

Who is Jesus Christ? What is grace? Why discipleship?

Jesus is introduced as our *“Counselor with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous. And he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world”* (1 John 2:1-2 WEB). Jesus has already forgiven all mankind - believers and unbelievers. *“It is finished”* is the awesome news!

Paul explained, *“There is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace”* (Romans 11:5-6 WEB). Yet God has not chosen everyone for a changed heart to obey Jesus and trust they are forgiven with all mankind. Hard to understand sad news!

Jesus commands us to strive to *“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I commanded you”* (Matthew 28:19-20 WEB). Jesus is reaching the world through us. Time to share the good news!

If you are chosen to believe that Jesus has already forgiven all our sin and to follow him, then you have a lot to be excited about. Make it your greatest goal to intimately know him and make him known. He has wonderful plans to change you to become like him and to use you to show God's love to others.

Where do unbelievers go? How should we respond? When does punishment end?

Jesus comes, *“punishing those who don't know God, and to those who don't obey the Good News of our Lord Jesus, who will pay the penalty: eternal (aionios) destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might”* (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9 WEB). Those who reject grace will be sentenced to destruction. Hades is their destiny even though their sins are forgiven, Luke 16:19-31. More sad news!

Paul responded, *“I have great sorrow and unceasing pain in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brothers' sake, my relatives”* (Romans 9:2-3 WEB). Paul would have given away his own salvation to go to Hades for them if he could have. More news of a good man!

Yet Jesus promised, *“I will build my assembly, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give to you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will have been bound in heaven; and whatever you release on earth will have been released in heaven”* (Matthew 16:18-19 WEB). Can unbelievers be released from Hades? The Greek word *“aionios”* means *“eon,” “duration,”* or *“complete”* and is mistranslated as *“everlasting”* in 2 Thessalonians 1:9. See the YLT Bible. Hades is proved to be temporary in Revelation 20:13-14, so *“aionios”* in Hades is for the *“duration”* of Hades. If you believe then you know even the sin of unbelievers is already forgiven, just like yours. More awesome news!

Finally Jesus says *“to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels’ ”* (Matthew 25:41 WEB). However, the *“duration”* of the Lake of Fire is not an age, but instead for *“The Ages of The Ages”* Revelation 20:10. Also, contrary to popular religion, the Lake of Fire is ONLY for... THE DEVIL AND HIS ANGELS. We deserve the same... except for grace!

Do all Christians believe this awesome news?

Paul warns, *“Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision. For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh”* (Philippians 3:2-3 WEB). Many are misled by the mistranslation above, but objectors claim Jesus loves them, but not all, or their *“faith”* is the reason Jesus loves them. Their confidence is in the flesh. Christians should instead simply trust Jesus loves all mankind, but Hades awaits those who reject grace.

Contact Jeff for further discussion about God's victorious grace at DGJC.ORG/CONTACT

Does God Limit His Love?

Calvinist Christians believe that God loves unconditionally and limits this love to a predestined subset of humanity. *Arminian* Christians believe that God offers conditional love to all humanity which is limited by our choice to accept or reject Christ. *Restorationist* Christians believe that God loves all humanity unconditionally, but limits the duration of punishment in Hades for the unbelieving. Each limits something.

A *Restorationist* understanding is defended from the Christian Scriptures at DGJC.ORG/OPTIMISM. The question of the nature of God and his love for each individual and our neighbor is critical. Bible study, prayer, conversation with Christians, and the Holy Spirit are essential ingredients to learn about God and his love. Following are questions to guide your study as you search the Bible for the truth.

Bible Study Questions

1. Is the love of God a conditional possibility or an unconditional promise?
2. What do the characteristics of God confirm about his love for humanity?
3. What is the significance that God loved us before we loved him?
4. From Genesis on when is the first and further mention of salvation promised?
5. From Genesis on when is the first and further mention of damnation threatened?
6. When are the events described in Dan 12, Mat 25, 1 Cor 15, 1 Thes 4, 2 Thes 2, and Rev 20?
7. What are *Sheol*, *Gehenna*, *Hades*, *Tartarus* (2 Pet 2:4), *Thalassa* (Rev 20:13), and *The Lake of Fire*?
8. What are the denotations of the Hebrew *olam* and the Greek *aion* and *aidios*?
9. Who did the death of Christ make atonement for, according to the Bible?
10. Why does Jesus call unbelieving Israel 'lost sheep' and even 'not my sheep'?
11. How is the second Adam, Jesus, similar and different than the first, Adam?
12. Is confidence in God's love equally feasible as a *Calvinist*, *Arminian*, or *Restorationist*?
13. Is confidence in God's love feasible while rejecting his unconditional love for all?
14. Does *faith* change God's heart toward us, or change our hearts toward God?
15. Does *obedience* gain God's love, or show gratitude for his unconditional love?

Four Square Salvation Evaluator

God's love?	Subset of Mankind	All Mankind
Conditional	Unknown?	Arminian?
Unconditional	Calvinist?	Restorationist?

Mystery?

Christian faith is not a blind leap or an unknown mystery but confident reasonable trust. God himself is our evaluator, yet is your faith founded on the facts of the person of Jesus Christ? What do you believe?

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