

# The Gospel of Grace

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Unless otherwise noted, all quotes are from *Destined to Reign* by Joseph Prince (Image Books)

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As we delve into any man's false teachings and errors, one of the most likely reactions from one of his followers is anger. This is seen very easily when Jesus was teaching. Some Jews both believed *and* believed in Jesus. (Jn. 8:30-31) But because Jesus told them things about themselves and their religion which they did not want to hear or believe – that they were slaves of sin (Jn. 8:34) and that being a descendent of Abraham would be insufficient as an excuse for their behaviors toward God (Jn. 8:37) – they ended up expressing the murderous fury of their real father, the devil (Jn. 8:44), and tried to kill Jesus. (Jn. 8:59)

As we delve into this particular man's false teachings and errors, if you, the reader, become uncontrollably angry, I beg you to discern that anger for what it is – confirmation that the devil and the demonic have far greater control over you than you previously believed or would like to believe. Discern wisely the fruit of your reactions to the truths that expose this man as the false teacher and deceived man that he is. Deny the truths contained in this writing at your own risk.

## **Straw Men Are Easy to Knock Down**

Joseph Prince's book, *Destined to Reign*, is an astonishing compilation of errors and false teachings. This article attempts to tackle chapter 3, "Controversies Surrounding the Gospel of Grace" as that chapter perhaps best represents some of his worst departures from the truth. Attempting to correct *all* of Prince's errors in his book would be a daunting, perhaps impossible task! Prince's most often used tactic is to set up a "straw man" that is easily knocked down and this is supposed to show that his teachings stand strong. This article, point by point, exposes the fallacies inherent in Prince's "gospel of grace" and lays out the truth for those who have ears to hear and eyes to see. If Prince's teachings are so strong, why does he need this straw man of law vs. grace?

Prince writes of people's reactions to his "gospel," putting the following forth, apparently as one of the best arguments that he has encountered against it, saying,

"You will hear people saying, 'You have to be careful now. Too much grace is not good for you. It must be balanced with law.'" (p. 19)

Anyone who reads the Bible with any depth is familiar with Paul's statement that "you are not under law but under grace." (Rom. 6:14) But limiting one's teaching emphasis to only one aspect of Christ's gospel is never wise or safe or accurate – and in the end, it may prove demonic.

It is evident (primarily from his usage of law as the only viable alternative to his "gospel of grace") that he has learned his Bible knowledge from mere men and not from the Spirit of truth. If he had learned from the Spirit of truth he would know that the choice is not only between law and grace but rather also between such things as Spirit and flesh, truth and error, etc.

That is, the one living by the Spirit will neither violate the law nor seek to obey it by carnal (fleshly) means. Rather the one who lives *by the Spirit* will fulfill the law of the Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2) by practicing self-sacrificing, divinely-directed agape love. Paul even says, “the righteous requirement of the Law (or law) [will] be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.” (Rom. 8:4) Those living “according to the Spirit” are free from the trap of the law but somehow accomplish the very things – and the essence behind it - which the law would have had them do all without being “under the law.” And their lives are lived “as those who will be judged by the law of liberty.” (Jas. 2:5) Prince has failed to grasp that while we are not *under* Moses’ law, it does still stand as a measuring tool (among several) that can tell us when we are operating in the flesh rather than in the Spirit. He has also missed the other laws that we *are* under! Such a drastically low level of spiritual understanding is out of place in one who claims to be a leader worthy to be listened to and followed. Does he not know he will be held to a stricter judgment? (Jas. 3:1)

Prince’s straw man of seeing only the opposing natures of law and grace also misses or completely ignores the opposing natures of truth and error which are equally as important as law vs. grace and Spirit vs. flesh. (Jn. 4:24) And though he mentions topics like the will of God, the schemes of the devil and the soul nature of man, it is clear that he has not received divine revelation on these matters but rather has taken teachings of other men (most often with either total abandon or total over-reaction) and concocted his own theories that he sees as better and more preferable.

### **The Devil’s PHD**

As we proceed through this chapter, we find little insights into Prince’s real nature,

“God gave the devil a PHD - **permanent head damage!** So you will always find that the devil’s strategies are always lacking in creativity – what he has done in the past, he is still doing now.” (p. 20 - emphasis in original)

Peter wrote, “But these, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, *speak evil of the things they do not understand...*” (2 Pet. 2:12) One of the devil’s most effective lies is that he is stupid, completely inept in his role as deceiver. The truth is that Satan is a super-genius in comparison to even the most-intelligent but divinely-unaided human and his schemes are such that he doesn’t mind if you think he’s a brain-dead PHD. The relatively young *Senior* “Pastor” Prince of a mega-“church” has no idea how many schemes of the devil he’s already bought into just to be where and what he is – nor does he seem to have any way to discern what spirit is speaking to and “enlightening” him. And he does not hesitate to crack jokes about the devil. Discern all this well – and wisely!

### **Jesus Heals All**

Prince also displays his slipshod handling of the word of truth and displays his overt subscription to the false health, wealth and prosperity “gospel.” Prince writes,

“I wish that somebody in Hollywood would produce the scene that took place in Luke 6:19. (Mel Gibson are you reading this?) All who were sick, lame and blind went to Jesus, and bam!” (p. 21)

Those who desire to walk in the whole counsel of God regarding healing should also consider the story of Jesus at the pool of Bethesda. There “lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed...” (Jn. 5:3) Jesus Himself singled out and chose to heal *only one certain man* “who had an infirmity thirty eight years.” (Jn. 5:6, 9) The health, wealth and prosperity “gospel” most often ignores this miracle of Jesus!

### **The Right to Be Sick and Poor**

Prince writes,

“I don’t understand why some believers would fight for the right to be sick and poor.” (p. 21)

Again this blatant lack of spiritual understanding is incredible to see in one who claims a position of spiritual leadership!

In another chapter, Prince explains away Paul’s Satanic “thorn in the flesh” (2 Cor. 12:7) as some mere “pain in the neck,” saying “it was clearly in reference to an evil personality who instigated people to attack, gossip, and backbite Paul everywhere he went preaching the gospel.” (p. 70-71) Before mentioning this “thorn in the flesh,” Paul had just told the Corinthians:

“From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness...” (2 Cor. 11:24-27)

So, after all this, Paul is going to even care about some “evil personality” stirring up trouble in the background of his travels? Would he even notice such a thing? Would he *three times* “call near” (Greek *parakalasa* [3870]) the Lord so that he might beg Him to take away something as routine and ordinary as that?

A.T. Robertson, whose excellent reputation as a Greek scholar transcends denominational lines, wrote,

“What was [Paul’s ‘thorn in the flesh’]? Certainly it was some physical malady that persisted. All sorts of theories are held (malaria, eye-trouble, epilepsy, insomnia, migraine or sick-headache, etc.) It is a blessing to the rest of us that we do not know the particular affliction that so beset Paul. Each of us has some such splinter or thorn in the flesh, perhaps several at once.” (*Word Pictures in the New Testament, Vol. IV*, p. 265, on 2 Cor. 12:7)

Paul’s “thorn in the flesh” is quite possibly even in the same class as the “spirit of infirmity” that plagued the woman for eighteen years. (Lk. 13:11) Paul’s soul, which needed to

remain humble in the face of great revelations, was much more important to God – and Paul! – than Paul’s body.

James wrote, “But let the [poor] brother in humble circumstances glory in his elevation [as a Christian, *called to the true riches* and to be an heir of God].” (Jas. 1:9 Amp. – emphasis added) He also wrote, “Has not God chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?” (Jas. 2:5)

It is not that we demand to be sick or poor – it is that we demand and fight for *God’s* right to take us into whatever *He* knows to be best for our eternal souls. And we must all insist on fighting against the spirit of error that would deceive us away from the truth that leads us away from the way that leads to eternal life or we will suffer the eternal consequences of departing from the faith.

- “Before I was afflicted, I went astray but now I keep Your word.” (Psa. 119:67)
- “It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes.” (Psa. 119:71)
- “Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all.” (Psa. 34:19)
- “But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, *after you have suffered a little while*, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.” (1 Pet. 5:10 - emphasis added)
- “Two things I request of You (deprive me not before I die) – [1] Remove falsehood and lies far from me; [and 2] give me *neither* poverty nor riches – feed me with the food You prescribe for me; lest I be full and deny You, and say, ‘Who is the LORD?’ or lest I be poor and steal, and profane the name of my God.” (Prov. 30:8-9- words in brackets mine)
- “The rich and the poor have this in common, the LORD is the maker of them all.” (Prov. 22:2)

Even these few verses should be sufficient to show that Prince’s notion of prosperity differs from the whole counsel of God as is found in the Bible.

### **No “Prosperity Gospel”**

Prince even goes on to say,

“My friend, there is no such thing as a ‘prosperity gospel.’ There is only one gospel in the Bible and that is the gospel of Jesus Christ.” (p. 23)

Then Paul’s mama sure must have raised a fool because Paul sure thought there were other “gospels” available! Paul wrote,

“...there are some who want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach *any other gospel* to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches *any other gospel* to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.” (Gal. 1:7-9 - emphasis added)

If “Pastor” Prince’s health, wealth and prosperity “gospel” differs from what Paul and the other original apostles preached – and we have *already* seen numerous ways in which his teachings differ from the rightly divided word of truth – then *Paul* says that “Pastor” Prince is accursed.

When Prince declares that there is no such thing as a “prosperity gospel” – an erroneous “gospel” that reaches at least as far back as the affluence and leisure that became more readily available as a result of the changes wrought by the Industrial Revolution – he is demonstrating the same denial of what is spiritually obvious to others that plagued the Jews who believed Jesus but still wanted to cling to Abraham’s ancestry as their righteousness before God. (Jn. 8:33, 48) Denial of obvious spiritual realities is a classic symptom of demonization.

### **Undeserved Favor**

Prince steps into yet another man’s blunder when he writes,

“[Grace] is not contingent on your performance, but it is based on His **undeserved** favor. If it were contingent on how good you are, then it would no longer be based *on grace* and would instead be based on the system of the law. It would be **deserved** favor.” (p. 23 – emphasis in original)

This error, if not started by, at the least comes through, Charles Williams (an associate and friend of C.S. Lewis who was a Greek scholar studying and interpreting the Scriptures) and it has been perpetuated probably the most by the Amplified Bible. This error fails to separate the two aspects of God’s grace that are inherent in the meaning of the word. One aspect is God’s merciful kindness and extravagantly generous love as was shown to us in the death of Christ on the cross. Certainly there is nothing we could ever possibly do to merit such a magnanimous gesture. This is the undeserved aspect of God’s grace.

Yet we also find in Scripture that “God resists the proud, but gives *grace to the humble.*” (Jas. 4:6, Prov. 3:34 - emphasis added) And this comes from both covenants! This grace *is* based, not on our goodness, which is nonexistent (Mk. 10:10), but on our ability to see our need for God’s help. And that is the second aspect of God’s grace – His power that enables us to overcome sin, self and Satan. Unfortunately, Prince’s health, wealth and prosperity “gospel” caters to many of the lusts of the flesh, the very thing which God’s power (grace), which is given *only* to the deservingly humble, is supposed to overcome. Calling both aspects of God’s grace undeserved only obscures the whole counsel of God.

And note again the usage of law as the straw man to support his “gospel of grace.” True grace *is* deserved and undeserved – and neither aspect of grace has anything to do with law whatsoever. Such impoverished spiritual understanding is tragic.

## Grace Is the Gospel

Prince displays his complete obsession with his own private interpretations of “grace” when he says,

“Grace is not a topic [for seminary study, etc.] – grace **is** the gospel.” (p. 24 – emphasis in original)

Now when Paul declared again to the Corinthians the gospel as he had preached it (one of the clearest expressions of the basic gospel elements in the New Testament), he doesn’t even use the word “grace.” (1 Cor. 15:1-8) Peter, preaching on the day of Pentecost (after which about *three thousand* souls were added to their number – Acts 2:41) is not recorded as even mentioning “grace.” The word “grace” only appears *four* times in the gospels. (KJV – Lk. 2:40, Jn. 1:14, 16-17) The balance of the new Testament simply does not support Prince’s *obsession* with grace – and obsession is yet another symptom of demonic control.

## Truth and Grace

Prince goes on to say,

“Grace came as a person and His name *is* Jesus Christ. Jesus is the personification of grace. Jesus *is* grace! It is important that you begin to realize that truth is on the side of grace and not on the side of the law. The word of God declares that if you know the truth, the truth will set you free. Well, my friend, grace is **the** (definite article) truth that will set you free, not the law of Moses. The law is on the side of Moses, but grace and truth are on the same side as our Savior. Yet, there are people today holding on to the law of Moses and preaching it as if it is the ‘truth’ that liberates. My friend, the grace of God is the only truth that liberates. Truth is on the side of grace!” (p. 25 – emphasis in original)

Jesus never said, “I am grace” as He did say “I am...the truth...” (Jn. 14:6) Jesus also said, “*If you remain* in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine, and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (Jn. 8:31-32 - emphasis added) We must *remain* in His teachings – so much for that “effortless” reign! If we fail to remain or abide in His word – that word which was at the first implanted in our soul for its salvation (Jas. 1:21) – then we are not really His disciples and we will not know the truth and we will not be free. Rather we will believe lies – like Prince’s deceptive words substitutions – and the demonic will have great power over us. Grace, the power of God given to those humble enough to recognize their dire need for His help, comes into operation in this context when we believe what the Spirit of truth reveals to us. Then, as we believe His truth, any lie we have believed that is contrary to this truth, will no longer be a demonic stronghold in our life.

And yet again we see Prince’s straw man – the only alternative to grace is law. But truth is “not on the side of the law”? The law is composed of untruths? As Paul said, “Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the [instruction of the] Law...” (Rom. 7:7)

And elsewhere, “The Law has become our tutor (literally, child-conductor) to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a

tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.” (Gal. 3:24-26) Notice that the key word contrasted here with “law” is “faith” (something we must act upon – Jas. 2:17), not “grace.”

Prince’s constant focus on law vs. grace completely fails to address the whole spiritual reality. Without the law, we will never know what things are sin and we will never see the depths of our need to repent of having violated God’s laws. And the laws are not Moses’ laws – they are God’s laws. Has His standards of righteousness changed?

And again, “those who are being led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.” (Rom. 8:14) Those led by the Spirit of God will know the laws of God because they are written in their hearts. (Heb. 8:10) They will neither try to obey them with carnal means nor will they violate God’s laws – they will *fulfill* God’s laws by practicing agape love. Prince’s false grace “gospel” seems completely ignorant of the law’s proper place in anew covenant believers’ life. We are not under law but it still stands beside us as a reminder of what Christ and God are like and what behaviors should come forth as one who *is* led by the Holy Spirit of truth.

### **The Devil’s Schemes**

Prince says, highlighted to show it as one of the more important statements of the chapter,

“If the devil can keep you under the law, he can keep you defeated.” (p. 25)

This would be better stated (as a *whole* truth), if the devil can deceive you in *any* way, he has already defeated you. “Church” is one of his biggest deceptions. Having a “pastor” is another. Allowing any man’s teachings to keep you from personally hearing and obeying Christ and God is yet another. Deceiving people into obeying law is only one of his many deceptions and it’s not one of his more effective ones at that (except in certain circles susceptible to legalism and self-determination). Deceiving people into relying on some mythical “effortless grace” that is accompanied by miraculous power that lulls one into yet another form of religious lawlessness (doing what is right in one’s own eyes) practiced in the name of Christ is another of the devil’s deceptions – time will tell just how popular this will be.

### **Practical vs. Positional Righteousness**

Prince goes on to discuss “positional righteousness” and “practical righteousness.” Prince, quoting (and adding to) Romans 10:3, writes,

“[Paul] said, ‘For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness [that’s what some people term “positional righteousness”], and seeking to establish their own righteousness [now that would be what they call “practical righteousness”], have not submitted to the righteousness of God.’” (p. 27 – words in brackets Prince’s)

This only shows that Prince does not understand righteousness. Righteousness, put simply, is what is right in God’s eyes. I hate to have to defend theological terms but the truth is that, while we are here on earth and caught in the struggle of Spirit vs. flesh, we are “positionally” righteous through Christ. That is, we do have the righteousness of Christ within us. Thus it is through faith that we are reckoned as righteous. (Rom. 4:5) This is what we are.

“Practical” righteousness speaks of what we habitually do – not a form of self-righteousness, as Prince wrongly expresses in his explanation of “their own righteousness.” This is also called “the fruits of righteousness.” (2 Cor. 9:10, Phlp. 1:11, Heb. 12:11, Jas. 3:18) It is called “practical” righteousness because it is what we *practice*. John wrote, “Little children, let no one deceive you, the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; the one who practices sin is of the devil; ... anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God.” (1 Jn. 3:7, 10) It is not that “positional” righteousness comes from God’s grace and “practical” righteousness is self-righteous attempts at keeping the law (Prince’s straw man yet again), but rather it is that we have the righteousness that Christ gives within us and, because He is there within, we *do* (practice) the things which are right in God’s eyes as best we are enabled by His Spirit of grace (power to overcome sin, self and Satan’s schemes).

### Against Sin

Prince states emphatically,

**“I, Joseph Prince, am vehemently, completely, aggressively, and irrevocably AGAINST SIN!”** (p. 30 – emphasis in original)

But then he goes on to display what he considers “sin.”

“Sin is evil. I do not condone sin. A lifestyle of sin leads only to defeat and destruction.” (p. 30)

That’s as specific as he gets.

Prince then boasts,

“When you visit our church, you won’t find a congregation that, having received the good news of the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness, wants to run off and start living in sin. Of course not! In fact, some of the top business people, management executives, entrepreneurs, lawyers, accountants, and consultants in my country attend our church, and you will find a congregation that is deeply in love with the person of Jesus. You will hear wonderful and amazing testimonies of how marriages have been restored, how huge debts that had run into the millions have been supernaturally cancelled, how terminal diseases have been miraculously healed, and other awesome testimonies that the good news of Jesus brings!” (p. 30)

Let’s work our way back up through all this:

- **“Wonderful and amazing testimonies.”** Paul warned, “The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception...” (2 Ths. 2:9-10) It is impossible to decide who is doing what here. Even if these claims are true, whether they were all done by Satan or all done by God or whether some were done by God while some others were done by Satan is not a question we can answer in this short analysis. It is certain that Prince’s teachings come under the category of “unrighteous deception” and it is thus likely, even

certain, that some (if not many or possibly even all) of these miracles are “lying wonders.”

- **“A congregation deeply in love with the person of Jesus.”** Who wouldn’t love a “God” who lets you have all the loot you can rake in and keeps you healthy while you do it! The heathen have sought for such a god throughout all history! But beware! When you become poor or sick or injured, this “God” will not be there for you and you’ll probably be unwelcome at Prince’s religious social club “church” as they will likely (based on past histories of other “churches,” denominations and fellowships under the “prosperity gospel”) conclude that you are living in sin, unbelief or even under the judgment of God – even though Prince preaches that there is no judgment for the believer anymore! (p. 51, see Jas. 2:12, Mt. 7:21-23, 1 Cor. 3:12-17, Rev. 20:12-13)

- **“The top people attend our church.”** Paul wrote, “For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called.” (1 Cor. 1:26) But Prince’s false health, wealth and prosperity “gospel” draws in large numbers of the wise, mighty, and noble workers, movers and shakers of his country.

- **“Our congregation doesn’t want to run off and start living in sin.”** Of course it doesn’t – it doesn’t have to! Look at this carefully: 1) They don’t get taught the law (by which they will know what sin is – Rom. 7:7) and 2) God would not judge or chasten or discipline them even if they were in sin (p. 50) and 3) they get to do whatever is right and good in their own eyes (lawlessness). Their ears are scratched by “Pastor” Prince very well. Who in their right (fleshly) mind would want to go anywhere else?

- **“Sin is evil, characterized by defeat and destruction.”** Prince’s words are vague and misapplied. The Bible is much more precise:

- “The fear of the LORD is to hate evil.” (Prov. 8:13) Since Prince says that he is so strongly against sin, which he calls evil, then he must either possess some fear of the Lord (quite inconsistent with his teachings of “grace”) or else he is not as against all evil as he claims to be.

- “Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.” (1 Jn. 3:4) Lawlessness is the absence of any outside, objective standard by which to order one’s behaviors, beliefs and lifestyle. This is best summed up as doing what is right in one’s own eyes. It is diametrically opposed, contrary and completely antithetical to righteousness (what is right in God’s eyes – 2 Cor. 6:14) In philosophy, it is called relativism. It is probably the most often practiced sin of our time (Mt. 24:12) and it is probably the sin most encouraged by Prince’s false health, wealth and prosperity “gospel of grace.”

- “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...” (Rom. 3:23) Sinning is falling short of God’s glory – and we *all* do it regularly.

- “to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.” (Jas. 4:17) What is the best source to learn what God considers to be good and evil? God’s old covenant laws!
- “Whatever is not from faith is sin.” (Rom. 14:23) Acts done by the flesh in presumption that God will, in His “grace” overlook them, come into this category. Prince’s “grace” does not promote faith but blind presumption.
- “The works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness [a category defined by God’s laws!], licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions [like trying to be “pastor” *over* a mega-“church”], dissensions [sects, denominations], heresies [divisions based on differing teachings and “gospels”], envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like...” (Gal. 5:19-21 - words in brackets mine)
- “Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him... He who sins is of the devil...” (1 Jn. 3:6, 8) It doesn’t matter which sin you prefer and practice – religious pride and presumption make the devil just as happy as does drug addiction and prostitution – habitual and routine sin reveals your true condition and state before God.

Any teacher who teaches you so much “grace” that you never learn what sin really is needs himself to start all over and re-learn the real gospel!

### **It Is Finished!**

Prince also places too much emphasis on “the finished work” of Jesus. This completely ignores the rest of the counsel of God.

- Peter wrote, “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you, but *to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ*, keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation.” (1 Pet. 5:12-13 - emphasis added)
- Paul wrote, “Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body (which is the ekklesia) in filling up *that which is lacking in Christ’s afflictions.*” (Col. 1:24 - emphasis added)

Now if it is all finished, how can there be anything lacking in Christ’s afflictions? How can Paul and those to whom Peter was writing share in Christ’s sufferings if it is all done? Either these Scriptures are wrong and Prince is right or Prince has again failed to enter into the whole counsel of God.

The work of Christ is indeed finished and we are to enter into His finished work. As we do so, we will cease from our own carnal works to be like God (Heb. 4:10) and spiritually and obediently enter into the good works God has prepared beforehand for us to do. (Eph. 2:10) Part

of those *good* works will be things grievous to our flesh that fill up what is lacking in Christ's sufferings. (also see 2 Tim. 3:12)

Further, the Revelation tells us, "In the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound [his trumpet], *then the mystery of God is finished*, as He preached to His servants the prophets." (Rev. 10:7) If it was all finished at the cross in 33 A.D., why then does something of what was preached by the prophets, the revealed "secrets" of God, need to be finished at a future date?

### **Reign in Life**

Prince closes this chapter with a plea to pull down the entrenched fences, strongholds and walls that surround his "gospel of grace." Many of those "barriers" are simply the rightly divided word of truth intended to keep the genuine believer from straying off the path that leads to eternal life. What is more needed is that the people of Christ cry out for discernment, walk in obedience to God by His Spirit, forsake the institutional "church" structure and paradigm (which are counterfeits of real life in Christ) and its Nicolaitan "pastors" and leadership, and take whatever the Lord has in store for us for the purifying of our flesh and spirit so that we may truly be His sons and daughters.

Prince's theory is that we are to "reign in life." This is a phrase ripped out of context from Romans 5:17. This verse comes toward the end of a discussion of the differences between Adam and Christ. (Rom. 5:12-21) By what twisted logic do we conclude that in the middle of comparing Christ to Adam, God would embed a promise that only special, chosen, "blessed" teachers can find? Haven't we heard and seen all this nonsense before in the health, wealth and prosperity preachers of this country who are mocked and ignored even by the world for their televised, flaunted foolishness and who are not taken seriously by anyone except those who can easily swayed and deceived? (see Eph. 4:14) Prince's country (Singapore) is only now experiencing the economic boom and affluence (which our country experienced years ago) because of its strategic nearness to China (the city of Singapore is the largest seaport in the region and is situated on the southern tip of the Malay peninsula directly between the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea). Now it would seem that his country needs to excuse away the worship and service to Mammon that is such a part of the American "gospel"? (see Mt. 6:24)

Prince's teaching that we are to reign in life is that we reign over sin, the devil, the powers of darkness, all their devices and schemes, depression, poverty, every curse and every sickness and disease (p. 1) and his "gospel of grace" is "God's *effortless* way to success, wholeness, and victorious living!" (p. 10 – emphasis added) This teaching renders Jesus' instructions to "overcome" ridiculous. Why is there any need for us to *overcome* if our life in Christ is *effortless*?

Further, the blessings which attend overcoming in the New Testament are the blessings we generally associate with simple or basic salvation. That is, those who overcome

- get to eat of the tree of life. (Rev. 2:7, also see Gen. 3:22, Rev. 22:14)
- are not hurt by the second death. (Rev. 2:11) The second death, the eternal lake of fire, is reserved for the cowardly, unbelieving, immoral, sorcerers, idolaters and liars. (Rev. 21:8)

- receive a white stone and a new name. (Rev. 2:17, see perhaps Jn. 1:42)
- have authority over the nations, wielding a rod of iron, and receive the morning star. (Rev. 2:26-28) Jesus rules with the rod of iron (Rev. 19:15) and He *is* the morning star (2 Pet. 1:19, Rev. 22:16)
- will be given white robes and their names will not be erased from the Book of Life. (Rev. 3:5, also see 7:9, 20:15)
- will be a pillar in the temple of God and have His name written on them. (Rev. 3:12) We, the true people of Christ *are* His temple (see 1 Cor. 3:16-17) and, as anyone familiar with God's laws already knows, God is very particular about what is done with His name. (Ex. 20:7)
- will sit on His throne. (Rev. 3:21) Given God's reaction to Satan's desire to sit on His throne (see Isa. 14:12-13), we should be most careful to overcome according God's instructions and not try to take a place on His throne by any other means. (see Phlp. 2:6-9)
- will inherit the things of God and be His Son. (Rev. 21:7, also see Jn. 1:12, 1 Cor. 15:50)

In spite of Prince's false "gospel of grace," overcoming and inheriting God's kingdom is not "effortless." It is a genuine work of true grace.

Let he who has ears hear.

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