

DOCTRINE OF SURPASSING GRACE

- I. Preliminary considerations.
- A. Every aspect of God's plan is based on the principle of grace as opposed to works. Rom. 3:24, 4:16, Eph. 2:8
 - B. God has chosen the principle of faith to access His grace riches. Rom. 5:1-2
 - C. The believer's Ph₂ works also must issue from the source of faith, which is in accordance with the principle of grace. ICor. 13:2; IThess. 1:2-3
 - D. Although our righteous works are based on faith and proceed from the principle of grace, God has clearly revealed that He will reward appropriate activity. Matt. 16:27; Rev. 22:12
 - E. Therefore, God's works-produce-rewards system is still completely compatible with the principle of grace.
 - F. The actions of the twenty-four elders in Rev. 4:10 demonstrate that their reward is considered in light of the grace that provided it. Lk. 17:10
 - G. Each believer will be rewarded based on his total accumulated Divine good production in time, no matter how significant or insignificant his works may appear. IICor. 5:10 **“For** *(this verse begins an explanation of verse 9, as to why it is important for all believers to make it their Ph₂ ambition to be pleasing to the Lord)* **it is necessary for us all** *(this is not optional and the Greek is emphatic “the all of us, everyone of us”)* **to be revealed in front of the judgment seat of Christ** *(to become known or visible, to appear in our true character, at the Bema Seat, the raised platform/judicial bench/judge's seat, in the presence of Jesus Christ, the only one that is qualified to judge us as the God/man. Jn. 5:22,30)* **in order that each individual may be repaid** *(the purpose for the Bema appearance is now defined; every individual must be given that which is coming to him, the middle voice of κομίζω has the force of acquiring for oneself, receiving back as a reward, Eph. 6:8, the subjunctive mood indicates the potential for rewards, but does not guarantee rewards)* **for the things which he practiced through/with/in his body** *(the verb πράσσω means to busy oneself with, to practice, to achieve, to accomplish, the body is the intermediate agent the real you employs to produce divine good)* **whether those things were divine good or worthless.”** *(there are two distinct categories of actions in view: that which is Divine good and is therefore judged worthy by Jesus Christ for reward, or those actions that are judged as φάυλος trivial, light, petty, or worthless; human good activities, without divine sanction. Jn. 3:20)*
 - H. Heb. 10:35 **“Therefore,** *(based on their previous applications and knowledge of their eternal rewards, a better and abiding possession)* **do not throw away your confidence,** *(under pressures of the angelic conflict, believers can throw away/cast off their confidence in doctrine and the importance of application, losing their intensity and focus on SG₃)* **which has a great reward.** *(our assurance that we have the truth and that application of it is going to be rewarded is described by the term μισθαποδοσία: what is due for service rendered, payment of wages, which is viewed as vast, extraordinary, or abundant in relation to the service performed)*

II. Vocabulary.

- A. The nomenclature is derived from Eph. 2:7 in the phrase τὸ ὑπερβάλλον πλοῦτος τῆς χάριτος which is translated "the excelling/transcending/exceeding/surpassing/beyond degree of comparison riches of His grace"
- B. This emphasizes that the grace of God that is manifest in our eternal rewards is incomparable to the effort/work/sacrifice that we manifested when we produced Divine good.
- C. Other vocabulary used to describe SG₃ includes:
 - 1. ἡ ἐλπίς (he elpis), hope, expectation or confidence. This word views SG₃ as a future reality, which provides motivation to apply in time and keep our priorities straight with respect to MPR. Col. 1:5; Eph. 1:18
 - 2. ὁ θησαυρός (ho thesauros), treasures or valuables. This word emphasizes the true value of SG₃. Matt. 6:19-21; Lk. 12:33
 - 3. ὁ μισθός (ho misthos), what one is paid for work, wages that one earns. This word points out that Ph2 works are required to obtain SG₃. ICor. 3:8,14; Heb. 11:26; Rev. 22:12
 - 4. ἡ κληρονομία (he kleronomia), inheritance, property received upon the bequest of another. This word deals with the fact that God has personally determined that we should have SG₃, and relates our inheritance to the inheritance of Jesus Christ, the Heir of all things. Eph. 1:18; IPet. 1:4
 - 5. ἡ δόξα (he doxa), glory, majesty, excellence, splendor. This word emphasizes the source of SG₃, the essence or glory of God, which He desires to share with us. IICor. 4:16-18; IPet. 5:10
 - 6. ἡ ἐπαγγελία (he epangelia), a promise, something which is promised. This word points out that the veracity of God is on the line in the matter of SG₃. Heb. 11:13,39
 - 7. The phrase "**eternal life**" is used as an expression for SG₃. This phrase focuses on the fact that as life is made more enjoyable by the possession of certain accoutrements, so those who possess SG₃ will enjoy Heaven to a greater degree. ITim. 6:12
 - 8. The phrase "**a better resurrection**" is a synonym for SG₃. This phrase demonstrates that the believer with SG₃ will have more than just the normal/universal blessings of heaven. Heb. 11:35
 - a. A resurrection body. ICor. 15:35-55; IICor. 5:1
 - b. No more sin nature. Rom. 7:24
 - c. No more separation, pain, sorrow, tears or death. Rev. 21:4
 - d. A home in the New Jerusalem. Rev. 21:27

III. Definition and description.

- A. SG₃ refers to the special blessings and rewards for the believer in Ph₃ (the believer in Heaven) that are above and beyond the normal blessings of Heaven that are bestowed on all believers.
- B. No one has seen an increment of SG₃, so physical description is impossible.
- D. It falls into the realm of that which "eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and things which have not entered into the fantasy of man". ICor. 2:9
- E. SG₃ are the eternal rewards that the essence of God is capable of providing for the believer that pleased Him in time. Heb. 11:5-6
- F. These are rewards, which God knows will completely satisfy the believer for eternity, and remain hidden with God for the time being.

- G. Peter provides a four-fold description of SG₃ in IPet. 1:4.
1. **Imperishable**, not capable or liable to be reduced to a worse state, not subject to the law of entropy, not subject to the aging process.
 2. **Undeiled**, not able to be stained, polluted, or contaminated, not able to be deformed or broken or reduced to some less perfect state.
 3. **Will not fade away**, will never lose its newness, glamour or luster, will always provide stimulation.
 4. **Reserved in Heaven**, attended carefully, guarded by God Himself. This guarantees that SG₃ is not subject to being misplaced, lost, or overlooked since God's essence is responsible for preserving it.

- IV. The basis for our SG₃ is our accumulated Divine good production in time.
- A. Works of any kind are not admitted in the issue of Ph₁ salvation. Rom. 3:28
 - B. Works are an issue in Ph₂ salvation (sanctification), and the lack of acceptable works demonstrates a lack of orientation or commitment to doctrine. James2:14-20
 - C. Divine good production is defined as the activities that the believer performs based on an understanding of and faith in the Word of God; these works must proceed from the correct mental attitude and be done while in fellowship.
 - D. Divine good production must have the necessary components to qualify for reward.
 1. The believer must be in fellowship, with the STA isolated. Jn. 15:4,6; ITim. 1:5
 2. He should begin by receiving the correct form of teaching, with the communicator providing sound doctrine. Rom. 6:17 cf. ICor. 3:10-15
 - a. Technically, this passage is to be interpreted as relating to communicators and their building/teaching of individual churches.
 - b. By application, it can be applied to all believers and their approach to the Christian Way of Life (CWL).
 - c. Paul, as the founder of the Church in Corinth, laid a foundation that is analogous to the gospel. ICor. 3:10-11; Lk. 6:48 cf. Matt. 16:18
 - d. He instructs all future communicators to respect his work and to be very careful as to how they build on it. ICor. 3:10
 - e. There are two distinct categories of building materials set forth that can be used by the builder/instructor/pastor-teacher.
 - f. **Gold, silver, and precious stones** refer to categories of sound doctrine, taught by adjusted communicators, that enable positive believers to adjust to God and His plan, understand the issues involved, and produce Divine good.
 - g. **Wood, hay, and straw** all refer to unsound doctrines that are based on the traditions of men, human viewpoint, or even worse, the doctrines espoused by demons. Isa. 29:13; Mk 7:5-13; Col. 2:8; ITim. 4:1ff
 - h. False teachings, which abound in our time in history, do not advance believers; instead, they keep them off-balance and disoriented to the issues involved in the CWL, Divine good production, and the importance of SG₃. Eph. 4:14; ITim. 6:3; IITim. 4:3
 - i. Those that build with the correct materials are assured of eternal rewards; those that build with incorrect materials will suffer loss of reward.
 - j. Again, while this is to be interpreted as regarding pastor-teachers, each believer is responsible before the Lord for his own priesthood and the type of doctrine to which he exposes himself.

3. He must assemble regularly to hear and understand the issues involved. Heb. 10:25
 4. He must personally believe the doctrine. James 1:21
 5. He must follow through and apply the doctrine. James 1:22
 6. He must have correct motivation/mental attitude orientation. Matt. 6:1
- E. Each increment of doctrine that we apply correctly, no matter how apparently insignificant, accrues an increment of reward. Matt. 10:40-42
 - F. Human good, that which proceeds from fleshly activity, is cursed and rejected by God. II-Cor. 5:10
 - G. Failure to apply the doctrine is tantamount to a denial of the truth and Christ denies us reward. IITim. 2:12,13 **“If we endure,** *(first class condition, assuming that is true, present active indicative, assuming we choose to keep on hanging in there)* **we will assuredly reign with Him;** *(future active indicative, a guarantee that we will participate with Christ in the rule of His kingdom. Rev. 22:5)* **if we will refuse to endure,** *(first class condition, future active indicative ἀρνέομαι to decline, to refuse, to say no)* **He will also refuse us what we could have had/rewards.** *(since we decided not to accept and orient to the niche He provided, He will decline to provide the rewards in the eternal niche)* **If we keep on being faithless,** *(first class condition, to be faithless is to withhold belief, to be distrustful, some obviously do refuse to believe the promises of God’s word)* **He keeps on being faithful; for He is not able to deny/disown/renounce Himself.”** *(His faithfulness in regard to the promises of salvation cannot be changed or altered since they are based on His own person and work. Jn. 6:37, 10:28-29)*
 - H. If a believer departs the straight and narrow, he will be cast forth as a branch, but God will still bestow any SG₃ he had accumulated prior to his defection from the truth. Jn. 15:6; Heb. 6:10
- V. The Bema Seat, or judgment seat of Christ, is the place of administration of our SG₃.
- A. At the rapture the Church universal will be assembled at a meeting of the Lord. IThess. 4:13-17
 - B. The Bema seat consisted of a raised platform at which the winning participants in the ancient games received their rewards.
 - C. At this time every believer will have his Ph₂ evaluated: all human good/energy of the flesh will be destroyed, and all Divine good will be rewarded. ICor. 3:10-15; IICor. 5:10
 - D. Christ states explicitly that He is bringing His reward with Him when He returns. Isa. 40:10; Rev. 22:12
 - E. Some believers will not have any rewards and will be ashamed at this ceremony. ICor. 3:15 **“If any man’s work will be burned up,** *(first class condition, assumes the truth of the statement, and it will be)* **he shall suffer loss;** *(not loss of salvation, which is impossible; loss of reward that he could have had)* **but he himself shall be saved** *(emphatic in the Greek, emphasizing that one cannot lose salvation or his place in Heaven)* **however, it will be as though he went through fire.”** *(it will be as though his possessions were destroyed in a house fire, but he escaped with his life)*
 - F. Due to differences in volitional response to the Word of God and the differences in applications, there will be differences in rewards, resulting in class distinctions in Heaven. Lk. 19:12-27

- G. There are two distinct reactions among believers when Jesus Christ returns at the rapture to administer the awards ceremony.
 - 1. Shame, humiliation, and disgrace is the response of the negative believer, who did not prepare for this event. IJn. 2:28
 - 2. Ecstatic happiness will be the response of those believers that embraced the sufferings of Christ and the importance of Divine good production. IPet. 4:13

VI. The ultimate reward.

- A. There is a reward reserved for the believers who complete their course; that is, they pursue MPR to the end of their Ph₂.
- B. The Christian way of life is viewed as a personalized course, which each of us can identify through exposure to sound Bible doctrine. Heb. 12:1b **...let us also lay aside every encumbrance** (*athletes often carry extra weights during training but take everything that would slow them off before competition. These encumbrances refer to legitimate/non-sinful things that become a problem by taking us out of class or interfering with our applications of doctrine under our spiritual gift*) **and the sin nature that so easily entangles us** (*the STA is viewed as an active impediment to the runner, entangling the feet and causing him to trip and fall. Each believer has his own areas of weakness in the flesh, which easily controls him, as seen in the adjective *εὐπερίστατος*, a triple compound that means to easily place around, thus exerting tight control, easily entangling, tightly controlling*) **and let us run with endurance the race that is being set before us.** (*The contest of the Christian way of life is viewed as a marathon, a grueling long-distance race that each believer is to run with patience, steadfastly holding to the course of action that is taught in Bible class. The term *ὑπομονή* refers to patience in regard to the circumstances of your niche, hanging in there in season and out of season, not letting personal failures, other people, adversity, Divine discipline, or any factor cause you to quit running. The participle *προκείμεαι* indicates that the responsibility of the communicator is to clearly set forth the particular rules for the race, and the course to run for each believer in Bible class*)
- C. The believer who pursues doctrine to the very end and makes the necessary adjustments, particularly the maturity adjustment, and completes his course will receive the ultimate reward: the victor's wreath/crown.
- D. This very visible sign is used to express Jesus Christ's public recognition and exaltation of believers, based on each one's obedience to His plan.
- E. While there is some debate as to whether or not there are a number of separate crowns or if there is only one crown that is represented in a number of ways, it appears that there is one crown that is viewed from a number of different perspectives.
- F. The crown/wreath comes from the Greek word *στέφανος* (stephanos), the victor's wreath of leaves that was presented as the award in athletic contests, and is described by the following terms:
 - 1. **Your crown**, emphasizing your contribution to God's plan, which brings your personal reward. Rev. 3:11
 - a. Faithful adherence to sound doctrine is critical, and the believer is warned that there are those that would rob him of his crown, indicating the need for discernment and separation lest he lose his crown.

2. **The crown of life**, emphasizing the full enjoyment of Heaven available to those that desire it. Rev. 2:10; James 1:12
 - a. This is reserved for the believer that fights the good fight to the end, enduring the trials and tribulations of this life and taking a firm stand for doctrine.
 - b. Whatever sacrifices must be made in our temporal existence that might cause us to **lose our life** will be repaid with eternal life. Matt. 10:39
3. **The crown of righteousness**, emphasizing that righteous activity is necessary. IITim. 4:8
 - a. This award is given according to the righteous judgment of Jesus Christ, and is fully in accord with what is right/correct/proper.
4. **The unfading crown of glory**, emphasizing that this reward, like all others, comes from the essence of God. Further, the genitive emphasizes that it is a **glorious wreath**, which confers glory on the one that wears it. IPet. 5:4
 - a. Each believer will partake of the glory of God, manifesting the splendor, brightness, or luminosity that is appropriate for his contribution to God's plan. Dan. 12:3
5. **An incorruptible crown**, emphasizing that this reward will never tarnish or lose its luster. ICor. 9:25
 - a. This wreath is contrasted with the perishable reward that athletes receive, and has an immortal quality that will never be diminished.
6. **The crown of boasting**, emphasizing that the reward will be a sanctified proof of the believer's accomplishment. IThess. 2:19
 - a. Again, the context focuses on the adjusted communicator, with specific reference to those believers that have been allotted to his charge.
 - b. The crown focuses on the future hope of the pastor-teacher that the sheep allotted to him by the Lord will take the teaching, run with it, make the maturity adjustment, and complete their course.
 - c. This crown of boasting reflects the mutually beneficial relationship between a positive, adjusted pastor-teacher, and a positive, adjusted congregation, neither receiving their crown apart from the other.
 - d. As positive believers make the adjustments to God, they are proof of the content of the teaching; as the adjusted pastor-teacher teaches doctrine to the end, he is proof of the positive volition of the congregation in that particular geographic locale.
 - e. Therefore, by inference believers that are not in sound, doctrinal ministries and pastors that cater to lukewarm/negative believers will not be able to fully participate in this glorified boasting **in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming**.
- G. It is also seen under the figure of **the prize** in ICor. 9:24-27.
 1. The background for this athletic metaphor is the Isthmus games that were held in Corinth.
 2. The race refers to the Christian way of life, in which all believers are viewed as runners.
 3. The fact that many would run in a race and only one would win teaches the reality that the vast majority of believers will not complete their course; only a small minority will make it to the end.
 4. The race is obviously on a specific course, with specific rules that must be adhered to if the believer is to **win**.

5. While our touchy-feely, high self-esteem world does not like it, the goal of any contest is to win; the human viewpoint that just competing is sufficient makes a mockery of the event.
6. When it comes to the importance of completing his course, the believer must have the attitude expressed by Vince Lombardi that *“Winning isn’t everything, it’s the only thing.”*
7. This race demands a consistent exercise/training regimen that involves **self-control in all things, and buffeting the body**, teaching the necessity of isolating the STA and consistent application of resident doctrine. ICor. 9:25,27
8. The believer must recognize and have legitimate fear that he can be disqualified at any time during his Ph₂ marathon by failing to deal with the STA, failing to maintain the priority of MPR, allowing non-sinful things to interfere with training, or simply ceasing to run.
9. Paul recognized that the apostles were not above the rules and ran the same risk of disqualification.

VII. Specific areas in which a believer can maximize his SG₃.

- A. Enduring persecution. Matt. 5:11-12
- B. Prayer. Matt. 6:6
- C. Giving. Matt. 6:19-24
- D. Applying doctrine to your testing. IPet. 1:6-7
- E. Enduring the sufferings of Christ. Matt. 19:29; IICor. 4:8-17; Col. 1:24
- F. Application under your spiritual gift. IPet. 4:10-11
- G. Hospitality. Matt. 10:41
- H. Doing your job as to the Lord. Col. 3:22-24
- I. Presenting the gospel. ICor. 9:16-17

VIII. Things that negate SG₃.

- A. Wrong motives.
 1. Seeking to please men. Col. 3:22
 2. Approbation lust. Matt. 6:1-2,5
- B. Unchecked STA activity. Gal. 5:21ff
- C. Not being in fellowship. Jn. 15:4
- D. Not completing your course. Rev. 2:10
- E. Lack of diligence in regard to doctrine. IIJn. 8
- F. Failure to separate from apostasy. IIJn. 10-11
- G. Tampering with the Word of God. Rev. 22:19

IX. Specific SG₃ blessings promised to adjusted believers.

- A. The earth. Matt. 5:5
- B. The tree of life. Rev. 2:7, 22:14
- C. Hidden manna, insight into previously unrevealed doctrine. Rev. 2:17
- D. A white stone and new name. Rev. 2:17
- E. Authority over others. Rev. 2:26
- F. The morning star. Rev. 2:28
- G. Special clothing. Rev. 3:5
- H. Public honor from Christ Himself. Rev. 3:5

- I. Vindication from your detractors. Rev. 3:9
 - J. Position of honor. Rev. 3:12
 - K. The ultimate position of honor and authority. Rev. 3:21
- X. Concluding observations.
- A. The great believers of history were motivated to apply doctrine in their niche based on their understanding of this doctrine.
 - 1. Abraham. Heb. 11:8-10
 - 2. Moses. Heb. 11:24-26
 - 3. The unnamed believers of Heb. 11:35.
 - 4. Jesus Christ. Heb. 12:2
 - B. Our knowledge of Bible doctrine and the reality of SG₃ should motivate us to emulate their example. Heb. 12:1-2
 - C. The adjusted believer is to make his number one priority the application of the doctrine that he is learning, not focusing his attention on the temporal blessings of life but on the eternal wealth that intake and application will bring. IICor. 4:18; Col. 3:1-2; IPet. 1:13
 - D. We should not lose sight of the fact that our time on earth is limited compared to the eons of eternity. IICor. 4:16-17
 - E. The Holy Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance. Eph. 1:14
 - F. The adjusted pastor desires those under his charge to fully appreciate and understand this doctrine. Eph. 1:17-18

*Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable
always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that
your toil is not in vain in the Lord."
ICor. 15:58*