



THE BODY VERSUS ITS SHADOW

A shadow is never by it's own. Once we see a shadow we know with absolute certainty that there is a substance causing the shadow. Now, would we study the shadow for the shadow's sake, or would we start searching for and study *the substance*? We know the answer: the substance is the real thing! This is a great secret when it comes to reading and interpreting the Bible. The law was given by Moses but grace and truth (reality) came with Jesus. The Bible is very clear regarding what is the body and what is the shadow:

Colossians 2:16-17 says, *“So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.”* Hebrews 10:1 says, *“For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things...”*

The good things – the substance – have now come: Christ and the reality of Him in us! In Global Grace News we will this month continue to study these wonderful truths about the finished work of Jesus Christ and the New Covenant of Grace established through His everlasting blood.



Mary Felde
Editor

IS JESUS THE NARROW PATH OR THE HIGHWAY?

By Pst. Clay Longoi Ngondi

The Bible talks about “the Narrow path”, “the Broad way” and “the Highway”. It is important to understand what they represent and which one is our way today.

The synoptic gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke do not hide the fact that Jesus' ministry, while on earth before the cross, centered mainly on Jews. The Jews, who were few and the minority as compared to the gentiles, had a way of salvation, by keeping the Law, which without doubt excluded all gentiles. - *Ephesians 2:11-13*.

When the rich young ruler approached Jesus in *Luke 18:18* asking, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?”, Jesus quickly referred him to the keeping of commandments, a practice the Jews have been trying since the days of Moses. The young man, deceiving himself all his life that he has been keeping the commandments perfectly, went away downcast and frustrated when Jesus proved him

otherwise! So sad!

Jesus, on his first coming, had to first of all acknowledge the Law by pointing it to the Jews as a way of salvation. He then raised the standard for them to prove that it was not only difficult but inaccessible! In fact when someone asked Him, “Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?”, Jesus urged the Jews to strive to enter the narrow door. He cautioned them that many of them will seek to enter but will not be able. - *Luke 13:23-24*. “To strive” is to force oneself through with great determination depicting **self-effort**.

Beyond the Pharisees' standard

Touching on keeping of the Law, in *Matthew 5:20*, Jesus paints a clear



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picture of those days, portraying the Pharisees and teachers of the Law as leading the pack in the exercise. Ordinary Jews highly regarded them when it came to supervision and keeping of the Law. But Jesus throws a wrench into their work by suggesting that if the Jews were to enter the Kingdom of heaven, then their righteousness was to surpass that of the highly regarded and revered Pharisees! Note that Jesus does not say that their righteousness should match that of the Pharisees. NO! It should go beyond their set standard. This simply means that even though they had set a standard, the standard set was not enough to qualify them entry into the Kingdom of heaven! Nevertheless they had always deceived not only others but themselves that they kept the law accordingly. That is why Jesus had to revise the Law for them, taking it a notch higher than their set standard showing them how short they had fallen from God's standard. – *Matthew 5:21-48*. Jesus concludes his challenge by saying **“be perfect therefore as your father is perfect”**.

Jesus clearly assures the Jews that many will try to enter through the narrow door but would not be able!

But the writer of Hebrews asks, “If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood (**for on the basis of it the Law was given to the people**), why was there still need for another priest to come –

one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron? ...the former regulation was set aside because it was weak and useless (*for the Law made nothing perfect*), and a **better hope** is introduced by which we draw near to God.” – *Heb 7:11, 18-19, NIV*. Although the Jews had a narrow way of accessing God through priests and burnt offerings, Jesus came to introduce a better way of drawing near to God for all mankind.

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The “Narrow Door”

When you read further in *Luke 13:25 – 30*, if you are not careful, you will be misled to understand that the “closed door” mentioned in verse twenty-five is the same door Jesus describes as “narrow” in the previous verse. Jesus clearly assures the Jews that many will try to enter through the narrow door but would not be able! However, He continues to say that many people will come from the east, west, north and the south to enter God's Kingdom through this “other” door. We might say that here Jesus does not talk about a physical door in heaven, but rather about Himself being the Door. John 10:9. This other door that the Jews will have over looked at first (but acknowledge at the end), will cause the Jews, who were first to listen and

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be with Christ, to become the last to enter the Kingdom. In this passage, the “narrow door” and the “closed door” are therefore actually two different doors. Simply put, the “narrow door” is related to “keeping the Law”, which many will try but will not be able to do. While on the other hand, Jesus portrays Himself as the “other” door that for a season will usher in many people from the four corners of the earth but will at the end be closed.

In *Matthew 8:10-12*, Jesus is greatly astonished at the Roman centurion, a gentile, who due to his high regard of Jesus found it easy to believe in Him. Unlike many of the Jews, who having a way of relating to God through the priests and their regular burnt offerings, mistook Him for just another **Rabbi!** The Jews were so embedded in their old covenant ordinances and their struggle to keep the Law that they missed seeing Jesus for who He was and what He had come for. This made Jesus caution them in *Luke 13:28* that they risked being shut out of God's Kingdom although they were the actual descendants of Abraham. They thought that being descendants of Abraham gave them an automatic entry!

They had to believe in Christ Jesus who came to be the only way to relate to God. In fact when it comes to the real descendants of Abraham, the apostle Paul emphasizes to the

He had to fulfill the Law perfectly in order to abolish it as the way of salvation for the Jews.

Galatians that, *only those of Faith are the Children of Abraham and that the Law is not based on Faith* – Gal 3:7, 12. *“But the scripture declares that the whole World is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. Before this Faith came, we were held prisoners by the Law, locked up until Faith should be revealed”* – Gal 3:22-25. This is what most Jews found hard to accept. They now had to turn away from trusting in their old covenant sacrifices and observances of the Law as their way of relating to God and instead embrace faith in Christ as the new and only way of relating and accessing God's blessings not only for them but gentiles as well! It appeared unbelievable for the Jews!

The broad way is simply choosing to live one's life independent of God rather than dependent on God!

When Jesus was on the earth, many Jews had given up hope in trying to keep the Law. Many of them were living in total disregard of the Law. For Jesus to bring in a new way that would include gentiles, He had to pass the old difficult way successfully. In other words, He had to fulfill the Law perfectly in order to abolish it as the way of salvation for the Jews. – Colossians 2:14. Apostle Paul tells the Ephesians, who are gentiles, that Jesus did abolish it in His crucifixion. The Law, with its commandments, stood as a barrier between the Jews and Gentiles, and thereby created enmity between the two. Jesus' purpose was to create one new man out of the two. In their union it would reconcile

both of them to God by the way of the cross - bringing an end their hostility! – Ephesians 2:14-16. In the gospel of John 14:6, amazingly, Jesus declares boldly, *“I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, no one comes to the father except through me!”* No one here is actually both Jews and Gentiles.

Deuteronomy 30:13-20, clearly shows that keeping the Law was given to Jews as a way to life while failure to keep the Law was the way to destruction. In Matthew 7:13-14, keeping the Law is compared to a narrow path in the sense that it had a lot of restrictions and requirements. Only a few of the Jews attempted to dare it, while living in disregard of the Law was compared to a **broad way**.

The “Broad way”

The **broad way** should not be mistaken for the **highway** in our subject of discussion. Proverbs 14:12 says, *“there is a Way that seems right to a man but its end is the way of death.”* The broad way is simply choosing to live one's life independent of God rather than dependent on God! Matthew 7:13-14 records Jesus putting into comparison the narrow path and the broad way. Jesus seems to suggest that many people shunned the narrow path because of its **design**. It was not only restricted to many but even the few who dared found it extremely difficult to follow. Worse still, Jesus goes ahead to emphasize that for some people to attempt the narrow path would be like trying to get a whole living camel through the eye of a needle! – Luke 18:25. You may not be shocked but the disciples of Jesus were! They clearly understood that it

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was practically impossible and asked Jesus in amazement, *“who then can be saved!?!”* – Luke 18:26.

It is very clear that by this time Jesus had not yet been crucified in order to reconcile the world to God. Neither had He shed His blood for the remission of the sin of the world – 2Cor 5:19,21. Therefore, you will agree with me that the narrow path is man's ability to keep all the requirements of the Law of Moses in order to be blessed by God and earn eternal Life. John 1:17 – *“For the Law was given through Moses but Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”* The narrow path was given by God through Moses but Jesus came as the Way that takes away the difficulties of the narrow way! – Col 2:13-15.

In this highway the ransomed of the Lord shall return to Zion with singing and everlasting joy on their heads.

The Highway

The prophet Isaiah proclaims a highway of salvation, a highway of holiness, where whoever walks the road, although a fool, shall not go astray! - Isaiah 35:8-10. In this highway the ransomed of the Lord shall return to Zion with singing and everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away! When John the Baptist makes his dramatic appearance more than 500 years later, he seems to have come to launch a construction of the highway described by Isaiah. When Luke reports, he does not mince his words; he says that John the Baptist actually quoted Isaiah the prophet in Luke 3:4-6. The problem is, unlike Jesus, John the Baptist says that by this highway not only a few but rather **all flesh** shall see the salvation of God! Could something be badly wrong with Luke?



When the Philippian jailer asked Paul the same question the rich young ruler asked Jesus in **Acts 16:30-31**, Luke reports that Paul and Silas answered him, **“believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved, you and your household.”** This is many years after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus the Christ.

Could the narrow, difficult path that Jesus pointed out to the rich young ruler have now been made wide, valleys filled, mountains brought low, crooked places made straight and smooth? Could this be what the prophet Isaiah saw and John the Baptist eventually proclaimed in **Luke 3:4-6**? John the Baptist went further when he pointed at Jesus on the banks of the Jordan River and kind of hinted He is the cost-bearer when he said, **“...the lamb that takes away the Sin of the World.”** The Philippian jailer needs to do nothing but believe in **Jesus’ finished work of the cross** and have a joyous smooth free ride on this highway straight into eternity with God the father!

If you think I am crazy, then try the writer of Hebrews who says that Jesus made a NEW and living WAY which he **CONSECRATED** for us by His **FLESH!** - **Heb 10:19-20**. My earnest prayer is that all gospel preachers will have the

veil of Moses lifted from their minds in the reading of the scriptures. This will enable the Church, which is the body of Christ, to discover and understand the New Covenant in its fullness as the apostle Paul emphasizes in **2Cor 3:14-17**. When the veil is taken away, you get to see that Jesus is the **highway of Salvation!** There is no more striving to enter; you only believe in the **FINISHED WORK OF THE CROSS** and you are **SAVED, HEALED AND PROSPERED!** - **All in one package.**

Could the narrow, difficult path that Jesus pointed out to the rich young ruler have now been made wide, valleys filled, mountains brought low, crooked places made straight and smooth?

Those whose veils have been taken away depend entirely on what Jesus has done for them to be accepted and be blessed by God thereby entering into **God’s Rest At Christ’s Expense - G.R.A.C.E.** This is **God’s highway of salvation!**

On the other hand, you could be deceived to try and earn God’s blessings by taking it upon yourself to make God accept and bless you according to your good works - thereby preferring the **Narrow difficult path.** In fact, if you are not

a Jew by birth it was never meant for you in the first place! As for the Jews by birth, the narrow path - which is seeking to be justified by your good works - has already fulfilled its purpose which was to identify the expected Messiah, Savior of both Jews and Gentiles who is Jesus the Christ - **Galatians 3:23-26**. Jesus came and took the narrow path on your behalf.

The good news is that the narrow path is obsolete; that is, no longer valid. It has disappeared! - **Heb 8:13**. Do not gamble your eternity - take the **highway**. Remember, your eternity begins **HERE** and **NOW!**



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Characteristics of a "Grace Believer"

BY PETER YOUNGREN

There is an array of misinformation about the meaning of God's grace. What does it mean to be a 'grace-person', or a 'grace-church'? Here are some characteristics:

1 The finished work of Jesus Christ is in focus

What we need for 'life' and 'godliness' has been provided by the death and resurrection of Christ. Just like Adam and Eve had everything they needed in the Garden of Eden, so Jesus has provided all for us. Our response is to "open" our eyes to see the riches of the inheritance we have.

2 The cross divides the Old and New Covenants

In the Old, believers looked forward to that which would come, while in the New we look back at what Jesus Christ has already accomplished. Believers before the cross were involved in spiritual activities in order to receive God's blessing. New Testament believers pray, worship, give and serve because the blessing is already provided.

Just like Adam and Eve had everything they needed in the Garden of Eden, so Jesus has provided all for us.

3 A new love for the Old Testament

Jesus instructed, "all things must be fulfilled which

were written in the *Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me. And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures*". Grace preachers value the Old Testament, and preach from it much like the apostles and early Church Fathers — to discover beautiful truths about Jesus Christ. The study of the Old Testament becomes a "treasure hunt" to know Christ better.

4 A recognition of the true power of sin

Some suggest that grace makes 'light' of sin, but the opposite is true. Sin is so powerful that no effort, discipline or struggle can defeat it. Our only hope is in believing that Jesus took all sins - past, present and future - "once for all". Victory over sin happens by yielding to the indwelling Christ. The good news is that our sins cannot stop God's grace, but grace stops sin.

5 True repentance

The Greek word 'metanoia', translated repentance, means to "change one's mind after". Repentance happens when we turn our thinking from "dead

works" [Heb 6:1], — our religious efforts. Realizing the futility of our own struggle against sin we turn to Christ, who alone can save. The Book of Acts calls this 'repentance to life' [Acts 11:18].

The good news is that our sins cannot stop God's grace, but grace stops sin.

6 Faith that Jesus Christ is at work inside believers

In a grace-based church, pastors are not trying to micromanage people's lives, but trusting that God's grace is at work in each one. When we let Jesus live big in us, true holiness will result.

7 The Law of Moses was for a purpose

It was not to make us holy, but to show our inability to become holy by our own effort. By the law every mouth of self-righteousness is stopped, and it becomes clear that God's grace is our only hope.

8 The law was until Christ [Gal 3:24]

As of 2000 years ago, Christ has come, and

his coming was “the end of the law for righteousness.” Now all God’s promises have their “Yes” and their “Amen” in what Christ has done.

9 Righteousness instead of sin-consciousness

When we focus on sins, those sins get a stronger hold, but when our attention is on Christ-righteousness, sin’s power is broken. The New Covenant promises “no more consciousness of sins” [Heb 10:2], “for sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace” [Rom 6:14].

10 Resting in Christ

To rest in faith means that we have ceased from our own works [Heb 4:10], and rest in what God’s grace has provided. Our focus is on allowing Christ to express Himself through us.

11 Holiness is by grace

God’s grace teaches us to deny “ungodliness and worldly lusts”, and to “live soberly, righteously and godly in this present age” [Titus 2:11-12]. Not only holiness, but spiritual maturity, miracles, prosperity, healing and the abundant life are all by God’s grace [Gal 3:2-5].

12 Preaching Jesus, instead of lessons of morality bring real results

The preachers who lived before the

cross focused on the sins of the people. Those after the cross, like Paul, Philip and John, preached the finished work of Jesus. Morality is important, but good morals do not come from lessons of morality but from Christ’s power in us. Corinth was a particularly immoral city in ancient times. No wonder Paul preached nothing except Jesus Christ crucified [1 Cor 2:2].

Our focus is on allowing Christ to express Himself through us.

13 Paul is important

He received the message of grace from Jesus Christ, so there is never a contradiction between Paul and Jesus. Christ is the source of Paul’s revelation of the mystery, previously hidden, namely “Christ in us”. Paul taught this revelation to the other apostles, and they added nothing to what he had received [Gal 2:6]. More than looking to past revivals and movements, a grace-based Christian looks to the revelations of the New Covenant given by Jesus, Paul and the other apostles.

14 Passion to reach the world around us

A grace church is not lazy or passive but instead the grace of God causes us to “labor more abundantly” (1 Cor 15:10). Our ministry is to give the word of reconciliation to the world that “God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself” [2 Cor 5:19]. Therefore, we implore people, “be reconciled to God” [v.20].

15 A new way to live

Once the demand for Bible reading, prayer, church attendance and giving because you have to do it is over, we discover a new way to be a “Christian.” It’s not by constraint or compulsion, but because we want to.

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Questions & Answers

(From "Living The Better Covenant," by Mary Felde)

Question:

Phil 2:12 says that we must work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. How does it fit into the teaching that salvation is by grace through faith?

Answer:

Here it is important to notice that this scripture doesn't tell us to work for our own salvation, but work out our own salvation. Many other scriptures clearly say we are not saved by works but by faith (Rom 3:28, Gal 2:16, Eph 2:8), and these scriptures are still valid as we look to understand Phil. 2:12. The message of the New Covenant is clear: we cannot work for our salvation – to obtain salvation.

However, after we are saved and salvation is already in us, it shall now be worked out until it becomes visible in our soul (emotions, thoughts and will), body and lifestyle.

Salvation in us brings healing to both our wounded soul and our body, as well as transforms our lifestyle and makes our eyes shine. However, even this is not possible with self-effort and our works. That is why in the New King James Bible there is no final end at the end of Philippians 2:12. Rather, the Bible shows that the sentence is not finished, and it continues in verse 13: "for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure."

Salvation has been put in us, and now God is at work in us to make it become visible for everyone around us, even for ourselves.

After we are saved and salvation is already in us, it shall now be worked out until it becomes visible in our soul (emotions, thoughts and will), body and lifestyle.

Question:

Mark 11:26 says that if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses. Does this mean that if people have problems to forgive they are in danger of losing their salvation?

Answer:

Some people get big problems with this scripture, as the abuses they have suffered are so terrible that they say they are not able to forgive even if they want to. Does God put another burden on their shoulders, telling that He will not forgive them if they do not forgive first? The truth is that this is the pattern of the old covenant, saying that *you* need to forgive *first*. In the old covenant we had to do our part first in order for God to do His part, but in the new covenant *God has already done His part!* That is the good news!

Let's look at what the new covenant says about forgiveness:

• "And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you." (Ephesians 4:32)

• "bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do." (Colossians 3:13)

Here we can see that forgiveness is still important, but the order has changed! God has forgiven us first, and that enables us to now forgive others.

Make no mistake, forgiveness is very important, even in order for us to set ourselves free and to allow God's healing to completely restore us. And this will often be a process. You see, there are some people who have not forgiven others, but there are also many people who have not forgiven themselves for what they have done wrong! And it may eat them up on the inside. How relieving it is to know that God has already forgiven us first! As we understand more of this truth, it becomes easier for us to forgive others and even forgive ourselves.

God has forgiven us first, and that enables us to now forgive others.