

The Grace of God, Obvious and Mysterious

Matthew 24:9-14; Luke 21:13-19; and Mark 13:9-13

The focus is on the grace that is sometimes easy to see and sometimes not so easy to see. Grace is that thing we receive without deserving. Today I want us to see two. One that is mysterious and one that is obvious.

I. The Mysterious Grace of God (Mk 13:9 and Lk 21:13)

Matthew 24:9-12 “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name’s sake. ¹⁰ And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. ¹¹ And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. ¹² And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold.

As they progress through these birth pains, we see the mysterious grace of God in redemption.

Luke 21:13–19 This will be your opportunity to bear witness. ¹⁴ Settle it therefore in your minds not to meditate beforehand how to answer, ¹⁵ for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict . . . ^{16b} some of you they will put to death. ¹⁷ You will be hated by all for my name’s sake. ¹⁸ But not a hair of your head will perish. ¹⁹ By your endurance you will gain your lives.
“It shall be to you for a witness” meaning “This will be an opportunity for you to witness” (to them).

It seems like evil judgment, but it’s used of God for good. Like the persecution of Joseph by his brothers, *they meant it for evil, but God mysteriously meant it for grace*.

In one of the prison epistles Paul wrote to the Philippians: Philippians 1:12 I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel

There is an ongoing and increasing foreignness for the church while we wait for the kingdom we long for and Jesus informs us that the tribulation we may know are part of the sovereign grace that is part of the unfolding redemption of the age that includes the fullness of Gentile redemption.

II. The Obvious Grace of God (Mk 13:10 and Mt 24:14)

Matthew 24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

The “end” period (beginning in Mt 24:14) is described as a time of great gospel work. I believe that this final redeeming grace of God will be the great punctuation of God’s new covenant. It is an optimistic eschatology.

There will be gracious evangelism described in Revelation 14:6–7

“Then the end will come”

Theology Proper:

Sovereign God has revealed a cycle of divine predestination and human freedom throughout human history that has been the catalyst to spread His gospel to every people.

The Cross:

The cross is the quintessential example of obvious and mysterious grace. Christ is the firstborn of this creation. He was mocked and ridiculed, and he did not utter a word but what was given to Him of the Spirit. Through His testimony, the covenant of redemption continues to march forward to its gracious completion.