

"The meaning of life. The wasted years of life. The poor choices of life. God answers the mess of life with one word: grace". Max Lucado.

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The theme grace in the Bible within the Adventist tradition is shown through many texts and acts of kindness or favour in the Bible. Firstly, I will go over some of the many stories in the Old and New Testament where grace is shown and I will furthermore explain how the theme is shown in the Bible. Secondly, I will explain the significance of the theme of grace with Christianity. Thirdly, I will summarise this theme and explain why it is important within the SDA as a Church. Lastly, I will explain what I think the wider implications of grace and what it means to me.

The SDA Church states that God introduces grace: the first act of grace is shown to us by God in Genesis when Adam and Eve ate the apple and disobeyed the Lord's orders. They were hiding themselves because after their first sin was committed they realised they were naked. They tried covering themselves with leaves and trees. Instead of killing them God sent them out of the Garden of Eden with animal skins as clothes and promised pain when the woman would give birth and hard labour for the man to provide food for his family. Genesis 4:6-7 the story about Cain killing his brother Abel also shows God's Grace because God did not kill Cain for what he has done, but protects him with hid mark. Cain is unrepentant and this kind of sin destroys but God forgives and give his grace so Cain can be restored. Psalm 103:10 describes God as not treating us as our sins deserve or repaying us according to our sinfulness.

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Another example of God's grace is with Noah in Genesis 6:5 – 8. When God does not destroy all of creation he shows favour or grace to Noah and his family and two of each kind of created creatures. This was so that things could be rebuilt for the better and the wickedness that filled the earth before would be gone.

In the New Testament, there are many references to grace. Matthew 8 Jesus preforms a number of miracles showing favour or grace to those who looked for help from him. With the Centurion, it is his faith and the grace of God that saves the servant from death. When God sacrifices his Son Jesus in all four gospels, this is the biggest act of grace from God (John 19 / Matthew 27 / Luke 25/ Mark 13). Jesus own words from the cross "Eli, eli, lama sabbachtani", shows the pain and suffering Jesus went through so that we could be redeemed. Grace generally is associated with the salvation of people.

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The word 'grace' in biblical phasing for SDA is like forgiveness, repentance, renewal and salvation, means something as broad as describing the whole of God's activity towards man or as narrow as describing one segment of that activity. An accurate and common definition describes grace as the unmerited favour of God towards Man.

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God is seen as just and holy, merciful and gracious; slow to anger and abandoning in steadfast love and faithfulness. These qualities are seen in the person of Jesus and are supported by Gen1:1, Rev 4:11 / 1 Cor 15:28 / John 3:16 /etc. The theme of grace is important to SDA Church because without God showing grace towards us we would not know that we are meant to show it to each other. We are made in God's image when he looks at us he wants to see himself and all the qualities that he possess being reflected back.

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I think that if more people showed grace to each other there would not be as many problems in the world. If people put others before themselves and thought more about the consequences of their actions the world would be a better place to live in. I think grace helps us do this, if we are open to the grace that God gives us, even we are unmerited or non-deserving of it.

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