

DOCTRINE OF SURPASSING GRACE

September 4, 1993

I. Definition and preliminary considerations.

- A. Surpassing grace (SG3) refers to the special blessings and rewards for the believer in eternity (Ph3), which are above and beyond the normal (universal) blessings in Ph3.
- B. The nomenclature for SG3 is taken from Eph.2:7 "*That in the ages to come (Millennium and eternity) He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*"
- C. The normal blessings of heaven include:
 - 1. A resurrection body (like that of Christ, 1Jn.3:2).
 - 2. Being minus the OSN (Eph.5:27).
 - 3. The total absence of pain, crying, sorrow, tears, and death (Rev.21:4).
- D. Some believers will not receive SG3, but only the normal blessings of heaven (1Cor.3:15 "*If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss [of SG3]; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire*").
- E. Each believer will be rewarded based on his total divine good production in time (Ph2), no matter how significant or insignificant (Heb.10:35 "*Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward*"; Mt.10:42 "*And whoever in the name of a disciple gives even a cup of cold water to drink, truly I say to you he shall not lose his reward*").

II. Some synonyms for SG3 from Scripture.

- A. Gold, silver, precious stones (1Cor.3:12).
- B. Hope (Col.1:5).
- C. Treasure (Mt.6:19-21).
- D. Reward (Mt.6:1).
- E. Inheritance (1Pet.1:4).
- F. Crown/wreath/prize (2Tim.4:8; Phil.3:14).
- G. Glory (2Cor.4:17).
- H. Better resurrection (Heb.11:35).
- I. Eternal life (Gal.6:8; 1Tim.6:12).
- J. A better possession (Heb.10:24).

III. The Judgment Seat of Christ is the basis for the administration of SG3 to the Royal Family (2Cor.5:10 "*For we all must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad*"; cp. 1Cor.3:11-15; Rev.22:12).

IV. SG3 totally surpasses anything this present world has to offer (1Cor.2:9 "*but just as it is written, 'Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered into the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him'*").

V. The wreath/prize (commonly known as "crown") represents the supreme category of SG3 the Lord bestows upon members of the Royal Family.

- A. Paul relates it to finishing one's Ph2 course (2Tim.4:7,8 "*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing*"[it is only for those who have accomplished all these things!]).
- B. Everyone will not receive a crown; in fact, the prize can be forfeited (1Cor.9:24-27 "*Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? [The background for this is the Isthmus games, close to Corinth.] Run in such a way that you may win. And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath [crown], but we an imperishable. Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air. I buffet [discipline] my body and make it my*

slave [keep it in training], lest, possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified"; Col.2:18 "Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement [asceticism] and the worship of angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind"; Rev.3:11 "I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, in order that no one take your crown").

C. This crown (Greek στέφανος, stephanos; not διάδημα, diadema) is called by four names.

1. The "*crown of life*" in Jam.1:12 and Rev.2:10.
2. The "*crown of righteousness*" in 2Tim.4:7,8.
3. The "*crown of glory*" in 1Pet.5:4.
4. The "*crown of boasting/exultation*" in 1Thess.2:19.

VI. SG3 and the Millennium.

- A. Old Testament saints are rewarded at the Second Advent (Isa.40:10; Dan.12:13).
- B. The twelve apostles will rule over the twelve tribes of restored Israel (Mt.19:28).
- C. Faithful members of the Royal Family will rule over the nations (Rev.2:26 "*And the one overcoming [Ph1] and guarding My works to the end [of Ph2], I will give him authority over the nations; And he [mature believer] will shepherd them with a rod of iron as vessels of clay are smashed*").
- D. Each will have varying authority, as seen in the parable of the *minas* (Lk.19:11-27; especially vss.17,18).

VII. Life lived according to the old sin nature forfeits SG3 (Gal.6:7,8 "*Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh [ISTA] shall from the flesh reap corruption [loss of rewards], but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life*"; Gal.5:21b).

VIII. Surpassing grace reward motivated Moses to turn down the throne of Egypt (Heb.11:24-26).

IX. Giving to meet the needs of others results in SG3 (Lk.12:33,34 "*Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves purses which do not wear out, an unfailing [never decreasing] treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near, nor moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also*"; Phil.4:17 "*Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account*").

X. Communicators who prepare believers for the Lord's return are promised stewardship over the Lord's possessions (Lk.12:42-44 "*Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. Truly I say to you, that he will put him in charge of all his possessions*").

XI. Testing is a basis for SG3 (1Pet.1:6,7 "*In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ*").

A. Persecution for the faith results in SG3 (Mt.5:10-12).

B. Health testing can result in SG3 (2Cor.4:17).

C. Our present sufferings are not to be compared to Ph3 and SG3 (Rom.8:18 "*For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us*").

XII. Peter's four-fold description of SG3 (1Pet.1:4 "*an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and unfading, guarded in heaven for you*").

XIII. Surpassing joy and celebration awaits those who receive full SG3 at the Bema (1Pet.4:13 "*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*"; Jd.24 "*Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy*").

XIV. Shame awaits believers who fail to attain to full SG3 (1Jn.2:28 "*And now, little children, abide in Him [fellowship], so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming*").

- XV. Two essential ingredients necessary for believers to earn SG3 are being in fellowship and the function of GAP (Jn.15:1-8, especially vss.4,5; cp. Heb.6:7,8).
- XVI. We should be preoccupied with the accumulation of SG3 (2Cor.4:18 "*while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal*"; Col.3:3 "*Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth*").

1Cor.15:58 "*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.*"

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