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Do Not Receive God's Grace in Vain (2 Cor 6:1-2)

Consider the cultural and medicinal aspects of mold. In order to get fluffy bread to rise, you need a kind of mold called yeast. To make wine and cheese, you need the grapes and the milk to be fermented, and both of these processes require the help of mold. Even antibiotics originated from the use of mold, as well as cyclosporin, an immunosuppressant which is used in organ transplant operations.

We can see that God has not created or given us anything in vain as even mold has its benefits to us. In today's Scripture, God commands us not to receive His grace in vain (2 Cor 6:1). *Kenos*, the term used for *vain*, means "empty; empty-handed; foolish". Grace and truth have come through Jesus Christ (Jn 1:17).

God's grace helps us come to know God, have faith in God, and live holy lives. Chaos, emptiness, and darkness will be the result if we receive God's grace in vain. The earth described in Gen 1:2 was formless, empty, and dark in relation to God. Then Gen 1:28 tells us that God wanted us to subdue the earth and rule over it. The Hebrew term used for earth in both of these verses is *eretz*. But in Gen 2:7, the term *adamah* is used for the "ground" that was used to create man.

In the Old Testament, *eretz* appears about 2,400 times, whereas *adamah* appears about 200 times. So what distinguishes the two terms? *Eretz* refers to the earthly ground; the land of the nations. It is land involving the concept of politics of man. Thus, we can see in Gen 4:16 that when Cain went out from the Lord's presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden, the term *eretz* was used for the word "land" in this verse. On the other hand, *adamah* is neither a desert or wilderness, but a land that can be cultivated.

So, *eretz* refers to the earthly ground that must be subdued and ruled over through God's grace, and *adamah* is the ground that is cultivated through faith. So we can see in Gen 3:23, that Adam was banished from the Garden of Eden *to work the ground* from which he had been taken, and the word "ground" in this verse is *adamah*. Why must this ground be cultivated? It is because he had disobeyed the God's words and thus was cursed.

In Gen 3:17, it says, [To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life."] In this verse, "ground" is *adamah*. The *adamah* land had been cursed.

Therefore, when you repent on *eretz*, that ground becomes *adamah*, and on *adamah* we must continue to be faithful so that we can bear the fruit of the Tree of Life. *Adamah* is not a ground you work with a shovel and a hoe, but with faith so that the fruit of God can blossom. It is a ground you cultivate with your faith.

In Gen 2:9, it says the Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground, including the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and of course, this ground is *adamah*. Good and evil is a spiritual issue, right? Only the Spirit of God, which is the Word, can allow us to discern between good and evil.

*Adamah* can be considered the land of Adam, because it is a land that can bear the fruit of God through faith. In Gen 12:1. God said to Abram, "*Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you.*" *Eretz* is used for both "country" and "land".

Abram's country refers to Ur of the Chaldeans, and the land that he was commanded to go to was Canaan, both of which were earthly ground. However, the land of Canaan could not be subdued and ruled over if Abram did not leave his country. God gave Abram grace through His Word. To leave Ur of the Chaldeans! To go to the land He had commanded! Sure enough, Abraham did not take God's grace in vain. So he left, as the Lord had told him (Gen 12:4).

Because he left Ur, he was able to set apart from himself, his ego, and his own personal means. And at last, Abram began to walk with God (Gen 12:4, Heb 11:8). Wherever Abraham went, he set up an altar and gave his worship to God (Gen 12:7, 13:18, 22:9). That is why he even offered his son Isaac in the "*region*" of Moriah (Gen 22:2). This *region* is *eretz*. But that land became "*Jehovah-jireh*" (Gen 22:14). Because Abraham offered Isaac through faith.

*Jehovah-jireh* means *the Lord will provide*. Dearest friends who have received God's grace, if we go forward with faith, we will receive the goodness that He has stored up for us (Ps 31:19). So, be strong until the very end and overcome all things. There is a trial that God has prepared for us. It is to help us grow and prepare for eternity with Him (1 Pet 4:12). Within that trial we will have people insult us, persecute us, and falsely say all kinds of evil against us (2 Tim 3:12, Mt 5:11-12).

Beloved friends, people may walk as phantoms and bustle about in vain because his thoughts are futile. (Ps 39:6, 94:11). However, from the moment you do it by faith, everything will be graceful. Faith, obedience, and action is *the way* not to receive God's grace in vain! Dt 32:47 teaches that our action upon God's Word is not in vain because He is our life. As people who have not received God's grace in vain, let us put the Word first and give our God-centered worship every time!