

"I AM WHAT I AM"

INTRODUCTION

I wonder how many of you remember the old comic book and cartoon character named "Popeye", who often said, "I yam what I yam and that's all I yam." Well, in the scripture, one writer said something similar, "I am what I am". This writer was the apostle Paul, who used these words in 1 Cor. 15:10. Let's read the verse. Did you notice that he used the word "grace" twice in this passage?

In the Bible, God and Jesus identified themselves as "I AM", signifying their eternal nature, for there never was a time they did not exist. (Explain Gen. 28:13; Exo. 3:6, 14; Matt. 22:32 and John 8:51-58).

Now, in the New Testament we find the apostle Paul saying, "I am what I am". Read 1 Cor. 15:9-10. At this time we are going to consider the LIFE of the apostle Paul relative to the "grace" of God, and apply it to US who are also recipients of God's grace. We are not to follow Paul in any particular way, except in the way he followed the Lord. He once said, "Be ye followers of me as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1).

DISCUSSION

I. 1st, let's look at Paul's PAST—before he was saved by grace.

A. Paul could look back at a time he would have boasted of what he was.

1. He could have said, "**I am** the one who consented to the death of Stephen, the first martyr for Christ. Cf Acts 7:54-58
2. He could have said, "**I am** the one who made havoc of the church in it's early days." Acts 8:1-4; Gal. 1:23
3. He could have said, "**I am** one who was sincere in opposing Christ." Acts 26:9-11

B. Paul is a good representation of anyone who bitterly opposes Christ and His church now.

II. 2nd, let's look at the PRESENT state of Paul's life which is preserved for us.

A. Paul, (and all who **are** saved) are SAVED by the "grace" of God. Rom. 3:24; Eph. 2:8-9

B. After Paul was saved, he wrote, "**I am** the chief of sinners." 1 Tim. 1:12-15

1. His life became a "**pattern**" of how others can benefit by God's grace. 1 Tim. 1:16
2. Paul's life shows **how** all can benefit by God's grace, even when things don't go to suit us. 2 Cor. 12:1-10

III. 3rd, let's look at OURSELVES and God's GRACE.

A. We are to **walk** in God's grace in always obeying God. Cf Gen. 6:(1-5) 8, (9-21) 22

1. In our walk, we are to **grow** in God's grace. Acts 20:32; 2 Pet. 3:18
2. In our walk, we are to **continue** in God's grace. Acts 13:43; cf Gal. 5:4
3. In our walk, we are to **conduct** in accordance with God's grace that reveals to us HOW to do this. Tit. 2:11-13

B. Finally, we are to be **heirs** of God's grace by receiving eternal life in heaven when this troublesome life is over because we ARE God's "children." Gal. 3:26-29; Rom. 8:17-18; 1 Pet. 1:13; 3:7

CONCLUSION

I. The word "grace" (simply meaning "favor") is found numerous times in the Bible.

A. Our lesson today merely touches the "hem of the garment" of God's grace.

B. We need to read more of God's grace as we meditate on His word from day to day.

II. Won't **you** accept God's grace or favor today, by becoming a Christian, or returning TO the grace of God, if you have fallen from it?

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