



When we first looked into this passage, we discovered that Jesus truly is the “Desire of All Nations.” Rome itself was looking for a world leader—a deliverer. Through His death, burial, and resurrection, Jesus presently leads His Church in the Victory Parade. He has conquered the great enemies of man’s soul: sin, Satan, death, and hell. That’s why Paul wrote, “Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ” (2 Cor. 2:14a).

The Greeks were looking for the ultimate philosopher. Regarding wisdom, Jesus is the very wisdom of God personified: “But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption” (1 Cor. 1:30).

Israel of course was looking for the Messiah. Although He came to His own (the Jews), and His own did not receive Him and rejected Him, He is still the Messiah—chosen by God and precious (1 Pet. 2:4b). So that, “As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name” (Jhn. 1:12).

*Just as Jesus was the Desire of All Nations 2,000 years ago,
He remains the Desire of All Nations today.*

Because of the Assyrian captivity of Israel in 722 B.C., and the Babylonian captivity of Judah in 606 B.C., *the hope of a Messiah had become known to the nations.* Although it was involuntary on their part to go to the nations, *God used their captivity as a means of proclaiming the message of the one true God and the promise of the coming Messiah.* God will get His message out some way! How do you suppose the Magi from the east, (Persia, present-day Iran), heard about a coming King? Do you suppose Daniel was among those who told their forefathers of the coming King? (Daniel became chief administrator over all the wise men of Babylon; Dan. 2:48).

All you have to do is read the OT prophets, and you will discover how God not only shook the nations before the coming of Christ, but also actually used the nations and even their kings to accomplish His will: the Assyrian Empire, Babylonian Empire, Medo-Persian Empire, Greek Empire, and even the Roman Empire. It’s also interesting to note that before Christ’s second coming to earth, there will be an even greater restlessness among the nations, as never before. Although we already see these events in the world, there will come a time when they will increase and intensify. These events will be unparalleled and unprecedented:

“And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. (Matt. 24:6, 7)

Seven times in the Book of Revelation, we read of a “great earthquake.” These quakes will be more powerful and devastating than any previous ones ever known to man. By the way, you don’t have to have a degree in Theology to understand that in the Scriptures, God frequently uses earthquakes as a sign of judgment.

The New Testament in Hebrews 12:18-29, sheds more light on our passage. The writer draws from Haggai 2:5-6, as well as Exodus 19. When God gave the law to Israel, because it was an expression of His holy nature, it naturally exposed the utter sinfulness of man. Although the covenant of the law is holy and just and good, man is sinful. So not only are we sinners, but we also face the just demands of holy God (Rom. 5:20). The law condemns the sinner and pronounces judgment. No

matter how hard we may try, we always fall short of God's divine standard (Rom. 3:23). James writes: "For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all" (Jas. 2:10).

When God gave the Mosaic Covenant, He never intended for it to be a means of salvation. Its purpose was to bring us to the end of ourselves and to see that it is absolutely impossible for us to do anything to merit God's love, grace, mercy, and forgiveness. Its purpose is to show us that we don't have even a shred of righteousness in-and-of ourselves and that our "righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isa. 64:6). Just as a mirror reveals any defects or dirt on our face, the law reveals the dirt and defects of our sin. But you don't use the mirror to wash your face! The law was never intended to cleanse man's sin or remove his guilt. It was never intended to give new life. The blood of bulls and goats could never take away sin.

Its intent was to point us to, and to bring us to Christ. Its purpose was to cause us to long for and cry out for a Savior—a Redeemer. So we come to Christ, particularly to His crucifixion. In fact, we come to the final moments of His crucifixion and read His final words:

And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. Then behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; [Luke wrote that it was torn in the middle] and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many. (Matt. 27:50-53)

Was this earthquake a sign of divine judgment? It was in Christ that God judged all the sins of all humanity—past, present, and future. He "bore our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Pet. 2:24). Since the judgment upon sin is death, and Jesus bore our sin, then Jesus bore our judgment by dying our death. "[He was] made to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21; KJV).

Because God's holiness has been upheld and His justice fully satisfied through Christ's death, God now freely offers His grace. It is now through faith in Christ and by His grace, that our sins can be forgiven, the guilt removed; and we have total and complete access with confidence to enter the Holy of holies, (i.e., behind the veil) by His blood (Heb. 10:19; 6:19-20; 5:16). That's why Paul wrote: "For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. 2:5-6).

Before considering the contrasts of Law and Grace, please make sure to read the following scriptures: Gal. 3:19-4:7; 21-31; 2 Cor. 3; Heb. 12:18-29. Please keep in mind law and grace do not contradict each other. Nor does grace compromise God's holiness. Please remember, because God's holiness has been upheld and His justice fully satisfied through Christ's death, God now freely offers His grace.

Law (Mt. Sinai)

Condemns
Sentences to hell
Brings bondage
Closed to all (Unable to approach God)
Says, "Stay away"
We are slaves
No inheritance
Kills
Curses

Grace (Mt. Zion)

Forgives
Promises a home in heaven
Purchases freedom
Open to all (Access to His very Throne Room)
Says, "Come near"
We are sons
Heirs
Makes alive
Redeems from that curse

Utterly condemns the best man
Stones an adulteress
Says, "Do"
Says, "Try"
Says, "Behave"
Displays God's hatred of sin
Earthly
Was glorious
Glory fades
Tablets of stone
The sheep dies for the shepherd
Refusal to obey brings judgment

Freely justifies the worst man
Says, "Neither do I condemn thee"
Says, "Done"
Says, "Trust"
Says, "Believe"
Displays God's love for the sinner
Heavenly
Much more glorious (2 Cor. 3)
Glory increases (2 Cor. 3)
Tablets of the heart (2 Cor. 3)
The Shepherd dies for the sheep
Refusal to obey brings greater judgment

Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? (Heb. 10:28-29)

Just as other OT books, portions of Haggai's writings have a present fulfillment *and* a prophetic fulfillment. Just as Jesus was *The Desire of All Nations* 2,000 years ago, He is still the *Desire of All Nations* today. Only Jesus can fill the void and vacuum in the human soul. The things of this old world are only temporary, ever-changing, and unstable. In fact, there will come a day when all these things will melt away with fervent heat. But the Kingdom of God is eternal, unchangeable, and immovable!

Just as the shaking of the nations occurred at the time of Haggai and at the time of Christ's first coming, there continues to be a shaking of the nations until Jesus' final return to earth. And then,

The kingdoms of this world [will] become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever! (Rev. 11:15)
[And the Church] will reign with Christ for a thousand years. (Rev. 20:4)