

Highlights

- **2026 Grace Evangelical Society Conference**

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Volume 18 Number 3
July-September 2026

The Kerugma

MESSAGE II

LOOK AT IT THIS WAY

Possessing the Kingdom – Part 3

By Zane C. Hodges

(originally printed in *The Kerugma Message* – Nov-Dec 1991)

Many New Testament texts are misunderstood because they refer to the truth that faithful believers will co-reign with Christ in His Kingdom. Among other places, this truth is clearly stated in such passages as 2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 2:26, 27 and 3:21. It is elaborately dealt with in the famous parable about the minas (or pounds) in Luke 19:11-27. In the last issue of *The Kerugma Message*, we considered Matthew 5:5. The series continues in this issue with Matthew 25:34-36.

“Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.’” — Matthew 25:34-36

The scene which surrounds the words quoted above is the inauguration of the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The first phase of that kingdom, the

Millennial Kingdom, is about to begin (see Mt 25:31).

The occasion which Jesus is describing (prophetically) is the event we often call the Judgment of the Sheep and Goats. It should not be confused with the Great White Throne Judgment, which takes place a thousand years later and involves the unsaved dead (see Rev 20:11-15).

Neither should it be confused with the Judgment Seat of Christ, where only the saved appear (1 Cor 3:11-15; 2 Cor 5:9, 10). Uniquely, the judgment of Matthew 25:31-46 is attended by both the saved and lost of “all the nations” (25:32 with vv. 41, 46). There is no mention of resurrection at all nor any mention of non-Gentiles (that is, Jews) who undergo the Judge’s examination.

Our Lord does mention “My brethren” (v. 40) and it is natural to conclude that these are Jews. Thus, the King is identifying Himself racially with God’s people of Israel, and the judgment pertains to all members of other races. Since the King is just now ascending the throne of His father David (Luke 1:32), this racial identification is deliberate and meaningful. Thus, this is a judgment of Gentiles by the King of the Jews (see Mt 2:2).

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Thank you, and God bless.

Mike Lii

President of Zane Hodges Library

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In the light of Matthew 12:46-50, where Jesus identifies His true brothers and sisters as “whoever does the will of My Father in heaven,” we must think here only of Jews obedient to Him during the Great Tribulation that precedes this scene. In fact, no other kind of Jew will survive the Tribulation (see Amos 9:9-12). But since it is His “brethren” (Mt 28:10), whom He summons to Galilee, and to whom He gives the Great Commission (28:18-20), it seems likely that the phrase “My brethren” has special reference to a special group of Jews.

This group, I suggest, are the Jewish evangelists who will carry the Gospel message worldwide during the final 3 1/2 years of the Tribulation. In Revelation, they are described as “the rest [=remnant] of her [=Israel’s] offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev 12:17). It is they who fulfill the prophecy of Matthew 25:14 that “this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then will the end come.”

Clearly, these Jewish preachers of the Tribulation fully fit the expression “My brethren” in Matthew 25:40, even if it does not refer exclusively to them. But what the King says about the services rendered to His brethren fits almost uniquely the experiences the preachers will have as they travel worldwide to preach in the King’s name.

We know that the bulk of believers in Israel during the Tribulation will go into hiding in the Judean wilderness (see Rev. 12:6 and 13-17). There, God will protect them from the efforts of Satan, through his agent the Beast, to

find and destroy them. Meanwhile “the remnant” of Israel’s seed will brave worldwide opposition in order to make Christ known.

Those days will certainly be the toughest times in all of human history to preach the Gospel. A new world government is in place which is openly

hostile to Christianity (Rev 13:5-8). A new religion has been introduced which demands universal adherence (Rev 13:11-15). The claims of this new religion will be

enforced by both political and economic means. There may well be at this time a cashless society in which all economic participation depends on the bearing of a personal identification number printed (perhaps invisibly) on the forehead or on the right hand or wrist (Rev 13:16, 17). This number, which will include the digits 666, will probably be the means by which high-tech scanners determine what bank account is to be credited or debited for every financial transaction.

In this highly charged and strictly regulated environment, a traveling evangelist will face enormous difficulties in sustaining himself. With no cash that can be carried from place to place, such servants of Christ will have no means of purchasing the basic necessities of life. Like all believers in that day, they will reject the number of the Beast (see Rev 14:9-11) and will thus be effectively shut out of the commercial system.

Among Christians in Gentile lands there will probably be a virtual return to the communal form of living which characterized the early Christian Church in Jerusalem (Acts 2:44, 45). Mutual interdependence will be essential. Those who farm will no doubt supply food, those who sew or weave will make or repair clothing, and

so on. The Christian populace among the Gentiles will be sizable according to Revelation 7:9, 14. But it is also likely to be desperately poor, living often on a day-to-day basis from hand to mouth. That they will often hunger and often live out-of-doors is hinted at in Revelation 7:16.

Nevertheless, the God who feeds the birds and clothes the lilies will supply their needs (Mt 6:25-34).

Yet, when a traveling Jewish evangelist reaches a certain locale, his very presence will constitute an extra burden on the already-limited resources of local believers. The temptation to give him nothing is likely to be strong. Especially is this likely to be so because the evangelist will be a visible target for political persecution. Not infrequently, such preachers will wind up in jail. Not a few, we learn, will be martyred (Rev 6:9; 12:11, 12; 20:4). Having failed to stamp out the fleeing body of Jewish believers who withdraw to the Judean wilderness, Satan will turn his hatred toward these preachers (Rev 12:13-17).

Thus, under Satanic inspiration, the new world government evidently will exert the fullest pressure to both arrest and execute these enemies of “the new world order”. It is in this environment that Gentile believers will confront the challenge of supporting the Jewish preachers, their Lord’s “brethren.” Should they assist these men when their own resources are so meager? Should they dare to be identified with these religious “outlaws”? Would they not be endangering other believers by doing so? And if one of them falls sick, or if they are even in prison, would it be foolhardy to try and help or visit them?

Clearly, this pressing situation, which is unique to the end times, will confront potential heirs of God’s Kingdom with a choice that deeply tests their commitment to Christ.

(The discussion of Matthew 25:31-46 will continue in the next issue of *The Kerugma Message*.)

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Zane Hodges Library

A Focused Free Grace Ministry

By Mike Lii

Zane Hodges Library exists to promote the teachings of Zane C. Hodges and other like-minded Bible teachers who hold to Focused Free Grace theology. This naturally, leads to the question: What is Focused Free Grace theology? To answer that question, let's deal first with the question: What is Free Grace Theology?

The term *Free Grace*, has come to be commonly understood as standing for the following truths:

1. Free Grace rejects the evangelistic messages of both Lordship Salvation (e.g., a commitment to obey Jesus as Master is necessary for salvation) and Works Salvation (e.g., a person must do good works [such as be baptized] in order to be saved) messages.
2. Free Grace affirms eternal security (once saved always saved).
3. Free Grace affirms the statement, "Faith Alone in Christ Alone."

While there is a degree of unity among Free Grace adherents due to their common opposition to Lordship Salvation and Works Salvation, there are differences over (1) the meaning of *faith* and *belief* and (2) the essential content of the *Gospel Message* or the *Saving Message of Jesus*.

1. Focused Free Grace theology understands that to *believe in* or *have faith/belief* in an idea is to be persuaded and convinced that the idea is true. The words *believe*, *faith* and *belief* do not include an act of the will (e.g. making a decision). Focused Free Grace recognizes that one cannot decide to believe that an idea is true.

2. An essential element of the Saving Message or the Gospel Message that results in eternal life, is Jesus' promise of everlasting life to all who believe in Him. In other words, the Saving Message must include believing in Jesus for everlasting life, a life that is secure forever and can never be lost.

Any Free Grace theology that omits any one of these distinctives is Flexible Free Grace theology. For example, if one's definition of *believe* includes making a decision, that is not Focused Free Grace, but Flexible Free Grace. Likewise, if eternal security is a doctrine for discipleship instead of for salvation, or if one can be saved by believing in Jesus for something less than an eternally secure salvation (e.g. a probationary or conditional salvation), that theology is not Focused Free Grace, but Flexible Free Grace.

Flexible Free Grace theology says that the essential content of the Saving Message need not focus on Jesus' promise of everlasting life. Therefore, a person may or may not have assurance of everlasting life when they believe in Jesus. Their belief in some other truth about Jesus results in their having everlasting life without necessarily knowing *for sure* that they have it. Without the element of assurance based on belief in Jesus' promise of everlasting life to those who believe in Him, Lordship and Works Salvation messages, may be Saving Messages, as Lordship and Works Salvation messages, teach many truths about Jesus (e.g., that Jesus died for sins and rose again), but omit the one most significant truth: that one receives everlasting life only

by specifically believing in Jesus' promise of everlasting life.

These two distinctives of Focused Free Grace can be seen in Jesus' interaction with Martha after the death of her brother Lazarus.

"I am the Resurrection and the Life," Jesus said to her. "He who believes in Me, even if he dies, will live. And everyone who lives and believes in Me will never ever die, even to eternity. Do you believe this?" – John 11:25-26 (FMT)

Notice that, Jesus states a number of facts about Himself, then concludes those statements with a question: "Do you believe this?" Another way of stating this question is: "Do you agree these statements are true?" or, "Are you convinced these statements are true?" Jesus' question, "Do you believe this?" doesn't make sense when rephrased as a decision: "Do you decide this?" or even, "Do you decide that this is true?" The one who hears these statements believes these statements to be either true or not true. If he does not understand, then he does not believe these statements to be true; one cannot believe what one does not understand. Either one believes or does not believe that Donald J. Trump is the president of the United States. If one doesn't believe Trump is the U.S. president, one cannot *decide* to believe it. At best, one can decide to be open to examining the evidence of whether Donald Trump is the U.S. president.

In addition, Jesus' statements contain the essential truth of the Saving Message: that the one who believes in Jesus for everlasting life has a life that is guaranteed and secure forever. Jesus states that the one who believes in Him, "...even if he dies, will live" and "...will never ever die". The believer in Jesus is guaranteed to be resurrected. There are no conditions placed on this guarantee, other than to believe in Him. The believer in Him will

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“never ever” die. These statements show that the believer in Jesus is “eternally secure”, and are part of the Saving Truth to be believed. Everlasting life is not just a side effect result of belief. The everlasting life that is promised to believers in Jesus, is part of the essential focus of what one believes in Jesus for.

Focused Free Grace builds on the truths of Free Grace by clarifying that to *believe* is to be convinced of the truth, and that the bullseye of the Saving Message of Jesus is to believe in Him for everlasting life. These are not secondary or minor clarifications, but truths that go to the heart of the question: “What must I do to be saved?”

Projects of the
Zane Hodges Library

- Assisting in the production of [*The Gospel of John in The Faithful Majority Translation of the New Testament*](#) by John Niemelä of Message of Life Ministries.
- Social Media Presence on Facebook and TikTok.
- If you know of Focused Free Grace foreign language readers, who would be interested in editing translations of Zane’s works, please email info@zanehodges.org.
- Videos with dynamic captioning are now available for:
[*Baptism and Salvation in Acts*](#)
[*What Do We Mean by Propitiation?*](#)
[*The Moralistic Wrath-Dodger Rom 2*](#)
[*Once Again James 2*](#)
[*Preparation for Comfort Isa 40:1-5*](#)
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 Please visit Zane Hodges Library [YouTube channel](#).
- English books:
[*How to Be the Spouse and Parent*](#)
[*God Wants You to Be*](#)
[*Dead Faith and More:*](#)
[*What Are They?*](#)

2026 Grace Evangelical Society National Conference

May 18-21, 2026, Mike and Letitia Lii attended the 2026 Grace Evangelical Society (GES) National Conference held at Camp Copass in Denton, Texas. Zane Hodges Library (ZHL) board members Bob and Sherry Bryant and Paul Carpenter were also in attendance.

GES graciously provided ZHL a book table where we made available for purchase many of the books that we have worked on from October 2025 to April 2026.

We also gave away tracts donated by Cypress Valley Bible Church, as well as bottles of physical water given to anyone attempting to answer the question. “What does Zane think the living water in John 4:10 is?” Choices are: (A) Physical water [H2O]; (B) the Holy Spirit; (C) Jesus is the Christ; or (D) Eternal life. (Find the answer below.)

Mike spoke on “[Hitting the Bullseye of the Saving Message Brings Assurance of Everlasting Life](#)”. Mike brought up the point that John 3:16 and other evangelistic verses in the Gospel of John are not only needed for evangelism but also for those who have lost assurance of everlasting life. Present assurance should always be dependent on Jesus’ promises in God’s Word, rather than on our memories or past actions.

Bob Bryant spoke on “[The Difference Between Eternal Security and Assurance of Salvation](#)”.

It was a wonderful time of fellowship for us seeing old friends and making new friends.

Answer: (C) Jesus is the Christ, (more in Chapter 6 of [Dead Faith, Saving Faith, God’s Will and More](#)).

