

If Grace is True ... A New Book

What a pleasant surprise! A young friend stopped by my home yesterday with a gift. "If Grace Is True, Why God Will Save Every Person" is a brand new book by Philip Gulley and James Mulholland, published by HarperSanFrancisco.

Gulley and Mulholland have both enjoyed some level of success with previous books they have each written, and both are currently Quaker ministers. Their previous successes should help to give exposure to this new literary effort, which very opening proclaims God's plan to save all of mankind.

I was somewhat disappointed to read that the authors do not believe that the Bible is the precise word of God. As a matter of fact, they allege that one who believes the Bible is comprised of the "infallible words of God" cannot believe God will save everyone, because "there are too many verses about judgment, hell, and the eternal punishment of the wicked to make such optimism reasonable." (page 49) I strongly disagree! I came to my firm belief that God will save all **because** the Word of God is infallible, and when properly translated and studied this conclusion is very clearly the plan of God.

Still, the book is filled with Bible quotations that the authors contend are revealing God's plan to save all. A few quotations from the book:

"If grace is true, it is true for everyone." (page 18)

When referring to John 12:32 ("When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men to myself") the authors comment, "I often wonder how I missed this ultimate triumph of grace." (page 21)

"I no longer believe God's grace is limited to the Christian. I don't believe God's grace is limited at all." (page 25)

Earlier in their lives, the authors believed the teachings about an eternal hell because they were taught these things from the Bible. They comment, "Only as an adult did I realize how inconsistent this belief was with the God I was coming to know." (page 28)

"Since I punish my children for their misbehaviors, I can hardly deny God's right to correct his. My trouble is with eternal punishment. No loving parent would send their child to their room forever." (page 81)

“I am unable to see how the eternal punishment of anyone could bring glory to God.” (page 82)

“Working for justice means eliminating the causes of pain, not increasing them.” (page 83)

“Human freedom was the linchpin of my (former) theology. We were saved not by grace, but by our decision to accept God’s grace.” (page 103)

“Human resistance is real and persistent, but God’s grace will ultimately wear down every obstacle.” (page 122)

“I’m convinced God’s eternal love will overcome even the hardest heart. God’s infinite patience will exhaust every remnant of rebellion. God’s persistent grace will allow God to outlast the resistance of even his most rebellious child. God’s grace will never end.” (page 171)

“The triumph of grace is not complete. It cannot be complete until every last person has been redeemed. Some are experiencing redemption in this life. Some will experience it after their death. But grace will triumph.” (page 196)

The book contains an appendix with “Universalist Themes and Verses in Scripture” and “A Short History of Universalism” containing quotes from a number of early “Church Fathers.”

This book by Gulley and Mulholland should get some exposure, and will enlighten some for the very first time of the **possibility** that God will ultimately save all. I do not agree with many points of their theology, particularly their view of Scripture and their failure to examine passages in context (to “correctly divide” the Word of God). But we are not required to agree on all points, and I’m sure the entire Body of Christ will never be in total agreement on all points.

I am excited that our brothers Gulley and Mulholland have taken the risk to write this book, knowing their views are not popular within Christian circles.

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- Bob Evely -