

# Marv's Final Message Part 1

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] This is going to be the first of a series of eight messages that we are going to try and treat and keep somewhat together and we are bringing them as for what I hope will be an ongoing reminder to the Grace Bible Church as to what we are about and what we are not about in connection with our meeting here on a weekly basis and opening the scriptures and trying to determine what God has to say to us so that we can know what to do as a result of it. So this will be the first of our final eight messages that we will be delivering from this pulpit the Lord willing and I want to begin with what has been introduced in your bulletin as our most recent good news and our most recent good news has been around for 2,000 years and has still not really caught on and by caught on I mean it has not swept across humanity with its blessings and benefits but has instead been subjected to a great deal of opposition and rejection so that only a small number of the world's population has actually been able to log in to this latest good news and one of the reasons for that and I'll be the first to admit it's a very complex kind of thing but one of the reasons for that is because there is an intelligent determined opposer to all of this good news that we have to share and he is the personification of evil itself it is referred to as Satan or the devil or the adversary or the opposer whatever you wish to call him but all the way through creation and I'm talking about creation of angels as well as creation of the heavens and the earth because so far as we know the angelic creation preceded all of that there has been a conflict that has developed that we call the angelic conflict and it is a conflict that is taking place that began to take place between the creator and the creature and for lack of a better term and I know this does not begin to describe it but I want to use this as a vehicle perhaps of trying to reveal in the simplest way possible what it is that's taking place we are all familiar with the game of chess I really don't know how to play it very well and I'm sure I wouldn't be very good at it even if I practice for a while but I do know this that the whole game of chess chess is made up on the basis of moves everyone starts out from the same place on the chess board and then somebody makes the first move and then the other partner makes their first move and as the game goes on the moves are counter one to another the idea of course is to win the game by defeating the other person completely and that has to be done by making the right move at the right time and it is a move and a counter move and this one moves here so this one moves there and this one moves here so this one moves there at the block kind of like checkers only a little more refined and the whole idea of course is that there is just one victor standing and the others is vanquished that is in some simple form

precisely what is taking place in the universe today and you need to understand that God is making his moves and Satan makes a counter move then God makes a move to counter Satan's counter move then Satan makes a move to counter that the whole idea of course is to win the game now we know who the winner is going to be because we've read the rest of the story and the revelation makes it quite clear so the question then becomes one of this well doesn't Satan know how to read can't he read revelation 19 and 20 can't he see what his end is oh I'm sure not only that but he can probably read it in every translation and language that's been made well why then doesn't he just throw in the towel and give up and say my goose is cooked why should why should I continue this struggle anymore what's to keep him from doing that his ego his ego

Satan's ego is the only ego that is greater than yours and greater than mine he still thinks he has a shot he still thinks he can pull it off yes but the scriptures say no matter when you have a supercharged ego the size of the adversary he thinks he can find a way and still pull it off we know better but he doesn't so what I want to do is take you way back to the very beginning of this whole thing starting with some I guess we would just call them some propositions that I want you to consider before we really get into this this greatest news thing that we're talking about and I have broken this down in such a way that I trust will be accessible to children

I really want the children to get this and a big reason that I really want the children to get it is because I would like to think if I can get this to the place of where the children can get it there's hope for the adults that's my game plan that's what I'm aiming for so with that in mind let me begin and this is as simple a beginning as I know how to make so bear with me and try to try to refrain from yawning if you can okay all right here we go humans humans are endowed or given a thing called volition the word volition is related to another word called voluntary with our will which is another word for volition a will with our will we make decisions they are responsible for determining outcomes because every decision we make is a cause and a cause results in an effect there are no effects without a cause in order for there to be an effect there has to be a causer somebody with a will or a volition and the result outcomes are the results of decisions made the results may be positive or good or negative and bad we humans are endowed or gifted with the ability to make choices they may be responsible choices or they may be irresponsible choices the choices we make become the basis for evaluating our actions and we call this accountability liability because we are all registering an account it's just like a ledger with the liabilities on one side and assets on another side and the good things we call the assets or the things that are for us we log on one side the liabilities are the things that we owe or the negative things and we put those on another side and that's called an accounting or an accountable sheet our lives is an occasion for accountability and we are all charged with that responsibility for accountability we are accountable for the things we say and the things we do because it was with our will that we do them and say them we do not have to do the things we do and we do not have to say the things we say we do so because we choose to that's the choice that's the accountability that's what volition is all about and the will our words and our deeds become the basis for our being evaluated and for approval or disapproval and it begins with our parents begins with mom and dad and when we start out this thing called life we soon reach an age where even though we have a will it is not

as obvious as it becomes a little later on maybe around maybe around two I guess they don't call it the terrible twos or nothing that's when that's when most of us discover we have a will we can tell mom I don't want to eat that I don't want to do that I don't want to be picked up I don't want to be there I don't want and we have ways of responding to that with the will or the volition we have it's a curious wonderful thing and it is it is a what shall I say it is a it is the ultimate of that which one day you will give an account to God for what you do and how you exercise that will and the decisions and the choices that you make and this is why the Bible places such a tremendous importance upon child training and rearing of children and the care and nurturing of children is so that parents who supposedly have learned something about exercising their will in the right way to communicate their values and their understanding to their children and the next generation and we do this because we want to fortify and protect and equip our children for the life that is ahead so that they will be able to make responsible decisions rather than irresponsible decisions when the time comes and the time will come very shortly when they're going to be charged with making a responsibility so on the basis of our deeds we are declared justified or unjustified we are seen to be right in what we did or wrong in what we did and sometimes that involves all kinds of other consequences such as go sit in a corner or spanking or withdrawal of privileges or whatever and all of those things are the consequences of wrong decisions or negative decisions for which there is a payment to be made and that can take several different forms being right in what we did wins approval and a smile from mom and dad and being wrong and what we did is disapproval and it creates frowny faces all over the place and maybe go to your room type thing or even worse than that go to the woodshed and I'll meet you there so thus we are it works this way beginning with our parents and it concludes with God and even government gets a hand in it because government instituted by people who have wills and volitions determine what is supposed to be in the best interest for the public out there and they make rules and regulations and they hold the public accountable for how they respond to the rules and regulations and there is a reward if the response is right and there is punishment if it is wrong and it may be a fine or 30 days in jail or whatever and however that works but that thing continues right on and it is the whole basis for having an orderly society so that we can function one with another thus we are from earliest childhood and I want you to understand this because it's really important we are locked in to the

[ 14 : 25 ] merit system the name of the game is this do good good results do bad bad results it's called meritocracy just a fancy word for meaning you get rewarded on the basis of the right things you do on the basis of merit merit and you merit something when I was a specialist in demerits when I was in school and merits was for good behavior and wise man that'll cost you two demerits

and that meant there were two check marks against me that were negative and all my concern was then is that the word of that did not get home to mom and dad because if it did it's going to be more consequences so anyway a demerit is a takeaway that means that you're wrong but a merit is you do good and you get good results this is the way the world works and as

I've said we get locked into this but I want to prepare you for something that is to come because in the thing that matters most that's not the way God works at all for my ways are not your ways saith the Lord as the heavens are higher than the earth so are my ways higher than your and my thoughts than your thoughts so God has a completely different agenda a different game plan other than meritocracy and that is our latest good news that we intend to share with you thus we are from earliest childhood locked into the merit system meritocracy where we are trying to receive merits rather than demerits and here's the bad news all of the human race has failed with the operation of the merit system did you get that the whole human race has failed flunked on the merit system nobody has measured up we all fall short sin and self centeredness would not allow us to make the decisions that win approval causing us to earn punishment rather than reward and that's the sentence that the whole human race is under because of our sin it is systemic to all of humanity and about 2,000 years ago that all changed dramatically changed and the reason it changed was because it was not one of us but it was one who became one of us effected the change and he did so in his own person and it was

God the creator who had such mercy and such love and such care for his miserable creation that sadly flunked the merit system that he decided to do something about it himself and he underwent what you and I deserve so you would not have to this is I know it sounds otherworldly because it is it is otherworldly and even though this was announced 2000 years ago and while you're turning to Acts chapter 13 we will see the beginning of it the world has still not really caught on and we still we still insist on operating on the merit system which is failed failed failed failed but that doesn't keep us from bumping our head on the same old rock by every generation that comes along and in Acts chapter 13 we're going to see the therefore and how that is going to change everything this is shortly after well it isn't shortly really it's actually it's about 15 years it's about 15 years after the conversion of Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus and he went through a process of schooling from the Lord and things that he'd learned from the apostles as well that gave him a message that was so different and so wild and so unique that upon the hearing of the message people are wont to not believe it and one reason is because it sounds too good to be true so we just automatically reject it and operating on the merit system will almost automatically cause people to reject this new thing and this new thing is called the gospel it's called the good news there isn't anything that man needs more than this good news but there isn't anything that he is more prone to reject than the good news because first of all it sounds too good to be true and secondly he is so ego centered that he thinks thank you but no thank you

I can make it on my own I can do quite well I know I'm not the worst person I know I'm not the best person don't get me wrong I'm not saying I'm perfect I just think I've got a good chance as anybody and about 15 years after Paul's conversion God selects him and the people there at the church at Antioch lay hands on him and Barnabas to take this incredible new message throughout the world and they begin on what is called missionary journey number one and in Acts chapter 13 they have arrived at a town that is called Antioch it's in Pisidia not to be confused with the Antioch near Damascus from which they originally went and when he stands there in verse 14 of [ 21 : 50 ] Acts chapter 13 going on from Perga they arrive at Pisidian Antioch and on the Sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down this is a Jewish synagogue the only people in it are Jews or God fearers and God fearers are Gentiles who embrace the concept that there is but one true God and that is the God of Israel and they kind of join with the Jews in their worship in the synagogue even though they were not bona fide Jews but they were still welcome and they recognized the God of Israel as being the one true God and after reading in the law and the prophets the synagogue officials these are the people the officials at the synagogue they sent to Paul and Barnabas because they're new guys they just got in town never seen them before and they asked them if you have any word of exhortation for the people say it this was a customary thing that they extended to visitors who were coming from another town and some good news to share with the congregation feel free the floor is yours so

Paul stands up and he delivers the message that goes all the way back to the very earliest beginnings of Israel and the founding of the nation and what God has done to bring them to the

place of where they are now a special chosen unique people of God called the Israelites the Jews the people who are and this by the way these people constitute the key nation and the key individual of that nation who will be Yeshua Hamashiach Jesus the Messiah to effect the change that he is going to bring about for the world Israel as a nation is a change agent they are an international change agent and they have always occupied a hot spot and by the way Israel has never gotten out of the hot spot they're in a hot spot right now and Iran is already preparing the demise for Israel and their motto is death to Israel and we're going to wipe them off the face of the earth and all of this so Israel is the key and the key of the key is Jesus the Messiah of Israel and he is the main player of course so he goes through this whole history of Israel here as he delivers this message and all of these Jews sitting around there on these benches in the synagogue they're all sitting there stroking their beards and nodding yes yes yes we know that we hear that amen to that brother and he's going all back all over the history of the the Israelites from the time and they're sitting there and they're thinking of how blessed they are and how fortunate they are and then as he moves on down through his message he comes to verse 38 with the therefore and the therefore is the summation or the conclusion of everything that he said up to this point in other words it's thus and so and thus and so and this happened and that happened and this next and therefore as a conclusion as a result to all of I said up to this point here's what it boils down to therefore let it be known to you brethren that through him and the him is none other than what the context requires it is the person of Jesus of Nazareth through him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you through somebody who died on a cross that doesn't make any sense and through him everyone who believes will will will you will you will will you can believe or you cannot believe you don't have to believe nobody's making you believe you are a free moral agent you don't have to believe but you may and those who believe is freed from all things not even most things all things freed set free released from all things from which you could not be freed through the law of Moses what in the world is this man saying what is he saying did you hear I can just see these wizened old scribes and Pharisees some of them sitting there and looking at each other and saying he didn't say what I thought he said did he did you hear what he said I I'm not hearing this right he didn't he didn't say what it sounded like what what did he say and they've got this puzzled quizzical look on their faces and they're looking at one another yeah that's what he said now for those of you who are here right now this morning this isn't news at all this is old hat stuff to you but if you lived 2000 years ago and you were operating under what was called the mosaic law and the system of animal sacrifices and the feast days and the ritual and and they all went into [ 28 : 29 ] Judaism so that man through observing all of these things could be made right with God only nobody ever was and a lot of people even even even many Christians to this very day tend to think that the reason we have laws like the Ten Commandments etc. etc. is to teach us to be good and it teaches us to be good because it's better to be good it's better for everybody and that you are good and you arrive in this merit system you do the right thing and you say the right thing and you get all of these assets accumulated to your account these are goodies that build up on your behalf and if you do enough and you do them long enough and consistent enough and all the rest of it then God will accept you so the law is given so that we might keep it and do good and win approval with God it's as wrong as it can be but that's what most people believe you know why because that's the way the merit system works with humans doesn't it you do good and you get good results it starts with mom and dad and it comes right through school and all the rest of it that's the way we think that's the way the world works and it is the way the world works and nobody suggesting you ought to be bad to go against the system we're just saying that's the way it works but that's not the way God works because the law was not given so that we might be good the law was given to show us that there is no way in the world that we can measure up to the standards of true goodness it's just not in us it's just not in it can't be done it's impossible the law is designed to reveal the knowledge of sin and our failure the law was never given to save anybody it was given to show us that our own efforts to be good and do good are futile and you better give it up well if you do then what then what have you got if you give that if you give up even trying to be good and trying to measure up and you give that up what do you got left nothing and you know what this spells despair all the way around despair despair despair and this is where

Jesus comes in this is what changes everything this is this is the ultimate game changer and these people here in this obscure Jewish synagogue 2000 years ago are hearing this proclaimed to the public audience for our record at least for the very first time and of course the response of some of the Jews is why that can't be he's teaching against the law of Moses and they had no idea didn't have a clue that the law of Moses just condemns you it sinks you it reminds me of the illustration that I heard a long time ago about the little boy that he was told by his mom to go in the bathroom and wash up for dinner and he went in the bathroom and stood up on his stool and he looked in the mirror and sure enough he needed to wash up for dinner he had a dirty face so the mirror reveals his condition you cannot go to the dinner table with a face looking like that so does he take the mirror off the wall and start rubbing it over his face of course not that's not what a mirror is for all a mirror can do is reveal what's there in front of it and the reveal was you got a dirty face you don't wash your face with the mirror then you turn to the soap and water it's right below and that's the wonderful cleansing agent you see all the mirror can do is reveal your true condition that's all the law does for by the law is the knowledge the revelation of sin the law says uh oh you are in big big trouble because you fail on every count you are one of billions who never make it on the merit system nobody ever has and when

Paul is saying delivering this he wants to issue a warning with it and I would issue the same warning to you this morning and to our audience verse 40 take heed therefore so that the things spoken of in the prophets may not come upon you now what Paul is saying is listen the prophets the Old Testament prophets Isaiah Jeremiah Ezekiel Daniel those guys in the Old Testament which was all of the Bible that existed at the time Paul was here delivering this message in Antioch the Old Testament was all there was and he is saying the prophets in the Old Testament wrote about people like you don't fulfill what they were writing about don't you be one of them and he says the prophet said behold you scoffers and marvel and perish scoffers what are scoffers people people that deride make fun of reject the news the information

[ 34 : 56 ] I don't believe a word of it get out of here with that garbage that's just religious garbage get out of here with that that's a scoffer that's a scoffer and there were people like that way back in Old Testament times and Paul is warning his audience don't you be one of those people don't you join that crowd of scoffers I am accomplishing a work in your days a work which you will never believe though someone should describe it to you and Paul is saying and here I am describing it to you are you going to be one of those scoffers boy it must have been an electrifying moment and these people are looking at each other and is he talking about us is he making an accusation what's going on here and this place is just electric it is rumbling and these people are murmuring and they're wondering what's going on and the text goes on and as

Paul and Barnabas were going out the place was dismissed the people kept begging they came up to them and said listen man we're having problems getting into this what what are you saying what this is this is difficult to handle you've got to come back we've got to hear more about this the jury's still out we need more information you've got to come back and explain more of this because they understood the implications and the implications were just enormous this is game changing stuff and they are on the threshold of it well God fearing proselytes these are Gentiles followed Paul and Barnabas I wonder if these Gentiles these proselytes you know a proselyte like I said a proselyte was somebody who had gone through the process of becoming a Jew even though they were not Jew and a proselyte was a non-Jewish man a Gentile man who had already submitted to circumcision because if you were if you were born a Jew if you were born a male Jew you were circumcised when you were eight days old and I'm sure you screamed and hollered and carried on because it was very painful but it was over in a short period of time but as an adult man you don't even want to think about that I mean there's just no way that you want to seriously consider but if you are really totally convinced that Israel's God is the true God and that you want to be a member and therefore in the covenant of Israel with God this was a price to pay and there were some who paid it not many not many that's why most of them were

God fearers they stopped short of circumcision but they were into everything else that was Jewish they just didn't go all the way with the circumcision thing now we look upon this of course in our culture today is completely different but you've got to understand the way it was then and I want you to understand because this is so critical in the beginning of exactly what this good news consisted of and if you will come back for what is taking place here and the basis for what Paul is saying about being justified from all things which you could not be justified by the law of Moses and in

verse 9 of Romans chapter 3 Paul begins by saying are we better than they not at all that is we've charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin in other words it doesn't make any difference whether you're as it is written none righteous not even one none who understands none who seeks for

God all have turned aside together they become useless these are all failures on the merit system everybody's a failure in the merit system none who does good not even one their throats an open grave with their tongues they keep deceiving the poison of asses under their lips whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness their feet that's the true picture of people on the merit system miserable failures all now we say verse 19 that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law that every mouth may be closed that means because you don't have anything to say in your defense and all the world may become accountable responsible answerable to God because by the works of the law no flesh will be justified that means declared righteous or made acceptable in his sight that is in

[ 40 : 41 ] God sight our works make us acceptable to each other but you've got a lot lower standard than what God does God's standard is in keeping with his character and nature and that means we're in big trouble because nobody measures up to that it speaks to those who are under the law that or so that every mouth may be closed because you've got nothing to say and all the world may become accountable to God because by the works of the law no flesh will be justified in his sight why because through the law comes the knowledge of sin but now but now see what Paul is saying you see this great switcheroo here in his message he's just delivered this sentence and he's saying it's really bad it's really really bad everybody is under this judgment under this systemic thing called sin and you may not be as bad as you can be but you are as bad off as you can be but now but now this is the game changer apart from the law separate from the law the righteousness of

God how righteous is that you just can't get any more righteous than that the righteousness of God has been manifested that means declared that means put on display showed openly the righteousness of God being manifested by the law and the prophets even and what I'm talking about Paul saying even the righteousness of God through faith or belief in the person of Jesus Christ for all those who believe for there is no distinction because all have sinned and fall short don't measure up to the glory or the standards of God being justified or declared righteous as a gift by his grace being justified being declared legally officially forensically justified as a gift this is a freebie it really means that as a gift as a gift well everybody knows that a gift comes with a price it's just the price that you don't pay it's the price that somebody else paid to make it a gift for you they had to pick up the tab that's the whole point that's exactly what he's saying this is

God's answer to the merit system and it was by one who had the merit who had the status who had the sinlessness to satisfy an utterly righteous holy God who requires perfection and this is the one who had perfection to give and he gave it he gave it it is through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus and let me say this by way of closing this is not only what it boils down to this is all that it boils down to and the world does not accept that nor understand that but it is true nonetheless there is no other way neither is there salvation in any other for there is none other name given among men under heaven whereby we must be saved and we make no apologies for holding

Jesus Christ forth as the exclusive means of approaching God because he's the only way that God has provided in other words what we're saying is God is satisfied when only his own standards are met and Jesus met them and he wants to give you his righteousness as a free gift this is our latest really good news and you need to understand something this is not the information that is given in the four gospels do you know what's operating in the four gospels same thing that was operating in the Old Testament it's the meritocracy it's the be good and do good it's the law thing under which we are all condemned under which they were all condemned and

God because of his great mercy and his love inexpressible took it upon himself to provide for the human race the ultimate freebie and it's called the grace of God nothing like it in the world I trust that you are a recipient of it if not I'm going to close in prayer and invite you to make yourself a recipient thank you father for for for this utterly amazing concept that so many have come to take for granted and see as ho hum while so many others by far and away the majority do not even begin to grasp it for those of us who know it and understand it and love it we simply pray for a new facility and determination and eagerness to share it and to convey it knowing full well it may fall on deaf ears at first because it often does but sometimes succeeded succeeding demonstrations and proclamations of this gospel can break through the hardness of our hearts and we can understand

your love for us and the death that

[ 48 : 01 ] Jesus died for us to make us acceptable to you and sometimes it takes repeated hearings like it did for us but we want to be eager to give them and to share them because we who have come to know and believe are so appreciative of who you are and what you've done in Christ trust that you will instill in this congregation not only the necessity of enjoying what we have but the responsibility and the glorious privilege of sharing it with others forgive our shortcomings we pray we know the message is never up to par from the standpoint of what it could be and should be but we trust the spirit of God will find it to be adequate for hearts and minds that are open and yielded to the truth in Christ's name we pray amen all right this is phase one next week we'll have second part