

THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

John 1:14-18
Lesson #13
A Christmas story
12/22/2019

What do these figures share in common?



The man upstairs



Father time



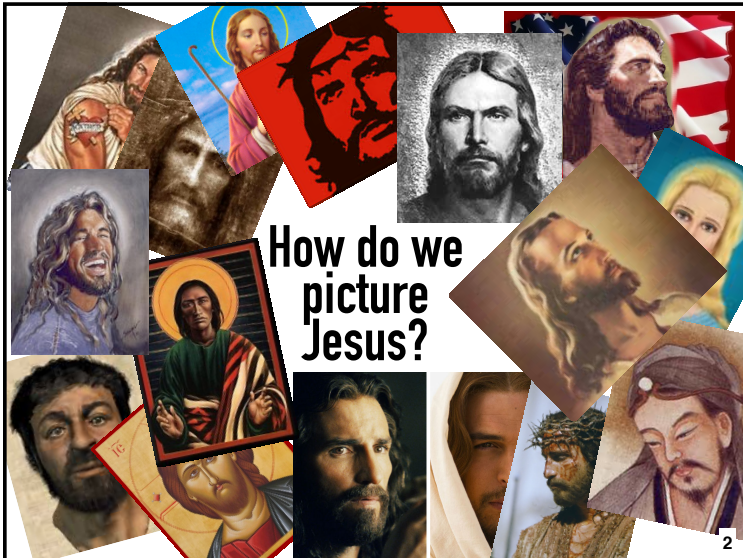
Uncle Sam



Santa Claus

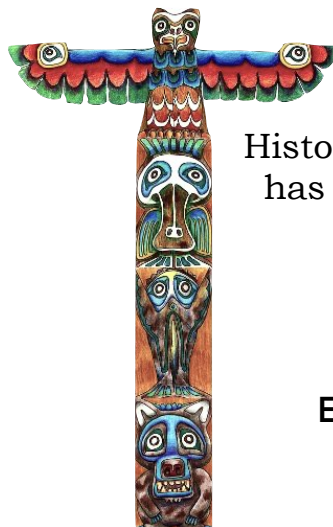
Many people might say that these are
**Fictitious old men with beards
that symbolize cultural myths?**

1

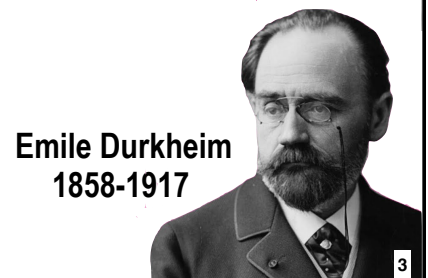


How do we
picture
Jesus?

2

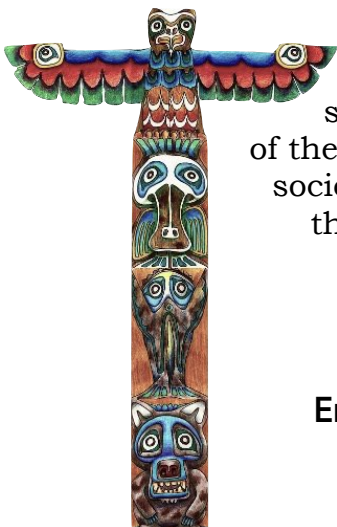


“Genesis tells us
that God created
man in His image.
History suggests that man
has been trying to return
the favor ever since.”

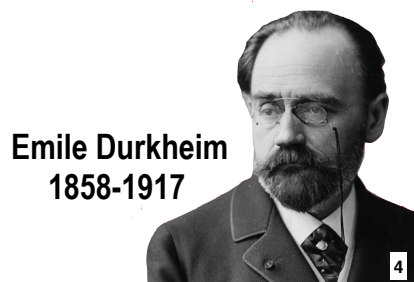


Emile Durkheim
1858-1917

3



“The idea of god was
nothing more than a
symbolic representation
of the collective values of the
society that worships (itself
through) him, she, or it.”



Emile Durkheim
1858-1917

4

Do we create God in our image?

- Our culture, family, and personal experiences shape our view of God.
- Many Americans see God as a chaplain for “the American dream”.
- Others see God as a political revolutionary calling for a socialist state.
- **The heart of the Holy Spirit’s ministry is to help us see Jesus as God’s image not as a mirror of our own bias.**

5



We all know that Jesus did not look like this.

He looked like US.

6

How did the Pharisees see God?

- Their God was concerned with **SEPARATION** from the unclean and unholy.
- **PRACTICED** holiness was the “name of the game” and God was tracking with “who was naughty and nice”.
- The Pharisees saw God as ceremonially washing Himself according to the **LAW**.
- Jesus did not match the profile of God on file with the Pharisees.

Enter the parable of the Prodigal Son

7

Christmas has a message revealed

in the parable of the Prodigal Son's father.

8

Christmas is a message about



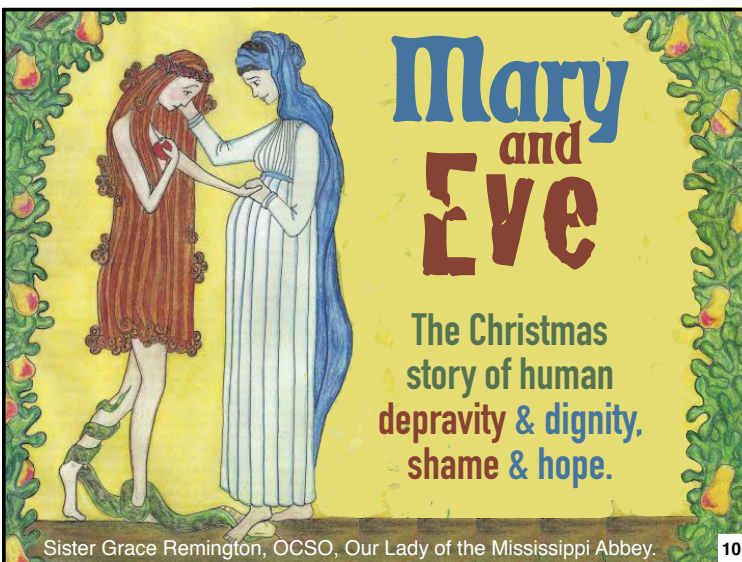
1.

Man's dignity and depravity

2.

God's grace and joy

9



Sister Grace Remington, OCSO, Our Lady of the Mississippi Abbey.

10

John's version of the Christmas story

John 1

“14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld **His glory**, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, **full of grace and truth**. . . 16 For of His fulness we have all received, and **grace upon grace**. 17 For the Law was given through Moses; **grace and truth** were realized through Jesus Christ. 18 No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has **explained** Him.”

11

The glory of God and man

The “glory” of an object or person is: that which a person or object cannot lose without losing its unique identity.

1 Corinthians 15

“⁴⁰ There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the **glory** of the heavenly is one, and the **glory** of the earthly is another. ⁴¹ There is one **glory** of the sun, and another **glory** of the moon, and another **glory** of the stars; for star differs from star in **glory**.”

12

The glory of God and man

The “glory” of an object or person is: that which a person or object cannot lose without losing its unique identity.

John 1

“¹⁴ And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld **His glory**, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, **full of grace and truth**. . . ¹⁶ For of His fulness we have all received, and **grace upon grace**.”

John 14:9

“He who has seen me **has seen the Father**”

13

“grace upon grace”

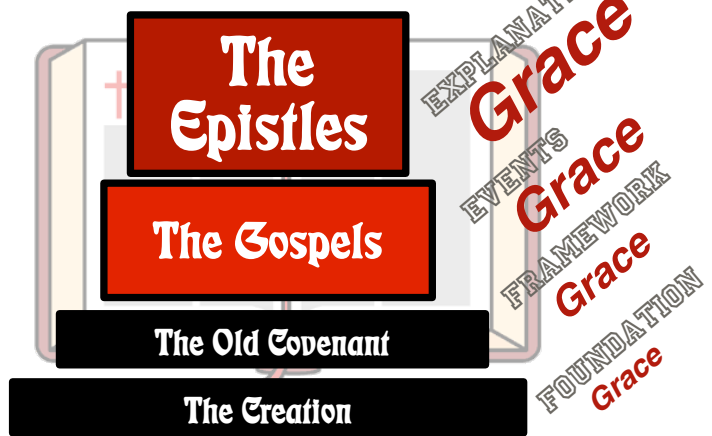
“endless waves of grace, one after another.”

Ephesians 2

“⁴ But God, being **rich** in mercy, because of His **great** love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, ⁷ in order that in the ages to come He might show the **surpassing riches** of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by **grace** you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the **gift** of God; ⁹ not as a result of works, that no one should boast.”

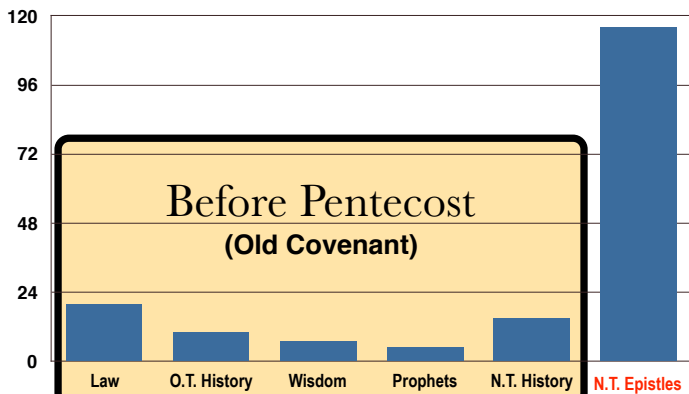
14

THE GOSPEL STORY



15

Distribution of references to the word “grace” in the various divisions of the Scripture



16

Paul opens letters with:
“**GRACE** and Peace be unto you.”

Paul closes letters with:
“**GRACE** be with you all.”

Grace always comes first.

“Full of **GRACE** and Truth, Peace, Love, etc.”

17

Implication #1 **God is love.**

John 3:16

“For God so **loved** the world, that He **gave** His only begotten Son, that whoever **believes** in Him should not perish, but have **eternal life**.”

- God’s glory is revealed in His **sacrificial giving** not in his control of life’s events.
- God dignifies our glory by becoming **one with us** and acknowledging our **freedom to receive or reject** His Son.

18

Implication #2 **We are valued.**

We do not merit our salvation but are worth saving.

John 3

“¹⁷ For God did not send the Son into the world to **judge** the world, but that the world should be **saved** through Him. ¹⁸ He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not **believe** has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

- We **judge ourselves** when we medicate our shame by rejecting the light for darkness.

19

Implication #2 **We are valued.**

The image of God that we bear is our glory and God’s treasure.

Romans 8:21

“that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of **the glory of the children of God**”

James 3:9

“With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been **made in the likeness of God**”

20

Implication #3 **Words matter.**

Ephesians 4:29

“Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, **so that it will give grace to those who hear.**”

- **NOT** - “If you can’t say anything nice don’t say anything at all.”
- **BUT** - *If you are not a part of the problem or the solution, speak only to God.*
- **AND** - *When you speak - graciously edify.*

21

Philippians 2

“⁵ Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but **emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.** ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

22

Temptation is often a grace and truth issue.

(shame and blame, false perceptions and words)

The ministry of the Spirit is to “lead us into all the truth” of the grace of God in Christ Jesus.



The ministry of Satan is to peddle shame and blame, distortion and destruction.

23

**Grace without Truth can be:
Cheap** - costing nothing.

**Truth without Grace can be:
Cruel** - peddling abusive shame.

- **Without grace** the crucifixion has no redemptive purpose.
- **Without truth** the crucifixion remains a misunderstood, tragedy of history.

Some tragedies
are victories
in disguise.



24

**Grace without Truth can be:
Cheap** - costing nothing.

**Truth without Grace can be:
Cruel** - peddling abusive shame.

- **Without grace** the incarnation has no redemptive message.
- **Without truth** the incarnation is simply Jesus' birthday.

Some things that
seem mundane
are profound.



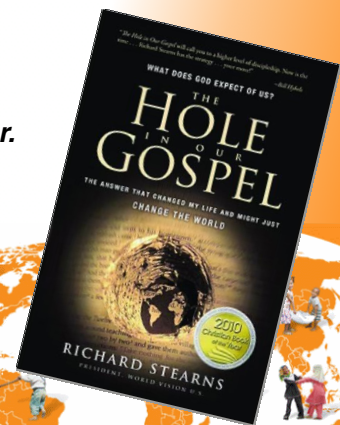
25

Some common lies we tell ourselves -

- God's grace is **conditioned upon our ability to manage life** with good works.
- **We can reform** this fallen imperfect world starting with ourselves.
- If God really loves us He will **keep our commandments** (or at least seek our advice and get our permission).
- **Our value** rests only with our virtue and productivity.

26

**It's God's job to
love the world.
It's our job to
love our neighbor.**



World Vision

27

2 Corinthians 13:14

“The **grace** of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the **love** of God, and the **fellowship** of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.”



*Challenge yourself to
throw a star fish in
the water this week.*

28