

When Hyper-Grace Teachers Literally Rewrite the Bible

It is one thing for a teacher or preacher to under-emphasize a biblical theme. That's bad enough. It's another thing entirely when a Christian leader actually removes a theme from the Bible and replaces it with something else. To do so is to tread on very dangerous ground, and that's exactly what some hyper-grace teachers have done.

I documented this in detail in my *Hyper-Grace* book (I name names there, if you want to see the documentation for yourself), and so I've been quite familiar with this material for some years now. But while teaching a class on God's true grace at FIRE School of Ministry this week, I was reminded of just how far some of these teachers have gone.

Here are examples from two hyper-grace paraphrases (or so-called translations). The biblical text will be followed by the hyper-grace version, and as you read, ask yourself the question: What happened to God's wrath?

Ephesians 5:5-6: "For this you know, that no sexually immoral or impure person, or one who is greedy, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience."

A hyper-grace paraphrase: "God's kingdom is one of love, and those who indulge in the immoral and impure things of this world have not yet crossed over into God's kingdom. Don't let anyone deceive you with empty words, for your salvation is not empty of power, but powerful enough to free you from all the things that deceive and trap those still walking along darkened paths."

A hyper-grace “translation”: “The Christ-life gives distinct definition to the kingdom of God. You cannot live a double-standard life. Abusing people through adultery, lust and greed is like worshipping a distorted image of yourself, which is what idolatry is all about. Avoid any association with those who employ hollow words to entice you; unbelief only produces a breed of people that distorts the pattern of their design as image-bearers of God; this certainly does not please God.”

God’s wrath is totally gone.

Colossians 3:5-6: “Therefore put to death the parts of your earthly nature: sexual immorality, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things, the wrath of God comes on the sons of disobedience.”

A hyper-grace paraphrase: “Don’t seek the things that belong to your old, earthly nature. Things that arouse lust and greed and entice you to pursue evil desires. For we know that Christ carried the punishment for all these unloving acts and passions. Remember that Jesus loved not only us, but the entire world so much that He took the wrath of God’s punishment for all these unloving and self-gratifying actions so that we could be free from them.”

A hyper-grace “translation” changes Colossians 3:6 (“Because of these things, the wrath of God comes ...”) into this: “These distorted expressions are in total contradiction to God’s design and desire for your life.”

Romans 1:17, ESV: “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.”

A hyper-grace “translation” changes it to: “The righteousness of God that is endorsed in the heavens is in such contrast to the counterfeit earthly reference that blindfolds people in their own unrighteousness.”

Again, I ask, what happened to God's wrath? How dare these teachers tamper with the holy Word of a holy God?

And here's one last example of rewriting the Bible to make it fit your theology.

Some hyper-grace teachers reject the idea that we can grieve the Holy Spirit by our sinful deeds or attitudes, since, they allege, all our sins (including sins we haven't even committed yet) have been forgiven and God sees us as perfectly righteous. What then do they do with Ephesians 4:30-31? The text says, "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, outbursts, and blasphemies, with all malice, be taken away from you."

You guessed right. They rewrite these verses too, changing Paul's words to say: "The Holy Spirit is now living in you, so remind yourself of his wonderful presence in your life, and, in accordance with his leading, empty yourself of any remaining bitterness, rage and anger."

Let me say it once more. These hyper-grace teachers are treading on very dangerous ground, and I urge them to repent before the Lord and make things right before God's people.

And let all hyper-grace teachers who say, "Don't include me here! I don't teach this stuff," shout your corrections for the world to hear.

It is bad enough to deceive yourself. It is a whole lot worse—dreadfully so—to deceive others. (See Jacob [James] 3:1.)

And if you find yourself defending this wholesale rewriting of the Bible, you are in greater deception than you realize.

May God have mercy on your soul. {eoa}