

Grace

grace: Favour, favourable or benignant regard or its manifestation (now only on the part of a superior); favour or goodwill, in contradistinction to right or obligation, as the ground of a concession.

- I. God's grace towards sinners is the basis of every good thing in this life and the life to come.
 - A. When God in the fulness of time became incarnate, He was described as "...full of grace and truth" (**JOH 1:14**). He remains full. **1PE 5:10; 2CO 9:8**.
 - B. It was said of Jesus Christ in prophecy, "...grace is poured into thy lips..." (**PSA 45:2**). From heaven He speaks salvation for His people, not the wrath that sin merits. **HEB 12:24-25**.
 - C. During His ministry on earth, men "...wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth..." (**LUK 4:22**).
 1. He spoke as one that had authority for edification, not as the scribes. **MAR 1:22 c/w 2CO 10:8**.
 2. Works-righteousness religion such as the scribes represented will not build up (edify) the hearers but puff up the teacher while breaking down the hearer with unbearable burdens that only grace resolves. **LUK 15:2; 18:9 ct/w ACT 15:10-11**.
 3. The heart will never be established (made firm, settled) by carnal religion but only by grace. **HEB 9:9-10; 13:9**.
 - D. Because He by Himself did for sinners what they could not possibly do for themselves, they are constrained to glorify Him. **HEB 1:3; REV 5:9-14**.
 - E. Christ is the Rock of salvation upon which His church is built and its anthem should ever be as Zerubbabel's for that OT house: Grace, grace. **MAT 16:18 c/w ZEC 4:6-7**.

- II. Whatever benefit is according to God's grace is a benefit that sinners have no right to.
 - A. The lawful end of sin is death and wrath from God. **ROM 6:23; EPH 2:3; REV 20:14-15**.
 1. God had no legal obligation to save any of Adam's posterity from their fate, nor could sinners have any claim on Him to concede a different fate.
 2. That any are delivered from this fate is owing to grace which excludes boasting. **EPH 2:8-9**.
 3. This grace cannot be earned or demanded since it is God's prerogative alone to extend it according to His own purpose. **2TI 1:9**.
 4. This grace accords with another sovereign purpose of God on which the sinner has no claim: mercy. **TIT 3:5-7**.
 - a. mercy: Forbearance and compassion shown by one person to another who is in his power and who has no claim to receive kindness; kind and compassionate treatment in a case where severity is merited or expected.
 - b. Mercy, like grace, is the province of God alone to give. **ROM 9:15-16**.
 - c. God's people should come to grips with this principle that prevents their utter consumption. **LAM 3:1, 19-23**.
 - B. If a saved sinner by Christ is able to access the throne of grace as needed (**HEB 4:16**), that is only because God has by His grace made that approach possible by the forgiveness of his sins according to His own purpose and grace in Christ. **EPH 1:3-7**.
 - C. If a saved sinner has been given preference in His kingdom, it is certainly not because he had a right to that or earned it. **1TI 1:12-15; 1CO 4:7; JOH 3:27; 1CO 15:9-10**.
 - D. If a saved sinner is moved and empowered to give of the fruit of his labors for godly purposes, that is a grace that traces a path all the way back up to divine grace in Christ.

2CO 8:1-2, 9; 9:7-8, 14-15.

- E. Indeed, “And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace” (**JOH 1:16**).
- F. God owes sinners nothing: no favor, no mercy. He has ever been the “I AM” (**EXO 3:14**) and ever will be, well able to exist and satisfy Himself without us. That He out of love has taken an interest in sinners should humble, arouse and drive us to grateful pleasings by faith and godly living. **TIT 2:11-14.**
- G. Acceptance of these humbling realities actually opens the door for more grace. **JAM 4:5-6; 1PE 5:5-6.**
- H. In times of personal affliction, we do well to remember that it is better with us than what we deserve and that the best is yet to come. **PSA 103:10; 2CO 12:7-10; ROM 8:18.**

III. The first appearance of the word “grace” is in **GEN 6:8.**

- A. Noah by nature was as deserving as wrath as the rest of the world.
- B. Interestingly, the same Hebrew letters that are the basis of “Noah” are also the basis of “grace,” but reversed in order.
 - 1. Noah’s name means “rest.”
 - 2. There is no rest without grace. **GAL 3:10.**
 - 3. God’s grace fits us to perceive Christ as our rest and reflect Him in life. **MAT 11:28-29; 2CO 3:14-18.**
- C. Noah’s salvation was that of a righteous man for whose sake others were saved: a federal headship salvation. **GEN 7:1, 7 c/w 1PE 3:20-21.**
 - 1. He and those given to him were temporarily shut up in an *ark* (A chest, box, coffer, close basket, or similar receptacle) and saved from wrath. **c/w ROM 4:25; COL 3:1.**
 - 2. The satisfaction of justice was the salvation of Noah and his crowd. **1PE 3:20.**
- D. God’s sworn promise of salvation through the blood of the everlasting covenant (**TIT 1:1-2; HEB 13:20**) is of enduring mercy and kindness as certain as His promise after the flood. **ISA 54:7-10 c/w ROM 8:28-39.**

IV. One might get the impression that grace is the key to everything: eternal life, abundant living, peace in the soul, rest, hope, etc. and that we should not receive it in vain but employ it in happy service to God. **2CO 6:1; COL 4:6; HEB 12:28.**

V. (**JOH 1:17**) For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

- A. Certainly, the concept of God’s grace towards man may be found in the O.T. and Moses himself recorded such a personal case. **EXO 33:12-23.**
 - 1. Mind the significance of **v. 19** which shows grace and mercy to be the province of God. **c/w ROM 9:11-16.**
 - 2. Even in this intimate, close encounter with God, man in his corrupt nature experiencing grace could not behold the full face of God.
 - 3. Even a *vision* of God’s glory condemned Isaiah. **JOH 12:41 c/w ISA 6:1-5.**
 - 4. Consider, though, the difference that the Incarnation made: God allowed His glory to be beheld by sinners. **JOH 1:14 c/w LUK 9:26-31; 2PE 1:16-18.**
- B. There was certainly truth in the law of Moses. **PSA 119:151.**
- C. The Law was good and spiritual, but not man. **ROM 7:12-14.**
- D. The “do and live” Law Covenant (**ROM 10:5**) had a fault: man. **HEB 8:7-8.**
- E. The Law’s teaching was unattainable righteousness and shut men up to the full plan of God in truth by Jesus Christ. **GAL 3:10, 23.**

- F. Jesus Christ did for man what no other man could do by merit or sacrifice. **ROM 8:3; HEB 7:11, 19; 10:1; GAL 3:13; 2CO 5:21.**
- G. Moses and the prophets were familiar with the concept of grace but the “do and live” covenant eclipsed the *Sun of righteousness* (**MAL 4:2**) concerning the truth about righteousness before a holy God. Those O.T. prophets knew by the Spirit that the perfection of grace was not to be in their season. **1PE 1:10-12.**
- H. The true grace of God was reserved for the New Covenant in the blood of Christ and the Spirit’s revelation via Jesus Christ and His apostles. By these, men could know the grace of God in truth. **1PE 5:12; COL 1:6 c/w MAT 13:17.**
1. This saving grace is according to God’s election unto Christ’s obedience and blood. **1PE 1:1-2 c/w ROM 11:4-5.**
 2. This grace in Christ not only *reserves* the elect to God, it *preserves* them. **JUDE 1:1; 1TH 5:23-24.**
 3. Unlike the Old Covenant, the New Covenant of grace *permanently secures* the true riches of inheritance: heaven. **1PE 1:3-4.**
 4. The Old Covenant laws made transgressions abound since it increased breakable laws. **ROM 4:15.**
 - a. The multiplying of laws only exacerbated the fallen nature of man by the Old Covenant’s “do and live” righteousness, making sin the reigning power.
 - b. But the New Covenant of grace in Christ is a better reign in the soul since it perceives Him as *the end of the law for righteousness*. **ROM 5:20-21; 10:4.**
- I. The Law had bites of grace and truth but Jesus Christ is *full of grace and truth*. **JOH 1:14.**
1. Mary was *highly favoured* (**LUK 1:28**) but Hail Jesus, full of grace!
 2. Hail Jesus, the Truth! **JOH 14:6.**
- J. (**JOH 1:17**) For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.
1. The Old Testament closed with a curse. **MAL 4:5-6.**
 2. The New Testament closes with grace. **REV 22:21.**
- VI. That there is a true grace (**1PE 5:12; COL 1:6**) presupposes that there are perversions of grace.
- A. Here are some facts about the *true grace wherein believers stand*.
1. It is rooted in God’s elective purpose in Christ. **1PE 1:2; ROM 11:5; 2TI 1:9.**
 2. It actually produced eternal forgiveness of sins. **EPH 1:7 c/w HEB 9:12.**
 3. It is justification by Christ, not by the law of Moses. **ACT 13:38-43.**
 4. It is *free* (given out of liberality or generosity, not in return or requital for something else). **ROM 3:24.**
 5. It bestows a *gift* (something, the possession of which is transferred to another without the expectation or receipt of an equivalent; a donation, present). **ROM 5:15; 6:23.**
 6. It is not a *reward of debt* that God is obliged to give to a sinner for good work. **ROM 4:4.**
 7. It excludes *all boasting* about justification. **EPH 2:8-9; ROM 4:1-2.**
 8. It is the *salvation of the LORD* (**JON 2:9**): His election, work and mercy for which He alone gets the glory, glory of which He is rightly jealous. **1CO 1:28-30 c/w ISA 42:1-8.**
 9. This is *why* believers shall stand before God in His presence one day, and it is *how* they stand in their walk of faith before Him now. When this doctrine is perverted by the introduction of the sinner’s work, will, resolve, etc. to oblige God, the

standing gives way to falling and bondage. **GAL 2:4; 5:1-4; HEB 12:15.**

B. Obviously, the primary error about the true grace of God in the *eternal salvation* of sinners is the addition of the sinner's works. **ROM 11:6.**

1. Sinners' evil works obviously cannot help but true grace even disallows good works in election unto eternal life. **ROM 9:11.**
2. This even disallows the sinner's faith as the means to this grace since that is something the sinner does (**MAT 23:23**) which is, by definition, *work* (something that is or was done; what a person does or did).
 - a. Sinners believe through this grace which makes one righteous. **ACT 18:27.**
 - b. Sinners obtain faith through the righteousness of God. **2PE 1:1.**
 - c. Sinners' faith is *counted for righteousness*: a token or evidence of the grace of God reigning through righteousness within them. **ROM 4:3-5.**
3. Once the sinner's performance is deemed to be the determining factor to the true grace which gives eternal life, it may be logically concluded that the thus-rewarded sinner can also lose it by disobedience. This is the "flip side" of false grace which only reigns through righteousness *for a season according to the sinner's performance*, not unto eternal life by Christ's performance. *ct/w* **ROM 5:19-21.**
4. The addition of the sinner's work to effectuate God's work of grace constitutes a departure from the gospel of grace unto *another gospel*. **GAL 1:6-7.**
 - a. Such a reversion to works-justification is a vain attempt to rely on *dead works* which were never able to eternally redeem the sinner but did burden the conscience. **HEB 9:12-14.**
 - b. The gospel is *good news*: the publishing of what God freely did for sinners by Jesus Christ according to His own purpose and grace which preceded them (**2TI 1:9**). Adding sinners' works to true grace is *fake news*.

C. Another error concerning grace that must be avoided is that sin is a means to greater magnify God's grace in salvation. **ROM 6:1-2.**

1. A logical end of this error is to exploit the perceived liberty of grace to justify lasciviousness and the breaking down of godly distinctions. **JUDE 1:4 c/w REV 2:20.**
2. Because Paul had preached free grace, he was falsely accused of advancing this error. **ROM 3:8.**
3. To this day, many hold that the teaching of true grace is a dangerous doctrine which opens the door for sin and lust. But true grace teaches the death of sin and lust in the believer, not the growth of them. **TIT 2:11-14 c/w EPH 2:10; 1PE 4:1-3.**
4. Those who hold that the grace of God to save sinners by Christ depends upon the sinner consider the doctrine of true, free grace to be a frustration of the plan of salvation. But adding the sinner's performance to grace IS the frustration of grace! **GAL 2:21.**

VII. Recap.

A. Grace is unmerited favor to which the receiver has no right or claim: he did not deserve it nor did he earn it by obliging God to give it. It accords with *mercy* which is similarly the decision of God upon which the sinner has no claim.

1. It is free, a gift, a reward of justification not reckoned by debt of labor. **ROM 4:4-5.**
2. It includes a miraculous change of nature by God, making one spiritually alive who was by nature spiritually dead through an *invisible* operation of the Spirit.

EPH 2:1-5; JOH 3:8; 6:63.

3. It yields eternal life. **TIT 3:3-5.**

4. It is the *common* eternal salvation of Jews and Gentiles. **ACT 15:11; JUDE 1:3.**

B. Proof that one is the object of this grace is in his faith and good works of submission to the gospel of Jesus Christ. By such the grace of God can be *seen*. **ACT 11:20-23.**

C. There is additional grace available *only to the actively believing* child of God who is the object of the grace of God in eternal salvation. **ROM 5:1-2; HEB 4:16; 2PE 1:2.**

D. All of this is owing to the fulness of Jesus Christ. **JOH 1:14-16.**

VIII. We ought to be good stewards of the *manifold grace* of God. **1PE 4:10.**

A. We should embrace God's sovereign election of grace as the first and true grace which gives eternal life to unworthy sinners and not presume to boast that our *evidence* of salvation is the *means* of our eternal life. **ROM 4:2-3.**

B. We should not receive the grace of God in vain but rather gratefully live in its liberating truth in a manner well-pleasing to the God Who loves us. **2CO 6:1; HEB 10:29.**

C. We should reckon that any benefit we have that flows from grace is nothing we deserved nor could earn. **2TI 1:9; 1CO 15:10 c/w ACT 9:15; 1TI 1:12-15.**

D. If we are the beneficiaries of any grace, we should be utilizing that to God's glory. **1CO 10:30-31.**

IX. **(ACT 20:32)** And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.