

## Only God sets the Terms of His Grace

A doctrine commonly accepted in the U.S. is that person's salvation comes from the grace of God; and therefore since it is a gift (grace), it cannot require man's works such as repentance, baptism or obedience.

God may give man something, while requiring nothing. For instance, "He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." (Matt. 5:45). Man can do absolutely nothing, and still receive abundant sunshine or rain! Jesus healed a paralytic (Mark 2), a blind man (Mark 8), and fed thousands (Mark 6), yet set no prerequisites. Or, God may give man something, and require a response from man. It's God's choice.

Salvation, on any terms, comes from the grace of God. We realize that man has no salvation if he excludes God. Ephesians 2:8-10 states "*For by grace have you been saved by faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.*" This states the type of works which will not save us, namely meritorious works of which man would boast. However, works which participate by faith, trust, and glorifying God, are inseparably part of a sinner's participation in grace. "*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*"

God, and not man, has the right to dictate God's grace. It is a gift even if it comes with a truck load of terms.

### **Examples where God required work(s) for man to receive God's grace.**

- God told Joshua, "*I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor*" (Josh. 6:2). God gave Jericho to the Israelites, but required seven days of marching, blowing of trumpets, and shouting; before the wall of the city would fall down. It was a gift (grace of God), but it required man's participation (works).
- God healed Naaman, with a requirement: "*wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored to you, and you shall be clean*" (2 Kgs. 5). His servants pled with reluctant Naaman to comply, and when he did, he was cleansed. It had conditions (work), yet it was still a gift from God. Obviously, he would not have cleansing without compliance.
- Jesus healed a blind man, with conditions. "*...He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. And He said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" So he went and washed, and came back seeing*" (John 9). Did the man heal his own blindness? No. But did the man comply with the grace which did? Yes!
- Food comes by grace. We pray, "*Give us this day our daily bread,*" and thereafter we give thanks for what we receive. Thus we eat by a gift (God's grace). Do we work for this grace? Yes. We plant, we harvest, or we earn and buy; so we may eat. In fact, "*If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat*" (2<sup>nd</sup> Thess. 3:10). If we truly believe that grace prevents us from working, or the gift does not come by grace, then we should never work for the food which we say God gives us! This is reposterous!

In conclusion, God may and God does require a response in order for us to receive salvation; namely "*repent and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins*" (Acts 2:38). Jesus is said to be "the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him" (Heb. 5:9). Some might say otherwise, but only God sets the terms of His grace.

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