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## **Salvation By the Grace of God**

By Everett Hardin

Grace is unmerited favor, a benefit bestowed upon one who does not deserve it. Such a blessing is always given without compensation, and there is nothing which the one needing the favor can do to merit it. The grace of God indicates a favorable disposition on His part and is a manifestation of that quality of His nature which is the source of undeserved blessings having to do with our salvation.

The sinner needs a blessing which he cannot provide for himself. He needs forgiveness and to be regarded as righteous before God, but the New Testament shows that it is only through God's grace that it is possible for a sinner to have these benefits.

### **Salvation And Grace**

*“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God”* (Eph. 2:8-9). The emphasis here is on God's part with reference to our salvation. Salvation is His gift to the sinner. It is provided or made possible through the grace of God. There has never been a sinner saved that was not saved by grace.

### **Salvation and Works**

*“Not by works lest any man should boast,”* (Eph. 2:9). There was nothing which we did, nor could do, to make our salvation possible. We can only accept by faith that which has been provided or made possible by the grace of God. Works are used in this verse to refer to meritorious works, or works which, in and of themselves procured the desired end. The divine and human sides of salvation are set forth in this verse. When Paul says that salvation is *“the gift of God,”* he doesn't mean that salvation is unconditional. If it is, then the expression *“through faith”* has no meaning in this passage. Obedience which springs from faith is never placed in contrast with faith, nor is such obedience ever represented as making faith void. Christ is *“the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him”* (Heb. 5:9).

The New Testament reveals different kinds of works. (1) The works of the Law of Moses, by which we cannot be justified. *“For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified”* (Gal. 2:16). (2) The works of man. Such a work if followed in religion will lead, not to, but away from God. Salvation did not proceed from ourselves, *“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us”* (Tit., 3:5). The works of God, any works commanded by God, proceed from Him, and when it is obeyed it is not meritorious, but obedience to God. Jesus was asked this question, *“What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, this is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom he hath sent”* (John

6:28,29).

The Works of God are two-fold in their nature. First, His rich provisions to save man—His boundless love (John 3:16), the sacrificial death of Christ and the atoning blood of Christ (I Pet. 1:18-19). *“The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men”* (Tit. 2:11. Second, the revelation of the gracious provisions to lost man in the gospel of Christ, which is *“the power of God unto salvation”* (Rom. 1:16). This revelation of His plan to Man was as much a matter of grace as was His provisional plan. It consisted of announcing to man the conditions upon which He could freely convey salvation. To the elders of the church at Ephesus Paul said, *“And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified”* (Acts 20:32).

### **Forgiveness For The Alien Sinners**

In being saved by grace through faith, man must believe. Jesus said, *“If ye believe not that I am he, you shall die in your sins”* (John 8:24). *“Without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him”* (Heb. 11:6). He must repent of his sins. In Acts 17:30 we are told that God *“now commandeth all men everywhere to repent.”* In climaxing salvation by grace, man must confess what he believes in his heart, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Rom. 10:9-10), and is then baptized into Christ. *“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ”* (Gal. 3:27). Salvation, remission of sins, and justification have been provided by the grace of God.

### **Grace Provides, Faith Obeys**

Salvation for the lost is provided and offered by God’s grace; it is received and appropriated by man’s faith. We can only accept by faith that which was provided or made possible by God’s grace. God in His mercy provides; man in humble submission must appropriate all of His provisions. What man cannot do in his salvation, God did for him. Man could not devise the scheme of redemption. God could and did. *“According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Eph. 3:11). God loved us while we were yet sinners (Rom. 5:8), and manifested that love in the gift of His Son, *“that he by the grace of God could taste death for every man”* (Heb. 2:9). This grace which made possible our salvation from sin was made possible in the purpose and plan of God before the world began. *“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began”* (2 Tim. 1:9). But man must hear, believe, and obey God’s revelation to be saved by the grace of God. In an utterance of great importance Peter said, *“Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness is accepted with him”* (Acts 10:34-35). When man is accepted of God he is saved and when he saved it is by the grace of God. Salvation is indeed a gift, but it always takes two to perfect a gift — one to make the offer and another to accept it.

### **No Cause to Boast**

Man is saved by grace as he accept's God's grace and demonstrates his faith by his obedience, but he still has no cause to boast. His salvation has not been made possible by the works of the law, nor by his works of merit. If it were by our works salvation would not be by grace, but rather a matter of debt. When the Scriptures say we are saved by works, the reference is to works of faith. A work of faith is a condition met, or a command obeyed, which manifests one's faith, yet is not sufficient to earn the reward. Jesus made it clear in Luke 17:10 that when one has done all things commanded of him, he is still an unprofitable servant. *"So likewise ye when ye shall have done all things commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do."* His disciples are to serve Him faithfully, it matters not what the service may be; some service will be delightful, other services will be unpleasant. *"Unprofitable"* does not mean useless, but having rendered no service beyond what was due. The necessity of doing the works of God excludes boasting. *"For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel"* (I Cor.9:16). We can apply this principle to every command of God. Apply this to godly living, attending the services, praying, giving, studying daily, visits, and endeavoring to restore the unfaithful. In doing these things we are only doing that which is our duty to do as provided by God's grace and revealed in the gospel.

When we stand before the judgment seat of Christ in that last day and He says, *"Well done, thou good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joys of the Lord"* (Matt. 25:21), we will have no room to boast. Truly, it will be salvation by grace, the unmerited favor of God. *"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them"* (Eph. 1:10).

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