

Rom. 14:19
So then let
us follow
after things
which make
for peace,
and things
whereby we
may edify
one
another.

John 8:32 And
ye shall know
the truth and
the truth shall
make you free.

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SALVATION, THE RESULT OF FAITH

Jim Stauffer

Paul, in explaining how the salvation of God was for everyone, both Jew and Gentile says it is because all men have sinned (**Rom. 3:23**). He then provides more details by saying this salvation for the sinner comes by way of the free grace of God through the redemption which is in Christ. (**see Rom. 3:24**) Redemption is the same principle Jesus used to explain His mission when He said He came to *give his life a ransom for many* (**Mat. 20:28**).

The passage goes on to explain the blood of Christ offered on the cross is to be a propitiation for all those who sinned, but in reality serves only those who have faith in that Christ as the Son of God (**Rom. 3:25; Rom. 10:9,10**). He goes on to tell us this grace extended from God to man proves the righteousness of God and identifies Him as Just and also the Justifier of those who have faith in Christ. Justification and righteousness represent the same condition of the soul of man. It is something we do not possess since we have sinned. Furthermore, that sin having left us in an unjustified condition has also separated us from a justified or righteous God (**Isa. 59:1,2**).

The solution to this predicament in which man finds himself, is the message of the gospel, the concept of salvation (**1 Cor. 15:1-4**). Salvation is predicated on the death of Christ for our sins and our faith in Him. Incidentally, so is the establishment of His eternal kingdom, the church. Jesus tells us He will die to establish or purchase the church (**Mat. 16:18; Acts 20:28**). Daniel tells us this kingdom of Christ, the church over which Jesus reigns in heaven now (**Eph. 1:22,23**) will never be destroyed (**Daniel 2:44; 7:13,14**). Those who are justified by His blood are saved and thus become members of His kingdom. The apostles began preaching this very message on the first Pentecost following the death of Christ. When they preached it to the very Jews who had called for His death, their response to the message was, *Brethren, what shall we do (Acts 2:37)?* Peter's response was, *Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus*

Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). When they gladly received the word and were baptized they were added to the church (**Acts 2:41,47**). The same act of faith called for here was what Jesus demanded be taught to receive salvation in **Mark. 16:15,16**.

When our obedience to Christ is consummated in baptism, we are then brought in contact with His cleansing blood. This happens when our faith in Him leads us to this baptismal burial into His death (**Rom. 6:4-6**). At this point we have been bought with a price (**1 Cor. 6:20; 7:23**). That price being paid by Christ as He was sacrificed on the cross bearing our sins (**Isa. 53:5; Heb. 9:28**). He purchased the church/kingdom with His blood. The purchase of our souls was complete when we decided *to obey from the heart that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered (Rom. 6:17)*.

In this way we are saved by faith just as Abraham was when he offered Isaac on the altar in obedience to God's command. His justification came when his faith was completed in his works. This was the point when Abraham was said to believe in God. It was reckoned unto him for righteousness and he was called the friend of God. A man, then must combine works with his faith to be justified (**Jas. 2:21-24**).

Yes, salvation is by the same kind of faith men in Scripture had; an active faith that leads to obedience. Any other kind of faith is tantamount to the dead faith James warns us of. **James 2:14** *What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but have not works? can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister be naked and in lack of daily food, 6 and one of you say unto them, Go in peace, be ye warmed and filled; and yet ye give them not the things needful to the body; what doth it profit? 17 Even so faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself.*

By an active faith we are added to the church, redeemed by His blood, justified by God's grace and added to the church Jesus purchased with His blood.

OT PASSAGES IN MATTHEW 2 No. 2

“Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him. When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt I called My Son” (Matthew 2:13-15 NKJV).

Soon, Joseph, Mary, and Jesus, having been warned by an angel, were fleeing the murderous wrath and jealousy of Herod. Leaving at night in order to escape Herod’s notice, this young family made their way to Egypt. Bible students remember that the Israelites suffered in Egyptian bondage for 400 years under the cruel terror of Pharaoh. Is this reminiscent of the nighttime journey of Israel when they left Egypt (**Exodus 12:31**)? Too, later in OT history some of God’s people sought refuge in Egypt (**Jeremiah 26:21-23**). In the 1st c. there was a sizeable Jewish population in Egypt; Alexandria was home to nearly 300,000 Jews; Jews from Egypt were present on Pentecost (**Acts 2:10**). So, these nighttime travelers would not be strangers when they arrived in Egypt. Matthew says that what happened was the fulfillment of the words of the prophet: *“Out of Egypt I called My Son.”* This is a quotation from **Hosea 11:1**. What did Hosea mean? What did Matthew mean?

Let’s begin with this statement: Scripture written aforetime (**Romans 15:4**) was fulfilled when Jesus returned/made His exodus from Egypt. The Hebrew quotation of Hosea renders the passage: *“Out of Egypt I called My Son.”* The LXX says: *“out of Egypt I have called his children.”* The Hosea passage refers to God calling His children out of Egypt, the primary application. When reading Hosea it is clear, that the Lord affirms His love for His people. It was always that way. He called them forth from Egyptian bondage; by themselves they would have perished. Israel is *“my son.”* God freely chose Israel; Israel became His son. But isn’t there more?

There is another Son. There is another flight into Egypt. Jacob and sons fled to Egypt to escape the famine in Palestine. Joseph and family fled to Egypt to escape the wrath of Herod. *“Then you shall say to Pharaoh, Thus says the LORD: Israel is My son, My firstborn. So I say to you, let My son go that he may serve Me. But if you refuse to let him go, indeed I will kill your son, your firstborn” (Exodus 4:22-23).* Refuge was found in Egypt, but a return from Egypt had to take place for God’s future plans and purposes to be carried out. This was true for the Israelites; this was true for Jesus. *“I will not execute the fierceness of My anger; I*

will not again destroy Ephraim. For I am God, and not man, The Holy One in your midst; And I will not come with terror” (Hosea 11:9). Yes, God punished His people because of their sin. He also looked to the time when He would provide redemption for His people—redemption that could only come from the seed of the woman. While Hosea referred to the Exodus, Matthew understood Hosea’s text as referring to the Messiah.

Jesus, Immanuel, God’s Son, our Savior is integral to Israel’s story. He is integral to our story. God chose Israel and acted to save them. God loves you and has acted to save you. Are you still in Egypt?

Randy Harshbarger

Tell Me The Truth: Are We Saved By Grace or Not?

Wes McAdams

I recently had a rather unfortunate debate on Facebook that revolved around a conversation I had with my son. I posted that I had told my son, people don’t go to heaven because they are obedient; they go to heaven because God is gracious and sent Jesus to die on the cross. Of course I wasn’t undermining the importance and necessity of obedience, but I was making the point that God saves us, *“not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace” (2 Timothy 1:9).* But it seems many are rather uncomfortable with that concept. So I want to address the question, “Are we saved by grace or not?”

What Does “By Grace” Mean?

There is so much confusion over the issue of grace. We all know there are those who abuse the word, acting as if grace is a license to sin or a freedom from obedience (**Jude 1:4; Romans 6:1-7**). Those kinds of people clearly don’t understand God or His grace.

But on the other hand, there are Christians who seem to only talk about what grace is not. They seldom – if ever – talk about what grace is. They get very nervous when they hear, “Saved by grace.” They are quick to say, “Yeah, kind of, but not really!” They rush to dilute teachings on grace, for fear it might be “taken too far.”

Just so you know, when you hear the words “by grace” it just means something good is given that wasn’t earned or merited. So when you receive something good, it was either given by grace or by merit. Or as the apostle Paul puts in Romans 4:4, it is either a *“wage”* or a *“gift.”* It is that simple and there is no middle ground.

The air we breathe, for instance, is given to us from God. Is it given by grace or by merit? What could we possibly do to earn the air we breathe? It is laughable to think we could. Death and punishment are the **only**

wages we've earned from God (**Romans 3:23; 6:23**). Everything else is a gracious gift. When we fill our lungs with air we should say, "Thank You, God for graciously giving me air to breath!"

It is absolutely impossible to take grace too far! Pervert it, Yes! But take it too far, absolutely not! In fact, God desires to show us, "*the immeasurable riches of his grace*" (**Ephesians 2:7**).

Salvation By Grace?

This issue is most significant when it comes to salvation. Eternal life is either earned or it is given as a gift of grace. Scripture makes it clear it is the latter. In fact, those in the first century who claimed to have earned eternal life by their obedience to the Law disqualified themselves from possessing it (**Galatians 5:4**).

If we've received salvation from God then it is either by grace or by merit. It is either deserved or undeserved. To say something like, "Salvation is by grace but not grace alone," is to say it is somehow merited and unmerited at the same time. This not only makes no sense, but is entirely unbiblical. Listen to the word of God: "*But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ - by grace you have been saved - and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them*" (**Ephesians 2:4-10**).

All a person is saying when he says we are saved "by grace" is our salvation is completely undeserved and unmerited. We deserve punishment, but because of what Jesus did at the cross we are able to receive eternal life. Salvation is "by grace." That's what God's word says; don't add to that or take away from it.

How Do I Receive the Gift?

The appropriate question then is, "How do I receive this gift?" The biblical answer is, "through faith." Much like the word "grace," the word "faith" is also very misunderstood.

Faith might best be understood as a "total surrender" to God. When we hear and believe that God is able and willing to save us from the horrible fate we deserve, we totally surrender ourselves to Him, trusting Him to save us from what we deserve.

Repenting and being immersed in water for the forgiveness of our sins (**Acts 2:38**) is how we "*call on the*

name of the Lord" (**Acts 22:16**) and appeal to Him for "*a clean conscience*" (**1 Peter 3:21**). It is in this act of faith that we clothe ourselves with Christ (**Galatians 3:27**). It is at this point - and this point alone - that our sins are washed away (**Acts 22:16**). We come up from the water rejoicing (**Acts 8:39**) because it is by grace that we have been saved! **None** of it by merit, **all** of it by grace!

What About Obedience?

Does this mean we don't have to obey? Of course not! That is an absolutely absurd suggestion!

It just means your obedience does not merit your salvation (that's what "by grace" means). We obey because we are trusting in God to save us, both at our baptism and in our continually walking with Him in faith. Obedience is a matter of entrusting our souls to a faithful Creator (**1 Peter 4:19**).

Disobedience, on the other hand, is how you reject the gift (**see Hebrews 3:12-19**). The gracious gift of salvation is either accepted by humble obedient faith or - at any point - rejected by stubborn and sinful pride: "*For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of the two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace*" (**Hebrews 10:26-29**)?

Saying we are saved by grace does **not** negate the necessity of obedience. It does not mean there is nothing we must do to be saved or to remain in a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. It just means that even after all of our obedience, we will always be "*unworthy servants*" (**Luke 17:10**) who are saved by God's amazing grace and **not** by our own merit.

~via **Capshaw Beacon**; Capshaw, Alabama. **Taken from the Market Street Messenger, Athens, Al.**

Rom. 3:21 *But now apart from the law a righteousness of God hath been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ unto all them that believe; for there is no distinction; 23 for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God; 24 being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, in his blood, to show his righteousness because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God; 26 for the showing, I say, of his righteousness at this present season: that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus.*

Eph. 2:19 So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;

1Pet. 2:9 But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Psa. 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

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What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10