

THE GRACE THAT SAVES

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Part 3

Most churches claim to believe and preach salvation by grace. Even some of the cults say they believe in salvation by grace. That is why we must define what we mean when we say we believe in salvation by grace because when it comes to salvation accuracy is what counts, not sincerity. Many people are sincere, but they are sincerely wrong about salvation, especially salvation by grace.

Did you know it is possible to believe in salvation by grace and still be lost? How is that possible? Because the grace many believe in today is the wrong kind of grace. Not just any kind of grace will save you. What is saving grace? In Ephesians 2:8-9, Paul defines saving grace. He wrote: ***For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.***

The grace that saves today is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast. Men have always been saved by Grace, but the grace hasn't always been the gift of God. Grace is God bestowing favor, blessing and salvation upon someone, but the grace hasn't always been unmerited or unearned or a gift.

God's grace can be found in both Testaments, but there are differences.

Under the Old Testament Law, grace was not received the same way it is under the New Testament. Old Testament grace was obtained by *faith and works*.

In Psalms 84:11 it says: ***For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.***

According to this verse, under the Law God bestowed grace, glory, and favor upon those who *walked uprightly*. Grace was conditional upon the walk and behavior of the person God gave it to. If the person walked uprightly, God was gracious unto him. If the person did not walk uprightly, God withheld His grace from him.

In Exodus 20:5-6 It says: ***I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.***

According to these verses, under the Law God showed mercy and grace to them that loved him and kept his commandments. If a person under the law loved God and kept his commandments, God was merciful and gracious to him. If he did not love God or keep his commandments, God was not merciful or gracious to him. Therefore, under the Law the grace of God was conditional upon loving God, keeping his commandments and walking uprightly.

A good example of Old Testament grace is the salvation of Noah. Noah was saved from the flood by grace for Genesis 6:8 says; ***Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.***

But, why did Noah find grace in the eyes of the Lord when the rest of the world perished? The next verse tells us why. Genesis 6:9 says: ***These are the generations***

of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.

Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord because he walked uprightly, was a just man, perfect in his generations and walked with God. Even though he did not live under the Old Testament Law, the grace he was saved by is typical of all those saved under the Law of the Old Testament.

The sad thing today is there are people who preach grace today, but it is Old Testament grace. Some teach that a person obtains the grace and favor of God today by their works and behavior. That kind of grace will not save you today. The grace that saves sinners today is the gift of God, not of works. True saving grace is unmerited and undeserved today and that's proven to be so by the ones He gives it to.

The Gentiles in Ephesus are good examples of New Testament grace. They were saved by grace according to Ephesians 2:8, but what kind of people were they, when God saved them? Were they like Noah? No! They were just the opposite. Here is what Paul says about them in Ephesians 2:1-5: ***And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)*** And according to Acts 19 they also ***worshipped idols.***

These are the kind of people God is gracious to today. They did not earn, deserve or merit the grace of God. God bestowed grace upon them freely and unconditionally in spite of their condition. There is no comparison between them and Noah. If they resembled anyone it was those God destroyed with the flood in Noah's day. Today, God is bestowing grace, favor and salvation upon men that in times past He destroyed.

Saving grace today is unmerited, unearned and undeserved. The reason God has made grace a gift today is so anybody can be saved, no matter who or what they are. The grace of God has opened the door of salvation wide enough for anyone to get saved, no matter how wicked or vile they may be. The apostle Paul is proof of this, for when God saved him he said he was a blasphemer, a murderer and the chief of sinners. He was probably the worst man on planet earth when God saved him. God picked him out to save to show in him how exceedingly rich his grace, mercy and longsuffering is. In 1 Timothy 1: 15-16 he wrote: ***This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew***

forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

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