

Our Firm Foundation on God's Grace

If it were not for God's Grace, mankind would have been without any hope ever since Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden. As Creator of the Universe, God had every right to destroy man and start over, but He did not. Instead, He extended His love in an undeserved, unmerited, unearned plan of salvation to man, without any requirements as to social status, wealth or natural ability. That offer of salvation is God's dispensation of GRACE.

GOLDEN TEXT:

But God commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8

SCRIPTURE TEXTS:

Genesis 22:7, 8; John 1:29,36,10-14; Ephesians 2:4-9; Romans 6:1,2

GENESIS 22:7, 8

7 And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?

8 And Abraham said; My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering:...

JOHN 1:29,36,10-14

29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God,

which taketh away the sins of the world.

36 And looking upon Jesus as He walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons

of God, even to them that believe on his name:

13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

EPHESIANS 2:4-9

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love

wherewith He loved us,

5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

7 That in ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

ROMANS 6:1,2

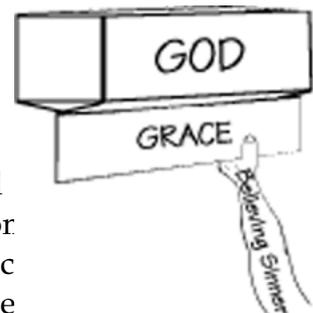
1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

INTRODUCTION:

If it were not for the GRACE of God, Jesus Christ would never have been born to be the Savior of the world. If it were not for the GRACE of God, you and I would never have heard the Gospel message. If it were not for the GRACE of God, Jesus would never have bled and died for us on Calvary, nor risen from the dead. If it were not for the GRACE of God, you and I would never have believed the message when we heard it. It would have seemed too fantastic, too unbelievable, too good to be true, to be of no consequence to us or any of a thousand other excuses. If it were not for the GRACE of God, you and I would never have felt the conviction of the Holy Spirit to prick our hearts.

If it were not for the GRACE of God, you and I would never have had the opportunity to Repent of our sins. If it were not for the GRACE of God, you and I would never have had the opportunity to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the Remission [*Forgiveness*] of our sins. If it were not for the GRACE of God, you and would never have the opportunity to receive the confirmation from God that He knew we were whole-hearted in our belief and repentance with the Holy Spirit as first evidenced by having spoken in "tongue



we never learned — perhaps heavenly, but sometimes a language known to others. If it were not for the GRACE of God, you and I would never have His perfect assurance and peace. These are but a few of the key things that Grace is. It is the mercy and love of God extended to us in salvation and a whole new life as new creatures in Christ Jesus. Grace is not, as the Apostle Paul declares in Romans 6:1,2, a license to sin nor to continue in sin.

1. WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE WORD “GRACE”?

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word *chen* (pronounced *khane*), is translated grace and means favor, grace(ious), pleasant, precious, [well-] favored. In the New Testament, it is the Greek word *charis* (pronounced *kharece*) which adds “acceptable, benefit, favor, gift and liberality” to the Old Testament list of meanings. Essentially Grace is the result of God’s love. Our usual Bible Dictionary meaning of **grace**, is “Unmerited, unearned or undeserved favor.”

It was the Grace of God that put Jesus in the place at the time for the rich young ruler of Matthew 19:16-22 to ask Him what to do to inherit eternal life. Notice that Jesus did not tell him to just believe. [Incidentally, many Bible scholars believe this man may have been Nicodemus and this narrative simply another writer’s view of the events in John 3:1-21.] Jesus asked that the young man prove his belief by obeying and the young man spurned or rejected the grace offered to him at that time. Since the young man had asked what to do to inherit eternal life, he must not have truly believed Jesus or surely he would have obeyed. Jesus was there to dispense grace, but the rich young ruler refused that dispensation.

God is the dispenser of Grace. He is always there and His grace is always free., but we must reach out for it in faith believing. In other words, *dispensation* is the passive offering of something which must be taken. Man must activate the dispenser in the way the instructions (the Bible, in this case) directs and take possession of the dispensation. (However, God does reach out to us to offer His grace.)

The important thing we need to remember is that grace is the undeserved, unmerited, undeserved offering of forgiveness, remission or pardon or pleasure. It is dispensed freely, without price or ability to pay to all who will reach for it. Without God’s grace, there would be no salvation for anyone.

2. HOW DID GOD DISPENSE HIS GRACE?

In the Garden of Eden, after Adam and Eve had sinned, God promised that the seed of woman would bruise the head of Satan and that Satan would bruise His heel. This has always been understood to be God’s first promise of the coming Messiah. (See Genesis 3:13-15). In Genesis 22:7, 8, when Isaac asked his father, “Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” And Abraham said; “My son, God will provide HIMSELF a Lamb for a burnt offering...” it is easy to see John the Baptist answering through the corridors of time, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.” (John 1:29). In John 1:1-14, we have the description of how the Great Creator came into the world and was despised and rejected by those very ones whom He came to seek and save.

a) **Jesus paid our debt.**

Because of Adam and Eve's sin, we are all under the curse of death. In the Old Testament, there was a long list of the sacrifices required to make atonement for sins, but they could not offer power to overcome temptations nor give a new life. The best they could offer was a payment to God for sin(s) already committed.

For us to enjoy our relationship with God, we need power to overcome temptations and the forces of evil and a whole new nature that focuses our desires on pleasing Him instead of ourselves. In order to make such a transformation possible and to pay the debt of sin, God extended His grace by becoming flesh, half God, half man and being tempted in every way we are, yet without sin, (*see Hebrews 4:15*). Being God, He overcame all temptations, then gave His sinless life as a sacrifice to make permanent atonement for our sins. This was the unmerited favor God extended to us.

Nothing we ever did, might do or could do could possibly pay for such gracious favor. There is no way we could ever earn having the Spirit of God enrobing Himself in flesh and suffering and dieing to pay for our sinfulness. *"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,"* (Ephesians 2:8,9). It is true GRACE.

b) Grace provides overcoming power .

"But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me..." (Acts 1:8). This promise was first made to the five hundred or so who witnessed Jesus' ascension from the mount of Olives [*see 1 Corinthians 15:6*], but its validity extends through them to all that will follow after until His word has reached "the uttermost part of the earth." God confirmed the believer's salvation, empowered them to witness and to overcome evil and temptation by pouring out the Holy Spirit on the 120 in the upper room (Acts 2:4), in Samaria (Acts 8:15-19), in the household of Cornelius, the Roman Army Captain (Acts 10:44,45), and in Ephesus where Paul rebaptized the Baptist believers in Jesus' name and they then received the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:1-6). As we shall see in Lesson 6, *God's Confirming Gift*, this gift is given to **ALL** who take possession of God's dispensation of Grace. Today, you too, may have the same gift, the same power, if you will seek the Lord with your whole heart. God will dispense His Grace on you by the Holy Spirit baptism and initial infilling. You will know beyond doubt that He has!

3. HOW DO WE OBTAIN GOD'S GRACE?

a) Our Obedience

Obedience is necessary if we would receive our personal dispensation of grace. *"By whom [Jesus] we have received grace and apostleship, for [or unto] obedience to the faith among all nations, for His name,"* (Romans 1:5).

When you operate a paper towel dispenser, you must follow the instructions for that dispenser. The towels are free to all, but to obtain a dispensation of a towel, you must activate the dispenser in the right way as the instructions say. The same is true of God's grace. It is free to all, but does require certain things of those who would receive the dispensation of grace.

Or liken the Power of the Holy Spirit to the power of electricity. Electricity occurs in nature in the form of static electricity, magnetism and lightning. If man follows the

rules, he may harness that power. The big generators and alternators that furnish our electrical power do not create electricity, but convert it from static magnetism to a flowing current. So long as man obeys the rules, it is a powerful force for good. But that same power that lights our homes and fries the bacon will also burn down the house if the rules are violated. While man does make merchandise of electrical power, God created it and provided it to man without cost. So too, many ministers make merchandise of the Gospel and the power of the Holy Spirit for their own personal gain. That does not mean that we cannot have the power of God through obedience to his rules even if we go through those who make merchandise of it. But His grace makes Holy Spirit power available to us. We will study the three steps that are absolutely necessary to obtain the dispensation of God's grace in the next three lessons.

b) God's Grace

As we pointed out in the beginning of this lesson, grace is the undeserved, unmerited and unearned favor of God. From birth, our lives begin in self-will and self-gratification without any regard for what God wants us to do and be. But from the moment of birth, we are also in the presence of the grace of God. Why do some people receive a personal dispensation of grace and live victorious, overcoming, happy lives while others live in sin, despair, jealousy, and defeat and even material wealth cannot erase the underlying gloom in their lives?

The difference lies in the fact that those who live the joyful, overcoming lives are those who have been turned on by the dispensation of God's grace in their lives.

SUMMARY:

The Love of God is extended to us through His **Grace**, providing favor and forgiveness which we have no natural reason to expect from Him. It is this undeserved favor that provides for our salvation from sin, our bodily healing and our peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Without His grace any religious ritual we might undertake would be worthless.