

# What Does Grace Mean?

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Of all God's spiritual blessings, one of the most glorious is grace. The scriptures are all in concert that if salvation is by grace then it can't be by works otherwise grace isn't really grace (Romans 11:6). The general position is there are only two possible offerings of salvation..... men's works and God's grace but grace and works are opposite, thus salvation cannot possibly be of any combination or mixture of both. It must be wholly one or the other, accordingly it is essential for all of God's people to understand that grace (the unmerited favor of God) is the only possible solution to alleviating the sin problem. This is true regardless of the dispensational settings of God's elect. Mankind is totally depraved and incapable of fulfilling any of the requirements of meeting God's standards. In this light it was of necessity for God to provide the only means of salvation, **HIS GRACE**.

Ephesians 2:5,8 state, "**for by grace ye are saved**," thus salvation can only be realized in one way, i.e., by the marvelous, matchless grace of God! But what does **GRACE** mean? Grace is God's **unmerited favor, undeserved kindness, approval, acceptance** and **favor** towards select sinners exclusively because of the merit of Jesus Christ. None of grace is deserved or earned in that neither does nor can one merit salvation in any manner. God has graciously and freely poured out His love and kindness toward those who He loved in eternity. The Scriptures give definitive descriptions of God's grace: "His kindness toward us (the undeserving ones described in Ephesians 2:1-3) through Christ Jesus" according to Ephesians 2:7. In Titus chapter 3, the elect are saved purely by the mercy and grace of God (verses 5 and 8), "not by works of righteousness which we have done but according to His mercy, He saved us . . . justified by His grace." In Titus 3:4 the grace of God is defined as "the kindness and love of God, our Savior, toward mankind."

It is ultra-important to fully comprehend the relationships between what the **grace of God IS** and what it is NOT:

**1. There is a relationship between GRACE and MERCY.** Grace focuses upon all that God gave, which was not deserved, i.e., eternal life, forgiveness of sins, peace with God, etc. Mercy focuses upon all that God did not give to those who surely deserved such, i.e., God's wrath, punishment, eternal death, hell, etc. God is gracious in that the believing sinner was freely given the gift of Christ and all that comes with Him (Romans 8:32), none of which was deserved. God was truly merciful in that He withheld His judgment and wrath; all of which was justly deserved.

**2. There is a relationship between GRACE and JUSTIFICATION.** Grace is the exclusive motive and impetus to justification. Our eternal standing with God is, "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24). Thus, we are "justified freely or "without a cause." There is no reason because there is nothing that we have done to deserve justification or salvation. We are justified **FREELY** because our salvation is totally undeserved and unearned. The reason the elect are saved is solely based on the Lord Jesus Christ—**who He is** and **what He has done** in eternity, as manifested on Calvary's cross. It is not based on our anything but on God's everything. God and God alone did the saving: salvation is exclusively of the Lord! Our only testimonies must be "Saved by grace alone, this is all my plea!" and "Oh to grace how great a debtor daily I'm constrained to be!"

**3. There is no relationship between GRACE and WAGES.** Grace has nothing to do with wages. A wage is something that a person works for and earns. Grace is something a person receives that he

does not deserve and that he cannot and did not earn. A wage is payment for work done. Grace is something freely given based upon the work done by another, even the Lord Jesus Christ.

**4. There is no relationship between GRACE and DEBT.** Grace has nothing to do with debt. Debt is something that is owed. Debt has to do with work and earnings. If an individual labors for something, it results in compensation but grace is something freely given. God does not owe anyone salvation. If God were to give us what we have earned and what He owes us, it would be **eternal death** (Romans 6:23).

**5. There is no relationship between GRACE and REWARD.** Grace has nothing to do with receiving rewards. A reward is something that is given in return for some good deed. Salvation is not a reward, which God gives in return for some act. Salvation is **by grace**, based only upon the faithfulness of Jesus Christ. It is based upon what He has done, not upon what the elect has done. If God were to reward us for how we have lived, the reward would be eternal punishment, as our reward would be nothing more than hell.

**6. There is no relationship between GRACE and BOASTING.** Salvation by grace alone, thus any act of boasting in oneself is absolutely and totally excluded. Romans 3:27 states, "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith." Ephesians 2:9 states, "not out of works, that no one might boast." I Corinthians 1:31 states, "That, according as it is written, He that glories [boasts], let him glory [boast] in the Lord." In this light, all boasting and glorying must be in the Lord for boasting says, "Look at what I have done! Look at what I have earned! Look at the good I have performed! Look at my good works! Look at what I have accomplished! Look at my dedication! Look at my commitment! Look at my love for the Savior! Look at my surrender to Christ! Look at my obedience to His commands! Look at my submission to His Word!" ALL SUCH BOASTING IS EXCLUDED because salvation is earned exclusively by grace through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ in the eternal realm. Those who understand the true concept of "having been saved by grace," will say, "**Look at what my Savior has done! Look at what He has accomplished!**" Here the focus is away from SELF to the crucified and risen Savior!

**7. There is no relationship between GRACE and WORKS.** Romans 11:5-6 states, " Likewise then also in the present time there has been (was and is) a remnant according to the election (choice) of grace; and if by grace (it is) no longer out of works, otherwise the grace is no longer grace." Here we glean that it is not God's purpose to save all men nor is it His purpose to save most men, but to save those who He has chosen in Christ before the foundations (creation) of the world (Romans 8:28-39; 9:11; Ephesians 1:11; II Timothy 1:9). Accordingly, God alone made the decision concerning the salvation of His elect, so it is God's sovereign choice without any meritorious part of mankind, which defines what grace truly is. In Romans 11:5, it was not God's purpose to save all Jews, in that He selectively saved some of them (I Corinthians 9:22) and these are referred to as the remnant. The word "remnant" refers to the small number of Jews who are being saved in this Church age.

Here the implication is very clear, i.e. if there was no election of grace, there would be no remnant, and thus, none of the Jews would be saved today. The phrase "according to the election of grace," basically spells out how the workings of grace operate, i.e., they were brought "into being", according to the principle of election which belongs to grace. The factor of grace (or no merit) on the part of those saved is proved by the fact that their selection rested entirely on God's sovereignty in eternity, of calling out (saving) His elect solely on the basis of the merit of Jesus Christ. In this view, election depends upon grace to make it effectual and grace depends on election for those who have been pre-determined to believe the gospel.

In Romans 11:6 the phrase, "but if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work," is not in the older Greek manuscripts and rightfully should be omitted in exegeting this verse. This is because it gives the impression that works is as viable as grace when included in this verse. Thus the reading should simply be "And if by grace, it is no longer out of works, for then grace is no longer grace," which does not go beyond the definition of what grace is and what it is not. Romans

11:6 makes it very clear that grace and works are at opposite ends of the spectrum and that they are mutually exclusive. To draw a distinct line of demarcation, it is important to consider the exact meaning of both "grace and "works."

Here "kah•rees", translated "grace" conveys the meanings of a free gift, or free favor, freely given for all that is necessary for salvation. Grace focuses on what God has accomplished in Christ, as His bestowal of salvation included both the provision and the means by which grace is appropriated, i.e., by or through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8-9). The word "ehr•gon" rendered works refers to anything that man may endeavor to produce in his flesh to gain acceptance with God. In biblical terms, this word is generally used in conjunction with the works of the Law. So salvation by and through grace is a free gift from God whereas the effort to obtain salvation by the works of the Law is futile due to the weakness of the flesh (Romans 8:3).

Thus when one attempts to mix grace and works together, it effectively cancels both. Salvation cannot possibly be of any combination or mixture of both; It is either one or of the other. In light of this, no man made remedy or solution or antidote is sufficient to accommodate that which is required to satisfy God's just demands of righteousness. No rite, no ritual, no ceremony, in fact no baptismal ceremony, no religious function(s), no do penance, nor repentance, no matter what it is; nothing but the blood of Jesus is competent to deliver us faultless before God, free and acceptable to God. Accordingly it is essential for all of God's people to understand that righteousness before God is obtained only through imputation, i.e. the righteousness of God being transformed to mankind through the merit of Jesus Christ. Thus the explicit statement is that if there is present the works of the law or any other exertions, the result is, **"grace is no more grace"**.