

SAVED BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH FOR GOOD WORKS

What exactly do we mean by Saved or Salvation? It is a word that is very common and coveted among religious people and shunned or put in the background of the minds of those who are not religious.

If we examine what it means in the New Testament it is used or applied to many things ((like so many other words are):

- The word Salvation (from the Greek, [σωτηρία]) itself means deliverance, preservation, and salvation.
- It could be salvation or deliverance from the sea, from prison, or from the condemnation of God because of sin and etc.

In our study, we want to apply it to “**Salvation From Sin.**” And specifically, we want to address “**Salvation By Grace Through Faith, Not By Works Which We Did Ourselves.**” This is taken from **Ephesians 2:8-10 (NIV)** 8 “For it is **by grace** you have been **saved, through faith**—and **this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God**— 9 **not by works**, so that no one can boast. 10 ***For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.***” Another passage of scripture that makes this clear is **Titus 3:5 (NIV)** 5 ***he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.***

In reading these two scriptures it should be completely clear that ***we are saved by God’s grace through our faith and not by our own works of righteousness.*** There are many other scriptures that teach this also, but these are sufficient when taken in context to prove to any seeker of God’s truth. It is by the grace of God and our faith in Him to apply Christ’s blood to wash us, cleanse us, so that we experience a **rebirth** and **renewal** by the Holy Spirit (**Titus 3:5; This was also what God promised in Acts 2:38**). ***We are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works*** (**Ephesians 2:10**). We “do good works,” because we are cleansed, washed, forgiven, saved, not in order to be saved! ***The good works that we do are simply living for Christ, following the Spirit’s teaching.*** When we become God’s child we are to live a life **worthy** (meaning suitably, worthily, in a manner worthy of) **of our calling** (**Ephesians 4:1**). ***We were called to be holy.*** Paul writes, “To **the church of God** in Corinth, **to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy**, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours:”) [**1 Corinthians 1:2 (NIV)**]. All Christians are called by the gospel (**Romans 1:16-17; 2 Thessalonians 2:14**).

Grace is used to describe many things in the Bible (pleasure, delight, favor, [see W.E. Vine’s **Expository Dictionary of New and Old Testament Words** on the Greek word- χάρις]). But in reference to God forgiving our sins it is most commonly defined as, “**Free, unmerited favor.**” Salvation by works of merit is therefore utterly impossible “**For the wages of sin is death**, but the **gift** of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”(**Romans 6:23 (NIV)**). God had the same thing to say in the Old Testament in **Ezekiel 18:20 (NIV)** “**The soul who sins is the one who will die....**” So if a person sins, they will die. That this is speaking of a spiritual death or separation from God is made clear in **Ephesians 2:1** “As for you (Ephesian Christians, see **Ephesians 1:1**), **you were dead in your transgressions and sins.**” These Ephesians to whom Paul spoke were alive **physically** when he spoke to them, but their sins committed before their conversion had caused them to die spiritually. **But Now, in Christ**, their sins were removed and they were made alive **spiritually** (see **Ephesians 1:3, 13; 2:3-5; 11-13**).

Since all men have sinned (**Romans 3:23; 5:12**) and the wages of sin is death (**Romans 6:23**), everyone needs to be forgiven, cleansed from their sin. God provided Jesus Christ as a sacrifice for our sins “You see, at just the right time, **when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.** 7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. 8 But **God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**” (**Romans 5:6-8 (NIV)**). We were lost and helpless. We had no way of helping ourselves without God’s gift of grace. God allowed Christ to die for us, take on our sins and give us **His righteousness!** “It is because of him that you are **in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.** 31 Therefore, as it is written: “**Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.**” (**1 Corinthians 1:30-31 [NIV]**). Christ having taken our place on the cross took on our sins **so that we might be given His righteousness.** We are counted righteous, not by our performance (for all have sinned [**Romans 6:23**]) but by His gift of grace. The **unrighteous** will die in their sins. No unrighteous person will enter heaven, “Or **know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?** Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men ¹⁰nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹**And such were some of you: but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.**” (**1 Corinthians 6:9 (ASV)**).

Being counted as righteous is not a “**work**” that we have done to earn our salvation, **but an act of faith on our part in response to what God revealed concerning His remedy for the forgiveness of sin.** This solution is an act of **grace** by God, (**His unmerited favor**). It is an act of faith on our part to put our trust in God to remove our sin (which condemns us), trusting Him to make us righteous so that we can enter heaven. **In Christ**, we have been **made righteous through His sacrifice!** It is a choice for us to make, (just like the people on Pentecost), to recognize that we are sinners, worthy of death, and because of our faith in what He said to do to have our sins removed (**Acts 2:37,38**), we have chosen to do it. **Therefore, it is our faith (obedient faith) and His work that removes our sin.** “And **without faith it is impossible** to please God, because **anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.**” (**Hebrews 11:6 (NIV)**). When we, in faith, **OBEY** Him, we have done only that which He told us to do and He does the rest! He cleanses us with Christ’s blood, makes us righteous and we become His.

When we first realize that we are sinners, condemned to eternal punishment, what should our response be? It should be to ask the same question the people on Pentecost asked when they realized their lost condition! **WHAT MUST WE DO?** (**Acts 2:37**). If we are sincere, convicted of our sin, sorry that we are in this condition, what will we do when we hear the divine answer to our question? **Obey whatever divine directive is given!** This is what these people on Pentecost did – “When the people heard this (*that they were sinners, lost in sin*), they were **cut to the heart** and said to Peter and the other apostles, “**Brothers, what shall we do?**” 38 Peter replied, “**Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**” (**Acts 2:37-38 (NIV)**). This they did! “**Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.**” **Acts 2:41 (NIV)**). **What happened to the rest of the people who did not accept the answer the Holy Spirit, gave through the apostles?** Jesus said, “... Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. 16 **Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.**” (**Mark 16:15-16 (NIV)**). If we believe what Jesus said – what

happened to those who did not believe (**OBEY**) the message? They were condemned! Why were they condemned? Because they did not have faith in the grace of God! They could later change their minds and **OBEY the gospel and be saved, but as long as they refused to believe and obey they were lost!** “**God is just:** He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you 7 and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. 8 **He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.** 9 **They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power** 10 on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you.” (2 Thessalonians 1:6-10 [NIV]).

When these people on Pentecost obeyed what they were told to do, did they have bragging rights to tell people what they had done? They could only say that God, through His grace provided Jesus Christ to take on their sins so that they might be forgiven for something they could never do for themselves. **The proof of their faith** was in their **OBEDIENCE!** When they obeyed what they were told to do they simply believed what God told them and had faith that He would forgive their sins just as He promised. By obeying the divine directive, they proved their faith: **“What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him?”** 15 Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. 16 If one of you says to him, “Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? 17 **In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.** 18 **But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.” Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.** 19 **You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.** 20 **You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless?** ((James 2:14-20 (NIV)). The Spirit, through James, then shows through the remaining part of chapter 2, example after example of how men and women of faith did what God told them to do! **Obedience** is faith in action! If there is no obedience, James says, there is no faith! Jesus said, “If you love me, you will obey what I command. (John 14:15 [NIV]). And again He said, 14 You are my friends if you do what I command. (John 15:14 [NIV]).

Obedience has nothing to do with a man saving himself by his own works. **Obedience** shows man’s trust in God’s grace to save those who believe! When one obeys what God tells him to do he simply trusts in God’s truthful word, believing that God will do what He promised to do! This is what Peter referred to in 1 Peter 1:22 when he said, **“Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth** so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.” God purified those who **obeyed the truth** because they **believed that God, through His grace will save those who have faith (proven by their obedience to Him).**

There is no amount of works that **I** can do that will save me. One sin condemns me and only God, who has been offended by the sin, can say what will satisfy Him to take away that sin. If I receive what I deserve through my works, I will receive death! Because the wages or payment for sin is death. If one is saved, he is saved by grace. **But one cannot accept the grace of God while refusing to obey Him!** So while obedience doesn’t **earn** or **merit** salvation, **obedience by faith is the means God has chosen for us to accept His grace.** If we truly trust Him (believe Him), we will do what He says, giving thanks for His grace that saves us from the guilt of our sins. **Praise be to God for His marvelous love and grace!**

AMAZING GRACE

- 1 Amazing grace! how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.
- 2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed!
- 3 Thro' many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace hath bro't me safe this far,
And grace will lead me home.
- 4 The Lord has promised good to me,
His Word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures.
- 5 When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we'd first begun.¹

¹ *Logos Hymnal*. 1st edition. Oak Harbor, WA : Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1995