

OUR NEED OF GRACE

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God does not need you; you need God, and all that he through his grace has to offer. Man, at the most, has but a few days to live; and without God he has no hope for the hereafter. God reveals that he has something after death: "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but, after this the judgment." (Heb. 9:27). The sentence for eternity at that judgment will depend upon whether or not there has been made satisfaction for our sins: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:23). This is where all of us should see our need of God's grace.

"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." (Eph. 2:8,9). You cannot save yourself, my friend; salvation is the provision of God's grace. He gives us salvation; and whatever we may do of our own devising, even how nearly we comply with God's terms and conditions of salvation, there is nothing to boast of.

God gives us salvation that is grace; but he specifies conditions to be met on our part that we may have access to his grace, gift of salvation. It is through faith, a condition with which we can and must comply. "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Heb. 11:6).

He who contends that salvation is by grace alone and there are no conditions to be met by the sinner, that there is nothing for the sinner to do in order to be saved by the grace of God, is denying the teaching of the Lord's words in Ephesians 2, and is keeping men who accept his teaching from the grace of God.

Faith as a condition of access to the grace of God is again declared: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." (Rom. 5:1,2).

GRACE AND OBEDIENCE

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." (Tit. 2:11,12).

Some men teach that God will yet bestow his grace upon men in some way so as to produce salvation. But the Bible says (see above passage) that the grace which saves has already appeared. It is a matter of accepting that which God has already made available for our redemption. He has sent his Son to die for us: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5:8).

The grace of God, in the person of his Son, has appeared, bringing salvation and teaching us (Tit. 2:12). Jesus is constantly described as our Teacher; and now, God's grace, the Teacher and his teaching are inseparably connected. We cannot partake of that grace without receiving the teaching of Christ.

This same passage in Titus informs us that there are certain things to be denied by us and a certain course of life to be pursued, in order to share in the grace of God. We must deny ungodliness and worldly lusts; we must live soberly, righteously and godly in this world; to share in his grace. We must meet the terms and conditions of his teaching; we must obey the Son; in order to be saved by his grace.

The fact that God's grace is embodied in the gift of Christ and that this grace is applied conditionally, is further amplified in this statement: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16). Grace on God's part, and compliance to terms on man's part, are inseparable in the teaching of the Bible: The teacher or preacher who would sever grace from obedience is doing violence to the teaching of the Savior and doing despite to his grace.

CHRIST THE SAVIOR

Since God has given his Son to be the Savior of men; it behooves us who are so in need of his grace to give heed to the one who can save. God himself says: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him." (Matt. 17:5).

And Moses made this declaration concerning him, as repeated by the apostle Peter: "A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you." (Acts 3:22).

Our Savior learned obedience by his suffering and death and we should certainly learn the lesson of obedience to him. More than that, we must obey him if we gain eternal life: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered: And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." (Heb. 5:8,9).

Jesus is the Savior of his body, the church: "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the savior of the body." (Eph. 5:23): "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all the things to the church.

Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all." (Eph. 1:22,23). Sinner friends, you need Christ, you need to be saved, you need to be in his church, for which he died.

WHAT TO DO

Through the grace of God he has given Christ to be our Savior and he has told us what to do in order that we might be saved.

We are not saved by the works which were required in the law of Moses. That law was taken out of the way and nailed to the cross of Christ (Col. 2:14). That law was under consideration when it was said; "Therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." (Rom. 3:28). Let no man deceive you by telling you all deeds of obedience are excluded. That is mishandling the teaching.

The Savior teaches: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned:" (Mark 16:15,16). Do you believe it? Then do it. Let no one deceive you by saying that to be baptized to be saved is a law of works and not of grace. You will be accepting God's grace when you do what his Son and our Savior says.

To sinners he had his apostle say; "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." (Acts 2:38). They that received the word were baptized and were added to the church (Acts 2:41,47).

"Do not turn from God your face; But today accept his grace."