

SALVATION BY GRACE

In our last study, we found two points of emphasis in the Old Testament. First, there was the sacrifice that sinners offered, the innocent blood of which pointed to Christ's sacrifice, and forgiveness by virtue of one's faith in Him. Second, the Old Testament contains many predictions, or "prophecies," of the actual coming to earth of the One to Whom the sacrifices pointed--the Messiah, or Anointed One--God's own dear Son.

It must be emphasized over and over that those people of old had to believe in what the sacrifice represented, in Him Who was to come. They did not find forgiveness for sin simply because they killed an animal. The key always was, and always will be, that which John 3:16 clearly states: "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." (Emphasis supplied.)

1. Open the Bible and read our "key" verse for this study: Ephesians 2:8. Answer these three vital questions:

- (a) What saves us? _____
- (b) What is the "channel" to that which saves us? _____
- (c) What is "the gift of God" in the last part of the verse?

Someone has said: "Grace is the hand of God reaching earthward. Faith is the hand of man reaching up to take hold of God's hand." When the two clasp, salvation by grace occurs.

2. We are then led to the question, How do we get this kind of faith? Read John 5:24 and Romans 10:17. Summarize what these verses tell us about the source of real faith.

- _____
3. This kind of faith is not simply "believing"--even in the Bible and what it says. Rather, it is believing in Someone, Who was the Author of the Bible, the Creator of mankind, and the Savior of sinners. How is this made clear in the following verses?

- (a) Hebrews 11:6 _____
- (b) Romans 6:23 _____
- (c) Matthew 1:21 _____
- (d) John 8:31,32 _____

4. We pick up our Bibles, open them. Then almost automatically we have faith. Or do we? Read John 16:7-9. According to these verses, what leads us to a conviction about our sinfulness, and to a faith in our need of salvation through Jesus Christ?

- _____
5. In light of the Bible passages we have read so far in this lesson, write your own simple definition of the kind of "faith" that leads to salvation.

6. When we exercise such faith, truly a gift from God, God then does for us what we cannot do for ourselves--He pardons our sins. Review Ephesians 2:8, first part. "Grace" is often called God's "unmerited favor." God does something for us that we can never do for ourselves, nor ever deserve. Complete the following sequence of thought:

(a) Romans 3:23 tells us that how many have sinned? _____

(b) Therefore, Romans 6:23 is really saying that how many deserve to die?

(c) But what did Christ do for the sinner? Summarize Romans 5:8 and Isaiah 53:4-6.

7. Grace--unmerited favor--in the Old Testament, in the New Testament, is always the same. Read Isaiah 55:6,7 and 1 John 1:9. What do these promises say to you personally?

