

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.

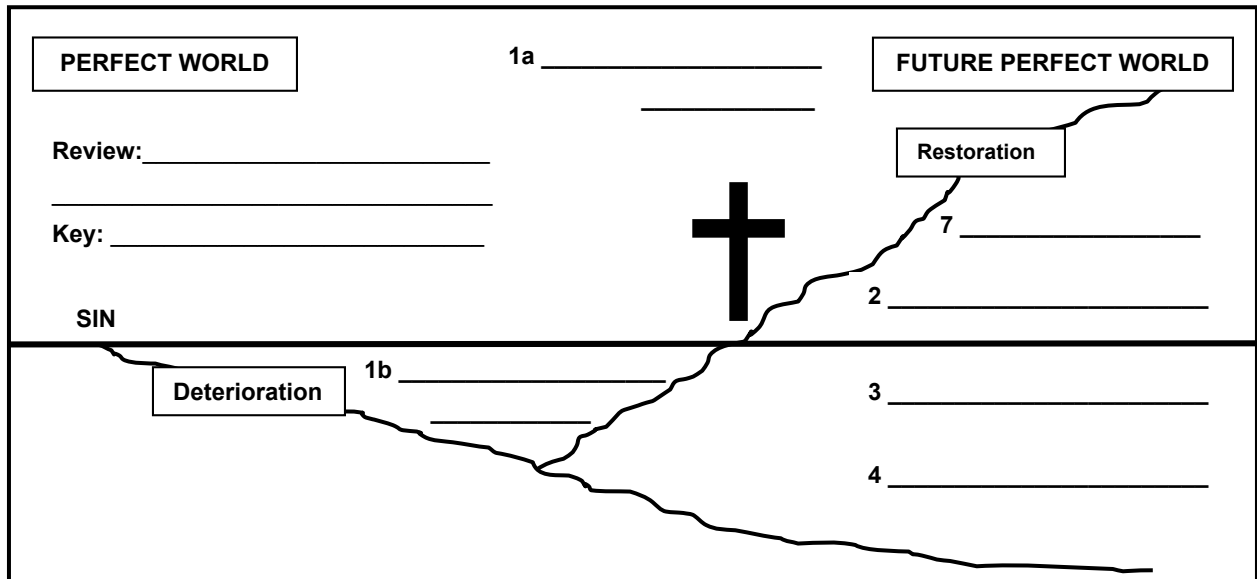
6. When we exercise such faith, truly a gift from God, God then does for us what we cannot do for ourselves--He pardons our sins. Review Ephesians 2:8, first part. "Grace" is often called God's "unmerited favor." God does something for us that we can never do for ourselves, nor ever deserve. Complete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



Introduction: John 3:16

¹⁶For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

1 Ephesians 2:8

⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, ⁹not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Answer: a. God saves us through His extended grace (giving us what we don't deserve – Salvation).

b. Faith (trust) is how we lay hold (claim) the gift of Salvation.

c. God's gift (what we don't deserve) is Salvation.

2. John 5:24

²⁴“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

(Additional text) Romans 10:17

¹⁷So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Answer: Hearing the Word (what God has revealed about Himself) causes us to have faith (trust) in Him.

3a. Hebrews 11:6

⁶But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Answer: Obedience, doing what He asks because we trust Him, pleases God.

3b. Romans 6:23

²³For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Answer: Sin, rebellion, doing things our way leads to death; while God's gift, to those who trust Him and do as he says, is eternal life.

3c. Matthew 1:21

²¹And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”

Answer: Jesus came to save His people (you and I) “from their sins”.

3d. John 8:31,32

¹Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.
³²And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

Answer: Knowing the truth about God causes us to trust God and frees us from sin.

4. John 16:7-9

⁷Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. ⁸And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: ⁹of sin, because they do not believe in Me;

Answer: The Holy Spirit convicts (points out, makes us aware) us of sin, which causes us to repent (stop what we are doing that is hurting us).

5. No Texts

Answer: Faith (trust) that causes us to “follow” (obey) Jesus leads to salvation.

6. (Review) Ephesians 2:8

⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, ⁹not of works, lest anyone should boast.

6a. Romans 3:23

²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, . . .

Answer: All (everyone, including you and I) have sinned (rebelled, done things our way, instead of God’s way).

6b. Romans 6:23

²³For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Answer: All (everyone) deserves to die because we have all sinned (rebelled against God).

6c. Romans 5:8

⁸*Blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin.”*

(Additional text) Isaiah 53:4-6

⁴Surely He has borne our griefs
 And carried our sorrows;
 Yet we esteemed Him stricken,
 Smitten by God, and afflicted.
⁵But He *was* wounded for our transgressions,
He was bruised for our iniquities;

The chastisement for our peace was upon Him,
And by His stripes we are healed.
⁶All we like sheep have gone astray;
We have turned, every one, to his own way;
And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Answer: All our sin (iniquity) was placed on Jesus and He died in our place so that we might live and not die.

7. Isaiah 55:6,7

⁶Seek the Lord while He may be found,
Call upon Him while He is near.
⁷Let the wicked forsake his way,
And the unrighteous man his thoughts;
Let him return to the Lord,
And He will have mercy on him;
And to our God,
For He will abundantly pardon.

(Additional text) 1 John 1:9

⁹If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Answer: God is ready and willing to forgive us of our sins whenever we are willing to confess and forsake our sins and He will cleanse us and make us righteous.

SALVATION BY GRACE

Notes for the Instructor

Purpose of Lesson 5: To examine Ephesians 2:8 and answer the two questions, "What is faith?" and "What is grace?" Emphasis is placed on an understanding that both faith and grace are "gifts" from God, and that faith is the "means" to an end--which is grace. This study will prelude the "how" to come to Christ in lesson 6.

During the study itself: In connection with question 1, 6 BC 1008 makes this comment on Eph. 2:8: "It is grace on God's part and faith on man's part. Faith accepts the gift of God. It is through the act of entrusting ourselves to Him that we are saved." 8 BC 420 says this: "Grace is the hand of God reaching earthward. Faith is the hand of man reaching up to take hold of God's hand." These statements may yield helpful ideas.

You might add Hebrews 11:1 to question 3(a). If you use it, explain it meaningfully. See SDA Bible Commentary on the verse. In connection with questions 2 to 4, particularly 4, make clear the wonderful miracle that the Holy Spirit performs in helping man to come to possess saving faith.

Question 5 is an attempt to get the student involved in defining the type of faith the lesson discusses. See Unto a Perfect Man, page 74, bottom of the page. It is very important to help the student see that when someone speaks of "my faith" he understands that it is a gift from God, and is his to exercise. When I accept it from God, it is mine, but I still understand that I could not have it to exercise if God had not given it to me. "Righteousness by faith" would more correctly be "righteousness by virtue of Christ's gift of faith which I exercise as my own."

Appeal: Make the passages of question 7 deeply personal.

Illustration: A good point to emphasize in the illustration is in connection with the miracle working of the Holy Spirit, as He creates within the person who earnestly studies the Bible, the gift of faith. Note that the illustration is now used in two ways. First, it covers the history of the human race from Eden, as in previous studies. Second, it is the pattern of the life of any individual, born into sin, but reclaimed by Christ. The illustration itself begins to personalize the message.

