

GOD

God Saved Us by His Grace and Gave us Power

God has given us power that we can utilize as we live for Him and stand with other believers. We received this power when we got saved, born again of God's spirit. We didn't deserve or earn our salvation: we received it by God's grace, His unmerited divine favor and benevolent kindness toward us.

To consider the great truth that we were saved by God's grace, let's begin in Acts Chapter 2, verse 47.

Acts

2:47 Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved.

This verse is the great summary statement for the first section of the Book of Acts, which documents the early history of the Church during the First Century. If we want to know how to best live our lives for God today so that we can receive the maximum benefits as we stand with our brothers and sisters in Christ, we should endeavor to understand and apply the great truths found in this first section of the Book of Acts.

Verse 47 begins with "Praising God". We know that in this present Grace Administration, we praise God perfectly by speaking in tongues. The words "having favor" more literally mean "sharing grace". We can abound in God's grace, and we can share it with others. As a result of believers in the First Century Church praising God and sharing grace with others, God was able to add to the Church, the Body of Christ to which we belong, daily "such as should be saved" or "those who were being saved."

These same great truths apply to us today, since we live in the same Administration of Grace that began on the Day of Pentecost. So, in order for us to help others to be "added to the Church", to become members of the Body of Christ and of the family of God, we should understand not only what it means to be "saved", but how one is to be saved. We also want to know why people should want to be saved: what are the benefits?

In Old Testament times, before the Day of Pentecost, the only way people could become righteous before God was to keep His commandments, to live according to all the Law of the Old Testament. But because Jesus Christ came and perfectly fulfilled the Law, offering himself as the perfect sacrifice for sin and its consequences, we are no longer under the Law. Many people today do not realize this, so they, through the man-made doctrines of religion, endeavor to live according to the Old Testament Law, which was still in effect during the Gospel Administration when Jesus Christ was personally present.

No matter what works people do, however, they cannot earn righteousness and be saved by these works. As it emphatically states in Romans 3:20, "by the deeds of the law there shall no

flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge (*full, experiential knowledge*) of sin.” It is impossible for a person to keep all the Law without committing sin.

If people can't be saved by works, then, how can they be saved? Look at Romans Chapter 10, verses 9 and 10:

Romans

10:9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

10:10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

These two verses show us how simple it is for people to be saved in this Grace Administration in which we live: we confess Jesus as Lord and believe in our hearts that God raised him from the dead. That's all, folks! Our confession and our believing bring us to the point that God can save us. He has already made salvation available, but it's up to us to confess and believe, accepting this salvation. And once we do, we're saved and can't become un-saved! Romans 11:29 says “For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.”

God didn't have to make salvation available to us in this way. He could have listed a series of laws or works that we would have to endeavor to follow and do in order to be saved. But God chose to make salvation available simply because He loves us, and He did it by His grace, His unmerited divine favor. We didn't deserve to be saved; we didn't earn it by our works. We simply accepted what God made available by His grace.

The Greek word translated “saved” in Romans 10:9 is *sōzō*, meaning “made whole”. Before we got saved, we were spiritually dead, just body and soul. When we got born again, we received God's gift of holy spirit, making us spiritually alive, complete with body, soul, and spirit. We can see that this was made available to us by God's grace in Ephesians Chapter 2:

Ephesians

2:4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

2:5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us (*made us alive*) together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

2:6 And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus:

2:7 That in the ages to come (*in all ages*) he might shew (*make a public example of*) the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:

2:9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Notice the emphasis on God's grace. We are saved by grace, not by works. Verse 8 tells us that we are saved by grace through faith – the faith of Jesus Christ, not of ourselves.

Our salvation is a gift from God, which He gave us by His grace. The word “gift” in verse 8 is from the Greek word *doron*, used to refer to a present, an offering. God, by His

unmerited divine favor, offered us the gift of salvation that was made available by the accomplishments of Jesus Christ. All we needed to do was to accept this offering by believing.

Verse 9 tells us that we didn't get salvation by our works. It wasn't our works that saved us, but God's, who gave us the gift of holy spirit and made us complete with body, soul, and spirit. We see this in verse 10:

2:10 For we are his (*God's*) workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Let's look at a few more verses that show us that we were saved by grace and not our works:

II Timothy

1:9 Who (*God*) hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which (*our calling*) was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.

Titus

3:3 For we ourselves also were sometimes (*once*) foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, *and* hating one another.

3:4 But after that (*when*) the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared,

3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost (*of holy spirit, the gift*);

3:6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior;

3:7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Once again, we see that we were saved by God's grace, not by any works that we did. Notice that verse 4 refers to "God our Savior" and verse 6 refers to "Jesus Christ our Savior". How can both be our savior when they aren't the same entity? God is the author of our salvation (He had the plan), while His Son Jesus Christ, through his accomplishments, is the agent of our salvation (he did what was needed to carry it out).

Verse 7 shows us one of the great benefits we have because we are saved: we have "the hope of eternal life". We have the Hope of Christ's Return and eternal life to look forward to. John 3:16 says: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him (*in His Son*) should not perish, but have everlasting life." And, Romans 5:9 tells us that we "shall be saved from wrath through him."

I Thessalonians

5:9 For God hath not appointed us to (*for*) wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ (*not by our works*),

5:10 Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

So, our salvation is by God's grace, not by our works. All we needed to do was to simply accept the salvation that God made available. And as we saw in Romans 10:9, we did this by our believing.

Look at Romans Chapter 1, verse 16:

Romans

1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew (*Judean*) first, and also to the Greek (*Gentile*).

The words "of Christ" are not in six of the seven Critical Greek Manuscripts and should be omitted. Here Paul was referring to the gospel, the "good news", of the Mystery that we should all be fellow-heirs, and of the same Body (Ephesians 3:6).

1:17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith (*believing*) to faith: as it is written, the just shall live by faith.

When we heard and believed God's Word (Romans 10:9), we were saved. "The just shall live by faith" is a quote from Habakkuk 2:4. Because faith was not available before the Day of Pentecost (Galatians 3:23), we know that the word translated "faith" here should be rendered "believing" ("...the just shall live by believing."). When we believe in this administration, we are made just; we are made alive (we live).

We see a similar record in Galatians 2:16:

Galatians

2:16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

Look ahead to Chapter 3, verse 11:

3:11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, *it is* evident: for, The just shall live by faith (*believing*).

Here again we see that quote from Habakkuk 2:4: The just shall live by believing. It's established.

Now that we are saved by God's grace, not by our works, it is available for us to do good works because we have power from God. Let's look at Titus, Chapter 2, beginning in verse 11:

Titus

2:11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.

2:12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

- 2:13 Looking for (*awaiting*) that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ;
- 2:14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

First, let's clarify verse 13 where we read "the glorious appearing of the great God..." Four of the Critical Greek Manuscripts better render this "...appearing of the glory of the great God and of our Savior, Christ Jesus". Christ Jesus is part of the glory of God. We have the Hope of Christ's Return.

We see in these verses once again that we are saved by God's grace, not by our works. But once we are saved, we can do good works. Let's look again at Ephesians 2:10:

Ephesians

- 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

We are God's workmanship, saved by grace, and now we can do good works. We also see this in II Corinthians 9:8:

II Corinthians

- 9:8 And God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all *things*, may abound to every good work:

We can not only do good works, but because we by God's grace have all sufficiency in all things, we can "abound to every good work." In order for us to be able to do this, we need power. And God, by His grace, gave us that power when we believed and got saved. This power was first made available on the Day of Pentecost. We see this in Acts Chapter 1:

Acts

- 1:5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost (*with the gift of holy spirit*) not many days hence.
- 1:8a But ye shall receive (*receive into manifestation*) power, after that (*when*) the Holy Ghost (*the gift of holy spirit*) is come upon you...

The gift of holy spirit that we received when we got born again is this power, referred to in Luke 24:49 as "power from on high". The Greek word for power here is *dunamis*, potential power we have that we can utilize. This power is from God: II Corinthians 4:7 says: "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." Philippians 2:13 says: "For it is God which worketh (energizes) in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure." As we operate the manifestations of holy spirit, God energizes that power that He has given us.

Ephesians, Chapter 1 tells us more about this power that God made available to us by His grace. We'll begin in verse 18:

Ephesians

- 1:18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,
1:19 And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,
1:20 Which he wrought (*energized*) in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*,

God's power (*dunamis*) that He made available to us when we believed is "exceedingly great", of the magnitude of the power (*kratos*, power with an impact) which He energized when He raised Christ from the dead. It's significant that this mention of the power God made available to us is embedded in this section of Ephesians that emphasizes God's great grace that made it available for us to be saved.

Look at Ephesians Chapter 3, verse 20:

- 3:20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power (*dunamis*) that worketh (*is energized*) in us,

This is another great verse that shows us how great this power God made available to us is. We can live the "Ephesians 3:20 lifestyle" as we abound in God's grace with power!

Let's conclude with one more verse in Ephesians that refers to this power that God made available to us through His grace:

- 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power (*kratos*) of his might.

The word "strong" here is from the Greek word *endunamoō*, meaning "to make powerful inwardly". As we stand together in the household ("in the Lord") we can be powerful inwardly with God's great power with an impact.

We've seen that because of God's great grace, His unmerited divine favor, we are saved. But not only are we saved, but God by His grace made great power available for us.

- Dr. Rick Batt