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God's Grace

By Dick Ward

Did you know we are saved by the GRACE of GOD? Most folks who profess to believe the Bible are quick to say they understand man is saved by God's grace. Ephesians 2:8 clearly states we are saved by grace, *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."*

It has amazed me to read creeds written by men which contend we are saved by grace ALONE! For example, the Baptists view contends for such: "We believe the Scriptures teach that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace; through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God;..." (Hiscock's Baptist Manual, p. 61). The word, wholly, means, entirely, completely, solely, exclusively." Does the Bible teach that lost people are saved exclusively by grace and nothing else is involved?

Does Grace Exclude Faith?

If a person or group of people say salvation is "wholly" by grace, and understand what they are saying, they exclude everything else. Would not such a view eliminate "faith" on the part of an individual seeking salvation? The Word of God plainly teaches us that man is *"...justified by faith..."* (Romans 5:1). I take it - faith and grace save because God's Book says BOTH are involved. If faith has a part in one's salvation, such proves a lost soul is not saved solely by grace!

Does Grace Exclude Obedience?

God's part (Grace) does not exclude man's part (obedience to God's commands). In the case of Noah finding "grace" in the eyes of God (Genesis 6:8) such did not exclude the obedient act of building the ark according to God's pattern. Noah could not have been saved from the flood-waters separate and apart from God's saving grace, but neither could he have been saved without strict obedience to God's instructions concerning the construction of the ark of gopher wood. God's grace in no way rules out man's working faith! Galatians. 5:6, *"For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love."*

God's Grace is Inclusive

God's grace provided the means of salvation, but all men are not saved. The plan of salvation given through God's grace has be believed and obeyed before man can be saved. Let us notice some statements of Jesus:

*"If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."
"Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."*

(John 8:24; Luke 13:3; John 3:5).

Let us never misrepresent God's grace, but rather let us appreciate it and take full advantage of it by doing our part.

Times of Services

Sundays - 2:00 pm Bible class, 3:00 pm Assembly Wednesdays - 6:30 pm Bible class

The Authority of God

By Mike Johnson

Everyone is subject to authority today. Many are employees and are thus subject to the authority of their employers. All of us, whether we want to be or not, are under the authority of our government. There is authority that by choice we put ourselves under, and there is authority that we find ourselves subject to due to circumstances.

There is one authority to which all people are subject. Man is subject to this authority whether he wants to be or not; he is subject to it no matter where he lives. This authority is the authority of God.

Authority can be either inherent or delegated. The word inherent means "intrinsic." It, according to the dictionary, exists "in someone or something as a natural and inseparable quality, characteristic, or right." It is an indwelling essence or characteristic. Delegated authority, on the other hand, is authority which is given, or appointed to or by another.

God possesses His authority inherently or intrinsically. This means that He received His power from no one. It did not come to be. God has His authority simply BECAUSE OF WHO HE IS.

Consider some reasons why God inherently has authority. First, He is the creator of the universe. Genesis 1:1 says, *"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."* The Creator does not need to obtain his rights from that which He has created. Second, God is the owner of all things. Psalms 50:10-12 says, *"For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine . . . for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof."* Finally, God is the sustainer of all (note Acts 17:25-28). We need God: He does not need us.

Sometimes a person will ask, "Who gave God the right to tell man what do?" The person who asks this question does not understand the inherent nature of God's authority. As we have seen, His authority was given to Him by no one. Further, no one can deny Him His authority. We must be willing to submit to God's authority.

- by Mike Johnson taken from The Religious Instructor, February 2000 issue

Would You Like A Home Bible Study?

We would be happy to study with you in the privacy of your home. We have several Bible studies, including written material and video tapes on Bible topics.

Please contact Mark J. Ward at 265-6936 or email **markjward@yahoo.com** if you would like to set up a study.

"Study to show thyself approved unto God..." (2 Timothy 2:15)

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