

# **GRACE + WORKS = NO MORE GRACE**

A Booklet by Elder Bob Allgood

“Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.” Romans 11:5-6

In the above passage Paul the Apostle records for the benefit of all of God's elect, in all ages, the divine formula for eternal salvation (i.e. eternal life, eternal redemption, eternal glory) IN, BY and THROUGH Jesus Christ our Saviour. Notice Paul said, “at this present time also there IS a remnant according to the election of grace”. A remnant is that which remains of the whole. IF the remnant IS according to the election of grace – so WAS the whole number (that no man can number) of those chosen by God in Christ before the foundation of the world. ALL of God's elect have been and will be eternally saved by God's Grace, “that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him (God) that calleth – “. It is absolute heresy for anyone to claim that the old testament saints were eternally saved by good works or obedience to the Law. The Scriptures are clear, “for by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His (God's) sight” (Rom. 3:20). The divine formula for eternal life is GRACE, plus nothing, minus nothing. For GRACE equals GRACE --- and if it be of works, then grace is no more grace.

The promise of eternal life was made by God, who cannot lie, to Christ in behalf of those chosen in Him “before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:3-6) -- “before the world began”. Paul wrote in Titus 1:2, “In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.” Since the promise was made “before the world began”, and God could swear by no greater, he sware by himself, as it is written in Hebrews 6:17-19, “Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.”

The promise of eternal life that God made to himself before the world began, was made or confirmed to Abraham in 1963 BC, 430 years before the law was given in 1533 BC, and the law could not disannul the promise. “And this I say, that the covenant (of Grace), that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance (eternal glory) be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise” (Gal. 3:17-18). Abraham was by no means the first benefactor of the promise of eternal life. A countless number of righteous men, such as Abel, Enoch and Noah, who had been

made righteous by God, lived and died in “Faith and Hope” of eternal life for about 2,513 years before the law was ever given to Moses.

Paul wrote to the Galatians, who were being deceived to add works to grace, “I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain. Paul explained to them the purpose of “the Law” was twofold: (1) “It was added because of transgressions, till the seed (Christ) should come to whom the promise was made”. “By the Law is the knowledge of sin.” Paul told them “If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law”. But as he said, “if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.” (2) The Law was given to be a tutor or schoolmaster for Israel, to teach them about Christ. Legalizers have been trying to add works to grace for 2,000 years. The first Church council was over this issue and the conclusion is still the same, “Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples” which the Jews could not bear, (Acts 15). No one, before the law or after the law, has ever been eternally saved by works – but “as many as were ordained to eternal life” have been saved by God’s grace.

## RIGHTLY DIVIDING BETWEEN GRACE AND WORKS

In Ephesians 2:8-10 we read , “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. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

Set forth in this passage are the two (2) precepts of the one (1) SALVATION as provided by God for his chosen people. First is the precept of eternal life, (called eternal salvation only in Heb. 5:9), "For by grace are ye saved (i.e. eternally saved) - through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works lest any man should boast" (v. 8-9). The second precept is that of good works in this life, which is the evidence that one has been made a new creature in Christ and given spiritual understanding in conversion to obey the gospel of the kingdom. “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (v. 10). The first precept, “Eternal Salvation” is by Grace through Faith without works. The second precept must rightly be divided in the word of truth, and understood as Gospel or Time Salvation, which is by Grace, but proven by Works. As Paul wrote in Philippians 2:12-13, “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure”.

The words SAVE, SAVED and SALVATION as found in the Bible can mean different things. The Greek word EIME (pronounced I May) is often times translated save in the King James Version, and means but or except, and generally has nothing to do with the salvation of a soul. This usage is easily identified by the context of the Scripture, and should cause no confusion. The Greek word SOZO (from the obsolete SAOS, meaning safe) is also translated save and saved, and means “To deliver, protect, heal, make whole and to preserve”. This word has several different applications and is used different ways in the Scriptures, which requires some diligence on the part of the child of God who will "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" II Tim. 2:15.

Sometimes SOZO speaks of being saved eternally from the penalty and power of sin to eternal glory, as is the case in both Ephesians 2:8-9 and Titus 3:5 respectively.

First, "For by grace are ye saved (Sozo) through faith, and that (faith) not of yourselves, it (the faith) is a gift of God (just as eternal life is a gift of God) not of works, lest any man should boast". Then, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done but according to his mercy (grace) he saved (Sozo) us". Notice that in both passages that the word **SAVED** is past tense. God's eternal work of deliverance, healing, and preservation had already been accomplished by Christ. These passages were written after "God was in Christ reconciling the world (world of the elect) unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them (i.e. God's act of **JUSTIFICATION**)", (II Cor 5:19). In Matthew 1:21 it says, "and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall **SAVE** (Sozo) his people from their sins". Here the word save is used in a future tense because Christ had not yet died for the sins of his people (the elect). In many other Scriptures, **SOZO** is used to speak of being eternally saved by the grace of God and not by works. There are no works of man involved in God's gift of eternal life. Christ's work of eternal redemption and God's act of eternal justification with God's promise and purpose of eternal glory, are all part of what we commonly call eternal salvation. And if it be by Grace, then it is no more of works.

Sometimes the word **SAVED** is used to speak of deliverance from the daily temptations to sin or from a particular physical condition, such as an illness or danger as we live in this time world. When Peter was beckoned to go to Jesus walking on the water; he took his eyes off the Lord and began to sink; and cried "Lord **SAVE** me". He was not asking to be saved eternally, but saved from the immediate danger of drowning which resulted from his doubt, caused by his "little faith" (Matthew 14:25-33). When Paul was on a ship going to Rome, and a storm was about to wreck the ship, Paul said, "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be **SAVED**" (Acts 27:31). Paul was obviously not talking about being saved eternally, but rather being saved from the danger of the storm and the impending ship wreck.

Most frequently the word **SAVED** is used in the Scriptures to speak of what is called GOSPEL SALVATION, (others call it Time Salvation), making a distinction from eternal salvation. While these exact terms are not found in the Scriptures, the truth as expressed by these terms is taught in the Scriptures. Gospel salvation, which can only take place as we live in this time world, requires the obedience and good works of God's people. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10). Gospel Salvation is taught in Titus 2:11-14, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lust, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world (i.e. in this time world); looking for (while we look for) that blessed hope and glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works". This is why Paul said "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" – but notice what follows - "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:12-13). God's grace is always present with God's people to deliver, protect and preserve them, both eternally and in this present world.

There are other Scriptures that teach of **GOSPEL SALVATION** and of being justified before man by our good works. In First Corinthians 15:1-4 Paul makes it clear he is writing to "Brethren" in the Church. He said, "I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are SAVED, IF ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain". Paul qualifies gospel salvation with the

necessity of works. IF believing the gospel is necessary for eternal life, then so is having a good memory.

In I Peter 3:20-21 we have an illustration of TIME SALVATION. "While the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water". Noah and his family were no doubt God's children before they entered the Ark, and were not saved eternally by the ark or the flood. The waters of the flood did dry up, and the ark settled to the earth, and Noah and his family continued on with their life on earth. This was a type of water baptism (v. 20) "The like figure [type] whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) --". Water baptism is a WORK OF RIGHTEOUSNESS that gives the child of God a good conscience for being obedient to God. Jesus Christ was not baptized in order to be eternally saved, but to fulfill all righteousness. Works of righteousness are not part of the divine formula for eternal life. Grace equals Grace, and if it be by Grace, it is no more of works.

James teaches us about JUSTIFICATION IN TIME by GOOD WORKS. "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith and have not works? can faith save him?" The key to understanding this is a man is saying I have faith. The question is, can faith save him before men? "If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them (just say and not act), Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doeth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works is dead being alone (by itself unproven) --Yea, a man may say, Thou [I] have faith – show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works" (James 2:14-26). It is impossible to show man faith without works. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). Likewise it is impossible to show love without deeds. This is why Jesus said, "If ye love me KEEP my commandments". But while man looks upon the outward appearance (for physical evidence), God looks upon the heart.

### SOME SAY GRACE WHEN THEY MEAN WORKS

Almost every religious denomination in the world today, operating in the name of "Christianity", will claim that they believe in "Eternal Salvation by Grace". But when their claim is examined under the light of Truth, we find that in reality their message is "You are saved by grace provided you do this or that -----". Some may say "You must be baptized in water in order to go to heaven". Some may say, "You must join the church" or "learn the catechism" or do some "good work", etc. Most claim that one must HEAR the gospel preached, BELIEVE it and ACCEPT Jesus as your personal Saviour. To grace they add all kinds of human works, many of which the child of God must do in order to enjoy gospel salvation and be justified before man in this time world, but none of which have anything to do with God's free gift of eternal life.

It is not my purpose to throw stones. God knows that we will do well just to keep our own house in order. But when it comes to the doctrine of eternal life, (eternal redemption, eternal justification, eternal glory or eternal salvation), God's divine formula must be taken from God's Word and God's Word only. Grace equals Grace. The Scripture teaches that God's elect people are chosen by grace, called by grace, redeemed by grace, justified by grace, kept by grace and will be glorified by grace, "And if by grace, then it is no more of works". One who is "dead in trespasses and sins, cannot hear the Gospel (I Cor. 2:14), cannot believe the gospel, for he has no faith, and cannot accept Jesus, which is an action or work. According to the

Readers Digest Encyclopedic Dictionary, to Receive is passive, but to Accept is active.

Again, Paul said, "I do not frustrate **THE GRACE OF GOD**, for if righteousness come by the law (works), then Christ is dead in vain" (Gal. 2:21). Some of God's people have been misled by False Prophets and Professing Religionists, who make merchandise out of God's people. They have perverted the Gospel of God's grace by adding works to grace, making certain works a prerequisite to God's gift of Eternal Life and the inheritance of Eternal Glory. This has caused much confusion among God's people, causing many of them to "frustrate the grace of God", robbing God of His glory, and robbing them of the knowledge of the righteousness of Christ. Paul spoke of such who "frustrate the grace of God" in these words, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved (\*\* saved in time according to the gospel). For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, (\*\* already being God's elect children, and already saved eternally) but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Romans 10:1-4 \*\* Notes mine). God's elect who try to establish their own righteousness, for eternal salvation, have received the "grace of God in vain" and must repent before they will ever experience the "righteousness, and peace, and joy of the Kingdom of God which is in the Holy Ghost (Romans 14:16-18).

## **GRACE DOES NOT MEAN GOD IS HELPING MAN TO HELP GOD**

Grace is not about anything that "God offers or has offered" to man. The phrases "God Offers and God Offered", which are used so frequently by many preachers today, are not found in the Bible (KJV). Grace is not about anything that "God permits or God allows" man to do. The phrases "God Allows and God Permits", which are used by so many preachers today, are not found in God's Word (KJV). Grace is not about anything God wants. The phrase "God Wants" as used by so many preachers, cannot be found in the Scriptures. Grace is not about anything that man can do to help God. "All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and he does according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou"? That's right, the phrase "help God" is not in the Bible (KJV). Grace is not about anything that man "Permits God" to do. The phrase "permit God", which is used so frequently today by many preachers, is not in God's Word (KJV). (Note: With so many different, diluted, watered down versions of the Bible on the market today, there's no telling what phrases are in them. That's why I prefer the KJV.)

Grace is not about what man can or should LET GOD do. The phrase "let God" can be found in the Scripture only three times: (1) Psalms 68:1, "Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him". (2) Psalms 70:4, "Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: and let such as love thy salvation say continually, let God be magnified. " (3) Rom 3:3-4, "For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar".

GRACE IS ABOUT SIN. Many people talk about grace, but what they say seems to indicate that they don't understand the nature and condemnation of sin. The nature of sin goes beyond the basic fact that we all "commit sin" at sometime in our life". The condemnation of sin is more than the basic fact that we all are going

to "die physically". Sin has a far greater impact on our lives than just physical death. It is God's grace that teaches us what that impact is and our own inability to deal with it. Scripture teaches us that every person is conceived "in sin"; in a natural state of enmity against God; in a natural state of "unrighteousness", regardless of whether it is obvious to man's eye or not. The sin nature does not always reveal itself outwardly. Little babies appear to be "so innocent" looking. Some adults live a "sociably good and moral life" and never seemingly commit any outward "sins", because they abide within "the laws of man". Sin is a sickness of the heart inherited by every human being through the genes of Adam and Eve. This sin nature is the root cause of all the sadness, sorrow, suffering, crime, corruption, immorality, incest, ungodliness and disobedience in the world. Not to mention the wars and death.

David, a man after God own heart said, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalms 51:5). David was not talking about an illicit conception, but his spiritual condition. "The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies" (Psalms 58:3). Job said, "Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble" (Job 14:1). Innocence may be the appearance outwardly, but God looks upon the heart. The condemnation of sin is death, spiritual death and physical death, and is "passed on" to every one as a "natural inheritance" for being a son of Adam. There are no exceptions. Many years ago preachers called this sin condition "The Total Depravity of Man" - but that was when they had enough courage to preach it. Now days most preaching is "Mush, Mush you nice people".

**GRACE GOES TO THE VERY CORE OF MAN'S DEPRAVITY.** Grace teaches us that man's standing before God by nature is that of an enemy of God, alienated from God. Grace teaches us of man's total inability to recover himself from sin and his inability to be reconciled to God by his good works, or any other deed he might do. Grace teaches us that "all our righteousness is as filthy rags" And what a paradox this is, for no one can have this spiritual understanding without first having God's Spirit dwell within him "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. Because the carnal mind (unregenerate mind without God's Spirit) is enmity (unreconciled to, enemies) against God --So then they that are in the flesh (unregenerate) cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Romans 8:5-10).

**SIN BEGAN WITH ONE ACT OF DISOBEDIENCE:** The Lord God commanded the man (Adam) saying, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die (dying thou shalt die)" (Gen. 2:15-17). The rest of the story is in Genesis 3. Eve was deceived by the Satan, who is called the Devil and that old serpent. She knew the commandment, but "saw the tree was good for food — a tree to be desired to make one wise" and she did eat and gave also to her husband with her; and he did eat. Eve was deceived, and being deceived was in the transgression, but Adam was not deceived and sinned willfully. (see I Tim 2:13-14). There is a beautiful story here, with Eve serving as an anti-type of the Bride, and Adam serving as an anti- type of Christ (a figure of Him that was to come) and becoming sin for us, his bride; for God made Christ, who knew no sin, to become sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. Adam could not redeem his bride, but Christ came to redeem his bride – and that is Grace.

**ADAM DID NOT DIE PHYSICALLY WHEN HE DISOBEYED**

God had said, "The day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die", but God spoke to him later and asked him about his conduct and knowledge of being naked, etc. (Gen. 3:8-13). Did God lie? God forbid, yea, let God be true and every man a liar. Adam did die that day -- He became "dead in trespasses and sins" the very moment he disobeyed God. So much so that he was at enmity with God; and he was separated from God, from God's garden of paradise; and from the Tree of Life. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned " (Rom 5:12). The evidence that the penalty and condemnation of sin is passed on to all men by nature is death. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment --" (Heb. 9:27).

Every person conceived in the womb of woman from the day that Adam sinned has been conceived "dead in trespasses and sins" (i.e. spiritually dead) by nature, while alive physically. The reason I use the term conceive and not born is that John the Baptist was quickened and filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in the womb. So it is possible, the Lord willing, that a child can be "born again" before coming forth in natural birth. Remember, God said to Jeremiah, "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations" (Jere. 1:4-5). This blows a big hole in many hot air balloons that are being flown today such as Abortion Rights; Choice; Free Will; Works and Gospel Regeneration.

Herein we see the need of and marvelous effectiveness of Grace as God bestows it upon helpless and worthless sinners. As it is written, "There is none righteous, no not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God - The way of peace have they not known: There is no fear [reverence] of God before their eyes - For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation (reconciling atonement) through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past - To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he (God) might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus", and that is grace. Grace is God's unmerited justification of sinners without the works of the of law.

I am a stranger here below, And what I am 'tis hard to know;

I am so vile, so prone to sin, I fear that I am not born again.

My nature is so prone to sin, Which makes duty so unclean;

When I count up all the cost, If not free Grace, Then I am lost.

Paul said to the Ephesians, "And you hath he (God) quickened (made alive spiritually) who were dead (dead spiritually, as a corpse, yet alive physically) in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now work- eth in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation (way of life) in times past in the lust of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of our flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins hath quickened us together with Christ". Did God quicken us because of something we did? No. For a spiritually dead corpse can do nothing). "For by grace ye are saved through faith, and that (faith) not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:1-5, 8-9).

## **THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY OF ETERNAL LIFE.**

Man without God's Spirit is dead in trespasses and sins; as a corpse without life; without any spiritual ability, and must be quickened by God's Spirit and made alive before he can have any discernment of SPIRITUAL TRUTH (I Corinthians 2:9-16 and Ephesians 2:1-7). When one is "born of God" he is a new born babe in Christ and desires the sincere milk of the word that he may grow thereby (I Peter 2:2). And as all new born babes, each little lamb of God's which is born by God's Spirit, is subject to child abuse by false prophets and false teachers, which are wolves in sheep's clothing seeking whom they may devour (Matt 7:15, Acts 20:28-30). The False Prophets and False Teachers have a "form of godliness" but deny the power thereof, bringing in damnable heresies, "and many shall follow their pernicious (devilish) ways; by reason of whom the way of truth (i.e. the way of Grace) shall be evil spoken of" (I Pet. 2:1-3, II Tim. 3:1-5). By false teachings, little children of God are "tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive --" (Eph 4:14). One of the deceitful teachings is that the child of God had to do something (some work) in order to be eternally saved.

Eternal Life is IN, BY and THROUGH Jesus Christ. No person has eternal life except IN JESUS CHRIST: "And this is the record, that God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is IN his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (I John 5:11-12). It makes no difference who you are or what you are. It makes no difference what you have or have not done. "He that hath the Son of God hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life". Jesus said to the Pharisees, who were active in doing many religious works, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39). According to Jesus eternal life is not in the scriptures that testify of the Son. It must be true then, since eternal life is not in the scriptures, which testify of the Son of God, that eternal life is not in the preaching or hearing or learning of those scriptures. The Scriptures are the record that God has given to his elect people eternal life, and that eternal life is in his Son. "He that hath the Son hath life and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life". The gospel of Grace tells of "Our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death and hath brought life and immortality to light [or made it known] through the gospel" (II Timothy 1:7-11). It doesn't make any difference how many sermons you have heard, how much you read the Bible or how much Scripture you know or memorize, "HE THAT HATH NOT THE SON OF GOD HATH NOT LIFE".

God places his elect IN Christ by an operation "made without hands" (Col. 2:9-12). As it says, "But of him (God) are ye IN Christ – That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (I Cor. 1:30-31). One may deceive his way into the baptismal waters, or into the church as a member, but one cannot get IN Christ by his works or good deeds. Only the elect according to grace are quickened by the Spirit of God and spiritually baptized into Christ Jesus our Saviour. They who have not the Spirit of Christ are none of his, and only "As many as are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God" (Rom 8:9, 14).

God gives us several examples of righteous men who were led by God's spirit before they ever heard the gospel preached by man. God sent Peter to the home of Cornelius (Acts 10) who was "A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house -- and prayed to God always". God heard his prayers, and they were even a memorial before God, -- But he had never heard the gospel -- -- He knew nothing about the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Peter's first remark to

Cornelius was not the Gospel, but "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness is accepted with him". Cornelius was a righteous man, who feared God, and was already accepted with God before Peter preached the gospel to him.

Then there is "Righteous Abel" - How did he become righteous and why did the Lord have respect FOR Abel and for his sacrifice? Then there was "Enoch, who walked with God". Who preached the gospel to him? And what about NOAH, he was a "just man and perfect (upright) and Noah walked with God". He was even a preacher of righteousness. When did Noah accept Jesus? And what about Jeremiah? God said to him "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee (set thee apart by my Spirit), and I ordained thee a prophet -" (Jeremiah 1:5). And what about David, who said of God "But thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts --" (Psalms 22:9-10). And what about John the Baptist, who was "filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mothers womb" (Luke 1:15). As a six month old fetus when did John hear the gospel? When did he accept Jesus Christ? When did he make a decision? Such man-made claims that one must hear the gospel, accept Jesus, or make a decision for Christ before he is born of God, only cause confusion in the minds of those who seek the Truth.

**WHAT THEN IS THE PURPOSE OF THE GOSPEL?** It is to inform God's people of what God has done for them through Christ. It tells of God's grace and how he "hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now manifested (made known) by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (II Timothy 1:7-11). The Gospel makes known to God's people God's grace and God's gift of eternal life, eternal justification and eternal glory which are in Christ Jesus. The Gospel makes known to God's people "the truth" that all the eternal matters have been taken care of by God and his grace. This "truth makes you free" and eliminates the confusion, of which God is not the author.

### THE EFFECTIVE OF GRACE

The word GRACE means "unmerited favor, benefit or gift". The effectiveness of God's Grace can be observed in at least three aspects. First "the election according to grace" which took place "before the world began" was an **UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION**. This was the first positive act by God concerning the eternal destiny of a people known in the scriptures as "the elect". As it is written, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed (graced) us with all spiritual blessings (unmerited favors and benefits) in heavenly places in Christ: -- Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will (not ours), To the praise of the glory of HIS GRACE, wherein he (God) hath made us accepted in the beloved (Christ)" (Ephesians 1:3-6). We read this same truth in Romans 8:28-30, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Please take notice that it is God who foreknew his people, predestinated them, called them, justified them, and glorified them, according to his eternal purpose in Christ Jesus.

Some would have us believe that God, by his omniscience (all knowledge or foreknowledge ) looked down through the ages of time and saw everyone who would eventually hear the gospel, and believe the gospel, and obey the gospel, and accept Jesus as their Saviour, - all according to their own free will, and based on what God foresaw he chose these and these only in Christ as “the elect”. IF that was true, then it would be an “election based on works” not according to grace. Second that creates much confusion and the need for the man-made heresy of an “age of accountability” to cover the infants who die in infancy.

The Biblical truth is, our Omnipotent God, being Just and Righteous and Holy, does not bestow his Grace upon all mankind. Many have been misled to believe that God loves everybody, and that Christ died for ALL of mankind. Such could not be further from the truth as taught in the Scriptures. IF we are to believe that Jesus was an honest man, without sin, without lies, then we must believe his words recorded in John 17:1-3, where he said, “Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to AS MANY AS thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” Eternal Life has been or will be given to AS MANY AS the Father has given to the Son. These three (3) little words – AS MANY AS, are often ignored by most readers of the Scripture.

The expression AS MANY AS is a quantifier – while being a number no man can number, it is a number that the Lord knows. “For the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his” (II Tim. 2:19). Jesus understood this precept and preached it. He said in John 6:37, “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” The “All that the Father giveth me” is the same “As many as” in John 17:2. Jesus said, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.” Jesus made a distinction between those who were “children of God” and those who were not of God. He said to some Jews in John 8:47, “He that is of God heareth God’s words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.” Those who are “not of God” – who have not been born of God, cannot hear the word of God.

Jesus made a distinction between those who were His sheep and those who could not believe because they were not his sheep. The Jews asked Jesus, “If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly”. Jesus answered them, “I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.” Notice Jesus did not say, “ye are not my sheep because you do not believe”, but he said “ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep”. They could not believe because they were not of the election of Grace. What a contrast to those who were ordained to eternal life. In Acts 13:48 we read, “And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.” AS MANY AS were ordained to eternal life believed. AS MANY AS were of the election of Grace believed.

The second aspect is God’s grace is **IRRESTIBLE**. God’s unmerited love and favor toward his elect is bestowed according to His will, not ours. "But God commendeth his love (grace) toward us (the elect), in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). It says in I John 3:1, “Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us (the elect) that we should be called the sons of God –“. No one can force someone to love them, and no one can keep someone from loving them if they choose to love them. “In this was manifested the love of

God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." God first loved his elect people and bestowed his love upon them according to his eternal purpose in Christ Jesus. None whom God chose in Christ before the world began can keep God from loving them, and if God loves them, they will ultimately be conformed to the image of his dear son.

We are told in Romans 9, that while two children were yet in the womb of Rebecca, "Being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth (according to the election of grace). --- It was said unto her --- "As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated". Jacob represents Israel, the Israel of God, the elect of God according to the covenant of grace, according to the promise of eternal life. Esau represents the non-elect, those not chosen by God unto eternal glory. Then we are asked a question, "What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.

Then we are told the essence of God's omnipotence in bestowing Grace upon whom he will bestow grace. For God said to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." Therefore the conclusion of the matter is stated by Paul, "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. --- Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?" So then my dear friends, God has mercy on whom he will have mercy. God's Grace is bestowed by God on whom he will bestow Grace, and God's Grace is not of works or else it is no more grace.

The third aspect of the effectiveness of Grace is God's **CALLING** his elect unto himself is **EFFECTUAL**. It is God that justifieth! It is God who makes his elect righteous by his act of eternal justification. It is God who makes his elect people pure and good and fit for immortal glory. "Much more then, being now justified (just as without sin) by his blood, we (the elect) shall be saved (eternally saved) from wrath through him (Christ)" (Romans 5:9). "For he (God) hath made him (Christ) to be sin for us (the elect), who (Christ) knew no sin; that we (the elect) might be made the righteousness (made pure and good) of God in him (Christ)" (II Cor. 5:21). God was in Christ reconciling the world of his elect unto himself according to his own will and eternal purpose in Christ, "In whom also we (the elect) have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will" (Eph. 1:11). God did not and does not seek the permission of man to justify one of his elect, nor does he justify based on his works.

**GRACE IS ABOUT THE LOVE OF GOD.** "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God -" (I John. 3:1). Love is manifested because of Grace; "God commendeth (exhibited or manifested) his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8), and that is grace. "Without controversy great is the mystery of

godliness: God was manifested in the flesh -" and "In this was manifested the love of God towards us because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him" (I John. 4:9), and that is grace. And "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation [substitutionary sacrifice] for our sins" (I John. 4:10), and that is grace. Grace explains how and why we love God with the words "he first loved us", and that is grace.

**GRACE IS ABOUT ETERNAL LIFE IN JESUS CHRIST.** Grace tells us about God's gift of Eternal life, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23), and that is grace. Eternal life is IN Christ and not in the knowledge about Christ; for "this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (I John. 5:11-12). Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish" (John 10:27-28), and that is grace. Jesus prayed "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, [with the glory which I had with thee before the world was] - As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him; and this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ -" (John 17:2-3), and that is grace. John wrote, "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are IN HIM that is true, even IN HIS SON JESUS CHRIST. This is the true God, and eternal life" (I John 5:20), and that is grace.

The term **ETERNAL LIFE** is synonymous with eternal redemption and eternal glory for the elect of God. It is also synonymous with "eternal justification" although that exact phrase is not found in the Scriptures, that truth is taught, as I will endeavor to prove. The elect are eternally justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ. In Romans 8:33 we read "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth". In Romans 8:30 we read "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called, and whom he called, them he also justified, and whom he justified, them he also glorified". Now if the glorification is eternal, so is the justification that precedes it. And the glorification is eternal. Peter says in I Peter 5:10 "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Jesus Christ --". Paul wrote in Romans 9:13 "that he [God] might make known 'the riches of his glory' (that is Grace) on the vessels of mercy (the elect), which he had afore prepared unto GLORY, (and this is eternal glory), Even us (the elect), whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles". And again Paul said, "being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life".

**GRACE IS ABOUT REDEMPTION** from the condemnation of sin. "Forasmuch as ye know ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold -- But with the precious blood of Christ - Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifested in these last times for you" (I Peter 1:18-20), and that is grace. This redemption was not " By the blood of goats and calves (the law system), but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place (not the holy place made with hands, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us) – having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Hebrews 9:12, 24), and that is grace. "Wherein he (God) hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:6-7).

**GRACE IS ABOUT RECONCILIATION AND PEACE** from the enmity of sin. "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (Rom 5:10), and that is grace. "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ -- To wit (for you to perceive) that God was in Christ, reconciling the world (of the elect) unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them -- For he (God) hath made him (Christ) to be sin for us, --- that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II Cor 5:17-20), and that is grace. "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell; and having made peace (past tense) through the blood of his cross -- you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled --" (Col 1:19-21), and that is grace.

**GRACE IS ABOUT JUSTIFICATION** from the eternal guilt and condemnation of sin. Grace says "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his (God's) sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God (which is Jesus Christ) without the law is manifested - even the righteousness of God which is by (the) faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: -- For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" The word "Justified" means to be put in a position of "innocence". It is not like a "Pardon" where there is still a record of wrong doing. Justification is to be "Just as if there was no sin". As it says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus --" (Rom 8:1), and that is grace. Justification means that the record is erased, we are cleansed, and made the righteousness of God in Christ, "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" - blessed is "the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works -- Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered" (Rom. 4:6-8), and that is grace. God is both Just and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus, and that is grace.

**GRACE IS ABOUT HOPE.** As God's people live in this present world we live "in hope" of eternal life, which God, that can not lie, promised before the world began -" (Titus 1:2), and that is grace. Peter said to the elect, "God -- who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ -- To an inheritance -- reserved in heaven for you -- Who are kept by the power of God" (I Peter 1:2-5), and that is grace. Hope speaks of glory for "Christ in you [is] the hope of Glory". "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope - but if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" (Rom 8:24-25). "For the Grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared - teaching us that we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope and glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:11-14). Our hope is not of man but of "God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace" (II Thess. 2:16), "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast -" (Heb 6:17-20). Hope is based on faith, which is the substance (or foundation) of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen (Heb. 11:1). And faith is the gift of God by grace, not of works less any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9).

- In summary, GRACE is about God's love which he has bestowed upon us. If one loves God, he does so because God first loved him, and bestowed his grace upon him in the election of grace. Grace is about God's gift of eternal life that he has given to us IN His Son. If one desires to spend eternity with God, it is because God has sent forth his Spirit into his heart crying "Abba, Father" bearing witness with him that he is a child of Grace (Rom.8:14-17). Grace is about God's gift of faith that he has given to us, which is a fruit of the Spirit and not from the works of man. Grace is

**about God's work of redemption, justification, reconciliation and sanctification. Grace is about hope of eternal glory "which he hath afore prepared" for all them that love him, "Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles. GRACE, GRACE, MARVELOUS GRACE, and if it be of works, then it is no more Grace.**

**This little effort has been published, I hope, out of love for Christ and the Truth about God's Grace, by a vile sinner saved by Grace, or not saved at all.**

**Bob Allgood**