

SALVATION BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH

Gary McDade

"Salvation" is a wonderful state of acceptance before God. An antonym for salvation is condemnation, which is a state of alienation and reprobation from God. The apostle Paul wrote, "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (II Tim. 2:10).

"By" is a preposition meaning "through or through the medium of" (*Webster's*, p. 150).

"Grace" is the unmerited favor of God. The human race has never done anything, no matter how pious, philanthropic, or profound, to merit the favor of the Almighty. The word "kindness" pictures the disposition of God toward wayward, sinful mankind. All have sinned (Rom. 3:23), and sin has dire consequences. Ezekiel taught that the soul that sinned would die (Eze. 18:20), and Paul taught that the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). Mankind was helpless in a hopeless condition until in his kindness God made provision for his salvation. Man deserved death due to his sins, but God desired life to be extended to his fallen offspring (Acts 17:28, Heb. 12:9).

"Through" is a preposition "used as a function word to indicate means, agency, or intermediacy" (*Webster's*, p. 1208).

"Faith" is defined in Hebrews 11:1, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." The apostle Paul spoke to the point of how faith comes in Romans 10:17, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

A text of scripture critical to the development of a correct understanding of the subject at hand is Ephesians 2:8-9, "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." The need exists to point out that the word "only" does not appear in the text under consideration, nor does the word "alone." Those who have taught and continue to teach that salvation is by grace only or by grace alone are guilty of what the apostle Peter called wresting or twisting the scriptures. Peter indicated that they wrested the scriptures "unto their own destruction" (II Pet. 3:16).

In the Book of Romans Paul discussed how the grace of God facilitates the introduction of the system of faith. In Romans 4:16 he wrote, "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all." To emphasize, the apostle said, "It is of faith, that it might be by grace." The gospel system of salvation is referred to here as faith, that is, the system of faith in contrast to the law of Moses. The New Testament is an expression of the grace of God. In the next chapter the thought is developed further. Paul wrote, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:1-2). So, the Bible teaches the relationship of grace and faith. Again, to emphasize, "We have access by faith into thi grace." No one can be saved by either grace alone or by faith alone because it is "salvation by grace through faith."

Both God's grace and God's system of faith are connected to God's word. Consider Acts 20:32 regarding grace and the word, "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." Next, look at Romans 10:8 and see the association of faith and the word, "But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach." "The word of faith" and "the word of his grace" both reference the same word, the word of God.

"Salvation by grace through faith" places a lost human family under a serious responsibility to explore the scriptures in order to seek salvation. Jesus Christ said, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (Jn. 5:39). What the Lord said still remains true today. He 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. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (Jn. 6:44-45). Peter's response requires recognition and repetition today, "Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life" (Jn. 6:68).