

Eternal Security and Grace

For by grace ye are saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8, 9).

This passage deals with the past tense of salvation. It is salvation from the guilt, penalty and condemnation of sin. It has already been fully accomplished. It is not a process that is being carried on to be perfected at a later time. In its present tense, salvation is from the power of sin and is a process. In its future tense, salvation will be from the presence of sin and will be accomplished "in a moment in the twinkling of an eye."

Salvation – Not Probation

To be saved by grace, to some, seems to mean to be placed in such a relation to God that at the end of the earthly life, one enters glory, provided, however, that one has been faithful to God and has lived according to certain moral standards.

The doctrinal epistles tell of a great many things that are true of the one who has been saved. These are all spoken of as being fully accomplished. There is no mention of growth or development of any one of them. They are always considered as being final.

The saved person has been redeemed from under the law (Gal. 4:5), and the curse of the law (Gal. 3:13), by an eternal redemption (Heb. 9:12). He is dead to the law (Rom. 7:4), and shall not come into condemnation (John 5:24, Rom. 8:1). He is reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:18), and is at peace with Him (Col. 1:20). He is justified (Rom. 5:1), and all trespasses have been forgiven (Col. 2:13). He has been delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the Son of God (Col. 1:13). He has been born again of incorruptible seed (1 Pet. 1:23); is a son of God (John 1:12); and has eternal life (John 5:24). He is a new creature (2 Cor. 5:17). He is perfected forever (Heb. 10:14); is complete in Christ (Col. 2:10); and has been accepted of God (Eph. 1:6). He has been born of the Spirit (John 3:6); baptized by the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:18); is indwelt by the Spirit who abides forever (John 14:10, 17); and has been sealed by the Spirit until the day of redemption (Eph. 4:30). He has become the object of God's love (Eph. 2:4), of His grace (Rom. 6:14), of His power (Eph. 1:19), and of His faithfulness (1 Cor. 1:9). He is a citizen of heaven (Eph. 2:19 and Phil. 3:20); is seated with Christ in the heavenly places (Eph. 2:6); and is already glorified (Rom. 8:30).

All of the above, and more too, God says of the one who has been saved. Before the one who has been saved can be lost, every one of these things must be made void. Is that possible? God's Word is absolutely silent as to any such possibility. This should be final, for it is only through His revelation that these facts are known to man. It could only, by a similar revelation, be known that they are subject to change if that were possible.

Can one who has been redeemed by an eternal redemption be brought back into bondage? Can one who is dead to the law be made alive to it? Can one within the Kingdom of God be taken out of it? Can one born again of incorruptible seed and having eternal life die? Can one that has been perfected forever be found imperfect? Can one

that is complete in Christ become incomplete? These are eternal in their very nature, and therefore are unalterable.

Only when all of these questions can be answered in the affirmative, can one who has been saved be said to be lost. The burden of proof rests squarely upon those who say that one who has been saved can be lost to show that these things can be made void. To many, it is a light matter to say that one who has been saved can be lost, but how many understand the full import of that statement?

IT IS BY GRACE

Grace is the _____ abounding provision of the unrestrained operation of God's infinite love through Jesus Christ on behalf of man, especially those who depend on Him.

To be saved by grace cannot take into account any merit in the saved one, either before, at the time of, or _____ the time he is saved.

THROUGH FAITH

There is no merit in faith. "It is of faith that it might be by grace." Faith involves an acknowledgment of your own utter helplessness and hopelessness and the casting of one's self upon God's provision.

Jesus gave a clear illustration of what faith in Him means. He said to Nicodemus: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:14, 15). The Israelite in the wilderness showed his faith by looking on the serpent of brass that hung on the pole (see Num. 21:5-9). In this one act of faith was expressed a confession of sin and utter helplessness and an acknowledgment that God's provision was his only hope. He did not understand the significance of the serpent, nor why it was made of brass. He did not analyze his faith to see if it was sufficient. He did not question the intensity of his look. He surely claimed no merit for looking. There were just two things in his mind: his own absolute hopelessness and the sufficiency of God's provision. And this is all that there is to that faith through which the lost are saved. There is no power in faith that contributes to salvation.

AND THAT NOT OF YOURSELVES

God is very zealous to have it known that He and He only is responsible for man's salvation. And yet well meaning, sincere Christians will insist on some "must" or "musts" on the part of man in order for him to remain saved.

IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD

Salvation is a gift from God. Again, and for the fourth time, all thought of merit is excluded, for a gift is not a gift in the full sense of the word if it is in exchange for even the slightest thing. And again, the fact that salvation is said to be a gift from God, makes it unchangeable, for the "gifts of God are without repentance" (Rom. 11:29).

NOT OF WORKS LEST ANY MAN SHOULD BOAST

Works and grace are said to be mutually exclusive of each other. "And if by grace, then is it no more 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" (Rom. 11:6). Therefore, as salvation is by grace, all that in any way might be works, whether it is to will or to do, is excluded.

Works are also the opposite of faith. That which is of works is of man's effort and is meritorious to him. By works man confesses his own ability and displays confidence in self. Israel did this at Sinai when they answered Moses: "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do" (Ex. 19:8). On the contrary, as has been seen, faith confesses one's own disability and dependence upon another for that which is to be done.

Thus where there are works there is boasting of man, but where it is through faith, there is no boasting of man. Therefore salvation is "not of works lest any man should boast." "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith" (Rom. 8:27). This is so "that no flesh shall glory in His Presence" (1 Cor. 1:29).

TO THE PRAISE OF THE GLORY OF HIS GRACE

God does not save man because of any value in man or because man is too good to be lost; for there is no goodness in man, "they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no not one" (Rom. 8:12). God saves men so "That in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:7).

The supreme purpose of God in salvation is: "To the praise of the glory of His grace" (Eph. 1:6 and 2:7). In eternity those who are saved shall sing a new song saying: "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood" (Rev. 5:9). There shall be no discord in that song. Here on earth there is a definitely discordant note every time someone says that the saved one must not sin, must continue in faith, must hold out, must do this and must not do that in order to remain saved. The praise is not all given to the blood. But these notes shall not be heard there, for they are of the flesh and no flesh shall glory in His Presence. To Him only and to the glory of His grace shall be all the praise.