

promised only to those who believe and love Him enough to obey Him. Thus He saves them and adds them to His family, the church.

When a person has been saved from his past sins, he must remain a faithful part of the Lord's family for the remainder of his life, if he is to be saved eternally. Never is salvation assured *regardless of one's behavior and manner of life*; rather, as is stated in Revelation 2:10, one must be *faithful unto death* *if* he is to receive a crown of life.

This does not mean that one's *faithfulness* has *saved* him, or that by his faithfulness he has done enough good works to merit salvation. Rather, it simply means that **by his faithfulness he continually qualified himself to receive the grace being poured from the hands of his Father.**

There are those (and some in the Lord's church who have become ignorant of what the Scriptures teach concerning faith and grace) who think that all sincere religious people — including those who are not a part of the church or body of Christ — will be saved by the grace of God. Their logic is that since even Christians are not perfect and must

depend on God's grace to be saved, then those of other religions who are imperfect in other doctrines and practices can also be saved by that grace.

Followers of such logic overlook one all-important thing: those people have not complied with God's will to be saved initially, to be born again through repentance and baptism, to be a part of the church which is God's one and only family. Not having come *into* that family, they *are not under God's grace*. **Being inside or outside of the family makes all the difference!**

Are you a Christian, a member of the church of Christ? If not, we plead with you to obey God so that His grace can save you.

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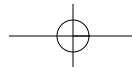
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Who Is Covered by the Grace of God?

J.C. Choate





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The word “grace” means unmerited favor, goodness, extended by God, that men have not earned and do not deserve. In other words, the Lord saves us when we could not save ourselves. Neither can we do enough to pay Him for what He has done. Even after we obey His commands and do all He requires of us to be saved and to have the hope of eternal life, still it will be only through the grace of God that we are saved, *if we are saved*.

The apostle Paul wrote, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, *“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”* (Ephesians 2:8,9). These words are saying that man cannot save himself; neither can he do enough good works to earn or pay for his salvation. If he could, he could then boast of having saved himself, disclaiming the need for God. Instead, Paul declared that salvation is the gift of God. It is something which only God has the power to give. It is **by His grace that we are saved!**

Yet, though man is saved by grace, *he is not saved by grace alone!* If salvation was by grace alone then all people would be saved, for God loves all souls, and Christ died for all. But again, Paul wrote, *“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”* (Titus 3:5).

By comparing the statements in Ephesians and Titus, we can see that God’s word is saying that one cannot be saved by his own good works, or even by doing the works of the law of Moses, because salvation comes by the grace of God. Yet, salvation is *conditional!* The passage in Titus speaks of salvation being *“by the washing of regeneration”*, which has reference to our spiritual washing in baptism; and *“renewing of the Holy Ghost”*, which has reference to the gift of the Holy Spirit — renewed spiritual life — promised as the result of baptism, as stated in Acts 2:38:

After Peter and the apostles had preached to a large group of people in Jerusalem, convincing them that Jesus was the Son of God, the listeners were cut to the heart and cried out, asking

what they should do. *“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”*

These passages mean that salvation is based on a person’s willingness to obey the Lord’s teaching. When he does all he can to comply with what is written in the Scriptures, God takes it from there and saves him through the extension of His grace and mercy to the penitent and obedient believer.

So what is the picture? *That salvation comes by the outpouring of the grace of God to the penitent, obedient believer.*

But what about the person who is not willing to obey God? Does grace cover him and save him in his sins? No. *Even God is bound by what He has written, and cannot go contrary to His word.* That word says that God’s part in salvation is *grace*, but man’s part is *faith*, faith which *moves him to obedience*. Without this combination working together, *there can be no extension of grace.*

We see by these Scriptures that God’s grace does not and cannot cover everyone. It was

