

grace

GRACE

Favor or kindness shown without regard to the worth or merit of the one who receives it and in spite of what that same person deserves. Grace is one of the key attributes of God. The Lord God is "merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abounding in goodness and truth" (Ex 34:6). Therefore, grace is almost always associated with mercy, love, compassion, and patience as the source of help and with deliverance from distress.

In the Old Testament, the supreme example of grace was the redemption of the Hebrew people from Egypt and their establishment in the Promised Land. This did not happen because of any merit on Israel's part, but in spite of their unrighteousness (Deut 9:5-6). Although the grace of God is always free and undeserved, it must not be taken for granted. Grace is only enjoyed within the COVENANT-the gift is given by God, and the gift is received by man through repentance and faith (Amos 5:15). Grace is to be humbly sought through the prayer of faith (Mal 1:9).

The grace of God was supremely revealed and given in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Jesus was not only the beneficiary of God's grace (Luke 2:40), but He was also its very embodiment (John 1:14), bringing it to mankind for salvation (Titus 2:11). By His death and resurrection, Jesus restored the broken fellowship between God and His people, both Jew and Gentile. The only way of salvation for any person is "through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 15:11).

The grace of God revealed in Jesus Christ is applied to human beings for their salvation by the HOLY SPIRIT, who is called "the Spirit of grace" (Heb 10:29). The Spirit is the One who binds Christ to His people so that they receive forgiveness, adoption to sonship, and newness of life, as well as every spiritual gift or grace (Eph 4:7).

The theme of grace is especially prominent in the letters of the apostle Paul. He sets grace radically over against the law and the works of the law (Rom 3:24,28). Paul makes it abundantly clear that salvation is not something that can be earned or merited; it can be received only as a gift of grace (Rom 4:4). Grace, however, must be accompanied by faith; a person must trust in the mercy and favor of God, even while it is undeserved (Rom 4:16)

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