

SAVED BY GRACE

AS SHOCKING AS IT MAY SOUND, NOT ONE IN ONE HUNDRED CHRISTIANS UNDERSTAND WHAT BEING SAVED BY GRACE REALLY MEANS. IN THIS ARTICLE THE TRUTH WILL BE MADE PLAIN

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"For by GRACE are you saved through faith, and not of yourselves, it is the GIFT of God.." many will quote this verse of Eph.2:8 and tell you the law of God has been abolished.

But Jesus answered the young man who asked Him how he might have eternal life, by saying, "IF YOU WILL ENTER INTO LIFE, KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS" (Mat.19:17).

Many say LAW and GRACE do not mix! Is that true? How can we reconcile what Christ said to the rich young man, and what Paul wrote to the Ephesians? Was Jesus and Paul of different opinions as to HOW a person is SAVED?

The way of Salvation can be understood - your Bible makes it PLAIN - here then is the truth of HOW YOU can have eternal life.

ALL OF GOD'S WORD

The verse in Eph.2:8 is an inspired part of God's revelation to man - but so also is Mat.19:17 ! Do you believe what Paul wrote to the Ephesian church? Do you believe what Jesus said to the young man? If you believe that the Bible is INSPIRED, your answer must be a resounding YES!

Jesus said elsewhere that the scripture can not be BROKEN - in other words, there cannot be any CONTRADICTIONS in the word of God. The verse, "For by grace are you saved" is true - very true. No one can save themselves by their WORKS. You can work, perform, DO THINGS for a thousand life times, and still you will never WORK your way into eternal life. Your WORKS, of themselves, will NOT save you.

God's salvation is a gift - it comes by the way of GRACE through faith. But can God's grace be turned into something He never intended? Yes indeed! Jude wrote towards the end of the first century A.D. that, "...when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith that was ONCE DELIVERED unto the saints(even BEFORE the end of the first century the way of salvation was being

corrupted) for there are CERTAIN MEN crept in UNAWARES(they looked like Christians but were deceivers)...UNGODLY men(not speaking the truth of God's word) TURNING (changing, doing something other than what God intended) the GRACE of God into LASCIVIOUSNESS(a license to sin)...." verse 3,4. God's grace was being ABUSED, twisted, turned into something other than what God said it was.

SOMETHING YOU CAN EARN!

Salvation comes as a GIFT - by grace -given to us by the Father. Our works, our deeds cannot EARN us the right to eternal life. But there is something we can most definitely EARN - by what we have performed.

Turn to Rom.6:23 and read there what it is we can EARN, "For the wages(the payment we are rightly due because we've worked for it) of SIN is DEATH....." What we have earned by sinning is DEATH - that is the eternal death, the SECOND death(Rev.20:4-~6,14-15), from which there is no resurrection.

Again the last part of verse 23 says that eternal life is God's FREE gift - His to give to us - not something we can demand because we've earned it.

WHAT IS SIN ?

We can earn by sin - DEATH! The next question we should ask and answer is "what IS sin?" What does God say sin is? Does He define it for us, or is it left to us to decide what sin is?

The word of God does define sin for us. The Bible definition is - never forget this verse - 1 Jn.3:4, "Whosoever commits SIN transgresses also the LAW: for sin IS the transgression of the LAW."

Now what law is John speaking about? Paul answers, "...I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known LUST, except the law had said, YOU SHALL NOT COVET " (Rom.7:7).

What law contains the command "you shall not covet"? Why, the TEN commandment law of EX.20. The marginal reference of many Bibles will, for verse 7, take you to the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20.

James further testifies that if we break only ONE of these commands of God, we are guilty - we become a transgressor - we SIN! "For whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For He that said, do not commit adultery, also said, do not kill. Now if you commit no adultery, yet if you kill, you have become a transgressor of the law" (James 2:10,11).

WHO HAS SINNED ?

Sin then is breaking any one of God's TEN commandments, as amplified by

Jesus

Christ and the entire word of God (see Jesus' amplification of the law in Mat.5 - 7).Has anyone kept the law of God completely perfectly - so no sin was incurred? Yes! Speaking about Jesus Christ, Paul wrote, that He was tempted like we all are, but He never sinned - not once (Heb.4:15).

What about the rest of mankind? Are only some sinners while the rest are not? The Psalmist wrote, "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are ALL together filthy: there is NONE that doeth good, no, NOT ONE" (Ps.14:2,3).

Paul translates this passage as, "There is NONE righteous, no not one(righteousness is defined as all God's commandments - Ps.119:172). - there is none that understands, there is none that seeks after God there is none that does good, no not one" (Rom.3:10-12).

God inspired Paul in verse 23 of this third chapter of Romans to write, "For All HAVE SINNED, and come short of the glory of God." Earlier in this chapter Paul had stated, "...for we have before proved both Jew and Gentile, that they are ALL under sin" (verse 9).

All mankind has sinned - the only exception was Jesus Christ. He only of all humans was without sin. He alone has kept the law of God completely perfectly - all the rest have broken that law - have SINNED - have earned the wages of sin - DEATH.

CUT OFF FROM GOD

God is HOLY (1 Pet.1:15,16). He is PERFECT (Mt.5:48). His very nature and character is that of perfection. GOD the Father and Christ Jesus are RIGHTEOUS (1 Jn.3:7) - there is NO sin in them at all (v.5).

God's law is PERFECT (Ps. 19:7). His commandments are RIGHTEOUSNESS (Ps.119:172). God's righteousness is FOREVER (Ps.111:3). To sin, as we have seen is to BREAK, go against the very character of God - His perfect HOLY, SPIRITUAL law (Rom.7:12,14).

The Father and Son have never sinned, but the rest of mankind, all mankind - YOU and I, have sinned - have broken that perfect and holy law. What has this sinning of ours done to our relationship with the Father ?

God answers us through the prophet Isaiah, "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it can not save, neither His ear heavy, that it can not hear, BUT your INIQUITIES (our sins) have SEPARATED between you and your God, and your SINS have hid his face from you, that He will not hear." (Isa.59:1-2).

Our sins have cut us off from God - we stand condemned to DEATH, our wicked deeds, our WORK of sin has earned for us the wages of death. But God the Father is a God OF LOVE (1 Jn.4:8). Although we deserve to die, He loves us - He wants to SAVE us from death. The Father, even before the foundation of the World, knew mankind

would sin, and so He planned HOW man could be rescued from the penalty of sin - death. God had determined to save us, not according to OUR WORKS, but according to His own purpose(plan) and GRACE, which was given us in Christ Jesus BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN (2 Tim.1:9). God had determined to buy us back from death through His very own Son - and this plan of redemption was formulated before the world was founded (1 Pet.1:19,20). God is so wonderful and merciful that He gave His only begotten SON, that whosoever believes in Him should NOT PERISH, but have EVERLASTING LIFE (JN.3: 16) .

Sin - our sins, have separated us from God - have cut us off, but there is a way we can be reconciled - the Father has made a way possible by which our sins can be forgiven, and the death sentence taken away from us.

GOD'S CALL TO MANKIND

The first step to salvation that we must do is to respond to the CALL of God, "For the promise(of forgiveness of sins) is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are far off, even as many as the Lord our God shall CALL" (Acts 2:39). What does God CALL OUT? Paul tells us, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at, BUT NOW commands all men everywhere to REPENT" (Acts 17:30) . Jesus said, "I tell you....except you REPENT, you shall all likewise PERISH" (Luke 1 3:5) .

God inspired Isaiah to write, "Seek you the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near: Let the wicked FORSAKE HIS way, and the un- righteous man his thoughts: and let him RETURN unto the Lord, and He will have MERCY(grace) upon him, and to our God, for He will abundantly PARDON" (Isa.55:2,7). On the day of PENTECOST, Peter cried out to the people, "REPENT (be broken up over being sinners, change your way of life) and be BAPTIZED every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, FOR the REMISSION (the forgiveness) of SINS..." (Acts 2:38).

A little later Peter again shouted, "REPENT you therefore, and be CONVERTED (be charged, be turned into something different) that (in order that) your SINS may be blotted out" (Acts 3:19). We are sinners - sin has cut us off from God - we are under the sentence of death. But God says if we REPENT of being sinners - if we are willing to CHANGE, to be converted to His thoughts and ways, our sins can be FORGIVEN - blotted out of the book of death, so to speak.

Listen again to what God calls out to us through the apostle John, "If we CONFESS our sins, He is faithful and just to FORGIVE us our sins, and to cleans us from all unrighteousness" (1 Jn.1:9).

Another time, "He that covers his sins shall not prosper: but whosoever CONFESSES and FORSAKES them shall have MERCY" (Prov.28:13) .

Just as a MURDERER on death row must show by a humble, contrite, repentant attitude, he is broken up over what he has done, and never wants to commit that crime

again, if he is to stand any chance of obtaining MERCY or GRACE, so it is with us before God. We must show God that we have repented of our transgression of His holy law - that we want to CHANGE our way of life to conform to His way. Upon manifesting that attitude, God says He will show us MERCY - our sins will be blotted out - FORGIVEN.

And just as the murderer on death row cannot possibly EARN his forgiveness by his repentant attitude, or anything he can do after he has murdered, so with us. Our repentance does not, cannot EARN our forgiveness with God. It is merely a CONDITION that the Father lays down in order for us to receive His free pardon of our sins.

When rightly understood, even the ability to come to repentance is a gift from God. as no one can come to Christ, accept Him as Savior, UNLESS the Father DRAWS him with His Spirit. You will see this truth by reading these scriptures: John 6:44,65; 16:13; 2 Tim..2: 24-26.

We do have our part to do - we must HUMBLE ourselves - have the proper kind of respectful fear of God (Isa. 66:2) and then God will look to us - give to us as one of His gifts the ability to REPENT which in turn leads to the forgiveness of our sins through faith in Christ Jesus.

WHAT IS GOD'S GRACE ?

It is written, "....the Lord is GRACIOUS...." (Ps. 111:4). The word "grace" can have manifold meanings. The WORLD BOOK DICTIONARY gives a long passage as to the various meanings of the word "grace." But in connection with THEOLOGY they say, "God's free and UNDESERVED favor to and love for mankind....." They also state grace is, "MERCY, CLEMENCY, PARDON, FORGIVENESS."

If someone has done you WRONG and justice would demand they pay the prescribed penalty for his their wrong actions, but you have compassion on them and put aside the right to exercise the justice of the law, you have shown CLEMENCY, you have had MERCY, you have granted PARDON, you have been GRACIOUS, shown GRACE to the wrong doer. Grace or mercy is a quality of character that comes from a person, where he could just as easily demand the penalty of the law be enforced.

Being shown grace - being under grace, does not mean you are in a condition of being free to henceforth live as you please, and break with impunity the laws of the land. The murderer, Being shown grace or forgiveness is not free to just go out and murder again - of course not! Why, the law enforcement agencies have no problem understanding what GRACE is - but some theologians and professing Christians have a terrible time in understanding the grace of God.

The grace of God is an ATTRIBUTE, quality of CHARACTER - one of the many qualities of God. It is the ability of God to forgive sin - to blot out the sins of any person - to show mercy - undeserved favor in not claiming the justice of the law, to be carried out on that person - which for us would mean eternal death.

But as God's law is ETERNAL and stands fast FOREVER (Ps.111:7,8) and as the

penalty or wages for breaking that law is death, the law must be satisfied. If God could have taken His magic wand and said, "law be gone, be no more" then there would be NO TRANSGRESSION, "for where no law is, there is no transgression" (Rom.4:15). You cannot get a speeding ticket if there is no law to tell you that you must not go over a certain speed. If God's law has at any point in time been "done away" or "nailed to the cross" then nobody from that time on has sinned - for sin is the transgression of the law. And so a savior would not have been needed.

The TRUTH is - God's law, has never been abolished, so the penalty of breaking it must be satisfied - it must be paid.

We have all sinned - we are under the laws penalty, which is death. God says there is a way to get out from under that death sentence. The first step is to REPENT of sinning - to repent of breaking the law of God. But the death penalty must be satisfied. The next step of God's plan now comes into play.

HOW WE ARE JUSTIFIED

A word that is used many times in the Bible, especially in the New Testament with reference to, and in connection with salvation, is the word JUSTIFICATION or JUSTIFY. Again to many this word is nebulous - they don't really understand what it means. A few minutes spent with a DICTIONARY will clarify its meaning.

The word means and denotes the act of pronouncing RIGHTEOUS, acquitting persons of guilt, to clear of blame or guilt. A person who has been JUSTIFIED has been acquitted or released from the penalty of his error. It is as if he had never been guilty of any wrong doing - he stands innocent - FORGIVEN - no penalty hangs over him. We have seen that we stand as SINNERS - the law claims our lives - death is the sentence. That penalty must be paid - the law is UNMOVEABLE. But God has provided a way by which we can escape that death penalty. He planned that His very own Son would come and die for us, in our place. It is as if the son of the judge of the land, who is about to enforce the death sentence on all murderers, came forward and said he would die in their stead - he would bear the penalty of death, so the law that was broken could be satisfied and the murderers could be declared innocent - righteous, forgiven of any crime - JUSTIFIED.

That is the way it is with God, the judge of the universe, His Son Jesus Christ, His perfect law, the penalty for breaking that law, and us the sinners who have transgressed that law and have incurred the sentence of death. We may have repented, but the law must be satisfied.

So Paul wrote, "Being JUSTIFIED(declared righteous - forgiven) FREELY(not something we can earn, or claim we have a right to because of some good work we've done) by His GRACE(undeserved pardon) through the REDEMPTION(the buying back or redeeming power) that is in Christ Jesus. Whom God hath set forth(it was planned as

we've seen before the world began) to be a PROPITIATION(an atoning sacrifice) through FAITH(believing and trusting the way God said it would be) in His blood(His death on the cross) to declare His righteousness for the REMISSION(passing over or blotting out) of SINS that are PAST(the grace of God does not give us a blanket forgiveness of sins we may commit in the future) through the forbearance of God" (Rom.3:24-25).

Again Paul wrote, "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, DISOBEDIENT, deceived, serving different lusts and pleasures..... But after the kindness and love of God our Savior towards man appeared. Not by WORKS of righteousness which we have done(there's no deed we could possibly do to release us from the death penalty) but according to His MERCY He saved us(from sure death) which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior. That being JUSTIFIED by His GRACE, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:3-7).

The man about to die for the crime of murder can live perfectly - he can obey the laws of the land completely - he can do all manner of GOOD DEEDS - but none of them can erase the sentence of death hanging over him. He can only escape death by being shown MERCY or GRACE by the powers that be.

God has made our justification - our acquittal from guilt possible through the death of His Son. We must believe - have faith - trust in God that truly Jesus' death in our stead, satisfies the law's demand and we are declared sinless - RIGHTEOUS.

And as Paul says, "Where is boasting then? It is excluded(we can not boast we did some deed to have to make God forgive us). By what law? of WORKS? No! but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is JUSTIFIED by faith without the deeds of the law" (Rom.3:27,28).

Paul in writing to the Christians at Rome about Salvation and Justification, had to combat the Gentle and Jewish doctrine of justification by WORKS or DEEDS. The Jewish sects believed that being physically circumcised in the flesh, observing certain ritualistic ordinances, performing animal sacrifices, and the like, would get you in right standing with God - that certain WORKS would justify you. The Gentile religions had similar beliefs. They held that by punishing the physical body, going through certain ceremonies, sacrificing animals, they could please their gods and acquire forgiveness of sins. Paul explains this was not the way God planned to JUSTIFY mankind from sin.

It was not the way of EARNING your forgiveness but a matter of God Himself through His Son, coming in the form of man, being made flesh and dying for the sins of the whole world - taking the death penalty upon Himself, so all mankind could be made free from the penalty of the law.

It was a simple matter of how God had planned it and faith in that promise of His. Faith in the fact Jesus died for us. Upon our REPENTANCE and acceptance of the death of Christ in our stead - the acceptance of Him as our PERSONAL Savior, God would forgive us our sins - would declare us righteous, sinless in His eyes. We would be JUSTIFIED - and that by GRACE through FAITH.

ONE MAN DIES FOR ALL ?

It may be asked at this juncture, "How can the death of just ONE man forgive the sins of millions upon millions of human beings?"

What many do not realize is the fact that, the Jesus of the New Testament was the God of the Old Testament. Jesus was the one who made the physical universe - who made all the things that are recorded in the first chapter of Genesis - the one who formed man and breathed into him the breath of life. The Jesus of the Gospels was the one who talked to Abraham, who wrestled with Jacob, who called and delivered Israel out of Egypt. This same Jesus who died on the cross is the one who wrote with His finger the 10 commandments to Israel.

Paul tells us that God the Father, "Has in these last days spoken unto us by His son..... BY WHOM HE MADE THE WORLDS" (Heb.1:2). ALSO in Col.1:16 we read, "For by Him(the Son - Christ - v.13-15) were ALL THINGS created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, ALL THINGS Here created by HIM....." Jesus told the Jews that He had seen Abraham - they laughed at Him(Jn.8: 56-57). He said to them, "Truly, I say unto you, before Abraham was born I was the I AM spoken of in scripture" (v.58 paraphrased). See EX.3:13-14.

Christ existed before all things - He WAS and IS and is to COME(Rev.1:8). He WAS WITH God and WAS God from the beginning(Jn.1:1-2,14). He was the second person of the Godhead - the LOGOS or WORD - the spokesman. Jesus Christ was that spiritual ROCK that followed the Israelites(1 Cor.10:4).

Because Jesus was the very God (in the main) we read about in the Old Testament - the CREATOR of all life - His life is worth more than all the human lives that have ever existed or will exist. That's why His ONE DEATH can forgive all the sins ever committed by all mankind.

DOES GRACE AND FAITH MAKE VOID THE LAW ?

Because no amount of good deeds or WORKS - no amount of perfect law keeping can earn you God's grace or make up for past sins - because our sins can only be blotted out by the blood of Christ - as our justification from a guilty past is through the death of Jesus - as it is our faith in His sacrifice that cleanses us from sin - does this FAITH mean we do not have to OBEY God or serve His holy law?

Paul was the man God inspired to preach and write so much on JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH, let's let him answer our question.

"Do we then make VOID the law through faith? God FORBID! No we ESTABLISH the law" (Rom 3:31).

Our man on death row for murder, who finds that the son of the judge has died for him so he need not die, is thankful for the GRACE and LOVE shown to him. He has FAITH in the sacrifice of the son - he knows he is now justified. BUT he also knows he

cannot just go out and murder again - he knows the law is still in force against such a crime. The law that says "you shall not murder" has not been made void because he was justified freely by GRACE through the redeeming power of the son.

As Paul builds up his case for the teaching of justification by faith, through the death of God's Son Jesus (Rom.4 and 5) and not by any works that we can perform - a natural question would arise: "What shall we say then, shall we CONTINUE IN SIN, that GRACE may ABOUND?" Or as the PHILLIPS translation puts it, "Now what is our response to be, shall we SIN to our HEART'S CONTENT and see how far we can EXPLOIT the grace of God?" (Rom.6:1).

"If God's grace is so free and wonderful," the question may be put, "and sin can only be blotted out by undeserved forgiveness, should we not go out and sin even more, so God can bestow more and more grace upon us, and so His love and mercy can be manifested even still more abundantly?"

What is Paul's answer to such an idea as this? "GOD FORBID!" or "WHAT A TERRIBLE THOUGHT" (Phillips Trans.). The FAITH we have in being forgiven of sin - the GRACE shown to us through the death of Jesus, does NOT give us the LICENSE or freedom to sin to our hearts content.

THE SAVIOR'S PURPOSE

At this point we should ask another question: "Did Jesus come to save us IN our sins, while we continue to live IN sin, or did He come to save us FROM sin and its penalty?"

When the angel announced to Joseph that Mary would be the one to bear the very Son of God, he said, "And she shall bring forth a son, and you shall call his name Jesus (which means Savior) for He shall SAVE His people FROM their sins " (Mat.1:21).

Why was Christ manifested to the world - so the world could be saved while continuing IN sin? NO! The Greek word "from" in Mat.1:21 is APO and means "forth from, away from."

NOTICE 1 JN. 3:5-10, "You know moreover, that Christ became man to TAKE AWAY sin, and He Himself was free from sin. The man who lives in Christ does not HABITUALLY sin. The REGULAR sinner has never seen or known Him. You my children should not let anyone deceive you. The man who lives a good life is a good man, as surely as Christ is good. But a man whose life is HABITUALLY sinful is spiritually a son of the devil, for the devil has been a sinner from the beginning.

Now the Son of God came to the earth with the express purpose of undoing the devil's work. The man who is really God's son does not PRACTICE sin, for God's nature is in him, for good, and such a heredity is incapable of sin. Here we have a clear indication as to who are the children of God and who are the children of the devil" (Phillips translation).

A true child of God - one who has been saved from sin - who has been JUSTIFIED by GRACE through FAITH - does not CONTINUE IN sin. He does not PRACTICE as an HABITUAL way of life, the works of the devil - sin.

The death of Jesus for the remission of sins, was also our death - He died in our stead - it was as if we had died. The Christian doctrine of BAPTISM pictures our death and resurrection in Christ Jesus.

Paul, writing about NOT LIVING IN SIN a moment longer, now that GRACE has been shown to us, said, "that all of us who were baptized into Jesus Christ were, by that very action, sharing in His death. If we have, as it were, shared in His death, we shall also share in His resurrection.....And if we were dead men with Christ we can believe that we shall also be men alive with Him. He died because of sin(the breaking of the law) once, He lives for God forever. IN THE SAME WAY look upon yourselves(converted justified Christians) as dead to the APPEAL and POWER of sin but alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Do not then(today as baptized forgiven children of God) allow SIN to establish any power over your mortal bodies in making you give way to its lusts, but like men rescued from certain death, put yourselves in God's hands as weapons of good for His own purpose. For SIN CAN NEVER(now ,today, or tomorrow) be your master - you are no longer living under the law, but under grace" (Rom.6:3-14 Phillips - amplification mine).

Jesus came to save us FROM sin - from its penalty - death, and from its POWER over us. As we have been given a new lease on life by His sacrifice in our stead, and as He lives for God - doing His will, forever - so we too must be instruments in God's hands for His purpose and will, not the devils. We are not to let SIN - the breaking of God's law - be our normal practice. Sin is not to have power and control over us.

NOT UNDER THE LAW ?

Some have taken verse 14 of Romans chapter 6 to say you are no longer under OBLIGATION TO OBEY the law of God. But if that was true then we could break the law at our hearts content, for sin as we have seen, is the breaking of God's law. If we can sin as a way of life because we are no longer under obligation to keep the law, then why did Paul spend so much time before verse 14 in telling the Romans not to let sin(disobedience to the law) rule their lives. Is Paul CONTRADICTING himself in verse 14? Of course not!! Ye are now through JUSTIFICATION by GRACE no longer under the CONDEMNATION of the law - no longer does the law CONDEMN us to death for violating it. We have been made free from its penalty by GRACE - undeserved pardon and we are not under the law as a means of EARNING our justification - trying to perform good works in order to claim God must justify us from sin.

All the well know Bible Commentaries have so understood verse 14. See such Commentators as: MATTHEW HENRY, ADAM CLARK, ALBERT BARNES, and more modern works like the WYCLIFFE and ABINGDON Bible Commentaries.

GRACE DOES NOT GIVE US LICENSE TO SIN

Again I quote from the Phillips translation of Romans 6:15, "Now what shall we do? Shall we go on sinning because we have no law to CONDEMN us any more but are living under grace? NEVER!" Paul, clearly and plainly did NOT believe that the grace of God gave us permission to willfully go on PRACTICING sin. Notice what he said in verses 16-22., from the Phillips with my inserts, "Just think what it would mean. You(saved Christians) belong(now,today) to the power which you choose to obey, whether you choose SIN, whose reward is(still is) DEATH, or God, obedience to whom means the reward of righteousness(eternal life)." Do you see ? If we saved Christians return again to the life of habitual sin, we would AGAIN come under the condemnation of the law - DEATH.

Let's continue, "Thank God that you, who were at one time the servants of sin, honestly responded to the impact of Christ's teaching when you came under its influence. Then released from the service of sin(being forgiven by Christ's death) you entered the service of RIGHTEOUSNESS(you repented and said you would walk in God's commandments - Ps.119:172). For when you were employed by sin you owed no duty to righteousness. But now that you are freed from sin and employed by God, you owe no duty to sin, and you reap(now,today) the fruit of being made righteous, while at the END OF THE ROAD is life for evermore."

Being justified by GRACE puts us on the road - the beginning of the road, of salvation. We are in a SAVED condition yes, but we have not INHERITED eternal life - we are HEIRS of God, not yet inheritors(Rom.8:17). At the end of the road is eternal life. We must walk that road all our lives until our death or Christ's return, whichever comes first. If we deliberately, willfully - with clear INTENT, turn from serving God, we come again under condemnation and the death sentence of sin.

Salvation is a PROCESS! There is no such doctrine taught in the work of God as "once saved always saved". That doctrine is FALSE - it is a lie - it has deceived tens of thousands into a false salvation!

LISTEN! Will you believe what the word of God plainly says? "For if we SIN WILLFULLY after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains NO MORE SACRIFICE FOR SINS. But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries" (Heb. 10: 26, 27) .

Jesus our Savior said, "But he that shall ENDURE TO THE END, the same shall be saved" (Mat.24:13). Again He said, "....He that OVERCOMES shall not be hurt of the second death. He that OVERCOMES, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will NOT BLOT HIS NAME OUT OF THE BOOK OF LIFE:...." (Rev.2:11; 3:5). So it is possible for a Christian to have his name blotted out of the book of life. If he does not endure and overcome to the end he will not be saved.

The apostle James wrote, "BRETHREN, if any of YOU do ERR from the TRUTH and one CONVERT him; Let him know, that he which converts the SINNER from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (James 5:19,20).

It is possible for a Christian to FALL AWAY from the TRUTH for a time, and be helped back again to conversion by another Christian?

Did the apostle Paul, a man who had experienced the great MERCY of God, who had been justified - who was in a saved condition, believe that it was now IMPOSSIBLE for him to "fall away"? He wrote these words, "Not that I have become perfect yet: I have NOT YET WON, but I am STILL RUNNING, trying to capture the prize for which Christ Jesus captured me. I can assure you my brothers, I am FAR FROM THINKING I have already WON. All I can say is that I forget the past and I strain ahead for what is still to come; I am racing for the FINISH, for the prize to which God calls us upward to receive in Christ Jesus" (Phil.3:12-14, Jerusalem Bible).

Paul knew that he had eternal life in him, because Christ was in him through the Spirit(1 Jn.5:11-13), but he also knew he was not yet an INHERITOR of eternal life - that prize was still ahead of him. So what must he do until he inherited it? Be careful - and as he said to the Philippians, "...work out your own salvation with FEAR and TREMBLING" (chap.2:12). Do not get into a laxidazical attitude in your Christian life. We must constantly be putting on the whole armor of God to withstand the darts of the devil, for he's always going about to see who he can devour (Eph.6:10-18; 1 Pet.5:8).

Did Paul believe it was possible for him to FALL WAY from the grace of God? "...But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection(he was enduring and overcoming): lest that by any means, WHEN I HAVE PREACH TO OTHERS I MYSELF SHOULD BE A CAST AWAY" (1 Cor.9: 24-27, KJV).

Paul did not believe in or teach any such idea as "once saved always saved." The GRACE of God gives no one a license to practice sin. If once we have REPENTED and been JUSTIFIED we again turn back to be the servants of sin, we shall reap the wages - what we CAN EARN - death! "Sin PAYS its servants - the wage is death. But God GIVES to those who serve Him: His FREE gift is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom.6:23 Phillips trans.).

A CHRISTIANS ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE LAW OF GOD

What should be the attitude of a person who has come under the GRACE of God, towards the law of the Lord? We may well ask - what was Paul's attitude? What was John's attitude? What was Peter's? What was James'? What was Jesus' attitude towards the law of God? Did they think it something terrible - a bondage - something to SHUN? After Paul had been justified he wrote, "Wherefore the Law is HOLY, and the commandment HOLY, and JUST, and GOOD..... I DELIGHT in the law of God after the inward man" (Rom.7:12,14).

After James had come under the grace of God, he wrote concerning the law, "But whoever looks into the PERFECT LAW OF LIBERTY, and continues in it, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a DOER of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deeds" (James 1:25).

John clearly tells us how we can KNOW that we KNOW the Lord, "And HEREBY

do we KNOW that we KNOW Him, IF we keep His COMMANDMENTS. He that says, I know him, and keeps not His commandments is a LIAR, and the TRUTH is not in him " (1 Jn.2:3,4).

Peter, after his conversion, speaking about Christ and sin, wrote, "For even hereunto were you called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an EXAMPLE, that you should follow His steps. WHO DID NO SIN" (1 Pet.2:21). Peter said Jesus never sinned - never broke the law of God - and that was an example for us to follow. WE are to have the attitude after being forgiven - shown grace - of not wanting to sin again.

The longest of all the Psalms - PS.119 - over and over again extols the wonder and greatness of God's LAW - COMMANDMENTS - STATUTES - PRECEPTS - and JUDGMENTS. Here is some of what is written: "Open you my eyes that I may behold wonderous things out of your law.... I will delight myself in your commandments, which I have loved.... O how love I your law, it is my meditation all the day.... Rivers of water run down my eyes, because they keep not your law..... I have longed for your salvation, O Lord, and your law is my delight" (Ps.119:18,47,97,136,174).

Jesus said, "If any man love me, he will keep my words.... he that loves me not, keeps not my sayings: and the word which you hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me" (Jn.14:23,24). What was one of the sayings - words - of Jesus that came from the Father? "but if you will ENTER(inherit) into life, KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS" (Mat.19:17). A Christian - a person under the grace of God - will LOVE the law of God and will, with his mind and inward attitude DELIGHT in it and want to serve it. For in this way we love God, for, "this is the love of God, that we KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS: and His commandments are not grievous" (1 Jn.5:3).

WILL GRACE BE GIVEN TO JUST ANYONE ?

Some say GRACE and LAW do not mix - cannot go together. Oh, really! Now it is only possible to show MERCY or GRACE to someone when a law has been broken and a penalty incurred. Will God shower down His mercy upon just anyone, no matter what kind of rotten, filthy, rebellious attitude they are in? Does God have the right to lay down certain CONDITIONS to receiving His grace? If so, what are those conditions?

The very answer to those questions above, is given in the very commandments of God that so many seem to hate and preach against today. Speaking about not making images to worship, God says, "for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me. And showing MERCY(grace - forgiveness of sins) unto," NOTICE IT, "unto thousands of them that LOVE me," we have seen already what loving God entails, "and KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS" (EX. 20:5,6).

God does have the right to lay down CONDITIONS for receiving His GRACE or MERCY. The condition is to love Him and be willing to KEEP His law.

Peter in Acts 3:19 put it this way, "REPENT you therefore and be CONVERTED

that your sins may be blotted out." God will grant you GRACE - forgiveness - justification - only upon REPENTANCE - upon your willingness to change your way of serving sin to the way of serving righteousness - His COMMANDMENTS (see Isa. 55:6-9 and Ps.119:172).

NOTICE PS.103:17-18, "But the MERCY(grace) of God is from everlasting to everlasting upon," who, upon just anyone? "upon them that FEAR Him...." (read Isa.66:2 for an amplification of Godly fear, "to such as KEEP HIS COVENANT," (read about the new covenant WE must enter into with God in Heb.10:1-17) "and to those that REMEMBER His COMMANDMENTS to DO them."

As we have already shown and proved, the keeping of the commandments - the law -cannot EARN you forgiveness - the grace or God. That is God's free GIFT, something He gives to you, that you do not deserve. You deserve only to die. But God will have mercy upon you IF you meet certain CONDITIONS. In PS. 103 those conditions are listed as:

1) A Godly fear. 2) A willingness to enter His covenant. 3) To remember His law to keep it.

Now, understanding that God does lay down conditions for His grace and what those conditions are, shows us WHY Paul wrote, "For not the HEARERS of the law (those only that hear but will not perform) are JUST(forgiven) before God, but the DOERS of the law (those who have repented of sin and are willing to serve the law of God) SHALL BE JUSTIFIED" (Rom.2;13).

Performing the law does not justify you, but only those who are willing to keep it, will be justified or forgiven by God.

Coming to have the attitude - purpose of mind - that you are willing to obey the law is a CONDITION to receiving GRACE through FAITH. That is why James wrote:

"What is the use (profit), my brethren, for anyone to profess to have faith if he has not (good)works (to show for it)? Can(such)faith save(his soul)? If a brother or sister is poorly clad and lacks food for each day, and one of you says to him, Goodbye! Keep(yourself) warm and well fed, without giving him the necessities for the body, what good does that do? So also faith if it does not have works(deeds and actions of obedience to back it up), by its self is destitute of power - inoperative, dead. But someone will say (to you then), You(say you) have faith and I have (good) works. Now you show me your (alleged) faith apart from any (good) works (if you can), and I by (good) works (of obedience) will show you my faith. You believe that God is one, you do well. So do the demons believe, and shudder (in terror and horror such as makes a man's hair stand on end and contract the surface of his skin)! Are you willing to be shown (proof), you foolish, unproductive, spiritually-deficient fellow, that faith, apart from (good) works is inactive and ineffective and worthless? Was; not our forefather Abraham (shown to be) justified - made acceptable to God - by (his) works when he brought to the altar as an Offering his (own) son Isaac? (Gen.22:1-14). You see that (his) faith was co-operating with his works, and this faith was complete, and reached its supreme expression (when he implemented it) by (good) works. And so the Scripture was fulfilled that says, Abraham believed - adhered to,

trusted in and relied on - God, and this was accounted to him as righteousness (as conformity to God's will in thought and deed), and he was called God's friend. (Gen.15:6; Isa.41:8; 2 Chron.20:7).

You see that a man is justified (pronounced righteous before God) through what he does and not alone through faith - through works of obedience as well as by what he believes. For as the human body apart from the spirit is lifeless, so faith apart from (its) works of obedience is also dead" (James 2:14-26, The Amplified Bible).

The MURDERER who is shown MERCY - grace - on condition that he does not murder again, can be pardoned from his crime if he accepts that condition and is willing to live in compliance with the law.

So likewise - God will be gracious to us on CONDITION that we no longer practice as a way of life - sin (the breaking of God's law). Now do you see why Jesus said to the rich young man, "...IF you will enter(inherit) into life KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS." God will only show GRACE (by which you are saved) to those who REMEMBER His COMMANDMENTS to DO them (Ps.103:17-18).

IS IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR A CHRISTIAN TO SIN ?

God's grace towards a repentant sinner does not END with that persons initial justification, as we shall now proceed to prove.

A person has REPENTED - he has confessed to God he is a sinner - he's cried out to God for mercy. He sees that God has made a way possible for him/her to be forgiven and have the penalty of death removed. They see that Jesus Christ came and paid that penalty for them - they accept Jesus as their PERSONAL savior and are baptized. Their sins are now completely washed away - they stand RECONCILED to God - sinless - absolutely RIGHTEOUS in God's sight. Now from that day on, is it IMPOSSIBLE for him/her to ever commit a sin ? They do not WANT to sin - their whole attitude is to NOT sin - they want to serve and obey God's commandments, but is it POSSIBLE under temptation and human weakness of the flesh, to slip up and sin?

Turn to 1 Jn.1:8. This verse plainly says, "If WE(converted Christians) say that we HAVE NO SIN, we DECEIVE ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

Spirit led, humble children of God, ones who desire to live the way of God's love, which is His commandments - DO AT TIMES SIN! If any say they do not, God's word says they are deceived.

Read the 7th chapter of Romans, and see how Paul explained the battle that went on between his old sin lusting nature and his now Spirit filled mind. He did not want to sin - he loved and wanted to keep God law, but he found himself at times falling short of that perfectness of God. He had to CRY OUT to God for HELP and MERCY!

HOW A CHRISTIAN IS FORGIVEN

So a baptized - converted - Spirit filled Christian, can and DOES SIN at times. The law has not been abolish as we have previously proved - the wages of sin is still death. How then can a Christian be FORGIVEN (be shown grace) of his sins this time? Can he be forgiven by DOING some good work or deed? Can he go about to EARN forgiveness? Does God add up all his good works and law keeping and use them to cancel out his evil deeds? If that is case, then he would indeed be EARNING his way to eternal life and salvation, and Eph. 2:8 would not be true.

God does not leave us in any doubt as to HOW we as Christians walking along the salvation road, can obtain FORGIVENESS of sins that we may through weakness commit.

Turn again to 1 Jn.1. We have read verse 8 which says we do sin, now read verse 9, "If we CONFESS our sins, He is faithful and just to FORGIVE us our sins, and to CLEANSE US from all unrighteousness." We again turn to God in a REPENTANT attitude - we confess to Him we have sinned. He sees our heart. He knows we do not want to sin, that we desire to obey Him, to serve and keep His law - He WILL FORGIVE US! God will again show us grace, because are still wanting to live within His law and the conditions He set down for us to qualify for His constant grace over us.

Look at chapter 2 of 1 John and verses 1-2, "My little children, these things I write unto you, that YOU SIN NOT." Yes, our aim - our direction of mind is not to sin, "And (but) if any man (does) sin, we have an ADVOCATE (an intercessor) with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." Jesus is in heaven pleading on our behalf before the Father. Continue, "And He is the PROPITIATION (the atoning sacrifice) for OUR SINS" Yes - Jesus was RAISED AGAIN from the dead - raised for our CONTINUAL justification (Rom.4:25). We are not only justified (forgiven of our past sins by the blood of Jesus, by His death - Rom.4:23-26) to RECONCILIATION with the Father by Christ, but He was raised again for our present day to day justification or forgiveness. He was raised to life so He could intercede for us.

Upon our present repentance and confession of sin, God the Father will accept the work Jesus is doing for us while in heaven above seated at the right hand of the Almighty. The Father will again and again (constantly) apply the BLOOD and SACRIFICE of His Son to us and cleanse us from our iniquities.

Turn to Hebrews the 4th chapter, verses 14-16. Read those wonderful words of truth. Jesus Christ is our HIGH PRIEST in heaven above. He is speaking on our behalf to the Father. He knows what it is like to be human. As a human He was tempted to sin, but He did not sin, not once. Jesus really knows and understands the battle we face in overcoming sin. We can come to the throne of GRACE when we do sin and ask for mercy. We shall obtain it.

Now do you see the WONDER of all the great LOVE of the Father? We do not

have to try to amass more good works than bad, more good thoughts than evil ones, so the good can cancel out the bad. No amount of good works can blot out our sins. Our sins during our Christian walk are washed away by the present work of Jesus in heaven, by His atoning sacrifice, by His shed blood being applied to them. Grace being again shown to us by the Father. **WE CANNOT EARN THAT MERCY BY ANY OF OUR GOOD WORKS!** It is God's to GIVE as His GIFT. But there are conditions laid down for us to receive His free grace. Those conditions we have previously shown you.

As long as we maintain that attitude of REPENTANCE and willingness to OBEY God, then He will through Christ Jesus , FORGIVE us our sins.

SAVED BY THE LIFE OF JESUS

You have probably thought or been taught that Jesus' DEATH on the cross COMPLETED salvation, that it WAS FINISHED at Calvary. After all, didn't Jesus say, "it is finished" (Jn.

19:30). But WHAT was finished on the cross? Let Paul answer, "For all have sinned(broken God's law - 1 Jn.3:4) and come short of the glory of God. Being JUSTIFIED declared righteous) freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God had set forth to be a propitiation (an atoning- sacrifice) through faith in His blood (death on the cross) to declare His righteousness for the remission (forgiveness) of sins that are PAST....." (Rom.3:23-25 KJV, amplification mine).

The sinner upon REPENTANCE, accepting Jesus as his personal savior, can have ALL PAST SINS - sins up to that very moment - FORGIVEN, washed away by the blood of Jesus on the cross.

Christ's DEATH secured our justification from the sins we HAVE ALREADY committed. His DEATH took away the penalty we had incurred by our sins (Rom.6:23). What Jesus finished on the cross was the sacrifice for our PAST sins to justification and reconciliation with the Father.

Listen friends, this may shocks some of you, but the truth of the matter is that it takes BOTH the DEATH and LIFE of Christ to SAVE you. If Jesus had only died and had never been raised to life, you could never be saved, you would never inherit eternal life - you would be dead in your sins!

Read these verses in your own Bible - mark them, and never forget them: "And if Christ be not RISEN, then is our preaching vain, and your FAITH IS VAIN ALSO.....if Christ be not RAISED, your FAITH IS VAIN - you are yet IN YOUR SINS!! Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ ARE PERISHED" (1 Cor.15:14,17,18. KJV). If Jesus is not alive - if He was not RESURRECTED, we are yet in our sins! We are yet sinners - doomed to perish. The death of Jesus is ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY for salvation, but so is His LIFE!

It takes not only His death but His LIFE also to save you.

Now how much of that part of the gospel have you heard? You hear a lot about the death of Jesus - His blood shed to cleanse your guilty past - but how much do you hear about His LIFE to cleanse your present and future sins? Christ is NOW upon the Father's right hand in heaven INTERCEDING for us, so the Father will daily forgive us our sins. That is why Paul wrote, "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).

Then we also read in chapter 8:9-11, "Now if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His....But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also QUICKEN(make alive) your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwells in you."

When Jesus shall RETURN - when God the Father sends Him back to this earth, WE the children of God shall be LIKE HIM (1 Jn.3:1-2). You can read what Jesus looks like TODAY in Revelation 1:13-16. WHAT GLORY AND SPLENDOR THAT WILL BE!!

If you meet the CONDITIONS given by God, you can be in the Kingdom of God. And all who are there, will be there not because of their WORKS that they've done, but because of God's mercy - GRACE. Because they have been forgiven their sins through the blood of His Son - Christ Jesus.

You are truly saved by GRACE !

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Written in 1984

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