

Saved By Grace

We should be ever thankful for the grace of God that has made salvation possible. Without God's grace and mercy, man would be without hope and "most miserable" (1 Cor. 15:19). The inspired Paul wrote, "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" (Eph. 2:8-9). Paul helps define "grace" by adding that salvation is a "gift" from God. Man's sin has separated himself from God (Isa. 59:1-2), but God loves man so much that God has made a plan by which man can be reconciled back to Him (John 3:16; Col. 1:21-23).

Many have used the phrase, "by grace are ye saved," to imply that one is saved by grace only. The verse, in no way, teaches such. In fact, we can know exactly how the Ephesian brethren were saved by grace through faith. During Paul's 3rd Evangelistic Journey, he once again visited the city of Ephesus (Acts 18:24). While there, he preached the truth (Acts 19:8), for without hearing the Word of God, one cannot be saved (Rom. 10:17). Of those Ephesians who heard the word some believed (Acts 19:18) and some did not (Acts 19:9). The Bible teaches that it is impossible to please God without faith (Heb. 11:6), and thus one must believe in order to be saved. The believing Ephesians acted upon God's grace and confessed that Jesus was the Christ and repented of their past iniquities (Acts 19:18-19). So, in order to be saved by grace, the Ephesians had to confess and repent. Lastly, we know that the Ephesians were baptized in order to have their sins forgiven. How do we know this? The Ephesians believed what Paul preached (Acts 19:18). What did Paul preach about baptism? "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Paul taught that it was in water baptism where one has his sins washed away. In addition, immediately upon entering Ephesus, Paul encountered disciples who had been baptized with the baptism of John. After teaching them that the baptism of John was no longer in effect, the disciples "were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19:5).

And so, we can know how to be saved by grace through faith. We simply need to follow the same pattern followed by the Ephesians to whom Paul was writing: 1) Hear the Word, 2) Believe the Word, 3) Repent of Sins, 4) Confess that Jesus is the Christ, and 5) Be Baptized in order to have our sins forgiven. After following God's plan to save, which was given to us by His grace, and not by the works of any man (Eph. 2:8-9), God will add one to His Church (Acts 2:47) and among the saved (2 Tim. 2:10; Eph. 1:22-23). We are saved by God's grace, but not by His grace alone. Man must appropriate that grace by humbly submitting to God's plan to save (Heb. 5:8-9) and by remaining faithful unto Him (Rev. 2:10).