

## Searching the Scriptures / 36 / Amazing Grace / Part 1

In today’s study we want to look at the topic of grace as it appears throughout the Bible. In doing so, let’s consider the following factors:

1. A Biblical Definition of Grace
2. Grace is God’s Divine Prerogative
3. Unworthy Recipients of Grace

### A Biblical Definition of Grace

To arrive at a biblical definition of grace, we must search all of the Bible, and only the Bible, “*comparing spiritual things with spiritual*” like the Bereans of old did in Acts 17:11. That is the way that God tells us to study the Bible in order to come to Truth. We read in Rom 4:4, “*Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.*” Rom 11:6 comments further, “*And if by grace, then is it no more of 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.*” By examining these two verses, one quickly realizes that “*grace*” and “*works*” with respect to salvation are incompatible.

“*Work*” is labor, or effort, that usually earns some kind of compensation. You have a job, so you do your work and get paid for it. “*Grace*”, on the other hand, is not work. It is a gift, so you get something for doing nothing. That is why the Bible declares in Acts 20:24 that Paul (and all Christians) are to proclaim “*the Gospel of the Grace of God*”. Nothing in this universe is more important for your spiritual welfare and mine than the Gospel of the Grace of God; and your eternal destiny and mine is based on our relationship to the Gospel of the Grace of God. Tit 2:11 informs us of the Divine purpose of the grace of God: “*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men...*” God’s grace first and foremost accomplishes salvation – to save sinners from eternal punishment in Hell for God’s honor and glory.

### Grace is God’s Divine Prerogative

Since God’s grace is an undeserved and unearned gift that is bestowed on whomever God so chooses, it is available to all kinds of people regardless of location, age, gender, race, social status, religion, or any other human classification. Thus, in Gen 6:6-8 we read, “*And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.*” 1 Cor 1:4 states, “*I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ...*”

Although written by the Apostle Paul under the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit, each Christian can truly rejoice in the words of Eph 3:8, “*Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ...*” Paul explains in 1 Cor 15:9 why he felt that way: “*For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet [worthy] to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God*” Because of their own rebellious natures, these verses apply to all true believers who were “*dead in trespasses and sins*” before God saved them by His grace.

The patriarch Jacob, speaking for all who have become saved, acknowledges that same attitude of humility with this statement in Gen 32:10: *“I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant...”* Eph 2:8 emphasizes that the whole salvation process is rooted exclusively in the grace of God: *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.”*

### **Unworthy Recipients of Grace**

Those to whom God has graciously given the gift of salvation do not, in any way, merit such eternal kindness and blessing nor can they claim any credit for it. 2 Cor 8:9 reveals the extent of God’s love for the unworthy recipients of His grace: *“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.”* We must never forget that these individuals were spiritually dead, under the wrath of God, and deserving of everlasting punishment in Hell until God saved them by the miracle of the New Birth, as we see from Eph 2:5 and 7, *“Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)... That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.”*

God speaks about His salvation by His grace in terms of His Divine acceptance of us – and not the other way around, as is commonly and erroneously taught. Eph 1:6-7 reveals God’s perspective on this issue: *“To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace...”*

My prayer for you and your family – and my family too – might be that we would truly know firsthand the marvelous, incomprehensible Grace of God.