

Searching the Scriptures / 39 / When Do We Get Grace? / Part 4

In our time together today we want to understand what happens when a person receives God’s grace. Our discussion will cover these important issues:

1. The Lord Jesus is the Author and Finisher of Faith
2. Salvation is of the Lord
3. Spiritual Birth is Likened to Physical Birth

The Lord Jesus is the Author and Finisher of Faith

Heb 12:2 states, *“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”* The word “our” in this verse was added by the translators. We can better understand how Christ is the “finisher of faith” by comparing this verse with Php 1:6, *“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”* Surely, God is entirely dependable in what He says and does, unlike us sinful human beings.

But how is Christ the “author of faith”? Christ is the “author of faith” because He bestows His faith – which is the only faith related to salvation – upon an individual. Listen to what Eph 2:8-9 claims, *“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.”* The only faith that can save one from sin and Hell is Christ’s own faith, which is His own personal faith and trust in God the Father. Let’s turn to Gal. 2:20: *“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”*

Salvation is of the Lord

John 2:9 is a short, but powerful, declaration of God’s sovereignty that boldly proclaims: *“Salvation is of the LORD.”* Why is this the case? As I have mentioned previously, man, by nature, is spiritually “dead in trespasses and sins”. This fact is clearly described in Eze 37:1-2, *“The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry.”* That whole chapter pictures the desolation, decay and utter deadness of man’s spiritual condition. This is a description of you and me prior to salvation.

But, lest we despair, it is also a stupendous illustration of God’s magnificent salvation by grace alone, which He sends forth by means of His Word, the Bible, to save His elect people: Eze 37:12-14 teaches, *“Therefore prophecy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live...”*

Jesus said in John 17:2-3, *“As thou [God the Father] hast given him [God the Son] power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”* Many, many verses in the Bible testify to the fact that “salvation is of the Lord”,

such as Psa 62:1 “...*Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation.*”

Spiritual Birth is Likened to Physical Birth

In John 3:3-6 we are confronted with the late night conversation between Jesus and a Pharisee named Nicodemus on the subject of the New Birth: “*Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*”

When Jesus referred to being “*born again*”, the Greek word for “*again*” <509> really means “*from above*”. For instance, we find it used in Jam 1:17, “*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above <509>, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*” We need to keep in mind that the gift of salvation, which comes “*down*” from God Himself, is entirely undeserved and is only by God’s grace. Nothing short of birth “*from above*” will suffice for someone to “*see*” (that is, with eyes of faith) the Kingdom of God. The same word for “*born again*”, except with a prefix, is used in 1 Pet 1:23, “*Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.*”

Have you been born from above by the Word of God?