

Grace Logic

The good news of the gospel is so good that many will never believe it, and for just that reason. Many believe that God loves them. Many know that God is willing to save. Many will say that they know Christ died for their sins. All this knowing does not insure that the grace of God in salvation is understood. This can be a problem for two reasons. 1. Someone who has accepted the gift and is saved may never grow up. They will become involved in religion and attempt to serve God from their sin nature, which is unacceptable. They will live a miserable life of hypocrisy, weakness and divine discipline. 2. If someone does not understand grace and they approach God based on their terms, they will be rejected. Forever doomed to religion and self-righteous arrogance. Constantly moving further and further away from grace and digging deep into legalism and religion, they seek to pervert the gospel of grace into a system of works. In both cases, they repel rather than attract unbelievers to Christ. The sad fact is that they truly do not understand the logic behind grace. To them, it makes no sense at all, and this makes them feel more justified in their rejection.

The goal in this discourse is to see the logic behind grace. If this is to be accomplished, I must get this logic from what the Holy Scripture teaches. If it is my logic and you understand it, I have not accomplished the goal. I must show that the Word of God is the substance behind grace logic. As the following passages are presented, simply take them at face value. We live in a time when everyone insists they are following the Word and nothing but the Word. It is very common to say that what is believed must be based on the Bible. However, sometimes the scriptures are twisted to arrive at meanings that support private interpretations. Like it or not, we MUST pay close attention to the Word or we will be deceived. We must see that in the Word, God says what He means, and means what He says. One important rule: If we read a passage and come away with an understanding, other than what the passage clearly says, we must have good reason for it. This reason must be clear, otherwise we may be simply twisting the Word to suite our own interpretation. We will explore the nature of grace and the simple way it is presented in the Word. I will use four passages that demonstrate this grace logic. Hopefully, we can see what God is trying to say in the following passages.

1st Romans 11:6 And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.

This verse seems invisible to those believing that their works have some merit in their salvation. It is an oxymoron to believe that you must work for a salvation which is by grace. Here in Romans, the subject is not salvation, but a “*remnant according to the election of grace.*” One thing is clear, that this choosing was not according to works, but grace. We can learn a principle about grace from this passage. Grace and works are antithetical, they are mutually exclusive. Just as light excludes darkness, grace excludes works. In fact, it is a contradiction of terms to say that we must work to obtain a salvation which is by grace. Even though this is true, many professing to be Christians have this thought deeply embedded in their logic.

So, this verse says ever so simply, “*if by grace, then it is no longer by works.*” You must put works aside when grace enters the picture. Further, Paul gives us the result of mixing works with grace. For more emphasis, just in case we did not get the point, if you introduce your works, the Word says that you cancel grace. Grace is nullified by adding works. What does this mean for our subject? Salvation is by grace, and if we add any works, we do not have a salvation that is by grace! There is only one way the Word declares a lost man can be saved. There is only one salvation in the entire Bible, in every age, and it is salvation by grace. Here is the danger of approaching salvation with the wrong understanding, if we bring our works, we will be rejected, just like Cain in the 4th chapter of Genesis. This verse is a very important principle in our understanding of Grace Logic. Do you believe in a salvation based on what you do? Do you believe that your salvation has anything whatsoever to do with your works? Do you think your salvation can be lost by something you can do, or do not do? If you have answered yes to any of these questions, you may not be saved by grace. When I read that last sentence, it sounds harsh. It is not meant to be mean, but to make you think about just WHO is responsible for your salvation – you or Christ? Do you have God, or does God have you?

2nd Romans 4:4-5

Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation.

5 However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.

Work is an honorable endeavor. I learned the work ethic from my father at the early age of eleven. I was able to learn how to work and the importance of earning money, even before my peers. I also learned that when you work, you should be paid. As much as the work ethic was ingrained in my thinking, when approaching salvation, I had to put aside my human inclinations and simply look to what the scriptures teach. No, this does not make sense. No, this is not the way I thought it would be. No, this is not the way I have heard it taught before. No, my Pastor doesn’t teach it this way. All these are legitimate objections to grace. I say legitimate because we should not be surprised when presented with these most obvious objections. Salvation by grace is a different logic, which comes from God and not man.

Verse 4 points out the difference between a gift and a reward. For some reason, many think that this distinction does not exist in the Word. Maybe they think that God’s Word, written so long ago, does not go into this kind of detail. However, it certainly does and we need to pay close attention to what the Word teaches. Many will blur the distinction between a gift and reward as if it doesn’t matter. When it comes to grace, it is a matter of life and death that this distinction be clear. If someone works, they should be paid. This should not come as a surprise to anyone who has worked. God recognizes this principle, for He says, “*Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done*” (Rev 22:12). There are many passages in the Word that establish the principle of reward for works of service. But we must remember why we are here, “*his wages are not credited as a gift, but an obligation.*” God

distinguishes between a gift and a reward, or in this verse, the receiving of payment. Salvation is by grace, it is a free gift. God is not obligated to give us salvation because we worked. Our works are not ever to be confused with us obtaining salvation. Our salvation is not according to our works, but according to the perfect work of Christ. If you are working for salvation, you do so in direct violation of the Word. If you think that your works have anything to do with salvation, you are missing the point of grace. Religious people are constantly working to obtain favor from God. They believe that this favor will gain them entrance into the hereafter, heaven, paradise or nirvana.

Notice in verse 5, it is the “*man who does not work but trusts God,*” he is the one who walks away justified. The phrase “*does not work*” means exactly what it says. The man does nothing! This is the opposite of what man would naturally believe. If you do not work, why should you get something for nothing? Why should you get something that you do not deserve? Because, this is grace. The answer is that God designed the plan of salvation to work just this way. “*God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God*” (2 Cor 5:21). Christ was made sin for us, on behalf of us, in place of us. Because of this, we are free to accept God’s gracious offer of salvation without any works. Also, God can never accept our imperfect works for salvation. If He did, this would say that God is not absolutely righteous. Also, notice the state from which a man is justified. He is said to be “*wicked*” or unrighteous. All he did is trust, have faith, and God credits His own righteousness to that wicked, unrighteousness sinner (see also Romans 3:22, 24).

Since God clearly makes a distinction between a gift and a reward, we must make sure we rightly divide the Word of truth. There can be no reconciliation of the passages that refer to the two subjects in scripture. Some have attempted to reconcile the gift/reward passages and have done great harm to the scripture. Salvation is free, while rewards must be earned. In other words, we must not confuse the salvation passages with the reward for service passages. Salvation passages speak of faith, believing, grace, no works and free gift. Reward passages emphasize works, endurance and faithfulness.

If you fail at the point of the salvation passages, the consequences are that you will not be saved; you will not have eternal life and will perish. If you fail at the point of the reward passages, the consequences are that you fail to fulfill God’s plan, you are subject to divine discipline and you will lose your reward. For believers who adhere to God’s plan for them, they glorify God and are rewarded abundantly. Take some time to look at the following passages. Again, there can be no reconciling the passages, but we are forced to conclude that they refer to different things. Salvation passages refer to unsaved man being reconciled to God. Reward for service passages refer to those already saved by grace, working as God has commanded and the promise of reward. Note, the passages below are not vague, but are very clear as to their meanings. Please take time to study the following passages in their contexts regarding this important issue:

Rewards for Service	Salvation by Grace
Matt 16:27 For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.	John 6:28, 29 Then they asked him, what must we do to do the works God requires? Jesus answered, the work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."
2 Cor 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.	Eph 2:8, 9 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast."
Mark 9:41 I tell you the truth, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to Christ will certainly not lose his reward.	Rom. 3:27,28 Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of Faith. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.
1 Cor 3:14-15 If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.	Titus 3:5 He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit."
1 Cor 9:25 Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.	John 5:24 I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.
Eph 6:8 because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free.	Rom 4:4-5 Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.
Heb 6:7 Land that drinks in the rain often falling on it and that produces a crop useful to those for whom it is farmed receives the blessing of God.	Gal. 3:16 Know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.
1 Cor 15:58 Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.	Eph 1:13-14 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession-- to the praise of his glory.

3rd Eph 2:8-9

8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--

9 not by works, so that no one can boast.

This passage, next to John 3:16, is probably one of the most well known of all passages in the Bible. Because it is well known does not mean it is commonly understood. With great clarity and without confusing words, Paul tells us exactly how these Christians were saved. This has to weigh heavily on our minds because it addresses the very question of how we were saved. It is only one sentence, but it is so powerful, it must be viewed as principle and not just a step in the right direction. I have seen this passage abused, contradicted and disregarded as if it really does not speak to the subject of salvation. You must see God's thinking behind this verse to really appreciate the wisdom and genius of these words.

There are 5 points this verse brings out to help us see grace logic. From the previous verses, it is clear to see that man is excluded from the process of salvation. Here the same concept continues. In this passage, salvation is said to be:

1. **by grace.** Automatically we know that since it is by grace, it cannot have anything to do with works, if it does, grace is no longer grace. You may dismiss this point as trivial, but God sees this point as essential to the only salvation He offers man. It is not a matter of God being picky, but a matter of holiness. If we are lost and in need of salvation, we had better pay close attention to God, the one who has this salvation.
2. **through faith.** Here is where man thinks he can intrude on a perfect salvation with his imperfect works. There is only one way to accept the free gift of salvation, and that is faith. Faith is the only thing man has that God can use in his salvation, but why? The very nature of faith means that we must look away from ourselves to another for knowledge, truth or action. When we have faith, we are depending, relying and trusting someone else to do something for us. In salvation, Jesus Christ is the object of our faith. We look away from ourselves to Him, His life, His death, His resurrection to save us. We are not saving ourselves in any sense of the word, we are completely lost and we are looking in faith to the savior to save us. The nature of faith excludes works. "*For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law*" (Rom 3:28). Faith is separated from works and this is the conclusion Paul himself arrived at. Furthermore, we learned that if it is by grace, then faith absolutely cannot include any works, for that would cancel salvation by grace. It would be a contradiction of terms.
3. **not from yourselves.** Here we examine the source of salvation. We find that salvation is of God when we look at the scriptures. We have a negative phrase to make sure we do not misunderstand the nature of salvation. There is nothing in us that contributes to our salvation. This is a point that is so very important that God

tells us in negative terms that salvation is not from the source of man. Man looks at himself and sometimes he sees things that he feels are very good. He is using other men to compare himself and he finds that he may stand head and shoulder above them in a certain area. Other men may even be impressed with this good. However, his mistake is comparing himself with other men. God is not impressed with anything in man, no exceptions! The only man God is impressed with is Jesus Christ. Certainly if we receive salvation from God and it is “*not from ourselves,*” we must see God’s grace. We did not earn or deserve this salvation, because we did nothing, we are excluded from the process other than being simply recipients. Since your salvation does not come from you, then it is not dependant on what you do or do not do. If you think you can do something to lose this eternal salvation, you have not understood this phrase, “*not from yourselves,*” for it excludes you and anything you have. It excludes your promises to God, your commitment, your sincerity and is wholly based on the perfect work of Jesus Christ.

4. **the gift of God.** The gift of God mentioned in this verse refers back to the verb in the sentence – saved. The fact that we are saved is a gift. Saved as in eternal salvation. If God saved us, then that automatically means that we cannot be lost. What are we saved from? Simply put, we are saved from being lost. If you are in danger of being lost, then you have not been saved. Since being saved is a gift, we must see that it excludes man from the process and says that salvation is free, unmerited and unearned. If this is so, why is salvation so hard? Why is it so difficult for some to admit they have it? If it is free and is offered to everyone, to whosoever will, why is it that most people think that salvation is something they must work at for their entire lifetime? We don’t work ourselves into a worthy state in order to receive the free gift. Free means that we don’t have to pay anything for it. Money is not in view, but human effort, works and energy is in view and is the very thing God is telling us to discard. It is free, but not cheap for it cost God much.

5. **not by works.** Why would Paul say that salvation is not by works? Because the greatest inclination of man is to work for salvation. He is letting us know that works are excluded from the process. He uses the negative term to drive the point home. He is not saying it is OK if you have works, he is saying that salvation is NOT by works. Don’t bring any works when approaching God because they will be rejected. Where do works come from? The sin nature. Everything unsaved man does comes from his sin nature. His sins come from that corrupt nature, but not only sins, his works. Man may look at these works and judge them to be good, worthy and noble. However, God has already rejected the sin nature and anything that comes from it. We have God’s direct testimony at this point:
“As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one" (Rom 3:10-12). “All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a

leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away” (Isa 64:66). Unsaved man does not have the ability within himself to perform a good work. God enables us to perform good works only AFTER we are saved eternally. Some have tried to get around this point by calling what they do something other than works. The reasoning is if they don’t see it as works, then God can accept it. This is where the person may be self-deceived. Works are works and if these works are coming from unsaved man, they are coming from his sin nature. This thinking may fool man, but God’s righteousness will never be compromised. Religious people all over the world are doing works in order to get God’s acceptance. Christians are the only ones saved by grace, apart from their works.

Sometimes people who are saved need to be reminded that even though they may be doing God’s will, even though they may be performing works done in the power of the Spirit, their salvation is NOT dependant upon these works, *“he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,”* (Titus 3:5). Our salvation is not by deeds done in righteousness. This point needs to be seen in order to know that our salvation rests entirely upon God and His Christ.

4th Gal 1:6-9

- 6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel--**
- 7 which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ.**
- 8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!**
- 9 As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!**

This last passage serves as a warning, given by the Apostle Paul. There is only one gospel and that is the gospel of grace. We see early in the Church the attacks on this grace gospel. Some were trying to pervert the gospel, that is, twist, distort and misrepresent the gospel. If we read further into the letter, we will find some of the perversions. It seems the attacks were always on grace. This twisting results in having a gospel that includes something man must do in order to receive salvation. Notice the real result of such perversion is having a gospel *“which is really no gospel at all.”* If there is no gospel, then there is no salvation. Anyone who teaches a gospel, which includes works, is an enemy of grace! If someone believes they are saved because of something they are doing or have done, I say to them beware!

There is another point that should not be missed. Paul makes the point that if someone comes to you preaching a gospel that is not according to grace, let them be eternally condemned. He is saying that if anybody comes to you and they believe and teach a false gospel, reject it and know that they are enemies of grace! The gospel truth is established in heaven and on earth, and in the entire universe. This gospel is the ONLY way unsaved

man can be saved. In verse 8 he says, “*even if we or an angel from heaven.*” Even if an angel, a glorious angel comes teaching something different, we are to reject it. Here, he is saying that this gospel is established forever. Paul includes himself and says that if he loses his mind and begins to sprout something else, don’t believe it! Later in verse 9, he says, “*if anybody*” preaches a different gospel, we are to reject it. That covers all possibilities, no exceptions. He repeats that same language in verse 9 for emphasis. And lest we forget that “*...Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light*” (2 Cor 11:14).

This should drive home the point that there is only one gospel and one way of salvation. We are to be on guard when it comes to the gospel. Personally, it means we must depend on the Word and what it teaches and never what seems right or logical. We must see the grace logic from God’s thinking revealed in the Word. If we think of someone as holy, righteous or godly, let us make sure that they believe in a gospel according to grace. If not, no matter how holy, how pious, how devoted to God and loving they may appear, they are enemies of grace.

In Conclusion, we have discussed the thinking of grace from the standpoint of four passages. Are there more? Yes! It is not my intention to exhaust every passage, but to introduce you to the grace logic found in the Word. Once we see the logic behind grace, we will see this again and again as we turn the pages of scripture. We should not be surprised that God would have a salvation that is different than what we expect. We find these words in scripture:

Isa 55:8-9

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD.

"As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

I know that this thinking may go against everything you may have thought to be true. Perhaps your church or pastor has a different viewpoint of these things. You may be tempted to dismiss grace logic as something false. You certainly have that option. Before you do, please take another look at the passages referenced throughout this document. The only question in your mind should be, “is this what the Word is really saying?” If this is what the Word is saying, then it is not mine, but God’s voice you are hearing. If you disagree with this message, don’t just walk away thinking this is simply my opinion or my interpretation. Remember that this is a matter of life and death. We cannot treat this subject in a way where there is uncertainty. If there are questions, ask them. If there are doubts, express them. Either way, you need get to the bottom of this issue for yourself.

The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you. Romans 16:20

In Christ, Doug
5/28/02