

Saved By Grace

Grace has been defined as “unmerited favor.” Hence, when we think of being saved by the grace of God, we have in mind His divine favor and redemptive mercy by which, and because of which, sinful man becomes the recipient of heaven’s numerous blessings. God supplied for man what man could not supply for himself. He supplied grace and, through His grace and love, He sent His *“only begotten Son,”* John 3:16 *“to be a propitiation,”* Rom. 3:25, whereby sin could be covered and remitted. Consequently, we may be *“justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,”* Rom. 3:24, Who is *“the gift by grace,”* Rom. 5:15.

Therefore, in order for one to be saved by the grace of God he must approach God through Christ because He (Christ) is *“the way, the truth, and the life,”* apart from Whom *“no man cometh unto the Father,”* John 14:6. It is *“to the praise of the glory of grace wherein He hath made us accepted”* in Christ, *“in Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His **grace**...,”* Eph. 1:6-7.

Thus, we learn that God’s grace abounded (Rom. 5:20), and in the abundance of that grace, He sent His Son, Who shed His blood that we might *“have redemption through His blood.”* Hence, if we are to receive the benefits of His grace we must contact the blood of Christ, wherein is redemption, Eph. 1:7.

But **how** does one reach the blood?

The blood of Christ was shed in the death of Christ (John 19:34), so in order for one to reach **the blood** of Christ he must reach **the death** of Christ, wherein His blood was shed. The apostle Paul declared that those who were *“baptized into Christ”* were baptized *“**into His death**”* (Rom. 6:3. This, incidentally, explains why the unsaved believers on the day of Pentecost were told to *“repent and be baptized...for the remission of sins,”* (Acts 2:38).

This further explains how one is saved by grace *“through faith”* (Eph. 2:8). Through the teaching of the word of God one acquires **faith** (Rom. 10:17), and having acquired faith, he becomes filled with *“godly sorrow”* for the sins he has committed and this leads **to repentance** (2 Cor. 7:10), and an acknowledgement of that faith (**confession**, Acts 8:37), whereupon he is *“baptized into Christ,”* Gal. 3:27, that His sins might be washed away, Acts 22:16.

One is saved by grace *“through faith”* (Eph. 2:8). Grace is the **divine** side of man’s salvation; faith is the **human** side of his salvation. God’s amazing grace was manifested in the sending of His *“only begotten Son,”* and by Jesus shedding His blood *“for the remission of sins”* (Matt. 26:28). Our **faith** is manifested in our obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ (Matt. 7:21; 2 Thess. 1:7-9). Remember this: one is not saved by “grace alone” nor by “faith only.” One is saved by **grace** *“through faith”* when his faith is manifested in obedience to *“the gospel of the **grace** of God “* (Acts 20:24; 2 Thess. 1:7-9). The necessity of such obedience is further evidenced in Heb. 5:9 which says of Christ, *“...he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that **obey** him.”* Friend, have you, from the heart, rendered obedience unto the gospel of Jesus Christ. Another way of asking this same question is this: “Have you been saved by grace through faith?”

**** —Bobby Witherington

Is Baptism Essential to Salvation?

One could with equal propriety ask “is immersion in water essential to salvation.” This is apparent because Immersion is the “mode” (Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12), and water is the element (John 3:23; Acts 8:36).

But the question as stated is this: “Is baptism essential to salvation?” Believing you, our reader, to be honest and sincere, we are herein simply listing several Bible reasons why one should be baptized so that you might sincerely consider these reasons and then form your own honest conclusion. Please note the following:

1. “*He that **believeth** and is **baptized** shall be saved...*,” Mark 16:16.
2. “*Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he **cannot enter** into the kingdom of God* “ (John 3:5).
3. “*Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ **for** the remission of sins...*” (Acts 2:38). Question: Is the “*remission of sins*” necessary in order to be saved?
4. “*And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away **thy sins**, calling on the name of the Lord*” (Acts 22:16).
5. “*For as many of you as have been baptized **into** Christ have put on Christ*” (Gal. 3:27).
6. “*For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body...*” (I Cor. 12:13). Note: the “one body” is the church (Eph. 1:22-23). Isn’t it significant that the **same** act of obedience whereby one enters “*into one body*” also grants entrance “*into Jesus Christ*” (Gal. 3:27)?
7. “*The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also **now save us** (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ*” (I Peter 3:21).

Summation: Baptism is administered by the authority of Christ (Matt. 28:18-19) — not by the authority of some church. It is for believers (Mark 16:16; Acts 8:36) — not infants. It is “*for the remission of sins*” (Acts 2:38) — not because God for Christ’s sake has already pardoned one’s sins. Scriptural and valid baptism requires the right authority, the right “mode, the right reason or purpose, and a properly taught candidate. Friend, have you been baptized? If so, by what authority, by what “mode,” and for what purpose?

**** —Bobby Witherington