

Grace

“You are saved by GRACE, lest any man should boast.”

Grace is a word that man has been able to use in a lot of theological debates. Probably the biggest being “once saved, always saved.” I would like to offer an opinion of the word GRACE as it applies to my understanding of the covenant I have with God.

First to understand the covenant, lets read the new covenant in Jeremiah 33-34...*“But this is the new covenant which I will make with the house of Israel: After in those days, says the Lord, I will PUT My law within them, and on their hearts will I write it: and I will be their God, and they will be my people.”* Verse 34 continues, *“And they will no more teach each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, know the Lord, for they will all know me,(recognize, understand, and be acquainted with Me) from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord.* 1 John 2:27 reaffirms this prophecy of Jeremiah, *“But as for you, the anointing (the sacred appointment, the UNCTION) which you received from Him abides (permanently) in you: (so) then you have no need that anyone should instruct you. But just as His anointing teaches you concerning EVERYTHING and is true and is no falsehood, so you must abide in (live in, never depart from) Him (being rooted in Him, knit to Him), just as (his anointing) has taught you (to do).* One of the problems I think most Christians have with their relationship with God is what is expected of them. To me, it runs the gamut from doing nothing because I am saved by grace, to doing everything because I am saved by grace.

We toss around the word Grace in our own understanding. So let me offer you my understanding of Grace. When you accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you entered into a covenant agreement with God. Jesus through the Holy Spirit is the mediator of this covenant (Hebrews 8, 1st John 2) The original covenant that God established with Abraham was with the Jews, not the Gentiles. Grace, money, or “who you know”, it did not matter, you were not allowed in this covenant. Under the new covenant with God, all are accepted because Jesus died for all man’s sin, past, present and future. You did nothing to be included, which is where Grace comes in. It is by the GRACE of God that we are allowed into the covenant.

Today, if you and I enter into an agreement or contract, which is the same as a covenant, there are certain performances that each are expected to do so the contract is successfully completed. God’s part in His covenant is to give you guidance on this earth and eternal life with Him once you die. Our part is where the confusion starts. Grace only allows us to be a part of the covenant if we desire to be apart of the covenant. Grace does not allow us to not perform your part of the contract. What is our part of the contract? *“Whose so ever believeth in Me shall not perish but have everlasting life.”* This statement, in my opinion, has cause the most confusion concerning our part of the contract. The best way to understand this statement is to go back to the original Greek translation. Basically the Greek says, *“Whose so ever trusts in, relies on and adheres to Me shall be saved”*. So you do have to complete our part of the covenant. Remember, satan believed who Jesus was!

I would think that most of us would say that I try to do these things that the contract calls for. But then you have to worry, did I trust in Him enough, or rely on Him enough, or adhere to His teachings enough. Did I do enough to full fill my part of the contract? When we don't have an answer, we fall back on GRACE. But remember Grace only got us to the "contractual table". So how are we to know if we are satisfying our part of the contract?

I base my conclusion on what I have found starting in verse 24 of Chapter 12 of Hebrews which says, "*You have come to Jesus, the one who mediates the NEW COVENANT between God and people, and to the sprinkled blood, which graciously forgives instead of crying out for vengeance as the blood of Able did. See to it that you obey God, the one that is SPEAKING to you. For if the people of Israel did not escape when they refused to LISTEN to Moses, the earthly messenger, how terrible our DANGER if we reject THE ONE WHO SPEAKS TO US FROM HEAVEN*". In the amplified version of the Bible it reads with a greater emphasis...(verse 25) "*So see to it that you do not reject Him or refuse to LISTEN to and HEED HIM who is speaking to you NOW.*"

How do we full fill our part of the contract? We LISTEN and then OBEY. Jesus did exactly that. He listened and then OBEYED. "*Not my will, but your will be done,*" *I only do what I see the Father do*". Jesus was doing what God wants us to do today, LISTEN! Truly listen. Learn to recognize the voice of God. "*My sheep hear my voice and they follow me*". Church services, bible reading and all the traditional things that I was taught, should not be a substitute for the individual hearing of His Voice. Sadly many of our traditions have replaced the voice of God. In fact many religions reject the power of the Holy Spirit and His gifts that He has given to us. All of these were intended to build our faith and our part in the new covenant.

Jesus said He would send a comforter, the Holy Spirit, which would lead us into all truth. If we reject that Voice, we are trying to full fill the contract on our own ability. If you rely of man, you are trying to full fill the contract in man's ability. How about trying what God ask you to do...LISTEN and then OBEY.

You are going to say what about "*I will never leave you are forsake you*". "*Nothing can take you out of the hand of God.*" And there are other verse that people have used to justify their not wanting to full fill their part of the covenant. But those verses are what God is promising as long as we are in the covenant, not outside the covenant. You are going to say prove what you are saying is true. Go to the 3rd chapter of Revelation and read the warning to the church at Sardis. Remember, He is talking to the church, His people. He warns that some have soiled their robes (which represents righteousness) and if they are not willing to clean them, that their names would be blotted out of the Book of Life. Grace can't save them now, only obedience to the warning. "*He that has an ear, let them hear what the Spirit is saying*". It was a warning to the church then and it is a warning to the church today. We had better learn to listen for God's voice. Or we may find our selves out of the covenant with God.

The warning in Jeremiah 5: 30-31 is no different than the warning to Sardis, “An appalling and horrible thing has happened in the land. The prophets prophesy falsely, And the priest rule on their own authority, AND MY PEOPLE LOVE IT SO! But what will you do at the end of it?” The amplified version is even more frightening. “An appalling and horrible thing (bringing desolation and destruction) has come to pass in the land: The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests exercise rule at their own hands and by means of the prophets. And My people love to have it so! But what will you do when the end comes?”

Living in the covenant is not hard if we learn to trust the voice of God. I was never taught to do this. I was taught to obey the teachings of God not His voice. Yes, the teachings are good, but again they are not to be substituted for His Voice. Learn to read the Bible with His voice as a guide and also listen for him every moment of every day. You will be amazed at what He will reveal to you. Walk in the anointing of the Holy Spirit as 1st John instructs. By doing that, you can abide with Jesus and the Father, the author of the new covenant.

Why you are baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit? Most ask the question: “do you believe or confuse that Jesus Christ came to earth and die for your sins? I answered yes. Then the pastor said I now baptize you in the name of the Father Son and Holy Spirit. The baptizing was the signing of the contract.

GOD...the author of a new covenant Jeremiah 33-34...”*But this is the new covenant which I will make with the house of Israel: After in those days, says the Lord, I will PUT My law within them, and on their hearts will I write it: and I will be their God, and they will be my people.*” Verse 34 continues, “*And they will no more teach each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, know the Lord, for they will all know me, (recognize, understand, and be acquainted with Me) from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord.*”

JESUS... the mediator or judge of the new covenant. Hebrews 8: 6, “*But now He (Jesus) has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which as been enacted on better promises.*” Also Hebrew 12:24

HOLY SPIRIT...the one who over sees the covenant. 2 Corinthians 3:8...”*how shall the ministry of the Spirit fail to be even more with glory?*”

1st John 2:27, “*And as for you, the anointing (HOLY SPIRIT), which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing (Holy Spirit) teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.*”

