

XI. Concerning God's Purpose of Grace

† **We believe that Election is the eternal purpose of God, according to which he graciously regenerates, sanctifies, and saves sinners; that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, it comprehends all the means in connection with the end; that it is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy, and unchangeable; that it utterly excludes boasting, and promotes humility love, prayer, praise, trust in God, and active imitation of his free mercy; that it encourages the use of means in the highest degree; that it may be ascertained by its effects in all who truly believe the gospel; that it is the foundation of Christian assurance; and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence.**

Grace Defined

'Grace': (The Greek word is 'Charis')-

Thayer's Def

- 1) that which affords joy, pleasure, delight, sweetness, charm, and loveliness: grace of speech
- 2) good will, loving-kindness, favor
 - 2a) of the merciful kindness by which God, exerting his holy influence upon souls, turns them to Christ, keeps, strengthens, increases them in Christian faith, knowledge, affection, and kindles them to the exercise of the Christian virtues
- 3) Thanks, (for benefits, services, and favors), recompense, reward

Vine's Def

- 1) Also translated 'highly favored' in KJV. Compared with debt, sin, etc...

Modern Day Baptist Def

- 1) God's unmerited favor
- 2) Grace is not defined as a word; rather it is displayed as a picture!

The Purpose of Article XI

† The underlying foundation of all things spiritual is the great, important doctrine of Grace. By taking the above definitions and searching out what scripture reveals of grace, one can easily see the foundation of Christianity. God didn't have to send his Son, but by his grace..., God saved my wretched soul, by his grace..., God leads me through this world by his grace..., God has prepared a place called Glory by his grace. This article is appropriately placed in the center, for all of

Christianity's dogmas orbit this comforting doctrine: Grace, God's unmerited, undeserved favor!

✠ *Key Verse: II Cor 12:9-10: God's Sufficient Grace!*

A Solid Foundation (Seeing God's Grace Clearly)

1. Deut 7:6-9- An outward expression of God's Grace. Most notably Grace can be seen through the LOVE OF GOD FOR HIS PEOPLE. Grace is manifested by outward expressions of Love. Love is a verb; it is something you do. Thus, God loves us and he expresses that love verbally, physically, spiritually, etc. God's love for the nation of Israel proves true throughout history and is seen by the longsuffering nature of our Lord.

2. Gen 1:27-31- THE CREATION OF MAN displays God's Grace! Even though God, despite his infinite foreknowledge, foresaw the fall of man, He created Man and BLESSED them, put them in dominion of all we see, and it wasn't just 'good'; it was VERY good! God did not have to create us free moral agents capable of loving and hating; yet by his Grace he did!

3. Rev 13:8- The Plan of Salvation is due to the grace of God. The pre-existent Christ knew full well that his role was to die for the sins of man. Yet, by his Grace, he created us thus signing Christ's death warrant fore to die on the cross.

✠ With this, we lay a solid foundation for future study. God's Grace is at the epicenter of Christianity and all that we know cannot exist without it! With a firm foundation and understanding of 'Grace', we turn our attention to detail. Thus, we will now go through this article of faith in detail as follows:

1. God's Grace is regeneration
2. God's Grace in Sanctification
3. God's Grace in Preservation
4. God's Grace interactive with Man's Weakness
5. God's Grace in Assurance
6. God's Grace sought after

God's Grace in Regeneration

✠ Eph 2:8-9- Given the preceding article, we are convinced that Salvation is a gift from God! Grace, Faith, Repentance, and all the elements (whether man's role or God's role) are all included in such gifts.

1. God's Grace Illustrated/Manifested: Psalms 116
2. Man's Appropriate Response to that Grace: Psalms 116
3. Man's Inappropriate Response to God's Grace: Romans 2:2-6

- † Gal 5:19-26- God's grace is manifested by the change of the believer! A true child of God has been transformed and conformed to the image of Jesus Christ...BY GOD'S GRACE! Thus, fruits of a babe are examples of God's grace!

God's Grace in Sanctification

- † Introduction to Sanctification: 'Becoming less like you and more like God!'
1. The Term & its proper meaning: 'hagiasmos' (strong's 38)-consecration or purification; to sanctify; separation unto God; the process of being Holy. See Vines, Thayer, or Strongs.
 2. J. M. Pendleton writes, 'Sanctification, according to the gospel and as the term is used in theology, is a precious reality, involving holiness of heart, which leads to holiness of life (Pg 299).'
 3. We will discuss sanctification in some detail in a following article, but it suffices us for now to understand the framework of sanctification and the grace given thereto. We now observe:
 1. It is the will of God for the believer: I Thess 4:3
 2. We are called by GRACE into holiness: I Thess 4:7
 3. It is developed by the Word of God: John 17:17
 4. The believer SHOULD have an earnest desire for it: Heb 12:14
 5. It is embodied in Christ, thus we become like him: John 13:15
 6. It is wrought by the Spirit: (by Grace!) Romans 8:13
 7. It is manifested by the Spirit: I Pet 1:2
- † It must be stated that one cannot be 'holy' with out 'holy' being pulled out of what is already in him. To note Pendleton again: 'Now, while regeneration implants the germ of holiness in the heart, sanctification is the unfolding of that germ' (Pg 299).
1. To summarize sanctification: I Thess 3:11-13

God's Grace in Preservation

- † The discussion (to be considered further along in our study) before us the question of the eternal security of the believer. It's no secret to this congregation that we hold on to and adhere to the great Baptist doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints. We will later discuss the arguments and apologies for this doctrine, but for now our concern is grace! To better understand this thought a simple question must be stated:
- 'Can a Man lose his Salvation?'
- † No. The reason: God's magnificent grace!
1. Note Pendleton on Preservation: 'Will a Christian fall from a state of grace? In view of the guarantees of God's covenant with his people I humbly, gratefully, and boldly answer, No. That saints will persevere through grace to glory may be argued (proved)... (Pg 322).'

2. I Pet 1:5- Man could lose his salvation if he kept it! However, it is by God's grace, that he holds our eternity in his hands!
3. Eph 4:30- Sealed (literally crimped, set)
4. John 10:27-29/ John 14:19

God's Grace Interactive with Man's Weakness

- † Key Verse/Thought: II Cor 12:9-10 (the foundation of Grace). It is important to note that while grace is 'illustrative' so to speak, the canvass it becomes displayed on is Man's Weakness! If man is to have any hope, it is by the grace of God, thereby giving God all honor and glory by shining through our mistakes, weaknesses, and infirmities!
- † WE ARE NOT CALLED TO SAINTHOOD OR SERVICE BASED ON MERIT, SKILL, OR NECESSITY. We are called according to the grace of God! Observe:
 1. Ex 4:10-12 The call of Moses & his appeal to weakness. God's 'calling' is placed on EVERY MAN, WOMAN, AND CHILD. For example, we are called unto repentance and faith, culminating in salvation! We are called to sainthood by the grace of sanctification. Some are called to be teachers, preachers, exhorters, etc. If we are saved, and alive WE HAVE A CALLING. However, it is not founded in you! The feeling of 'humbleness' or 'unworthiness' should always remain in the heart of the believer!
 2. Judges 6:11-16- Gideon, a mighty man of valor was called to service by the Lord, yet he knew he could not do the impossible without the Lord. Thus, he asked for signs from God. Though, we should not 'ask for signs' from God, we know what the Lord has for us to do and should rest in comfort on verse 16!
 3. Num 13:26-30- God told the Israelites to take the land, yet they became scared of the mighty armies and sheer, physical stature of the other nations. Thus, they refused to obey God. Yet, God reassured them time and again that he would fight for them! So, again, God's grace shines through your weaknesses!
- † Paul teaches this in the New Testament:
 1. I Cor 1:23-27- Vs. 27- 'foolish things' Greek: Moros (Strong's 3474) dull, or stupid- The English word 'moron' is derived from this word! So, don't feel bad! God hasn't called us by our strengths, but rather our weaknesses and his grace that empowers us! Why? Vs. 31 & I Cor 2:4-5
 2. Who is sufficient to work for the Lord? II Cor 2:16/ 3:5

God's Grace Given for Assurance

† By God's grace, we are given assurance of what we have, what we believe, and what we should do! Observe:

1. Job 19:25-26- The question is HOW did Job know?
2. Heb 10:22- Faith (also a grace) brings about assurance
3. *'Faith cometh by hearing, & hearing by the word of God'*
4. Romans 8:16- The Spirit of God gives us that assurance

† Assurance, of God's greatness and majesty is given to us by his Spirit, his Word, by faith, and His grace! We can assure our hearts before God and feel confident he is real, he loves us, he hears us, and he works! 1 John 3:19-24

God's Grace Sought After

† Heb 4:16- God's grace should be sought after if it is to help us through our weaknesses! God's grace is promised to those that humble themselves before his 'throne of grace': I Pet 5:5