***Grace
RO141-02***

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We are looking at Romans 10:1-6. Our subject is "The Remnant of Grace," and this is segment number two.

**The Jews**

Certainly the Easter season, which celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ, puts into stark contrast the difference between Christians and Jews today, which has been the subject of these chapters in Romans, in which Paul is dealing with the Jewish people: chapters 9, 10, and 11. Today, Christians are rejoicing in the resurrection of Jesus Christ as the final evidence of the reality of their salvation through His death on the cross for their sins. The Jews, on the other hand, who reject the deity in the saviorhood of Jesus Christ, grimly must await their entrance into the lake of fire after death, if what the Bible says is true at all. The Jews, of course, since New Testament times, have resisted God's grace method of salvation through Jesus Christ. They have sought instead a salvation through their good works in the teaching of the Mosaic Law.

**Isaiah and Elijah**

Paul has pointed out that the great prophet Isaiah faced, in his day, the rebellion of the Jews in rejecting the true God, as they were rejecting Him in Paul's days. In Elijah's day, they were turning to the God Baal, and worshiping him. We reviewed Elijah's victorious confrontation with the prophets of Baal, which proved that their God was a false nothing. In spite of having dramatically proven this point, Elijah now finds himself in danger of being killed by the Jews. Elijah feels, consequently, very much alone. He feels discouraged by the response of the people to whom he has brought, indeed, the true message of God.

**Elijah**

So, we begin today, in Romans 11:3-4 which describe for us the largest miscalculation. Paul here, in these verses, is quoting 1 Kings 19:10 and verse 14, where Elijah is expressing his sense of abandonment, and of his standing alone against the proponents of Baal worship. So, Elijah says, "Lord, they have killed the prophets." The Jews, in their rebellion against God, on occasion, had actually taken the life of their prophets which God had sent to them. They simply murdered these voices from God. Not only that, Elijah says, "They have also dug down Your altars." The word "dug down" here means "to tear down." They have literally destroyed the very altars to the true God in their apostasy. They hate God so much that they will not receive their message from the prophets. And if the prophet won't be quiet, then they murder him. They will not approach God through the legitimate altars provided for that. And if Elijah insists on approaching God in the right way, then they tear down and destroy those altars. All of these are done by the very people to whom God has brought this great opportunity of enlightenment.

So, Elijah finally comes to the conclusion that he's fighting a very lonely battle. So he says, "I am left alone, and they seek my life." He says, "There's no one left in Israel. I'm the only true prophet of God that is left alive. I'm the only one who remains faithful to the true God. And now they're trying to kill me, and finish me off as well.

**Suicide**

The result of this feeling on the part of Elijah was that he decided he wanted to die. 1 King's 19:4 tells us that. He said, "Just forget it. I'm ready to die. But, of course, Elijah understood that you might be ready to die, but it is not your right to execute that. This is why suicide is such a very grievous sin, because God gives life, and only God has the authority to take life.

So, Elijah understands that – that he can't take his own life. But he is expressing a really deep feeling that he has. He's just fed up with it. What he's suffering from is the occupational hazard of the ministry. The hazard of a true preacher of finding that he cannot get through to minds which are spiritually dulled or blinded.

So, Elijah, having been rejected in spite of the great victory with the prophets of Baal, and in spite of the fact now that he has very clearly demonstrated who is the real God in Israel, finds that people still are turning their backs upon him. So, he is ready to chuck it. But God says, "O, Elijah, how wrong you are."

Verse 4 says, "But." And in the Greek language, it's the Greek word "alla," which is the strong kind of negative. God's answer is to the effect that he's very wrong in his conclusion about standing alone: "But what says the answer of God unto him?" Here is a divine response in the form of an oracle from God. What he says is that: "I have reserved unto Me." This is the Greek word "kataleipo," and this means that God has separated out, from the mass of the Jews, a faithful group who are standing by. In fact, God says, "I've got 7,000 men who have not bowed the kneed the god Baal;" that is, they have not gotten down to worship the god Baal – 7,000 faithful men, out of all this Jewish apostasy. Now, that must indicate probably that there were many women and children who are associated in the homes of these men who also followed the leadership of these men in not bowing to the worship of the god Baal.

So, the terrible apostasy of the Baal worship could not cause God to cast away His people. And that's Paul's point in this illustration. If in Elijah's day, when people had a miraculous demonstration of the reality of the true God, and they still wanted to go over there and play with the sex cults, God still did not cast them off as His people, but instead he ferreted out from among them certain that he called into the enlightenment of eternal life.

So, in verse 5-6, we come to a very dramatic portion of the Word of God – a portion in which is declared for us some sobering truths about this specific election of grace – the specific call of some into eternal life. In Romans 11:5, then, Paul deals with this Jewish remnant. He introduces it with the word "Even so," In the Greek Bible: "houtos." This is a word that indicates to us that Paul is making a comparison. He's making comparison between his day and how things were in Elijah's day. Paul points out that there was, in his day, as there was in Elijah's day, a believing remnant of Jews. Today, there are so few Christians among the Jews that they are practically non-existent to our eyes. But there are, even today, a large number of people who were Jews who have received Christ as Savior. So, they're no longer Jews with God. They are now Christians. But out of the mass of the Jewish people, there are not very many of them.

**A Remnant of Jews**

Paul says, therefore, "Even so (this comparison), at this present time;" that is, in the time when Paul himself is here alive and ministering. He says, "There is something to observe." And that is that there does exist a remnant. The Greek word looks like this. It's "leimma." The word "remnant" refers to that which is left, that which is removed from a larger group. It refers here to the small number of Jews who have become Christians – a portion that are left over from the mass of the Jewish race, who are headed for heaven. In Elijah's day, there was a remnant of 7,000 Jews who were true to God from the whole vast population of the northern kingdom of Israel. In the future tribulation, we have learned that there will be 144,000 specially sealed Jews who will become God's voices of evangelism during that terrible seven-year period on earth. They will, in that day, compose the leftover "leimma," the "remnant" of Israel. Since God has selected by foreknowledge to make the Jews His special people forever, there must always be a remnant of saved Jews, no matter how widespread their apostasy.

**Election**

He tells us that they are selected as a remnant "according to." The Greek word is "kata," which means that God is creating a remnant of saved Jews, according to a certain process. And that process, he calls "election.' Here's a word that we have looked at in some detail: "ekloge." This is the noun that simply says that God looks at the mass of humanity. They're all going to the lake of fire. He picks some of them out and says, "I don't want you to go to the lake of fire. I want you to go to heaven." He has done this out of the mass of the Jews. It refers to His divine choice to fulfill the purpose or the plan of God.

This word is illustrated for us in Acts 9:15, in connection with Saul of Tarsus: "But the Lord said unto him, go your way for he (that is, the apostle Paul, now newly born again) is a chosen vessel unto Me." And here you had the same word: "I have particularly decided to pick him out of the mass of humanity, to bear My name before the gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel." So, there, the apostle Paul clearly illustrates that, for some reason, God said, "I'm going to take this Pharisee, and I'm going to make him a powerful voice to the world in his day relative to salvation through Christ.

**Grace**

This election, we're told, furthermore – Verse 5 says, "Even so, there is at this present time a remnant (a group of Jews saved for heaven) according to the election of grace ("charis"). And what more beautiful word to think about on Easter Sunday morning than this critical New Testament word: the word "grace." In ancient times, this word, "charis," had the basic meaning of a bestowal of help on another by an act of one's free generosity. The Greek philosopher Aristotle defined this word "charis" as "helpfulness toward someone in need, but not in return for anything;" that is, it was a favor which was not granted so that the helper could receive something in return, but only to benefit the recipient.

Now, this word, before it ever came into New Testament language, it already carried the basic idea of being helpful to someone who didn't deserve it, and being helpful without expecting something in return. So, it refers to a friendly disposition from which flows kindly acts and goodwill.

Now, when God the Holy Spirit took this word into the New Testament. He enriched it considerably, and He used it to describe the salvation which God has provided, which is a favor bestowed by God out of love for a sinner who has no claim to it, and who does not deserve it. In fact, he not only does not deserve the salvation, he deserves the very opposite of this salvation. He does not deserve to go to heaven. What he does deserve is to go to the lake of fire.

**A Free, Undeserved Gift**

So, the word grace connotes a gift which is freely bestowed rather than a reward or a payment for some human effort. And I stress that because, in a moment, you will see why that is so important – that you understand that when God says, "I'll take you to heaven on grace," you must understand what grace involves. It involves getting a gift from God without paying for it. The word "grace" connotes a gift which is unearned, it is undeserved, and there's no strings attached. You must understand that. The word "grace" says, "No strings. I'm never going to take it back from you. Now, that's a commonplace understanding for most of you. You are not worried about whether you're going to wake up tomorrow morning and find yourself on the way to the lake of fire. Since you have received Christ the Savior, you lean back comfortably in the confidence that no matter how far off track you get, you're still going to be the child of God, since you were born into His family spiritually, and you're going to go to heaven.

**No Strings Attached**

I'm here to tell you that most of the religious world does not understand that, and does not have the comfort and the assurance of their salvation. The very people who make a great deal of the word "grace" are forever coming in with something in the way of human conduct and religious rituals in order to ensure that God is going to keep taking them into heaven. What I'm telling you is that this violates the nature of the meaning of this word in the language that God selected to communicate to us His plan of salvation. The word "grace" means "no strings attached." It means you don't deserve it. It means it's a gift, but it also means "no strings" to take it back.

So, election to salvation by grace of some Jews is God's way of always preserving, in each generation, a remnant of saved Jews. This plan of God for salvation is summed up in Acts 20:24 in the words "the gospel of the grace of God." That means, "The good news of the grace of God." It is clear from our study of the Word of God that a lost sinner is justified only on the basis of his faith in Jesus Christ, so that he receives salvation as a grace gift.

**Faith**

So, it Romans 3:28, we read, "Therefore, we conclude that a person is justified by faith, apart from the deeds of the Law (apart from his good works)." But the faith in Jesus Christ needed for salvation – where does that come from? Here is a thing, again, where people go far astray: "Yes, I believe it takes faith for me to get into heaven." Where does the faith come from? "Oh, that's me. I had this faith." Then what happens? "Well, because I have faith, God's grace gives me salvation." That is wrong. If you think that way, you do not fully appreciate the meaning of the word "grace." This word "charis" carries with it the amazing connotation that it is the starting point of everything in salvation. Why do you have faith exercise in Christ? It is because grace first gave it to you.

**Grace is the Means to Faith**

So, you have to understand that it is the grace of God that comes into your life, and the first thing it gives you is faith. It's just a gift. It's not deserved. You are looking for it. He gives it to you. And then you are able to apply that faith to trusting in Christ, who paid the price on the cross for your sins. It does not go the other way around, such that you start with faith (you decide to believe), and then God gives you the grace to do that. There is a very important difference. Grace is *the* means to faith. It is not that faith is the means to grace. If a person's faith in Christ would secure the grace of God into salvation, then grace is not a sovereign gift. God says, "This is a gift – a sovereign gift." But if my faith is what gets God's grace, then it's not a gift. My faith has merited my getting the grace of God. So, faith now becomes a very powerful human work that get something out of God. It's a serious distortion. You cannot get faith except as a gift of grace from God. The grace from God must precede our faith in Jesus Christ. Grace is the channel or the means, then, to salvation. Faith is the application or appropriation of that salvation.

**Sprinkling Infants**

My point in stressing this is in part this: I've recently been listening to a lot of talk in a certain circle about the means of grace – things that secure a grace for you – what you can do to get God's grace blessing upon you. One of the means of grace that certain large religious groups believe is water baptism. So, they perform the enormous serious error, bordering on blasphemy, of sprinkling infants, and saying that this is an act of securing the grace of God. As one minister recently said to me, "We believe that water baptism is the means of grace that secures for this child the capacity to come into the kingdom of God. He gets God's grace because the faith of his parents is expressed in sprinkling of this child. And then the child gets faith. Faith brings grace. It is the faith of the parents in sprinkling this child in baptism that secures for him the grace of God into salvation."

Now, of course, sprinkling a child is no baptism in itself. That is a serious error to begin with. But water baptism isn't going to bring the grace of God to you. Otherwise grace would be something you earn. God says, "No, My grace is a free gift."

**The Lord's Supper**

Some people think that the Lord's Supper is a means of grace, to secure the forgiveness of sins. In certain denominations, both Catholic and Protestant, if somebody is on his deathbed, the first thing they want to do is get the priest or the minister there to give them the Lord's Supper. Why are they doing that? I heard of a pastor recently who, when he arrived, the parishioner was already in a coma, and therefore, could not be given the Lord's Supper, and said, "Well, this person won't benefit by it at all. What kind of benefit was he going to give? He was saying that at the moment of death (the Catholics call it "extreme unction"), if you take the Lord's Supper, you get a great big eraser run over your sins and wipes them out, so that you can step out clean in God sight – God's grace that you have secured through the Lord's Supper. How false! What a travesty! What an insult to the God of grace!

That's why I want you to understand that the word "grace" is a gift that you do not deserve; you do not earn; it has no strings attached; and, there's no way you can get it unless God looks down and says, "You – I'm going to give you grace." And when He gives it, then comes faith, and then comes everything else that follows from it.

**The Bible**

Some people even think that grace comes through the Word of God, the Bible. Certainly, if you can accuse us of anything, at Berean Memorial Church, you can accuse us of being zealots for teaching doctrinal truth out of the Word of God. But that does not mean that you secure the grace of God through that. God's grace does not come from your doing anything. If anything could secure the grace of God, then grace is no longer a free gift of God's sovereign choice.

**Seven Sacraments of Roman Catholicism**

The Roman Catholics, of course, teach this very adamantly. They have seven sacraments, not just two like most Protestants do. They have seven of them. And if you go through those seven sacraments (you can't really do all seven), But if you went through most of them, you would be gaining God's grace, and that's false. The word "sacrament," by the way, is not a word that you should use. What we have in the Lord's Supper and water baptism is not a sacrament. "Sacrament" means of means of grace. It means a way to secure favor with God. To say that anything is a means of securing grace is a contradiction of the meaning of grace itself as a freely bestowed gift.

Now, Paul's encounter with Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus clearly stressed two basic features about the grace of God that he understood well. First of all, his encounter with Jesus Christ on that road made it clear that salvation is a result of God's sovereign choice to give that person faith in Christ. It is God's decision to grace you out. And Paul suddenly realized what it was to be graced out by God's personal decision on the Damascus road.

Secondly, he understood from that that human merit, all of his Pharisaical good deeds, were of no value with God – a God who can only give you salvation on the basis of grace. Did you hear that? He is a God who can give you salvation as long as you don't tie His hands by interjecting your good works. He is a God who can only give you salvation if you take it on His terms, which is a gift. If you won't take it as a gift, you won't get it. And if you understand that, I can tell you that you are now smarter than the vast number of people who are sitting in congregations all over this land today, struggling and agonizing whether they're going to make it into heaven from moment to moment. If God gives it to you, it is a sure thing, because it is entirely the result of His own doing. God acts work entirely on His own initiative in taking a sinner into heaven. That is what we're saying.

So, the remnant of Jews is not the product of their volition; their good works; their morality; or, their obedience to the rituals of the Mosaic Law. That remnant of saved Jews was the grace of God coming to them, the result of which they had the capacity for faith. Romans 11:6 then makes a very sobering summary statement, as we close this section, on the exclusiveness of grace. Paul says, "Having said that God has preserved a remnant of saved Jews on the basis of his election (His decision to give them grace), I should make something else very clear. But," he says, "if by grace." And this "if" is our word "ei." This is first-class condition, which means that it is a truth – if, and it is true; or, we may translate it as "since." Paul says, "And since by grace." Here we have our word again, referring to salvation as a gift from God to those who simply trust in Christ. The Bible clearly states that human salvation is secured on this basis alone. And since salvation is by grace, Paul says, "Then it is no more of works." The word "no more" is "ouketi." The "ou" part or this word is that strong negative that says, "Absolutely it is not of works." That's a significant word. And since salvation is by grace, then it absolutely is not by means of human doing. It is simply not by any thing that people do to earn it. It is not by works.

**Works**

When they say "works," please remember that that includes circumcision. That includes water baptism. It includes your morality. It includes the Lord's Supper. It includes all those acts of mercy, and all those millions of poor starving children in some part of the world that some sensitive, caring person is feeding, but who is outside of Christ? And you would think that that great kindness should be recognized by God. And God says, "No. Even feeding those desperately needy children is an act of the sin nature, and it is contaminated, and it is human good, and it counts nothing with Me unto salvation."

If salvation is by means of grace, with all that that word connotes, then it is absolutely no more out of human effort. Otherwise, why is that the case? Well, otherwise (and here's the punch line), "Grace is no more grace." Wow. Do you realize what God the Holy Spirit has said here? God the Holy Spirit has just said that if you, as an individual say, "Yes, Christ died for my sins," like the Roman Catholics do, and like the Mormons do, but then you also say, "But for me to receive the benefit of what He does, I must live a good life; I must provide certain penance; I must receive certain punishment; or, I must go to the priest, and confess my sin, and he will assign me what I must do to absolve myself from that sin, and then he will give me absolution," then you have added something to the grace basis. You have added works to grace. And God says, "Then it's not grace anymore. And I've made it very clear in the Bible," the Lord says, "that I'll only take you to heaven as a result of giving you eternal life as a gift. I won't take you on any other basis.

It so happens that in your King James Version, some scribe apparently wrote out in the margin of the manuscript the opposite statement: "But if it be of works, then it is no more grace. Otherwise work is no more work." Now, that's a true statement. It's the opposite of the first part of the verse, but it is not in the earliest manuscripts. The scribes would sometimes put these comments out in the side, and the next person copying would inadvertently put the commentary into the verse. So, in any case, the last part is not there. But it makes a very strong statement that if salvation is by grace, then it is absolutely no more by means of works. Otherwise you don't have grace at all.

Verse 6 translates as: "And since it is by grace, it no longer comes from works; otherwise, grace is no longer grace." So, what this verse is saying that grace and works are mutually exclusive factors so that whichever one is the source of salvation, the other is automatically eliminated. You're either going to go to heaven on the basis of your good works, or you're going to go to heaven on the basis of grace. You're not going to go on both. You're either going to go to heaven on the basis of your religious rituals that you perform; or, you're going to go to heaven on the basis of a gift from God. You cannot go on part one and part the other. The blessing of salvation cannot be the product of both grace and works at the same time.

Human salvation thus must come either from man's efforts or from God's efforts. It cannot be a product of a mixture of both. So, those who insist on adding their human good works to the payment of Christ for sins have made salvation impossible, because they have neutralized the only basis upon which God can save, which is grace. Works neutralize grace. That is the only basis by which God can give eternal life.

Most Jews neutralize the grace basis. They are still pursuing the Mosaic Law. Salvation by good works was the cornerstone of the rabbi's teachings. It is still that today. Understand this: The grace of God does not supplement man's good works unto salvation. Grace eliminates man's works completely, or it's not grace. Please understand that. God's grace is not there to supplement what you do to get into heaven. It's there to wipe out what you do. So, you can lean back; sigh; and, say, "I'm in, and I'm in for good."

Now we'll close with one of the great examples in Scripture of human salvation by grace, of which Paul speaks. Please turn to Ephesians 2:1-10. This is a classic declaration of how you may get into heaven, and the only way that you may get into heaven. The first three verses describe the hopelessly lost condition of every person. Verse 1 says, "Are you He has made alive who are dead in trespasses and sins." Every person comes into the human race spiritually dead. This spiritual death is the result of the imputed moral guilt from Adam's sin. He was acting in our behalf. Spiritually dead people have no communication with God. Your human spirit is your point of contact with God. Your soul is your point of contact with other people: your mind; your volition; and, your emotions. That's your contact with other people. Your body, with the five senses, is your contact with the world around you. So, the only point of contact in your being with God is your spirit. And when that is dead, you have no contact with God.

That's why, when unsaved people stand up and they pray to God, it's such a travesty. It should make your skin creep, because they have no point of contact with God. They have no access to God. They are spiritually dead. That's what this verse is saying – that once you, who are born again now, were spiritually dead in your trespasses and in your sins (in your evil works). Spiritually dead people cannot make themselves alive. Only God can bring that miracle about.

Verse 2 says, "In which, in times past, you walked according to the course of this world, and according to the prince of the power of the air – the spirit that now works in the sons of disobedience. The unregenerate follow the ways of Satan's world system. Our world has a lifestyle, as you're well aware. That lifestyle was created by Satan. That's what the Bible refers to as "the world." It is the world’s way of doing things. The lifestyle of the people of our world is taking them into the lake of fire. For this reason, the world hates, and it opposes, everything that is godly, because it interferes with their lifestyle. John 15:18 and John 15:23 tell us how the world hates the Christian and his lifestyle (his godliness).

The unsaved, on the other hand, we're told here in verse 2, follow the prince of this world, which is Satan. 1 John 15:19 and 2 Corinthians 4:4 indicate that Satan is the god of this world. The spirit of Satan, then, is actively at work in all unbelievers. These people, therefore, are disobedient to the Word of God – to its moral code, and thus to God Himself. They work, furthermore, at promoting disobedience in others. So, this is the world's lifestyle, and that's what he's talking about in verse 2.

In verse 3, he says, "Among whom also we all (who are now born again – Jews and gentiles) had our lifestyle (our manner of life in times past), specifically, in the loss of our flesh. We pursued the lust patterns of the sin nature, fulfilling those desires of the sin nature. And, furthermore, we pursued mental attitude sins. We fulfilled the desires of our sin nature, and the evil thoughts of our minds. And we were, by our very nature, children of wrath, even as others. And what Paul says here is that the sin nature of man makes him an object of divine wrath until he's regenerated. We are by nature under God's wrath, which is exactly what John 3:36 says – that we are under the wrath of God by nature. And, of course, that's an important point to understand.

In the field of education, we are constantly being plagued by people who are trying to tell us that children are not by nature bad. But children are by nature bad, because they are born with this sin nature. Therefore, we must immediately seek to do what we can to restrain that evil nature, and to channel it into controlled conditions.

Verses 4-10 then present the marvelous new position in life for those who are born again: "But God." Here comes God into the picture – this sorry-looking scene that we just looked at. But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love with which He loved us." God is rich in mercy – that undeserved kindness that He exercises toward sinners. God's character of love causes him to rescue sinners from the lake of fire. There's nothing attractive in that lost sinner, but God loves him.

Verse 5: "Even when we were dead in sin (spiritually dead), He has made us alive together (spiritually alive with Christ). By grace you are saved." God, by His effort alone, has made the spiritually dead sinner alive; that is, regeneration. This was done by means of the death of Christ to pay for that sin. This salvation is by grace. It is a gift from God, so that there is no human works attached.

Also, I must tell you something else, in passing. At the end of verse 5, it says, "For by grace you are saved." The word "saved" in the Greek Bible is in the perfect tense. And the perfect tense tells us that something begins here in the past, and then it goes on forever. It never ends. No matter where you are in time, what happened back here keeps going, and keeps going, and keeps going. It is one of the most dramatic evidences of the assurance of salvation. No, you can't lose your salvation, because even the Greek language tells you that once you're in, you're in for good. God the Holy Spirit uses that unique, perfect tense in the Greek language to tell us that.

So, God has done His job, and He's done it all by himself.

Verse 6: "And He has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." God has raised the believer up from spiritual death. Believers are now positionally resurrected physically. That's good to know. As far as God is concerned, you've already died physically, and you're alive. Positionally, you're already resurrected. So, who cares where you come along, and the time comes when God says, "Okay, I want you to check in home. Your death is here." You are already alive as far as He's concerned, because your resurrection is ensured. There is now, this Easter Sunday morning, a man in heaven, in the God-Man, Jesus Christ. Because He is there, we are, as human beings, most assuredly going to be there as well.

We Christians now share the powerful, resurrected life, therefore, of Jesus Christ. That's the point of that. You now share the powerful, resurrected life of Jesus Christ. And I cannot stop now to review how powerful was that Easter morning and onward resurrected life of Jesus Christ. The position in Christ, however, I should remind you, requires a new set of life values, goals, and conduct. Colossians 3:1-2 says, "If you then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God. Set your reflection on things above, and not on things on the earth. For we are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." Are you really dead to this world? Or are you really moving along as if there was no difference between you and the unsaved world around you? Now, if you fully understand that, as far as God is concerned, you've already got resurrection life, and that, as far as He's concerned, you are in the position of great spiritual power, then you should live in a way that's befitting. Why waste your life on things that are secondary, and trivial, and temporal instead of getting your eyes and your life hooked into that which is going to be eternal.

Then verse 6 goes a step further: "And has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Believers are also spiritually (positionally) in heaven with Jesus Christ. We are no longer mere earthlings. Jesus Christ has exalted us as He Himself has been exalted. The power of God, furthermore, which raised Christ from the dead – Ephesians 1:19-20 tell us that the power that God the Father used to raise the Son from the dead is the power that you have at your disposal in daily life. You don't think so? In Ephesians 1, that's what it says: "And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places." I don't know of any power greater than that, that it takes to bring a dead person back to life. And that's the power that we have.

Verse 7 says that: "In the ages to come, He might show the exceeding riches of His grace and His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." "In the ages to come" refers to eternity in heaven. There, God is going to display the riches of His grace toward the sinner. How is he going to do that? By holding you and me up as trophies of His grace – sinners who deserved hell, and He transformed us into the absolute righteousness of Jesus Christ. Now that is a trophy of grace. And it was done entirely by God's kindness in rescuing us from the lake of fire. It was made possible by the death of Christ. The incomparable riches of God's grace is expressed in His kindness in saving rebellious sinners through Jesus Christ.

Then verse 8-9 – we know it so well: "For by grace you are saved through faith." That's what we've been saying all day. Salvation is the greatest gift of God, and it is appropriated by the elect, through faith, through trusting in Christ as Savior. The source of salvation, then again, is the grace of God. The means is faith in Christ. It is grace that gives us the faith. Faith is not a human work which earns salvation. It is simply the means for accepting a gift. Faith is not a human work. It is a means of saying to God, "You're right. You're telling the truth, and I believe it."

"For by grace you are saved through faith, and *that* not of yourselves. It is the gift of God." What does "that" refer to? "That" does not refer to faith. The reason that we know that is that, in the Greek language, it would be a grammatical conflict. The words "grace" and "faith" are feminine words. The word "that" is neuter word. So, you can't use "that" to point back to grace and faith. So, we know that what it is pointing back to is what the phrase previously has been talking about: salvation. "And that (salvation) is not from yourselves. It is the gift of God." That salvation that comes as the result of grace, which gives us faith, is not something that comes from us. It is not something that we produced by our rituals and our works. It is purely the gift of God. Therefore, salvation can only be received as a gift. If you won't take it by grace, and if you insist on adding your rituals and your own additions to it, you're going to be lost.

Verse 9 clinches it by saying, "Not of works, lest any man should boast." It reinforces the principle that salvation cannot include any human merit. Since no one can bring salvation to himself by good works or religious rituals, no one can brag about himself. No one can take credit for his salvation. Why did God do this kind of a grace gift salvation?

We conclude with verse 10, which gives us the answer: "For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus." A born-again person is entirely the workmanship of God. And this Greek word, "workmanship" means, of all things, "a work of art" – a masterpiece. This is the way the Greek language talks about a work of art (a masterpiece). We people saved by grace are the masterpiece of Almighty God. And we have been created that in Christ Jesus. Christians are made a new spiritual creation, in the only way they can be made that – through Christ Jesus.

So, the poor Jews who reject Christ Jesus cannot become a new spiritual creation. The purpose of the new species of regenerated humanity, furthermore, we are told, is to do something specific: "We've been saved unto good works, to produce good works through the indwelling Holy Spirit, for which God then rewards us in heaven.

Furthermore, the Christian service to which we have been called is not just any good thing that's out there to be done. It is specifically what God has designed for you to do: at this point in time; in this geographic location; and, in this particular circumstance. If you miss that, you have missed it all. We are purely an artistic creation of God in Christ Jesus, for the purpose of providing divine good production, which works He specifically has ordained for us to do. That means literally ("for us to do") we should walk in them. God has prepared a specific path of good works for each person to follow. It is thus not doing our own thing for God, but doing *His thing*, and being rewarded for it. Most Christians waste their lives doing their own choice of good things, and Satan sees to it that we are dissatisfied with doing God's works, and following God's plan and pathway for us. He sees to it. Do not become victim to Satan's deceit. This is the grand demonstration, on this Easter Sunday, of what grace is all about – the grace which was sealed by the resurrection of Christ.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1988

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