

NOAH FOUND GRACE

(Grace: unmerited, but not unconditional)

OUR TOPIC: "NOAH FOUND GRACE IN THE EYES OF THE LORD."

OUR TEXT: Ge 6:1--9: And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, 2 That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. 3 And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. 4 There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. 5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. 7 And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. 8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. 9 These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.

OUR KEY THOUGHT: Gen 6:8 "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord."

OUR PRESSING QUESTION IS: IF GRACE IS "UNMERITED FAVOR..." THAT IS, YOU DO NOTHING TO DESERVE IT... WHY, OUT OF THE WHOLE POPULATION OF THE WORLD, DID ONLY NOAH FIND GRACE IN GOD'S SIGHT?

HOW MANY PEOPLE WERE IN THE WORLD AT THAT TIME? SCHOLARS ESTIMATE THAT THERE WERE AS MANY PEOPLE ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH BACK THEN AS THERE ARE TODAY!

The average lifespan back then, between the Creation and the Flood, was over 900 years. Methuselah, as you know, lived to the age of 969. The AVERAGE lifespan was more than 900 years.

People had kids at a much greater age than they do now, and thus had many more kids in the family. The Bible records name only some of the sons and very few of the daughters. People had kids after their 500th birthday!

The Jewish historian Josephus of the first century A.D. reports that Adam and Eve had 56 children — 33 sons and 23 daughters.

(Flavius Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, Book 1, Chapter 2, Paragraph 2, Endnote 8.)

Josephus also reports that Lamech had 77 children by two wives. Lamech was the sixth generation after Adam through Cain; [this was a different Lamech from the father of Noah through Cain's brother Seth] (Genesis 4:17-19).

(Flavius Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, Book 1, Chapter 2, Paragraph 2.)

OUT OF THIS ESTIMATED BILLIONS OF PEOPLE, WHY DID **ONLY NOAH AND HIS FAMILY** FIND GRACE IN THE EYES OF THE LORD?

(Answer:) WE MUST CONCLUDE THAT EITHER GRACE IS CONDITIONAL, OR GOD IS A RESPECTER OF PERSONS. And the bible clearly states on a number of occasions that the latter is NOT the case.

One person said, "That is kind of an oxymoron isn't it? Since Grace means "Unmerited favor" how could it be conditional? What can you do to obtain something that is unmerited in the first place? -Or, am I missing something?"

WELL, I THINK YOU ARE MISSING SOMETHING, AND THAT GRACE IS CONDITIONAL! --THE REASON THAT NOAH FOUND GRACE IN THE EYES OF THE LORD IS STATED IN THE NEXT VERSE: **Gen 6:8 "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. V. 9 These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God."**

NOAH FOUND GRACE BECAUSE HE WAS DIFFERENT!

JOHN PIPER, THE NOTED BAPTIST EVANGELIST, DEALT WITH THIS ISSUE IN SOME OF HIS WRITINGS... AND MAY I SAY, HE WAS VERY INSIGHTFUL. HE SAYS:

"Conditional grace is nearly unintelligible to many contemporary Christians who assume that unconditionality is the essence of all grace."

"However, "free" doesn't always mean "unconditional". Many of God's acts of grace are conditional... When James says '[God] gives a greater grace... God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble' (James 4:6), he means that there is a grace that comes to those who are humble, but does not come to the proud."

"It should be plain from this, that "fulfilling conditions" does not imply "earning" anything or "meriting" anything. Grace is still free, even when it is conditional. There is such a thing as unmerited, conditional grace. Do not equate meeting conditions of grace with earning or meriting grace. 'Earning grace' would indeed be a contradiction in terms, like 'hot snow' or 'verdant desert.'"

"Grace cannot be earned. The very meaning of grace is that the one receiving the grace does not deserve it - has not earned it. If a philanthropist pays \$80,000 for your college education on the condition that you graduate from high school, you have not earned the gift, but you have met a condition. It is possible to meet a condition for receiving grace and yet not earn the grace. Conditional grace does not mean earned grace. How can this be?"

The part of the answer that needs to be said here is that when God's grace is promised based on a condition, that condition is also a work of God's grace. This guarantees the absolute

freeness of grace. The philanthropist mentioned above may even become the personal tutor for a failing high school student to insure that he does get his diploma and so meets the condition for \$80,000 grant."

Piper goes on to give an example of a conditional promise from the Scriptures, and comments on it.

*"The Lord is good, a **stronghold** in the day of trouble, and He knows **those who take refuge in Him.**" Nahum 1:7*

"We do not earn or merit anything by taking refuge in God. Hiding in something makes no contribution to the hiding place. All it does is show that we regard ourselves as helpless and the hiding place as a place of rescue. The condition we must meet to have this grace is not a meritorious one."

"As we ponder how to live the Christian life, the uppermost thought should be: How can I magnify rather than nullify the grace of God? Paul answers this question in Galatians 2:20-21, 'I have been crucified Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me. I do not nullify the grace of God.'"

Why does his life not nullify the grace of God? Because he lives by faith in the Son of God. Faith calls all attention to grace and magnifies it, rather than nullifying it."

(End of quote from Preacher John Piper)

If we believe the Bible, the fact that man is saved by the grace of God cannot be denied. Were it not for God's wonderful grace, all of us would be condemned to an eternity in hell. But, Praise God, He loved this sinful world enough to make a terrible sacrifice to save us from our sins. When we understand our lost and helpless condition, We appreciate God's wonderful grace more and more!

Man is a sinner condemned to eternal ruin. Every one of us has departed from the right way revealed in God's word. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way" (Isa. 53:6). "There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10-12). "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (Rom. 3:23). When we become honest with ourselves, we will confess that we have violated God's law and stand condemned before God as sinners. "The wages of sin is death,") (Rom. 6:23). Hence, each of us stands doomed before God because of the sin which we have committed.

When man could do nothing to save himself, God acted, through His grace, to save us. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should

not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jn. 3:16). God sent His Son to save us; that is the message of God's grace. While we were yet God's enemies, He sent Jesus as the propitiation for our sins. "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5:7,8) Indeed, the grace of God is most apparent when we remember that God sent Jesus to die on the cross to save even the men who condemned Him and nailed Him there!

SO, THOUGH GRACE IS UNMERITED... UNDERVED... IT IS NOT UNCONDITIONAL.

OH, IT IS *EXTENDED UNCONDITIONALLY*, BUT IT IS UP TO EACH OF US TO RECEIVE IT!

**PAUL SAID, Tit 2:11 "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,
12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world..."**

IT IS EXTENDED TO US. WE CAN ACCEPT IT, OR REJECT IT. WE CAN SAY, "I DON'T WANT TO HEAR HOW I SHOULD LIVE; I DON'T WANT GOD TELLING ME WHAT TO DO." TO DO SO IS TO REJECT HIS GRACE. HIS GRACE COMES TEACHING, AND TO REJECT THE *TEACHING* IS TO REJECT HIS GRACE!

ONE COMMENTATOR SAYS,

"Probably nothing hinders the Western church more than a theological misunderstanding of grace. God has poured out on humanity extraordinary unconditional grace such as the gift of life, and the offer of salvation.

However, as the Baptist evangelist, John Piper, discusses at length in his book, {Future Grace,} more grace from God is available for the Christian in this life and the next. This grace often comes with conditions. "Heb 12:14--16: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright."

There are many such passages in the New Testament where blessings are promised in response to meeting specific conditions. For example in James 4, the Christian is promised God's opposition when He is proud, and God's favor (or grace) when he is humble. Furthermore, he is promised that God will draw near to him as he draws near to God, and that the devil will flee when the Christian resists him. In James 4:4--8, "You adulterers and adulteresses, don't you know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. 5 Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who lives in us yearns jealously"? 6 But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

7 Be subject therefore to God. But resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.'" Whether we are near to God, or the devil, depends on the choices WE make!

Piper says, "Misunderstanding ensues because Christians confuse conditionality with merit. Just because something is conditional doesn't mean it has been earned. All grace from God is unmerited, but not all grace from God is unconditional. Take salvation as an example. Salvation only comes to those who repent and believe the good news, but salvation is in no way earned by anyone. Similarly, God's presence and power come to the Christian as he draws near to God, but that doesn't mean it has been earned."

(End of

Quote.)

We understand that the grounds of our salvation is nothing but the blood of Jesus. Man is not saved by his own works of righteousness; he cannot earn his salvation. **Man can only be saved by grace.** Yet the giving of salvation does not preclude there being any **conditions** for receiving it. We see examples of God's grace which was given conditionally in other spheres than salvation and understand them perfectly. For example, note the following:

1. Jericho. God told Joshua, "See, I have **given** into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valor" (Josh. 6:1). Despite the fact that the taking of Jericho was a gift from God, there were divine conditions which had to be met before Jericho could be destroyed. Hence, the record states that God required that Israel march around the city once each day for six days in silence in a fixed order. Furthermore, God required that on the seventh day the Israelites should march around the city seven times, blow the trumpets, and shout with a great shout. When the Israelites would do these things, the wall of the city would fall down flat.

Anyone can see that there was no merit in what the Israelites did to cause the walls to fall down. Indeed, no man would plan such a strategy as a military means of conquering a city. Rather, these were divine **conditions** imposed by God for the Israelites to fulfill before receiving God's **grace**. There was no work of merit in what the Israelites did; they merely met the conditions for receiving grace.

2. The men who were saved with Paul. In Acts 27, when Paul was being taken prisoner to Rome, the ship on which he sailed wrecked during a storm. Prior to the storm, God revealed, "And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee" (Acts 27:22-24). Notice that God gave the deliverance to the men on the ship. Nevertheless, the record goes on to tell how that the sailors aboard the ship tried to abandon ship leaving the prisoners to die. When Paul found out about the plan, he said, "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved" (Acts 27:31). Consequently, here is another

example of a gift of God which could only be obtained conditionally.

So, when we come to a discussion of salvation, we need to understand that God gives His wonderful gift of grace, salvation, conditionally. That does not imply that there is any merit in what man does so far as providing the grounds for his salvation; rather man must act to meet the conditions for receiving God's wonderful gift.

LOOK AT THE CONDITIONS OF GRACE IN THESE VERSES:

"God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son," (GRACE) "that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (CONDITION)(Jn. 3:16).

"God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world though him might be saved" (GRACE) "He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (CONDITION) (Jn. 3:17).

"The bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world . . . I am the bread of life" (GRACE) "he who comes to me shall not hunger and he who believes in me shall never thirst (CONDITION) (Jn. 6:33, 35).

"The bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh" (GRACE) "if anyone eat of this bread, he will live forever" (CONDITION) (Jn. 6:51).

"He came to his own, and his own receiveth him not" (GRACE) "to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (CONDITION) (Jn. 1:11).

"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation" (GRACE) "he who believes and is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned" (CONDITION) (Mk. 16:15, 16).

This entrance into the kingdom is conditional. Joh 3:5 (To Nicodemus:) Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

So... Salvation Is A Conditional Gift

"I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins (Jn. 8:24)."

"I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Lk. 13:3).

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (Jn. 3:3).

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 Jn. 1:7).

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, **if** ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain" (1 Cor. 15:1-2).

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. 10:9).

"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:8-9).

Hence, these passages show that salvation is given to man only when man meets God's conditions for receiving it.

And, as Christians, it is up to us to continue to walk in God's grace:

Mrk. 11:26 But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.

Ac 13:43 Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, **persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.**

1Pe 5:5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: **for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. 6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: 7 Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.**

Jude 1:4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, **turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness,** and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

SO... WHY DID NOAH FIND GRACE IN THE EYES OF THE LORD WHEN THE REST OF THE WORLD DIDN'T? --THE HEBREW WRITER EXPLAINS: Heb 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. 7 By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet,

moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

"The presence of grace is not conditional. Your acceptance of it, well, that's up to you."