



# The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator

*“To testify the gospel of the grace of God.” Acts 20:24*

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## ELDERS IN A BAPTIST CHURCH

A sermon delivered by Laurence Justice in the annual Bible Conference  
of the Grace Baptist Church in Tyler, Texas

Presbyterians believe that there are three officers in a church; pastors, deacons, and elders. Presbyterians teach that there are two classes of elders in a church; the teaching elder who is the pastor and the ruling elders. In a Presbyterian church the pastor and ruling elders make up a body called the session which govern the church and over which the pastor presides. The ruling elders make up a committee of laymen which controls the church, carries on the church's business, and makes its decisions. The very name Presbyterian comes from this form of government in the church. The Greek word that is translated elders in our Kings James Version of the Bible is the word **presbuteros**. Presbyterian church government is government by elders and thus the name Presbyterian.

Should a Baptist church have a third office in addition to pastors and deacons? [Emp. Is that of the editor]. Should a Baptist church have elders? In seeking to answer this question let us carefully consider three things.

### THE BIBLICAL TITLES FOR THE OFFICE OF PASTOR

There are three official titles given the office of pastor in the New Testament; pastor, elder, and bishop. The office is also referred to with at least four other descriptive terms which are not official titles; preacher, minister, steward, and angel. But let's look at the three official biblical titles for the office of pastor. First there is the title of PASTOR which occurs in Ephesians 4:11. **“And He gave some apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and**

**some, pastors and teachers.”**

Pastor is a translation of the Greek word **poimenas** which means literally, shepherd, one who tends flocks. One of the functions or duties of a shepherd is feeding his sheep. A pastor or shepherd feeds his flock the Spiritual food of the word of God. Feeding Spiritual food to one's flock involves teaching the word of God to that flock. This teaching involves what Paul refers to in II Timothy 2:15 as **“rightly dividing the word of truth”** does not mean dividing the scriptures up into seven dispensations. It means instead giving every member of the flock his proper portion, the portion which fits that member's particular needs. This teaching or feeding the flock by the shepherd necessitates that the shepherd carefully and diligently studies the word of God. **“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth,”** Paul says to the young preacher Timothy. The shepherd does more than just feed his flock. He leads them and guards them as well.

The second title God's word gives the office of pastor is that of ELDER. In I Peter 5:1 Peter uses this title when he says, **“The elders which are among you I exhort who am also an elder...”** As we have already noted, the Greek word which is translated elder here and elsewhere in the New Testament is the word **presbuteros**. It literally means older man and speaks in the case of this scriptural office of one with Spiritual age and maturity, one who is **“Not a novice”** as Paul says in I Timothy 3:6. Elder, when used to refer to the church office, is a title

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used in an official sense to designate those with experience in Spiritual things and thus worthy of respect. An elder in ancient Israel was a man who ruled the village by his influence. He was not necessarily an old man but he was characterized by wisdom and experience.

In I Timothy 5:17 Paul speaks of elders who rule the church. ***“Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor . . . .”*** What does Paul mean when he speaks of the elders **ruling** the church? This same Greek word which is translated as **“rule”** in I Timothy

5:17 is translated **“are over”** in I Thessalonians 5:12 where Paul says, ***“And we beseech you brethren to know them who labor among you and are over you in the Lord to admonish you.”*** It means to stand before or to preside over.

Presbyterians separate the office of Pastor from the office of elder by saying that there are two types of elders in the church; ruling elders and teaching elders. They base this theory on I Timothy 5:17 where Paul says, ***“Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine.”*** They teach that this verse says that there is a teaching elder, one who labors in the word and doctrine, and there are ruling elders; a committee of laymen who rule the church.

The third title God's word gives the office of pastor is that of BISHOP. Paul uses this title in I Timothy 3:1-2 where he says, ***“This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife . . .”*** etc. The Greek word that is translated bishop in the New Testament is the word ***episkopous {ἐπίσκοπος}*** and it means overseer. A bishop is one who oversees or superintends the church of Christ. Peter tells the bishops in I Peter 5:2 to take the oversight of the flock. The pastor or bishop is to oversee, to superintend **all** the work of the church; the deacons, the committees, the music, and every other aspect of the Lord's work in the church.

So these are the three biblical titles given to the office to which we usually refer as pastor. Now why does God's word give three different names to this one office instead of just one? Well, the various titles just describe various aspects of the work of this office. When the pastor is looked upon as the shepherd of the flock who feeds and leads and guards the sheep, he is spoken of as **pastor**. When he is looked upon as one who is spiritually mature and who rules over the church by his influence with the people he is spoken of as **elder**. When he is seen as the superintendent or overseer he is called **bishop**. The title pastor is used only once in the New Testament and that is in Ephesians 4:11. We Baptists use the title pastor

almost to the exclusion of the other two, probably because of the way others have abused the titles of bishop and elder.

### THE KEY BIBLICAL PASSAGES CONCERNING ELDERS IN THE CHURCH

There are four key passages which refer to elders in the church and it is of critical significance that we note that in these passages the titles and functions of pastors, elders, and bishops are used interchangeably in referring to one office and one office only. Let's look at each of these passages individually and see if this is so.

**I Peter 5:1-3:** *"The elders (presbuteros) which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: feed (verb form of poimenas which is the Greek word for pastor or shepherd) the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight (the Greek word here is episkopous which elsewhere is translated bishop) thereof, not by constraint but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock."*

Peter exhorts the **elders** here to do the work of **pastors** and **feed** the flock and to do the work of **bishops** and take the **oversight** of the flock. It is clear from this passage that all three titles and functions of the office of pastor are used interchangeably in speaking of one office.

**Acts 20:17, 28:** *"And from Miletus he (Paul) sent to Ephesus and called the elders (presbuteros) of the church."* Then Paul proceeds to address these elders telling them farewell and giving them instructions for their work. When we come to verse 28 Paul is still speaking to the same persons, the **elders** of the church at Ephesus and he says, *"Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock over the which God hath made you overseers (the Greek word is episkopous which is also translated bishop) to feed (verb form of the Greek word poimenas which means pastor or shepherd) the church of God which he hath purchased with his*

*own blood."*

So, Paul called the **elders** of the church at Ephesus together at Miletus as we read in verse 17 and addressed them as **bishops** (overseers) and as **pastors** (shepherds) in verse 28. Again it is clear here that all three titles and functions of the office of pastor are used interchangeably in speaking of one office.

**Titus 1:5-7:** The apostle Paul is instructing the preacher Titus when he says, *"For this cause left I thee in Crete that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting and ordain elders (Greek word presbuteros) in every city, as I had appointed thee: If any be blameless (he's talking about elders), the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop (Greek word episkopous, overseer) must be blameless, as the steward of God, not self-willed, not soon angry, etc..."*

Paul tells Titus here that he left him in Crete to ordain **elders** in every city and then he gives the qualifications for these elders under the title of **bishop** thus plainly indicating that an elder and a bishop are the same. It is therefore clear that elders and bishops are one and the same office because the two titles are used interchangeably here.

**I Timothy 5:17-18:** *"Let the elders (Greek presbuteros) that rule (same Greek word that is translated in I Thessalonians 5:12 as "are over" and means to preside) well be counted worthy of double honor (double pay), especially they who labor in the word and doctrine (in other words those who prayerfully study – something a shepherd or pastor must do in order to feed the sheep). For the scripture saith, "Thou shalt not muzzle the oz that treadeth out the corn., And the laborer is worthy of his reward."*

The **elders** are spoken of as **ruling** here. One of the qualifications for a **bishop** as we read in I Timothy 3:4-5 is that he **rule** in the church. *"One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)"*

The **elders** are also spoken of here as **teaching**, the purpose for which they labor in

word and in doctrine. One of the qualifications for a *bishop* as we read in I Timothy 3:2 is that he must be “*apt to teach.*” So here in I Timothy 5:17-18, two functions of the elders are singled out for commendation: 1. Ruling the church and 2. Teaching in the church. It is clear here that the ruling elder and a teaching elder are one and the same office.

The Presbyterians and others who seek to establish a third office in the church, the office of elder, always sooner or later come to this verse and say that Paul is talking about two distinct types of elders here; one who rules in the church and a different officer who teaches in the church.

But I Timothy 5:17-18 **does not** teach that there are two classes of elders in the church. Instead Paul simply indicates here that the double function of ruling and teaching belongs **to all elders**. Paul is saying here that elders (pastors, bishops) who do a good job in the two functions of ruling and teaching in the church ought to be paid well for their work, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. **Double honor** here means financial remuneration or pay with money as verse 18 clearly indicates.

The phrase “***Especiallly they who labor in word and doctrine***” indicates that **some** of God’s pastors are more diligent in their work than others. The pastor who is to be honored is the one who puts some sweat into his preparation for his sermons. Unfortunately all the sweating some preachers do is when they deliver their sermons. Some preachers try to make up for lack of sweat in their preparation with a lot of sweat in delivering their sermons.

Paul tells us in I Timothy 5:17 that those elders who not only rule well but also excel in teaching are to receive double pay. I Timothy 5:17-18 clearly teaches that elders are to be paid workers. They are professionals in the sense that they are paid for their services. Don’t be offended by that! It’s the truth! I Timothy 5:17-18 clearly teaches that those whom the Presbyterians call **ruling** elders ought to be paid for their services. Presbyterians, however, pay their **teaching** elders but do not pay their ruling elders, yet God’s word says it is **ruling** elders first of all who are to be paid. Presbyterians

have what they call “lay elders” who are not paid for their services and these Baptist churches who are now establishing “lay elders” in their churches do not pay their elders as Paul clearly instructs the churches to do in I Timothy 5:17-18. That is an inconsistent interpretation of scripture!

The key biblical passages concerning elders in the church teach us clearly that the titles pastor, elder and bishop all refer to one and the same office. The teaching of the New Testament is that:

**Every pastor is a bishop  
Every pastor is an elder**

**Every bishop is a pastor  
Every bishop is an elder**

**Every elder is a bishop  
Every elder is a pastor**

#### **THE HISTORICAL BAPTIST POSITION CONCERNING ELDERS IN THE CHURCH**

How have most Baptists throughout history understood the biblical teachings concerning elders in the church? The vast majority of Baptists have believed with God’s word that there are **only two scriptural offices in a New Testament church**; pastors and deacons. There were no committees of “lay elders” who managed the affairs of the churches in the New Testament and Baptists historically have not established such committees in their churches.

Historically, Baptists have recognized that the New Testament very definitely teaches that the government of a church is to be **congregational** rather than Presbyterian! The power of government in a New Testament church is not in the hands of an elder or elders but is in the hands of the members, all the members! The churches in the New Testament were democracies. There was no higher court than the congregation in the church. Congregational church government is a pure democracy. Presbyterian church government is not a democracy but a representative democracy or a republican form of government.

According to the New Testament the majority of the members have a right to rule the church in accordance with the law of Christ. Majority rule under the leadership of the Holy Spirit is the Lord's plan for His churches. Every member of the church has a right to know about the church's finances and other business. The members of a church have a right to a regular public report of the church's finances rather than having some group of lay elders secretly "take care of" those finances.

The historic Baptist position concerning elders in the church can perhaps best be summed up by simply quoting some of our great confessions of faith: The **London Confession of 1689**, chapter 26, "The Church" paragraph 8, "...the officers appointed by Christ...**are** bishops **or** elders **and** deacons." The **Philadelphia Confession of Faith of 1742**, chapter 26, "Of The Church" paragraph 8, "...the officers appointed by Christ to be chosen and set apart by the church...are bishops **or** elders **and** deacons." The **New Hampshire Declaration of Faith of 1833**, chapter 13, "Of A Gospel Church" "...its only scriptural officers are bishops **or** pastors, **and** deacons." The much watered down **Baptist Faith And Message of 1963**, chapter 6, "The Church" "Its scriptural officers are pastors **and** deacons." This question of elders in the church was answered for Baptists long ago and those who believe in elders as a lay committee who make the decisions for the church became Presbyterians. An important question must sooner or later be faced by every church in connection with this – Is this church a Baptist church or is it a Presbyterian church?

Another important question is why did the churches in the New Testament have more than one elder or pastor? The answer is simply because of their large sizes and because there was only one church in each city.

Here's a third question. Why are some Baptist churches looking with favor on creating this third office of elders in the church? There are two probable reasons that come to mind. One is surely the widespread lack of knowledge and understanding of what God's word teaches about church government and the officers in the church. Let us not be tossed to and fro with

every wind of doctrine. Let us search the scriptures and anchor our hopes and our practices and our church government there. Let our Baptist pastors once again preach God's word and from it teach their people what the office of pastor is.

The second reason some Baptists may be looking with favor on adopting the elder system in their churches could be the necessity of the pastor taking all the heat that he sometimes has to take in connection with the business of the church. It's tough for a pastor to lead in a democracy. It's tough to have to deal continually with the domineering personalities and the cliques and the critics and the nit-pickers in the church when the church is governed by a democracy. A lot of pastors see having elders as an out from the difficulties of their ministries. If elders handle the church's business then the pastor can avoid some of these difficulties! But the important thing is that the Lord Jesus Christ, the great Head of the church, left us the congregational form of government in His churches and we must therefore utilize that form of government.

Should a Baptist church have elders? The answer of God's word is **YES** – if by elder one means the scriptural office of pastor, elder, bishop. Should a Baptist church have elders? The answer of God's word is **NO** – if by elder one means that unscriptural position of a member of a committee of lay persons which governs the church.

## **"ACCEPTING CHRIST"**

In an effort to get sinners saved we often hear them exhorted to "*Accept Christ as their personal Saviour*" as though those who are slaves of Satan and captives of the Devil could do so and be saved if they did so. But this is utterly foreign to Holy Scripture; there is no foundation in Holy Writ for it. It presents a false way of salvation, and therefore should be discarded along with other similar expressions such as "*Give your heart to Jesus*", "*Take Jesus as your Saviour*", etc. **"Salvation is of the Lord."**

From I.C. Herendeen's tract, "*Accepting Christ*"

# SALVATION BY GRACE AUTHENTICATED

*By Wayne Camp*

**Romans 4:16** *Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all.*

**Ephesians 2:8-10** *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

To **AUTHENTICATE** something is to prove that it is actually and precisely what is claimed without any admixture or adulteration. In this message our goal is to show, with God's help, that salvation is by grace without any admixture of works, ordinances, or merits of men. The negative side of this message will be considered under the title "**Salvation by Grace Frustrated**" that will be in a forthcoming issue, if the Lord wills.

The text for this series, Romans 4:16, sets forth the purpose of salvation by grace. It is the only way that salvation will "**be sure to all the seed,**" both Jew and Gentile seed. Salvation by grace assures the salvation of "**the lost sheep of the house of Israel**" and the "**other sheep**" which are not of the Jewish fold (Matt. 15:24; Jn. 10:16).

The text for this message is Eph. 2:8-10. This text sets forth both a positive and negative declaration on the subject. Positively, the text declares emphatically that salvation is "**by grace through faith.**" Negatively, the text declares that salvation is not the product of works for this would allow men to boast of their own works saving them. The fact that salvation is by grace and not of works is the dominant theme of the Scriptures. To Titus Paul wrote: "**After the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to mercy he saved us, by the washing regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost**" (Titus 3:4-5).

Paul uses three words in this Scripture that are very closely related in meaning. The first is

**kindness** and means "benevolence." This word is very closely rooted with the word "grace" in the original Greek. The second word is **mercy**. It means "to show favor to those who do not deserve it." The third word is **grace**. It means "unmerited, undeserved favor."

The united testimony of prophet and apostle is that salvation is by grace. God does not owe us salvation. He is not obligated to save even one of Adam's race. We can not earn salvation. We do not merit or deserve to be saved. We cannot purchase it and all our righteousnesses are inadequate to achieve and secure salvation. We are so impotent in our natural state that we are shut up to grace.

## THE SCRIPTURES TEACH THAT GOD'S PLAN TO SAVE IS BASED ON AN ETERNAL AND GRACIOUS PURPOSE

Paul very clearly sets forth the fact that the salvation of sinners is based upon an eternal and gracious purpose. This is easily seen in II Timothy 1:8-9: "**God; who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began:**" Our salvation was and is according to God's "**own purpose and grace**" and the elect were made the objects of that purpose of grace "**before the world began.**" This is that "**hidden wisdom**" of God which he "**ordained before the world unto our glory**" (I Cor. 2:7). All these things that he ordained before the world assuring the salvation of all the seed were for "**the praise of the glory of his grace**" and "**according to the riches of his grace**" (Eph. 1:3-7).

## ELECTION ETERNAL AND GRACIOUS

The election unto salvation is of grace and is eternal. It is not based upon works or foreseen faith. It is wholly of grace.

For those who may wonder, let it first be established by Scripture that there is an election unto salvation. What could be plainer and clearer than the words of Paul when he writes to the

Thessalonians: ***“God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth”*** (II Thes. 2:13).

This election is entirely of grace according to Paul’s letter to the Romans. Paul wrote to those who thought that God had cast the nation of Israel off forever. He reminded them that Elijah once thought that he was God’s last man on earth. However, God told Elijah: ***“I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal”*** (Rom. 11:4). Paul then declares: ***“Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the ELECTION OF GRACE”*** (V-5). Paul then argues that if this election ***“is by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work”*** (Rom 11:6).

I marvel at how often I have heard men make the argument that salvation is by grace and use the above Scripture as proof. I have heard it in the seminary class room, in Sunday School, and from the pulpit. While it may be used to teach that there is no way to mix works and grace, this passage is not teaching that salvation is by grace. It is teaching that the ELECTION TO SALVATION is wholly of grace. Verses five and six are clearly joined by the conjunction “and.” A careful reading of these verses clearly reveals that the election to salvation is wholly of grace without any admixture of works. ***“The purpose of God according to election”*** does not stand upon any good, any repentance, or any faith that is seen or foreseen in its objects (Rom. 9:11).

Not only is this election to salvation based entirely on grace, it is an eternal election. The elect were ***“chosen . . . before the foundation of the world”*** (Eph. 1:4). Paul thanked God that he had chosen the Christians at Thessalonica to salvation ***“from the beginning”*** (II Thes. 2:13).

### **JESUS CHRIST CAME TO REVEAL GRACE AND THAT COMING WAS ETERNALLY PURPOSED**

None would argue, surely, that Christ coming was not a vivid manifestation grace. He was ***“full of grace and truth”*** (Jn. 1:14). ***“Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ”*** (Jn. 1:17). ***“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that***

***though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye though his poverty might rich”*** (II Cor. 8:9). Jesus was the fulfillment of all the gracious promises of salvation. He was the embodiment and personification of grace. His coming into the world was to proclaim grace as grace had never before been declared.

The purpose for him to come was established before the foundation of the world. He was ***“the lamb slain from the foundation of the world”*** (Rev. 13:8). He was the Lamb who was ***“verily ordained before the foundation of the world”*** (I Pet. 1:18-20).

It is unequivocally evident that God’s way of salvation is by grace. It is also just as evident that our salvation rests upon an eternal gracious purpose.

### **THE SCRIPTURES DECLARED THAT SALVATION BY GRACE IS THE ONLY WAY OF SALVATION**

There are not, as some men claim, several ways to be saved. One fellow said to me on one occasion, “You get there your way and I’ll get there mine.” He was speaking of heaven. I declared to him, “You don’t have a way and I don’t have a way. We go God’s way or we do not go at all.”

There has never been but one way of salvation. False teachers and satanically controlled preachers declared that in different ages there have been different ways to be saved. Some erroneously argue that you could not be saved by the blood of Christ before he came to the earth and shed his blood and established salvation by grace.

These prophets of perversion fail to consider the fact that Christ is ***“the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”*** They choose to ignore the fact that all the prophets declared of Christ that ***“through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins”*** (Acts 10:43).

Peter, when before the congregation at Jerusalem to give an account of the events which occurred at the house of Cornelius in defense of Paul’s ministry to the Gentiles, referred to the Fathers of Israel. He pointed out that they were unable to bear the yoke of the law and could not be saved by law. He then adds: ***“We believe that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we***

**shall be saved, even as they**" (Acts 15:10). According to Peter's declaration the Fathers of Israel were saved **"through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ"** (Acts 15:10). This is why Paul could write that Moses esteemed **"the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt"** (Heb. 11:26). Jesus declared: **"Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad"** (Jn. 8:56). Abraham and Moses, and all the prophets, and all Old Testament saints were saved by grace through faith. **"The Spirit of Christ which was in them"** caused the prophets to bear witness of Christ and to declare that **"through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins"** (I Pet. 1:11; Acts 10:43). God has **"put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith"** just as he purifies the hearts of men today. Therefore we see that we are saved just as they were saved, i. e., **"through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ"** (Acts 15:11).

Salvation by grace is the only way of salvation because it is the sure and certain way. God has not purposed any way of salvation in any age that is not sure. Paul declared that **"it is of faith, that it might be by grace; TO THE END the promise might be SURE to all the seed"** (Rom. 4:16). Just as God's covenant with David was "ordered in all things and SURE," so the covenant of redemption is **"ordered in all things and sure."** Because it is sure Christ could be sure that all whom the Father has given to him would come to him (Jn. 6:37). He was certain to "give eternal life to as many as the Father **"hast given him"** (Jn 17:2).

The salvation of Old Testament saints was sure also because they too were saved **"through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ"** (Acts 15:11). Though they did not live to see the day that Christ actually came to the earth and died for their sins **"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth"** (Heb, 11:13).

#### THE SCRIPTURES TEACH THAT THE VARIOUS ASPECTS OF OUR SALVATION ARE BY GRACE

There are many different aspects of the

salvation that is by grace through faith. Salvation is wholly of grace; therefore every aspect of it is by grace.

#### FAITH IS OF GRACE

I once asked a Baptist preacher this question: "From where did you get the faith with which you trusted Christ?" He thought for a minute and answered: "I conjured it up within myself." I assured him that "conjured up" faith is not saving faith.

Some hold that faith does not save. Jesus declared to one woman: **"Thy faith hath saved thee"** (Lu. 7:50). Jesus said of some **"Then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved"** (Lu. 8:12). To two blind beggars whom Jesus had healed he said: **"Thy faith hath saved thee"** (Lu. 18:42) Paul wrote that we are **"saved through faith"** (Eph. 2:8). Therefore, we have Biblical authentication for the expression "saving faith."

The source of this faith is the marvelous thing. We do not naturally have saving faith. That is the basis for Paul's declaration that **"all men have not faith"** (II Thes. 3:2). Dwight L. Moody once wrote "Faith is like hyssop, it grows everywhere." A. J. Wall said: "I conjured it up within myself." Men do not naturally have saving faith. It does not grow everywhere. It can not be conjured up. **"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"** (Rom. 10:17). It is sadly true that there are many in the condition of those to whom Jesus said: **"My word hath no place in you"** (Jn. 8:37). Again he said to them: **"Ye cannot hear my word"** (Jn. 8:43). Because his word had no place in them and they were unable to hear his words, Jesus said: **"ye believe me not"** (Jn. 8:45).

Saving faith is given by God as he graciously regenerates the sinner who is the object of saving grace. Paul wrote: **"Unto you it is given . . . to believe on him (Jesus Christ)"** (Phil. 1:29). In Achaia Paul found those **"which had believed through grace"** (Acts 18:27). Again Paul wrote of his own experience of salvation and said: **"And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant WITH FAITH and love which is in Christ Jesus"** (I Tim. 1:14).

Saving faith is not a common, natural faith that grows out of the crack in the wall as does hyssop.

It is not in us waiting to be “conjured up” and “exercised.” One believes “through grace.”

### THE GOSPEL OF GRACE

The gospel which we believe through grace is “the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24). It is the good news of all that God through grace has accomplished for us. It is good news of all that God through grace has given us. It is the good news of all that God through grace will yet do for us.

### JUSTIFICATION BY GRACE

Guilty sinners must be justified before God but it is impossible for us to justify ourselves. We cannot be justified by works **“for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified”** (Gal. 2:16). We know that **“a man is not justified by the works of the law”** (Gal. 2:16). We are shut up to grace for justification.

Paul assured that we are **“justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus”** (Rom. 3:24). Again Paul wrote that we are **“justified by faith”** and that we **“have access by faith into this grace”** of justification through Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:1-2). Since we are **“justified by his grace”** we are **“made heirs according to the hope of eternal life”** (Titus 3:7). The guilt and penalty of sin are gone because of justifying grace.

### RIGHTEOUSNESS BY GRACE

If we are to come into God’s presence we must have a positive righteousness and an untainted holiness. Both are impossible for us because, at our best, we come far short of the glory of God.

How then can we ever stand before God in the beauty of holiness and righteousness which he requires? Again, we are shut up to grace. The man who works for justification he were to achieve it, it would be imparted to him as debt or wages he would have earned it. If he were to attain justification by works he could not glory before God. The only justification that glorifies God is that which he graciously imputes to believers (Rom. 4:48).

### ETERNAL LIFE BY GRACE

**“For if by one man’s offense death reigned**

**by one, much more they which receive abundance of GRACE and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ”** (Rom. 5:17). Here Paul tells us that the offense of Adam brought the reign of death upon the human race. Contrary wise, life reigns through the abundance of grace that came by the death of Jesus Christ. Eternal life is by grace.

### ELECTION UNTO SALVATION OF GRACE

In the first division of this message we went into some detail and set forth several Scriptures which reveal that there is an election unto salvation and that that election is according to the eternal purpose of grace which was ordained before the world for our glory. As Paul declared: **“There is a remnant according to the election of grace”** (Rom. 11:5).

### REDEMPTION BY GRACE

One of the more familiar aspects of salvation is redemption through, the shed blood of Jesus Christ. We did not deserve to be redeemed. We were in bondage and slavery to sin but we loved that bondage just as a hog loves to wallow in the mire. We would not redeem ourselves if we could and could not if we would. There is nothing so contented and stubborn as a hog in a wallowing hole on a hot summer day.

The sinner loves the bondage of sin so much that he does not even see it as bondage. When Moses came to deliver Israel from Egyptian bondage, the Israelites said: **“Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians.”** Yet, in mercy and grace God brought such pressure to bear upon them by hardening Pharaoh’s heart that they were made willing to go. Even so, the bankrupt, slaving sinner would willingly go on in his sin never realizing that he has not the price of his redemption. God in marvelous grace, has redeemed us through the blood of his precious son, Jesus Christ. **“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his GRACE”** (Eph. 1:7). Blood redemption is supplied according to the riches of God’s grace.

### REGENERATION BY GRACE

Jesus declared to Nicodemus: **“Ye must be born**

**again**" (Jn. 3:7). That regeneration is absolutely necessary for by nature all are dead in trespasses and sins. A dead man cannot will his own resurrection and a man who is dead in trespasses and sins cannot and will not will his regeneration. He is as impotent spiritually as Lazarus was physically when Christ called him forth from the grave. Regeneration, which gives life to those dead in trespasses and sins, must be of grace. By nature we were **"foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another"** (Titus 3:3). But, in spite of our condition and our practice, God in kindness, love, and mercy administered to us the **"washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost"** (Titus 3:4-5).

### CALLING OF GRACE

A man who is in sins and degradation must be effectually called out of it or he could never be saved. Jesus imparted life to Lazarus and then called him forth from the grave.

The call to salvation is certainly a gracious call. God **"hath saved us and called us with a holy calling . . . according to his own purpose and grace"** (II Tim. 1:9). Of his own call to salvation Paul wrote: **"When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace . . ."** We had our backs to God and our ears turned to the calls of the world, but in grace God has opened our spiritual ears and called us by his marvelous grace.

### SANCTIFICATION IS BY GRACE

**"Before thou wast formed in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee,"** declared God to Jeremiah (Jer. 1:5). Certainly an unformed baby could do nothing to merit or deserve God's love and favor. When God sanctified Jeremiah he did so out of pure grace. Paul declared that he was set apart and called by grace. Both his sanctification and his calling he attributed to grace.

### PRESERVATION AND PERSEVERANCE OF GRACE

Preservation and perseverance of the saved

are very closely related. They remind one of the two sides of a coin. Preservation is what God does for us and perseverance is what God does in and through us. God preserves his saints and causes them to persevere. **"The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord; and he delighteth in his way"** (Psa. 37:23). That perseverance that is ordered, directed, and caused by the Lord. In the next verse David sets forth preservation. **"Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand"** (Psa. 37:24). The Lord orders the steps of his saints causing them to **"will and to do of his good pleasure"** (Phil. 2:13). If they fall, preservation takes over and God upholds them and refuses to utterly cast them down. He **"forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved forever"** (Psa. 37:28).

### OTHERS

Peter declared that God **"hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness"** (II Pet; 1:3). We have not dealt with all aspects of salvation. There is adoption, acceptance in the beloved, the forgiveness of sins, glorification and other blessings. A study of all these would reveal that they too are of grace (Eph. 15-7; Rom. 8:28-30). Since salvation is by grace and is of the Lord then it follows that every aspect of salvation is of grace and is a blessing which God either works in us or for us.

### CONCLUSION

Salvation by grace is the Divinely ordained way of salvation.

Salvation by grace is the eternally ordained way of salvation.

Salvation by grace is the only ordained way of salvation.

Salvation by grace is the only scripturally authenticated way of salvation.

If you are ever saved, Dear Sinner, you will be saved by grace. If you are never saved by grace, you will never be saved. It is all of grace or it is not of grace at all.

## REPORT ON REBUILDING OF GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH BUILDING, CLAREMORE, OK

Here is a brief account concerning our building. The evening of December 3rd I was informed that the ice and snow had caused the roof on our auditorium to collapse and that the building was virtually destroyed.

We contacted our insurance people and things began to shape up. They (insurance) assured us that our building would be put back as it was, only better, and in time for our Bible Conference.

And so at this moment we have a building that will soon have shingles on the roof. We have a building!

Our fellowship hall survived the ordeal in very good condition. This has allowed us to have our services in a home like meeting place. However due to ADA (disability) requirements we will be meeting the next six weeks in a motel conference room.

The insurance company is doing everything. All we have to do is pick out colors and things like that.

We want to thank all of you that called and volunteered to help. And we know that prayers were offered up also. We rejoice that no one was injured. When all is said and done we will have a brand new building and furnishings.

We would appreciate your listing the speakers, theme and dates of our Bible Conference in your paper. We hope that many of you can come and help us celebrate all that God has done for us.

Hope to see everyone soon.

Roger Dohrer

## FAULTLESS

by C. H. Spurgeon

***"Faultless before the presence of His glory."—Jude 24.***

**EVOLVE** in your mind that wondrous word, *faultless!* We are far off from it now; but as our Lord never stops short of perfection in His work of love, we shall reach it one day. The Saviour who will keep His people to the end, will also

present them at last to Himself, as "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but holy and without blemish." All the jewels in the Saviour's crown are of the first water and without a single flaw. All the maids of honour who attend the Lamb's wife are pure virgins without spot or stain. But how will Jesus make us faultless? He will wash us from our sins in His own blood until we are white and fair as God's purest angel; and we shall be clothed in His righteousness, that righteousness which makes the saint who wears it positively faultless; yea, perfect in the sight of God. We shall be unblameable and unproveable even in His eyes. His law will not only have no charge against us, but it will be magnified in us. Moreover, the work of the Holy Spirit within us will be altogether complete. He will make us so perfectly holy, that we shall have no lingering tendency to sin. Judgment, memory, will—every power and passion shall be emancipated from the thralldom of evil. We shall be holy even as God is holy, and in His presence we shall dwell for ever. Saints will not be out of place in heaven, their beauty will be as great as that of the place prepared for them. Oh the rapture of that hour when the everlasting doors shall be lifted up, and we, being made meet for the inheritance, shall dwell with the saints in light. Sin gone, Satan shut out, temptation past for ever, and ourselves "faultless" before God, this will be heaven indeed! Let us be joyful now as we rehearse the song of eternal praise so soon to roll forth in full chorus from all the blood-washed host; let us copy David's exultings before the ark as a prelude to our ecstasies before the throne.

### IT WAS NOT THE NAILS!

J. C. Philpot

"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" Mark 15:34

It was not the nails driven through His hands and feet;

It was not the crown of thorns placed upon His brow;

It was not the stripes which mangled His back;

It was not the languor and faintness under which He suffered—which caused the Lord to

die.

It was not the mere bodily agony of the cross; it was not the mere pain, though most acute and severe, of the nails driven through His sacred hands and feet.

It was not the being stretched upon the cross six hours that constituted the chief part of the Redeemer's suffering.

But it was the almost intolerable load of imputed sin—the imputed sins of millions.

It was the tremendous pouring of the wrath of God into His holy soul;

It was the hiding of His Father's face, and the very pangs of hell that there caught hold of Him.

Our suffering Savior drank the cup of the wrath of God to the very dregs—when our vile, dreadful, and horrible sins were laid upon Him!

"Yet we considered Him stricken by God, smitten by Him, and afflicted." Isaiah 53:4

"Yet it pleased the Lord to crush Him, and cause Him to **suffer**, and though the Lord makes his soul an offering for sin . . ." Isaiah 53:10

## *Bouquets and Brickbats*

**MISSISSIPPI:** Today I got The GPP and read your article on the Value of Christ's Atonement. It is the best I ever saw on this subject and I fully agree with you. I like T. P. Simmons and his book but always did differ with him on his view of the Atonement of Christ.

### **Quotes:**

To great sections of the Church the art of worship has been lost entirely, and in its place has come that strange and foreign thing called the "program." *The Pursuit of God, A. W. Tozer*, Page 9

**[EDITOR'S NOTE:** Though I differ with Tozer's use of the word "Church" as he employs it here, I fully agree with the sentiment of his statement. To many churches and "Christians, the "program" is everything. Not the preaching but the "program." Not the praying but the "program." Not the "praise" with the great old hymns of the faith like "Amazing Grace" but the "program" of "Amazing Entertainment."

"What kind of 'program' do you have for the youth?" I have been asked numerous times. "What kind of 'program' do you offer for the senior citizens?" asks another.

I have had many phone calls from different organizations that have new programs to put life back in the congregation. There is nothing that will put real spiritual vitality into the church services like the pure, plain, and powerful preaching of the glorious gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. I am reminded of those powerful words of the Apostle Paul, *And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.* <sup>27</sup>*For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. (Acts 20:25-26)*

### **SOMEONE WROTE:**

I have never heard any thing about the *resolutions* of the disciples, but a great deal about the *Acts* of the Apostles.

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