

*free sovereign grace.* Salvation by *grace alone* cannot be merited by any human work or condition.

The word grace is typically defined as *unmerited favor*, describing the nature of salvation as God's freely bestowed gift. An even better definition might be *favor against merit*, emphasizing the fact that although sinners have in fact merited or earned damnation, God has given them salvation instead.

*Titus 3:4-7:* <sup>4</sup>But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, <sup>5</sup>**He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy**, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, <sup>6</sup>whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, <sup>7</sup>that **being justified by His grace** we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

*2 Timothy 1:8-11:* <sup>8</sup>Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, or of me His prisoner; but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, <sup>9</sup>who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, **not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace** which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, <sup>10</sup>but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, <sup>11</sup>for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher.

*Ephesians 2:4-5:* <sup>4</sup>But **God, being rich in mercy**, because of His great love with which He loved us, <sup>5</sup>even **when we were dead in our transgressions**, made us alive together with Christ (**by grace you have been saved**),

If grace could be merited, it would *no longer be grace* because God would owe us salvation.

*Romans 11:5-6:* <sup>5</sup>In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant **according to God's gracious choice**. <sup>6</sup>**But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.**

Even the faith we exercised to believe is *"the gift of God."* Scripture specifically says it is *"not of ourselves."*

*Ephesians 2:8-9:* <sup>8</sup>**For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;** <sup>9</sup>**not as a result of works**, that no one should boast.

Scripture speaks in this way as to exalt God's free and sovereign choice in the matter so that we glorify Him for His *"freely bestowed"* grace and so that we do not *"boast"* or somehow take credit for the fact that we have been saved. Notice in the passage in Ephesians below the Scripture plainly says that *"He predestines us...according to"....*

- to the kind intention of *His will*
- to the praise of the glory of *His grace*
- it is *freely* bestowed

*Ephesians 1:3-6:* <sup>3</sup>Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who **has blessed us with every spiritual blessing** in the heavenly places in Christ, <sup>4</sup>just as **He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world**, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love <sup>5</sup>**He predestined us** to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, **according to the kind intention of His will**, <sup>6</sup>to the **praise of the glory of His grace**, which **He freely bestowed on us** in the Beloved.

**Question #135:** In your own words, define unconditional election. \_\_\_\_\_

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**Question #136:** Why is *favor against merit* a fuller description of grace than *unmerited favor*? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Question #137:** List words and phrases from Ephesians 1:3-6 that emphasize God's free and sovereign choice of sinners for salvation. \_\_\_\_\_

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**Question #138:** According to Ephesians 1:6, for what purpose does God save sinners? \_\_\_\_\_

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Those God has redeemed cannot take any credit for their salvation or boast in anything they have done to earn it. The **Bible plainly declares** that sinners contribute nothing to merit their salvation. It is wholly and completely God's free gift given by His own free and sovereign grace.

**1 Corinthians 1:26-31:** <sup>26</sup>For **consider your calling**, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; <sup>27</sup>but **God has chosen** the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and **God has chosen** the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, <sup>28</sup>and the base things of the world and the despised, **God has chosen**, the things that are not, that He might nullify the things that are, <sup>29</sup>**that no man should boast before God.** <sup>30</sup>**But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus**, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, <sup>31</sup>that, just as it is written, "**Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.**"

**Romans 5:15-16** - <sup>15</sup> But **the free gift is not like the transgression.** For if by the transgression of the one the many died, **much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many.** <sup>16</sup> And **the gift** is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand **the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification.** NASB

**Romans 6:23** - <sup>23</sup> For the wages of sin is death, but **the free gift of God is eternal life** in Christ Jesus our Lord. NASB

The **Bible plainly declares** that sinners are chosen for salvation *not on the basis of their will*, but by the free mercy of God.

**Romans 9:10-16:** <sup>10</sup>And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac; <sup>11</sup>**for though the twins were not yet born, and had not done anything good or bad, in order that God's purpose according to His choice might stand, not because of works, but because of Him who calls,** <sup>12</sup>it was said to her, "The older will serve the younger." <sup>13</sup>Just as it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." <sup>14</sup>What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be! <sup>15</sup>For He says to Moses, "**I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.**" <sup>16</sup>**So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.**

**John 1:12-13:** <sup>12</sup>But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, <sup>13</sup>who were born not of blood, **nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.**

In fact, the Gentile nations of the world did not seek God at all until God chose to reveal Himself to them.

**Romans 3:9-11:** <sup>9</sup>What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that **both Jews and Greeks are all under sin;** <sup>10</sup>as it is written, "There is none righteous, not even one; <sup>11</sup>**There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God.**"

**Isaiah 65:1:** **I permitted Myself to be sought by those who did not ask for Me; I permitted Myself to be found by those who did not seek Me.** I said, "Here am I, here am I," To a nation which did not call on My name.

**Question #139:** List several specific statements from the above quoted Scripture passages which affirm that sinners contribute *nothing* to their own salvation. \_\_\_\_\_

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**Question #140:** Meditate on your answer to **Question #139**. Then describe your personal response (mentally, emotionally, practically) to what God has done for you. \_\_\_\_\_

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## Election and Foreknowledge

Peter and Paul both use the word *foreknowledge* in connection with election:

**1 Peter 1:1-2:** <sup>1</sup>Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, **who are chosen** <sup>2</sup>**according to the foreknowledge of God the Father**, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, that you may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in fullest measure.

**Romans 8:28-30:** <sup>28</sup>And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. <sup>29</sup>**For whom He foreknew, He also predestined** to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; <sup>30</sup>and **whom He predestined, these He also called;** and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

Some students of Scripture explain the connection between foreknowledge and election like this: God *knew beforehand* who would be saved and based election on that foreknowledge. He simply looked into the future to see who would believe the Gospel; then He chose (elected) those He saw choosing Him. This view cannot stand however, because it misunderstands and misrepresents the biblical meaning of *foreknowledge*. **John MacArthur** explains: "*When the Bible speaks of God's foreknowledge, it refers to God's establishment of a love relationship with that person. The word "know," in both the Old and New Testament, refers to much more than mere cognitive knowledge of a person. Such passages as Hosea 13:4-5; Amos 3:2 (KJV); and Romans 11:2 clearly indicate this. For example, 1 Peter 1:20 says Christ was 'foreknown before the foundation of the world.'* Surely this means more than that God the Father looked into the future to behold Christ! It means He had an eternal, loving relationship with Him. The same is