

Ephesians 2:1-10

- 1 “And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,
- 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.
- 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.
- 4 But God, being rich in mercy because of His great love with which He loved us,
- 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),
6. and raised us up with Him, and seated us with in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,
7. so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.
8. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;
9. not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.
10. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

In this passage Paul writes to the Christians at Ephesus concerning their salvation. At one time they were all dead in their sins, but the grace of God saved them. In this passage God gives us His definition of Grace. Verses 4 and 5 state: “But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).” Then verse 7 goes on to state that God shows “the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” So God’s definition of grace is His mercy, love, and kindness.

Verse 8 then concludes: “For by grace you have been saved through faith.” Notice the original statement from verse 5 is repeated: “For by grace you have been saved.” The prepositional phrase “through faith” is added on. We are saved then by grace, through faith.

In the book of Romans, Paul clarifies the relationship of faith to grace. Romans 5:1-2 states: “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand.” So our faith in Jesus constitutes the means by which we are introduced into the grace of God. Faith then is the vehicle by which we access God’s grace.

Faith is man’s part and responsibility in the salvation process; grace is God’s part. Faith involves the individual person hearing the Word of Christ, believing it, then obeying God’s commands. God’s grace: His mercy, love, and kindness, are realized in forgiveness of sin, forgetting our past, and empowering us by His Spirit.

This being the case, we can rightly understand the rest of Ephesians 2:8-9, which reads: “And that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.” This is speaking of God’s grace, not our faith. Grace is not of ourselves, it is His gift, it is not from our works, and if we boast, it is in God—not ourselves.

True faith, on the other hand, always includes acts of obedience or works, as James uses the term. Verse 10 focuses on the realization of our faith: “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to that we would walk in them.