

SALVATION BY GRACE

All the way through the Scriptures, we are shown that we are saved by God's GRACE and not by our WORKS. As Paul says, "by grace you have been saved" (Eph. 2:5). If salvation were by our works, it would mean there is merit to what we do to earn or work our way to God. But that is the opposite of what the Bible teaches. In fact, it teaches that ALL our works are a demerit, even "all our righteousnesses" (all the right things we do) are "like filthy rags" in the sight of God.

Isaiah 64:6 (NKJV)

6 But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away.

This word "**unclean**" was used in reference to being ceremonially unclean such as when a person was a leper and was forced to cry out "**Unclean! Unclean!**" whenever anyone came close to them (cf. Lev. 13:45-46; Hag. 2:13-14). Such a person was to dwell alone outside the camp. He could not approach God in worship because he was UNCLEAN! (cf. Zech. 3:3-4)

The phrase: "**And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags**" is shocking on three counts:

- 1) It says **ALL** our righteousness, not merely some. The sum total of all the right things we do are like filthy rags before God.
- 2) **Righteousnesses** are right things we do - not the wrong things. Even all the right things we do as unregenerate people are like filthy rags.
- 3) All our righteousnesses are like **filthy rags**. This is really graphic in the Hebrew because filthy rags literally refer to the rags of a woman's menstrual period.

The expression, 'filthy rags,' in the Hebrew, is one which we could not with propriety explain in the present assembly. – **Charles Spurgeon**

The reason Spurgeon said this is that the phrase "filthy rags" refers to those used during a woman's menstrual period.

But however extreme the phrasing, the point is important. Even the works of the unbeliever that seem holiest from the outside are disgustingly putrid and unrighteous before God. On our own, even when we are at our very best we are as something disgusting and repulsive before God. It is for this

reason that Paul counted everything LOSS – realizing it all did NOTHING to help him on to God.

Philippians 3:7–9 (NKJV)

7 But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.

8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ

9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;

Through and through the Scripture is very clear that we are NOT saved by our works of righteousness.

Titus 3:5 (NKJV)

5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,

Romans 4:5 (NKJV)

5 But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness,

Grace is all of God. Grace means God's unmerited favor. It is the GIFT of God. As Jonah succinctly stated it: "***Salvation is of the LORD.***" (Jonah 2:9) Paul concisely said, "***if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.***" (Rom. 11:6)

Thus, grace and works are mutually exclusive. If we are saved by God's GRACE, then our works have nothing to do with it. Salvation by grace means it is all God's doing. As Paul said, "But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." (Gal. 6:14)

Grace means it is all God's doing! We simply receive by faith.

Ephesians 2:8–9 (NKJV)

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,

9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Grace eliminates all merit on our behalf and, therefore all boasting. In the gospel of Grace – God ALONE is to be praised!