

# Saved by Grace

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There is a phrase in the Bible that we are all likely familiar with. Depending on the translation, it might be paraphrased as:

*“You are saved by grace.”*

Being saved is likely an important concept for most of us. Most of us are glad to be alive and look forward to living forever into the future. It is a natural human desire to live forever. To me, if there is a way to live forever, then I am interested. As we will see, most humans—because of how we were created—will be interested in a way to live forever. We will see that God created that desire in us. If we can be saved from eternal destruction and death, I want to know how. If it's by grace that I could be saved, then it is important to me to understand grace. What is it and where does it come from?

Today I want to explore the topic of grace.

We will look at the scriptures in context that say we can be saved by grace. There is more to be understood than just that phrase, *saved by grace*. That desire to be saved is a human attribute that I do not believe animals possess. I know animals want to live and will naturally struggle ferociously to survive. A difference between humans and animals, is that the human perception is that we have the potential for life beyond this physical existence.

There is a phrase in Ecclesiastes 3 in the New King James Version, that says *He has put eternity into their hearts*. By the way—I'll be quoting from the New King James Version and there will be a couple of scriptures where I'll note otherwise. God has put into the hearts of man, a desire for understanding God's eternal purpose and to be a part of that purpose. God is eternal and He has an eternal purpose for physical humans that exceeds our comprehension. God and His plan are beyond our wildest imaginations.

**Ecclesiastes 3:10** *I have seen the God-given task with which the sons of men are to be occupied.*

*11) He [a reference to the Most High God, Yehovah] has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.*

*12) I know that nothing is better for them than to rejoice, and to do good in their lives,*

*13) and also that every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor—it is the gift of God.*

*14) I know that whatever God does, It shall be forever. Nothing can be added to it, and nothing taken from it. God does it, that men should fear before Him.*  
(NKJV)

So, God's intention for us is to have a pleasant life, full of opportunity and achievement. Skip over a couple of pages to Chapter 8. Our greatest minds employing our wildest imaginations cannot comprehend the magnitude of God and what He is accomplishing.

**Ecclesiastes 8:17** *then I saw all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun. For though a man labors to discover it, yet he will not find it; moreover, though a wise man attempts to know it, he will not be able to find it.* (NKJV)

What is really exciting to me is that, if I'm alive, I can be part of that plan. I can witness the reality of the awesome magnificence of that plan. The next chapter of Ecclesiastes reveals that I must be alive if I want to witness or enjoy the unfolding of God's plan.

**Ecclesiastes 9:5** *For the living know that they will die; But the dead know nothing, And they have no more reward, For the memory of them is forgotten.*  
(NKJV)

So death is the cessation of life. As we just read in Ecclesiastes 9, life in this flesh ends in death. Hebrews 9:27 tells us that God intends that each one of us must die in this flesh. The only way out of this physical life, is to die. What happens next after death should be of major concern to each one of us.

**Hebrews 9:27** *And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment ...* (NKJV)

We all know that we are going to die. For many of us, that knowledge comes with some level of fear of the unknown. Part of the reason we fear is because of what we see in verse 27, we see that judgment comes next. Fear comes to most of us from the realization that we know we have sinned and deserve punishment. We question, what will God's judgment be when He assesses our lives? We know from Romans 3:23 that *we have all sinned* and from Romans 6:23 that *the wages of sin is death*. The wages are what we get for what we have done. Wages are what we have earned. Because of sin, everyone is condemned to death. The next verse in verse 28 of Hebrews 9 is an encouragement for those of us with reason to fear.

*28) ...so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many.* (NKJV)

That's encouraging. Christ's sacrifice at least gives opportunity for mercy for many. The mercy that is extended is the avoidance of death that we have all earned. Continuing in the second half of verse 28. the "*many*" are then defined.

*28 continued) ... To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation. (NKJV)*

We can be saved. Christ's sacrifice, as we just read in verse 28, gives many a chance for salvation. What it does not say is that everyone gets a pass on salvation. In context, let's look back in the chapter beginning in verse 11.

**Hebrews 9:11** *But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation.*

*12) Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. (NKJV)*

To redeem something is to pay for it. Eternal redemption is to redeem or pay for something with eternal consequences. The payment for the redemption for what is being redeemed—that redemption is eternal. The life that is being redeemed is and will be owned by God forever. So what God redeems, He owns.

*Continuing in verse 14) ...*

*14) how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (NKJV)*

Instead of spending time trembling in fear over our past sins, we can focus on doing better. Because of redemption and salvation from eternal death our focus does not need to be on the fear of death. Rather, our focus can be on service toward God and how to please Him.

*15) And for this reason, He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant ... (NKJV)*

Christ's death was the price for what has been redeemed that was under the penalty of death.

*15 continued) ... that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. (NKJV)*

Here we see who are "*the many*" we saw referenced in verse 28. So, to repeat verse 28 of Hebrews 9.

*28) ...so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. (NKJV)*

The "*many*" are those who are called to receive the promise of eternal inheritance. In order to receive eternal inheritance, a person needs to be alive. For the promise of

eternal inheritance to be realized, eternal life is required. Eternal life requires salvation from eternal death. The death of Christ has saved many from death. It is worth noting, “*many*” does not mean all. Christ is known as the Son of God. From John 5, I want to cover some important concepts concerning Christ.

**John 5:26** *For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself ... (NKJV)*

*So Jesus has life in Himself—one point.*

*In the flesh, the life of Christ was dependent on the natural consequences of being a flesh and blood human being. His life was sustained by breathing oxygen into his lungs where it was infused into the blood.*

*As we know, life is in the blood. In this flesh, Christ was mortal and susceptible to death. His life could have been taken from Him, as was demonstrated when the Romans did eventually crucify Him.*

*As a Spirit Being, Christ does not need any exterior force or requirement to maintain His life. He is now, after being resurrected, like God the Father, capable of sustaining His own life.*

*The life of Jesus is of greater value than all of creation*

*Because God the Father created everything through Christ, it follows that the life of Christ is of greater value than all of creation.*

*God the Father’s sacrifice of His servant—the Christ—was sufficient to redeem everything that was condemned to destruction because of sin.*

The life of Jesus was and is of greater value than all of the creation combined. In the next verse, we see that because He became part of the creation, lived life in the flesh and allowed His life to be sacrificed, God has given Him authority to execute judgment.

*Continuing in verse 27) ...*

*27) and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. (NKJV)*

In Hebrews 9:27, we see that after death there will be judgment. Now we are going to see additional information about that judgment.

*28) Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice*

*29) and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation. (NKJV)*

We see here in John 5:28, that everyone who has ever lived will be resurrected. For clarity, I want you to notice that Jesus is referencing two different resurrections in **John 5**. The one we just read about is where everyone that is in the grave at the time of this resurrection will be resurrected to face judgment. We celebrate and acknowledge this resurrection as part of the fall Feast season. In verses 24 and 25, Jesus' reference is referring to the resurrection of the Firstfruits. The resurrection of the Firstfruits is represented by Pentecost which we are celebrating tomorrow. Just as Pentecost, which is the summer harvest, occurs prior to the fall harvest, the resurrection of the Firstfruits will occur prior to the resurrection to judgment. All the individuals who hear the voice of Christ in the resurrection of the Firstfruits are being resurrected to eternal life.

**John 5:24** *Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word [this is speaking of Firstfruits because you'll see He is not being resurrected to judgment] and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. (NKJV)*

The individuals in this resurrection are not being resurrected to the judgment that we saw in verse 27. This resurrection is to everlasting life.

*25) Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. (NKJV)*

If we are part of the elect in this age at the resurrection, then at the time of our resurrection, we will hear the voice of Jesus and be resurrected to eternal life. Notice verses 19-23 where Jesus describes the authority that He has been given by God. The authority to execute judgment.

**John 5:19** *Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.*

*20) For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel.*

*21) For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will.*

*22) For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son,*

*23) that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. (NKJV)*

So, the authority to execute judgment has been given to Christ and as we will see, everyone will be judged by Christ. Knowing that Christ will be making decisions concerning everyone, a person might ask, how is it that the Firstfruits are resurrected to eternal life and others are resurrected to judgment as we saw in verse 28 and 29 of John 5? The answer is, the Firstfruits are being judged now. Decisions concerning the Firstfruits are being made now, during this life time or age. The literal meaning of Pentecost is count 50. In Leviticus 25, count 50 is related to redemption and release

from poverty and restoration of property for all the children of Israel, every jubilee or 50 years. In a similar way, counting 50 days from the day of the wavesheaf offering, represents the release of the Firstfruits from the penalty of sin and resurrection to everlasting life. For the sake of time, we're not going to go through Leviticus 25, but in 2 Corinthians 5, in my Bible, this section of chapter 5, starting with verse 9, has the heading, "The Judgment Seat of Christ".

**2 Corinthians 5:10** *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. (NKJV)*

There will be a judgment made for every person who has lived and died. We have seen that our sins condemn us. Christ will be considering what we have done, whether good or bad, and making a judgment of life or condemnation or death. For the Firstfruits, that judgment is being made now, in the age of our lifetime. The sacrifice of Christ's life redeemed us. Our faith of salvation or condemnation rests solely on the decision of God the Father who has delegated that choice to Christ. Understanding that the decision making authority of Christ makes verse 9 stand out as a strong warning. We must make ourselves pleasing to Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:9.

**2 Corinthians 5:9** *Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. (NKJV)*

When it comes to our conduct in this life, we must act in ways that are pleasing to God. The scriptures and the examples of the physical life of Christ, reveal what is pleasing to God the Father and in turn to Jesus Christ. We must have faith that following God's instructions and examples are how we should live our lives.

**2 Corinthians 5:7** *For we walk by faith, not by sight. (NKJV)*

We see that all humans will be judged to determine their fate concerning eternal life or death. At the start, I mentioned a Bible concept of salvation by grace. Let's look at that phrase and hopefully gain more understanding of the relationship of grace and salvation. In Ephesians 2 I want to read a portion of verses 5 and 8 from the Darby Bible. The Darby Bible was first published in 1890. According to my Google search for information on the Darby Bible, it is noted for its literal and word for word approach to the original Hebrew and Greek texts. In the Darby Bible, the last phrase of verse 5 states:

**Ephesians 2:5** *...you are saved by grace. (DB)*

*Continuing in verse 8) ...*

**8)** *For ye are saved by grace through faith and this is not of yourselves, it is God's gift. (DB)*

My title, Saved by Grace, comes from the word arrangement translated from the Darby Bible. The New King James version translates the verse

*8) For by grace you have been saved through faith and not of yourself, it is the gift of God. (NKJV)*

Before we get started into Ephesians 2, let's look at the first chapter of Ephesians and the introduction to the Ephesians. As we read verse 1, notice who the book of Ephesians is addressed to. The book of Ephesians is addressed to the saints and faithful in Christ Jesus.

**Ephesians 1:1** *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus:*

*2) Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (NKJV)*

*Continuing in chapter 2) ...*

**Ephesians 2:1** *And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins ... (NKJV)*

The "you" that are made alive are the saints who are in Ephesus and the faithful in Christ Jesus. The saints of the Ephesians and the faithful in Christ Jesus are part of the "called out" ones we read about in Hebrews 9:15, who may receive the promise of eternal life. We are part of the "called out" ones. Those who are faithful in Christ Jesus. As part of that group, we are made alive. The Apostle Paul then describes that prior to being made alive, we were part of those who were doomed to eternal death and destruction. Continuing in verse 1, He describes our status prior to becoming part of the body of Christ.

*Verse 1) continued ... who were dead in trespasses and sins. (NKJV)*

Contrast there, being made alive or dead in contrast.

*2) in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,*

*3) among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. (NKJV)*

So all of us, prior to responding to God's calling, were children of wrath and subject to eternal condemnation.

*4) But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,*

*5) even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved) ... (NKJV)*

Our status of being made alive and not being condemned under the penalty of death is an act of mercy from God. That mercy is extended out of love from God toward us. God knows what we are. He knows our hearts are inclined by our very nature to sin. We need to learn obedience to God. We need to learn to love God. That takes a process for our maturity and ability to make the choice to obey God and to love Him. We need to make a choice. That process takes time. To give us that time and to allow for mistakes, God redeemed us through His sacrifice of His only begotten Son. Because we have been redeemed from mandatory destruction, God now extends his mercy and forgives us of our mistakes.

We know from other sermons and study, the meaning of the Greek word translated as *grace* means “to favor or look on another with good will or a pleasant disposition”. For me the definition of grace can be expressed as:

A summation of God’s pleasant disposition and kind regard, acceptance, good will and favor extended towards those whom He chooses. God’s grace is the opposite of wrath and rejection.

*Continuing in verse 6)...*

*6) and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,*

*7) that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. (NKJV)*

If God did not love us, there would be no reason for Him to extend His kindness toward us.

*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.*

*10) For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. (NKJV)*

Our salvation is predicated on God’s faith in us that we will do good works. The majestic opportunities that God has prepared for us will require good works. In this physical life, we are being prepared and tested so that we will have the ability to perform without failure those good works that God has prepared for us. We can expect that when we have eternal life as spirit beings, we will live life constantly doing good works. For many the phrase, *saved by grace*, is misunderstood. Some erroneously believe that grace means unmerited pardon or unmerited favor. We have already noted, God will reject those that continue to trespass in sin. Rejection by God will result in eternal condemnation. So there’s actions and consequences.



From what we have read so far, it does not make sense that we will be saved by unmerited pardon. Part of the problem is that many confuse the meaning of mercy and grace. They are separate words with separate meanings. They are not synonyms. *Grace* means “favor or a positive disposition towards another”. *Grace* is characterized as a positive attitude. As we have seen, God’s positive attitude is impacted by our actions and the intent of our heart. Mercy is a totally different concept. *Mercy*, according to the online definition from Oxford Language Dictionary is:

*Compassion or forgiveness shown towards someone whom it is within one’s power to punish or harm.*

The extension of mercy is at the sole discretion of the person extending mercy. The extension of mercy may be merited or unmerited. For example, a person might extend mercy and forgive a person for a debt of money owed and write off the debt. If the person being forgiven the debt promises to get their spending under control and not go into the debt again, exchanged for the mercy, that would be considered merited mercy. The debt is being forgiven based on what the debtor is willing to do.

On the other hand, if no consideration is given or promised for the forgiveness of debt, that would be considered unmerited pardon of debt. The extension of mercy whether merited or unmerited is based on the decision of the person extending mercy. Mercy does not always result in forgiveness. In the Bible, rather than forgiveness, mercy may only involve a temporary reprieve. Mercy may involve covering over a transgression so that it can be ignored or at least for a time. Or it may involve total forgiveness of a transgression so that the transgression is considered to never have occurred. An example of total forgiveness is the example of the future resurrection of the Firstfruits. Anyone who is part of the resurrection of the Firstfruits, represented by the Feast of Pentecost will have had all their sins forgiven. That is the mercy we just read about in verses 4 to 6 of Ephesians 2. In addition, we saw in verses 7 to 9 that mercy is based on God’s positive disposition toward those whom He grants salvation. On the other hand, only covering over a transgression without forgiveness allows the transgression to be ignored for a time. This is the type of mercy that was extended to the children of Israel through the covering of the sins by the blood of animal sacrifices. Their sins were only covered and ignored so that they were not condemned to death and could be given the time to experience life. Life is needed to grow and mature in character and wisdom. Covering does not mean forgiveness which is required for eternal life. The children of Israel were not offered eternal salvation, only a physical pardon. They were only offered physical promises and a physical covering through the blood of animal sacrifices. Turn to 2 Samuel 16. The example of Shimei is an illustration of how mercy was extended as a matter of expedience where the transgression was ignored, at least for a time. You may recall when David’s son Absalom attempted a coup d’etat that King David had to flee from Jerusalem. Shimei was a relative of the previous King Saul. Shimei resented the fact that David was king and hoped David would be deposed as king. Absalom was attempting that.

**2 Samuel 16:5** *Now when King David came to Bahurim, there was a man from the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei the son of Gera, coming from there. He came out, cursing continuously as he came.*

*6) And he threw stones at David and at all the servants of King David. And all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left.*

*7) Also Shimei said thus when he cursed: "Come out! Come out! You bloodthirsty man, you rogue! (NKJV)*

*Continuing in verse 13) ...*

*13) And as David and his men went along the road, Shimei went along the hillside opposite him and cursed as he went, threw stones at him and kicked up dust. (NKJV)*

This was a treasonous attack on a king and deserving of death. Based on David's fear and respect for God, he would not allow his men to attack and kill Shimei. When Absalom was defeated and returning to Jerusalem, Shimei met David and begged for mercy. Continuing on in chapter 19:16-23 these are the scriptures that discuss Shimei pleading for his life, forgiveness and mercy.

**2 Samuel 19:16** *And Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite, who was from Bahurim, hurried and came down with the men of Judah to meet King David.*

*17) There were a thousand men of Benjamin with him, and Ziba the servant of the house of Saul, and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him; and they went over the Jordan before the king.*

*18) Then a ferryboat went across to carry over the king's household, and to do what he thought good. Now Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king when he had crossed the Jordan.*

*19) Then he said to the king, "Do not let my lord impute iniquity to me, or remember what wrong your servant did on the day that my lord the king left Jerusalem, that the king should take it to heart.*

*20) For I, your servant, know that I have sinned. Therefore here I am, the first to come today of all the house of Joseph to go down to meet my lord the king."*

*21) But Abishai the son of Zeruiah answered and said, "Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the LORD's anointed?"*

*22) And David said, "What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah, that you should be adversaries to me today? Shall any man be put to death today in Israel? For do I not know that today I am king over Israel?"*

*23) Therefore the king said to Shimei, "You shall not die." And the king swore to him. (NKJV)*

So, David allowed the transgression to be covered and extended his mercy. He gave him a pardon. Shimei's problem was his proclivity for rebellion. The penalty for rebellion and cursing God's anointed was death. As long as Shimei exercised self control and restraint or restrained himself from rebelling, he was safe because of the merciful word of the king. As we will see, David's mercy did not include forgiveness, rather it provided

for forbearance as long as Shimei did not rebel against the king. In 1 Kings 2 and I want to show you that indeed, he did not forgive him. As we will see, David did not forgive Shimei for his rebellion. In David's mercy, he only pardoned Shimei which released him from the punishment he deserved for his cursing and attack toward the king. As part of David's last instructions to his son Solomon, he gave instructions concerning Shimei. These instructions were given in 1 Kings 2:8.

**1 Kings 2:8** *And see, you have with you Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite from Bahurim, who cursed me with a malicious curse in the day when I went to Mahanaim. But he came down to meet me at the Jordan, and I swore to him by the LORD, saying, 'I will not put you to death with the sword.'*

*9) Now therefore, do not hold him guiltless, for you are a wise man and know what you ought to do to him; but bring his gray hair down to the grave with blood." (NKJV)*

David had not forgiven Shimei. Shimei's rebellion was not forgiven but it was covered over and he had a temporary pardon. The penalty for Shimei's transgression will eventually be required. In a similar way, as we saw in John 5 in verses 28 and 29, many of those that have done evil in this life have been allowed to continue with their lives. In the end, there will be a reckoning; a resurrection of condemnation. It is interesting how Solomon chose to deal with Shimei. He gave him the opportunity to live out his life in Jerusalem under the pardon that David had extended to him. Solomon imposed some rules of his own onto Shimei. Skipping down to verse 36.

*36) Then the king sent and called for Shimei, and said to him, "Build yourself a house in Jerusalem and dwell there, and do not go out from there anywhere.*

*37) For it shall be, on the day you go out and cross the Brook Kidron, know for certain you shall surely die; your blood shall be on your own head."*

*38) And Shimei said to the king, "The saying is good. As my lord the king has said, so your servant will do." So Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem many days. (NKJV)*

Then Shimei carelessly disobeyed Solomon's instructions. I really don't know what Shimei was thinking. Maybe he realized Solomon was not a warrior like his dad, David. Perhaps Shimei thought he would be softhearted or relent on the punishment that he had promised.

*39) Now it happened at the end of three years, that two slaves of Shimei ran away to Achish the son of Maachah, king of Gath. And they told Shimei, saying, "Look, your slaves are in Gath!"*

*40) So Shimei arose, saddled his donkey, and went to Achish at Gath to seek his slaves. And Shimei went and brought his slaves from Gath.*

*41) And Solomon was told that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath and had come back.*

*42) Then the king sent and called for Shimei, and said to him, "Did I not make you swear by the LORD, and warn you, saying, 'Know for certain that on the day*

*you go out and travel anywhere, you shall surely die? And you said to me, 'The word I have heard is good.'*

*43) Why then have you not kept the oath of the LORD and the commandment that I gave you?"*

*44) The king said moreover to Shimei, "You know, as your heart acknowledges, all the wickedness that you did to my father David; therefore, the LORD will return your wickedness on your own head. (NKJV)*

So Shimei was not forgiven and now that he was breaking the instructions of the new king. Though leaving town was not really worthy of a death sentence, other than the fact that the king had told him he couldn't leave town. But the death sentence was that he disobeyed the king and now that he disobeyed the king again, the penalties for the things he had done before were to be executed on him.

This is a warning. We cannot consider God's forbearance and patience on us to relieve us of our responsibility for good works and attitude of striving to curry favor or grace with God with obedience.

*45) But King Solomon shall be blessed, and the throne of David shall be established before the LORD forever."*

*46) So the king commanded Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; and he went out and struck him down, and he died. Thus the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon. (NKJV)*

At first glance, the extension of mercy may seem arbitrary. As we will see, it's based on judgment. The word *decision* is a synonym for *judgment*. *Judgment is a decision*. A judgment or decision by God will be made concerning the extension of mercy. Mercy is not an obligation for God. His mercy is extended for His purpose based on His decisions.

**Romans 9:15** *For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion."*

*16) So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.*

*17) For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth."*

*18) Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens. (NKJV)*

This scripture is very clear that God will decide to whom He will extend His mercy. If the extension of mercy is based on a decision or judgment, then it might be a good idea to see if God has any criteria for His decisions concerning *mercy*. Turns out, He does. Turn to Deuteronomy 5—a review of the Ten Commandments. Moses is reviewing the Ten Commandments with children of Israel. The majority had not been born when the

original commandments were given 40 years earlier. Other than Moses and likely less than a handful of people, no one was over the age of 60, of all the children of Israel.

*Deuteronomy 5:1 And Moses called all Israel, and said to them: "Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your hearing today, that you may learn them and be careful to observe them.*

*2) The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. (NKJV)*

*Continuing in Verse 7) ...*

*7) You shall have no other gods before Me. (NKJV)*

*Continuing verse 9) ...*

*9) you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me,*

*10) but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments. (NKJV)*

Notice the contrast. Punishment for rebellion versus mercy for those that love God and keep His commandments. Notice Psalms 18. As we read this scripture in Psalms 18, notice God's disposition toward the contrasting attitudes.

**Psalms 18:25** *With the merciful You will show Yourself merciful; With a blameless man You will show Yourself blameless;*

*26) With the pure You will show Yourself pure; And with the devious You will show Yourself shrewd.*

*27) For You will save the humble people, But will bring down haughty looks. (NKJV)*

God's attitude and disposition is influenced by the attitude of those He is dealing with. We must learn to control our attitude. We are here and have been called to put on righteous character and righteous attitude. God pardons us as we mature. He pardons us so we are not destroyed. As we grow and develop righteous character, we prove ourselves and burn righteous behavior into our very being and the intent of our heart. God, as he judges us, will make His decisions concerning our resurrection to everlasting life.

**Psalms 103:11** *For as the heavens are high above the earth, So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him;*

*12) As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.*

*13) As a father pities his children, So the LORD pities those who fear Him. (NKJV)*

*Continuing in verse 17) ...*

*17) But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting On those who fear Him, And His righteousness to children's children,  
18) To such as keep His covenant, And to those who remember His commandments to do them. (NKJV)*

Look at Psalms 147. What God has in store for us should fill us with great joy.

*Psalms 147:7 Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving; Sing praises on the harp to our God,  
8) Who covers the heavens with clouds, Who prepares rain for the earth, Who makes grass to grow on the mountains.  
9) He gives to the beast its food, And to the young ravens that cry. (NKJV)*

Just by observing this wonderful creation, our hearts should sing with praise toward God. In verse 10 we see that comparatively speaking, we see that God created what should fill our hearts with joy and praise. This is not what is most significant to God. All of this creation should fill us with praise and delight.

*10) He does not delight in the strength of the horse; He takes no pleasure in the legs of a man.  
11) The LORD takes pleasure in those who fear Him, In those who hope in His mercy. (NKJV)*

We all know we are sinners and God has declared that the penalty for sin is death. Our hope is that God will extend His mercy towards us and spare us from the death penalty.

*1) Praise the LORD! For it is good to sing praises to our God; For it is pleasant, and praise is beautiful. (NKJV)*

When we consider God, our praise should spring from the heart— an emotional surge of awesome love and respect. I do not know how much power and strength we are going to have as “born again” spirit beings. What is certain is that we will have an awesome respect and love for Almighty God and His Son, our elder brother, Jesus Christ. We will always be subservient to God our Father, just as Jesus is also subservient to His God who is also our God. In our love for God our Father, we will fear to disappoint Him in any way. We will always be motivated out of love and respect to do our very best in everything that we do. Our joy will be God’s pleasant disposition toward us—favor, grace. God will always be greater than the sum of the rest of us.

*Continuing in verse 5) ...*

*5) Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite. (NKJV)*

I do not fully comprehend *infinite*. Our minds usually struggle with the concept of something being *infinite*. Yet God's understanding is *infinite*. There are not bounds to God's understanding. Then in verse 6 we see the consistent theme; God judges us based upon what we do. The result of God's judgment has permanent consequences.

*6) The LORD lifts up the humble; He casts the wicked down to the ground.*  
(NKJV)

We saw in Ephesians 2:4-8 that we receive the blessing of God's mercy based on God's grace. We are saved because God extends His mercy toward us and forgives us of our sins. Look at Ephesians 2 and review. Salvation is not something we are owed. We can never expect salvation because God owes it to us. We can never demand salvation.

**Ephesians 2:8** *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God ...* (NKJV)

Grace is God's favor or pleasant disposition toward us. God extends his mercy based on His favor or grace. We grow in His grace based on our attitude and disposition. Our attitude is developed based on our faith in God's word and His wisdom. Because we believe God and have faith in Him, we are motivated to correct ourselves from what is our natural human nature. We are motivated to do what is pleasing to God. We will produce greater works based on our faith in God and our desire to please Him. That's described in James 18 and the chapters around that. Our salvation is not earned. God does not owe us based on what we have done or think. Our salvation is a gift based on God's grace toward us. Continuing in verse 9.

*9) not of works, lest anyone should boast.*

*10) For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.* (NKJV)

Doing good works is our desire because of our faith in God our Father. Our intent of the heart based on faithfulness and service, pleases God, which encourages His favor or grace. We are saved by God's grace.