

## Salvation By Grace Through Faith

Rev. 3.28.26



Christian salvation, when broken down to its irreducible elements, consists of grace and faith. Paul, who was a master of succinctness, made the same assessment in Ephesians 2:8.

*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:*

But, a lot is packed into these two elements, grace and faith. Each brims with content.

### Defining grace

Grace can be well defined briefly as the unmerited favor of God.

In a true, comprehensive sense, absolutely everything is the grace of God. Grace is ingrained into the very design and fabric of the universe. That's because God foresaw the Fall of the human race and continued with Creation, knowing it would require redemption (Revelation 13:8). His continuance to create the world and us was the first manifestation of His grace. Thus, Genesis 1:1 is the first biblical expression of the grace of God. *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*

Creation, at its primal moment, was the first manifestation of God's love for you and I. His foreseeing the Fall, but continuing with Creation, is the important backstory of grace.

In a pure soteriological sense, grace is the undeserved salvation God makes available to fallen man through His Word. The Bible is, thus, the medium of grace. It reveals God's heart to redeem us and provides the means for mankind to be reconciled to our loving and gracious Creator. That's why the Word of God can be summarily described by Paul as, *the word of His grace* (Acts 20:32).

*And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.*

The word of His grace is what we hold in our hands when we pick up a Bible. It is the only thing that is able to save us. We do well to consider it diligently in reverence and godly fear (James 1:21; Philippians 2:12). The Word of God is the grace of God and the grace of God is the Word of God. Hoping in His grace is hoping in His Word (Psalms 119:114b). *I hope in Thy Word.*

## Defining faith

Faith is the means whereby we appropriate to ourselves the grace which God bestows upon mankind in His precious Word. It involves belief and trust in everything the Bible says regarding salvation.

True faith is predicated on the Word of God, which is its proper and sole object (Romans 10:17). *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* That simply means that true faith proceeds from hearing the Word of God.

A good example of the principle of Romans 10:17 is provided by the Apostle, John, in John 20:31. *These things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: and that believing ye might have life through His name.*

Evident in this text is the fact that Scripture is written that we might have faith in God. And, Scripture restricts faith to what is written, correctly interpreted. (An incorrect interpretation of Scripture actually changes Scripture, which must be avoided. Scripture is only as valid as its true and proper interpretation.)

As a result, faith is not a fluid, meandering entity. Since it is founded on the Word of God, it is as sure, precise, fixed, definitive, solid, and unmovable as the Word itself (1Peter 1:23-25).

*23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.*

*24 For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withered, and the flower thereof fallen away:*

*25 But the Word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the word by which the Gospel is preached unto you.*

Faith involves understanding provided by God's Word. Therefore, it actuates us to act on the grace God has offered.

Summarized, salvation is the bestowal of God's grace as revealed in Scripture. Faith is the appropriation of it. The important medium is the Word of God. Grace and faith are both determined by the unchangeable Word of God and are, therefore, fixed, well-defined, certain, and unalterable (1Peter 1:23-25; John 8:31-32; Acts 2:38-39; 1John 2:3-5; 5:3; Jude 3).

Salvation is available to all. But, it can only be obtained by honest faith in the Word of God.

### **Misunderstanding grace**

I have a feeling that, when some people talk about grace, they are imagining a divine characteristic that refuses to recognize or punish wrong-doing in people that say they believe in Jesus. These persons are in a “safe zone” and are not held accountable to any standard that would call their “salvation” into question. It’s a handy and sloppy kind of guarantee that their salvation is sure, no matter what they believe or how they live.

They speak of this grace as though it’s a sound biblical teaching with miles and miles of latitude in their favor. It doesn’t have form. It’s whatever a person needs it to be. It even frees him from biblical injunctions and restrictions. It’s fortuitous that it aligns so much with their own egos.

It didn’t take long for this idea to appear. Even in Apostolic times, some were mistaking grace as a license to sin (Jude 4 NIV). *For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.*

Similarly, the word, grace, is used by many today to mean the room allowed for doing wrong with impunity. Even in its popular financial use, grace is the period of time in which it is okay to be late with what you owe, without incurring penalty. For obvious reasons, humans are prone to love this conventional meaning of grace.

Due to the erosion of its true meaning over time, I think the word, grace, today often provides comfort, albeit unscriptural, to souls who wish for an easy or a sin-friendly faith without much delineation of that faith. The more vague, the better.

### **Grace is not vague or indistinct.**

Far from being vague, the grace that brings salvation is very exact and firm— you might even say, rigid. It doesn’t bend. It cannot. That’s because grace comes to us through the medium of God’s Word, which is fixed and unchangeable. See Psalms 119:89; Isaiah 40:8; Matthew 24:35.

Grace is precisely contained in the narrow limits of the Word of the Gospel.

Notice how Jesus made this point.

See Matthew 7:13-14.

*13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:*

*14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*

See also Luke 13:23-24.

*23 Then said one unto Him, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" And He said unto them,*

*24 "Strive to enter at the strait (hindered; difficult to enter) gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.*

Notice in the next passage how narrowly Jesus describes entering into the Kingdom of heaven exclusively through a new birth of water and Spirit.

See John 3:3-5.

*3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

*4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?*

*5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

Notice the absolute precision of Jesus' words. All may enter the Kingdom of God. There is no discrimination there. But entrance is limited to being born again of water and Spirit.

John 3:5, of course, has its fulfillment on the Day of Pentecost, as it must. The Day of Pentecost is the first day of the Church age, when entrance into the Kingdom of God began. Hence, when souls asked what to do to meet salvation requirements, Peter echoed the same availability of what Jesus taught with the same narrowness— the tenets of water (baptism) and Spirit.

See Acts 2:37-38.

*37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?*

*38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

### **Acts 2:38 is the grace of God.**

Acts 2:38 is the pinnacle of the grace of God. It provides complete remission of sins through baptism in Jesus' name, something every human being desperately needs. That's, perhaps, the most gracious aspect about salvation. It also promises the infilling of God's Own regenerating Spirit, which we all must have to be endowed with eternal life. No verse of Scripture is more gracious.

But sometimes, when Acts 2:38 is presented as the plan of salvation, someone will ask, "Then, what about grace?", as though Acts 2:38 is not gracious. It's shocking to me that everyone doesn't recognize it as the amazing and ultimate grace of God—grace unmatched by anything else. No greater grace exists, or is even possible. Remission of sins, coupled with the power by the Spirit to live a new life, is precisely what Jesus brought us through His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension.

Since the Day of Pentecost, the same grace is available to every person. Grace related to salvation does not take different forms. Grace does not mean absence of uniformity because grace occurs through the medium of God's Word. Grace actually means there is a way of salvation available to us undeserving, sinful creatures, not that it has no form or limits.

And Peter made it clear that the grace of God that was offered on the first day of the Church was for everyone until the very end of the Church age. Notice his emphasis of that fact in Acts 2:38-39.

*38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

*39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our God shall call.*

The next two verses show that three thousand souls on that very day heard Peter's message and received it gladly.

*40 And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.*

*41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.*

Anyone who receives Peter's message will be added to the original, Apostolic Church in the same way.

### **Grace does not take different forms.**

Nothing that is extra-biblical, or falsely contrived through misinterpretation, is the grace of God (2Timothy 2:15). Grace is truth. Therefore, grace can neither be created or destroyed. The truth of God's grace will continue to march on its inexorable course, saving its adherents through the remainder of the grace dispensation, as it has since the Day of Pentecost. To be sure, grace is the gift of God (Ephesians 2:8-9). Honest faith accepts it as it is.

The Bible actually gives a definition of grace in Titus 2:11-15. Notice how different it sounds from what is commonly perceived.

*11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,*

*12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;*

*13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;*

*14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

*15 These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.*

### **Ephesians 2:8-9 is Acts 2:38; 19:1-6.**

Often, misled souls use Ephesians 2:8-9 to try to refute Acts 2:38 as the plan of salvation. That is extremely poor scholarship and an egregious mishandling of God's Word. It must not be overlooked that this famous expression of grace Paul used in Ephesians is in reference to the salvation experience the Ephesians received through Paul in Acts 19:1-6. This is a very important fact!

*1 And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,*

*2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.*

*3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.*

*4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.*

*5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.*

*6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.*

Recall that Paul founded the Ephesian Church while on his third missionary journey. This is what Luke recorded in Acts 19:1-6. Paul came into Ephesus and discovered believers in Christ who were baptized long ago (roughly 20 years) by John the Baptist. Being remote from Jerusalem, they were not aware of the Christian terms of grace introduced on the Day of Pentecost. Paul informed them of Acts 2:38 tenets (baptism in Jesus' name and the infilling of the Holy Ghost) and they received his word wholeheartedly— wise on their part! From this, everyone can see without a doubt that Paul preached Acts 2:38.

With these original twelve charter members, the Ephesian Church began. Acts 2:38 was their salvation experience that Paul was referring to when he wrote summarily in his epistle to them that they were saved by grace through faith. Grace and faith are exactly what occurred in Acts 19. They were re-baptized in the saving name of Jesus and filled with the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking in other tongues. In this way, Acts 2:38, Acts 19:1-6, and Ephesians 2:8-9 are parallel.

And, by re-baptizing believers in Jesus' name, who had not yet heard of it, Paul created biblical authority for everyone to be re-baptized who has not yet been baptized in Jesus' name.

**Acts 2:38 is the *justification by faith* Paul refers to in his Epistles.**

We know this for two reasons.

**1/** We have previously showed that Paul preached Acts 2:38 to others, namely, the Ephesian believers just covered.

**2/** But we also know that Acts 2:38 was his own salvation experience as well.

We know that Paul was baptized in order to have his sins washed away. We read his own account of it in Acts 22:16 when Ananias attended his conversion. Ananias led

repentant Saul of Tarsus to baptism in this way: *And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*

The theological term, *justification*, refers mainly to remission of sins. So, we know what he is referring to when he theologizes in his epistles about justification.

Paul also received the Holy Ghost when Ananias met him (Acts 9:17), completing the saving elements of water and Spirit preached in Acts 2:38. This is the justification Paul refers to in his Epistles.

### **Evidence of Acts 2:38 in Paul's Epistles**

#### **See Paul's allusion to Acts 2:38 in 1Corinthians 6:11.**

*9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,*

*10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.*

*11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*

The tenets of Acts 2:38— baptism (washing) in Jesus' name for the remission of sins (justification) and the infilling of the Holy Ghost (which brings sanctification)— are quite plain.

#### **Acts 2:38 is justification by grace.**

##### **See Titus 3:5-7.**

*5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;*

*6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;*

*7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

The elements of baptism (washing) and receiving the Holy Ghost are highly noticeable in verse 5. (There is also a vivid allusion to the new birth experience (regeneration), involving water and Spirit, mentioned by Jesus to Nicodemus in John 3:5, which, of course, was fulfilled in Acts 2:38.)

In verse 7, Paul referred to this washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost as, *justification by grace*. Acts 2:38 is justification by grace.

**Acts 2:38 is justification by faith and justification by grace in the Christian era.**

Justification by faith occurred for the first time on the Day of Pentecost.

Justification by grace occurred for the first time on the Day of Pentecost.

Salvation by grace through faith occurred for the first time on the Day of Pentecost.

This involved the three thousand who obeyed Acts 2:38. They were saved, accordingly, in response to Peter's preaching. There is not a better example of salvation by grace through faith in the entire New Testament. Acts 2:38 was the grace of God!

**Acts 2:38 went into all the world was commissioned by Christ.**

Acts 2:38 continued to be the grace of God received by faith throughout the thirty year history provided by Luke in the book of Acts. It went from Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost into all the world, as commissioned by Jesus in Luke 24:47. *And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*

In Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost, it was preached to the Jews (Acts 2).

In Acts 8, it was preached to the Samaritans (mixed race of Jew and non-Jew).

In Acts 10, it was preached to the Gentiles, or, non-Jews.

These three occasions covered every people group, showing that the same grace of God was available to all people, as preached by Peter on Day 1. After stating the plan of salvation in Acts 2:38, notice what Peter said in verse 39. *For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.* That's everyone!

And, in Acts 19:1-6, we have seen that Paul presented Acts 2:38 to the Ephesians, who were already believers in Christ. This emphasizes the fact that all persons must obey Acts 2:38 to be saved. It is the grace of God for salvation in the Christian era.

**The book of Romans**

The book of Romans is considered by many to be all about grace, which they consider to be a refutation of Acts 2:38 as the plan of salvation for the Church age. But Romans 6 may be the most pro-baptism chapter in the Bible.

Romans 6 is about baptism, I mean grace, I mean baptism, I mean grace, I mean baptism. Baptism in Jesus' name remits sins (Luke 24:47; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Colossians 2:13). That makes baptism the grace of God.

The theme of Romans 6, "Shall we sin that grace may abound?", continues from Romans 5:20, which declared grace more effective than sin.

*20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:*

*21 That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Paul had reasoned earlier in chapter 5 that a single offense brought condemnation into the world. But, through the righteousness of One, the free gift of salvation came upon everyone. But then he mentioned that the Law entered, increasing the number of offenses, but still grace reigned.

This is an important teaching about the efficacy of grace. But, apparently, some interpreted Christian teaching on grace to mean there is no harm in sinning. I think many today have that same misunderstanding, which Paul was determined to correct. In chapter 6, Paul explains that grace is the means by which God has put away sin. Far from being an excuse to sin, grace is the theological basis for not sinning. And this grace Paul ties directly to baptism.

In chapter 3:24 of Romans, Paul pivots from teaching on man's lost state and, hence, his need for salvation, to the grace that provides that salvation according to the redemption in Christ Jesus. *Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:*

This verse often gets misunderstood as meaning there is nothing to do to receive grace but merely believe in Jesus. "Justified freely" simply meant that salvation was not to be acquired by us as in the former dispensation of the Law through good works. And Paul is clear that this grace is offered according to the redemption provided in Christ Jesus. That redemption, by the way, was highly evident at the time of his writing. It had been taking place since the Day of Pentecost, roughly twenty-five years or more.

Not only was it his own salvation experience, it was everyone's to whom he was writing. There was no misunderstanding on their part as to what redemption in Christ Jesus meant. It meant Acts 2:38.

*Ye are not under the law but under grace* (Romans 6:14). Baptism is the grace being referenced. The Law, of course, is that which had been superseded by the Gospel. (The Gospel is all about baptism. Did you ever notice the Great Commission? It's a mandate to baptize. You can read more about that in the article on the *Various Bible Lessons* page entitled, *Water Baptism And The Great Commission*.)

## **Romans 6**

In chapter 6, as Paul makes application of his teaching that grace conquers sin and death, he stresses that grace leads to holiness, a concept still not grasped by many. (He makes this point in other places as well— e.g., 1Thessalonians 4:1-8; 2Thessalonians 2:13-14; Titus 2:11-15.)

*1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?*

*2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?*

Verse 1. While the grace of God abounds over sin, that does not mean that grace reigns in spite of our sin and that it's alright to sin. To this concept, Paul forcefully responds, "God forbid!", which he also repeated in verse 15.

Beginning with verse 3, Paul goes on to explain that burial with Christ in baptism is the grace that abounds over sin by putting an end to it.

*3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?*

*4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

*5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:*

*6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*

*7 For he that is dead is freed from sin.*

*8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:*

*9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.*

*10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.  
11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

In these illuminating verses, Paul is effectively showing that the grace of God is baptism and that the efficacy of the grace of God over sin is in the purpose of baptism, which is to bring us into contact with Christ's death, and, therefore, His blood, in order to remove our sin. And, by rising from the waters of baptism, we are empowered to assume a new walk with Christ, freed from sin by the death of Christ but alive unto God through the life of Christ (6:3-11).

Baptism in Jesus' name is the grace of God. The chief aspect of salvation is receiving remission of sins. Paul's answer to sin in Romans 6 was baptism. That is the grace Paul referred to in 5:20. Baptism can handle sin. For a person to have his sins washed away is grace— by whatever means remission occurs! That's inarguably the grace of God. The Word of God, which is the medium for pouring out His grace, specifically designates baptism in Jesus' name for the remission of sins (Luke 24:47; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Colossians 2:13). By the grace of God, baptism in Jesus' name can, and does, handle sin. It's the only thing that can. That watery grave is how we come into contact with Christ's blood, which washes us clean.

### **Will you accept the grace of God through biblical means?**

Why do some people suggest that remission of sins is not grace if it occurs through baptism? The grace of God comes to us in the way He chooses, and He chose baptism in His saving name (Acts 4:12). Salvation is the grace of God. To receive salvation is to receive the grace of God. Any means by which salvation is obtained is the grace of God. Baptism is so efficacious that Jesus and Peter said it saves (Mark 16:15-16; 1Peter 3:21). Anything that saves is the grace of God.

### **The context in which Romans was written**

We've pointed out sufficiently that Romans cannot but support Acts 2:38. That's because Paul himself was saved by Acts 2:38 and preached it.

But there is another great point to make regarding the book of Romans. It was written on Paul's third missionary journey while in Corinth, Greece (Acts 20:2). This was right after his ministry in Ephesus, which is recorded in Acts 19:1-6, a portion of Scripture

we have laid stress on in this lesson. He was literally writing the book of Romans as he was preaching Acts 2:38. This is another strong proof that Paul could not have taught a means for salvation in the book of Romans other than Acts 2:38.

**The book of Galatians shows that Acts 2:38 is justification by faith.**

Galatians 3:22-29

*22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of [concerning] Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.*

*23 But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.*

*24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.*

*25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.*

*26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.*

*27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*

*28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.*

*29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

Let's look at these verses closely.

Verse 22. *But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of [concerning] Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.*

Similar to what Paul had taught in his Roman Epistle, he pointed out that no one could be saved without faith in Christ because no one could keep the Law.

Verse 23. *But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.*

“But before faith came” — Paul is simply referring to the era or dispensation of faith in Christ, which we read of in the Gospels and the book of Acts.

Verse 24. *Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.*

Paul's expression, “that we might be justified by faith”, cannot be forced to mean “faith alone” in Christ. If Paul meant that, he would have said that. It means our justification comes through our faith in Him, which faith leads us to obey the terms of justification Christ prescribed.

That is precisely what we see happening in the evangelism of Acts, Paul being the most prominent example of someone believing in Christ, seen in his dramatic experience on the Damascus Road, yet needing to receive baptism in order for his sins to be washed away, as he was told by the man Christ sent to him and whom Paul was instructed to obey (Acts 9:6).

*Verse 25. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.*

The phrase, “after that faith has come”, simply refers to the dispensation of faith in Christ that replaced the dispensation of the Law.

*Verse 26. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.*

Jesus addressed how to become children when speaking with Cornelius (John 3:5). Faith in Christ Jesus led us to receive the new birth salvation experience of water and Spirit, which was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost, involving water baptism in Jesus’ name and the infilling of the Holy Ghost.

*Verse 27. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*

“For...” is provided to indicate how they became children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. They were baptized into Christ.

*Verse 28. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.*

There is no distinction of persons among the redeemed. We are all one in Christ Jesus – i.e., through baptism!!!

*Verse 29. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

If we are Christ’s— that is, through baptism, as Paul has pointed out in verse 27, then we are Abraham’s offspring and heirs of the promise God made to Abraham.

Rather than the book of Galatians teaching something other than Acts 2:38, it corroborates it. There are many other things in the book that could be pointed out. For example, Galatians 1:6-10 implies that Paul was preaching the unalterable faith that existed from the Day of Pentecost, as does Ephesians 4:5, Jude 3, etc.. And we know for certain that Paul preached Acts 2:38 because it is evident in Acts 19:1-6.

**The meaning of justification by faith**

*Justification by faith* simply means we are saved through belief in Christ and what He prescribed for salvation rather than by keeping the Law.

Romans and Galatians do not permit interpretation of this expression to mean faith alone in Christ. True faith in Christ must include trust in, and obedience to, what He taught for salvation because true faith is regulated by the Word of God (Romans 10:17).

**Conclusion: Grace acquired through faith is the Acts 2:38 experience.**

Again, grace occurs through the medium of God's Word. The grace of justification is according to means provided in Scripture for remission of sins. That was signally addressed on the Day of Pentecost when the dispensation of justification by grace began. And Peter made it clear that it was for everyone until the very end of the Church age. Notice again his emphasis of that fact in Acts 2:38-39.

*38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

*39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our God shall call.*

*40 And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.*

*41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.*

**The role of our own hearts**

Salvation by grace boils down to this in its most basic form: the Word of God's grace and your honest heart, from which you form faith. Since faith comes from focus on the Word of God, that faith must be governed by personal diligence and honesty.

Solomon's keen eyes noticed that all the issues of life, of which we are in control, proceed from our hearts (Proverbs 4:23). *Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.*

This is especially important in the area of faith and salvation. Our hearts determine how we hear the Word of God. Jesus warned, "Take care then *how you hear*, for to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away" (Luke 8:18 ESV). This statement of Christ followed His

parable of the four soils in which He described the good ground as those who receive the Word with an honest and good heart. *But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience* (Luke 8:15 ESV).

Receiving the Word of God, our source of true faith, must always be with strict diligence and honesty and an earnest desire to know the truth because truth is grace.