

Doctrine of Soteriology and Common Grace

1. Soteriology refers to the study of salvation.
2. Salvation is spoken of in Scripture in different ways.
 - The word saved could mean to be delivered from a disastrous situation.
 - The word saved could mean to be delivered from a life threatening disease.
 - The word saved could mean to be rescued from capture in battle.
 - The word saved could mean to be out from under the wrath of God in the Day of Judgment.
3. The concept of grace is at the center of soteriology. The essence of theology is grace. The essence of ethics is gratitude.
4. Salvation is of the Lord. It is not something that can be earned or deserved. It is given freely by God.
 - *Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.*
5. There is a distinction between justice and grace. Justice is something that is merited, or due to a person, by virtue of some standard.
6. In salvation, the standard is works. If salvation could be earned or deserved, it would be based on good works. But, by the works of the Law, no flesh can be justified in the sight of God, for all have sinned and come short of His glory.
 - *Romans 3:10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:*
 - *Galatians 2:16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.*
7. Grace stands in contrast to a standard of merit. Grace is not merited, it is not earned, it is given freely by God. Grace is always a divine prerogative, not something owed.
 - *Exodus 33:19 And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.*
 - *Romans 9:15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.*

8. God is under no obligation to be gracious to anyone.
9. The classic definition of grace is “unmerited favor.” God behaves in a favorable way that we have no claim to.
10. A distinction needs to be made between common grace and special grace.

- Common grace is universal. It refers to that grace which God gives to all people. *Matthew 5:45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.*

Special Note.

The church has reflected the common grace of God by starting the hospital movement, establishing orphanages, promoting education, and encouraging science. The church has influenced law and society in general, because Christians imitate Christ. The Christian is to feed the poor, attend to the sick, and visit those in prison.

James 1:27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

In the nineteenth century Liberal Christianity rejected the historic gospel and so turned to a new agenda for the church, humanitarianism. Liberalism embraced the Social Gospel. Conservative Christians reacted by emphasizing evangelism.

The church is called to both the special ministry of grace, and common grace as well. The church must be involved in aches, poverty, and every other social ill as per the Story of the Good Samaritan.

In common grace matters, the Christian must be a co-belligerent with all kinds of savory characters to advance the cause of Christ. A march against abortion can be enjoyed by everyone without question.

In a worship service, more care should be taken. We cannot stand side by side with a Muslim for example. That involves special grace.

- Special grace is given to individuals of God’s own choosing. The special grace of redemption is given to the elect.

11. The love of God must be distinguished between His benevolence, and His complacency.

- God’s benevolent love. This love refers to the love God has for the general welfare of his creation. In that sense God does love everyone. He give life, air, and food to all.

God’s complacent love. This love refers to His special love for the redeemed. God did love Jacob in a way He did not love Esau.