
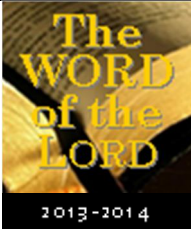


<h1>CHARIS</h1>  <h2>Grace</h2>	Transliteration: Charis <small>(conversion from Greek to English)</small>	
	Pronunciation : <i>khar'-ece</i> KAHR eess	
	Strong's: 5485, charis	
<p>Definition: noun. that which affords joy, pleasure, delight, sweetness, charm, loveliness: grace of speech, good will, loving-kindness, favor of the merciful kindness by which God, exerting his holy influence upon souls, turns them to Christ, keeps, strengthens, increases them in Christian faith, knowledge, affection, and kindles them to the exercise of the Christian virtues.</p> <p>Undeserved acceptance and love received from another. When used of divine grace toward mankind, it refers to the undeserved favor of God in providing salvation for those deserving condemnation. In the more specific Christian sense it speaks of the saving activity of God which is manifested in the gift of His Son to die in the place of sinners.</p>		
This Month: The Year of Spiritual Growth: Study	Sermon: “Binary: The Story of Two”; Ralph Herbert, 2/16/2014	
Scripture Focus: Genesis 2:7-9, 15-17, 3:1-7; Romans 5:12-17		

The Greek word for “grace,” *charis*, is equivalent to the Hebrew word *hesed*, which means “loving kindness”----a word frequently used by the psalmists to describe God’s character. In the New Testament, the word *charis* usually means “giving favor” or “goodwill,” but it also means “that which gives joy” and “that which is a free gift.” When the OT was translated into Greek, *charis* was used to translate the Hebrew *chen* and thus in biblical Greek came to be associated with an objective relation of undeserved favor given by a superior to an inferior. It is used approximately 150 times in the NT. This objective relation of undeserved favor given by God to man forms the background of the distinctively Christian meaning of grace in the NT. *Charis* rarely appears in the Gospels. It is totally absent in Matthew and Mark. Luke uses the term eight times, four of which are uses by Jesus, but in the ordinary sense of “thanks” (Luke 6:32-34; 17:19). In John’s Gospel it appears four times, all in the prologue.

Grace is the gift of God. It is expressed in God’s actions of extending mercy, loving-kindness, and salvation to people. Divine grace is embodied in the person of Jesus Christ (John 1:14, 17). It is used to describe Christ in His incarnation and as something that those who believe on Him receive as contrasted with the law (vv. 16-17). John’s unusual expression, “grace for grace,” has the idea of the continuance and inexhaustible supply of God’s grace to believers. It is never interrupted and knows no bounds.

God’s grace manifested in Jesus Christ makes it possible for God to forgive sinners and to gather them in the church. During His ministry, Jesus repeatedly offered forgiveness to a great number of sinners and extended God’s succor for a variety of desperate human needs. Through teachings such as the father’s forgiveness of the prodigal son and the search for the lost sheep, Jesus made it clear that He had come to seek and save those who were lost. But ultimately, it was His redemptive death on the cross which opened wide the gate of salvation for repentant sinners so that they have access to God’s forgiving and restorative grace.

In Acts, *charis* is used in three senses. The most frequent use is to refer to a power that flows from God or the exalted Christ. It gave the apostles success in their mission (4:33; 11:23; 13:43; 14:26), power to unbelievers to believe (18:27), and power to build up believers (20:32). It is used in the sense of human favor, and as such it is usually translated as “favor” or “pleasure” (2:47; 7:10, 46; 24:27; 25:3, 9). The rarest, but most theologically significant, use is to refer to God’s method of salvation in opposition to the legalism of the Judaizers. It is by “the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ” that both Jews and Gentiles are saved (15:11). The specific reference to the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ rather than to the more general “grace of God” indicates that Peter and the Jewish Christians viewed the saving grace of God as being manifested in the redemptive work of Christ.

The greatest majority of the occurrences of *charis* in the NT appear in the Pauline letters with a wide range of meanings. Often he used *charis* simply to mean thanks (1 cor. 10:30; Col. 3:16), frequently employing the set expression “thanks (*charis*) be to God” (Rom. 6:17; 7:25; 1 Cor. 15:57; 2 Cor. 2:14; 8:16; 9:15, 1 Tim. 1:12; 2 Tim. 1:3). Paul’s most frequent and theologically significant use of *charis* is to refer to the grace of God or “grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.” For Paul the grace of God is not so much a timeless attribute as an activity of God. It is the redeeming activity of God that manifests itself in the redemptive work of Christ by which sinners are forgiven and accepted by God. In Paul’s thought the grace of God is necessary because of man’s total inability to do anything to save himself and because of man’s unworthiness to be saved. Paul’s use of grace to refer to the undeserved nature of God’s salvation was particularly illustrated by his own experience. His former life as a persecutor of Christians caused him to have a profound sense of his own unworthiness. It was only because of the grace of God that Christ appeared to him, changed him, and appointed him to be an apostle (1 Cor. 15:9-10; 1 Tim. 1:12-14).

So pervasive was Paul’s sense of grace that he refers to it at the beginning and end of every one of his letters. For him the Christian life is summed up in the grace of God. Salvation from beginning to the end is all of grace. There can be no mixture of grace and works, or else it would not be grace (Rom. 11:6-7). Grace is synonymous with the gospel of Christ and to depart from it is to turn to a false gospel (Gal. 1:6). It was the grace of God that planned salvation for sinners in eternity past before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4; 2 Tim. 1:9). It was grace that provided salvation in the historical death of Christ (Rom. 3:24). It is grace that enables one to appropriate salvation, for it calls one to salvation, reveals Christ, and even gives the faith which is the condition of salvation (Gal. 1:6, 15; Eph.

2:8-9; Phil. 1:29). It is the grace of God that calls and equips one for service in the Christian life (Rom. 15:15-16; 1 Cor. 3:10). The grace of God was something that was with him, produced labor, humility, godliness, and sustained him in times of difficulty (1 Cor. 15:10; 2 Cor. 1:12; 12:7-10). Everything, therefore, from first to last is of grace.

This simple truth is formulated in the doctrine of “justification by faith through grace” (Rom. 3:23; Titus 3:7). According to this teaching, God graciously provides life, through the death of Christ, to sinners who believe in Jesus. Jesus’ substitutionary death for all people enables God to pronounce a verdict of “not guilty” on repentant sinners and to include them in His eternal purposes. God’s grace manifested in Jesus also makes it possible for God to bestow undeserved benefits on believers. These benefits enrich our lives and unite us together in the church. God’s acceptance of believers on the basis of grace gives us a new status; we are children of God, members of the household of God, and can relate to Him as our heavenly Father (Gal. 4:4-6).

In the General Epistles and Revelation *charis* appears 24 times, most of these being found in Hebrews and 1 Peter. In Hebrews, grace is related to the atoning death of Christ (2:9). It is grace that allows us to come to God boldly for “help in time of need” (4:16). It is grace that strengthens the heart of the believer by which he is equipped with everything good to do the will of God (13:5). In the Petrine letters grace has its source in God (1 Pet. 5:10). Peter equates grace with salvation and, like Paul, sees salvation as grace from first to last. It was prophesied by the prophets, accomplished by the sufferings of Christ, applied to people by a sovereign calling (1 Pet. 1:10-11; 5:10) and equips believers to serve (1 Pet. 1:10-11). All believers stand in a grace relationship with God, both men and women (1 Pet. 5:12; 3:7). The way to avoid being led astray by Satan into unfaithfulness is to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 3:18). *Charis* is found only in the closing verses of Revelation. The NT very appropriately closes with a benediction of grace: ***“The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the saints. Amen”*** (Rev. 22:21).

God’s disposition to exercise goodwill towards His creatures is another essential meaning of “grace” in the Bible. This favorable disposition of God finds its supreme expression in Jesus Christ. By its very definition, this grace is rendered fully accessible to all humans with no precondition other than a repentant desire to receive it (Titus 2:11-12). The tragic alternative to receiving God’s grace is to remain in hopeless alienation from God (Rom. 1:21). **Therefore, let us accept God’s gift of grace granted to us in Christ Jesus.**

Other Key Verses: Romans 2:24; Ephesians 2:5.