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Section: Doctrine of Salvation (Soteriology)

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**HANDOUT NOTES**

**Q80. What is saving grace?**

Saving grace is God’s love, forgiveness, and redemption freely and effectively given in Jesus to the elect, who are undeserving of this.

**Q81. What is opposed to God’s grace?**

Opposed to God’s grace are the lies that we are worthy or that we can work hard enough to earn God’s love and forgiveness or that we can seek, will, or choose Jesus without the Holy Spirit giving us new life and saving faith.

* **First Question (Q80)**

**Ephesians 1:19-20** and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places

**Ephesians 2:1-3** And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

**Ephesians 2:4-5** But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ— by grace you have been saved

**Where does saving grace come from?** Saving grace is *from* God.

**What is saving grace?** God’s act of mercy and love to make us alive with Christ.

**Can we earn saving grace?** God is the operative agent in saving grace; we do nothing.

**Why is saving grace important?** It is of utter importance that we are moved upon and reborn by God’s saving grace, lest we perish for eternity.

**Ephesians 2:8** For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God

**Ephesians 1:4-10** even as he [God] chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

**2 Peter 3:9** The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all [of God’s people] should reach repentance.

**How do we obtain saving grace?** We come to know, realize, and love God and His saving grace when He causes us to have saving faith in Christ.

**1689 Confession of Faith**: “Since humanity brought itself under the curse of the law by its fall, it pleased the Lord to make a covenant of grace. In this covenant he freely offers to sinners life and salvation through Jesus Christ. On their part he requires faith in him, that they may be saved, and promises to give his Holy Spirit to all who are ordained to eternal life, to make them willing and able to believe.”

**What is the doctrine of *sola gratia*?** This means, grace alone. It is the doctrine that the Holy Bible teaches us that the totality of salvation is only by God’s free and effective gift of grace.

* **Second Question (Q81)**
* **Can we work hard enough to earn saving grace?**

**Luke 18:9-14** He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: 10 “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ 13 But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”

**Psalm 14:1** ​​​​​​​​The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.” ​​​​​​​They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds, ​​​​​​​there is none who does good. ​​​

**Romans 3:12** ​​​​​​​​“All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; ​​​​​​​no one does good, ​​​​​​​not even one.”

**Isaiah 64:6** ​​​​​​​​We have all become like one who is unclean, ​​​​​​​and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. ​​​​​​​

**Matthew 22:37-40** … “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

**John 1:17** For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

**Romans 11:6** But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.

**Galatians 2:21** I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.

* **Are we able to seek, will, or choose Jesus?**

**Romans 9:16** So then [election] depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy.

**Romans 9:15** For [God] says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.”

**Romans 9:19b-20** “For who can resist his will?” But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, “Why have you made me like this?”

**Proverbs 16:9** ​The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps.

**Romans 3:11** “no one understands; no one seeks for God.”

* **Is the Holy Spirit essential in giving new life?**

**John 6:63a** “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all.”

**Titus 3:3-7** For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

**1689 Confession of Faith**: “In God’s appointed and acceptable time, he is pleased to call effectually, by his Word and Spirit, those he has predestined to life. He calls them out of their natural state of sin and death to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ. **He enlightens their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God. He takes away their heart of stone and gives them a heart of flesh. He renews their wills and by his almighty power turns them to good and effectually draws them to Jesus Christ.** Yet he does all this in such a way that they come completely freely, since they are made willing by his grace.

* **Why this way?**

**Ephesians 1:6a** to the praise of his glorious grace