

Mod 4 — SAVED BY GRACE, THROUGH JESUS CHRIST

by [Jack Cottrell](#)

Romans 3:24-25 says, “We are all justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth to be a propitiation—a sacrifice of atonement—through faith in his blood” (composite translation).

The only way to be saved from sin is by grace, and the only source of grace is what Jesus has done for us on the cross. Here we are seeking to understand exactly what Jesus was doing on the cross to make salvation by grace possible.

I. GRACE COMES *BY JESUS CHRIST*.

The general or generic meaning of the Greek word for grace (*charis*) is “a gift that brings joy,” so both *charis* and our English word “grace” can refer to gifts of different kinds. But the Bible is very clear that *saving* grace comes through Jesus Christ alone. “Grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ” (John 1:17). “Be strong in the grace that is in Jesus Christ” (2 Tim. 2:1). “We are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 15:11). “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men” (Titus 2:11). See Romans 3:24; 5:15.

We must stress that Jesus is the **ONLY** source of saving grace. “And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). Most religions have a concept of “salvation,” but none of them can truly save.

This is because sinners can be saved only by grace, and grace comes only through Jesus. Sects such as bhakti Hinduism and True Pure Land Buddhism CLAIM to provide a gracious salvation, but they are deceiving themselves and others. Grace is possible nowhere outside Christianity, because Christianity alone has the only true source of grace: the sinless divine Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

II. GRACE COMES BY THE CROSS OF JESUS CHRIST.

Why is Jesus different from other so-called “saviors,” such as some Buddha, or Krishna, or Mohammed, or Sun Moon, or Joseph Smith? What is there about Jesus that makes him the sole source of grace? Two things:

First, Jesus brings grace because of *who he is*. For one thing, he is the only *sinless* human being, and only a sinless human being can offer himself to suffer the penalty for sin deserved by someone else. For another thing, he alone is the divine Son of God, God the Son, God in the flesh. Only a divine being can offer himself to suffer the penalty for sin deserved by the whole world.

Second, Jesus brings grace because of *what he has done*. Remember: grace is not fair; it is even the opposite of fair. Under grace one does not get what he deserves, but rather its opposite. This is just as true of Jesus as it is of us. What did Christ deserve? The highest praise and honor; see Revelation 5:11-14. But what did he get? He got the CROSS! *He* did not deserve the cross, but we did! He was taking what WE deserve so that he can give us what HE deserves. See 2 Cor. 5:21.

How does the Bible describe what Jesus was doing on the cross? Here I will stress two things. First, the cross was our REDEMPTION (see Rom. 3:24). “To redeem” means to set free by paying a price, or in this case, by paying a DEBT that we owe. Sin puts us in debt to God (Matt. 6:12). We are under bondage or obligation to pay God the debt of eternal punishment in hell. Jesus *redeems* us by paying this debt for us. In his suffering, Jesus was experiencing the equivalent of eternity in hell for all mankind. He thus sets us free from the obligation of paying this debt. See Gal. 3:13; 1 Pet. 1:18-19.

Second, the cross was our PROPITIATION (Rom. 3:25). “To propitiate” means to turn away wrath by an offering. Because of our sin, we deserve God’s wrath and are justly condemned to suffer the consequences of this wrath for all eternity. But Jesus intervenes for us, and takes the wrath of God (which WE deserve) upon HIMSELF instead. He put himself in our place and allowed the Father to pour out his divine wrath upon him. This is how he is our propitiation. See 1 John 2:2; 4:10.

We cannot begin to understand what Jesus was going through on the cross. The physical torture of crucifixion was extreme in itself. But the *spiritual* (mental, emotional) suffering which accompanied Christ’s crucifixion was infinitely worse, given the fact that he was the sinless Son of God.

The cross of Christ, and his cross ALONE, allows God to be both just and the justifier of whoever trusts in him. See Romans 3:26.

III. GRACE COMES *BY FAITH* IN THE CROSS OF JESUS CHRIST.

The cross of Jesus Christ does not provide salvation for all sins automatically for all mankind. True, it automatically cancels out the consequences of *Adam's* sin for everyone (Rom. 5:12-19), but our own personal, conscious sins will be forgiven only when we consciously accept Christ's gift of redemption. Romans 3:25 (correctly translated, as in the NIV) declares that Christ is a propitiation "through FAITH in his BLOOD." Saving faith must be this specific. See also Rom. 10:9-10.

The benefits of Christ's propitiation are first applied to the sinner in Christian baptism, but only through faith. See Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12. We as Christians are acceptable to God NOW, at this very moment, not because of how good we are, but because we are still trusting in Jesus's blood.

Why is this the only way? Actually, human pride would LIKE to think there could be another way besides grace, a way in which we could be seen as somehow deserving of salvation. *But the cross will not allow it!* Whenever you begin to think that you might deserve to be saved, just take another look at the cross: that's what you deserve! "When I survey the wondrous cross, on which the Prince of Glory died, my richest gain I count but loss, and pour contempt on all my pride." See Eph. 2:9; James 4:6.