

NOT BY RACE, BUT BY GRACE #1, #2

Jno.1:11-13

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. What we mean by our lesson topic – “Not By Race, But By Grace” –
 - a. That salvation is not by race, but is by grace.
 - b. That is, salvation is not based on nor dependent upon race – not upon whether or not one is a Jew or a Gentile, a black man, red man, or a white man – but on the grace of God.
2. This matter of salvation, whether by race, grace, or some other means, has been and continues to be a subject of great interest and of gross misunderstanding by the masses.
3. Our emphasis in this study will focus on the problem some have had, and some still have, that salvation is by race, not grace and their obvious misunderstanding of the subject of salvation.
4. We begin our study with an exegesis of our introductory text, Jno.1:11-13.

II. DISCUSSION

A. JNO.1:11-13 INTRODUCES US TO THE BIRTH FROM ABOVE, THAT IS EXPLAINED IN GREATER DETAIL IN JNO.3:3-8.

1. V.11a: “He came unto his own”
 - a. “His own things” or “his own possessions,” i.e., his own country (and people).”
2. V.11b: “and his own received him not”
 - a. Here, without a doubt, his own people – the Jews – received him not; they rejected him, even with contempt, Mt.23:37; Rom.10:21; 10:1-3.
 - b. They were called “his own,” because they had long been God’s chosen people to whom the oracles had been committed and who had been for ages the recipients of manifold favors from God’s bountiful hand, Rom.9:1-5.
 - c. They “received him not,” by their refusal to accept him as the Messiah, as their Lord and Savior: and they were eventually to consummate their rejection of him by causing him to be put to death, Mt.27:22,23.
3. V.12.
 - a. Note what he gave to those who did receive him or “took” him as the Messiah.

- (1) He gave to them the “power to become the sons of God.”
 - (2) Obviously, what you are given the power to become, you were not that before you were given the power to become that.
 - (3) Nor are you become that the moment you receive the power to become that. In this case, “sons of God”.
 - (4) You are given the power that you may become “sons”.
- b. Who were or are these to whom he gave or gives the “power to become the sons of God”?
- (1) He gave or gives this power “to them that believe on his name.”
 - (2) Thus those who “believe” are then and there given the power or the right to “become sons of God”.
 - (3) Cf. Receiving a marriage license. When it is given or issued, it gives you the power or the right to be joined in lawful marriage under the laws of the state, not that you are married the moment you receive the license.
 - (4) One is not a son of God the moment he believes that Jesus is the Christ, but he then has the power or the right to become a son of God. Cf. Ac.2:36-38; 8:35-38.
4. V.13: “Which were born” (negatively):
- a. “Not of blood”
 - (1) Descent from Abraham, David or any other person does not make one a child or a son of God.
 - b. “Nor of the will of the flesh”
 - (1) The efforts and exertions of our own human hearts and nature may reform, but can not regenerate, the life, Ac.3:19; 9:1-9; 22:6-16; Tit.3:4-7; Ac.10:1-6; Ac.11:13,14.
 - c. “Nor of the will of man”
 - (1) We are not begotten of God by the acts and deeds of our fellow-men, however much they may aid us in leading right lives, Rom.9:1-3.
5. V.13: “Which were born” (positively):
- a. “Not of, nor of...but of God”

- (1) It is a spiritual birth, not a physical one, and its elements are more particularly detailed in Jno.3:3-8 as a “new birth,” a being “born again,” not of the flesh, but “of water and of the Spirit.” Cf. 1Jno.4:7; 5:1; Ac.2:36-41; 1Pet.1:22-25; Jas.1:18; Mk.16:15,16.
- b. For emphasis: They are said to be “born...of (“ek”) God”
 - (1) This NEW BIRTH, this spiritual birth, was not after the pattern of the fleshly birth, nor did it originate in the will or man, or by decent from man, but “of (ek) God”.
 - (2) God alone can impart spiritual life; only God can save or forgive sins, Mk.2:7; Lk.5:20,21.
 - (3) The preposition “of” is from the Greek preposition “ek” (not “dia”) and denotes origin or source and not means or instrumentality as would have been indicated by the Greek preposition “dia”.
 - (4) Those thus born do not trace their origin from man or of men, but from God and of God.
6. Though not **of** or **out of** man’s will, it is **through** man’s will, since man’s will must be brought into subjection to the will of God before the new birth can occur, Mt.7:21-23; 11:28-30; Lk.6:46; Jno.5:39,40; 7:37; 1Pet.1:22,23; Jas.1:18; 1Cor.4:15; Mk.16:15,16; Ac.2:21,36-41; Heb.5:8,9.
 (See The Fourfold Gospel, McGarvey, Pendleton, p.3, and A Commentary On The Gospel According To John, by Guy N. Woods, pp.29-31)
7. One thus “born again” or “born anew” or “born of water and of the Spirit”, is said to be “a new creature in Christ,” and that by means of “the ministry of reconciliation” given to the apostles, which is effected by “the word of reconciliation” (or the gospel) committed to the apostles, wherein they as “ambassadors of Christ” said, “as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God,” 2Cor.5:17-21. Cf. Ac.26:15-20; Mk.16:15,16; 1Cor.1:21; 15:1,2.
 - a. Once again, it is obvious that both God and man have a part in this salvation. Cf. Eph.2:8; Tit.2:11,12; Ac.2:36-41
 - b. Once again, it is obvious that it is not by race, but by grace

B. BIBLE EVIDENCE THAT THE JEWS HAD A PROBLEM UNDERSTANDING, LEARNING AND ACCEPTING THAT SALVATION WAS NOT BY RACE OR FLESHLY DESCENT FROM ABRAHAM.

1. John the Baptist, the harbinger of Jesus Christ, came as the messenger of God to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, the Jews, living under the law of Moses, to bring them to repentance and prepare them to accept Jesus who was to come after him.
 - a. To do this he came preaching “the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus,” Ac.19:4; Mk.1:1-15; Mt.3:1-6; Lk.3:1-6; Jno.1:19-34.
 - b. Thus they would have to trust in Jesus Christ for their salvation, not Abraham. Cf. Lk.19:10; Mt.1:21-23; Isa.53:5,6,10-12.
2. The Pharisees and Sadducees refused the plea and preaching of John the Baptist and his baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, because they trusted in their fleshly descent from and fleshly relationship to Abraham for their salvation, or salvation by race rather than grace, Mt.3:7-12; Lk.3:7,8; Cf. Jno.8:30-44.
 - a. Even Peter, as an apostles, at first didn’t understand, as the case of Cornelius proves, Ac.10:1-20 (10:34,35); 11:1-18; 15:1-11.
 - b. Neither did the Jews as whole, Ac.22:20-22.

C. BIBLE EVIDENCE THAT SALVATION, RATHER THAN BEING BY RACE, IS BY GRACE.

1. By grace, Eph.2:5,8; 1:2-7; 2Tim.1:8,9; Tit.2:11-14 (Cf.Heb.2:9); Tit.3:4-7.
2. Not by race, Rom.9:6-8 (Gal.4:21-23); Gal.2:16; 3:1-9,26-29; Cf. Phil.3:3-7; Jno.3:5-7; Jno.1:11-13.

D. HOW IS IT BY GRACE? IS IT CONDITIONAL OR UNCONDITIONAL?

1. Being by grace, it can’t be of debt or meritorious works, Rom.4:1-8 (Psa.32:1,2).
2. But being by grace doesn’t mean it is grace alone, or unconditional; for it is by “grace through faith,” Eph.2:8; Rom.5:1,2.

3. True, we are saved by grace; but we are also saved by the gospel, which is the gospel of the grace of God, which is also God's power to save the believer, which gospel must be obeyed, 1Cor. 15:1,2; Eph.1:13; Rom.1:16,17; Ac.20:24; Eph.3:6; Tit.3:4-7; Mk.16:15,16; 1Pet.4:17,18; 2Th.1:6-10; Cf. Mt.7:21-23; Heb.5:8,9.
4. It is not by debt or meritorious works (Rom.4:4); neither is it by grace alone (Eph.2:8), nor by faith alone (Jas.2:14-26; 1Pet.5:6-10).
5. Therefore, salvation by grace is conditioned upon man by his obedience of faith accepting what God offers to man by his grace, Rom.1:5; 16:25,26; 6:16-18; Eph.2:8; 1:13; Ac.19:1-5.

E. THE BIBLE ALSO TEACHES THAT ONE ONCE SAVED BY GRACE CAN SO SIN AS TO FALL FROM GRACE AND EVEN BE LOST ETERNALLY, Ac.8:12,13,18-24; 1Cor.9:27; 10:12; Gal.5:1-4; Heb.2:1-3; 3:12-14 (Cf. Ps.106:12,24); Heb.12:14,15; 2Pet.2:20-21; Heb.6:4-6; 10:28-31.

III. CONCLUSION

1. Remember what our introductory text teaches.
 - a. What he gives to those who "believe on his name": "the power to become the sons of God"
 - b. These are "born": "not of blood," "nor of the will of the flesh", "nor of the will of man".
 - c. They are "born of God" – a spiritual birth, the new birth, born again, born anew, born from above, when they exercise their faith in Jesus as the Son of God in obedience to the gospel, which is God's power to save the believer.
2. Though the Jews as a nation had a problem understanding, learning and accepting that salvation was not by race or fleshly descent from Abraham, but by grace, many of them were persuaded to see the truth
 - a. Such as the 3,000 on Pentecost, Ac.2.
 - b. Another 5,000 men were added, Ac.4:4.
 - c. Ac.5:14 says, "believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women".
 - d. Ac.6:7 records the fact that "...the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of priests were obedient to the faith."

- e. Eventually, even Saul of Tarsus, that great persecutor of the faith, was converted, Ac.9; Ac.22; 1Tim.1:12-15.
- 3. Unfortunately, there are those today who are still trusting in and basing their hope on their fleshly descent from Abraham, or salvation by race, rather than by grace.
- 4. Still others are basing their hope on the religion of their ancestors (their family – parents, grandparents, etc.), which is, in effect, no better than the Jews trusting in their fleshly descent from Abraham.
- 5. Neither family religion nor human traditions will save you. It is by grace through faith in obedience to the gospel of Christ
- 6. This is the only way to be washed by the blood of Christ and have the remission of sins; this is salvation by grace through faith; this is to be “born of God”.