

Romans 11:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

Analysis

And if by grace, then is it no more of works—Paul establishes an absolute antithesis between charis (χάρις, "grace") and erga (ἔργα, "works"). The Greek uses emphatic negation: ouketi ex ergōn (οὐκέτι ἐξ ἔργων, "no longer from works"). Grace and works are mutually exclusive bases for salvation. The reasoning is logical: **otherwise grace is no more grace**. If human merit contributes even partially, grace ceases to be grace—it becomes payment, obligation, debt.

The second half (found in some manuscripts) reinforces the converse: **But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work**. This textual variant, though not in all manuscripts, makes the logic explicit. Work that earns nothing is not truly work; grace that depends on merit is not truly grace. Paul's point: the remnant exists by unmerited divine choice, preserving the gospel's essence. Any admixture of works destroys grace, just as any admixture of grace negates works-based righteousness.

Historical Context

First-century Judaism debated the relationship between God's covenant grace and human obedience (covenantal nomism). Paul clarifies that the basis of the remnant's existence is grace alone—God's electing love precedes and produces

faithful response, not vice versa. This challenged merit-theology in both Jewish and Gentile contexts.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. Why are grace and works mutually exclusive as the basis of salvation? What confuses people about this distinction?
2. How does the doctrine of grace alone guard against both legalism and antinomianism?
3. In what subtle ways do we attempt to add works to grace, thereby nullifying both?

Interlinear Text

εἰ	δὲ	χάρις	οὐκέτι	ἐξ	ἔργον	ἐπεὶ	ἢ	χάρις
if	And	by grace	G3765	it be of	work	otherwise	G3588	by grace
G1487	G1161	G5485		G1537	G2041	G1893		G5485
οὐκέτι	γίνεται	χάρις	εἰ	δὲ	ἐξ	ἔργον	οὐκέτι	ἐστίν
G3765		is	by grace	if	And	it be of	G3765	is
		G1096	G5485	G1487	G1161	G1537	G2041	G2076
χάρις	ἐπεὶ	τὸ	ἔργον	οὐκέτι	ἐστίν	ἔργον		
by grace	otherwise	G3588	work	G3765	is	work		
G5485	G1893		G2041		G2076	G2041		

Additional Cross-References

2 Timothy 1:9 (Grace): Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,

Galatians 5:4 (Grace): Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

1 Corinthians 15:10 (Grace): But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

Galatians 2:21 (Grace): I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

Titus 3:5 (Grace): Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

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