

GRACE

KEY QUESTIONS:

- What is grace?
- What do people mean when they talk about the 'grace of God'?
- How is grace connected to the Law, sin, Jesus, salvation and atonement?

INTRODUCTION

In this session we will discover the meaning of grace to Christians, then answer the key questions before moving on to tackle an exam style question.

So, what is grace? There are several meanings to the word, but the grace we are learning about, within the context of Christianity, refers to *the undeserved love and kindness that is freely given by God to all humans*.

CONSIDER

1. One of the most famous Christian hymns ever written is Amazing Grace. You can listen to it at https://youtu.be/HsCp5LG_zNE

“Amazing Grace”

by John Newton

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

These are the first
three verses of
Amazing Grace.

There's a very special story behind this hymn. You can read about it at <https://request.org.uk/teachers/teaching-resources/people-places/significant-people/john-newton/>

TASK

How has God shown grace to the writer of this hymn? Why would the writer think that the grace was underserved?

2. It's time to get another Christian perspective on the subject of God's grace.

Watch the video at <http://request.org.uk/issues/the-grace-of-god/>

TASK

- a. What did the girl mean when she said she was trying to earn 'God points' by doing lots of stuff to please Him?
- b. She said she found it hard always doing stuff. She found it stressful trying to figure out if God was pleased with her or not. What happened to make her change her approach to God? What did she find?
- c. What did this new approach mean for her life?
- d. 'Grace makes a huge difference to religion, because our faith is not about good works, but about accepting God's good grace for us.' What does this mean?
- e. Why doesn't the girl panic anymore when she forgets to pray?
- f. Explain what you have learned so far about the grace of God.

3. Sources of Wisdom and Authority

Your exam board will want you to show that you understand grace, but you may need to refer to Christian teachings from sources of wisdom and authority. We're going to be digging into the Bible for these.

"For it is by God's grace that you have been saved through faith. It is not the result of your own efforts, but God's gift, so that no one can boast about it."

Ephesians 2:8-9

QUESTION

How does this verse from Ephesians link with what the girl in the video talked about when she discovered God's grace?

- 1 "God puts people right through their faith in Jesus Christ. God does this to all who believe in Christ, because there is no difference at all: everyone has sinned and is far away from God's saving presence. But by the free gift of God's grace all are put right with him through Christ Jesus, who sets them free."

Romans 3:22-24

TASK

These three extracts from the Bible show us a bit more about God's grace. Explain how they are connected.

- 2 "Christ died for our sins."
1 Corinthians 15:3

- 3 "Sin must not be your master; for you do not live under law but under God's grace."

1 Corinthians 15:3

“When the day of Pentecost came, all the believers were gathered together in one place. Suddenly there was a noise from the sky which sounded like a strong wind blowing, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then they saw what looked like tongues of fire which spread out and touched each person there. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to talk in other languages, as the Spirit enabled them to speak.

There were Jews living in Jerusalem, religious people who had come from every country in the world. When they heard this noise, a large crowd gathered. They were all excited because all of them heard the believers talking in their own languages.”

Acts 2:1-6

This shows that the people of Israel were no longer living under the Law, which required them to make a sacrifice for their sins. Through the death of Jesus on the cross they were living under God’s grace. This meant that God’s grace now extended to everyone across the world, not just the people of Israel. Nobody needed to be separate from God because of their sins. Jesus’ death was the ‘once and for all’ sacrifice, the atonement for everybody’s sin. That is amazing grace!

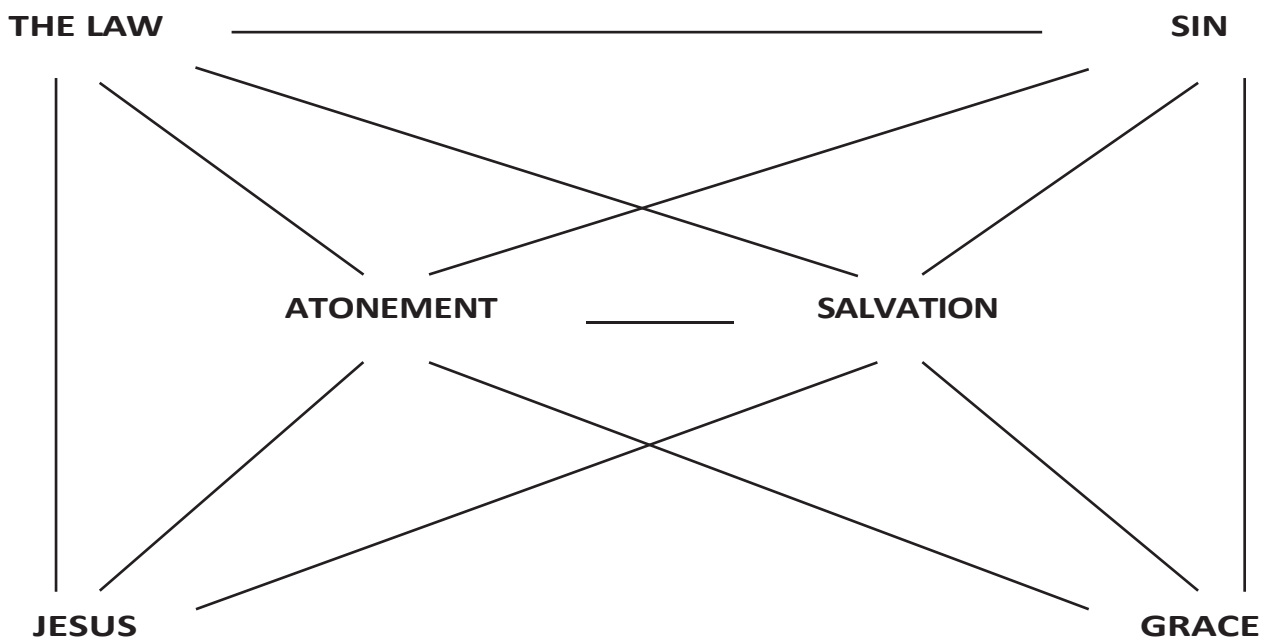
QUESTION

How are the Law, sin, atonement, Jesus, salvation and grace connected?

TASK

- On a blank sheet of paper, write out each of the keywords above, leaving lots of space in between them.
- Next, draw lines between them.
- On each line, write how the concepts are connected. Make at least one connection between all the concepts. You will find the extracts and previous learning on these concepts helpful.

See the diagram on the following page as an example.



4. Exam Questions

There are a number of exam boards across the UK. You should attempt the question which relates to your exam board because each of them has their own terminology and guidance about how to answer. If you aren't sure which your exam board is, contact your teacher to ask.

WJEC EDUQAS

Explain Christian teachings about grace. *(5 marks)*

PEARSON EDEXCEL

Explain two Christian teachings about grace. *(5 marks)*

In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom or authority.

AQA

Explain two Christian teachings about grace. *(5 marks)*

Refer to sacred writings or another source of Christian belief and teaching in your answer.

OCR

- a. Describe what is meant by grace. *(3 marks)*
- b. Outline one Christian teaching about grace. *(3 marks)*

SQA - N5

- a. Explain Christian belief about grace. *(4 marks)*
- b. How might belief about grace affect Christians? *(4 marks)*