

So Great Salvation

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Chapter Seventeen

WHY DOES GOD SAVE MAN?

When one considers the awfulness of man's sin against GOD and GOD's omnipotence which includes the power to create another being to take the place of man, if and when he were destroyed by GOD's judgments, there comes a question that demands an answer. It is this. Why does GOD save man?

That Man Shall Not Perish

The first answer to this question is found in John 3:16. "**For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life**" (John 3:16). Here GOD's purpose is in consideration of man. GOD knows as no one else the awfulness of an everlasting destruction from His presence and from the glory of His power (II Thessalonians 1:9) which shall be the lot of those who are not saved. His love, and that at the cost of His Own SON, would spare the creature from this punishment even though through sin he had become an enemy. The importance to man of being saved from perishing is so great that no one this side of eternity shall ever realize it even in a small degree.

Unto Good Works

Some lightly and mistakenly say that to them salvation is more than "a fire escape from hell!" Its importance to them is for the present life. It is true that one of GOD's purposes in saving man relates to man's life on this earth,

but the eternal values of salvation far outweigh any temporal advantages as the infinite is greater than the finite. Furthermore, GOD's purpose for the earthly life of the saved person is that eternal values may result therefrom. In connection with the statement that salvation is by grace and not of works it is also stated that it is so in order that there may be good works by those who are saved. **"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which GOD hath before ordained that we should walk in them"** (Ephesians 2:10).

GOD does not save man because of man's good works, but that it may be possible for man to do good works. Neither does GOD save man and deliver him out of an evil world and the power of darkness, to continue a life of sin as before. While GOD's ultimate purposes in salvation are eternal, the new nature given to one who has been saved is necessarily reflected in his present earthly existence. Paul said **"How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"** (Romans 6:2) and in writing to Titus he said, **"I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works"** (Titus 3:8). It was to be a *constant* affirmation by Titus that good works were to be *maintained*. Certainly GOD's purpose for the life of every saved person is that he do good works. Even His grace abounds toward the saved that they **"always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work"** (II Corinthians 9:8).

It is important to recognize just what constitutes good works. First of all, there are only certain ones who can perform good works. They are those who are **"created in Christ Jesus"** thereto. Only those who are saved can do works that GOD will accept as good.

Again, not all of the works by those who are saved are "good works." The "good works" of the saved were **"afore prepared that we should walk in them."** That which has been prepared by GOD beforehand must be according to His will and purpose. Therefore many seemingly good works by saved people which are self-willed and planned do not come under GOD's "good works."

Evidently these works, in order to be good, must be to the glory of GOD and not for the glory of man. ". . . **whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God"** (I Corinthians 10:31). **"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him"** (Colossians 3:17).

Much of the present day social welfare work which is often prompted by deeply sympathetic feelings and carried out with much sacrifice cannot be

included in GOD's good works because GOD is entirely left out. It is not done by saved people. The works are not "**afore prepared by God**" and the objective is not the glory of GOD. It cannot be denied that these works have an unmistakable value, but that value is a temporal one and has no relation to GOD's work of salvation which involves eternal values.

If and when the social work is done as a means of bringing to the needy not only temporal help but also spiritual and eternal aid through salvation, then it becomes "good works" according to GOD's purpose in salvation.

The good works are good because they have a part in the carrying out of GOD's whole program of salvation, and are not in themselves the ultimate objective. They are, as it were, a link in the chain of things that shall finally culminate in the praise of the glory of GOD.

To the Glory of His Grace

If GOD had only had in mind the matter of salvation from everlasting separation from Himself and unto good works, His work of salvation could have stopped far short of what it does. It would only have been necessary to have restored man to Adam's original condition in the garden of Eden. He could there continue in everlasting bliss and fellowship with GOD and carry on good works. But, as has been seen, GOD does far more than restore man to Adam's original state. Consequently there must be another and even far greater reason for GOD to save man. And so there is.

That it was the love of GOD that caused Him to save man suggests the possibility that in salvation GOD found a way to express His love as in no other way. JESUS in His prayer to His FATHER said; ". . . **the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one . . . that the world may know that thou hast . . . loved them, as thou hast loved me**" (John 17:22-23). That part of GOD's work of salvation through which the glory of CHRIST is given to those who accept Him is here expressly said to be in demonstration of GOD's love for them.

Ephesians 2:7 teaches that salvation is in order "**that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.**" Ephesians 1:5-6 declare that the saved have been predestinated "**unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself . . . to the praise of the glory of his grace.**"

"**The heavens declare the glory of God**" (Psalm 19:1). That glory is the glory of His creative power. When GOD's work of salvation has been consummated and they who are saved during this age have been brought

into a perfect unity with GOD then shall there be praise, not only to the glory of His creative power, but to the glory of His grace. This is the very highest pinnacle of GOD's glory, and to accomplish this is the greatest reason why GOD in this age saves man.

Lucifer, in sinning, refused to give unto GOD His due glory. So also Adam and the entire human race, because of sin, have not glorified GOD as GOD. In saving man, His lost and rebellious creature, GOD does so, not only to restore the lost glory due Him as CREATOR, but to gain a far greater glory, the glory of the REDEEMER and the SAVIOUR.

If man could contribute the least bit to salvation, by just that much would the praise of the glory of the grace of GOD be reduced. He could not be praised for that which man contributed. The glory of His grace must be absolute. It cannot be marred. An infinite GOD cannot be infinite if His glory is diminished by the slightest amount.

That is why human merit and the works of man are excluded as a contributing factor in salvation. That is why no flesh shall glory in His presence (I Corinthians 1:29) and that is why the basic principle of salvation is by grace through faith.

In salvation GOD does not salvage something that is good in man. He takes an utterly lost and condemned sinner, and raises him apart from any of his own merit to His own divine level and glory, all to the end that the glory of His grace may be praised.

Only as it is seen that the great purpose of GOD in salvation is to the praise of the glory of His grace, is it at all possible to understand why GOD does not destroy man (who in rebellion against Him tried to make himself like GOD) but instead actually transforms him into that exalted condition that he, in rebellion, sought to gain. There can be no greater manifestation of grace than that. Nothing could call forth praise to the glory of GOD's grace more than that action. Herein is also a reason why GOD permitted man to sin.

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counselor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." (Romans 11:33-36)