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WHY IS SALVATION BY GRACE?

BY: C. D. COLE

INTRODUCTION: Salvation by grace is a revealed doctrine. It was not invented by men, nor even discovered by men. It is a declared truth; declared, set forth in Spirit and in spite of the clear revelation many, who profess to believe the Bible, persist in their belief that salvation is by human works, deeds of the law, keeping the ten commandments, or some other works. Ephesians 2:8-10, *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."* Romans 11:6, *"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."* Romans 5:20, *"Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."* Ephesians 1:7, *"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."* II Timothy 1:9, *"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."* Titus 3:5, *"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."

Salvation by grace means two things:

1. That salvation is without merit on our part.
2. That it is without necessity on God's part.

1. There is no merit on our part. We can do nothing to earn salvation. We might as well talk about a criminal earning a palace from the governor as to talk about a sinner earning heaven. We might as well talk about an ant crushing an elephant, or a monkey producing one of Shakespeare's plays.

Salvation is costly but we have nothing to pay. Christ paid it all. Christ put all our sins away by the sacrifice of Himself. His blood cleanseth us from all sin. There is merit in salvation but all the merit is in Christ. And this makes salvation by grace to us. He met justice that we might have grace. He bought salvation that we might have the gift. Romans 11:6, *"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."* You cannot have a salvation half of grace and half of works; you cannot begin to be saved by grace and continue to be saved by works. Romans 4:4-5, *Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is*

counted for righteousness."

2. It is without necessity on God's part. God was under no obligation to save anybody. Who are the people who need salvation? They are sinners, rebels against God's government, people who would dethrone Him if they could, enemies to God by wicked works. Is a government obligated to its enemies, to those who would destroy it? Is a righteous judge under necessity to give his son to die for criminals?

Why is salvation by grace?

1. Because God is determined to have no boasters in heaven. This world is filled with boasters. About all you hear is human praise on the one hand and criticism on the other hand. Much of the praise is self praise. But in heaven there will be no human praise or human criticism. In heaven there will be love and good will among all the citizens. But Christ will be the object of praise and the center of attraction, as His people behold His glory. Can we anticipate His glory? What will that glory be? Think of the glory of the victorious general returned from battle, the victorious athlete carried on shoulders of shouting admirers, the glory of the skilled surgeon whose name is on everybody's lips. But all this will be nothing as compared to the glory of Christ. His will be the glory of the victorious Captain of our salvation; glory of the King of Kings; glory of One who conquered death and demons; glory of the sinless Son of God. If salvation were by works men would have occasion to boast. And heaven would be filled with self praise and Christ would hardly be

noticed.

2. Because God means to display the glory of His grace. The divine objective in salvation is the glory of His grace. Ephesians 1:6-7, *"To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."* Ephesians 1:12, *"That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ."* Ephesians 1:14, *"Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."* Ephesians 2:7, *"That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."*

Heaven will be a monument to God's grace; hell will be a monument to His justice. If you want to see how just God is, turn your eyes to the torments of hell; if you want to see how gracious He is, fix your eyes on the glory of heaven.

Some of you may have gone through the Jefferson Memorial building in St. Louis where the Lindbergh trophies are housed. There are gifts and trophies to the honor of the famous flyer from all parts of the world. Gifts from kings and queens and other notables of this world.

Heaven will be filled with trophies to the grace of God. There we will see the dying thief; the scarlet woman, the despised publican, the cruel jailer, the filthy Magdalene, the proud persecuting Saul; yea, a multitude of sinners too great to number, all trophies of His mighty grace. All of us will be to the honor of His grace.

3. Because God means for His Son to have all the credit and honor for our salvation. We are saved for His sake, not ours. Ephesians 4:32, *"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."* John 17:24, *"Father, I will*

that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."

4. Because God wants to have grateful servants. If salvation were on the basis of works, then men would be working for themselves. They would do only that which would contribute to the salvation. Nothing would be done out of love, fear should be the impelling motive.

In your secular jobs, for whom are you working? In the real sense of the term, you are working for yourself and family, your service is not grateful service for anything your company has done for you; you expect a pay envelope at the end of the week. And you keep on working for fear the pay envelope will be empty. But let me tell you, heaven will not be something you find in a pay envelope on the day of judgment. Heaven will come as a gift from the bleeding hands of Jesus Christ.

Suppose salvation were by works, then the question would be how much works? Or rather how little can I do and get to heaven? Salvation by works does not make men work harder. Because of their wrong attitude, they do not think of how much they can do, but how little and still be saved. The greatest servants of God have been men who believed in salvation by grace.

If salvation were by works, every man in his natural state would drive a hard bargain with God. They would want to know the minimum of what it would take to save them. They would want to do nothing except that which would contribute to their salvation.

If salvation were by works, then the motive would be wrong. Suppose salvation were on the basis of giving God a tithe. Would you be willing to give a tenth of all you make for salvation? You say, Yes. Your motive would be selfish. But if you give a tithe as a grateful servant for salvation by grace, then your motive is love.

Salvation by grace does not do wrong with works, but puts works in its right place. I Corinthians 15:10,

"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."

THE SECRET OF TRUE GREATNESS

BY: C. D. COLE

Matthew 20:20-28, *"Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him.*

And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.

But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able.

And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism, that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.

And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren.

But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.

But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;

And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:

Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

This passage shows that human nature, in the days of our Lord's earthly pilgrimage, was very much like it is today. The mother of James and John came with them to Jesus and requested a place of prominence in the coming kingdom. And from

that time until now it has been common for men to seek the pre-eminence. This whole question of earthly ambition needs to be studied anew in the light of divine revelation. In this passage we have the mind of the master upon the question. May our hearts be willing to receive His teaching.

It is perfectly legitimate to desire to be great. There is such a thing as a scriptural ambition. It is right for us to desire the best. II Peter 1:5-7, *"And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity."* We are to grow in grace and in knowledge of the truth. We are to grow up into Him in all things, which is the head even Christ.

But we need to see the difference in a desire to be great and a desire to be the greatest. May we all desire to be great and may none of us desire to be the greatest. A desire to be the greatest is a desire to have others below us.

What makes a man great?

What are the elements of true greatness?

1. It is not a position. There are many who imagine if they could get a position of prominence they would immediately become great. Not so. True greatness has nothing to do with position at all. A man may occupy a very exalted position and may be a very little man; and he may occupy a very humble position and be the world's greatest.

2. It is not worldly honor. Some of the most popular men are some of the smallest. As a matter of fact, few of the great characters of history were great in the eyes of their contemporaries. It was not until they had passed from the scene of

action that their worth and greatness dawned upon men. The greatest philanthropist was killed by the world. The man who accomplished the most for the world was the man whom the world judged to be unfit to live. Our Lord said, *"Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist,"* and yet this man was killed by those who the world would pronounce as great. May we be delivered from the world's judgment of who are the great, for the world's judgment is a perverted judgment.

3. It is not in the exercise of authority. What fools a little authority can make of men. A lot of men think they are big men because they have a little authority.

4. It is not wealth. Some of the weakest characters I have ever known were men of wealth. The world has always sought to honor men of wealth. I have seen men of wealth honored by the world only to lose their honor, praise, when they lost their wealth.

5. It is also not the opposite--poverty.

What is the secret of true greatness?

1. It is imparted quality. It is not something you can put on a man, but something God puts in a man. It is grace that makes men great. I Corinthians 5:10, *"I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."* I say we need to get away from the world's idea of a great man. Men like Napoleon, Caesar, etc., were not great men in any true sense of the term.

"Are you able?" was the question which Jesus put to James and John. You want position, but can you go with me all the way? And that is the question he is asking each one of us. Can you drink of my cup and be baptized with my baptism?

2. True greatness is a willing-

ness to share Christ's cup of shame and suffering. True greatness consists of cross bearing. Cross bearing is a willingness to be treated by this world as Christ was treated. Matthew 10:24-25, *"The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?"* There is a cup of wrath which Jesus drank alone.

"Death and the curse were in our cup;
O Christ was full for Thee!
But thou hast drained the last dark drop,
'Tis empty now for me;
That bitter cup, love drank it up;
Now blessing's draught for me."

There is the cup of salvation for us because Christ drank the cup of God's wrath against sin for sufferings. There is a sense in which we may share his cup. Let us look into His cup to see what was in it, and thereby learn what will be our cup if we choose to be faithful to Him.

SHAME--He who shared the glory with the Father became a spectacle of shame before men. The cross was a shameful death. Hebrews 12:2, *"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith: who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."* Can you share his shame?

SUFFERING--His suffering was spoken under the figure of baptism. His suffering was great. To be great there must be a willingness to suffer with Him. II Timothy 2:12, *"If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him: if we deny him, he also will deny us."*

SERVICE--Matthew 20:28, *"Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and give His life a ransom for man."*