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EXEGESIS OF JOHN 17:2

BY C. D. COLE

"As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him," John 17:2.

INTRODUCTION: This text comes out of the high priestly prayer of the Saviour. He prays as if His work on the cross had been accomplished, and looks to the future results of that work. The cross was not viewed as a venture or experiment which might end in disappointment, but as a successful transaction that brings satisfaction. Isaiah saw him on the cross and said, *'He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities,'* Isaiah 53:11.

Our text is interesting and instructive in the use of the word "give," three times it occurs. Giving is a common word of the Saviour. God is set forth as a great giver. *"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. The word give was often upon the lips of Christ. He taught the blessedness of giving. *"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive,"* Acts 20:35b.

But the world is more concerned about getting. And this passion for getting has made the world a society of gamblers and thieves and murderers. People do not war over giving. The spirit of giving is the only spirit that will save from war and the world will never have that spirit until we have a world of redeemed society on the new earth. The rule for peace among Christians is to give in and give up and forgive.

This passion for getting takes us to the origin of sin and the nature of sin. It re-

veals human selfishness, self before God and self before others. Eve became more concerned about getting what God had prohibited than about giving thanks for what He had provided.

Our text speaks about giving. It speaks of transactions between God the Father and God the Son. Giving is God-like, getting for personal ends is devil-like. Speaking of Lucifer, which is Satan, *"For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High,"* Isaiah 14:13-14.

I. Our text speaks of authority given to Christ. *"As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him,"* John 17:2. The word for power is not the word which means ability - not the word for might but the word for right. It speaks of the rights of Christ over all flesh. *"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power (authority) is given unto me in heaven and in earth,"* Matthew 28:18.

This authority is given to Christ as the Son of Man, as the official Mediator between God and man. As the Son of God, He had this authority as Creator by whom were all things made. We must distinguish between Christ as Creator and Christ as Mediator or Redeemer. As Creator, He was God and had all authority, but as Mediator He was the Son of Man and universal authority was given as the reward of His suffering unto death. The Lord Jesus Christ has authority over all flesh and one day His dominion will be recognized. *"For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God,"* Romans 14:11. He is a universal Lord, but

not a universal Saviour.

II. The purpose or end of this authority is that He might give eternal life to those given Him by the Father. This is a plain statement and not hard to understand. It may be hard for some to believe, but not for them to understand. Observe,

1. Christ gives eternal life. It is not sold for a bargain. *"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price,"* Isaiah 55:1. No human merit of any kind is required. The man who thinks there is some good thing he can do to inherit eternal life is the man who does not get it. Christ did not purchase eternal life for the purpose of selling it. He is no speculator. He bought it to bestow on others.

2. Christ gives eternal life. Nobody else can give it. *"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand,"* John 10:28-29. Despise Him and you perish.

3. Christ gives eternal life. Not a temporary blessing.

4. Eternal life is given by Christ to those given Him by His Father. There was a lot of giving in the transaction of the everlasting covenant of grace. God gave to Christ a people and He gave Christ to the people. This was a secret transaction and we know those given only as it is manifested in the faith and good works.

JUSTIFICATION OR SIN AND SALVATION

BY: C.D. COLE

“And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses,” Acts 13:39.

INTRODUCTION: Sin has wrought terribly and widely in the human race. Its death-dealing bombs have exploded in every human heart, for there is none that doeth good and sinneth not. Sin has given to every man a knock-out punch. Whatever approach you make to man sin has left its awful mark upon him. View man as to his intellect, sin has darkened his mind, so that the things of God are foolishness to him. The natural man is in a state of moral darkness. *“For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light,”* Ephesians 5:8. Look at man from the standpoint of his affections, it will be seen that he is in love with evil and hates the good. He even hates God, the sum of all excellency. *“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be,”* Romans 8:7. *“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”* Jeremiah 17:9. Look at man in his physical makeup, he is wonderfully made. There is nothing lacking in his constitution to enable him to live forever, but alas sin has placed the germ of disease in the human body so that man is shortlived, he begins to die as soon as he begins to live. This germ of disease has conquered the race in all ages, from the infant of a span to the old man. Look at man in his relation to God, he is awful to behold. Made in the image and likeness of God, sin has so warped and twisted him that he is more like the devil than God. He has transgressed God's holy law and the sword of justice is suspended over him. He has been indicted, tried, and convicted of rebellion, and the sentence of condemnation has been passed upon him. If the natural man had his right mind such a condition would make him miserable beyond words of description, but with a ruined mind he walks on the precipice of hell without knowing it. Suppose a man commits murder and immediately loses his mind. The process of law in his indictment, arrest, and conviction makes no impression, he does not grasp the meaning of the sentence of death. This is the way with the sinner until the Holy Spirit opens his heart to the things of God and convicts him of his sin and ruin.

If sin is awful, salvation is glorious. Salvation is deliverance from sin, and there are as many aspects to salvation as there are to sin. If sin ruins the mind then in salvation there is given a sound mind, so that the sinner like the prodigal comes to himself. If sin ruins the affections, in salvation the man hates sin and loves God. The things he once hated he now loves and the things he once loved he now hates. If sin ruins the body and takes it to the grave then salvation provides a resurrection with a deathless and glorious body. If sin sends men to hell, then salvation takes men to heaven. If sin separates men from God and brings His curse upon them, then salvation brings men to God and into His favor. If sin makes men the children of the devil, then salvation makes them the sons of God.

Salvation in some of its features is instantaneous, in others it is a long drawn out process. Some phases of salvation are in the present, others are in the future. Salvation of the body is the last phase of

salvation, for the last enemy to be destroyed is death. In one sense salvation is at the time of faith, in another sense we can speak of salvation being nearer than when we believed.

GUILT VS. JUSTIFICATION

We are to consider one aspect of sin and salvation in this message, that of guilt and justification. When sin is considered as guilt before God then salvation is called justification.

I. THE MEANING OF JUSTIFICATION.

Justification deals with only one phase of sin and removes the guilt and penalty of sin. Justification is the opposite of condemnation. The justified man is not condemned and if not condemned will not be punished. Justification does not describe any moral change wrought in the sinner. Justification does not make a man righteous, but is a declaration that he is righteous before the law of God. Justification alone would keep a man from hell but it would not fit him for heaven. Justification alone would deliver a man from the guilt of sin, but not from the love of sin. In justification God says to the sinner, My law no longer regards you as a sinner; you are free from the guilt and penalty of sin; you are delivered from the wrath to come.

II. THE AUTHOR OF JUSTIFICATION.

It is God that justifieth. Before you take any comfort from this blessed truth of justification be sure that God has justified you.

1. It is not enough for the sinner to justify himself. His conscience may not condemn him, but the question of guilt and penalty is not left to the conscience. It is not the human conscience but a holy God who has to be satisfied before there can be any justification. Nobody's conscience would consign him to hell.

2. It is not enough to be justified by our friends. Most any of us could find friends who would give us a clean bill of health, and say that we ought not to be punished in hell forever.

3. To be saved from eternal punishment God must justify us.

III. THE WAY OF JUSTIFICATION.

There are two ways: man's way and God's way. Man's way is futile; God's way is effective. Man's way destroys justice by overlooking sin; God's way honors justice by punishing sin. Man's way would make boasters of men; God's way makes men praise the grace of God. Let us look at the two ways separately:

1. Man's way of justification is by works, something the sinner does. Man's way makes self righteousness the sanctuary against the day of wrath. Justification by works takes a thousand forms. The sinner may trust his prayers, his church going, his observance of the ordinances, his character, his family tree, his orthodoxy, his morals, his citizenship, his reputation, his honesty, his sobriety, etc. Of course this way of justification shows the blindness of the sinner. He is blind to the requirements of justice, blind to his own helpless condition, blind to the gospel way of salvation.

2. God's way of justification is abundantly and expressly set forth in the Spirit.

a. God's way of justification is based on the punishment of sin. God forgives the sinner but not his sins, they must be punished. Justice must not be

dethroned. God justifies the sinner who deserves punishment by putting his sins on Christ who died the just for the unjust that he might bring us to God and into his favor.

b. God's way of justification is by imputing the righteousness of His Son to the sinner. Justification is God's declaration that the sinner is righteous. And God does not lie in declaring the sinner to be righteous. If God says I am righteous then I am righteous. But the sinner is not righteous in his own right; his is righteous by the righteousness of Christ. The righteousness of Christ is imputed or credited to him. The believer's righteousness is an imported righteousness, and not of his own make. The righteousness of the believer is not the result of his obedience to the law, but the result of Christ's obedience. My righteousness is based upon Christ's obedience. *“For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous,”* Romans 5:19.

c. God's way of justification is by faith. Faith is the channel through which the righteousness of Christ comes to us. The righteousness I need for God to declare me righteous is the righteousness wrought by Christ. How am I to get His righteousness? How is it to reach me? What must I do to get it? Faith is the righteousness, it is not the substitute for righteousness. It is not faith that God accepts in lieu of righteousness. He will not accept anything as a substitute for righteousness. The sinner must have a righteousness, a perfect righteousness, before God will justify him. It is the righteousness of Christ that God accepts on the sinner's behalf. *“For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness,”* Romans 4:3. *“Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,”* Romans 4:6. Faith is not a full hand but an empty hand that takes the righteousness of Christ. We might say a man has recovered from sickness by taking a certain medicine. We would not attribute his recovery to anything but to the healing virtue of the medicine itself. It would not be his faith that cured him; it was the medicine. I owe a debt I cannot pay. A friend promises to pay it; my creditor does not accept my faith; he must have the money; faith gets the money from my friend.

*“The best obedience of my hands
Dares not appear before His throne,
But faith can answer all demands
By pleading what my Lord hath done.”*

THE CHOICE OF MOSES

BY: C.D. COLE

“By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward,” Hebrews 11:24-26.

One of the most interesting and helpful character studies in the Bible is the life of Moses. His life of 120 years is divided into three periods of 40 years each. The first 40 years were spent in the house of the king of Egypt; the next 40 years were spent in the desert country of Midian as a shepherd; the last 40 years were spent in delivering the people of Israel from Egyptian bondage, and in leading them towards the promised land. Our text introduces us to a crisis in his life, a crisis that changed his future for time and eternity. It tells us of a choice that this man made which was marvelous in its character and eternal in its results. Hebrews 11:24-26. The choice of Moses is to be our study.

1. The character of this choice. Moses, in his journey through life, came to the forks of the road. And he could not take both roads. Looking down the left hand road he saw (1) The throne of Egypt; (2) The pleasure of sin; (3) The treasures of Egypt. He also saw that there was written over these things, "Passing away." "Only for a season." Looking down the other road he saw (1) Affliction; (2) Reproach; (3) Loss of what he already had. He also saw that these things were but for a season, and then such glories and joys and blessings with which the pleasures and treasures and honors of Egypt were not to be compared. So, he deliberately refused the position involved in the offer to be adopted by Pharaoh's daughter. Hebrew historians tell us that Pharaoh had no son, and an only daughter. To be her son would place Moses on the throne of Egypt.

He surrendered the greatest position and honor that the world had to offer. He left something. The infidel world has always sneeringly remarked that when the disciples left all and followed Jesus that they didn't leave much, only a few battered boats and frail nets. He chose to suffer affliction with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

II. The character of the person who made the choice. Worldly men have said that Christianity is for weak-minded people. While it is true that not many of the mighty have been called. Moses was one on them.

1. The choice was made by a full grown man, 40 years old. Not the choice of a child.

2. It was the choice of an educated man. *“And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds,”* Acts 7:22. Educated in mathematics, astronomy and war. Josephus tells us that he was given command of an expedition against the Ethiopians and won a notable victory. Moses was a great statesman.

III. The ground of this choice was faith. This implies a revelation from God, for faith cometh by hearing. What Moses did was rash and foolish unless he had a revelation from God telling him to do what he did. Reason would have argued that Moses could do more for his people by accepting the offer to occupy the throne of Egypt. His influence would mean the end of bondage for his people. It would mean prosperity for them. It would mean their freedom. What else could reason say? But God revealed to Moses in some way that he was not to use his influence for his people but to be identified with them. In this he is a type of Christ. Christ did not save by remaining on the throne in heaven, but by becoming identified with us.

God also showed him the outcome. He looked at the recompense of reward.