

Four Causes Of Man's Salvation

Introduction. In Ephesians 2:1-10, Paul explains the marvelous redemption through grace that all God's children have received. He identifies four causes of man's salvation. Although these are fundamental issues of God's scheme of redemption, many do not fully realize how these elements are woven together.

We will look at the elements on God's side and on man's side to more fully understand how the redemption story spells out a plan for your life.

I. God's Love And Grace

- A. Forgiveness and salvation begin with the gift of God (Romans 5:8). The entire story of the Bible centers on man's need for mercy and grace. The story began in Genesis 3, and unfolded for thousands of years until the time of Christ. From beginning to end, the scheme of redemption — including all that God has done, is doing, and will do — is one continuous act of grace.
- B. Sin placed man in a state of antagonism toward God (Ephesians 2:1-3; cp. Genesis 3:22-24; Isaiah 59:1-2; Hosea 5:6). Sinners are condemned because they have violated God's law, and because God's justice cannot permit Him to ignore sin (Psalm 5:4; 66:18).
- C. Mercy in Ephesians 2:4 indicates the emotion aroused by someone in need and the misery coming from the consequence of sin. Mercy is sympathy in concert with action (Matthew 20:30).
- D. Grace in Ephesians 2:8 preeminently speaks of that kindness by which God bestows favor on the ill-deserving, and grants to sinners the pardon of their offenses, and bids them to accept salvation through Christ.
 1. Grace does not eliminate human responsibility; grace emphasizes human responsibility. Grace, because it cost God so much, has tremendous duties and obligations.
 2. It is a great paradox that the gospel is free, yet at the same time it is so very costly: take up cross, crucify yourself, lose your family, give up activities, love your neighbor, etc.
- E. Putting these two together, God so loved the world with a compassionate, pitying love (mercy), that He gave His only begotten Son (grace), that the world through Him might be saved (John 3:16; cp. Luke 1:78-79).

II. Man's Faith And Obedience

- A. Forgiveness is the operation of God's grace through Christ.
 1. We have forgiveness through His blood (Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14; Hebrews 9:12-14).
 2. When Jesus died on the cross, God could be just and at the same time be the justifier (to put someone right with) of those who believe in and obey His Son (Romans 3:26; 4:25).
 3. There was no way by which God could remain just, and yet save His Son from death (Isaiah 53:4-6, 10; Romans 5:15; 8:3; Hebrews 10:4-10).

- B. Obedient faith is the condition of salvation through grace.
1. Faith is what separates the saved from the lost (John 3:36; Galatians 3:7-9; Ephesians 2:8-9). Man's response of faith is God's condition on which He saves by grace (Romans 4:16).
 2. The will of man is critical to salvation. God forces no one to believe. Each individual must choose whether or not to accept God's condition (faith) in God's means (Christ) to obtain God's operation (forgiveness).
 3. The gospel is the "word of His grace" (Acts 20:32; Romans 1;16-17), and grace teaches us to obey God's righteousness (Titus 2:11-12).
 - a) This does not mean salvation is by perfect law keeping. The Law of Moses proved that was impossible (Galatians 2:16; Philippians 3:9).
 - b) However, faith working through love will not refuse to obey any commandment (Galatians 5:6; James 2:20-24; 1 John 5:2-3).
 - (1) Faith comes by hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17), and walking "by faith" (2 Corinthians 5:7) means to walk in the works "which God prepared beforehand" (Ephesians 2:10).
 - (2) Obeying "that form of doctrine" does not nullify grace, but is God's condition by which we can be "servants of righteousness" (Romans 6:17-18).

III. Uniting The Four

- A. Several examples of faith illustrate obedient faith which results in the unmerited favor of God.
1. Noah prepared an ark (Genesis 6:22; Hebrews 11:7).
 2. Abraham obeyed and went out (Acts 7:4; Hebrews 11:8).
 3. Israel passed through the Red Sea (Hebrews 11:29; Exodus 14:21-22).
 4. The walls of Jericho fell (Hebrews 11:30; Joshua 6:1-5, 12-20).
 5. Naaman dipped in the Jordan River (2 Kings 5:1-14).
- B. Repentance and baptism, performed as obedient faith to works ordained by God, do not nullify grace but rather unite grace and faith (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4).

Conclusion. No one will ever appreciate to what level they have been raised by God's grace until they recognize that they have been saved from a sinful state. Because sinners are redeemed by the sacrifice of Christ, and not their own righteousness, they are sanctified by the mercy and grace of God (1 Corinthians 1:9).

Because we are saved by grace, Christ's demands are consistent with His sufferings. He demands that we give up everything for Him. He insists that we take up our cross; He took up His. He insists that we lose our life; He lost His. He insists that we give up our families for His sake; He gave up His for ours. He had nowhere to lay His head, and His only possession — the robe on His back — was taken from Him. The costs are high, but the blessings we receive are priceless. He dispenses mercy and grace, and offers salvation to all who will believe in and obey Him.