

The Gospel of our Salvation

“Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.”

I Corinthians 15:1-3 (NASB)

Charles Spurgeon writes, “In these days I feel bound to go over and over again the elementary truths of the gospel. In peaceful times we may feel free to make excursions into interesting districts of truth which lie far afield; but now we must stay at home, and guard the hearts and homes of the church by defending the first principles of the faith. In this age there have risen up in the church itself men who speak perverse things. There be many that trouble us with their philosophies and novel interpretations, whereby they deny the doctrines they profess to teach, and undermine the faith they are pledged to maintain. It is well that some of us, who know what we believe, and have no secret meanings for our words, should just put our foot down and maintain our standing, holding forth the word of life, and plainly declaring the foundation truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ” (The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, Vol.32, p.385).

Extremely Important

A Work in Progress

This workbook is the first in a long series of workbooks dealing with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Over the last several years, I have spent countless hours and many sleepless nights arranging texts and accumulating quotes from those that I consider to be the most scholarly and passionate preachers of the Gospel - the Puritans, Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, Charles Spurgeon, Martyn Lloyd-Jones and countless others.

Rather than wait several years to publish a polished edition, we have decided to print it “in house”, and “in the rough”, a chapter or two at a time. If these first workbooks are found to be useful to the people of God, we will continue to print the others until we have exhausted what we have written and continue to write.

As stated, this is a rawboned workbook full of questions and commentaries. The benefits reaped from this study will depend upon your investment. If you answer the questions by thoughtlessly copying the text and without seeking to understand its meaning, very little will be gained.

Method of Study

Each chapter and subsection begins with an introduction of a certain subject and then quickly advances to the study of individual biblical texts dealing with the subject. **The student should answer the questions only after he or she has carefully meditated upon the text and compared his or her conclusions with the study notes at the bottom of the page and with the insets which contain important quotes regarding the subject at hand.** It may be helpful underline or mark with a flare the key truths in the study notes and insets.

Founded upon the conviction that the Scriptures are the inspired and infallible Word of God, this workbook has been designed in such a way that it is literally impossible for the student to advance without an open Bible before him or her. It has also been designed so that the student might have the opportunity to study the Scriptures in the company of some of the greatest preachers and scholars of Church history.

This book may be used by an individual, small group, or Sunday school class. It is highly recommended that the student complete each portion on his or her own before meeting for discussion and questions with the group or discipleship leader.

Exhortation to the Student

The study of doctrine is both an intellectual and devotional discipline. It is a passionate search for God that should always lead the student to greater personal transformation, obedience, and heartfelt worship. Therefore, the student should be on guard against the great error of seeking only impersonal knowledge, and not the person of God. Neither mindless devotion nor mere intellectual pursuits are profitable, for in either case, God is lost.

The New American Standard Version

To complete this study the New American Standard Version is required. This version of Scripture was chosen for the following reasons: (1) The unwavering conviction of the translators that the Bible is the infallible Word of God; and (2) its faithfulness to the original languages.

Introduction

Of all the endeavors to which a man may give himself, there is none greater than to seek to understand the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to search out its infinite glory - *God in Christ reconciling the world to Himself*. It is a glory too deep for our intellect, too wide for our hearts, and beyond the power of any language to describe, and yet within so great a mystery we find our salvation.

The Divine Dilemma

Webster's Dictionary defines the word dilemma as "a situation involving a choice between equally unsatisfactory alternatives" or "a problem seemingly incapable of a satisfactory solution." In the Scriptures, the greatest of all dilemmas is set before us on almost every page - *How can a just God pardon the wicked?*

If God simply pardons the wicked, He is no longer just. The Scriptures declare: "He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous, both of them alike are an abomination to the LORD" (Proverbs 17:15).

If God does not pardon the wicked, all will perish. The Scriptures declare: "For all have sinned" (Romans 3:23); and "The wages of sin is death..." (Romans 6:23); and still, "The soul who sins will die" (Ezekiel 18:4).

One might ask why God cannot simply forgive man's sin and be done with it? The Scriptures command us to freely forgive, so why would it be wrong for God to do the same? The answer to this question is three-fold. *First*, God is a being of infinite worth. Even the slightest form of rebellion is a grotesque offense to His person, a crime of highest treason, a strike against the very order of creation. It is worthy of the strictest censure. *Secondly*, God is righteous, and His love is a righteous love. God cannot love unrighteously anymore than He can love unrighteousness. There is no contradiction in the character of God. He must be both righteous and loving, and cannot be one at the expense of the other. *Thirdly*, God is the Judge of all the Earth. It is His place to see that justice is done, that evil is punished, and that right is vindicated. It would not be appropriate for the heavenly judge to pardon the wicked any more than it would be for an earthly judge to pardon the criminal who stands before him in a court of law. Is it not our frequent complaint that our justice system is corrupt? Do we not cringe when convicted criminals are pardoned? Should we expect less justice from God than we do from our own judges? This is the great dilemma - How can God pardon men and still be just? The answer is found in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Divine Answer - The Gospel

The word "gospel" comes from the Greek word *euangélion* which is properly translated "good news." In ancient history, the word was given to any message of great joy. In the Scriptures, the Gospel is the "good news" that through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the penalty of sin has been paid and sinful men may be saved!

In accordance with the Father's good pleasure, the eternal Son, who is equal with the Father and the exact representation of His nature, willingly left the glory of heaven, was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of a virgin, and was born the God-Man - Jesus of Nazareth. As a man, He walked on this earth in perfect obedience to the Law of God. In the fullness of time, He was rejected by men and crucified. On the cross, He bore man's sin, suffered God's wrath, and died in man's place. On the third day, He was raised from the dead. This resurrection is the divine declaration that the Father has accepted His Son's death as a sacrifice for sin, that the penalty for man's disobedience has been paid, the demands of justice satisfied, and the wrath of God appeased. Fourty days after the resurrection, the Son of God ascended into the heavens, sat down at the right hand of the Father, and was given glory, honor, and dominion over all. There in the presence of God, He represents His people and makes requests to God on their behalf. All who acknowledge their sinful, helpless estate, and throw themselves upon Christ will be fully pardoned, declared righteous, and reconciled to God. This is the Gospel of God and of Jesus Christ His Son.

Chapter One

God's Motive

for Sending the Son

It is appropriate to ask what could have been God's motivation for sending His only begotten Son to die that men might be saved. In the Scriptures, we discover that God does not save man because of some divine need, or because of man's inherent worth, or because of some noble deed that he might have done. Rather, God was moved to save for the praise of His own glory and for the great love with which He loved us.

God Had No Need

One of the most awe-inspiring truths about God is that He is absolutely free from any need or dependence. His existence, the fulfillment of His will, and His happiness or good pleasure does not depend upon anyone or anything outside of Himself. He is the only being who is truly Self-existent, Self-sustaining, Self-sufficient, Independent, and Free. All other beings derive their life and blessedness from God, but all that is necessary for God's existence and perfect happiness is found in Himself. To teach or even suggest that God made man or saves man because He was needy or incomplete is absurd and even blasphemous.

God speaks through the Psalmist, "I shall take no young bull out of your house nor male goats out of your folds. For every beast of the forest is Mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird of the mountains, and everything that moves in the field is Mine. If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is Mine, and all it contains" (Psalm 50:9-12).

The Apostle Paul writes, "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things..." (Acts 17:24-25).

Charles Hodge writes, "According to the Scriptures God is self-sufficient. He needs nothing out of Himself for His own well-being or happiness. He is in every respect independent of His creatures." (Systematic Theology, Vol. 1, p.556).

A.W. Tozer writes, "Were all human beings suddenly to become blind, still the sun would shine by day and the stars by night, for these owe nothing to the millions who benefit from their light. So, were every man on earth to become atheist, it could not affect God in any way. He is what He is in Himself without regard to any other. To believe in Him adds nothing to His perfections; to doubt Him takes nothing away" (The Knowledge of the Holy, p.40).

Man Had No Merit

One of the most humbling truths about man is that He is absolutely destitute of virtue or merit. According to the Scriptures, the image of God in man has been seriously disfigured and moral corruption has polluted his entire being - body (Romans 6:6,12; 7:24; 8:10,13), reason (Romans 1:21; II Corinthians 3:14-15; 4:4; Ephesians 4:17-19), emotions (Romans 1:26-27; Galatians 5:24; II Timothy 3:2-4), and will (Romans 6:17; 7:14-15). All men are born with a great propensity or inclination toward sin and are capable of the greatest evil, the most unspeakable crimes, and the most shameful perversions. All that men do is contaminated by their own moral corruption, and sin prevades even their most heroic and altruistic acts (Isaiah 64:6). The Scriptures also teach that the deeds of man are not prompted by any love for God or any desire to obey His commands. No man loves God in a worthy manner or as the law commands (Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Matthew 22:37), nor is there a man who glorifies God in every thought, word, and deed (I Corinthians 10:31; Romans 1:21). All men prefer self to God (II Timothy 3:2-4), and all acts of altruism, heroicism, civic duty, and external religious good are prompted by the love of self or the love of other men, but not the love of God. Furthermore, the mind of man is hostile toward God, cannot subject itself to the will of God, and cannot please God (Romans 8:7-8). Therefore, men are inclined to greater and greater moral corruption, and this moral deterioration would be incalculably more rapid than it is

were it not for divine intervention which restrains man's evil. Finally, Man cannot free or recuperate himself from his sinful and depraved condition. He is spiritually dead (Ephesians 2:1-3), morally corrupt (Psalm 51:5) and cannot change himself (Jeremiah 13:23).

Based upon the above biblical description of man it is evident that God was not moved to save man because of some inherent virtue or merit found in him. It is evident that there is nothing in fallen man that could ever motivate a holy and just God to love Him, but only to bring him to judgment and condemn him. What then, moved God to send His only begotten Son for the salvation of sinful men? According to the Scriptures, God did so for the praise of His own glory and for the great love with which He loved us.

For the Glory of God

The Scriptures teach that the creation of the universe, the fall of man, the nation of Israel, the cross of Christ, the Church, and the judgement of the nations, all have one great and final purpose - the glory of God. What does it mean that God does all things for His own glory? It means that He does all that He does in order that the fullness of all that He is might be revealed to His creation and that He might be esteemed, worshipped, and enjoyed as God.

Charles Hodge writes, "Men have long endeavoured to find a satisfactory answer to the question, Why God created the world? What end was it designed to accomplish? ...The only satisfactory method of determining the question is by appealing to the Scriptures. There it is explicitly taught that the glory of God, the manifestation of His perfections, is the last end of all His works" (Systematic Theology, Vol.1, p.565, 567).

Jonathan Edwards writes, "Thus we see that the great end of God's works, which is so variously expressed in Scripture, is indeed but ONE; and this one end is most properly and comprehensively called, THE GLORY OF GOD" (Works, Vol.1, p.119).

Again, Jonathan Edwards writes, "Thus it is evident, that the glory of God is the ultimate end of the work of redemption..." (Works, Vol.1, p.111).

Should God Seek His Own Glory?

It is often asked, even by sincere Christians, whether or not it is right for God to act for His own glory. To answer this question, we only need to consider who God is. According to the Scripture, He is *infinitely greater* than all of His creation combined. Therefore, it is not only right, but necessary for Him to take the highest place and to make His glory the great reason or chief end of all that He does. It is right for Him to take center stage and to work all things so that His glory [i.e. the fullness of who He is] might be made known to all, with the end that He might be glorified [i.e. esteemed and worshipped] above all. For Him to shun such preeminence would be for Him to deny that He is God. For anyone other than God to seek such preeminence would be the grossest form of idolatry.

Thomas Boston writes, "Every rational agent proposes to himself an end in working, and the most perfect the highest end. Now God is the most perfect Being, and His glory the noblest end" (Works, Vol.1, p.11).

A.A. Hodge writes, "Since God Himself is infinitely worthier than the sum of all creatures, it follows that the manifestation of His own excellence is... the highest and worthiest end conceivable" (Outlines of Theology, p.245).

Charles Spurgeon writes, "God must have the highest motive, and there can be no higher motive conceivable than His own glory.... The good of His creatures He considereth carefully; but even the good of His creatures is but a means to the main end, the promotion of His glory. All things then are for His pleasure, and for His glory they daily work" (The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, Vol.10, p.304).

An extract from Robert Haldane's letter, addressed, in 1824, to Mr. Cheneviere, the well known Professor of Divinity at Geneva, "There was nothing brought under the consideration of the students of divinity who attended me at Geneva, which appeared to contribute

so effectually to the overthrow of their false system of religion, founded on philosophy and vain deceit, as the sublime view of the majesty of God presented in the four concluding verses of this part of the Epistle (i.e. Romans 11:33-36). Of Him, and through, Him, and to Him, are all things. Here God is described as His own last end in everything that He does. Judging of God as such an one as themselves, they [i.e. the students] were at first startled at the idea that He must love Himself supremely, infinitely more than the whole universe, and consequently must prefer His own glory to everything besides. But when they were reminded that God in reality is infinitely more amiable and more valuable than the whole creation, and that consequently, if He views things as they really are, He must regard Himself as infinitely worthy of being more valued and loved, they saw that this truth was incontrovertible. Their attention was at the same time directed to numerous passages of Scripture, which assert that the manifestation of the glory of God is the great end of creation that He has Himself chiefly in view in all His works and dispensations, and that it is a purpose in which He requires that all His intelligent creatures should acquiesce, and seek and promote it as their first and paramount duty. Passages to this effect, both in the Old and New Testament, far exceed in number what any one who has not examined the subject is at all aware of" (Romans, p.552).

God's Glory and the Creature's Good

It is extremely important to understand that God does not seek His own glory apart from His creatures' greatest good. In fact, the greatest good that God could ever accomplish for His creatures and the greatest kindness He could ever show them is to glorify Himself - to direct all things and work in all things so that the fullness of all that He is might be displayed before them. If God is of infinite value, splendor, and beauty, then it follows that the most valuable, most splendid, and most beautiful gift He could ever give to His creatures is the fullest revelation of Himself.

Louis Berkhoff writes, "In seeking self-expression for the glory of His name, God did not disregard the well-being, the highest good of others, but promoted it... The supreme end of God in creation, the manifestation of His glory, therefore, includes, as subordinate ends, the happiness and salvation of His creatures, and the reception of praise from grateful and adoring hearts" (Louis Berkhoff, Systematic Theology, p.136-137).

A.A. Hodge writes, "Nothing can so exalt and bless the creature than being made the instrument and the witness of the infinite Creator's glory" (Outlines of Theology, p.245).

Hugh Binning writes, "His majesty's seeking of His own glory is not prejudicial to the creature's good, but the very communication of His fulness goes along with it: so that in glorifying Himself, He is most beneficial to His own creatures... Our blessed Lord is then doing most for our advantage when He does all for His own glory... O blessed self-seeking that gave us a being and well-being; that makes no advantage of it, but gives advantage! He hath the honour of all, but we have the profit of all" (Works, p.4).

Charles Spurgeon writes, "Man's chief end is to glorify and enjoy God. God's greatest and highest object is to make to Himself a glorious and an everlasting name. Since God is God it must be so; for He is full of love and kindness to His creatures, and He cannot more fully bless His creatures than by making Himself known to them. Everything that is good, true, holy, excellent, loving, is in God. He is not only the giver of 'every good and every perfect gift', but He is Himself the sum and substance of all blessing; and it is for the highest good of all the creatures He has made, that they should know their God" (The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, Vol.37, p.565).

God's Glory through the Gospel

We have learned that God glorifies Himself by directing all things and working in all things so that the fullness of all that He is might be revealed to His creation. Of all the works of God in history, none so glorifies God as the Cross of Jesus Christ and the salvation that was accomplished through it. In this one thing, the fullness of God's attributes is revealed in the greatest possible way, making it possible that God be esteemed,

worshipped, and enjoyed to the greatest possible degree by both the angels and the redeemed. Why has God given His Son for the salvation of men? Do not look for the reason in a fallen humanity that is ruined of worth and destitute of merit. Look to God! He has accomplished this great work of salvation for the sake of His Name and the praise of His own Glory! Jonathan Edwards writes,

“Now this distinguishing glory of the Divine Being has its brightest manifestation in the things exhibited to us in the gospel; the doctrines there taught, the word there spoken, and the divine counsels, acts, and works there revealed. These things have the clearest, most admirable, and distinguishing representations and exhibitions of the glory of God's moral perfections, that ever were made to the world” (Works, Vol.1, p.291).

1. In Romans 11:36 is found one of the most majestic declarations in all of Scripture. According to this text, what is the great purpose or “chief end” of all things? How does this help us to understand the divine motive behind God’s work of salvation?

2. In the Scriptures, for God to act for the sake of His Name is for Him to act for His own glory. According to the following Scriptures, what is God’s motivation for saving His people? Does He save them as a response to their merit, or for the purpose of displaying His own glory?

Psalm 79:9

Study Notes

Romans 11:36 - *To Him are all things.* In this simple phrase is found the meaning of everything. It is a foundational truth of Scripture that God created all things and works in all things for His good pleasure, and for the great purpose of displaying or making known His glorious attributes, so that He might be worshipped and fully enjoyed as God. *To Him be the glory forever.* The universe was created to be a theater upon which God might display His infinite worth. Therefore, the only proper response is to esteem the worth of God above all things, to ascribe to Him alone the highest honor, adoration, and praise, and finally, to find our joy and satisfaction only and completely in Him. In the study of theology, there is a very important Latin phrase used to describe this truth - *Soli Deo Gloria* which translates, “To God Alone Be The Glory.” *Amen.* A simple, yet powerful affirmation that may be translated, “So it is,” “So be it,” or “May it be fulfilled.” Those who understand the worth of God are never disquieted or troubled by such statements as, “God does all for His own Glory.” They simply bow in worship and acknowledge that He is right in doing so.

Psalm 79:9 - *Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Your name... for Your name's sake.* Undeserving and sinful men have no basis for their plea for salvation except that God might do so for His own glory. John Calvin writes, “They (*i.e.* Israel) testify that they bring nothing of their own to influence Him to have mercy upon them; and that the only plea which they present before Him is His own glory. From this we learn that sinners are not reconciled to God by satisfactions or by the merit of good works, but by a free and an unmerited forgiveness” (CC, Vol.5, p.291). Matthew Henry writes, “God’s name and honour would be greatly advanced if He did deliver them; His mercy would be glorified in delivering those that were so miserable and helpless. By making bare His everlasting arm on their behalf He would make unto Himself an everlasting name; and their deliverance would be a type and figure of the great salvation, which in the fulness of time Messiah the Prince would work out, to the glory of God’s name” (MHC, Vol.3, p.543).

Psalm 106:6-8

Isaiah 48:9

Isaiah 63:12

Study Notes

Psalm 106:6-8 - Nevertheless. God saves sinful Israel (v.6-7) not “because of,” but “in spite of” what they deserve. There is nothing in our fallen humanity that could move a righteous God to act on our behalf. It is divine grace and not human merit, that keeps God from vindicating His justice and pouring forth His wrath. The New Testament parallel to this word is the phrase “But God...” in Ephesians 2:4. *He saved them for the sake of His name, that He might make His power known.* The Name of God is a reference to God Himself. God saves man because of who He is, for His own sake, good pleasure, and glory. This is the great “first cause” of all that God does. Albert Barnes writes, “For the promotion of His own honour and glory; that it might be seen that He is powerful and merciful. This is constantly given as the reason why God saves men; why He forgives sin; why He redeems the soul; why He delivers from danger and death. ...This is the highest reason which can be assigned for pardoning and saving sinners” (BN, Psalms, Vol.3, p.104). John Gill writes, “And so the spiritual Israel of God are saved, not for any superior excellences in them, for they are in no wise better than others; nor for their righteousness-sake; but to display the wisdom and faithfulness of God, His grace and mercy, His justice and holiness, power, goodness, and truth” (EONT, Vol.4, p.159). ***Isaiah 48:9 - For the sake of My name I delay My wrath.*** Here, God delays His judgment for the sake of His own purpose, reputation, and glory. There is nothing in sinful man that could motivate a holy and just God to delay or restrain His wrath against him. The reason for mercy must come from within God Himself. *And for My praise I restrain it for you, in order not to cut you off.* God’s mercy is motivated by a passion for His own glory. By delaying His wrath, He gains praise for Himself through those being saved and through those who hear of it! All of redemptive history abounds to the glory of God! Charles Spurgeon writes, “Then the Lord looked to find a reason for mercy in their past conduct, but could see none. He looked at their present character for a plea, and found none, for even while they were under the rod they exhibited hardness of heart, so that even the eyes of mercy could see no reason for favor in them. What should the Lord do? He would not act without a reason: there must be something to justify his mercy, and show the wisdom of his way. Since there is none in the offender, where shall mercy find her plea? Behold the inventiveness of eternal love! The Lord falls back upon Himself; and within Himself finds a reason for His grace...” (MTP, Vol.18, p.158). ***Isaiah 63:12 - Who caused His glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses, who divided the waters before them to make for Himself an everlasting name.*** Israel was an undeserv-

The Reason for Wrath Delayed

*“For the sake of My name I delay My wrath, and for My praise I restrain it for you,
In order not to cut you off” (Isaiah 48:9)*

Albert Barnes writes, “Learn thence - 1. That God acts with reference to His own glory, in order to manifest His own perfections, and to secure His praise. 2. That the reason why the wicked are not cut off sooner in their transgressions is, that He may show His forbearance, and secure praise by long-suffering. 3. That the reason why the righteous are kept amidst their frequent failures in duty, their unfaithfulness, and their many imperfections, is, that God may get glory by showing His covenant fidelity. 4. That it is one evidence of piety - and one that is indispensable - that there should be a willingness that God should secure His own glory in His own way, and that there should be a constant desire that His praise should be promoted, whatever may befall His creatures” (BN, Isaiah, Vol.2, p.189).

Charles Spurgeon writes, “Wherefore we rejoice, and think it delightful that God is aiming at the manifestation of His own character, and is in all His works getting to Himself a great, eternal, and glorious name” (The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, Vol.37, p.575).

Jeremiah 14:7

Study Notes

ing nation of idolaters, but God saved Israel to make for Himself an everlasting name. Through the work of redemption, God builds an eternal monument to His glory. Matthew Henry writes, “This is that which God is doing in the world with His glorious arm, He is making to Himself a glorious name, and it shall last to endless ages, when the most celebrated names of the great ones of the earth shall be written in the dust” (MHC, Vol.4, p.372). Charles Spurgeon writes, “Now, as God got to Himself a great name at the Red Sea, He has done much more by the great works of salvation in the gift of Jesus. Ah! Here Egypt is eclipsed, and the destruction of Pharaoh is no more to be remembered... As I see Him bow His blessed head, and hear Him utter His death-cry, ‘It is finished,’ I say that the Most High hath gotten to Himself an everlasting name, a glorious name... All other deeps are shallow; this is an abyss. All other heights of goodness can be climbed; but this never. Pile Andes on Pelion, Alp on Alp, the Matterhorn on Mont Blanc, and the Andes on the Himalayas; all are not great enough to be a symbol of His love. The incarnate Son of God condemned! The Son of God slain! The Son of God in the grave! and all this for us! Truly, He hath made Himself a glorious name” (MTP, Vol.37, p.567-568). **Jeremiah 14:7** - *Although our iniquities testify against us.* Charles Spurgeon writes, “You are obliged to confess that there are ten thousand reasons why God should not refrain from His anger, and overwhelming reasons why He should cut you off; but you cannot find so much as one single argument why He should be pleased to spare and save you. Every man who is really brought to Christ is first stripped of all on which he placed reliance as a ground of hope, and made to see that in himself there is guilt deserving condemnation, and rebellion demanding, punishment, but there is no quality which can enlist divine sympathy or secure, by its own excellence, divine regard. In us, by nature, there are no beauties of character, no charms of virtue, or loveliness of conduct to win the Almighty heart” (Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, Vol.18, p.159). *O LORD, act for Your name’s sake! Truly our apostasies have been many, we have sinned against You.* Having found nothing in his people to move God to mercy, the prophet Jeremiah pleads with God to save in spite of them and for His Name’s sake. John Calvin writes, “The Prophet takes it as granted that there was but one remedy, —that God would save His people for

3. In Jeremiah 33:8-9 is found a text of such beauty and significance that it stands out even among the Scriptures listed above. According to this text, Why does God move to save men? Is it for their merit or for His glory?
 - a. *According to verse 8, how has Israel responded to all of God's mercies? What promise does God give to Israel? Does He act because of them or in spite of them?*

Study Notes

His own Name's sake; as though he had said, 'In ourselves we find nothing but reasons for condemnation; seek then in Thyself a reason for forgiving us: for as long as Thou regardest us, Thou must necessarily hate us and be thus a rigid Judge; cease then to seek anything in us or to call us to an account, but seek from Thyself a reason for sparing us'" (CC, Vol.9, p.210-211). **Ezekiel 36:22-23** - *Therefore say to the house of Israel. Thus says the Lord GOD, "It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went."* The people of Israel needed to understand why they were being delivered. God was not saving them because of their merit or virtue, but in spite of their having neither. This is a great deterrent to pride. Matthew Henry writes, "God's reasons of mercy are all fetched from within Himself; He will bring His people out of Babylon, not for their sakes, but for His own Name's sake" (MHC. Vol.4, p.961). This text is an important reminder that God's saving work on our behalf was "because of Him" and "in spite of us." Our character and deeds could only lead a holy God to withdraw and a just God to condemn, but God has saved us so that His glorious attributes might be revealed, and that His Name might be made great among the nations.

Jeremiah 33:8-9 - *(a) I will cleanse them from all their iniquity by which they have sinned against Me, and I will pardon all their iniquities by which they have sinned against Me and by which they have transgressed against Me.* The writer goes to great lengths to communicate the extent of Israel's sin. In doing so, he destroys all possibility that some worth or merit in Israel moved God to act on their behalf. Men must know this truth if they are to appreciate God's saving work for them. John Calvin writes, "The favor of God, then, would never have been appreciated by the Jews had not the atrocity of their guilt been clearly made known to them" (CC, Vol.10-4, p.236).

Why Should God Save?

by Charles Spurgeon

“There is no other reason why God should save a man, but for His name’s sake, there is nothing in a sinner which can entitle him to salvation, or recommend him to mercy; it must be God’s own heart which must dictate the motive why men are to be saved. One person says, ‘God will save me, because I am so upright.’ Sir, He will do no such thing. Says another, ‘God will save me because I am so talented.’ Sir, He will not. Your talent! Why thou drivelling, self-conceited idiot, thy talent is nothing compared with that of the angel that once stood before the throne, and sinned, and who now is cast into the bottomless pit for ever! If He would save men for their talent, He would have saved Satan; for he had talents enough. As for thy morality and goodness, it is but filthy rags, and He will never save thee for aught thou doest. None of us would ever be saved, if God expected anything of us: we must be saved purely and solely for reasons connected with Himself, and lying in His own bosom. Blessed be His name, He saves us for ‘His name’s sake’” (The New Park Street Pulpit, Vol.3, p.69-70).

“[The truth of God doing all for His name’s sake] opens a great door for sinners. Now, do listen to this. Perhaps there is one here who says, ‘I am so guilty; I am so unworthy; I am so vile, that God cannot save me on account of anything in me. I am everything that I ought not to be.’ Stand to that, brother. Tire not there. You have a hold of the truth this time. ‘Then why should He save me?’ you ask; ‘it cannot be because of any use that He can make of me; for I am ignorant; I am obscure; I am weak-minded; God can never get much out of me: He cannot save me for the sake of that.’ But look, sir, He can save you that He may make a great name for Himself; for if He pardons you, a great sinner that will bring great praise to His mercy. If He changes you, who have been desperately set on mischief that will bring great credit to His power. If He takes you who are so insignificant and obscure, that will clearly show the greatness of His condescension, and the wondrousness of His love” (The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, Vol.37, p.573).

- b. *According to verse 9, what motivated God to move on Israel’s behalf? What would be the ultimate result of God’s saving work?*

Study Notes

(b) *It will be to Me a name of joy, praise and glory before all the nations of the earth which will hear of all the good that I do for them.* By pardoning the iniquity of an underserving people, God would gain for Himself a name that would move even the pagan nations to rejoice in Him, praise Him, and give Him glory. Note that the redeemed do not so much bring praise and honor to God through what they have done for Him, but through what He has done for them - He pardons undeserving sinners and cleanses their iniquity. *And they will fear and tremble because of all the good and all the peace that I make for it.* God’s character would be so revealed in this work of salvation that it would inspire reverence from the observing nations. A similar statement is found in Ezekiel 36:23 - “‘I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD,’ declares the Lord GOD...”

4. The Scriptures teach that God is not only the God of the Jews, but also of the Gentiles. According to the following texts from both the Old and New Testaments, what is the great motive behind God's work of salvation among both peoples?
- a. *Jews*: II Samuel 7:23

 - b. *Gentiles*: Acts 15:14
5. In Ephesians 1:5-6 (see also: 11-12,13-14) is found one of the greatest declaration in all of Scripture with regard to the divine purpose behind God's work of salvation. Read and meditate upon the text until you are familiar with its contents, and then write your thoughts on the following questions:
- a. *According to verse 5, why was God moved to save us? Explain your answer.*

Study Notes

II Samuel 7:23 - *And what one nation on the earth is like Your people Israel, whom God went to redeem for Himself as a people and to make a name for Himself.* Two reasons are given for the salvation of Israel: God redeemed them for His own good pleasure and for His own glory and praise. Jonathan Edwards writes, "Again, it is represented as though God's people had their existence, at least as God's people, for God's name's sake" (Works, Vol.1, p.112). Matthew Poole writes that God redeemed Israel "to advance the glory of His power and goodness, and other perfections" (MPC, Vol.1, p.601). Matthew Henry writes, "They were redeemed to be a peculiar people unto God, purified and appropriated to Himself, that He might make Himself a great name and do for them great things" (MHC, Vol.2, p.484). **Acts 15:14** - *Simeon has related how God first concerned Himself about taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name.* God saved the Gentiles not because of some virtue or merit found in them, but for the glory of His Name, to demonstrate His character and saving power, and to gain praise for Himself. William Gurnall writes, "What aims He at in the gathering in of souls by the grace of the gospel, but 'to take out a people' from the heap of sinners 'for His name'" (Complete Armor, Vol.11, p.521). John Gill writes, "It was grace to visit them, to look upon them, when for many hundreds of years He had overlooked them, He had taken no notice of them; and it was distinguishing grace to take some out of them, to be a special and peculiar people to Himself; to separate them from the rest by His powerful and efficacious grace, and form them into a church state, that they might show forth His praise and glorify Him" (EONT, Vol.8, p.284).

Ephesians 1:5-6 - (a) *According to the kind intention of His will.* The phrase "kind intention" comes from the Greek word *eudokia* which means "good pleasure, delight, or satisfaction." Our salvation is solely the result of

On the Chief End of Redemption

by Jonathan Edwards

“Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.”

Luke 2:14

“That the glory of God is the highest and last end of the work of redemption, is confirmed by the song of the angels at Christ’s birth... It must be supposed that they knew what was God’s last end in sending Christ into the world: and that in their rejoicing on the occasion, their minds would most rejoice in that which was most valuable and glorious in it, which must consist in its relation to that which was its chief and ultimate end. And we may further suppose, that the thing which chiefly engaged their minds was most glorious and joyful in the affair; and would be first in that song which was to express the sentiments of their minds, and exultation of their hearts” (Works, Vol.1, p.110).

b. According to verse 6, what is the end or great purpose of our salvation?

Study Notes

God’s good pleasure, and not because of some merit or virtue in us. It pleased God to save the ungodly, and He takes delight and satisfaction in His saving work. John Calvin writes, “In adopting us, therefore, God does not inquire what we are, and is not reconciled to us by any personal worth. His single motive is the eternal good pleasure, by which He predestinated us” (CC, Vol.21, p.201). Charles Spurgeon declares, “What was there in us that could merit esteem, or give the Creator delight? Twas ‘Even so, Father,’ we ever must sing, ‘Because it seemed good in Thy sight.’” (MTP, Vol.7, p.99). **(b)** *To the praise of the glory of His grace.* The word “grace” comes from the Greek word *cháris* which refers to the unmerited favor of God. The end or goal of God in sending His Son for undeserving sinners is that His unmerited favor might be revealed and that He might gain greater glory for Himself. Robert Bolton writes, “The free grace and favour of God are the first mover and fountain of all our good” (Comfortable Walking, p.10). Thomas Manton writes, “This was God’s great end, that grace might be admired and esteemed by us, and be matter of eternal praise and thanksgiving” (Works, Vol.3, p.110). *Which He freely bestowed on us.* The phrase “freely bestowed” comes from the Greek word *charitóo* which means “to lavish with favor or to encompass with blessings.” God literally “graced us” with “grace”, and it is the grace of God which brings praise to God. *In the Beloved.* This brief phrase humbles man and exalts God. It is only “in Christ” that salvation comes to man. Charles Spurgeon writes, “How marvelous that we, worms, mortals, sinners, should be the objects of divine love! But it is only ‘in the beloved’” (Morning and Evening, p.534).

6. Based upon the Scriptures that we have studied and the conclusions drawn from them, summarize and explain the truth that God was moved to save sinful man for His own Name's sake or the praise of His glory.

For the Love of His People

One of the most important declarations in the Scriptures regarding the attributes of God is, "God is love" (I John 4:8), and it is through His love for undeserving sinners that He gets the most glory for Himself. Throughout all eternity, God will be worshipped for His unconditional love toward His people. It is crucial to understand that the God who does everything for His own glory has chosen to get that glory through loving His people and giving His Son for their salvation. It is a great joy and consolation to know that the God who saves His people for the sake of His Name is the same who saves them for the sake of His love. A love that is beyond both our understanding and language.

James Montgomery Boice writes, "Augustine once called the cross 'a pulpit' from which Christ preached God's love to the world" (Foundations of the Christian Faith, p.332).

It is extremely important to understand that the coming of the Son to save sinners was in perfect accord with the will of God the Father. We should never think of the Father as a wrathful God who desires the death of the wicked. Neither should we think of the saving work of the Son as something done independently of the Father in order to save us from Him. According to the Scriptures, it was the Father who *so loved the world* that He sent His Son, not to condemn the world, but that through Him the world might be saved (John 3:16-17). The saving work of the Son is the saving work of the Father. The Son's love for sinners is the perfect reflection of the Father's love for them.

Charles Spurgeon writes, "Jesus Christ is the Savior; but not more so than God the Father... Some persons who are ignorant of the system of divine truth think of God the Father as being a great Being full of wrath, and anger, and justice, but having no love... Now, nothing can be more incorrect than such opinions. It is true the Son redeems me, but then the Father gave the Son to die for me, and the Father chose me in the everlasting election of His grace. The Father blots out my sin, the Father accepts me and adopts me into His family through Christ. The Son could not save without the Father any more than the Father without the Son..." (The New Park Street Pulpit, Vol.3, p.66).

Again Charles Spurgeon writes, "It is true that Jesus rent Himself away from the glories of heaven, from the felicities of blessedness, and voluntarily descended to the scorn, the shame, and spitting of this lower world. But, yet His Father had a part therein. He gave up His only begotten Son; He withheld not the darling of His bosom, but sent away His well-beloved, and sent Him down with messages of love to man. Jesus Christ comes willingly, but still He comes by His Father's appointment and sending" (The New Park Street Pulpit, Vol.6, p.125).

God as the Prime Mover of Love

by Martyn Lloyd Jones

“Our salvation is entirely of God and of His love. It is essential that I should put it like this. Sometimes, rather loosely, evangelical people are tempted - and it is the peculiar temptation of those who are evangelical - to put this whole question of the Atonement and of Salvation in this way, that it is something that the Son of God has done to affect the Father. The idea is that the Son, having done the work, as it were stands before the Father and pleads with Him, and has to persuade Him to forgive us in the light of what He has done for us. That is a wrong way of putting it, but it has often been put like that. There are hymns that are guilty of this very thing. I well remember a Welsh hymn which quite specifically and explicitly put it like that - that the Son was there pleading with the Father and saying, ‘I have died for them, O, let them live!’ That is surely a travesty of the teaching of Scripture.

“Though we must always emphasize that the work was done by the Son, we must never forget that it was the Father who sent the Son to do it. ‘God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son’; ‘God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself’. It is always the action of God, God is prime mover; salvation is of God the Father. It is wrong to represent God the Father as being passive, and as simply responding to the appeals and pleading of the Son to grant us salvation and forgiveness on the basis of what He has done for us” (Romans, Ch.5, p.104-105).

God’s Love Manifested

What is the love of God? It is that divine attribute that moves Him to freely and selflessly give Himself to others for their benefit or good. The Scriptures teach us that God’s love is much more than an attitude, emotion, or work. It is an *attribute* of God - a part of His very being or nature. God not only loves, but He *is* love. He is the very essence of what true love is and all true love flows from Him as its ultimate source.

The height, depth, and width of God’s love are beyond the comprehension of the greatest and most discerning creatures. It would be easier to count all the stars in the heavens or each grain of sand on the earth than to measure or even seek to describe the love of God. The Scriptures teach that the love of God is manifested to all of His creatures in an almost infinite number of ways. Nevertheless, there is one manifestation of divine love that surpasses them all – His giving of His only begotten Son for the salvation of a sinful and rebellious humanity! Without doubt or dispute, this is divine love’s greatest work!

John Flavel writes, “The gift of Christ is the highest and fullest manifestation of the love of God to sinners, that ever was made from eternity to them” (Works, Vol.1, p.64).

Archibald Hall writes, “These very deplorable circumstances of guilt and perdition, into which we plunged ourselves, by sinning against God, gave occasion for that most astonishing scene of benevolence and mercy, that swallows up all expression, and even thought itself is lost in wonder and joy. Behold, what manner of love is this that God hath showed to us! He so loved the world, as to give His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Gospel Worship, Vol.2, p.96-97).

Thomas Boston writes, “The gospel is a breathing of love and goodwill to the world of mankind-sinners” (Works, Vol.3, p.564).

1. In I John 4:8 is found one of the most important declarations in the Scriptures with regard to the character of God - *God is love*. Consider this declaration carefully and then explain its meaning in your own words. What does it reveal to us about the motive behind God’s saving work on behalf of fallen men?
2. According to I John 4:9, what is the greatest manifestation of the love of God toward sinful men. How does this text prove that it was not man’s merit, but God’s love which moved Him to send His Son?

Study Notes

I John 4:8 - God is love. Albert Barnes writes, “Never was a more important declaration made than this; never was more meaning crowded into a few words than in this short sentence—God is love” (BN, I John, p.331). It is essential to understand that love is not just a decision or action on God’s part, but an attribute of His very being. It is not necessary for God to will to love any more than it is necessary for Him to will to exist, to be eternal, or to be holy - He *is* love, and therefore all of His decrees and works spring from His love and are accomplished in the realm of love. God creates, reveals, rules, saves, and even judges in love. Samuel Davies writes, “God is love; not only lovely and loving, but love itself; pure, unmixed love, nothing but love; love in His nature and in His operations; the object, source, and quintessence of all love” (Davies’ Sermons, Vol.p.316). When we look to Adam’s depraved and rebellious race, we find nothing that would move a holy God to save, but God finds reason in His very character. His work of salvation flows from who He is. He loves, not because of some inherent worth found in men or some merit they have accomplished. On the contrary, He loves man in spite of man, and is moved to save the undeserving because He *is* love!

I John 4:9 - By this the love of God was manifested in us. Albert Barnes writes, “The apostle does not mean to say that it [i.e. the love of God] has been manifested in no other way, but that this was so prominent an instance of His love, that all the other manifestations of it seemed absorbed and lost in this” (BN, I John, p.331). *That God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him.* The Father’s sending of the Son to bear sin and die condemned on behalf of sinful men is the greatest manifestation of divine love. The phrase “only begotten” is used to heighten our awareness and appreciation of God’s work of love. The cosmos would have been a small thing compared to the gift of God’s “Only Begotten”. John Calvin writes, “He calls Him His *only begotten*, for the sake of amplifying. For in this He more clearly shewed how singularly He loved us, because He exposed His only Son to death for our sakes” (CC, Vol.22, p.239). Thomas Manton writes, “That such a remedy should be provided for us argueth the unspeakable love of God” (Works, Vol.1, p.391).

3. In John 3:16-17 is found one of the best known and most dearly loved passages in all the Scriptures. According to this text, what was God's motive for sending His Son for the salvation of sinful men? Explain your answer.

Study Notes

John 3:16-17 - For God so loved. Robert L. Reymond writes, "Never should the atonement be represented so as to suggest that it was the Father who hated the sinner, that it was the Son who loved the sinner, and that His cross work won the Father over to clemency or extorted the Father's gracious attitude toward the sinner from Him against His will" (A New Systematic Theology, p.641). Charles Spurgeon writes, "God has such love in His nature that He must needs let it flow forth to a world perishing by its own wilful sin; and when it flowed forth it was so deep, so wide, so strong, that even inspiration could not compute its measure, and therefore the Holy Spirit gave us that great little word 'so', and left us to attempt the measurement, according as we perceive more and more of love divine" (MTP, Vol.31, p.386). *The world.* One can appreciate this awesome declaration only to the degree that he comprehends the depravity and rebellion of this world. It was God's love and not man's worth, God's desire to show mercy, and not man's merit that moved Him to save. Albert Barnes writes, "It was a free and unmerited gift. Man had no claim; and when there was no eye to pity or arm to save, it pleased God to give His Son into the hands of men to die in their stead. It was the mere movement of love; the expression of eternal compassion, and of a desire that sinners should not perish for ever" (BN, John, p.207). *That He gave His only begotten Son.* The greatness of God's love for men of every tribe, language, people, and nation is manifest in that He delivered up His beloved Son as a sacrifice for their sin and made Him the means of their reconciliation. John Calvin writes, "The word 'only begotten' (*monogenés*) is emphatic, to magnify the fervour of the love of God towards us. For as men are not easily convinced that God loves them, in order to remove all doubt, He has expressly stated that we are so very dear to God that, on our account, He did not even spare His only begotten Son" (CC, Vol.17, p.124). *That whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.* Here we witness both the breadth and purpose of the Father selflessly giving His Son. The breadth is wide - the most vile among humanity's fallen may come. No credentials are necessary but a broken and believing heart. The purpose is clear and sure - those who believe shall not perish under the just condemnation of their sins, but shall have eternal life in perfect fellowship with God. *For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world.* Although judgment would have been appropriate in light of man's rebellion, God sent His Son to demonstrate the great riches of His mercy. Albert Barnes writes, "God might justly have sent Him for [condemnation]. Man deserved condemnation, and it would have been right to have pronounced it; but God was willing that there should be an offer of pardon, and the sentence of condemnation was delayed" (BN, John, p.207). Matthew Henry writes, "Ever since man sinned, he has dreaded the approach and appearance of any special messenger from heaven, as being conscious of guilt and looking for judgment: 'We shall surely die, for we have seen God.' If therefore the Son of God Himself come, we are concerned to enquire on what errand He comes: 'Is it peace?' Or, as they asked Samuel trembling, 'Comest thou peaceably?' And this Scripture returns the answer, 'Peaceably.'" (MHC, Vol.5, p.889). *But that the world might be saved through Him.* Matthew Henry writes, "He came into the world with salvation in His eye, with salvation in His hand" (MHC, Vol.5, p.888).

God Sent Though Man Did Not Seek

John Flavel writes, “Let us consider how freely this gift came from Him: It was not wrested out of His hand by our importunity; for we as little desired as deserved it” (Works, Vol.1, p.68).

Charles Spurgeon writes, “We never sent to Him; He sent to us. Suppose that, after we had all sinned, we had fallen on our knees, and cried importunately, ‘Oh, Father, forgive us!’ Suppose that day after day we had been, with many piteous tears and cries, supplicating and entreating forgiveness of God. It would be great love then that He should devise a way of pardoning us. But no; it was the very reverse. God sent an ambassador of peace to us; we sent no embassy to Him. Man turned his back on God, and went farther and farther from Him, and never thought of turning His face toward His best Friend. It is not man that turns beggar to God for salvation; it is, if I may dare to say it, as though the Eternal God Himself did beg of His creatures to be saved. Jesus Christ has not come into the world to be sought for, but to seek that which is lost. It all begins with Him. Unsought, unbidden by the object of His compassion, Jesus came into the world” (The Metropolitan Tabernacle Plulpit, Vol.42, p.29).

The Proper Grounds For Glory

Octavius Winslow writes, “The wise man must cease to glory in his wisdom, the mighty man must cease to glory in his might, the rich man must cease to glory in his riches, and their only ground of glory in themselves must be their insufficiency, infirmity, poverty, and weakness. Their only ground of glory outside of themselves must be that “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” (Evening Thoughts, p.330).

John Calvin writes, “Such is the wicked ambition which belongs to our nature, that when the question relates to the origin of our salvation, we quickly form diabolical imaginations about our own merits. Accordingly, we imagine that God is reconciled to us, because He has reckoned us worthy that He should look upon us. But Scripture everywhere extols His pure and unmingled mercy, which sets aside all merits.... And, indeed, it is very evident that Christ spoke in this manner, in order to draw away men from the contemplation of themselves to look at the mercy of God alone. Nor does He say that God was moved to deliver us, because He perceived in us something that was worthy of so excellent a blessing, but ascribes the glory of our deliverance entirely to His love” (CC, Vol.17, p.123).

Charles Spurgeon writes, “For what reason did God give His only-begotten Son to bleed instead of us? We were worms for insignificance, we were vipers for iniquity; if He saved us, were we worth the saving? We were such infamous traitors that, if He doomed us to the eternal fire, we might have been terrible examples of His wrath; but heaven’s darling bleeds that earth’s traitors may not bleed. Tell it; tell it in heaven, and publish it in all the golden streets every hour of every glorious day, that such is the grace of God ‘that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life’” (The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, Vol.56, p.303).

Samuel Davies writes, “O! Was it not love, free, rich unmerited love that provided a Savior for the guilty children of men? ...O love, what hast thou done! What wonders hast thou wrought! It was thou, almighty love, that broughtest down the Lord of glory from His celestial throne, to die upon a cross an atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world!” (Davies’ Sermons, Vol.1, p.316).

God Loved Because He Would Love

Thomas Manton writes, “If you ask, why He made so much ado about a worthless creature, raised out of the dust of the ground at first, and had now disordered himself, and could be of no use to Him? We have an answer at hand, because He loved us. If you continue to ask, but why did He love us? We have no other answer but because He loved us; for beyond the first rise of things we cannot go” (Complete Works, Vol.2, p.341).

Charles Spurgeon writes, “Whence came that love? Not from anything outside of God Himself. God’s love springs from Himself. He loves because it is His nature to do so. ‘God is love.’ As I have said already, nothing upon the face of the earth could have merited His love, though there was much to merit His displeasure. This stream of love flows from its own secret source in the eternal Deity, and it owes nothing to any earth-born rain or rivulet; it springs from beneath the everlasting throne, and fills itself full from the springs of the infinite. God loved because He would love. When we enquire why the Lord loved this man or that, we have to come back to our Savior’s answer to the question, ‘Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight’” (Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, Vol.31, p.386).

- c. *According to verse 8, what was God’s true motivation for redeeming the nation of Israel and calling them to be His own? What does this truth reveal to us about God’s motive for sending His Son to redeem sinful men and make them His own?*

Study Notes

good pleasure. One glimpse of man’s depravity and rebellion is testimony enough to prove that such things are so. According to I Corinthians 1:26-28, the same may be said of the New Testament Church. *(c) But because the LORD loved you.* The first reason given for God’s election and calling of Israel is more a taunt than an explanation - “I did it because I did”. It is a powerful way to explain that there is no reason for God’s love toward man outside of God Himself. John Trapp writes, “Lo, He loved you, because He loved you. This may seem *idem per idem* [same through the same], but it excellently shows the ground of God’s love to be wholly in Himself” (CONT, Vol.1, p.294-295). John Gill writes, “With an unmerited love; He loved them, because He loved them; that is, because He would love them; His love was not owing to any goodness in them, or done by them, or any love in them to Him, but to His own good will and good pleasure” (EONT, Vol.2, p.32). Matthew Henry writes, “God fetched the reason of it purely from Himself. He loved because He would love. All that God loves He loves freely. Those that perish perish by their own merits, but all that are saved are saved by prerogative” (MHC, Vol.1, p.756). *And kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers.* The second reason given for God’s choice and calling of Israel is His unwavering faithfulness. By redeeming Israel from Egypt, He fulfilled the promises He had made to the patriarchs (6:10) and gained glory for Himself as the faithful, covenant keeping God. Matthew Henry writes, “Nothing in them, or done by them, did or could make God a debtor to them; but He had made Himself a debtor to His own promise, which He would perform notwithstanding their unworthiness” (MHC, Vol.1, p.756).

For the Sake of God's Lovingkindness

by Albert Barnes

"Rise up, be our help, and redeem us for the sake of Your lovingkindness."

Psalm 44:26

"It was not primarily or mainly on their own account that the psalmist urges this prayer; it was that the character of God might be made known, or that it might be seen that He was a merciful Being. The proper manifestation of the divine character, as showing what God is, is in itself of more importance than our personal salvation, - for the welfare of the universe depends on that; and the highest hope which we can have, as sinners, when we come before Him, is that He would glorify Himself in His mercy. To that we may appeal, and on that we may rely. When that is urged as an argument for our salvation, and when that is the sole ground of our confidence, we may be assured that He is ready to hear and to save us... From the beginning of the world - from the time when man apostatized from God, - through all dispensations, and in all ages and lands, the only hope of men for salvation has been the fact that God is a merciful Being; the true ground of successful appeal to Him has been, is, and ever will be, that His own name might be glorified and honoured in the salvation of lost and ruined sinners - in the displays of His mercy" (BN, Psalms, Vol.2, p.25-26).

2. In Psalm 44:26, to what does the Psalmist appeal so that God might intervene and save? How does this demonstrate that God saves His people, not for their own merit, but for the sake of His love toward them? Similar appeals are found in Psalm 6:4 and Psalm 31:16.

Study Notes

Psalm 44:26 - This petition serves as an excellent reminder that God's salvation is not motivated by some virtue or intrinsic good in man, but by His unconditional and sovereign love (see also Psalm 6:4; 31:16). *Rise up, be our help, and redeem us*. Here the psalmist is calling upon the Lord to deliver His people after a devastating defeat by their enemies. The phrase "rise up" is a Hebrew idiom that often precedes a desperate appeal for help or deliverance, and the phrase "redeem us" is properly understood as just such an appeal. *For the sake of Your lovingkindness*. The ground for the psalmist's petition or appeal is not Israel's piety or merit, but the lovingkindness or mercy of God. John Calvin writes, "They are contented to ascribe their salvation to the unmerited goodness of God as the alone cause of it" (CC, Vol.5, p.172). Fallen man's only ground for any appeal for salvation or deliverance is God's character and willingness to save. Beyond divine love and free grace, there is simply no reason for a righteous God to procure the salvation of the wicked. Jonathan Edwards writes, "And here it may be observed, after what a remarkable manner God speaks of His love to the children of Israel in the wilderness, as though His love were for love's sake, and His goodness were its own end and motive" (Works, Vol.11, p.115). Matthew Henry writes, "We depend upon the goodness of Thy nature, which is the glory of Thy name - Exodus 34:6" (MHC, Vol.3, p.404).

3. Romans 5:6-10 is a text which powerfully demonstrates that divine love, and not man's merit, was the motivation or grounds for God sending His only begotten Son to die for sin. Read the text several times until you are familiar with its contents and then answer the following questions:
- a. *In verses 6-10, there are four terms used to describe men and their relationship with God. Explain the meaning and significance of these four terms.*

Helpless (v.6):

Ungodly (v.6):

Sinners (v.8):

Study Notes

Romans 5:6-8 - (a) Helpless. The word “helpless” comes from the Greek word *asthenés* which means “weak”, “feeble”, or “without strength”. In light of the verses which follow, the meaning is not only that man was completely destitute of any virtue or power to save himself, but that there was nothing in man which would move a holy and righteous God to save him. Martyn Lloyd Jones writes, “‘Without strength.’ What does this mean? It means ‘total inability’, it means that we were entirely devoid of any spiritual strength” (Romans, Ch.5, p.112). Matthew Henry writes, “We were without strength, in a sad condition; and, which is worse, altogether unable to help ourselves out of that condition - lost, and no visible way open for our recovery - our condition deplorable, and in a manner desperate” (MHC, Vol.6, p.397). Robert Haldane writes, “This introduces the proof of the love of God... Christ died for us while we were unable to obey Him, and without ability to save ourselves” (Romans, p.192). **Ungodly.** The word “ungodly” comes from the Greek word *asebés* which denotes one who is impious or destitute of reverence toward God. Martyn Lloyd Jones defines the ungodly as someone who is unlike God and/or lives as though God did not even exist - God is not in any of his thoughts (Romans, Ch.5, p.117-118). The word “ungodly” is added to “helpless” to show that men are not helpless victims, but ungodly rebels whose own depraved condition make it impossible for them to reform. Robert Haldane points out that Christ died for us even when He considered us ungodly (Romans, p.192). **Sinners.** The word comes from the Greek word *hamartolos*, which in the Scriptures, denotes one whose thoughts, words, and deeds are contrary to the nature and will of God. Matthew Henry writes, “Not only helpless creatures, and therefore likely to perish, but guilty sinful creatures, and therefore deserving to perish; not only mean and worthless, but vile and obnoxious, unworthy of such favour with the holy God” (MHC, Vol.6, p.397).

The Truth about a Sinner

by Martyn Lloyd Jones

“For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” - Romans 5:7-8

“This is how the Apostle proves his case. He works upwards first of all from the righteous man to the good man. Then, he comes to an end and works downward. Where are we? Certainly not ‘good’. What about ‘righteous’? Not even righteous. Well, what are we? Sinners! Nothing lovable about us at all. God shows His love and proves His love towards us in that Christ died for us, not because we were lovable and lovely and good. Well, although we may not have been lovable, and lovely, we were correct at any rate, we were law-abiding? No! We were not even righteous. The truth about us was that we were sinners, and a sinner is the exact opposite of the good man and the righteous man. A sinner is an offender. A sinner is a man who has missed the mark; he has come short. There is no righteousness about him at all. The very term suggests moral turpitude; not moral excellence, but moral failure. Not only have we not kept the Law, we are guilty of transgressing the Law, we have broken the Law. That is what a sinner is. These are the terms that are used to describe him in the Bible. In other words, he is not only a man who is guilty of moral turpitude and trespasses, wrong actions and iniquities, and because of this, guilty in the sight of God; he is reprehensible before the Law, he is deserving of divine displeasure, he is deserving of the wrath of God.

“That is the truth about a sinner. He is one who has deliberately flouted God’s Law, he is not interested in God, he does not like God, he is a hater of God. Because of that he pits his own will against the will of God. He says, ‘Hath God said? Very well, I will do the opposite. Is this the commandment? I will break it. He tells me not to covet, but I want this thing and I am going to have it.’ He has therefore deliberately offended God, rebelled against Him, attacked Him, flouted His Law, spurned His voice, gone his own way deliberately, and made himself guilty in the sight of God.

“That is the kind of person for whom Christ has died. ‘Not the righteous - sinners Jesus came to call.’ Not the good men and the lovable, but the vile and the hateful!

“...It is only as we realize this, that we are able to follow the Apostle’s argument. The argument is this. God proves His love toward us in that, while we were like that, when we deserved the wrath of God in His justice, and punishment and perdition and banishment out of His sight, God actually sent His Son to die for us. If that does not prove the love of God to us, nothing ever will, nothing ever can. The people who have appreciated the love of God most have always been those who have realized their sinfulness most” (Romans, Ch.5, p.121-123).

Enemies (v.10):

Study Notes

Enemies. The word *enemy* comes from the Greek adjective *echthros* and refers to someone who is hostile, hating, or in bitter opposition to another. In the Gospels, it is used to describe the devil (Matthew 13:39; Luke 10:19), and in Romans 8:7 and Colossians 1:21, it is used to describe the “hostile” mind of fallen man. Matthew Henry writes, “Not only such as were useless, but such as were guilty and obnoxious; not only such as there would be no loss of should they perish, but such whose destruction would greatly redound to the glory of

- b. *According to verses 6, 8, and 10, how did God respond to the enmity and rebellion of man? How does man's wretched condition and God's gracious response demonstrate that His motive for saving did not come from some virtue or merit in man, but from His own nature and will to love?*
- c. *In verses 7-8, an argument is set before us that serves to demonstrate the extraordinary nature of Christ's death on behalf of sinful men. Explain how this argument showcases the love of God and proves that it was divine love and not human merit that moved God to save.*

Study Notes

God's justice, being malefactors and criminals that ought to die" (MHC, Vol.6, p.397). Robert Haldane writes, "It greatly enhances the love of God that He gave His Son for us while we were yet His enemies. Had we discovered any symptoms of willingness to obey Him, or any degree of love to Him, His love to us would not have been so astonishing" (Romans, p.195). **(b)** *God demonstrated His own love toward us... Christ died for us.* The word "demonstrated" comes from the Greek word *sunístano* which means "to show, prove, establish, or confirm." Robert Haldane writes, "Christ's death for us as sinners, in an astonishing manner, commends, manifests, or exhibits God's love to us" (Romans, p.163). Charles Hodge writes, "The gift of Christ to die on our behalf, is everywhere in Scripture represented as the highest possible or conceivable proof of the love of God for sinners" (CER, p.135-136). John Gill writes, "God has given clear evidence of it [His love], a full proof and demonstration of it; He has so confirmed it by this instance, that there's no room nor reason to doubt of it; He has illustrated and set it off with the greater lustre by this circumstance of it" (EONT, Vol.8, p.451). It is extremely important to understand that Christ's death did not procure the love of God for us, but proclaimed or demonstrated it in a way never before accomplished. God's love for His people was a divine reality before Christ died and was His reason for sending Him. John Gill writes, "The love of God to them [sinners] was very early; it anteceded their conversion; it was before the death of Christ for them; yea, it was from everlasting" (EONT, Vol.8, p.451). **(c)** *For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* It is considered an act of selfless love and heroism when someone dies for another who is worthy of saving, but Christ gave His life for us when we were neither righteous nor good, but deserving of the most severe condemnation. Charles Hodge writes, "Therein is the mysteriousness of the divine love revealed. That God should love the good, the righteous, the pure, the godly, is what we can understand; but that the infinitely Holy should love the unholy, and give His Son for their redemption, is the wonder of all wonders" (CER, p.136). Thomas Manton writes, "The case is rare that one should die for another, be he ever so good and righteous. But God's expression of mercy was infinitely above the proportion of any the most friendly man ever

God's Love Demonstrated

David Clarkson writes, "By this the love of God appeared in its highest exaltation, that when we were so far from being good or righteous, that we were sinners; when useless and impotent, when loathsome and hateful, when enemies and haters of God; when there was nothing in us, that might move in the least to love us, when we were full of that which might oblige Him to express His hatred and indignation against us, even then He vouchsafed the very highest expression of love; then He gave His Son, even then Christ exposed Himself to death for us. Herein both the greatness and freeness of His love appeared, to the wonder and astonishment of all that duly consider it" (Works, Vol.3, p.64-65).

Martyn Lloyd Jones writes, "Let us now sum up the whole argument of verses 6 to 8. The Apostle's argument is that there is nothing whatsoever in us to recommend us, nothing at all. Why did Christ come into the world? Was it in answer to some plea that came from mankind? Not at all! Was it in response to some good in man? Was it because of some divine spark still remaining, and some manifestations of that? Not at all! There was nothing in mankind to recommend it to God, nothing in human nature, nothing in any one of us to recommend us in any way to God and His love. Indeed the truth about us was, and is, that there was everything in us that was wrong and vile and hateful, everything calculated to antagonize God towards us - enemies, hateful, vile, ungodly, sinners as we were. We must realize that our salvation is entirely gratuitous, and arises only and altogether from the love of God in His infinite grace. That is the Apostle's argument" (Romans, Ch.5, p.124).

- d. *How does our understanding of the sinful and wretched state of man lead us to more fully appreciate the love of God in sending His only begotten Son to die for our sins?*

Study Notes

showed. There was nothing in the object to move Him to it, when we were neither good nor just, but wicked. Without respect to any worth in us, for we were all in a damnable estate, He sent His Son to die for us, to rescue and free us from eternal death, and to make us partakers of eternal life. God so loved the world, when we had so sinned, and wilfully plunged ourselves into an estate of damnation" (Works, Vol.2, p.343). *(d)* The Scriptures paint man as he is - sinful, rebellious, corrupt, and odious. This dark canvas serves to magnify the love of God in the same way that black velvet serves to magnify the brightness of the diamond placed upon it. John Murray writes, "But when we assess our weakness and particularly our ungodliness, then we discover both the need and the marvel of the proof God has given. What looms up in our conviction when our ungodliness is properly weighed is our detestability and the wrath of God, and it is impossible to take God's love for granted. That God could love the ungodly, far less that He did love them, would never have entered into the heart of man (I Corinthians 2:9-10). On that background the text must be understood. The marvel of God's love is that it was love to the ungodly" (NICNT, Romans, p.166). Martyn Lloyd Jones writes, "Another way of measuring this love is to measure the depth of the deplorable condition of the people for whom He did it" (Romans, Ch.5, p.112). Matthew Henry writes, "Now herein God commended His love, not only proved or evidenced His love

4. In Ephesians 2:4-5 is found one of the most beautiful passages in all the Scripture concerning God's work of salvation on behalf of sinful man. Read the text until you are familiar with its contents and then write your thoughts on the following phrases. How do they communicate that it was divine love and not human merit or worth that moved God to save?

a. *But God...*

b. *Being rich in mercy...*

Study Notes

(He might have done that at a cheaper rate), but magnified it and made it illustrious. This circumstance did greatly magnify and advance His love, not only put it past dispute, but rendered it the object of the greatest wonder and admiration: 'Now My creatures shall see that I love them, I will give them such an instance of it as shall be without parallel'" (MHC, Vol.6, p.397). Thomas Boston writes, "O what astonishing goodness was it for the great and glorious God to give His only begotten Son to the death for such vile rebels and enemies as we all are by nature! The goodness of God, under the name of His love, is rendered as the only cause of our redemption by Christ" (Works, Vol.1, p.120).

Ephesians 2:4-5 - (a) But God. God's attributes of mercy, love, and grace are now contrasted with the depravity and rebellion of a fallen humanity outlined in the preceding verses. This one small phrase "But God..." changes the course of a fallen humanity. If God had not been moved by His own character to act on our behalf, there would be nothing for us but condemnation and eternal destruction. It is only when God enters the equation that salvation appears. This proves that salvation finds its origin, not in the merits of man, but in the attributes of God - particularly His love, mercy, and grace. Matthew Henry writes, "God Himself is the author of this great and happy change" (MHC, Vol.6, p.692). Martyn Lloyd Jones writes, "There is only one hope for man in sin, says Paul - 'but God'" (Ephesians, Ch.2, p.65). Again Martyn Lloyd Jones writes, "With these two words we come to the introduction to the Christian message, the peculiar, specific message which the Christian faith has to offer to us. These two words, in and of themselves, in a sense contain the whole of the gospel. The gospel tells of what God has done, God's intervention; it is something that comes entirely from outside us and displays to us that wondrous and amazing and astonishing work of God..." (Ephesians, Ch.2, p.59). **(b) Being rich in mercy.** The word "mercy" comes from the Greek word *éleos* and points to God's goodness, kindness, and pity extending to undeserving and miserable creatures. John Calvin writes, "The whole of our salvation is here ascribed to the mercy of God (CC, Vol.21, p.224). Albert Barnes writes, "God is rich in mercy; overflowing, abundant. Mercy is the riches or the wealth of God. Men are often rich in gold, and silver, and diamonds, and they pride themselves in these possessions; but God is rich in mercy. In that He abounds; and He is so rich in

God's Condescending Grace

George Swinnock writes, "Reader, is it not condescending grace in the highest degree, nay, beyond all degrees, for this self-sufficient, absolutely perfect, incomparable God, when the soul of man lay naked, starving, restless, encompassed with enemies, unpitied of all creatures, weltering in its blood, gasping for breath, ready every moment to fetch its last, and to be seized on by devils, dragged to their dungeon of darkness, there to fry in intolerable flames for ever; for Him to look on man in this loathsome condition with an eye of favour and love? ... Friend, friend, what is condescending grace, if this be not? Alas, the incomparable God had no obligation to man, He stood in no way need of man, He is incapable of the least good by man; He would have been as happy as He is at present, if the race of mankind had been ruined and had perished. Besides, He was infinitely disoblged by man, and had all the reason in the world to destroy him; and yet He is pleased to be as studious of man's welfare, and as solicitous about it as if it had been His own" (Works, Vol.4, p.478-479).

c. *Because of His great love with which He loved us...*

c. *By grace you have been saved...*

Study Notes

it that He is willing to impart it to others; so rich that He can make all blessed" (BN, Ephesians, p.40-41). (c) *Because of His great love with which He loved us.* God's mercy flows from His love and extends to the vilest of sinners. Matthew Henry writes, "His great love is the spring and fontal cause of [His mercy]; hence He resolved to show mercy. ... And that love of God is great love, and that mercy of His is rich mercy, inexpressibly great and inexhaustibly rich" (MHC, Vol.6, p.692). Albert Barnes writes, "It was love to the children of wrath; love to those who had no love to return to Him; love to the alienated and the lost. That is true love - the sincerest and the purest benevolence - love, not like that of men, but such only as God bestows. Man loves his friend, his benefactor, his kindred - God loves His foes, and seeks to do them good" (BN, Romans, p.41). Charles Spurgeon writes, "Of all the saints in heaven it may be said that God loved them because He would do it; for, by nature, there was nothing more in them for God to love than there was in the very devils in hell. And as to His saints on earth, if God loves them, - and He does, - it is simply because He will do it, for there was no goodness whatever in them by nature; God loves them in the infinite sovereignty of His great loving nature" (MTP, Vol.52, p.9). (d) *By grace you have been saved.* Grace is now added to mercy and love to show that man's salvation was born out of the character and will of God. Man made no contribution to salvation except to be the pitch black background upon which the light of God's grace is displayed. John Calvin writes, "These words shew us that

5. In Titus 3:4-5, the apostle Paul makes one of the clearest declarations in Scripture regarding the motive behind the saving work of God in Christ. Read the text until you are familiar with its contents and then explain how it affirms that God's salvation of men through Christ was motivated by divine love and not by the worthiness or merit of man?

Study Notes

Paul always feels as if he had not sufficiently proclaimed the riches of Divine grace, and accordingly expresses, by a variety of terms, the same truth, that everything connected with our salvation ought to be ascribed to God as its author" (CC, Vol.21, p.225). Matthew Henry writes, "God has ordered all so that the whole shall appear to be of grace" (MHC, Vol.6, p.692).

Titus 3:4-5 - It is important to first read verse three, where the apostle Paul sets before us a hard word on man's depravity, as John Gill writes, "to set off and magnify the grace of God as black and white illustrate each other" (EONT, Vol.6, p.360). *But when the kindness of God our Savior*. The first reason given for God's saving work on behalf of sinful men is His kindness. The word comes from the Greek word *chrestótes* which may also be translated, "goodness" or "benignity". Matthew Poole defines kindness as "one's easiness to do good to another; that native goodness that is in God, rendering Him inclinable to love, and prone to do good unto the sons of men. This was in God from eternity, but appeared in His sending Christ, and then His Spirit, and in the application of Christ's redemption to particular souls" (COB, Vol.3, p.804). *And His love for mankind appeared*. The second reason given for God's saving of sinful men is His love. The phrase "love of mankind" comes from one Greek word *philanthropía* [*philéo* = to love + *ántropos* = man] from which we derive the English word "philanthropist". God is the Great Philanthropist. His kindness and love made their greatest showing in the sending of His Son. Matthew Henry writes, "This is the ground and motive. God's pity and mercy to man in misery were the first wheel, or rather the Spirit in the wheels, that sets and keeps them all in motion. God is not, cannot be, moved by any thing out of Himself. The occasion is in man, namely, his misery and wretchedness. Sin bringing that misery, wrath might have issued out rather than compassion; but God, knowing how to adjust all with His own honour and perfections, would pity and save rather than destroy" (MHC, Vol.6, p.872). *He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness*. A sound rebuttal laid against any thought that God's work of salvation might have been motivated by or based upon man or his merits. Matthew Henry writes, "False grounds and motives are here removed: not for forseen works of ours, but His own free grace and mercy alone. All is upon the principle of undeserved favour and mercy from first to last" (MHC, Vol.6, p.873). Thomas Boston writes, "There was nothing in the creature to move Him to all this. No beauty remained in the fallen creature, nothing to be seen there but perverseness and enmity against God... God had no need of man, neither could He profit him. But He loved man" (Works, Vol.10, p.437-438). Joseph Alleine writes, "God finds nothing in man to turn His heart, but enough to turn His stomach; He finds enough to provoke His

6. In I John 4:10, we find a final magnificent proof that God's love was totally and completely undeserved or unmerited. According to verse 10, what was the divine motive behind God sending His Son into the world. Was it man's merit or God's love? How does this text demonstrate and even magnify the love of God?

Study Notes

loathing, but nothing to excite His love" (Guide to Heaven, p.27). *But according to His mercy.* The third reason given for God's work of salvation is His mercy, which is here contrasted with our deeds. The greatest deeds of men are as filthy rags and lead to condemnation, but divine mercy saves. *By the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.* Both the foundation of our salvation (the Cross) and its application (the work of the Holy Spirit) is attributed to God's mercy.

I John 4:10 - In this is love. Albert Barnes writes, "In this great gift is the highest expression of love, as if it had done all that it can do" (BN, I John, p.332). *Not that we loved God.* To put it plainly, God's love for us had nothing to do with our love for Him. The Scripture refers to us as having been "haters of God" (Romans 1:30). This is yet another clear rebuttal of any claim to merit, virtue, or worth in us that might have been the cause of God's saving work. John Gill writes, "The love of God is antecedent to the love of His people; it was when theirs was not; when they were without love to Him, yea, enemies in their minds, by wicked works, and even enmity itself, and therefore was not procured by theirs" (EONT, Vol.9, p.647). Albert Barnes writes, "If we had loved and obeyed Him, we might have had reason to believe that He would be willing to show His love to us in a corresponding manner. But we were alienated from Him, we had even no desire for His friendship and favour. In this state He showed the greatness of His love for us by giving His Son to die for His enemies" (BN, I John, p.332). *But that He loved us.* The sole reason for our salvation - the love of God which flows from His nature and is totally independent of man's merit or worth. Thomas Manton writes, "God's love was at the beginning, not ours" (Works, Vol.2, p.342). John Calvin writes, "God, induced by no love of men, freely loved them. ... It was then from God's goodness alone, as from a fountain, that Christ with all His blessings has come to us" (CC, Vol.22, p.240). Matthew Henry writes, "Strange that God should love impure, vain, vile, dust and ashes! ... He loved us, when we had no love for Him, when we lay in our guilt, misery, and blood, when we were undeserving, illdeserving, polluted, and unclean, and wanted to be washed from our sins in sacred blood" (MHC, Vol.6, p.1084). *And sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.* The word "propitiation" comes from the Greek word *hilasmós* which denotes satisfaction or appeasement. In Scripture, it points to a sacrifice which satisfies the demands of God's offended justice and appeases His fierce wrath against rebellious man. The great and enduring seal of God's love was, is, and shall always be the propitiating death of His Son for us. John Calvin writes, "For it was not only an immeasurable love, that God spared not His own Son, that by His death He might restore us to life; but it was goodness the most marvellous, which ought to fill our minds with the greatest wonder and amazement. Christ, then, is so illustrious and singular a proof of divine love towards us, that whenever we look upon Him, He fully confirms to us the truth that God is love" (CC, Vol.22, p.239).

“Herein Is Love” by Charles Spurgeon

“In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” - I John 4:10

“John, with love in his heart, soars aloft, and using his eagle eye, looks over all history, and all space, and at last he poises himself over one spot, for he has found that for which he was looking, and he says, ‘Herein is love.’ There is love in a thousand places, like the scattered drops of spray on the leaves of the forest; but as for the ocean, that is in one place, and when we reach it, we say, ‘Herein is water.’ There is love in many places, like wandering beams of light; but as for the sun, it is in one part of the heavens, and as we look at it, we say, ‘Herein is light.’ So, ‘Herein,’ said the apostle, as he looked toward the Lord Jehovah himself, ‘Herein is love.’ He did not point to his own heart, and say, ‘Herein is love,’ for that was but a little pool filled from the great sea of love, he did not look at the Church of God, and say of all the myriads who counted not their lives dear unto them, ‘Herein is love,’ for their love was only the reflected brightness of the great sun of love; but he looked to God the Father, in the splendor of His condescension in giving His only Son to die for us, and he said ‘Herein is love,’ as if all love were here, love at its utmost height, love at its climax, love out-doing itself: ‘Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins’” (The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, Vol.41, p.1).

“When God loves those who love Him, it seems to be according to the law of nature; but when He loves those who do not love Him, this must be above even all laws, — it is according, certainly, to the extraordinary rule of grace, and grace alone. There was not a man on earth who loved God. There was none that did good, — no, not one; and yet the Lord fixed the eye of His electing love upon sinners in whom there was no thought of loving Him. No more love to God is there in an unrenewed heart than there is of life within a piece of granite. No more of love to God is there within the soul that is unsaved than there is of fire within the depths of the ocean’s waves; and here forsooth is the wonder, that when we had no love to God He should have loved us. This is a mild way of expressing it, for instead of loving God, my brethren, you and I withheld from Him the poorest tribute of homage. We were careless, indifferent. Days and weeks passed over our heads in which we hardly thought of God. If there had not been any God, it would not have made much difference to us as to our thoughts, and habits, and conversation. God was not in all our thoughts; and, perhaps, if somebody could have informed us that God was dead, we should have thought it a fine piece of news, for then we could live as we liked, and need not be under any fear of being judged by Him. Instead of loving God, though now we rejoice that He loves us, we rebelled against Him. Which of His laws have we not broken? We cannot put our finger upon one command without being compelled to acknowledge that we have violated its claims, or come short of its demands” (The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, Vol.42, p.27-28).

“As His creatures we ought to love our Creator; as preserved by His care we are under obligation to love Him for His goodness: we owe Him so much that our utmost love is a mere acknowledgment of our debt. But God loved us to whom He owed nothing at all; for whatever might have been the claims of a creature upon His Creator, we had forfeited them all by our rebellion. Sinful men had no rights towards God except the right of being punished. Yet the Lord manifested boundless love to our race, which was only worthy to be destroyed. Oh words! How ye fail me! I cannot utter my heart by these poor lips of clay. Oh God, how infinite was Thy love which was given without any obligation on Thy part, freely and unsought, and all because Thou willest to love-yea, Thou dost love because Thou art love. There was no cause, no constraint, no claim why Thou shouldest love mankind, except that Thine own heart led Thee so to do. What is man that Thou art mindful of him? ‘Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that God loved us’” (The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, Vol.29, p.113).

Chapter Two
The Son's Motive
in Coming to Save

We have discovered from the Scriptures that the Father did not send His Son because of man's merit or worth, but rather for the praise of His own glory and for the great love with which He loved us. In the following, we will now consider those things which moved the Son to lay aside His glory, robe Himself in flesh, and give His life for the salvation of men. We will discover that He did so, not because of any virtue or merit found in them, but for the glory of His Father, for the great love with which He loved us, and for the joy that was set before Him.

For His Father's Glory

After only a cursory study of the life of Christ, it is evident that His greatest passion was to glorify the Father through the doing of the Father's will. One of the most incomprehensible aspects of the person of Christ is that, although He existed in the very form of God, He did not consider equality with God a thing to be grasped, but willingly and joyfully emptied Himself of divine privilege and became a man. He was obedient to the Father even to the point of death on a cross (Philippians 2:5-8; Hebrews 1:9). Although there were other motives which moved Christ to offer His life for fallen man, the first and foremost was His all-consuming passion to glorify the Father. In this sense it may correctly be said that *Christ died for God*.

Jonathan Edwards writes, "The Scriptures leads us to suppose, that Christ sought God's glory, as His highest and last end" (Works, Vol.1, p.109).

1. In Hebrews 10:7, is found a messianic prophecy quoted from Psalm 40:7. According to both these texts, what was the great purpose of the Son of God in coming into the world? What was His great passion and priority?

Study Notes

Hebrews 10:7 - Then I said. The writer of Hebrews applies the Psalm directly to Christ. Albert Barnes writes, "It is not easy to see how this could be applied to David in any circumstance of his life. There was no situation in which he could say that, since sacrifices and offerings were not what was demanded, he came to the will of God in the place or stead of them... The reference of the language, therefore, must be to the Messiah" (BN, Hebrews, p.227). **Behold, I have come.** A great declaration of willing submission and determined obedience. The Son of God puts Himself at the beck and call of God. John Gill writes, "Christ observing that legal sacrifices were not acceptable to God; that there was a body prepared for Him; and that it was written of Him in the book of God, that He should come; and the time being now come, with a note of attention and admiration, the matter being of great moment and concern, He cheerfully expresses His readiness to come, immediately, without any compulsion, even He Himself, and not another" (EONT, Vol.9, p.445). *In the scroll of the book it is written of me.* That

2. What do the following Scriptures teach us about the Son's attitude toward the Father's will, His passion for the Father's glory, and His earnest desire to manifest His love toward the Father? Explain why it is appropriate to say that Christ accomplished all His works, even His death, first and foremost for God.
 - a. *Christ's Obedience to the Father's Will (John 4:34)*

Study Notes

Christ is spoken of in the Old Testament is affirmed by Christ Himself (John 5:46) and the apostles (Acts 22:23). Matthew Henry writes, "God had not only decreed, but declared by Moses and the prophets, that Christ should come and be the great high priest of the church, and should offer up a perfect and a perfecting sacrifice. It was written of Christ, in the beginning of the Book of God, that 'the seed of the woman should break the serpent's head'; and the Old Testament abounds with prophecies concerning Christ" (MHC, Vol.6, p.931). *To do your will, O God*. It is noteworthy that the will of God is mentioned three times in verses 7-10. Christ came into this world with an eye to accomplish the will of God for the glory of God. John Gill writes, "When He came, He set about with the utmost delight, diligence, and faithfulness, in preaching the Gospel, performing miracles, doing good to the bodies and souls of men, and in finishing the great work of man's redemption, which was the main part of His Father's will He came to do" (EONT, Vol.9, p.445). Matthew Poole writes, "This will of God was in His heart, He delighted to obey it" (MPCB, Vol.3, p.854).

(a) John 4:34 - *Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me."* Jesus' life was a perfect reflection of the the words of Job: "I have not departed from the command of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food" (23:12). He found His satisfaction (i.e. food) in doing the will of His Father. John Calvin writes, "He means not only that He esteems it very highly, but that there is nothing in which He takes greater delight, or in which He is more cheerfully or more eagerly employed; as David, in order to magnify the Law of God, says not only that He values it highly, but that it is sweeter than honey - Psalm 19:10" (CC, Vol.17, p.169-170). Albert Barnes writes, "His great object - the great design of His life - was to do the will of God... This one great object absorbed all His powers" (BN, John, p.220). Charles Spurgeon writes, "Our Lord and Master had but one thought, but one wish, but one aim. He concentrated His whole soul, gathered up the vast floods of His mighty powers, and sent them in one channel, rushing towards one great end: 'My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish his work'" (The New Park Street Pulpit, Vol.6, p.126). *And to accomplish His work*. The word "accomplish" comes from the Greek word *teleiōo* which means to make perfect, or complete; to carry through completely, to finish or bring to an end. Albert Barnes writes, "It is His work to provide salvation, and His to redeem, and His to apply the salvation to the heart" (BN, John, p.220). John Gill writes, "The whole of the work of God was done by Him, just as the Lord commanded it; exactly, according to the pattern given Him, with all faithfulness and integrity; with the most consummate wisdom and prudence; with all application, diligence, and constancy, and so as to finish it, and that without the help of any other; and in such a manner that nothing can be added to it to make it more perfect, or that it can be undone again by men or devils: and that the doing and finishing of this were His meat, or as delightful and refreshing to Him as meat is to the body, appears from His ready and cheerful engaging in it in eternity; from His early and industrious entrance on it in time; from His constancy in it, when He had begun, insomuch that nothing could deter Him from it; nor did He sink and fail under it, nor left it till He had finished it" (EONT, Vol.7, p.791).

The Son's Delight in the Will of the Father

by John Gill

“Now as food is pleasant, and delightful, and refreshing to the body of man, so doing the will of God was as delightful and refreshing to the soul of Christ: He took as much pleasure in it, as an hungry man does in eating and drinking. One part of the will of God was to assume human nature; this He had done, and with delight and pleasure: another part of it was to fulfil the law; and this was in His heart, and was His delight, and He was now doing it: and another branch of it was to suffer and die, in the room and stead of His people; and as disagreeable as this was in itself to the human nature, yet He cheerfully agreed to it; and was sometimes, as it were, impatient till it was accomplished; and He voluntarily became obedient to it: no man could, with greater eagerness, fall to eating, when hungry, than Christ went about His Father's will and work, even that which was most ungrateful to Him, as man” (EONT, Vol.7, p.790).

b. *Christ's Passion for the Father's Glory (John 17:4)*

Study Notes

(b) John 17:4 - I glorified You on the earth. It was Christ's passion for the Father's glory that fetched Him from heaven, robed Him in flesh, and led Him to the cross. It would be appropriate to say that Christ came to earth to get glory for God and His zeal for His mission consumed Him (John 2:17). Here in our text, He declares that His zeal was not in vain for He accomplished exactly what He intended - He glorified God on the earth in a way that was unparalleled in history and that will not be superseded in a thousand eternities. Beyond all decrees and events in redemptive history combined, the greatest revelation of the nature and will of God comes to men and angels through the Son's incarnation and cross work. Therefore it is through the Son and His redemptive work that God gains the greatest possible glory for Himself. *Having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do.* At the beginning of His ministry (John 4:34), Jesus declared that His food was to do the will of the Father who had sent Him. In this text, He declares that He had accomplished that will. John Gill writes, “He did not take it (*i.e.* the work of God) upon Himself, but being called to it He readily accepted of it... And though it was difficult, it was pleasant and delightful to Him” (EONT, Vol.8, p.84). Jonathan Edwards writes, “Here it is pretty plain, by declaring to His Father that He had glorified Him on earth, and finished the work given Him to do, He meant that He had finished the work which God gave Him to do for this end - that God might be glorified. He had now finished that foundation that He came into the world to lay for God's glory. He had laid a foundation for His Father's obtaining His will, and the utmost that He designed. By which it is manifest, that God's glory was the utmost of His design, or His ultimate end in this great work” (Works, Vol.1, p.110).

c. *Christ's Earnest Desire to Manifest His Love for the Father (John 14:31)*

3. We have learned that Christ's entire earthly life and ministry were directed toward the doing of the Father's will. As His earthly ministry was drawing to its close and the cross was drawing near, Christ made an extremely important statement that allows us great insight into His heart and mind. According to His own words in John 12:27-28, why did Christ submit to the Father's will, embrace the cross, and suffer its pain?

Study Notes

(c) John 14:31 - *But so that the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me.* The obedience of which Christ speaks refers specifically to His being "obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross" (Philippians 2:8). This is one of the most profound statements in the Scriptures. Christ died in obedience to the Father in order to show the world His love for Him. The Son loves the Father above all and fully embraces the cross, even hastens to it, as the greatest of all opportunities to demonstrate His immeasurable love for Him. In our day, we often hear that Christ loved man and died for his salvation, but an even greater truth is less known and seldom proclaimed - that Christ loved God and died for His glory. Matthew Henry writes, "As it was an evidence of His love to man that He died for His salvation, so it was of His love to God that He died for His glory and the accomplishing of His purposes. Let the world know that between the Father and the Son there is no love lost" (MHC, Vol.5, p.1121). John Gill writes, "As a son is obedient to a father, so was Christ in all things obedient to the commands of His heavenly Father, in preaching the Gospel, obeying the law, and suffering death; all which He did and suffered, as the Father gave commandment to Him, as man and Mediator: and that it might fully appear how much He loved His Father, and agreed with Him in all His designs of grace; how much His will was resigned to His..." (EONT, Vol.8, p.64). *Get up, let us go from here.* Christ arises to meet the death of the cross for the love of the Father. Matthew Henry, quoting Dr. Goodwin, writes, "Christ, mentioning the great motive of His sufferings - His Father's commandment, was in all haste to go forth to suffer and die" (MHC, Vol.5, p.1121).

John 12:27-28 - *Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour'?* Christ was deeply troubled in the very depths of His spirit when faced with the terrifying reality of the cross that awaited Him. It would not be at all unreasonable to ask to be excused or delivered from such a fate. John Calvin writes, "In His death we ought chiefly to consider His atonement, by which He appeased the wrath and curse of God, which He could not have done, without taking upon Himself our guilt. The death which He underwent must therefore have been full of horror, because He could not render satisfaction for us, without feeling, in His

Christ Died for the Glory of God by Charles Spurgeon

“Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour. ‘Father, glorify Your name.’ Then a voice came out of heaven: ‘I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.’” - John 12:27-28

“Observe right well that the text indicates the deep intent which steadied our Lord’s resolve. Why is Christ resolved to die? Is it to save men? Yes, but not as the chief reason. His first prayer is not, “Father, save my people,” but “Father, glorify thy name.” The glory of God was the chief end and object of our Savior’s life and death. It is that the Father’s name may be illustrious that Jesus would have souls redeemed. His passion had for its main intent the exhibition of the attributes of God. And, brethren, how completely he has glorified Jehovah’s name! Upon the cross we see the divine justice in the streaming wounds of the great Substitute: for the Son of God must needs die when sin is laid upon him. There also you behold infinite wisdom, for what but infallible wisdom could have devised the way whereby God might be just and yet the justifier of him that believeth. There, too, is love, rich, free, boundless love—never so conspicuous as in the death of man’s Redeemer. Till this day it still remains a question concerning the atonement which of the letters best is writ, the justice, the wisdom, or the love. In the atonement the divine attributes are all so perfectly glorified that no one crowds out the other: each one has its full display without in the least degree diminishing the glory of any other. Our blessed Lord, that the Father might be glorified, pushed on to the end which he had set before him. Whatever conflict might be within his spirit, his heart was fixed upon bearing to the death our load, and suffering to the end our penalty” (*The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, Vol.24, p.6*).

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own experience, the dreadful judgment of God” (CC, Vol.18, p.32). *But for this purpose I came to this hour. ‘Father, glorify Your name.’* Christ would not shun the cross because it was the very reason for which He had come. His death and the glorious salvation of an undeserving multitude would abound to the glory of God like no other decree or event before or after. Charles Spurgeon writes, “Shall men, then, be unredeemed? Shall the blood of atonement be unspilt, and no man be ransomed from going down to the pit? Shall He remain alone, the grain of wheat unsown? If He doth, He will be happy enough and glorious enough, for heaven is all His own. Doth He need men to make Him blessed? Does He require worms of the dust to make Him glorious? Should He remain alone, He will still be God and Lord. But, shall the death penalty be left to be borne by men, guilty men, who deserve to bear it? Shall there be no cross, no Calvary, no open tomb, no resurrection, no gates of heaven set wide open for coming souls? There is the question, and you see in the text how resolutely Jesus had settled it. He says in effect - ‘Father, glorify Thy name by My death for this purpose have I come to this hour, that by My agony and bloody sweat, by My cross and passion, I may redeem the sons of men. Redeemed they must and shall be, cost Me what it may. I have resolved to bear the penalty, and magnify Thy law, and I will perform it, though hell itself be let loose against Me and all its waves of fire dash over Me. I will endure the cross, and despise the shame, to honor Thee, My Father”” (Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, Vol.24, p.6). *Then a voice came out of heaven: “I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.”* Jonathan Edwards writes, “The meaning plainly is, that God had glorified His name in what Christ had done, in the work He sent Him upon; and would glorify it again, and to a greater degree, in what He should further do, and in the success thereof” (Works, Vol.1, p.110). Here is seen the mutual agreement between the Father and the Son (see also John 17:1). They have both set the glory of God as their highest aim. The great goal of the Godhead in the saving work of Christ is that through the redemption of the undeserving and the great manner by which it was accomplished, the fullness of God might be revealed to all creation and God might be worshipped as God.

For His Great Love Toward Us

In the preceding chapter, we were careful to point out that the coming of the Son to save sinners was in perfect accord with the will of the Father, and that it was the Father who *so loved the world* that He sent His Son, that through Him the world might be saved (John 3:16-17). In this chapter, we must be equally careful to point out that the Son was not forced to take up this saving work, nor did He do it grudgingly. Rather He gave Himself wholly and willingly that the objects of His love - a lost, depraved, rebellious humanity - might know forgiveness and everlasting life.

It is a great encouragement and consolation to know that the Son who accomplished so great a work of salvation, did so, not only for the glory of God, but for the great love with which He loved His people. In short, the Son who gave Himself because of His unwavering passion for the glory of God is the same who died for the love of fallen men and the improvement of their welfare. The Christ who died *for* God is the same who died *for* us.

Jonathan Edwards writes, “The Scripture every where represents it, as though the great things Christ did and suffered, were in the most direct and proper sense from exceeding love to us” (Works, Vol.1, p.114).

Louis Berkhof writes, “The doctrine of vicarious atonement, it is said, involves injustice on the part of the Father in that He simply sacrifices the Son for the sins of mankind... It was not the Father but the triune God that conceived the plan of redemption. There was a solemn agreement between the three persons in the Godhead. And in this plan the Son voluntarily undertook to bear the penalty for sin and to satisfy the demands of the divine law” (Systematic Theology, p.379).

1. In John 15:9 is found one of the most amazing texts in the Bible. What truth does Jesus declare in this text? How does it demonstrate that He gave Himself to the work of redemption because of the great love with which He loved us?

Study Notes

John 15:9 - *Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you...* This is one of the most astonishing verses in all of Scripture. What is the motive behind His coming? It is the great love with which He loved us. As the Father’s love for the Son cannot be measured, so the depth of the Son’s love for us cannot be sounded. Albert Barnes writes, “The love of the Father toward His only-begotten Son is the highest affection of which we can conceive. It is the love of God toward His coequal Son, who is like Him, and who was willing to endure the greatest sacrifices and toils to accomplish His purpose of mercy. Yet this love is adduced to illustrate the tender affection which the Lord Jesus has for all His friends” (BN, John, p.339). Matthew Poole writes, “The Father’s love to Christ is eternal, immutable, constant, full and perfect, wise and just, free: in all these respects Christ loveth His people as the Father loveth Him” (John 15:9). Matthew Henry writes, “As the Father loved Him [*i.e.* Jesus], who was most worthy, He loved them, who were most unworthy” (MHC, Vol.5, p.1125). John Gill writes, “There is a likeness between the Father’s love to Him, and His love to His disciples: as His Father loved Him from everlasting, so did He love them; as His Father loved Him with a love of complacency and delight, so did

The Father's Bargain by John Flavel

"Here you may suppose the Father to say, when driving His bargain with Christ for you:

Father: My Son, here is a company of poor miserable souls, that have utterly undone themselves, and now lie open to my justice! Justice demands satisfaction for them, or will satisfy itself in the eternal ruin of them: What shall be done for these souls? And thus Christ returns.

Son: O my Father, such is my love to, and pity for them, that rather than they shall perish eternally, I will be responsible for them as their Surety; bring in all thy bills, that I may see what they owe thee; Lord, bring them all in, that there may be no after-reckonings with them; at my hand shall thou require it. I will rather choose to suffer their wrath than they should suffer it: upon me, my Father, upon me be all their debt.

Father: But, my Son, if thou undertake for them, thou must reckon to pay the last mite, expect no abatements; if I spare them, I will not spare thee.

Son: Content, Father, let it be so; charge it all upon me, I am able to discharge it: and though it prove a kind of undoing to me, though it impoverish all my riches, empty all my treasures, yet I am content to undertake it!" (Works, Vol.1, p.61).

The Son's Countervailing Love by Jonathan Edwards

"His [*i.e.* Christ's] delight in the prospect of the eternal salvation of souls more than countervailing the dread He had of His extreme sufferings. Many waters could not quench His love, neither could the floods drown it, for His love was stronger than death; yea, than the mighty pains and torments of such a death" (Works, Vol.2, 962).

2. The nature, degree, and extension of the Son's love toward undeserving sinners is one of the most astounding truths of Scripture. It was this love that led Him to lay down His life on behalf of those whom He came to save. What do the following texts teach us regarding this truth?

Galatians 2:20

Study Notes

He, and so does He love them; and as His Father loved Him with a special and peculiar affection, with an unchangeable, invariable, constant love, which will last forever, in like manner does Christ love His people" (EONT, Vol.8, p.97). Charles Spurgeon writes, "Unto which of the angels did He ever say this? I believe angels are the subjects of divine love in a certain sense, but I have never read of Christ saying to them: 'As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you.' This is the special privilege of the sons of Adam, who have fallen, which angels never have. How marvelous!" (MTP, Vol.41, p.602).

Galatians 2:20 - *...the Son of God, who loved me.* For the great love with which He loved us, He freely gave Himself up to the cruelest of deaths to suffer the full extent of God's wrath against sin. John Calvin writes, "If any merit of ours had moved Him to redeem us, this reason would have been stated; but now Paul ascribes the

Love and Pity Moved Him by Charles Spurgeon

“Jesus Christ looked upon men not at their best, when He laid down His life for their redemption, but at their worst. This is clear, yea, it is self-evident: had they been whole they would not have needed a physician; if they had not been lost they would not have needed a Savior; if the disease had not been very bad they would not have needed so matchless a medicine as the blood of Christ; if they had not been helplessly lost, there could have been no necessity for omnipotence to step in to effect their rescue, and had not the ruin been terrible to the last degree, it would not have been demanded that God Himself should come in human flesh, and make expiation for guilt by His own death upon the cross. The glory of the remedy proves the desperateness of the disease. The grandeur of the Savior is a sure evidence of the terribleness of our lost condition. Look at it, then, and as man sinks Christ will rise in your esteem, and as you value the Savior so you will be more and more stricken with terror because of the greatness of the sin which needed such a Savior to redeem us from it” (Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, Vol.20, p.413).

“Observe, then, that when the Son of God determined to die for men, He viewed them as ungodly, and far from God by wicked works. In casting His eye over our race He did not say, ‘Here and there I see spirits of nobler mould, pure, truthful, truth-seeking, brave, disinterested, and just; and therefore, because of these choice ones, I will die for this fallen race.’ No; but looking on them all, He whose judgment is infallible returned this verdict, ‘They are all gone out of the way; they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.’ Putting them down at that estimate, and nothing better, Christ died for them.... Jesus viewed us as we really were, not as our pride fancies be; He saw us to be without God, enemies to our own Creator, dead in trespasses and sins, corrupt, and set on mischief, and even in our occasional cry for good, searching for it with blinded judgment and prejudiced heart, so that we put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. He saw that in us was no good thing, but every possible evil, so that we were lost, — utterly, helplessly, hopelessly lost apart from Him: yet viewing us as in that graceless and Godless plight and condition, He died for us” (Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, Vol.20, p.495-496).

“Putting all these things into one, man by nature, where Christ finds him, is utterly devoid of strength of every sort for anything that is good — at least, anything which is good in God’s sight, and is acceptable unto God.... He has no strength of his own at all. He is without strength, and there he lies — hopeless, helpless, ruined, and undone, utterly destroyed; a splendid palace all in ruin, through whose broken walls sweep desolate winds with fearful wailings, where beasts of evil name and birds of foulest wing do haunt, a palace majestic even in ruins, but still utterly ruined and quite incapable of self-restoration. ‘Without strength.’ Alas! alas! poor humanity!” (Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, Vol.20, p.412).

“Then let it be noticed — and this is the point I want constantly to keep before your view — that Jesus died out of pure pity. He must have died out of the most gratuitous benevolence to the undeserving, because the character of those for whom He died could not have attracted Him, but must have been repulsive to His holy soul. The impious, the godless — can Christ love these for their character? No, He loved them notwithstanding their offenses, loved them as creatures fallen and miserable, loved them according to the multitude of His lovingkindnesses and tender mercies, from pity, and not from admiration. Viewing them as ungodly, yet He loved them. This is extraordinary love! I do not wonder that some persons are loved by others, for they wear a potent charm in their countenances, their ways are winsome, and their characters charm you into affection; ‘but God commendeth His love towards us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.’ He looked at us, and there was not a solitary beauty spot upon us: we were covered with ‘wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores,’ distortions, defilements, and pollutions; and yet, for all that, Jesus loved us. He loved us because He would love us, because His heart was full of pity, and He could not let us perish. Pity moved Him to seek the most needy objects that His love might display its utmost ability in lifting men from the lowest degradation, and putting them in the highest position of holiness and honor” (Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, Vol.20, p.499-500).

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whole to love: it is therefore of free grace. Let us observe the order: 'He loved us, and gave Himself for us.' As if He had said, 'He had no other reason for dying, but because He loved us,' and that 'when we were enemies' (Romans 5:10)" (CC, Vol.21, Galatians, p.75). Charles Spurgeon writes, "The language of the text also suggests to me that I should remind you that the love of Jesus was *an ancient love*. It is true that He loves us now, but Paul also wrote truly, 'Who loved me.' The verb is in the past tense. Jesus loved me upon the cross; loved me in the manger of Bethlehem; loved me or ever the earth was. There never was a time when Jesus did not love His people... Do think of it. 'The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love.' That He should love us at all, is a wonder; that He should have loved us always, is a wonder of wonders; and this love is a part of His eternal purposes, and is as old as His arrangements for the history of the universe" (MTP, Vol.40, p.339). *And gave Himself up for me*. Love was Christ's motivation for "giving Himself up" for us. Thomas Boston writes, "See the matchless love of the Son of God to poor sinners. It was love that induced Him to substitute Himself in their room, and to undertake to pay their ransom... He was willing to be reproached, that we might be glorified; to become poor, that we might be made rich; to be accused and condemned, that we might be justified; to enter into prison, that we might go free; and to die a cursed ignominious death, that we might live, and reign in honour for ever. O how great was His love to poor sinful men!" (Works, Vol.1, p.387). Charles Spurgeon writes, "Jesus could not give any more than Himself. He not only gave His crown, His throne, His manhood, His life, His sufferings, His death, His offices, His excellences, His merits, but He gave Himself... If you measure a love by its gifts, you have certainly an immeasurable love here, because it was proved by an immeasurable gift" (MTP, Vol.13, p.340). **Ephesians 5:2** - ... *Christ also loved you*. There is no hope for the sinner outside of these four words. It is the greatest of tragedies when the truth they convey becomes common and no longer astounds us. John Gill writes that Christ loved us, "...with a love exceeding great and strong, which is wonderful, inconceivable, and unparalleled" (EONT, Vol.8, p.98). *And gave Himself up for us*. This is the once and for all proof of Christ's love. No greater proof can be given, and none after should be required. John Calvin writes, "This was a remarkable proof of the highest love" (CC, Vol.21, Ephesians, p.304). Albert Barnes writes, "The strength of His love was so great that He was willing to give Himself up to death on our account" (BN, Ephesians, p.95). *An offering and a sacrifice to God*. For sinful man to be saved from the wrath of God, it was required that someone interpose. In love, Christ accepted the burden of our sins and suffered the wrath of God in our place. The word "sacrifice" comes from the Greek word *thusia* which is the most common word employed in the New Testament to denote a sacrifice offered to God by the shedding of blood and the taking of life. Albert Barnes writes, "Christ was such a sacrifice; and His love was shown in His being willing that His blood should be shed to save men" (BN, Ephesians, p.95). *As a fragrant aroma*. The perfect sacrifice of Christ was altogether pleasing and acceptable to God. Matthew Henry writes, "As He offered Himself with a design to be accepted of God, so God did accept, was pleased with, and appeased by, that sacrifice" (MHC, Vol.6, p.709).

3. The measure of Christ's love is that He gave Himself for us. There can be no greater expression or illustration of love than this? What do the following Scriptures teach us about this truth? How does this prove once again that the motive for the Son's coming was not the merits or worth of men, but the Son's love?

John 15:13

Study Notes

John 15:13 - *Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.* The incarnation and death of Jesus Christ is the greatest expression, work, and proof of love. Matthew Henry writes, "And this is the love wherewith Christ hath loved us, He is our bail for us, body for body, life for life, though He knew our insolvency, and foresaw how much the engagement would cost Him" (MHC, Vol.6, p.1125). John Gill writes, "He not only came down from heaven, and laid aside His glory and royal majesty, but He laid down His life; not His gold and silver, and the riches of this world, which were all His, but His life; than which, nothing is dearer to a man, is himself, his all: and besides, Christ's life was not a common one, it was not the life of an innocent person only, or the life of a mere man, but of a man in union with the Son of God; it was the Lord of glory and Prince of life, who was crucified, and slain; a life that was entirely at His own dispose; it had never been forfeited by sin, nor could it have been forced away from Him by men or devils; it was laid down of and by Himself, freely and voluntarily; and that 'for', in the room, and instead of His people, as a ransom for them; He being their surety and substitute, and standing in their legal place and stead, He took their sins upon Him, bore the curse of the law, sustained His Father's wrath, and all the punishment due to sin; and so suffered death, the death of the cross; the just, in the room and stead of the unjust" (EONT, Vol.8, p.68). Charles Spurgeon writes, "Our Lord Jesus Christ was under no sort of necessity to die. When a man lays down his life for his friend, — and how seldom has that been done! — he only anticipates the debt of nature which, in any case, he has to pay before long. If you were to die for me, or I were to die for you, tomorrow, we should, either of us, only do a little earlier what we must both ultimately do. Death will, ere long, claim every one of us, and to the sepulcher we must all descend unless our Lord should speedily come. But, He possessed inherent immortality. No sentence of death was written across His brow, He could live on for ever... So Jesus Christ's laying down of His life for His friends was beyond anything that could even happen in any other man's life, a voluntary act, and, consequently, a more wonderful display of love than could ever be given in any other case" (MTP, Vol.52, p.222). Thomas Boston writes, "He was born holy for them, lived holy for them, and died for them on the cross. Never was there such an act of friendship as this among men, one bearing the wrath of God in the room and stead of another. O how He loved them!" (Works, Vol.5, p.246). *You are my friends.* John Gill writes, "The persons for whom he laid down His life, are described as 'His friends'; not that they were originally so; being enemies and enmity itself to God, when He laid down His life for them, and reconciled them; they were not such as had carried themselves friendly, or had shown any love and affection to Him, but all the reverse: but they are so called, because He had chosen them for His friends; He had pitched upon them, and resolved to make them so; and by dying for them, reconciled them who were enemies; and in consequence of this, by His Spirit and grace, of enemies makes them friends; so that His love in dying for His people, is greater than any instance of love among men: He laid down His life for His enemies, without any sinister selfish views, and that freely and voluntarily; whereas among men, when one man has laid down his life for others, either they have been very deserving, or he has been forced to it, or it has been done with the view of popular applause and vain glory" (EONT, Vol.8, p.68).

The Son's Eternal Love

Charles Spurgeon writes: "From all eternity the Son of God has loved His people: even from of old "His delights were with the sons of men." Long before He came on earth He so loved the men whom His Father gave Him that He determined to be one with them, and for their redemption to pay the dreadful price of life for life. He saw the whole company of His chosen in the glass of His foreknowledge, and loved them with an everlasting love, Oh the love which glowed in the heart of our Redeemer "in the beginning"! That same love will never know an end. Herein to us is His glory. He loved us so, that heaven could not hold Him; He loved us so, that He descended to redeem us; and having come among us amid our sin and shame, He loves us still. 'Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.' Love, thou hast reached thine utmost glory in the heart of the divine Savior! And the glory of this love, which is without beginning, boundary, change, or close, is the very life-blood of the gospel. The love of Jesus is the glad tidings of great joy. Our great Physician loves the sick, and delights to heal them. He comes into the wards among the palsied and the plague-stricken with an intense longing to bless them. Jesus is the sinner's Friend. How rapturously does my soul sing of Him as 'Jesus, lover of my soul'! A gracious gospel lies in the glory of the love of Christ!" (The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, Vol.35, p.172).

"Long before the lamps of heaven were kindled, or the stars began to twinkle in the sky, when as yet all this world slept in the mind of God as unborn forests sleep within the acorn-cup, we were in the heart of Christ... We may be infallibly certain that His foreseeing eye beheld us, and that His foreloving heart loved us when as yet we had no being..." (The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, Vol.41, p.603-604).

The Causa Prima

Thomas Watson writes, "The causa prima (*i.e.* first cause), and impulsive cause, was free grace. It was love in God the Father to send Christ, and love in Christ that He came to be incarnate. Love was the intrinsic motive. Christ is God-man, because He is a lover of man. Christ came out of pity and indulgence to us: *non merita nostra, sed misera nostra* (Augustine). 'Not our deserts, but our misery' made Christ take flesh. Christ's taking flesh was a plot of free grace, and a pure design of love. God Himself, though Almighty, was overcome with love. Christ incarnate is nothing but love covered with flesh. As Christ's assuming our human nature was a master-piece of wisdom, so it was a monument of free grace" (A Body of Divinity, p.194).

Love to the Least

Thomas Watson writes, "To whom Christ came. Was it to friends? No; He came to sinful man. Man that had defaced His image, and abused His love; man who was turned rebel; yet He came to man, resolving to conquer obstinacy with kindness. If He would come to any, why not to the angels that fell? 'He took not on Him the nature of angels' (Hebrews 2:16). The angels are of a more noble origin, more intelligent creatures, more able for service; ay, but behold the love of Christ, He came not to the fallen angels, but to mankind. Among the several wonders of the loadstone it is not the least, that it will not draw gold or pearl, but despising these, it draws the iron to it, one of the most inferior metals: thus Christ leaves angels, those noble spirits, the gold and the pearl, and comes to poor sinful man, and draws him into His embraces" (A Body of Divinity, p.195-196).

John Owen writes, "But the Lord Christ placed His love on us, that love from whence He died for us, when we were sinners and ungodly; that is, every thing which might render us unamiable and undeserving. Though we were as deformed as sin could render us, and more deeply indebted than the whole creation could pay or answer, yet did He fix His love upon us, to free us from that condition, and to render us meet for the most intimate society with Himself. Never was there love which had such effects-which cost Him so dear in whom it was, and proved so advantageous unto them on whom it was placed. In the pursuit of it He underwent everything that is evil in His own person, and we receive everything that is good in the favour of God and eternal blessedness" (Works, Vol.1, p.168).

For the Joy Set before Him

The Son gave His life for His Father's glory, and thus *died for God*. The Son gave His life for the great love which He loved us and thus *died for His people*. To conclude our study we will consider one last motive that led the Son to the cross: it was the *joy that was set before Him*.

To say that the Son was moved by the future hope of joy may give rise to the objection that such a statement is contradictory, or that it presents Christ as self-seeking. How could He seek in unison the glory of God, the salvation of His people, and His own joy? These objections are easily answered. First, we must understand that the Son of God found His greatest joy in the promotion of His Father's will and glory. Therefore His joy, the glory of God, and the redemption of God's people were one in the same with Him. He had no competing loyalties or passions. Secondly, we must understand that the Son of God is right in seeking His own joy. After all, all things were made by Him and for Him (Colossians 1:16). The Father loves the Son, has given all things into His hands (John 3:35), and desires that all honor the Son as they honor Him (John 5:23). It is the Father's good pleasure that the Son's joy be complete. All creation, in all realms, has one great and final purpose - they were created and exist for the glory and good pleasure of the Son of God.

Study Notes

I John 3:16 - *We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us...* Countless men of literature, poets, and scholars alike have long attempted to both define and illustrate the nature of love. On the cross, Christ made their works obsolete. With His death, He defined, illustrated, and proclaimed a love whose purity is only matched by its zeal. Through Him, we come to know the very essence and meaning of love. His death for His people is the gold standard of love. Albert Barnes writes, "By this.... we know what true love is; we see a most affecting and striking illustration of its nature" (BN, I John, p.322). Charles Spurgeon writes, "All sorts of sacrifices may be taken as proofs of affection, but the relinquishment of life is the supreme proof of love, which nobody doubts" (MTP, Vol.51, p.520). Thomas Manton writes, "There was power discovered in the creation, when God made us like Himself out of the dust of the ground; but love in our redemption, when He made Himself like us. The person that was to work out our deliverance was the eternal Son of God. That God who owes nothing to man, and was so much offended by man, and that stood in no need of man, having infinite happiness and contentment in Himself, that He should come and die for us! Hereby perceive we the love of God" (Works, Vol.1, p.432). There are a few essentials that must be properly understood if we are to ever perceive the magnitude of Christ's love: (1) The infinite greatness of the one who died. On the cross, it was not man for man, but God for man. The Creator condescends to die for the creature. (2) The depravity, destitution, and misery of the ones for whom Christ died. It would have been unspeakable love if Christ had died for angels, or good men, or even penitent sinners. But He died for harden enemies. (3) The severity of the death that was suffered. The cross itself was known to be the greatest of all tortures. But Christ's cross was not a common one. All other crosses combined are a small thing compared to His, for He died under the wrath of God. It is only when these three truths are properly understood that Christ's death is properly appraised. Since the death of Christ is the greatest and truest demonstration of love, it must be that love is its author and the force behind it. It was not human merit or virtue that moved Christ to give Himself so freely, but it was His unmerited and unconditional love.

Joy - The End for Which Christ Aimed

by William Gouge (Commentary on Hebrews, Vol.2, p.928)

William Gouge writes, "Christ's joy was and is comprized of the following:

1. That glory which Christ left when He descended into the lower parts of the earth (Ephesians 4:9); therefore, a little before His ascension thereunto, He thus prayed, 'O Father, glorify thou me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was' (John 17:5).
2. All that was added by the work of redemption, as:
 - (1) A clearer manifestation of God's divine properties.
 - (2) The exaltation of His human nature.
 - (3) Man's redemption and salvation, following thereupon.
 - (4) The praises that through all ages should be given to Him.
 - (5) The preaching the gospel through the whole world."

Joy - Christ's Promised Reward

by Thomas Boston (Works, Vol.8, p.470-471)

"Lastly, He had a promise of a glorious reward to be conferred on Him, as a proper merit of His work done; there was a joy set before Him in the promise, for which He endured the cross, despising the shame (Hebrews 12:2). Never was there such a work wrought; and never was there such a reward promised. Unto it there belongs a fivefold promise.

1. The promise of a new kind of interest in God, as His God and Father, 'He shall cry unto me, thou art my Father, my God' (Psalm 89:26). Our Lord Jesus had God as His Father, by eternal birthright: but there was a new relation constituted between God and Christ as the second Adam, head of the covenant, founded upon His undertaking and fulfilling the covenant condition... For by His obedience unto death, He purchased the enjoyment of God as a God and Father. I do not say, He purchased it for Himself; the man Christ needed not to do that, forasmuch as He had it, in virtue of the personal union of the two natures: but He purchased it for sinners, who had lost all saving interest in God, but could not be happy without it.
2. The promise of a glorious exaltation, to be the Father's honorary servant, prime minister of heaven, as great administrator of the covenant: 'Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high' (Isaiah 52:13). 'I will give thee for a covenant of the people' (Isaiah 49:8). In fulfilling the condition of the covenant, He took upon Him the form of a bondservant, and humbled Himself even unto the death of the cross: wherefore God also, according to the promise of the covenant, hath highly exalted Him to the prime ministry of heaven, and given Him a name as great administrator of the covenant, which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow (Philippians 2:7-10).
3. The promise of a seed and offspring, numerous as the stars of heaven: 'He shall see His seed' (Isaiah 53:10). 'So shall thy seed be' (Genesis 15:5); namely, 'as the stars of the sky in multitude' (Hebrews 11:12), even the whole multitude of the elect, all of them to live by his death, and to bear His image, as a child doth that of His father. He consented to suffer the pangs of death; but they were travailing pains, to issue in a numerous birth. He was as a corn of wheat to fall into the ground, and die; but the promise secured to Him, on that condition, His bringing forth much fruit (John 12:24).

4. The promise of His inheriting all things, as primary heir; ‘I will make Him my firstborn’ (Psalm 89:27). So the apostle says, God hath appointed Him heir of all things (Hebrews 1:2). And Christ Himself declares His being put in possession accordingly; ‘All things are delivered unto me of my Father’ (Matthew 11:27). Thus He hath by promise suitable treasures for the supporting of the dignity conferred on Him. But of this also more afterwards.
5. Lastly, the promise of victory and dominion over all His, and His people’s enemies: ‘I will beat down His foes before His face’ (Psalm 89:23). He was to encounter with Satan, sin, and death, in the quarrel of the designed heirs of glory; and no sooner was He engaged against them, but the wicked world of men began a war with Him too: but He had His Father’s promise, for victory and dominion over them all; that, howbeit He should get the first fall, and die in the battle, yet His death should be the destruction of Satan’s dominion, sin’s power, and death’s bands over His people; and that whosoever should go about to support that tottering interest, should fall under Him, ‘The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool’” (Psalm 110:1).

1. According to the writer of Hebrews 12:2, why was the Son of God willing to leave the glory of heaven, take upon Himself human flesh, and endure the humiliation and pain of the cross? Explain your answer.

Study Notes

Hebrews 12:2 - Who for the joy set before Him. Before the foundation of the world, the Father had set before His Son the indescribable joys and eternal pleasures that would be His as a result of Him being obedient unto death, even the death of a cross. Matthew Henry writes, “He [*i.e.* the Son] had something in view under all His sufferings, which was pleasant to Him; He rejoiced to see that by His sufferings He should make satisfaction to the injured justice of God and give security to His honour and government, that He should make peace between God and man, that He should seal the covenant of grace and be the Mediator of it, that He should open a way of salvation to the chief of sinners, and that He should effectually save all those whom the Father had given Him, and Himself be the first-born among many bretheren. This was the joy that was set before Him” (MHC, Vol.6, p.954). John Gill writes, “Christ underwent so much disgrace, and such sufferings; namely, for the sake of having a spiritual seed, a numerous offspring with Him in heaven, who are His joy, and crown of rejoicing; for the sake of the salvation of all the elect, on which His heart was set; and for the glorifying of the divine perfections, which was no small delight and pleasure to Him” (EONT, Vol.9, p.472). *Endured the cross, despising the shame.* Christ not only patiently endured every hurt and shame associated with the cross, but He endured the full force of His Father’s wrath. Albert Barnes writes, “He, in view of the honour and joy before Him, endured the most severe sufferings to which the human frame can be subjected, and the form of death which is regarded as the most shameful” (BN, Hebrews, p.295). *And has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.* This summarizes all the honors and joys that were given to Christ for His obedience to the will of God. He was exalted to the highest place in the universe - to the highest place in heaven itself.

The Joy of Sharing His Father's Presence and Glory

The writer of Hebrews could hardly give us a clearer explanation of the motivation which led Christ to Calvary's cross - He did it *for the joy that was set before Him*. But what was that joy which so moved the Son of God? It was first and foremost the joy of returning to His Father's presence and of sharing His Father's glory - a glory which was His before the foundation of the world. It was an immense trial for the Son of God to leave His Father's dwelling place in heaven, and an infinitely greater trial to bear the sin of His people and to be forsaken, even abandoned by God on their behalf. He endured such indescribable agonies, even despised them, because He looked forward to the future hope of once again dwelling with His Father and rejoicing, even reveling, in His presence.

1. What does Psalm 16:9-11 teach us about the truth outlined in the above introduction? Based on this text, describe the joy that led Christ to the cross and sustained Him through indescribable suffering.

Study Notes

Psalm 16:9-11 - In Acts 2:25-30 and Acts 13:33-37, both Peter and Paul apply these words of David to Christ and His resurrection. *Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices. My flesh also will dwell securely.* The Christ faced the cross with a strong gladness of heart and a great confidence. *For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.* The reason for such confidence was the promise of the resurrection. God had promised not to leave Christ to the grave, but to raise Him from the dead. *You will make known to me the path of life.* Matthew Poole writes, "Thou wilt raise Me from the grave, and conduct Me to the place and state of everlasting felicity" (Psalm 16:11). Albert Barnes writes, "Though He was to die, - to descend to the regions of the dead, and to lie down in the dark grave, - yet there was a path again to the living world, and that path would be pointed out to Him by God. In other words, He would not be suffered to remain among the dead..." (BN, Psalms, Vol. 1, p.133). *In Your presence is fullness of joy.* The "joy set before Him" and that motivated Him to bear all things related to His incarnation and suffering, was that He would return to the very presence of God in heaven and to the fulness of the joy and eternal pleasures that are found there. Isaiah prophesied "And His resting place will be glorious" (11:10). Albert Barnes writes, "Not partial joy; not imperfect joy; not joy intermingled with pain and sorrow; not joy which, though in itself real, does not satisfy the desires of the soul... - but joy, full, satisfying, unalloyed, unclouded, unmingled with anything that would diminish its fulness or its brightness; joy that will not be diminished..." (BN, Psalms, Vol. 1, p.133). John Gill writes, "Christ, being raised from the dead, ascended to heaven, and was received up into glory into His Father's presence, and is glorified with His own self, with His glorious presence, for which He prayed, (John 17:5); and which fills His human nature with fulness of joy, with a joy unspeakable and full of glory" (EONT, Vol.3, p.585). *In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.* John Gill writes, "Christ being entered into heaven is set down at the right hand of God in human nature, an honour which is not conferred on any of the angels, (Hebrews 1:13); where the man Christ Jesus is infinitely delighted with the presence of God, the never fading joys of heaven, the company of angels and glorified saints" (EONT, Vol.3, p.585).

The Son's Joy in the Father's Presence

Charles Spurgeon writes, "Christ being raised from the dead ascended into glory, to dwell in constant nearness to God, where joy is at its full for ever: The foresight of this urged Him onward in His glorious but grievous toil" (Treasury of David, Vol.1, p.197).

Stephen Charnock writes, "This is a part of the joy of the soul of Christ; He hath now a fulness of joy, a satisfying delight instead of an overwhelming sorrow; a 'fulness of joy,' not only some sparks and drops as He had now and then in His debased condition; and that in the presence of His Father. His soul is fed and nourished with a perpetual vision of God, in whose face He beholds no more frowns, no more designs of treating Him as a servant but such smiles that shall give a perpetual succession of joy to Him, and fill His soul with fresh and pure flames. Pleasures they are, pleasantness in comparison whereof the greatest joys in this life are anguish and horrors. His soul hath joys without mixture, pleasures without number, a fulness without want, a constancy without interruption, and a perpetuity without end" (Treasury of David, Vol.1, p.209).

Jonathan Edwards writes, "Christ from eternity is, as it were, in the bosom of the Father, as the object of His infinite complacence. In Him is the Father's eternal happiness. Before the world was, He was with the Father, in the enjoyment of His infinite love; and had infinite delight and blessedness in that enjoyment; as He declares of Himself in Proverbs 8:30: 'Then I was by Him as one brought up with Him. And I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him.' And when Christ ascended to the Father after His passion, He went to Him, to the enjoyment of the same glory and blessedness in the enjoyment of His love... The love which the Father has to His Son is great indeed: the Deity does, as it were, wholly and entirely flow out in a stream of love to Christ; and the joy and pleasure of Christ is proportionally great. This is the stream of Christ's delights, the river of His infinite pleasure" (Works, Vol.2, p.29).

2. In Psalm 16:9-11, we learned that it was the hope of future joy in the presence of the Father that led the Son to endure the cross. In the following texts, we will learn that part of that joy was the Son's glorification or exaltation to the place that was rightfully His even before the foundation of the world. Write your thoughts on these texts.

John 17:4-5

Study Notes

John 17:4-5 - *I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do.* Christ glorified God on the earth in two specific ways: (1) By revealing God to men - v.6; and (2) By His obedience to the Father's will. John Calvin writes, "He completed the whole course of His calling" (CC, Vol.18, p.168). *Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself.* Jonathan Edwards writes, "The glory of the Father and the Son is spoken of as the end of the work of redemption" (Works, Vol.1, p.110). John Calvin writes, "He desires to be glorified with the Father, not that the Father may glorify Him secretly, without any witnesses, but that, having been received into heaven, He may give a magnificent display of His greatness and power, that every

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knee may bow to Him - Philippians 2:10" (CC, Vol.18, p.169). Why did Christ seek such glory for Himself? The following reasons should be considered: (1) He desired such glory because it was rightfully His. John Calvin writes, "He desires nothing that does not strictly belong to Him" (CC, Vol.18, p.169). Matthew Henry writes, "See with what confidence He expects the joy set before Him... It cannot be denied Him... Such an infinite value there was in what Christ did to glorify His Father that He properly merited all the glories of His exalted state. If the Father was a gainer in His glory by the Son's humiliation, it was fit that Son should be no loser by it" (MHC, Vol.5, p.1153-1154). (2) He desired such glory because it would also glorify the Father. In John 13:31 Jesus declared, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." (3) The glory of Christ is the joy of the saints. The saint will have no great privilege in heaven than to gaze upon the beauty of the exalted and glorified Son. *With the glory which I had with You before the world was.* This is a strong proof of the Son's preexistence and deity. He desired to take up the glory that He had left behind (Philippians 2:5-11). John Trapp writes, "Our Saviour then is no upstart God" (John 17:5). John Calvin writes that Christ desired that "the Divine majesty, which He had always possessed, may now be illustriously displayed in the person of the Mediator, and in the human flesh with which He was clothed" (CC, Vol.18, p.169). Matthew Henry writes, "He prays that even His human nature might be advanced to the highest honour it was capable of, His body a glorious body; and the glory of the Godhead might now be manifested in the person of the Mediator, Emmanuel, God-man" (MHC, Vol.5, p.1153). Albert Barnes writes, "He now prays that God would raise Him up to the dignity and honour which He had before His incarnation. This is the state to which He is now exalted, with the additional honour of having made atonement for sin, and having opened the way to save a race of rebels from eternal death" (BN, John, p.355).

John 17:24 - "*Father, I desire that they also.* The word "desire" comes from the Greek word *thélo* which may be translated, "to will." This has been called the last will and testament of Christ for His people. John Trapp writes, "Every word is full of life and joy. I would not (saith Mr Baxter) for all the world that one verse had been left out of the Bible" (CONT, Vol.5, p.406). The Father loves the Son and will not answer Him reluctantly or meagerly, but bountifully. *Whom You have given Me.* Here we find a great motive for God's saving work among sinful men - He is moved to save them, not because of some merit found in them, but to give them to His Son. Throughout the ages, God has saved and transformed a countless multitude from Adam's fallen race so that He might give them as a gift to Christ. See also: John 3:35; 6:37,39; 10:27-30. *Be with Me where I am so that they may see My glory which You have given Me.* Christ now reveals the great motive behind His petition - He asked that His people might see His eternal splendor - the fulness of His excellencies, perfections, beauty and power. The Son desires to be glorified because He is God, and it is right for Him to be so. To shun this glory would be to deny His deity. The Son desires that His glory be seen by His people because the most loving and gracious thing He could do for them and the highest privilege He could confer upon them would be to allow them entrance into His presence to behold the fulness of His glory. John Owen writes, "It is evident that in this prayer, the Lord Christ hath respect unto His own glory and the manifestation of it. But in this place, He is not so much concerned for His own glory as He is for the advantage, benefit, satisfaction, and blessedness of His

The Joy of Gaining a Redeemed People

Thus far, we have learned that God the Father loves His Son above all and has ordained all things for His glory and good pleasure. Thus, before the foundation of the world, God ordained to save a people out of the multitude of sinful humanity that they might be for the glory, honor, and praise of the Son. In accordance with the will of the Father, and in view of this joy set before Him - the joy of redeeming a people of His very own - the Son willingly, even joyfully, endured all for His bride and for the joy that she would ultimately bring Him. Through His incarnation and death, He has secured a great congregation for Himself from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation. He has made them to be a source of continuous joy, satisfaction, and glory throughout all of eternity.

Charles Spurgeon writes, “To bring His chosen to eternal happiness was the high ambition which inspired Him, and made Him wade through a sea of blood” (Treasury of David, Vol.1, p.197).

Matthew Henry writes, “The salvation of souls is a great satisfaction to the Lord Jesus. He will reckon all His pains well bestowed, and Himself abundantly recompensed, if the many sons be by Him brought through grace to glory. Let Him have this, and He has enough. God will be glorified, penitent believers will be justified, and then Christ will be satisfied” (MHC, Vol.4, p.308).

1. In Psalm 2:8, what does the Father promise His Son? Explain how this promise was one aspect of the “joy that was set before Him”, and which led Him to surrender His life to the cross of Calvary?

Study Notes

disciples, in the beholding of it... So Joseph charged his brethren, when he had revealed himself unto them, that they should tell his father of all his ‘glory in Egypt’ (Genesis 45:13). This he did, not for an ostentation of his own glory, but for the satisfaction which he knew his father would take in the knowledge of it. And such a manifestation of His glory unto His disciples doth the Lord Christ here desire, as might fill them with blessed satisfaction for evermore” (Works, Vol.1, p.286). *For You loved Me before the foundation of the world*. The Father seeks the Son’s glory because of His eternal and paternal love for Him. John Gill calls it an “ancient love” (EONT, Vol.8, p.91). The Father created the universe and ordained the salvation of a multitude from the mass of fallen humanity because He loves His Son and seeks His glory. Through His incarnation, perfect life, cross and resurrection, the door has been opened for the Son to gain the greatest glory for Himself. He has “come to have first place in everything” (Colossians 1:18), and all things in heaven and earth have been “summed up” in Him (Ephesians 1:10). All of this has been accomplished according to the good pleasure and perfect satisfaction of the Father.

Psalm 2:8 - This Psalm is attributed to David (Acts 4:25), and is frequently quoted in the New Testament as having been fulfilled in Christ (Acts 4:25-27; 13:33; Hebrews 1:5). It has long been considered a Messianic Psalm. *Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance and the very ends of the earth as Your possession*. With regard to David, this promise refers to his possession of the promise land and the subjection of the nations. With regard to the Son of God, it refers to His rule over all creation and the gathering of a people

2. The following Scriptures further illustrate the truths revealed in Psalm 2:8, that the Son left the glories of heaven and embraced the cross that He might redeem a people for His own glory and joy. Write your thoughts on these texts.

Isaiah 53:11

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for Himself from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. God was moved to save the nations, not because of some merit or virtue that He found in them, but that He might give a redeemed people as an inheritance to His Son - for His joy, good pleasure, and glory. Charles Spurgeon writes, "At great feasts many a monarch has been known to say to his favourite, 'Ask what I shall give thee, and nothing shall be denied thee this day.' Even thus doth the great Father say to His glorious Son the Prince of Peace, 'Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen, thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth, thy possession.' He bids Him open His mouth wide, and request a boundless dominion. He will give Him distant nations, yea, and the whole round earth to be His kingdom" (MTP, Vol.26, p.253-254). John Gill writes, "These are given Him as His inheritance and possession, as His portion, to be enjoyed by Him; and who esteems them as such, and reckons them a goodly heritage, and a peculiar treasure, His jewels, and the apple of His eye" (EONT, Vol.3, p.531). Christ gave Himself to the cross with the sure hope that His labor would not be in vain and His reward would not be meager. Sovereign grace would see to it that the Son would receive His reward in full. God promised His servant Abraham, "Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them... So shall your descendants be." If God made such a promise to His servant who believed, how much greater is that promise to His Son who obeyed unto death, even death on a cross!

Isaiah 53:11 - *As a result of the anguish of His soul.* The Messiah's work would be marked by the intense suffering of bearing His people's iniquities and the wrath of God. The word "anguish" comes from the Hebrew word *'amal* which denotes wearisome labour, toil, trouble, and travail. Albert Barnes writes that the word refers, "to the arduous and wearisome labour and trial involved in the work of redemption, as that which exhausted the powers of the Messiah as a man, and sunk Him down to the grave" (BN, Isaiah, Vol.2, p.281). *He will see it.* A powerful statement. The Messiah's work would not be in vain. He would see it through to its end. He would accomplish it and rejoice, even revel, in its reward - the justification of "many." John Calvin writes, "He [*i.e.* Isaiah] declares that Christ, after having suffered, shall obtain the fruit of His death in the salvation of men. When he says, 'He shall see,' we must supply the words, 'Fruit and Efficacy'" (CC, Vol.8-4, p.126). *And be satisfied.* The Messiah would be completely satisfied in His accomplishment. The word "satisfied" comes from the Hebrew word *saba* which means to be satisfied, sated, or filled; to have one's fill or to have in excess. Matthew Poole writes, "He shall esteem His own and His Father's glory, and the salvation of His people, an abundant recompense for all His sufferings" (Isaiah 53:11). John Calvin writes, "This is full of the sweetest consolation; for Isaiah could not have better expressed the infinite love of Christ toward us than by declaring that He takes the highest delight in our salvation, and that He rests in it as the fruit of His labours, and He who has obtained His wish rests in that which He most ardently desired; for no person can be said to be satisfied but he who has obtained what he wished so earnestly as to disregard everything else and be satisfied with this alone" (CC, Vol.8-4, p.126127). John Gill writes, "Now the fruit of all this He sees with inexpressible pleasure, and

He Shall be Satisfied

By Edward Payson

“As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, as He will bear their iniquities” - Isaiah 53:11

“Could any of us have seen what angels saw, when the Son of God left the bosom of His Father, and exchanged a throne in heaven for a manger on earth; could we have seen Him divesting Himself of His glory, laying aside the form of God, assuming the form of a servant, and appearing on earth, in the likeness of sinful flesh, with the avowed purpose of living in poverty, and dying an ignominious, agonizing, and accursed death - we should naturally have been led to exclaim, ‘What adequate object can He have in view? What motive can be sufficiently powerful to induce such a being to make sacrifices so great, to encounter sufferings so exquisite!’ This question an apostle has partially answered. He has informed us, that Jesus Christ endured the cross and despised the shame for the sake of the joy set before Him. In what this joy consisted, we may learn from the chapter before us, and especially from our text. It is here predicted, that He shall see of the travail of His soul, that is, of the fruits or effects of His sufferings, and be satisfied. In the context we are informed what these fruits will be. He shall justify many, He shall see His seed, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. The joy set before Him, for the sake of which He endured the cross, and despised the shame, was then the joy, which would result from seeing His Father glorified and sinners saved, in consequence of His incarnation, sufferings, and death. This, our text declares, He shall see, and the sight will satisfy Him. While contemplating it, He will feel that He is amply rewarded for all His sacrifices, toils, and sufferings...

“Already has our Redeemer seen much of the fruit of His sufferings. Our once barren world, watered by His tears and His blood, has already produced a large harvest of righteousness and salvation. His cross, like Aaron’s rod, has budded and blossomed, and begun to bear precious incorruptible fruit. From His cross sprang all the religious knowledge, all the real goodness, all the true happiness which has existed among mortals since the fall. On His cross, which, like the ladder seen by Jacob in vision, unites heaven and earth, myriads of immortal being, who were sinking into the bottomless abyss, have ascended to the celestial mansions; - other myriads, now alive, are following them in the ascent. In the patriarchs, prophets, and pious Israelites; in the apostles, and other primitive preachers of Christianity; in the numerous converts, who, by their instrumentality, were turned from darkness to light; in all the truly pious individuals, who have since existed among men; in all the real Christians who are now on earth, our Redeemer has seen the fruits of His sufferings. In every real Christian now present He sees one of these fruits, sees a soul, which has been redeemed by His blood from endless wretchedness and despair, and made an heir of glory and honor and immortality. On then, how much, how very much, has He already seen effected, in fulfillment of the promise before us! How many immortal souls have been plucked as brands from everlasting burnings! How many individuals have been instructed, sanctified, pardoned, comforted, and made more than conquerors, through Him that loved them! How many pious families have rejoiced together in His goodness; how many churches have been planted, watered, and made to flourish! How much happiness have the members of all these churches enjoyed in life, in death, and in heaven! What an exceedingly great, almost innumerable multitude of happy spirits, redeemed from among men, are now surrounding the throne of God and the Lamb! And even while I speak, the number of these happy spirits, and the harvest, which springs from a Savior’s sufferings, is increasing. Even while I speak sinners in different parts of the world are flocking into the kingdom of God. Even while I speak, immortal souls, washed in a Savior’s blood, sanctified by His spirit, and just made victorious over the last enemy, death, are entering heaven from the four quarters of the globe, and commencing their everlasting song, Now unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, be glory and dominion forever and ever.

“And while our thrice blessed Redeemer has thus seen, and still sees the happiness of human beings increased by His sufferings, He has also seen, and still sees the glory of God augmented in an equal degree. He has seen millions, who were once enemies to His Father, transformed to friends; He has seen millions, who once blindly worshipped false gods, and ascribed to them the glory of creating, preserving, and governing the world, turning from their worthless idols to worship the only living and true God, who made heaven and earth. He has seen His Father’s law obeyed and honored by multitudes, who, but for Him, would have continued to trample it under foot. He has seen ten thousand times ten thousand of prayers and ascriptions of praise, ascending from a world, which, but for His interposition, would never have offered one of these acceptable, spiritual sacrifices to His Father. He has seen the eternal throne surrounded, and Him who sits upon it adored by almost countless multitudes, who were once dishonoring God on earth, and preparing to blaspheme Him in hell. In fine, He has seen His religion flying through the world as on angels’ wings, scattering blessings wherever she comes, and loudly proclaiming peace on earth, good will to men, and glory to God in the highest. Surely, the prediction before us has already been partially fulfilled” (Complete Works, Vol.2, p.152-154)

Isaiah 62:5

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which gives Him and infinite satisfaction; namely, the complete redemption of all the chosen ones, and the glory of the divine perfections displayed therein, as well as His own glory, which follows upon it; ... as a woman, after her travail and sharp pains are over, having brought forth a son, looks upon it with joy and pleasure, and is satisfied, and forgets her former pain and anguish; so Christ, after all His sorrows and sufferings, sees a large number of souls regenerated, sanctified, justified, and brought to heaven, in consequence of them, which is a most pleasing and satisfactory sight unto Him” (EONT, Vol.5, p.316). Jonathan Edwards writes, “He sees the travail of His soul, in seeing His seed, the children brought forth as the result of His travail. This implies, that Christ has His delight, most truly and properly, in obtaining the salvation of His church, not merely as a means, but as what He rejoices and is satisfied in, most directly and properly” (Works, Vol.1, p.114). *Isaiah 62:5 - ... and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so your God will rejoice over you.* The most intimate language is employed here to communicate the nature and extent of Christ’s joy in the bride that He has redeemed for Himself. He found her accursed, He redeemed her with His blood, He transformed her by His power, and He presents her to Himself with boundless joy. Matthew Henry writes, “This is very applicable to the love Christ has for His church and the complacency He takes in it, which appears so brightly in Solomon’s Song, and which will be complete in heaven” (MHC, Vol.4, p.364). John Gill writes, “Christ is the Lord God of His church and people; Immanuel, God with us; and He stands in the relation of a bridegroom to them, and they in the relation of a bride to Him; and as such He rejoices over them with exceeding great joy, and that to do them good; so He rejoiced over them from all eternity, when first betrothed to Him; and so He does in time, in redemption: this was the joy set before Him, which animated Him to bear the cross, and despise the shame of it; namely, that those would be redeemed, and saved by Him, and brought to glory; He rejoices at the conversion of them, and will present them to Himself with joy in the spiritual and personal reign, and to His Father at the last day; and

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particularly, what is meant here, there will be such a profusion of blessings on the church in the latter day, as will abundantly show the joy of Christ in His people” (EONT, Vol.5, p.365). **Luke 15:10** - *In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God.* The phrase “presence of the angels” is a reference to heaven - the dwelling place of God (see verse 7). The primary idea is not that the angels rejoice, but that God’s superabundant joy because of the salvation of His people overflows to all of heaven and every holy creature which dwells there. *Over one sinner who repents.* The relationship between Hebrews 12:2 and this verse is clear. The joy that was set before Christ and that moved Him to give His life as a ransom for many includes the joy of seeing a multitude of glorified saints, redeemed by His own blood. Charles Spurgeon writes, “One sinner had repented, and all heaven must make holiday concerning it. Oh, brethren, there is enough joy in the heart of Christ over His saved ones to flood all heaven with delight. The streets of Paradise run knee-deep with the heavenly waters of the Savior’s joy. They flow out of the very soul of Christ, and angels and glorified spirits bathe in the mighty stream” (The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, Vol.30, p.526). Matthew Henry writes, “There is always joy in heaven. God rejoiceth in all His works, but particularly in the works of His grace. He rejoiceth to do good to penitent sinners, with His whole heart and His whole soul. He rejoiceth not only in the conversion of churches and nations, but even over one sinner that repenteth, though but one” (MHC, Vol.5, p.741).

Why the God Rejoices over the Redeemed

By Edward Payson

“That the infinite and every blessed Jehovah, before whom all nations are as nothing and vanity, should rejoice in the repentance of a sinful worm of the dust, appears at first view, strange, and almost incredible. But however strange or incredible it may appear, it is evident, both from His declarations and His conduct, that such is the fact. . . It is however certain, that God does not rejoice in the repentance of sinners, because it can add any thing to His essential happiness or glory; for He is already infinitely glorious and happy, and so would continue though all the men on earth, and all the angels in heaven should madly rush into hell. Is it any profit to the Almighty that thou art righteous, or is it any gain to Him that thou makest thy ways perfect? No, our goodness extendeth not to Him, and when we have done all, we are but unprofitable servants. Why then does God rejoice when we repent? He rejoices:

1. Because His eternal purposes of grace, and His engagements to His Son, are then fulfilled. We learn from the Scriptures, that all who repent, were chosen by Him in Christ Jesus before the world began, and given to Him as His people in the covenant of redemption. We also learn, that He has said to His Son, ‘Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power’. He therefore rejoices to see them repent, as we rejoice when our promises are fulfilled, and our favorite purposes accomplished.
2. God rejoices when sinners repent, because bringing them to repentance is His own work. It is a consequence of the gift of His Son, and is effected by the power of His Spirit. The Scriptures inform us, that He rejoices in all His works, and with reason He does rejoice in them; for they are all good. But if He rejoices in His other works, much more may He rejoice in this, since it is of all His works the greatest, the most glorious, and the most worthy of Himself. In this work the image of Satan is effaced, and the image of God restored to an immortal soul. In this work, a child of wrath is transformed into an heir of glory. In this work, a smoking brand is plucked from eternal fires, and planted among the stars in the firmament of heaven, there to shine with increasing lustre forever and ever. And is not this a work worthy of God, a work in which God may with propriety rejoice?
3. God rejoices in the repentance of sinners, because it affords Him an opportunity to exercise mercy and show His love to Christ, by pardoning them for His sake. Christ is His beloved Son in whom He is ever well pleased. He loves Him as He loves Himself, with an infinite love; a love which is as inconceivable by us, as His creative power and eternal duration. He loves Him not only on account of the near relation and inseparable union which subsists between them, but for the perfect holiness and excellence of His character, and especially for the infinite benevolence which He displayed in undertaking and accomplishing the great work of man’s redemption. As it is the nature of love to manifest itself in acts of kindness toward the beloved object, God cannot but wish to display His love for Christ, and to show all intelligent beings how perfectly He is pleased with His character and conduct, as Mediator. The inexhaustible fountain of love to Christ, which fills His heart, is constantly seeking new channels in which it may flow out and display itself to creatures. As David asked, ‘Is there yet alive any of the house of Saul to whom I may show kindness for Jonathan’s sake?’ so we may conceive of God as asking, ‘Is there yet any penitent sinner, to whom I may show kindness for the sake of Christ?’ And when such a sinner is found, God cannot but be pleased, because it affords Him an opportunity to display His love for Christ, by bestowing pardon from respect to His atonement and intercession. . .
4. God rejoices when sinners repent, because it gratifies Him to see them escape from the tyranny and from the consequences of sin. God is light; perfect holiness. God is love; pure benevolence. His holiness and His benevolence both prompt Him to rejoice, when sinners escape from sin. Sin is that abominable thing which He hates. He hates it as an evil or malignant, and as a bitter, or destructive thing. It is indeed both. It is the plague, the leprosy, the death of intelligent creatures. It infects and poisons all their faculties; plunges them into the lowest depths of guilt and wretchedness, and pollutes them with a stain, which all the waters of the ocean cannot wash away, which all the fires of hell cannot remove; from which nothing can cleanse them, but the blood of Christ” (Complete Works, Vol.3, p.235-241).