

1.

Introduction

1.

We have been learning of the works of the kingdom in Matthew 8 and 9, and in anticipation of Easter we turn to consider Christ's greatest work in His death and resurrection.

2.

Before Christ's death, His disciples did not understand when He told them He would die. After Christ died, His disciples mourned His death, confused about why God would let this great evil happen. Why did Jesus Christ die on the cross? There was good reason.

3.

But it is easy to miss that reason. The majority of Protestant churches in America, and the majority in Caney, are Arminian. Their gospel message goes this way: "Christ died to make it possible for you to be forgiven for your sins, if you believe in Jesus Christ." These words are Biblical, but their Arminian meaning is not true. Specifically, Arminians claim Christ died to make salvation possible for all who will believe. But they will not teach that Christ actually saved His people by dying on the cross. Their reason is they believe your faith

is what actually saves you. Christ's death only made your salvation possible

. In believing this, Arminians make Jesus Christ no Savior

, and they empty His death of its true meaning

. As they and we consider Christ's death this week approaching Easter Sunday, I challenge you to believe the full biblical gospel that Jesus' death on the cross actually saved

you from your sins. Anything less is not truly worth celebrating.

4.

Of the many passages which reveal the meaning of Christ's death, this passage is eminently clear that God saved us from death through the death of Christ. Why did Christ die? To save you from death. To save you from sin, cond

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emnation

, and their final result of
death

, in that order. The outstanding English Puritan theologian John Owen wrote an excellent book titled "The Death of Death in the Death of Christ." Through careful exegesis of many passages he demonstrates this truth—scripture teaches that Christ died not to make salvation possible

for all men, but to
actually save

the elect. You see, if Christ merely made salvation possible, even for all men, then He did not

defeat death

for you

! The Arminian doctrine that Christ died to make salvation possible for all men is called "Universal Atonement." The Biblical doctrine that Christ died to actually save the elect is the third of the five points of Calvinism, called "Limited Atonement," "Definite Atonement," or "Particular Redemption." Christ definitely saved a limited number of particular people when He died on the cross. And that is the real reason Christians celebrate Jesus' death.

5.

Outline. We will consider this passage in 3 parts.

1.

The One Man vv. 12-14

2.

The Free Gift vv. 15-17

3.

The One Act vv. 18-21

4.

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Body

1.

The One Man: Sin and Salvation Come Only Through One Representative Man vv. 12-14

1.

Text

1.

12 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned-

2.

13 for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law.

3.

14 Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.

4.

The first, and the main, reason this passage gives us to believe Christ actually saved us from death is in vv. 12-14. Sin and salvation, death and life, come only through one representative man . Just as through Adam's sin, you die, so it is through Christ's obedience you live. From Adam to Moses, even if you did not sin as Adam sinned, you would die, because you sinned in Adam. Just as Adam's sin actually impacted you, so Christ's saving work actually impacts you.

5.

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Adam and Christ are representative heads; representatives of all who are associated with them. The thrust of Paul's teaching here for our consideration is that if the one man Jesus Christ did not save you, no one else will. Sin and salvation came through one man. Your sin—your actual transgressions—did not originate with you. They originated in Adam. Your salvation—your imputed righteousness, your acts of obedience; even your faith—do not originate with you. They originate with Christ. The first half of Paul's comparison in v. 12 is not completed in v. 12 but it begs us to find its completion later in v. 18. "

Just as sin came into the world through one man,
" so salvation came into the world through one man. And just as sin actually came into the world through Adam—not just

potential

sin, but

actual

sin—so also salvation came into the world through Christ—not just

potential

salvation, but

actual

salvation. Just as Adam's work actually

condemned

us, so also Jesus' work

actually

saved us!

6.

Praise God for that! Praise God that each one of us does not have to become our own savior by choosing Christ by the whim of our own free will! Praise God that there is "one man" who is the Savior of sinners!

7.

The Free Gift: Sin and Salvation Differ Because Salvation Is A Free Gift vv. 15-17. We
learned about the "

one man

;" now we learn about the "

free gift

."

Sin and salvation differ because salvation is a free gift

.

1.

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Text

1.

15 But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many.

2.

16 And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification.

3.

17 If, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

4.

Sin and salvation differ because salvation is a free gift. Though there is a parallel between Adam and Christ, sin and salvation, the free gift of salvation is not like the evil triumvirate of sin

,
condemnation

, and
death

, because salvation's blessings are much greater than the evils of sin. Salvation is greater because it actually triumphs

over sin, condemnation, and death. Sin in v. 15 leads to condemnation in v. 16, which leads to death in v. 17.

1.

Grace abounded over sin. But God's grace in v. 15 "abounded" "much more" than sin. Grace abounded over sin

. Its quantity and power, its growth and overflow, is greater than the one man Adam's sin.

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This grace is the " grace of that one man Jesus Christ . " What really, actually triumphs over sin is not your faith, but " the grace of...Jesus Christ . " Praise God that grace abounded over sin ! We don't deserve this grace, but it is a " free gift . "

2.

Justification outdoes condemnation. Sin leads to condemnation, but in v. 16 justification outdoes condemnation

. The " one " original sin was enough to condemn us. But in our justification Christ saved us not only from the guilt of original sin, but also from the guilt of " many [actual] trespasses . " Why does justification cover all of our sins? Because it is a " free gift . " You don't owe God anything as payment for this gift of justification. Jesus Christ paid the whole penalty for your sin, covering the guilt of your every trespass. Praise God that while condemnation came by God's justice , justification comes by God's mercy ! Praise God that you need not pay anything for justification! Praise Him that even your faith does not count as payment! Justification is a " free gift ! "

3.

Life reigns over death. Sin leads to condemnation, which leads to death, but in v. 17, life reigns over death

. Christ's purpose in dying for our sins was not only to replace our condemnation with justification, but also to replace our death with life. Not because of your faith, not because of your works, but because of Jesus Christ alone, " There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. 3 For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh.

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" (

Rom. 8:1-3

) In Jesus Christ Himself, God condemned sin, removed your condemnation, and freed you from death.

Christ died "

that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

" (

Heb. 2:14-15

) When Christ died, He not just possibly, but actually

delivered you from death. And what He gives you instead is life. Death would bring you to an end, but life gives you "

hope and a future.

" (

Jer. 29:11

; cf. Prov. 23:18; 24:14) The free gift's end in life is not like death. Praise God that though

The wages of sin is death...the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord!

" (

Rom. 6:23

) Praise Him that "

God...when we were dead in our sins, made us alive together with Christ
," and that we are saved "

by grace...through faith, and that [faith] not of yourselves; it is the gift of God!

" (

Eph. 2:4-5, 8

) Were eternal life and even our faith not a "
free gift

," we would be dead in our sins. But even in Christ's death,
life reigns over death

.

4.

The One Act: Sin and Salvation Come Through One Representative Act vv. 18-21

1.

Text

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1.

18 Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.

2.

19 For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

3.

20 Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,

4.

21 so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

5.

When did God's grace triumph over sin, condemnation, and death? It did so in Christ's "one act of righteousness," when He died on the cross for your sins, for your condemnation, for your death. This was already stated implicitly in vv. 15-17. God's grace "abounded" over sin, in the past tense. Justification covers your every sin because Christ paid for your every sin, in the past. The recipients of righteousness reign in life because Christ defeated death, in the past.

6.

But now Paul states the means of this triumph plainly. Both sin and salvation came through one representative act. No doubt Adam's progeny were guilty not only for Adam's actual sin, but also for their own actual sins. And we must rejoice that salvation was completely planned by God the Father "before the foundation of the world"

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" (
Eph. 1:4
) , and is completely applied or "
sealed
" by God the Spirit, even through the means of faith (

Eph. 1:13
) . Sin and salvation come to us through these channels. But they were not produced on the stage of redemptive history except through one representative act, and through that act they were produced actually

,
completely
, and
specifically
for you and me.

1.

Do you see the two respective acts? Adam's sin "led to condemnation for all men" (v. 18) because by that sin "the many were made sinners" (v. 19), and so "sin reigned in death." (v. 21) But Christ's "one act of righteousness"—His death on the cross—leads to justification and life for all men.

2.

These acts actually produced sin and salvation. Adam's sin actually made the many sinners. In parallel with this, Christ's one act of righteousness actually made the many righteous. The text says "the many will be made righteous," in the future. This future tense does not refer to the past production of justification by Christ on the cross, but to its future application by the Holy Spirit. Our justification's past production guarantees its future application. Christ's death did not merely make it possible for you to be forgiven; rather, it

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actually guaranteed
you would be forgiven. As such you were
actually
justified in Christ by His "
one act of righteousness.
"

3.

These acts completely produced sin and salvation. The one trespass led to condemnation, and to death. It did not merely make these ends possible. It brought these ends about. So also with Christ's one act of righteousness. It brought about justification and life. Likewise, Adam's one trespass, and Christ's one act of righteousness, were so effective as to bring death and life to all men whom each covenant head represented. Adam represented "
all men
" without exception. Christ represented not the same set of "
all men
," but only all those who receive the free gift of justification and life. Christ's death counts for
each one
of those men. In this way, these acts
completely
produced sin and salvation.

4.

These acts produced sin and salvation specifically for you and me, because these acts made sin and salvation not just possible for all
but ac
tual
for specific people. Paul affirms what Jesus Himself taught, "
I lay down my life for the sheep
" (
John 10:15
) , but Jesus says unbelievers are "
not my sheep.
" (
John 10:26
)

5.

Conclusion

1.

Why then did Jesus have to die? He died for His sheep, to actually save them from sin, condemnation, and death. If Jesus laid down His life for a lesser purpose, merely to open the door to heaven but not to lead His people through that door, merely to knock at the door of your heart in the hope you will freely choose to let Him in, merely to save you halfway, and not to the uttermost, then Jesus Christ died in vain, and He cannot save you. Only you can save yourself.

2.

But this Arminian Jesus who is not really a Savior is not the Jesus Christ of the Bible, who came to actually "save His people from their sins." (**Matt. 1:21**) If you believe in Jesus Christ as your Savior, praise God for the solid promises scripture gives you that

"
We have now been
justified by his blood

·
" (
Rom. 5:9
) "

We
were reconciled
to God
by the death of his Son

·
" (
Rom. 5:10
) "

And you...he has now
reconciled in his body of flesh by his death

·
" (
Col. 1:21-22
) Christ has entered into the holy places "
by means of his own blood,

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thus securing
an eternal redemption.

" (

Heb. 9:12

) "

He is able to save to the uttermost
those who draw near to God through him....He has no need, like those high priests, to offer
sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since
he did this once for all when he offered up himself

.

" (

Heb. 7:25, 27

)

3.

This is the old gospel of Jesus Christ, of Paul against the Judaizers, of the ancient church
fathers against Pelagius, of the creeds and councils against the heretics, of the Reformers
against the Catholics, of the Reformed scholastics against the Socinians, and of the Dutch
Reformed and Puritans against the Arminians: Jesus Christ saves sinners! This is the gospel
the disciples needed to understand in their confusion while Christ's body lay in the grave. Jesus'
death was necessary because it
actually saved

them from their sin. Let nothing less satisfy your soul! The new gospel that you were not dead in
your sins, so you don't need Christ to strengthen you in order to receive Him as your Savior,
glorifies you

at the expense of the
glory of Jesus Christ

! It lengthens man's arm by shortening God's. God rebuked Job, "
Have you an arm like God?

" (

Job 40:9

) But true believers give glory to God, "

Not by their own sword did they win the land, nor did their own arm save them, but your right
hand and your arm!

" (

Ps. 44:3

) "

Salvation belongs to the Lord.

" (

Ps. 3:8; Jonah 2:9

) Believing on Christ alone for your salvation, say with the apostle Paul, "

God forbid that I should glory,
save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ
, by which the

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world
has been crucified to me, and
I
to the world.

" (
Gal. 6:14
)

4.

The cross is no mere halfway house to heaven. It is the glorious means by which you were saved. Go
d saved you from death in the death of Christ. That is why Christ had to die.