

CHAPTER 5

WHY GOD SAVES BY GRACE, RATHER THAN BY ANY OTHER MEANS

I COME now to answer the fifth question; namely, to show why God saveth those that he saveth by grace, rather than by any other means.

First. God saveth us by grace, because since sin is in the world, he can save us no other way; sin and transgression cannot be removed but by the grace of God through Christ; sin is the transgression of the law of God, who is perfectly just. Infinite justice cannot be satisfied with the recompense that man can make; for if it could, Christ Jesus himself needed not to have died; besides, man having sinned, and defiled himself thereby, all his acts are the acts of a defiled man; nay, further, the best of his performances are also defiled by his hands; these performances, therefore, cannot be a recompense for sin. Besides, to affirm that God saveth defiled man for the sake of his defiled duties — for so, I say, is every work of his hand — what is it but to say, God accepteth of one sinful act as a recompense and satisfaction for another? (^{<ST04>}Haggai 2:14). But God, even of old, hath declared how he abominates imperfect sacrifices, therefore we can by no means be saved from sin but by grace (^{<ST24>}Romans 3:24).

Second. To assert that we may be saved any other way than by the grace of God, what is it but to object against the wisdom and prudence of God, wherein he aboundeth towards them whom he hath saved by grace? (^{<ST08>}Ephesians 1:5-8). His wisdom and prudence found out no other way, therefore he chooseth to save us by grace.

Third. We must be saved by grace, because else it follows that God is mutable in his decrees, for so hath he determined before the foundation of the world; therefore he saveth us not, nor chooseth to save us by any other way, than by grace (^{<ST03>}Ephesians 1:3, 4; ^{<ST08>}Ephesians 3:8-11; ^{<ST23>}Romans 9:23).

Fourth. If man should be saved any other way than by grace, God would be disappointed in his design to cut off boasting from his creature; but God's design to cut off boasting from his creature cannot be frustrated or disappointed; therefore he will save man by no other means than by grace; he, I say, hath designed that no flesh should glory in his presence, and therefore he refuseth their works; "Not of works, lest any man should boast." "Where *is* boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay; but by the law of faith" (^{<400>}Ephesians 2:8,9; ^{<403>}Romans 3:24-28).

Fifth. God hath ordained that we should be saved by grace, that he might have the praise and glory of our salvation; that we should be "to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved" (^{<400>}Ephesians 1:6). Now God will not lose his praise, and his glory he will not give to another; therefore God doth choose to save sinners but by his grace.

Sixth. God hath ordained, and doth choose to save us by grace, because, were there another way apparent, yet this is the way that is safest, and best secureth the soul. "Therefore *it is* of faith, that *it might be* by grace; to the end the promise [the promise of eternal inheritance, (^{<304>}Hebrews 9:14-16)] might be sure to all the seed" (^{<406>}Romans 4:16). No other way could have been sure. This is evident in Adam, the Jews, and, I will add, the fallen angels, who being turned over to another way than grace, you see in short time what became of them.

To be saved by grace supposeth that God hath taken the salvation of our souls into his own hand; and to be sure it is safer in God's hand than ours. Hence it is called the salvation of the Lord, the salvation of God, and salvation, and that of God.

When our salvation is in God's hand, himself is engaged to accomplish it for us.

1. Here is the mercy of God engaged for us (^{<405>}Romans 9:15).
2. Here is the wisdom of God engaged for us (^{<400>}Ephesians 1:7,8).
3. Here is the power of God engaged for us (^{<400>}1 Peter 1:3-5).
4. Here is the justice of God engaged for us (^{<403>}Romans 3:24,25).

5. Here is the holiness of God engaged for us (^{<438B>}Psalm 89:30-35).

6. Here is the care of God engaged for us, and his watchful eye is always over us for our good (^{<618B>}1 Peter 5:7; ^{<237D>}Isaiah 27:1-3).

What shall I say? Grace can take us into favor with God, and that when we are in our blood (^{<266D>}Ezekiel 16:7,8). Grace can make children of us, though by nature we have been enemies to God (^{<482B>}Romans 9:25,26). Grace can make them God's people which were not God's people (^{<618B>}1 Peter 2:9, 10). Grace will not trust our own salvation in our own hands — “He putteth no trust in his saints” (^{<485B>}Job 15:15). Grace can pardon our ungodliness, justify us with Christ's righteousness; it can put the spirit of Jesus Christ within us, it can help us up when we are down, it can heal us when we are wounded, it can multiply pardons, as we, through frailty, multiply transgressions.

What shall I say? Grace and mercy are everlasting. They are built up for ever. They are the delight of God. They rejoice against judgment. And therefore it is the most safe and secure way of salvation, and therefore hath God chosen to save us by his grace and mercy rather than any other way (^{<248B>}Isaiah 43:25; ^{<482B>}Romans 3:24,25; ^{<244D>}Isaiah 44:2,4; ^{<487D>}Psalm 37:23; ^{<418B>}Luke 10:33, 34; ^{<285D>}Isaiah 55:7, 8; ^{<410D>}Psalm 136; ^{<488D>}Psalm 89:2; ^{<318B>}Malachi 3:18; ^{<518B>}James 2:13).

Seventh. We must be saved by the grace of God, or else God will not have his will. They that are saved are

“predestinated unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace” (^{<410B>}Ephesians 1:5, 6).

1. But if it be his will that men should be saved by grace, then to think of another way is against the will of God. Hence they that seek to establish their own righteousness are such as are accounted to stand out in defiance against, and that do not submit to, the righteousness of God — that is, to the righteousness that he hath willed to be that through which alone we are saved by grace (^{<480B>}Romans 10:3).

2. If it be his will that men should be saved through grace, then it is his will that men should be saved by faith in that Christ who is the contrivance of

grace; therefore they that have sought to be justified another way have come short of, and perished notwithstanding, that salvation that is provided of God for men by grace (^{<B01>}Romans 9:31-33).

3. God is not willing that faith should be made void, and the promise of none effect; therefore they of the righteousness of the law are excluded: “for if the inheritance *be* of the law, *it is* no more of promise, but God gave *it* to Abraham by promise” (^{<B01>}Romans 4:14 ^{<B01>}Galatians 3:18).

4. God is not willing that men should be saved by their own natural abilities; but all the works of the law which men do to be saved by, they are the works of men’s natural abilities, and are therefore called the work of the flesh, but God is not willing that men should be saved by these, therefore no way but by his grace (^{<B01>}Romans 4:1; ^{<B01>}Galatians 3:1-3; ^{<B01>}Philippians 3:3).

Eighth. We must be saved by grace, or else the main pillars and foundations of salvation are not only shaken, but overthrown — to wit, election, the new covenant, Christ, and the glory of God; but these must not be overthrown; therefore we must be saved by grace.

1. Election, which layeth hold of men by the grace of God, God hath purposed that that shall stand — the election of God standeth sure; therefore men must be saved by virtue of the election of grace (^{<B01>}Romans 9:11; ^{<B01>}2 Timothy 2:19).

2. The covenant of grace, that must stand — “Brethren, I speak after the manner of men. Though *it be* but a man’s covenant, yet *if it be* confirmed [as this is, by the death of the testator, (^{<B01>}Hebrews 9:16, 17)] no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto;” therefore man must be saved by virtue of a covenant of grace (^{<B01>}Galatians 3:15).

3. Christ, who is the gift of the grace of God to the world, he must stand, because he is a sure foundation, “the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;” therefore men must be saved by grace, through the redemption that is in Christ (^{<B01>}Isaiah 28:16; ^{<B01>}Hebrews 13:8).

4. God’s glory, that also must stand; to wit, the glory of his grace; for that he will not give to another; therefore men must so be saved from the wrath

to come, that in their salvation praise may redound to the glory of his grace.

Ninth. There can be but one will the master in our salvation; but that shall never be the will of man, but of God; therefore man must be saved by grace (~~8113~~ John 1:13; ~~8116~~ Romans 9:16).

Tenth. There can be but one righteousness that shall save a sinner; but that shall never be the righteousness of men, but of Christ (therefore men must be saved by grace), that imputeth this righteousness to whom he will.

Eleventh. There can be but one covenant by which men must be saved; but that shall never be the covenant of the law, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof; therefore men must be saved by the covenant of grace, by which God will be merciful to our unrighteousness', and our sins and iniquities will remember no more (~~3016~~ Hebrews 8:6-13).