

Pardoning Grace Journal

Issue Theme: "Accomplished Redemption"

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It is Finished: The Gospel of Christ's Accomplished Redemption

Jason K. Boothe

The Gospel is the good news of what the Lord Christ Jesus accomplished on behalf of His people. Jesus Christ, God the Son, entered into fallen and sinful humanity as the virgin-born Son of Mary, fully God and fully man. He lived perfectly among us, taught us, healed the sick, and raised the dead. Unjustly accused and condemned by the Jewish and Roman rulers, He died a sinless and atoning death on behalf of His people, imputing (or crediting) His righteousness to them. The great work of redemption, the good news of the Gospel, was accomplished in the death of Christ.

On the third day following His crucifixion, the Lord rose from the grave (Luke 24:7). After appearing to countless people, He commanded

His disciples to go into all the world to share the good news (Mark 16:15). He then ascended to the Father, promising to return one day to rule and reign eternally (Acts 1:11; Revelation 22:5). Through the faithful proclamation of this Gospel, God grants faith and repentance to His people (Romans 10:17; 2 Timothy 2:25). Those who are given faith will believe Christ, trusting in His finished work alone as the only source of forgiveness and righteousness (Psalm 110:3, Philippians 2:13).

The Gospel is the wonderful news of an accomplished, not theoretical, redemption. To put it plainly, Christ did not come to save everyone. Neither did He come to merely invite or plead with everyone to make a freewill decision to surrender their hearts and lives to Him. Had it been God's will to save everyone, then nothing could have hindered Him from doing so (Psalm 115:3; Isaiah 46:10; Daniel 4:35; Romans 9:19; Ephesians 1:11). Much to the contrary, Christ died, "to save His people from their sin" (Matthew. 1:21), "a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45), and "to lay down his life for His sheep" (John 10:11). This particular redemptive work is explicitly declared in John 17:9. In this passage, Christ says to His Heavenly Father, "I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours." The Gospel, the work of Christ's accomplished redemption on behalf of His people, was a work limited in application to God's people, the elect, in Christ. Those whom Christ gloriously calls unto salvation through the preaching of the Gospel have been loved with an everlasting love (Isaiah 54:8, Jeremiah 31:3; Ephesians 1:4b,5). Love for His people is what sent Christ to the Cross to bear their sins! Truly, "In Love He predestined us to adoption as Sons through Jesus Christ (Ephesians

1:5). The Gospel is a mission of love, God's love, for His people. He saves His people because He loves them! The Apostle John wrote, "In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10). God, through Christ's accomplished redemption, has paid the sin debt of each and every individual whom He loves. Redemption is the ultimate expression of God's love for His own (John 15:13; Galatians 2:20)! These are the ones God has given to the Son, of which Christ declares, "And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day" (John 6:39). Christ cannot lose any of His own because they have been given to Him by the Father to be raised on the last day. The certainty of God's people spending eternity with Him is sealed for all time by the loving and immutable promises of God demonstrated in the accomplished redemption of Christ Jesus.

In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. - 1 John 4:10

Of course, since the earliest days of Christianity, there have been those wolves who seek to distort this precious message with any number of human innovations or flights of fancy. It is suggested by many that the Gospel is the story of a Christ who came to suffer and die for all people without exception, even the wicked who ultimately die apart from Him in their sin and rebellion. These same groups teach that the Gospel is a work begun on the cross yet continued by God in the life of an individual by the Spirit of God as the person yields his heart to Jesus. In either case, any notion of an accomplished redemption is immediately taken off the table, smothered by the

certain uncertainty and sinful nature of fallen man.

If the Gospel is a work performed in the heart of a man or woman or simply a mere offering of salvation to every man without exception, Christ finished nothing on the cross! The Gospel is monstrously transformed into a continuing work of cooperation between a Christ who cannot save without a sinner's permission and a sinful man who can never please God in His own strength!

If salvation is conditioned on sinful man in any way, shape, or form, Christ's last words on the cross, "It is finished!" comprise the greatest lie in redemptive history.

What's more, the Gospel promise of eternal salvation, the promise of God to "lose none but raise them up on the last day," could be undone at any time. In fact, many groups teach that the Gospel provides a salvation that can be forfeited by the will of man! So much for accomplished redemption! If salvation is conditioned on sinful man in any way, shape, or form, Christ's last words on the cross, "It is finished!" comprise the greatest lie in redemptive history.

In the face of every false gospel stands the truth of the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ! In love, He completed the work of redemption on behalf of His people, sealing for all time their eternal destiny. Because of Christ's accomplished redemption, God's people, the elect of God, shall live forever with Him. Christ cannot fail, His work can not be hindered. As the true and saving Gospel is proclaimed, God's people will respond in God-given faith and repentance, turning away

from the sinful and prideful works they used to trust for righteousness, and trusting Christ alone for all salvation.

Have you come to believe the Gospel of an accomplished redemption in Christ Jesus? Are you resting in the rock-solid promises of God in Christ to lose none of His own, but raise them up on the last day? Have you repented of trusting in anything but the finished work of Christ for all hope of forgiveness and righteousness before God? The Lord's sheep, on the Lord's appointed day, shall hear His voice.

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The Gospel: A Revelation of God's Righteousness

David Bishop

In his epistle to the Romans, Paul defines the gospel as "the revelation of God's righteousness" (Rom 1:16-17). He elaborates on this in the third chapter, telling us that this revelation is by faith in the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by His blood for the redemption of His people who He justifies by His grace as a gift in order to show His righteousness apart from the Law. (Rom 3:21-26). In other words, the gospel is the revelation of God's righteousness revealed by faith in the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

We face two questions in the light of this definition. First, are there other redemptions to be found besides the one that is in Christ? And second, what exactly is the redemption that is found in Christ Jesus?

As to the first question, there are indeed CLAIMS to other redemptions. None of these redemptions

are true though. None of them save and none of them are Biblical.

All these other redemptions are just possible redemptions rather than an accomplished one. That is, in the scheme of a false redemption, Christ died for everyone in order to make it possible for people to be redeemed. Under this scheme, Christ's death introduced an immediate condition that must be met in order to fulfill the requirement necessary for redemption. This condition is believed to be a free will choice made by the recipient of the death – us, in other words. Under this scheme, the choice itself, rather than the death that necessitated it is the righteousness which serves to secure the redemption. In other words, in a false redemption scheme, redemption is found in a person's choice, rather than in Christ. Now, let's contrast this false possible redemption with the true accomplished redemption found in Scripture.

True redemption is a redemption that has indeed redeemed all those for whom Christ's death was intended. It is not a "will redeem," but rather it is a "has been redeemed." The redemption found in Christ Jesus is a redemption that does not need its intended to choose it, before its intended can be redeemed. Rather, its intended will believe, because Christ's death has already redeemed its intended.

Hebrews 9:11-12, "But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption."

Ephesians 1:13-14, "In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation – having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,

who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession to the praise of His glory."

Notice in these texts that the Holy Spirit is an inheritance. An inheritance is not something you receive that later makes you a member of the family. No. You had better already be a member of the family if you expect to receive an inheritance. An inheritance is something only a family member can receive. An inheritance is not something the gardener receives.

The Holy Spirit is given as a pledge of an inheritance. A down payment, if you'd like. And He is given with a view to the redemption of God's own possession.

In other words, the reason why the Spirit is given is because God has a possession that He has redeemed. How has He redeemed this possession? He redeemed it with the death of His Son. His Son's death redeemed the possession. Notice that this is a has been done issue.

In most churches today, the kind of redemption you hear about is a redemption that God will accomplish at some point in the future. The listener is left with hopelessness and despair, because the message leaves open the question of whether he will ever be redeemed. Hopelessness, because if the death of the Son of God was not enough to redeem me, then what is enough? Despair, because I can never measure up to Christ's perfection, and if His death couldn't redeem me, then what hope do I actually have that I will ever be redeemed?

In the darkness of such a hopeless message, people are taught to look to their obedience for assurance. How do I know I will be redeemed? Guess I'd better check in with my performance to see if I have improved.

Standing opposite such a hopeless message is the message of God's true redemption. God's true redemption begins by informing us that Christ died to redeem a select few whom He had chosen for salvation from before the foundation of the world. God did not choose to save everyone. Instead, He chose to glorify His mercy and grace by saving some people from their sins, and to also glorify His righteousness and holiness by condemning others for their sins. God is just and righteous and good to do this, because He is perfect and therefore worthy to be worshiped for all His attributes, and not instead for just the attributes that benefit us. Christ's death was an act of perfect obedience to God on behalf of His people. More than this, His death was also a sacrifice to God for the sins of His people. God is right to do it like this.

At the cross, God charged the guilt for His people's sins to Christ. God credited Christ with their guilt. And there upon the cross, God poured out upon Christ the full and eternal measure of His anger that He held against His people for His people's sins. Christ took the full measure of God's anger in obedience, and in obedience died on the cross.

Christ had satisfied God's anger that God held against His people for His people's sins. To prove this, and to prove that Christ did it obediently without ever having sinned even once, God raised Christ from the dead. Christ's resurrection is the proof to God's people that Christ has fully redeemed them from the punishment of death for their sins.

In dying for His chosen few, Christ accomplished what no goat, no bull, no dove, no lamb or sinner's pledge of improved performance had ever done or could ever do – that is, He fully satisfied God's wrath on behalf of His chosen few, and thereby atoned for their guilt. His death did not make redemption possible. Rather, His death actually redeemed His people. His death satisfied God's anger that stood against His

chosen few. His death is why His people are brought to faith. His death is why His people are made willing to believe. His death is why not one of His people shall be lost to eternal death.

God commands everyone everywhere to repent of their false ideas about the cross and to instead believe what He has said is true about the cross. That means you too. God commands you to believe the truth about the cross.

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What is the Simple Gospel?

William Parker

Many people today talk about the word gospel, but few ever define specifically what they mean by the gospel. For example, most will agree that all who are saved believe the gospel, but most do not agree on what the gospel is. It is easy to say that the gospel is simply "Christ," or "Christ, crucified." It is easy to say that the gospel is merely the "death, burial, and resurrection of Christ." A preacher in a letter to me once defined the gospel as "the word of God's promise in Jesus who is the Christ." This was, as he stated, the gospel in its simplest form. The problem with all this is that it really does not tell anyone specifically what the gospel is and what it is not. Many who disagree on such vital issues as who God is, who Christ is, the sinfulness of man, and the ground of salvation, can and do agree with the statements above. Also, when we consider the words of God in Galatians 1:8 -- "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed," does this not prove to us that we need a more specific definition? Of course it does.

Thank God that He has not left us to our own thoughts and imaginations on this vital issue. He has given us His definition of the Gospel. It is stated throughout the Bible in many ways and in many forms, but God gives us the most concise definition by the Apostle Paul in Romans 1:1-17 and Romans 3:21-26. The Gospel is the Good News of God's Eternal Salvation and final glory in heaven conditioned on the Lord Jesus Christ, based on His righteousness alone. The Gospel, in light of the sinfulness of man (Romans 1:18--3:21), and the utter impossibility of any sinner being saved based on that sinner's best efforts at obedience, reveals how a holy and just God can save sinners in mercy, love, and grace, and still remain holy and just. The Gospel reveals that all this is possible based on the merits of a God-sent Substitute, the Lord Jesus Christ, who would become incarnate, obey the law perfectly, and satisfy justice by His death on the cross in order to establish a righteousness whereby God could be both a just God and a Savior (Isa. 45:21-22).

The Gospel excludes all the works of man and any work done by or in man as to the ground of this great salvation. It calls on sinners to believe in and trust Christ for all righteousness and life. It calls on sinners to repent of ever thinking that salvation or any part of it could have been conditioned on the sinner. It leaves sinners with no hope of salvation but that which is found in the Person and accomplished work of Christ.

This Gospel identifies and distinguishes the only ground of salvation from all false refuges.

Therefore, in order to preach the Gospel, we must preach the sinfulness of man in light of the holiness and justice of God, the Person of Christ as God-man/Mediator, and the righteousness of Christ freely imputed and revealed by God-given

faith for salvation. This is the heart of the Gospel (2 Corinthians 5:21). Every other subject in the Bible must be preached in this light if it is to be distinguished from the dead works and idolatry of man-made religion.

This Gospel identifies and distinguishes the true and living God from all idols. This Gospel identifies and distinguishes the true Christ from all counterfeits. This Gospel identifies and distinguishes the Holy Spirit from evil spirits. This Gospel identifies and distinguishes the only ground of salvation from all false refuges.

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Permanent Redemption

Mark McCulley

Hebrews 9:12, “Christ entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing a permanent lasting redemption.” As a permanent lasting punishment does not mean punishing forever but punishment which is final, even so permanent lasting redemption does not mean that Christ is and will be redeeming forever, but rather that by one death, Christ has obtained a redemption which is complete and final. Like a punishment which cannot be reversed, this redemption for the elect cannot be reversed.

This permanent redemption is not the payment of a price without a guarantee that those paid for will be freed from guilt and its consequence death. Biblical redemption secures freedom for each particular elect person so that when that specific person will be (or has been, OT) joined to Christ’s death, they are justified from sin and no longer under law or death.

The false gospel never talks about election, and so it cannot rightly talk about permanent redemption for the elect. It can only talk about redemption on the condition of faith. Some with the false gospel say you can have secure redemption because of your faith, and then lose your faith and then your redemption. Others with the false gospel say that faith is like getting a tattoo that cannot be removed, and that even if you lose your faith, you will still have your redemption.

All in the false gospel are agreed in profaning the redemptive death of Christ. All in the false gospel say that Christ died for every sinner, even those who add that Christ died with extra intent for the elect. All in the false gospel say that Christ is the mercy seat for every sinner. According to this common mercy, many die unjustified but none die without mercy.

The false gospel says that God would have and could have and did have mercy on all sinners, at

The Gospel is that, before they did good or bad, before they believed, the elect were already loved in Christ so that Christ died for them and not for others.

least until they died. The evil and deceptive gospel says that Christ in His death showed mercy to every sinner, but that such mercy was not enough alone to save any sinner.

A warning to all sinners is not God’s mercy to all sinners. Hebrews 10 is not assuming that God has been merciful to all who are being warned. Many died under the Mosaic law without mercy. Even though the ceremonies of the Mosaic economy proclaimed gospel by the death of Christ and not by our doing, God was never merciful to anybody

in the Mosaic covenant except those who were elect in Christ.

Paul's kinsmen according to the flesh, "Israelites, to whom belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises, " (Romans 9:4) did not receive mercy unless they were elect. We cannot talk about mercy without talking about election, because there is no mercy except for the elect.

Not all in the family are promised redemption from sin, because "it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God." (Romans 9:6) Christ's covenant of blood which secures redemption, and this mercy is only for the elect. There is no common "covenant" mercy, and then extra special mercy for the elect. "Though they were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad—in order that God's purpose of election would CONTINUE, not because of their works but because of His call." (Romans 9:11)

There is no grace for those who are not effectually called. The false gospel claims not to teach salvation by works, but it cannot avoid it because it will not teach calling and election. Some with the false gospel claim to teach both election and universal love, but where there is no election, there is never any love.

What kind of love is it that does not redeem? The gospel is not a conditional promise which warns that love will run out for those who don't believe. The gospel is that, before they did good or bad, before they believed, the elect were already loved in Christ so that Christ died for them and not for others.

Mark McCulley regularly contributes to his blog, "For the Elect Alone." More information is available at: markmcculley.wordpress.com.

Effectual Atonement Cannot Be Separated From Justification

Scott Price

Justification of sinners is based on the merit of the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ established and imputed to their account. What goes into the establishment of this righteousness is the perfect life and death of Christ. This is the basic content of the gospel of grace. But today many who claim to hold to the Christ of sovereign grace want to allow their gospel to be stretched to include the message of Universal Atonement (the false doctrine that says Christ died for all people without exception and many of them end up in hell). There may be many reasons for this compromise. We have covered some in past newsletters, like the buddy system, money or employment, fame and popularity of certain "Reformed" or "sovereign grace" men who still yet hold to the satanic doctrine of Universal Atonement.

Why do preachers and theologians want to make this sad compromise? Why have they totally divorced the doctrine of the atonement of Christ from the doctrine of justification? They are speaking out of both sides of their mouth. They write articles saying Arminianism is a false gospel but they let the famous ones or maybe some missionaries slide without holding them to the same gospel standard as us regular folks. This is respect of persons! This is dishonoring to God Almighty!

The bottom line is: There is no justification for anybody if the Atonement of Christ is not effectual. If there is one person who ends up in hell for whom Christ died, nobody will be justified. Besides that Christ would not have risen from the grave if he failed to save all for whom He died. "If He be not raised our faith is in vain" (I Corinthians 15). Every person that God

intended to save will be saved, because the effect of Christ death was designed to save all for whom He died (Matthew 1:21).

Universal Atonement is nothing more than a message that boasts of man's pride, flesh and works, takes away the offense of the cross, and makes a failure of the cross work of our precious Lord. God's messengers call it just what it is: a lie. They do not hide it or dress it up in little sovereign grace clothing. It does not matter how many times a false prophet uses the Lord's Name in vain by peppering his message with "Christ, Christ, Christ." As long as he shows Christ's death to be ineffectual he should be exposed NOT promoted.

Am I saying we should not attempt to preach and teach those with love and patience? Of course we are, very zealously. BUT until they preach the same gospel of pure grace by the successful, accomplished, victorious, satisfactory, effectual life and death of the Savior we shall not have them preach for us, support their ministry, call them brother, or any thing else near these things. They are enemies of the cross! We are commanded to love our enemies. How? Pray for them that God would convert them and give them the truth as the means of their conversion.

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No Other Gospel

Jason K. Boothe

The precious good news of Christ is that His people, those God calls to repentance and faith, have been bought with a price, their sins imputed to Christ, and His righteous portion fully credited to them. With sins fully atoned and having

Christ's righteousness, God is just to save His elect people while judging the rest of sinful humanity. To this end, God calls and sends preachers into all the world to declare this good news (Mark 16:15)!

The Gospel affords true spiritual security to the believer because it does not seek validation or activation from the sinner. Oh no! The Gospel is Christ's finished work (Matthew 1:21)! And it is the Spirit of God that testifies to the truth of this glorious reality to elect sinners in the preaching (Zechariah 4:6; Matthew 16:17; 1 Corinthians 2:14;). When God grants faith, a person once dead in trespasses and sins repents of dead works (everything they thought made them right in God's eyes) (Hebrews 6:1) and trusts in Christ's work alone for salvation (Psalm 37:39; 2 Timothy 2:10). Faith is NOT man's contribution toward salvation. Much to the contrary. Faith is God's gift, a supernatural gift enabling a child of God to rest in Christ's promises (Romans 3:28; 2 Corinthians 5:2; Galatians 2:16; 3:2; 3:5; 3:11; 3:24; Ephesians 2:8). Christians understand salvation to be God's work in Christ, from first to last, from beginning to end.

The Gospel affords spiritual assurance to the believer because Christ's promises are true! Christ declared, "All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out" (John 6:37). Later in the same book, Christ promises, "if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed" (John 8:36). Since the work of redemption is finished, God's people assuredly rest in Christ. And from this wellspring of assurance, this full assurance of faith (Colossians 2:2; Hebrews 6:11; 10:22), they endeavor, however imperfectly, to serve the Lord from hearts filled with love and gladness (Psalm 100:2; 2 Corinthians 9:7; Galatians 5:6). Just as faith is NOT man's contribution to salvation, righteous deeds are not the ground of a saved person's assurance. In fact, the only acceptable works offered to God are those offered by Christians

who possess assured faith in Christ's promises. We don't work to get saved. We don't work to assure our salvation. We are saved by Christ, assured by His promises in the Gospel, and offer faith-filled, works in full assurance of faith.

Christ's Gospel is God's work of security and assurance. He sets our feet upon the rock to stay! It is no wonder the Apostle Paul was so zealous in defending this precious message. Paul did not believe that just "any ole message" heralded God's salvation. In fact, he plainly rebuked the Galatians for even entertaining the notion of a different gospel! There is only one Gospel, says Paul. If anyone were to come preaching something different than the Gospel of God's accomplished redemption in Christ (the very message Paul taught the Galatians), let them be accursed!

Our day is filled with competing messages, all boldly declaring themselves to be "the good news" of Christ. But as Paul makes it abundantly clear, not all that parades itself around as the gospel is, in fact, the true and saving Gospel.

What do you believe concerning Christ? Do you believe Christ alone accomplished redemption for His people alone for all time by his death on Calvary? Have you repented of dead works, resting fully in Christ as your only hope of righteousness? Do you believe Christ has secured you for all time and will never let loose of you? Do you endeavor to please the Lord out of assured love and not mercenary reward or legal fear?

There is only one Gospel, one way whereby God makes His people righteousness in His sight. The other so-called gospels all lack the distinction of being true. There is no other Gospel but the Gospel of God's Free and Sovereign Grace in Christ.

"so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." – Romans 5:21

Would that God grant each reader repentance from dead works and faith toward the living God in Christ, for Christ – Amen.

The Gospel of Free Grace

Henry T. Mahan

It is not easy to preach the gospel of free grace because by nature we are prone to get bound by a system. It is very easy to get bound to a creed or a system or denominational guidelines, and then try to make God's Word fit that system, fit that creed, or fit those guidelines. We begin to hunt what we already believe in the Bible, and that is dangerous. I've heard many Arminian preachers tremble lest they go an inch beyond John Wesley, or an inch beyond Arminius, or an inch beyond some other famous free-will preacher. Then I've heard some Calvinists, some sovereign grace preachers, who speak as if John Calvin were the final authority. Well, these men are not the final authority.... It is time that the Scripture becomes our final authority.... We are to seek to preach the Word of God -not what Baptists believe; the Word of God, not what Calvinists believe.... I really don't know any difference in what they call high doctrine and low doctrine. I read these statements, "That's high doctrine - that's low doctrine." Well, if God's Word teaches it that's enough; and if God's Word doesn't teach it, let's do away with it.

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