

THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God
IN CHRIST JESUS.**
(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)*

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The Absolute Success of the Cross #2

April 14, 2009

This series is about why I see the cross of Christ as an absolute success in the eventual salvation of all mankind. In the remaining issues, I offer some scriptural proof along with some brief commentary.

Therefore, even as through one man sin entered into the world, and through sin death, and thus death passed through into all mankind, on which all sinned.... (Romans 5.12 CV)

Death passed through to every single human born after Adam. Because we are born to die, we are also born to sin because sin reigns in death. All of mankind is included in this death sentence; no one is excluded.

For God locks up all together in stubbornness, that He should be merciful to all. (Romans 11.32 CV)

God is going to shower His mercy on all because He has shut up or locked up all. Whom do you want to exclude from this all?

But the scripture locks up all together under sin, that the promise out of Jesus Christ's faith may be given to those who are believing. (Galatians 3.22 CV)

The word of God locks up all together under sin so that each (in its own era) may be released by faith. Today, the promise is for those who believe. But if God locks up all together in stubbornness and Scripture locks up all together under sin, then how does one come to believe unless God gives the faith to believe?

And from this we learn that everything is dependent not on man's will or endeavour, but upon God who has mercy. (Romans 9.16 WNT)

Why do we think that our will enters into the equation when everything is dependent on God who has mercy? **But God!** Man's will is against God; therefore, man is totally dependent on God who wills.

Our Savior, God, Who wills that all mankind be saved and come into a realization of the truth. (1 Timothy 2.3b-4 CV)

For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. (1 Timothy 2.3-4 KJV)

God our Savior Who will have all men to be saved is a mighty powerful affirmation of God's will. Unfortunately, many translations use the words *wishes*, *desires* and *wants*, as if God is begging mankind to be saved. This is gross interpretative bias to maintain the doctrine that man has a free will in the matter of his salvation. I address the matter of free will in Article #5, January 2008, *Being Ignorant, In Unbelief, Yet the Grace*. However, for the sake of argument, let us say that man has a free will and that he must make a choice; this does not preclude the idea that God will eventually reach the heart of every man and woman by overwhelming their will with His love, even if it takes until the consummation of the eons as they are taught (not tortured) God's righteousness through the lake of fire, which is His fiery law.

Do you think that God sent His Son to this earth to die on a wish, a want or a desire to save mankind? It is as if God said to His Son: "Well, Son, I am not sure this plan is going to work, but I desire for it to work. At any rate, You go down there and be totally humiliated and suffer an agonizing death, and let's see what happens. Perhaps mankind will respond to our gesture of love." What kind of Savior would He be if His vicarious death were not an absolute, perfect success to save all mankind? Let us keep in mind that it is God who devised this plan of salvation, not man. If we devised it, it would be, at best, a wish or a desire. But for God it is an entirely different matter. Do we not think that God's will can and will trump man's will? Why? Because He sent the Savior of the world to die for all the sin of the world! Why? Because God loves the world! Why? Because God wills that all mankind eventually will be conformed to the image of His Son.

We rely on the living God, Who is the Savior of all mankind, especially of believers. (1 Timothy 4.10 CV)

Scripture does not state that God is the Savior of believers only. He is the Savior especially of believers in this eon, for they are the ones who are called out to be the complement of Christ for the oncoming eons. However, it does not state that they are the only ones who ultimately will be saved. All mankind is included. There are no omissions, exclusions or deletions in the work of the living God to save all mankind.

God wills, not man, not preachers. Who will cancel out God's will? Will man cancel it out? Will man reverse God's will? If God wills it, then how can we say that it will not happen? It must happen because it is in God's will that *all* be saved.

The next day John saw Jesus coming towards him and exclaimed, "Look, that is the Lamb of God who is to take away the sin of the world!" (John 1.29 WNT)

Christ took away the sin of the world. John did not proclaim that Jesus left some sin behind. He took it all away. Recently, I was listening to a pastor on the radio, and he said the one sin that will be held against the unbeliever is that he did not believe. In other words, Christ took away all sin but one, the sin of unbelief. This is contrary to Paul's word to the Romans: **For God hath concluded [locks up] them all in unbelief that he might have mercy upon all** (Romans 11.32 KJV [CV]). Consider how Paul explained the matter to Timothy, his son in the faith.

I, who formerly was a calumniator and a persecutor and an outrager: but I was shown mercy, seeing that I do it being ignorant, in unbelief. Yet the grace of our Lord overwhelms, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. (1 Timothy 1.13-14 CV)

By his own admission, Paul was in unbelief. He had no way out of his unbelief until the grace of the Lord overwhelmed him with faith and love in Christ Jesus. After all, he was locked up in unbelief. In other words, grace was a power outside of Paul that came in and overwhelmed his ignorance and unbelief. Paul had no choice in the matter; it was all of grace that was lavished on him.

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that [faith] not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.... (Ephesians 2.8 KJV)

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2.20 KJV)

Faith in Christ does not come naturally for us; it is something that we must receive as a gift of God. In other words, God must give us the faith to believe on His Son. This is what it means to be saved by grace through faith. If God does not do it, then we will not be saved. He must overwhelm the unbelief of all through His grace.