

INTRODUCTION.

AT PRESENT IN OUR STUDY OF COLOSSIANS, ~ WE HAVE BEEN FOCUSING OUR attention on Paul's brief discussion of the gospel in Col. ~ 1: ~ 5b-6.

▶▶ As we have noted, ~ from what Paul says about the gospel in vv. 5b-6, ~ we can make at least 7 observations.

IN OUR STUDY, ~ WE HAVE COMPLETED OUR LOOK AT THE FIRST SIX. ⇔⇔ JUST A brief review.

▶▶ 1st, ~ we observed that the gospel is the good news ~ that Jesus has solved the problem of sin and death ~ through his death, ~ burial, ~ and resurrection.

▶▶ 2nd, ~ we noted that Paul set forth the essential nature of the gospel: ⇔⇔ abs. truth.

▶▶ 3rd, ~ we observed that in our unsaved state we do not seek God. ~ ~ God seeks us.

▶▶ 4th, ~ we noted that the gospel is for everyone in the whole world, ~ not just one nation or ethnic group.

▶▶ 5th, ~ we observed that the gospel is the living and enduring word of God ~ and it bears fruit.

▷▷ I.e., ~ it produces salvation in all who call upon Jesus for salvation.

▶▶ And 6th, ~ we noted that the gospel is going out into all the world without restriction.

TODAY, ~ WE'LL FOCUS OUR ATTENTION ON THE 7th AND FINAL OBSERVATION.

▶▶ And with that we'll conclude our look at the first major section of Colossians. ↴ 1/9

AT THE END OF VERSE 6, ~ FROM WHAT PAUL SAYS ABOUT THE GOSPEL, ~ WE can observe ~ that the gospel ~ is a message of God's grace.

SINCE THE DAY YOU HEARD IT ~ [I.E., ~ THE GOSPEL. ~~ SINCE THE DAY YOU HEARD ~ the gospel] ~ and understood the grace of God in truth.

▶▶ The phrase "the grace of God" is parallel to "the gospel."

▷▷ Another way of saying this is ~ "since the day you heard the gospel and understood it."

▶▶ IOW, ~ Paul is using the phrase "the grace of God" ~ as a synonym of "the gospel."

▶▶ The question is why?

▷▷ Well, ~ no doubt to emphasize ~ and to remind these believers in Colossae ~ that God's grace ~ is at the center ~ of the gospel message.

▶▶ Keeping the overall context of the letter in mind, ~ it could be ~ that, ~ along with their other heresies, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ the false teachers ~ were denying the doctrine ~ of salvation by grace alone, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ and were teaching some kind of salvation by human works or human merit.

→→ So Paul reinforces the truth ~ of the doctrine of salvation by grace alone.

NOW, ~ IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT ~ THAT WE, ~ BELIEVERS HERE AT NHCC, ~ be well-grounded in this doctrine.

WE MUST NEVER ~ BE IN A POSITION ~ IN WHICH WE CAN BE FOOLED OR CAUGHT off guard by any teaching ~ that even hints at denying salvation by grace alone.

▶▶ Any teaching that has even the slightest whiff ~ of salvation by human works or human merit. ¶¶ 2/9

SO, ~ WE'RE GOING TO DROP BACK INTO EPH. ~ 2: ~ 8-9, ~ TO REVIEW PAUL'S teaching on this matter.

▶▶ But purposefully so, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ in order to make sure we are all on the right page when it comes to the doctrine of salvation by grace alone.

▷▷ And ~ to protect us from false teaching.

↪↪ Recall, ~ in the context of warning against and refuting false doctrine, ~ Paul told the Philippian believers, ~ ¶¶

→→ "It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, ~ and it is a safeguard for you."

▶▶ Also, ~ since Christmas was just a couple weeks ago, ~~ I think it's quite appropriate, ~ to review the truth of salvation by God's grace alone.

▷▷ Because Christmastime should always be a reminder to us of God's grace.

↪↪ Because of God's grace alone, ~ "to us a child is born, ~ to us a son is given."

→→ Because of God's grace alone ~ "when the fullness of time had come, ~ God sent forth his Son."

OK, ~ LET'S EXAMINE EPH. ~ 2: ~ 8-9, ~ BEGINNING WITH VERSE 8a.

FOR BY GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED.

▶▶ "grace" here means free and undeserved favor. ⇔⇔ Saved by God's

▶▶ Paul emphasizes "by grace." ~~ "For by grace you have been saved."

▷▷ Paul does not want us to miss this, ~ ¶¶

↪↪ that the source of our salvation is God's grace, ~ and His grace alone! ¶¶ 3/9

▶▶ Earlier in Ephesians, ~ Paul said that God "lavished" His grace "upon us."

▷▷ The Greek word for "lavished" there means ~ 77

↳↳ more than enough, ~ to provide in abundance, ~ to cause to overflow.

▷▷ God is infinitely rich in grace. ~~ But He is not stingy with it. ~~ Not like some cosmic Scrooge.

▷▷ God does not give His grace to us in limited measure, ~ carefully weighed out.

▷▷ He causes His grace to overflow, ~ to abound to us. ~~ Gives it in overflowing measure.

▶▶ "Marvelous grace of our loving Lord, ~ Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt! ~~ Marvelous, ~ infinite, ~ matchless grace, ~ freely bestowed on all who believe."

▶▶ And God's grace is sufficiently abundant ~ to cover the sins of all ~~ and is adequate ~ for the worst of sinners.

▷▷ Some might think, ~ "Oh, ~ God could never forgive me for what I've done"

↳↳ Jesus abundantly bestows His grace on all who respond to the gospel in true repentance.

▶▶ Paul: ~~ classic example. ~~ He testifies to this in 1 Tim. 1:12-14.

▷▷ "I thank him who has given me strength, ~ Christ Jesus our Lord, ~ because he judged me faithful, ~ appointing me to his service, ~ though formerly I was a blasphemer, ~ persecutor, ~ and insolent opponent. ~ 77

↳↳ But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, ~ and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus."

▷▷ Even the vilest of sinners who come to Jesus in true repentance and call out to Him for salvation ~ will be forgiven and become a new creation in Christ.

▷▷ O perfect redemption, ~ the purchase of blood, ~ to ev'ry believer the promise of God; ~~ The vilest offender who truly believes, ~ that moment from Jesus a pardon receives. 77 4/9

"FOR BY GOD'S GRACE, ~ AND GOD'S GRACE ALONE, ~ you have been saved," ~ Paul says.

▶▶ By God's grace, ~ believers have been freed from sin and our sin nature ~ Sin's curse has lost its grip on me. ~~ We have been freed from all the powers of evil.

▷▷ Every one of our sins have been forgiven. ~~ Sin not in part**

↳↳ We have been reconciled with God. ~~ Peace with God. ~~ We have been delivered from God's wrath.

→→ And we are now new creations. ⇨⇨ More: ~~ Citizens. ~~ Children of the King.

▶▶ Truly!, ~ God's grace is amazing, ~ isn't it?

IN VS. 8b, ~ PAUL STATES HOW WE RECEIVE GOD'S GRACE FOR SALVATION.

FOR CONTEXT, ~ START AT BEGINNING OF VERSE 8.

▶▶ Paul says "8a for **by grace** you have been saved ~ [and here's how we receive it:] ~ 8b through faith."

▶▶ We just talked about this recently, ~ but since it fits here and is so important, ~ let's review it in order to cement it into our hearts and minds.

▶▶ Whereas God's grace is the objective source of our salvation, ~ "through faith" is the subjective means ~ or channel ~ by which one receives God's grace and is saved.

▶▶ Remember, ~ the salvation that was purchased by Christ's death ~ is universal ~ in its provision. ~~ But not in its application.

▷▷ One is **not** automatically saved because Christ died, ~ but one is saved when one puts their faith in God's gracious provision. ⇨⇨ Recall the illustration of this in Jn. 3:16.

▶▶ By grace alone, ~ through faith alone, ~ in Christ Jesus alone. ⇓⇓ 5/9

THEN, ~ PERHAPS TO EMPHASIZE HIS POINT EVEN MORE, ~ THAT GOD'S GRACE alone is the source of our salvation, ~ ¶¶

IN VERSES 8c-9a, ~ PAUL EXPLAINS ~ THAT OUR SALVATION DOES NOT ORIGINATE with humans in any way, ~ shape, ~ or form.

IN VERSE 8c, ~ HE SAYS THAT OUR SALVATION DOES NOT ORIGINATE within us.

HE SAYS, ~ "AND THIS ~ [I.E., ~ THIS SALVATION] ~ IS NOT YOUR OWN DOING; ~~ IT is the gift of God."

▶▶ The phrase ~ "is not your own doing" ~ expresses that salvation does not have its origin or source with humans.

▷▷ Could paraphrase [verse 8c](#) this way: "And this salvation ~ is not from you as a source."

HOW COULD IT BE?

▶▶ There is nothing within us ~ that could cause God to save us ~ or ~ that could cause us to produce our own salvation.

▶▶ Remember, ~ when unsaved, ~ we were spiritually "dead ~ in [our] trespasses and sins."

▷▷ Now, ~ physical death ~ is a state from which people cannot break free on their own
~~ Why? ~ because they're dead.

↪↪ When people are dead ~ they have no capability to generate life. ~~ Lazarus

▷▷ And just like physical death, ~ spiritual death is a state from which people cannot break free on their own.

↪↪ When we were unsaved, ~ we had no capability to generate spiritual life.

▶▶ Add to this the fact that we weren't even looking for salvation. ~~ In [Rom. 3:11](#), ~ Paul says that "no one seeks for God." ⇒⇒ A & E's reaction. ¶¶ 6/9

▶▶ What's more ~ we were unable even to understand the things of God ~ let alone act on them.

▷▷ In 1 Cor. 2:14, ~ Paul writes, ~ NIV ~ "The person without the Spirit ~ [i.e., ~ an unbeliever] ~ does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God ~ but considers them foolishness, ~ and cannot understand them ~ because they are discerned only through the Spirit."

↳↳ I.e., ~ only those who have been given spiritual life can understand what the Spirit means.

▶▶ There's no way ~ we could be ~ or are ~ the source of our salvation.

CONTINUING IN VERSE 8c, ~ "AND THIS SALVATION IS NOT FROM YOU AS A source; ~ it is the gift of God," ~ Paul says.

▶▶ In the Grk. text, ~ "of God" here means ~ "from God."

▷▷ Paraphrase verse 8c this way: ~ "And this salvation ~ is not from you as a source; ~ it is the gift from God."

▶▶ In Rom 3:23-24a, ~ Paul says, ~ "for all have sinned ~ and fall short of the glory of God, ~ and are justified by his grace ~ as a gift."

▶▶ In Rom. 6:23, ~ Paul: ~ "For the wages of sin is death, ~ but the free gift of God ~ is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

▶▶ And Eph. 2:4-5, ~ "But God, ~ being rich in mercy." ~ Let's stop right there for a minute.

▷▷ When we consider Paul's description in verses 1-3 of our unsaved state, ~ we were spiritually dead, ~ following this world and Satan, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ carrying out our sinful desires, ~ and were subject to, ~ deserving of, ~ and facing God's wrath, ~ ¶¶

→→ you would think ~ the next words out of Paul's mouth would be ~ "God is rich in wrath." ~ But he gives us a wonderful surprise. ¶¶ 7/9

▷▷ "But God, ~ being rich in mercy, ~ because of the great love with which he loved us, ~ even when we were dead in our trespasses, ~ made us alive together with Christ ~ by grace you have been saved."

▶▶ Our salvation is a free and undeserved gift from God. ~ ~ Originates w/ God. ~ ~ Yahweh.

IN VERSE 9a, ~ PAUL SAYS THAT NEITHER ARE OUR WORKS THE SOURCE OF OUR salvation.

"WORKS" HERE ~ REFERS TO ANY GOOD DEED BY WHICH A PERSON MIGHT SEEK TO gain God's favor and attain salvation.

▶▶ In brief, ~ we cannot earn salvation by doing good works.

▷▷ And it's definitely not earned by a person's good works outweighing their bad.

▶▶ As Paul says in Rom. 11:6, ~ ~ "But if it is by grace, ~ it is no longer on the basis of works; ~ ~ otherwise grace would no longer be grace."

▶▶ If we could earn salvation through works, ~ then God's grace would not be what it really is, ~ free and undeserved.

▶▶ Paul reinforces this truth in Titus 3:4-7.

▷▷ "But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, ~ he saved us, ~ not because of works done by us in righteousness, ~ but according to his own mercy, ~ by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, ~ whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ~ so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

▶▶ Paul makes it quite clear. ~ ~ Our salvation is not a result the righteous things we had done.

↳↳ It is because God is rich in mercy ~ and loved us with a great love ~ that we are saved.

CONCLUSION.

GOD'S GRACE ~ IS AT THE CENTER ~ OF THE GOSPEL MESSAGE.

▶▶ By God's incredibly free and undeserved favor ~ we have been saved.

▶▶ Even though we were spiritually dead and utterly sinful, ~ even though sinning was a way of life for us, ~ 77

▷▷ even though we were following the standards of this present evil age, ~ even though we were following Satan," ~ 77

↳↳ even though we were enslaved to our sinful nature and its sinful desires ~ 77

→→ even though we carried those sinful desires out, ~ 77

↪↪ and even though we were subject to, ~ deserving of, ~ and destined for ~ 77
God's wrath, ~ 77

↻↻ God's mercy and love led him to offer humanity the free and undeserved gift of salvation.

▶▶ Amazing grace! ~ how sweet the sound, ~ That saved a wretch like me! ~ I once was lost, ~ but now am found, ~ Was blind, ~ but now I see.

LET'S PRAY 9/9