

Scriptures and Doctrine :: An Ends or a Means

An Ends or a Means - posted by JFW (), on: 2017/4/8 17:18

It seems there are several perspectives and recent threads have given reason to revisit this subject as it would provide a basis of understanding differing views on other topics...

The salvation that God offers mankind thru Christs atoning sacrifice, is it an ends in and of itself or a means to an ends?

Re: An Ends or a Means - posted by Elibeth, on: 2017/4/8 21:59

JFW,

I don't quite know / can't quite grasp what you are asking...?

"The salvation that God offers mankind thru Christs atoning sacrifice,"

And this is what I can't quite understand,..

"Is it an ends in and of itself,or a means to an end?"

If I said, it was an ends in and of itself,.. Then I would believe 'OSAS'

Wouldn't I ?.....(only if one,like the one on the cross,that died along side of Jesus,then,I believe,it would be an ends in a nd of itself.)

Rom.3:23-25

Paul says,"For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God;

Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood,to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins 'THAT ARE PAST', through the forbearance of God; To declare,I say,AT THIS TIME His righteousness: that he might be just,and justifier of him which believe in Jesus.

And If I said, A means to an end,..then I would have to believe,that the hand of the Lord is not shorten,..and that He wants to Save / be our Salvation,...

Not only initially,but always,....He wants,and is ready to save us in every situation.

Please forgive if I understood you wrong,...please explain.

elizabeth

Re: - posted by JFW (), on: 2017/4/9 0:48

Dear Sister,

You have not misunderstood and are quite eloquent in expressing your faith:)

As to your answer: yes I suppose one could say that if it is an end that would lead to an OSAS doctrine tho is that the only position that could come from this view? It would seem to my mind there would be other possibilities... likewise if salvation is itself a means while the position you expressed would certainly be true,... wouldn't there be more?

So why is God saving us,...

For loves sake ?

For glory ?

For joy ?

One could say yes to each of these yet God already has all of this without us,... so why did He do it?
What is the ultimate purpose in His heart?
What does God desire....?

Re: An Ends or a Means - posted by twayneb (), on: 2017/4/9 9:08

Salvation, reconciliation, peace (the doing away of the enmity), anointing, power, sonship, intimacy, ministry. I guess I could continue the list. These words just came to mind right away. The incarnation, the atoning sacrifice, the baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire are all God's means of bringing about the list above. How wonderful the knowledge of forgiveness of sins. How marvelous the hope that I will one day spend eternity in the presence of God. This hope, this knowledge, is amazing, powerful, wonderful, and plays a great part in our walk with God. But if we act as though this is all there is to the atonement we miss out on most of what God has and wants for us.

I guess it is a little bit like taking a job and having as our only focus the acceptance letter and the retirement plan. In doing so we totally miss out on the career itself. We think the acceptance letter and the retirement plan are what the job is all about, when these things are only our entrance into the career and our exit from it.

Re: why ? - posted by Elibeth, on: 2017/4/9 9:58

Bro.JFW,
First of all,...thank you for your kindness.
Among others here, I want to say that you are such a blessing on this forum, and I am quite sure Greg and many others here, could say the same.
because of your well thought-out soberness and kind speech.
...this is not meant for flattery at all,... But a true and kind word, that we all need sometimes.

Next -
"Why is God saving us ?"
"For love's sake ?"
"For glory?"
"For joy?"

I would say too,... All of those things evolves out of A RELATIONSHIP / FELLOWSHIP / COMMUNION, that He had with Adam, that was lost then.

Now !
That relationship / fellowship, communion, can be restored, that was lost in Adam's, through the saving blood of His Son, Jesus,...the sacrifice.

Blessings,

elizabeth

Re: sister Elizabeth - posted by JFW (), on: 2017/4/9 11:27

ANEN! Yes dear sister that is exactly the conclusion I came to:)

Our Lord Jesus says; "that they may know you the one true and living God"

It seems that this is the whole purpose of all that God did, does and will do-
And it's for His sake,... He desires intimate fellowship (tabernacled) with His children and since sin entered and put up a wall, He Himself came and tore down that wall and reconciled us unto Himself. So is the whole purpose of salvation, sanctification, consecration, reformation, regeneration etc... that we might be conformed into the image of His Son so that we

e may have eternal fellowship with Him:)

(For me) when I realized this it put the whole of His wonderous works, His patience, His justice, His holiness and glory in to a seamless perspective. From beginning to end He had one thing in mind (fellowship) and will Have His will be done:) Hallelujah!!!

And thank you for your kind words~

Re: brother Travis - posted by JFW (), on: 2017/4/9 14:15

Yeah that's what got my spirit moving on this, yes salvation, yes holiness, ... but why and to what ends ? That's where I began to observe that just receiving forgiveness was the objective of most people and most ministries seem to have salvation as an ends in and of itself rather than a beginning of our life in Christ... and with that discipleship (learning obedience) is all but gone in many places. As a result of not knowing Gods will, the body has suffered from spiritual malnutrition and not because Jesus isn't offered, He clearly is, but because we aren't seeking (as a body) the same thing God the Father is and so we don't feed on Christ. It's almost as if we (the body) sit at His table, where a feast has been prepared, and cry out in hunger and thirst,... the Lord says take up the fork of faith and the cup of obedience and feed- yet we (as a whole) don't. All the while the church becomes more worldly and millions lose the opportunity everyday as they perish in their sins and it's with a heavy heart that I submit that their blood is on our hands.

While listening to Keith Green one day it occurred to me that the primary difference Jesus made between the sheep and the goats was fellowship (intimately knowing) the one and not the other...

From this I gleaned that when we are in fellowship with God through Christ Jesus, we are being used by Him whether we know it or not- whereas if we're not in fellowship with God then no matter what we do, at the end of the day it is all vanity

Re: An Ends or a Means - posted by InTheLight (), on: 2017/4/9 16:43

This is an important question to consider because it brings God's eternal purpose in creating mankind into view. Men are constantly confusing the part with the whole. So many are enamoured with God's grace - and rightly so - but we should not let it cause us to overlook His purpose in creation.

Devern Fromke deals marvellously with this topic in his book Ultimate Intention, I would encourage all to read it, I found it eye opening.

In Christ,

Re: brother Ron - posted by JFW (), on: 2017/4/9 16:57

Thank you for that info!

I had not heard of this book but will find a copy:)

Yes it is about God's eternal purpose and yes His grace serves to enable that purpose but is not itself the purpose. It is also true (in my experience) that grace becomes the focus rather than Christ which seems to be due to God's eternal purpose not being made clear by those whom minister the gospel of grace-

Re: Fletcher - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2017/4/9 21:24

Yes it is about God's eternal purpose and yes His grace serves to enable that purpose but is not itself the purpose. It is also true (in my experience) that grace becomes the focus rather than Christ which seems to be due to God's eternal purpose not being made clear by those whom minister the gospel of grace-

William (StirItUp) wrote this in another thread:

There are different "graces" as in graces which could be interpreted as gifts, such as the gifts (graces) of the Holy Spirit. Being fellow heirs of the grace of life is really the same as the gift of eternal life. Whatever graces or gifts we may have received, they are all fruits or branches or outflows of The Grace of God, Jesus Christ our Lord.

" for of His fulness have we received, and grace upon grace"

The grace of God is nothing else but the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and in Him, the undeserved favor and gift of Life that we have received.

" and this is Eternal Life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom You have sent"

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all!

Agree with William.

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2017/4/9 21:59

The "end" : "The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen" (Rev. 22:21).

The "means": The way of the cross -- end of self-life.

Yes, in me, in me He dwelleth --
I in Him and He in me!
And my empty soul He filleth
Now and through eternity.
-- H. Bonar

Re: Eternal Purpose - posted by Jeremy221, on: 2017/4/10 6:06

Ephesians 3:10 KJV

To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

This is the end to which we have been redeemed and daily seek sanctification through communion and fellowship with brethren. Through faith we bear a good report, we are witnesses not only to men among whom we live but the Principalities and Powers under whose wisdom they live their lives. Bearing the cross daily is an individual's response and demonstration of living by the wisdom of displayed in Christ. Rejoicing in trial because we have hope in the Word of God rather than the wisdom of the age is a demonstration that this generation will be judged. As a body continually building each other through teaching, preaching, rebuke and fellowship so that no one is lead astray and so that we look for the blessed hope is a testimony of the truthfulness of God's Word. Not going to the secular courts to settle disputes is a sign that we believe the Lord that we have been endowed with the wisdom to pass righteous judgement by the Holy Spirit. Provoking each other to good works is a sign that we believe that treasure in heaven is eternal and cannot be taken or destroyed. Rebuking each other daily is a sign that we believe the warnings of Christ about the punishments for the unfaithful.

Re: sister Jade - posted by JFW (), on: 2017/4/10 8:26

So are you saying that grace itself is the end of Gods eternal purpose for man?

Also are you saying the means being the "way of the cross" is itself without grace?

Hoping to understand what you are saying:)

Re: brother Jeremy - posted by JFW (), on: 2017/4/10 8:30

Well said brother!

Re: Fletcher - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2017/4/12 0:25

"So are you saying that grace itself is the end of Gods eternal purpose for man?"

"Also are you saying the means being the "way of the cross" is itself without grace?"

The grace of THE LORD JESUS HIMSELF is the end of God's eternal purpose for man. We are to be conformed to the image of Christ (Rom. 8:28-29). Christ is to be all, and in all (Col. 3:10-11). Christ in us is the hope of glory (Col. 1:27).

We were barred from this because of

- 1.Sin which must be forgiven for man to be reconciled to God
- 2.The old man which has a mind set on the flesh which is enmity to God and is not able to submit to the law of God.
- 3.Satan and the world that rule over men.

Man has no power and ability to free himself from all these and be saved.

The cross opens the way for us i.e. the means to the end.

At the cross the Lord Jesus shed His blood for the forgiveness of our sins. At the cross the Lord Jesus gathered all of us into Himself and when He died we all died in Him. And at the cross the world was also crucified and principalities and powers destroyed so these will no more rule over us.

Resurrection comes AFTER the cross.

At the resurrection, when the Lord Jesus was raised from the dead we were all in Him and raised from the dead in Him and made alive in Him to God. And now we are in Christ and Christ lives in us as our eternal life. (1 John 5:11-12).

GRACE STRETCHES ALL THE WAY FROM THE CROSS INTO ENDLESS ETERNITY AND THE GRACE OF GOD IS THE LORD JESUS HIMSELF!

"For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace" (John 1:16).

We receive the grace of redemption when we receive Jesus Himself as our redemption. We receive the grace of righteousness when we receive Jesus Himself as our righteousness. We receive the grace of holiness when we receive Jesus Himself as our holiness. We receive the grace of wisdom when we receive Jesus Himself as our wisdom. (1 Cor. 1:30). And we receive the grace of eternal life when we receive Jesus Himself as our life (1 John 5:11-12). We receive all these graces or gifts by faith not works (Eph. 2:8).

Union with Christ is absolutely essential. He is the Vine. All that are in Him, the Vine, can and will flow into us when we, the branches, are attached to Him and abiding in Him. Apart from Him we can do nothing for we cannot redeem ourselves, cannot make ourselves righteous, cannot make ourselves holy as God is holy, cannot acquire God's wisdom by ourselves, cannot give ourselves eternal life.

Thus the Bible ends with this triumphant good news: "The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen" (Rev. 22:21). This, I think, sums up the whole Bible message that is God's good news to us.

"the free GIFT of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:23)!

T. Austin Sparks:

"Have we got settled on this? We take so long to learn these basic elementary lessons. We do still cling to some sort of idea that we can produce something, and all our miserable days are simply the result of still hoping that we can in some way provide the Lord with something. Not being able to find it, but breaking down all the time, we get miserable, perfectly miserable. It takes us so long to come to the place where we do fully and finally settle this matter, that if we lived as long as ever man lived on this earth, we shall not be able to contribute one iota which can be acceptable to God, and which He can take and use for our salvation, for our sanctification, for our glorification, not a bit. All that He can use is His Son, and the measure of our ultimate glory will be the measure of Christ in us, just that. There will be differences in glory, as one thing differs from another. One glory of the sun, another of the moon, another of the stars. There will be differences in degree of glory, and the difference in degree of glory ultimately will be according to the measure of Christ that each one of us severally has. That in turn depends upon how much you and I by faith are really making Christ the basis of our life, the very basis of our living, of our being, how much the principle of these familiar words has its application in our case, 'Not what I am, but what Thou art'. Christ is all the glory, 'the Lamb is all the glory in Immanuel's land'.

"Beloved friends, whatever you go away with, go away with this, that from God's standpoint, the glory of life depends entirely upon our faith apprehension, appropriation and appreciation of Christ, and there is no glory at all for us now or in the time to come but on that ground and on that line. I know how simple that is, how elementary, but oh, it is such a governing thing. Glory—that the Lord shall be glorified in us. What greater thing could happen than that the Lord should be glorified in us? The glory of God is bound up with the resurrection, and resurrection is God's unique and sole prerogative. So that if God is to be glorified in us, you and I have to live on Him as the resurrection and the life from day to day, and know Him as that as we go through life."

Edit to add:

In the phrase "the grace of the Lord Jesus", THE LORD JESUS is the object of the grace.

Edit to add:

Andrew Murray said this:

- (1) Everything in us must be like God.
- (2) Everything can only be like God by partaking of His nature.
- (3) Everything must have the nature of God.
- (4) Nothing can be like God but God Himself.

My thought:

Therefore, the only way for us to be conformed to the image of Christ is to have Christ Himself dwelling in us and filling all of us with Himself. Then we will surely be the exact image of Him. The REAL Him, not an imitation that will surely have spots and wrinkles. God does not give us grace to produce Christ in us by our own works. Christ in us is the free gift of grace of God to us. How good is our God!

Re: sister Jade - posted by JFW (), on: 2017/4/12 9:06

Thank you for answering and helping to clarify your earlier statements for me :)

Also I appreciate your putting the grace of God to good use and disagreeing without being disrespectful, that is a most virtuous attribute:)

Having said that it seems there is a desire on your part to rehash a difference in defining grace from a previous thread some time ago... if I am mistaking you please forgive me but I have no heart to argue or cause division.

As for your central point "The grace of God is Jesus" is a statement I've heard many times in different forms, another is "grace is a person and His name is Jesus", etc... I understand many people hold this to be true tho I cannot find it in the scriptures. In fact I found quite a different thing to be taught by the word of God.

You say;" Therefore, the only way for us to be conformed to the image of Christ is to have Christ Himself dwelling in us and filling all of us with Himself. Then we will surely be the exact image of Him. The REAL Him, not an imitation that will surely have spots and wrinkles. God does not give us grace to produce Christ in us by our own works. Christ in us is the free gift or grace of God to us. How good is our God!"

Indeed sister Jade He is quite good to us all, so patient and kind not wanting any to perish but all to come unto repentance-

Your wording is interesting, you say "God does not give us grace to produce Christ in our own life" and that is an interesting way to word that sentiment because if I were to say anything contrary, one could say I am advocating a "works based" position which wouldn't be true but because this statement is insulated it cannot be dealt with directly to expose the error contained within it...

14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as without sin.

16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need

And

11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,

12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

15 These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.

Re: Fletcher - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2017/4/12 10:12

There are many views on grace and holiness.

My own beliefs are close to those of Andrew Murray and T. Austin Sparks. They are two of my most favourite authors.

I respect that yours are different.

An author most strongly against what I believe was still gracious to say this: "The last day will show who is right and who is wrong. In the meantime, I am quite certain that to exhibit bitterness and coldness towards those who cannot conscientiously work with us is to prove ourselves very ignorant of real holiness."

My own belief is that the most important thing of all is to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus and abide in Him. I also believe t

hat even if the doctrines we have acquired are wrong, the Holy Spirit is able to produce the right life in us if we are led by Him.

I have spoken NOT to put you down. But I have spoken because I have found a Christianity that has brought me joy and peace and I am eager to share that with anyone.

Proverbs 18:19 - "A brother offended is more unyielding than a strong city, and quarreling is like the bars of a castle" (ESV).

The greatest thing is love.

1 John 3:23 - "And this is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us."

Re: sister Jade - posted by JFW (), on: 2017/4/12 10:26

You wrote "My own belief is that the most important thing of all is to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus and abide in Him. I also believe that even if the doctrines we have acquired are wrong, the Holy Spirit is able to produce the right life in us if we are led by Him. "

Amen to that dear sister!

Blessings to you:)

Re: - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2017/4/12 10:31

Thank you, brother Fletcher.