

Human beings do not come into this world morally and spiritually neutral. The moment they are conceived as persons, they are morally corrupt and spiritually dead (that is why human beings need to be radically transformed and made spiritually alive via the new birth).

Sinful human beings do not need to do anything to incur condemnation; in their natural condition they are already condemned. Both as human beings involved in mankind's Fall, and as human beings who constantly fall short of God's righteous standard, all men deserve everlasting destruction.

As human beings created by God, they have already received every good thing they ever deserved; and as sinners they have received ten thousand benefits they never deserved, as gifts of God's general grace.

God is under no obligation whatever to save human beings from the consequences of their own choices, whether made representatively in Adam, or individually in themselves. God owes sinful mankind nothing further!

And yet . . . and yet . . . "God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus". (Ephesians 2:4-7)

And look at these wonderful words: God "has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity." (II Timothy 1:9)

What a gracious God! All human beings are lost and on the broad road that leads inexorably to everlasting destruction, and they fully deserve that end; yet God in His love and grace reaches down and lifts some of them out of the miry clay and sets their feet on the narrow road that leads to everlasting glory, and they do not deserve that end!

Throughout eternity, the courts of heaven will ring with the praises of human beings who fully deserved destruction for their sins, but were given heaven as a gift of God's marvelous grace!

- b. A second important way in which God in His special mercy prevents or alleviates some suffering for some sinners is by taking away their guilt and the punishment due them for their sin.