

## Introduction

How easily the profound doctrines and truths of the scriptures can become intellectual data but void of life changing effects. To know them and live in the reality of personal “justification” and “reconciliation”, etc., is quite different. Therefore, I am deeply thankful to God that my relationship and fellowship with God is not dependent on my appreciation of these truths but on God’s full satisfaction with the work of His Son who has secured them. What a blessing to know that not only am I forgiven, and reconciled, but in my standing before God I am without guilt, not just innocent, but holy and righteous before God, and not a charge can be laid against me. With what resounding assurance does the words of the inspired apostle write: “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us” (Rom. 8:33, 34). Lovely as this is, the question remains, “How can God be just and the justifier?” (Rom. 3:26), putting guilty sinners in the place of uncontainable perfection without a spot or blemish (Eph. 5:27). Thank God it is only through, “the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Pet. 1:19). This creates a series of tensions.

## The Tensions

Tensions always raise questions, and in this case there is one leading question and several subsequent ones. The leading question is, “Does God answer the following questions without consideration of His Holiness?” The unchanging answer is a resounding “No”. Holiness is the beauty of God. It is the moral balancer that equates every attribute and action without detracting from any other. It is this which balances His patience and nonchalantness, His firmness with gentleness, His truth with mercy. The holiness of God’s character and unswearing righteousness cannot be changed, and this creates a tension on at least five levels which are all bound up with my justification. The questions are:

- 1) Is God an idealist in viewing us ideally but not in reality, pronouncing us as righteous when we are far from it? The scriptures say: “let God be true” (Rom. 3:4), and “True and righteous are Thy judgments” (Psa. 19:9; Rev. 16:7) therefore, all He does is in light and there is never the slightest iota of covertness or deceptiveness in Him. If God were to do such a thing (and that is an impossibility) He would no longer be the God of the Bible.
  - a) Am I declared justified by applying the righteousness of Christ to me as a clinical positioning?
  - b) How can the righteous God righteously declare the sinner righteous?
  - c) How can the righteous God ignore the sins of the past?
  - d) How can the righteous God be completely free from all respect of persons?
- 2) The Biblical foundation answering the above questions is found in Paul’s words (Rom. 3:21-28), and there it is taught twice over that God is righteous (Rom. 3:21, 25) because He has put all humanity on the one footing, guilty before God (Rom. 3:19, 23). On that foundation He can righteously offer righteousness to the whosoever will, and cover the sins of the past by “His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 3:24).
- 3) This seems quite reasonable until the matter is rethought. Christ suffers for the sins of humanity, but is that righteous? Is it righteous for the non-guilty party to suffer for the guilty and then to pronounce the guilty as guiltless? That demands a resounding “No”. The only way for it to be righteous is if the non-guilty, of their own volition, offers to bear the penalty for the guilty. I had two aunts, one a big strong girl and the other small and weak. One day the little one failed to do her homework and was brought out to the front of the class to get punished. Then her big sister offered to take the punishment for her. That was fair, but the little one was still guilty. That is where God’s works go far beyond what man can understand or demonstrate.

## Justification

### 1) The Clarification of Justification

- a) When we read the New Testament the Holy Spirit informs us that we are justified, but before I can enjoy a truth there is a need to understand what it means. In simple terms it means that the record of guilt is righteously blotted out and judicially my guilt is removed. This is an activity that no court in the world can do. An individual caught committing a crime can be pardoned, pay a penalty, or go to jail, but they are still guilty and that cannot be eradicated and the individual declared cleared of all guilt.
- b) To be justified means to be cleared of all guilt before the judgment bar of God, to be declared righteous by God, and given that place through the finished work of Christ in His sufferings, death, and resurrection.

### 2) The Vitalness of Justification

- a) To lose the doctrine of justification would mean there would be no eradication or full declaration by God that the individual is fully righteous before Him. It would degrade the work of the Lord and God for it would not be a perfect work, thus the blood of our Lord would be denied its efficacy, and the message of salvation by faith would be reduced to being a “nice story” void of any truth or substance.

### 3) The Grounds of Justification

- a) The theme of justification is mentioned twenty-six times in the New Testament and there are four which clearly present its meaning.
  - i) It is God who justifies (Rom. 3:4). This means there is the recognition that all God does is righteous and without any tint of bias or covertness.
  - ii) Christ was justified in the Spirit (1 Tim. 3:16). The word “in” can be translated “by” which indicates that all He claimed to be, the truths He spoke, were all endorsed by the Spirit of God. His works were done by the Spirit (Acts 2:22; Heb. 2:4), He was declared to be the Son of God by the Spirit (Rom. 1:4), and the coming of the Spirit proved He had been glorified (Jn. 7:39).
  - iii) Those who do the law are justified before God (Rom. 2:13). This is a human impossibility since fallen man could never completely and perfectly keep the whole law.
  - iv) Salvation is by faith without the law. (see paragraph 4, the Acquiring of justification)

### 4) The Acquiring of Justification

- a) Thousands of years ago Job asked the question: “How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?” (Job 25:4). The Holy Spirit caused Paul to take up two major themes in Romans chapter four. The first is that faith is not a work and salvation is by faith, that justification by faith without the works of the law is the only way for forgiveness of sins (Acts 13:38-39), but in Romans he gives two illustrations to prove this.
  - i) First, Abraham who lived long before the law. He could not keep the law to be justified or made righteous before God, yet in the sight of God he was justified and made righteous by believing God (Rom. 4:3-4).
  - ii) Then Paul takes up David as an example of justification without works. David had broken the law yet he was righteous before God because he believed God. If then an individual is justified without the works of the law, how could they lose their salvation if they break the law afterward? We listen and the Holy Spirit informs us that man is “justified by faith without the deeds of the law” either before or after salvation (Rom. 3:28; Gal. 3:24), for justification is the result of the grace of God and not a debt (Rom. 4:4-5).

5) **Justification and Pardon**

- a) Last Sunday we sang a hymn and the words were: "Pardon from sins of deepest dye, Pardon bestowed through Jesus' blood". However, I am thankful that justification is more than being pardoned. A pardon waives the execution of the penalty of the law, but justification is to declare that the demands of the law are satisfied. Pardon is a sovereign prerogative whereas justification is a judicial act.

6) **Justification and My Sins of Tomorrow**

- a) For many saints this is a major hurdle and at times accompanied by it is the haunting remembrance of a sin in the past. It is now approximately 2000 years since the Lord suffered for our sins at Calvary. We certainly were not born and neither were our ancestors of recent origin. The point being, Christ suffered for all my sins before I was conceived, consequently they were all still future. Again, when our Lord was here He spoke to two individuals and pronounced them "Forgiven". It is very precious for we are not told the sin of the palsied man (Matt. 9:2), but that of the woman was prostitution (Lk. 7:47-48). The Holy Spirit then caused Paul to write: "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses" (Col. 2:13). Then John wrote on what foundation and whose glory sins are forgiven: "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake" (1 Jn. 2:12). To question the fulness of the finished work of Christ and live by the principle that I must do my part, or any sin I could ever commit will banish me into Hell for eternity is an insult to the integrity of God.

**Summary**

When there is a realization that justification is a one sided covenant secured by the blood of the Lord through the grace of God, to consider the possibility of losing ones salvation is to override God's conditions of the covenant, deny the eternal efficacy of the blood of the Lord, and set limits on the grace of God. All of these are contrary to the following scriptures:

- a) "Justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (Rom. 3:24)  
b) "Now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him." (Rom. 5:9)  
c) "Who was delivered for (better "because" of) our offences, and was raised again for (because of) our justification." (Rom. 4:25)  
d) "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." (Rom. 5:20)

Therefore being *justified* by faith,  
we have peace with God  
through our Lord Jesus Christ.  
*Romans 5:1*

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**May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.  
John 16:13**

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