

Scriptural Truths

E-Mail Meditations

The Lord May Come . . . Perhaps Today . . . Behold, I Come Quickly . . . Rev. 22:7

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Justification

Introduction

One of the great words God uses to describe the fullness of salvation is “Justification”. The simplified meaning given to it is, “just-as-if-I’d-never-sinned” and this is true to a degree, but it is much more. In summary, it means to be cleared by God of all guilt and my record is without a trace of any crime or offence committed. It indicates the condition of the individual who is depending on Christ alone for salvation and being before God without spot or blemish. It is infinitely more than being forgiven, for the child of God is judicially pure and in full fellowship with divine Persons. John records: “As He is, so are we in this world” (1 Jn. 4:17). As the Lord is before God at this moment, we are seen by God in all the perfections of Christ.

In all these cases, whither the word is an adjective, adverb, noun, or verb, the basic truth is the same. Justice must be executed without bias and in righteousness, and only then can an individual be declared “justified” before God. As Paul wrote so long ago: “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth.”

When any of these words are used in the context of spiritual life and activity, it indicates conformity to the will and character of God. Thus, for a human being to be conformed to the will and character of God demands a major change regarding hereditary, activity, and inner being. In other words, such a one must be separated from the state they were in at natural birth, and by the work of the Lord at Calvary made a new creature in Christ.

What Cannot Happen With God?

It is precious to know, and a cause for much thanksgiving, to consider what God does not do for us due to personal “weakness” or a lowering of His moral absoluteness.

- a) He never knows the weakness of forgetfulness, but loves us despite being fully aware of our every sin, sinful tendency, and apathetic attitude toward sin, Himself, the Holy Spirit, and Christ.
- b) Furthermore, nothing ever “slides past Him” of which He is unaware, but is fully cognizant of all that is occurring in the lives of each of us.

What God Does Not Do

- 1) God never declares the sinner “innocent” but emphasis is made of their guiltiness: “Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God” (Rom. 3:19; Jam. 2:10). The truth of “innocence” mentioned in forty-one verses, and depending on context, the meaning varies. However, only the Lord was truly innocent (Matt. 27:4, 24). Being

“innocent” means that the individual has not committed any crime. The only time a man (Adam) was innocent was before he sinned in Eden.

- 2) We never read of God pardoning the sinner. The thought of being “pardoned” is found in 16 verses but always in the Old Testament. To “pardon” means to absolve from any penalty for the crime committed, and it always carries the truth of guiltiness (Ex. 23:21; Num. 14:19; Jer. 5:7). Thank God for those lovely words of Micah: “Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy” (Mic. 7:18). Yet lovely as this verse is, it may be a surprise to learn that the word is never used in the New Testament. The hymn writer wrote, “pardon from an offended God,” but we are not pardoned, for this word is only used in the Old Testament, and like the word “atonement,” indicates the grace and mercy of God in covering the sins by the temporary measure in view of the sacrifice of the Lord. These are Old Testament words for God had provided something better for us. We are, “cleansed from all sin” (1 Jn. 1:7).
- 3) We never read of God acquitting the sinner. To be “acquitted” indicates that the accused is not guilty of a particular crime as far as the law under which he is being tried is concerned, or there is insufficient evidence to convict, or under the law of the country has not provided for such a situation. The truth of acquittal is mentioned in two passages, both in the Old Testament but never in the New Testament.
 - a) “If I sin, then thou markest me, and thou wilt not acquit me from mine iniquity.” (Job 10:14)
 - b) “The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the LORD hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet.” (Nah. 1:3)

What God Does Do

Thank God we do read of Him “justifying” the sinner, and to do this He must know the fulness of my sin and transgression and have judgment for it fully and righteously executed. All these are legal terms requiring “absolutes” when a matter is either right or wrong. Indeed, if it were not for God as the Moral Absolute, there would be no absolute right or wrong. In a world of moral “grays” man has rejected every moral absolute so that the basest of sins are now viewed as “alternate lifestyles”. In answer to the question, “What does justification mean?” It means to be in such a condition before God that in righteousness He can declare the individual cleared of all guilt and all condemnation removed. This leads to the questions:

- a) Why do I need to be justified?
- b) What were Christ’s qualifications to provide justification?
- c) How can I be justified before God?

Why Do I Need To Be Justified?

One of the greatest illustrations of why I need the justification that comes from God is the pronounced judgment of God on the firstborn of Egypt. The days preceding the exodus every firstborn in that land knew they were under the condemnation of God (Ex. 4:23; 11:5; 12:12). This was no idle threat, for God does not make rash threats but a promise, for He did go through the land and slew the firstborn (Ex. 12:29). In the words of the apostle John, even while they lived and went about their normal duties, the sentence of God was over them, they were “condemned already” (Jn. 3:18). Every firstborn was under the condemnation of the judgment of God because of three matters:

- a) because of birth
- b) because of unbelief in the gospel message
- c) because of rejecting the sacrifice of God’s provision

It was irrelevant if they were Hebrews or Egyptians, rich or poor, educated or illiterate priests, or commoners. They were under condemnation by birth therefore, nothing they could do could change that situation.

How like every individual born into this world since the birth of Cain (Gen. 4:1), all under condemnation by birth, something they can do nothing about. However, as long as the individual lives in indifference to the gospel and the rejecting of Christ as Saviour, they are under condemnation of God.

Apart from all the sins they commit, the two greatest sins are believing intellectually, just as another fact that Jesus is the Christ and Saviour but never depending on Him for salvation; and not believing the solemn message of the gospel. To all such the Lord Jesus said: “I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins” (Jn 8:24). How can such deliberate activities be eradicated? These are crimes every individual is guilty of, and to be in Heaven this condemning list must be cleared to God’s satisfaction.

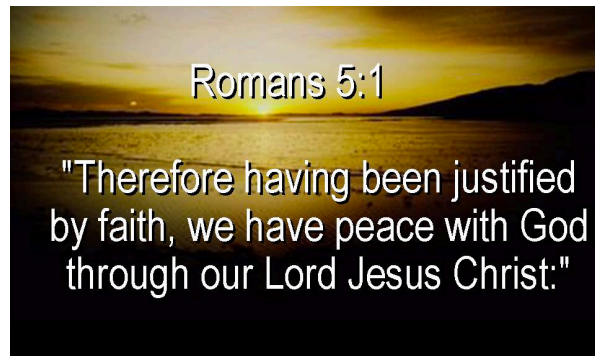
[What Were Christ's Qualifications to Provide Justification?](#)

The scriptures inform us very clearly that man cannot redeem his brother (Psa. 49:7) and the reason is simple, "How could one guilty man nullify the guilt of another?" It is an impossibility! For any individual to be justified before God it can only be done by an individual who needs no justification. In other words, their entire life is without sin, they never sinned in thought word or deed, never sinned by omission or commission. There has only been one man who walked this earth with those qualifications, and that was Jesus. The Psalmist asked the questions: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in His holy place?" The answer comes swiftly back: "He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully (Psa. 24:3-4). The only babe, child, boy, young man, adult who always had these qualifications was the Lord Jesus, and that is why He never needed justification.

[How Can I Be Justified Before God?](#)

As children we used to sing, "What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus"! The only way to have our sins forgiven and the record eradicated so that the individual can stand faultless before the throne of God, is by the deliberate acceptance of the Lord Jesus as the remover of our record. God does not just forgive sins, he judges them, and then offers forgiveness! At the cross of Calvary the Lord took my place and laid the foundation for the removal of all my guiltiness. No works of the individual or of another could ever cleanse that record, and no court of earth could eradicate it. If we commit a crime and are caught, there will be a penalty which we may pay, but even after the judicial judgment is executed, there will still be the record of that which we have done and no human court can delete that. That is exactly what God has done by the executing of divine judgment on Christ, and He offers to us not only complete forgiveness but also completely erases the record of my guilt. How glorious to know that I shall stand before the Throne of God in all the perfect righteousness of Christ.

. . . . Rowan Jennings



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