

JUSTIFICATION, JUDGMENT AND THE JUDGE

Romans 3:20-31

Introduction: We have mentioned the impact of the Reformation which was credited with a beginning in 1517 when Martin Luther pinned his 95 Thesis on the Wittenberg Church Door. One of the major issues was that of *indulgences*. These were certificates issued to those who wanted to reduce the punishment for sins committed. These indulgences were purchased by the person wanting to avoid the punishment for sins they had committed. Luther claimed that repentance and receiving Christ by faith was required for a person to avoid the judgment and punishment of hell. The indulgences made people avoid this process of repentance and finding eternal life in Jesus Christ. The whole of the penance system was to avoid the punishment of Purgatory, which does not exist, and live a life of revelry as long as one had the money to purchase the indulgence which was a system of forgiveness of sin. The Bible says in **1 Peter 1:18 (KJV)** *Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers.* What is being conveyed here is that a person cannot purchase their forgiveness. One of the major objections to that is the poor would not have a chance for eternal life. Look at **Romans 3:20 KJV)** *Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.* In other words doing things will not help anyone in relation to salvation and redemption.

That is why salvation is seen as *free*. Paul says in **Romans 6:23 (KJV)** *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.* The reason the Bible presents eternal life this way is because Jesus Christ paid the sin debt when he died on the cross. If you could buy forgiveness with money, then the death of Jesus Christ was a vain and foolish act.

God wants to change people and make them righteous so they can be in His presence. Thus what we see is that God changes a person into a righteous person. **2 Corinthians 5:21 (KJV)** *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* Our righteousness is made possible by being “in Christ.” Look at how this is stated in the book of **Romans**. **Romans 5:19 (KJV)** *For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.* **Romans 5:17 (KJV)** *For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.* Dr. Charles Ryrie gives five steps that are involved in the “outworking of this procedure as found in **Romans 3:21-26.**”¹

THE PROCEDURE IN JUSTIFICATION

¹ *Basic Theology*, page 344.

- 1. The Plan, Romans 3:21 (KJV)** But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets. The righteousness needed by men and women is provided in Jesus Christ. Note that this verse says that the “righteousness of God without the law is manifested.” Keeping the Law was never designed to give one eternal life. The only righteousness available for man is in Christ. He is the only source of righteousness that God will acknowledge. Without Jesus Christ man has no means to enter into eternal life and subsequently enter into heaven.
- 2. The Prerequisite, Romans 3:22 (KJV)** Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference. Notice that this verse indicates that the righteousness of God is accessed only by “faith.” The ingredient needed is to believe. Look at the two words “faith” and “believe.” They are from the same root word. The word *faith* is a noun. The verse is saying we are “saved through faith” which is the idea of “by.” Remember **Ephesians 2:8 (KJV)** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. It is the same idea. Faith becomes the channel through which we receive salvation. The word *faith* (*pistis*) has the idea behind it “trust, certainty, confidence, trustworthiness, guarantee or assurance. In some cases it has the idea of “PROOF.” The other word *believe* is a verb. It has the meaning of reliance, trust and includes belief. This word *believe* (*pisteuo*), has several uses in the New Testament. One source indicates, “In the NT the group becomes a leading one to denote the relationship with God, partly on the OT basis and partly in connection with the Christian mission and its call for faith as a turning to God.”² The verse that fits here is **Hebrews 11:1 (KJV)** Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Faith is believing God. The word is also used for believing God’s word in **John 2:22 (KJV)** When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said. There must be belief in order to have eternal life.
- 3. The Price, Romans 3:24-25 (KJV)** ²⁴ Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: ²⁵ 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. These verses are the heart of the doctrine of justification. We are justified “freely” by his grace. We have a right standing, pardon of sin, forgiveness when we are in Christ. We were at one time the “condemned” but now we are justified. Remember two weeks ago we dealt with the subject of *propitiation* and defined it as

² TDNT Apridged in one volume page 853.

satisfying the wrath of God? That means that Jesus Christ was the one who was judged and paid the price that we might have God's righteousness and be justified. That means we were declared righteous in Him. The price is clearly noted in **Romans 3:25**, "in his blood, to declare righteous for the remission of sins." Please note with me that in **Romans 3:24-25 (KJV)** ²⁴ Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: ²⁵ 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.

4. The Position, Romans 3:24 (KJV) Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. When a person receives Jesus Christ as their personal saviour they are placed "in Christ." Look at **Romans 8:1 (KJV)** *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.* Again, **2 Corinthians 5:17 (KJV)** *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.* **Ephesians 2:6 (KJV)** *And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.* **Ephesians 2:13 (KJV)** *But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.*

5. The Pronouncement, Romans 3:26 (KJV) **To declare, I say,** at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. When we are in Christ we have met the demands of God has which is satisfied by Christ, with "his righteousness." This is the basis in which God can justify us. That is why no one can lay anything to the charge of God's elect. Look at **Romans 8:33 (KJV)** *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.*

THE PROCESS OF JUSTIFICATION

There is an important aspect of justification that is seldom discussed. One of the important matters in dealing with God is that we face two propositions. One, if we are not justified we face judgment. If we are to face judgment, when we are not justified. The important aspect of justification is that it is part of Redemption. In fact, redemption has several aspects to it that we don't always bring together. Just as we see that judgment and justification are inseparable, the matter of salvation, sanctification, atonement, and election (not Calvinism), are all part of the provision God has made for us. Now note with me in the text the things that are part of the process of justification. Justification and judgment are intrinsically connected. Listen to these passages: **Deuteronomy 25:1 (KJV)** *If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them; then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked.* Notice **Romans 3:4 (KJV)** *God*

forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged. **Romans 5:18 (KJV)** Therefore as by the offence of one *judgment* came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift* came upon all men unto **justification** of life.

Man is going to face judgment or be justified. The question to pose is, “Which will it be for you?” **1 Corinthians 4:4 (KJV)** For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. A person who is justified has no problem facing the Judge of the world, God, Himself. That being the case why would one not avoid facing the judge and turn to His Son Jesus Christ who of the object of justification?

In the Old Testament justification is closely associated with *righteousness*. Justification came because they were “deemed” righteous. It had to do with two things: 1) do the things God said; 2) by believing God. Abraham is the example in both cases. **Genesis 18:17-19 (KJV)** ¹⁷ And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; ¹⁸ Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? ¹⁹ **For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment;** that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him. [Emphasis added.] Again, the passage that brought Abraham to be the illustration of “justification by faith” in **Romans 4:3 (KJV)** For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Paul is quoting what is said in **Genesis 15:6**. This subject is addressed in detail in **Romans 4**. Which we will take up next week.

With this in mind, we should understand how one is justified in the New Testament. You are in **Romans 3**. Note with me:

1. **We are justified freely by his grace, Romans 3:24.**
2. **We are justified by believing in Jesus, Romans 3:26.**
3. **We are justified by faith without the deeds of the law, Romans 3:28.**
4. **We are justified by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, Romans 4:24-25.**
5. **We are justified by the righteousness of Jesus Christ, Romans 5:18.**
6. **We are justified by God, Romans 8:33.**

The conclusion to this whole matter is that without Jesus Christ, we are not justified and will stand before the Judge of “. . .all the earth.” Abraham knew this and invoked the righteousness of God in his deliberation with Him on the matter of Sodom and Gomorrah. **Genesis 18:25 (KJV)** That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: **Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?** [Emphasis added.]

Folks, we have one of two options.

1. **We can reject the provisions provided by God** in declaring us righteous in Jesus Christ and face the judgment of God at the Great White Throne Judgment described in **Revelation 20**.

- 2. We can receive Jesus Christ by faith**, believing that He has taken our judgment when He died on the cross and subsequently rose from the dead that we might be justified before God.