

JUSTIFICATION: THE HEART OF THE GOSPEL

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For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. ([2Co 13:8](#))

Veritas prævalebit!

Buy the truth, and sell it not ... ([Pr 23:23](#))

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PREFACE

This book was written for the purpose of leading the student of the Bible to a richer and better understanding of the doctrine of justification. The modern cry that doctrine is unimportant is not true. The epistles in the New Testament instruct the reader with doctrine before giving the guidelines for practical holiness. Many professors of Christianity do not understand the doctrine of justification or the meaning of the word. I have tried to correct this erroneous thinking in this book. Further, I have introduced the modern reader to some writers of the past. Some of the quotes are written in Old Style English, and some words are spelled differently from modern English. Some of the quotes are rather lengthy. The reasons for these many and lengthy quotes are four-fold.

First, as stated above, these quotes are to introduce some of the old writers to the modern reader. Many Christians believe that those writers were archaic, antiquated, and dry. This is far from the truth and these quotes will prove it. Some of the writers are almost unknown and lost to the Christian world. This is one way of preserving their names and creating a source of reference for further study on the subject.

Second, these sources are quoted so the reader will know that the topics considered and discussed are not novel thoughts. Though the average Christian today is often unaware of the subject of justification and its related topics, I have not presented anything new. It is the old, old story of the message of salvation by the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Third, the doctrine of *eternal justification* is discussed. I quoted men who believed this doctrine with those who did not hold to it. By doing this, I showed that those who *rightly* believe in *eternal justification* do not hold to antinomian views. They believe, as their opponents, that the righteous live godly.

Last, while the book is written from an orthodox Baptist perspective, quotes are from men of various Christian denominations. This further demonstrates the importance of the doctrine of justification. While Christians may differ in many points concerning the Bible, the central message of salvation through the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ is the same.

The book is not exhaustive by any means. Some points are only suggestive. No doubt this is a major weakness of the book. However, to keep the book from becoming too large, I decided not to enlarge on some points. It is my

prayer that the book will be an introduction to a better understanding and deeper study of the doctrine of justification.

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This book would not have been possible without the aid of several people.

I want to express my appreciation to Kendall and Debbie Poe. They encouraged me to send the written material to them to be entered on their computer so that editing the manuscript would be made easier. It was Kendall who introduced me to computers which led me to see the value of word processing.

Judy Guess and Linda Carter are to be commended for proofreading the manuscript in its rough form and correcting the grammar and punctuation. They portray the virtuous woman of [Pr 31](#), “which is in the sight of God of great price” ([1Pe 3:4](#)). And, like Paul, I have had the blessing of “those women which laboured with me in the gospel” ([Php 4:3](#)).

A Christian gentleman, who desires to remain anonymous, also read the manuscript and suggested changes which improved the book. He is not only a “fellowlabourer” in the gospel of God, but a beloved brother in the Lord. I regret his desire to remain anonymous.

I must express thanks to the congregation of Grace Chapel. The members were understanding as I gave much time to writing and printing the book. Blessed are those who know that the pastor’s ministry is greater than the pulpit.

Some of the sources quoted in this book would not have been possible without Leroy Rhodes. Leroy has purchased many old books which are out of print. There is much valuable information in these works which the modern reader will never know. Leroy’s kind generosity made them available for this work. I refer mainly to the works of John Brine, Herman Witsius, and Robert Hawker. (Thankfully, due to the internet and other sources today these books are available and in print, as well as, available for SwordSearcher modules. In fact, this book is so designed that links are provided to take you to those documents. JKB, March, 2010)

Jim McSwain not only gave me advice when I bought my computer, but he introduced me to the word processor I used to write the book. He sat patiently for hours tutoring and guiding me concerning computers and word

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I want to thank the many friends and ministers who have encouraged and aided me in writing and printing this book. After reading the manuscript, Herman Hanko contributed valuable suggestions which clarified some points. James T. Sherrill graciously allowed me the use of his computer and laser printer to correct many problems in formatting and printing the manuscript. Curtis I. Crenshaw made recommendations which were germane to desktop publishing and printed the manuscript on a Post Script laser printer. Robert Green gave valuable time and talent by designing the cover of the book. Many friends contributed in a financial way to make it possible to publish this book. (A note of thanks goes to Regie Rhodes who spent many hours editing and converting the book to be used in the *SwordSearcher* computer program. JKB, March, 2010) Words cannot express the value of *true* friends.

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House, 1975; MOODY PRESS: *Gleanings in Genesis* by Arthur W. Pink, Moody Press, 1922, 1950; THE BANNER OF TRUTH TRUST: *Romans—A Digest of Reformed Comment* by Geoffrey B. Wilson, The Banner of Truth Trust, 1977; WM. B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING CO.: *Word Studies in the Greek New Testament* by Kenneth S. Wuest, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1966; *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* by Gerhard Kittel, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964-1976; *The Expositor's Greek Testament* by W. Robertson Nicoll (ed.), Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967; TYNDALE HOUSE PUBLISHERS: Verses marked *The Living Bible* are taken from *The Living Bible*, copyright 1971 by Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton. IL. Used by permission.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION WHY THIS BOOK?

The doctrine of justification, a central truth in Christianity, has been the focus of many books and articles written from various viewpoints. An incident related to me by a Christian friend illustrates from everyday experience the need for a practical and understandable book on this crucial subject. During a break at work, my friend discussed with an associate the apparent differences between present day Christian writers and those of the past. The fellow worker asserted that modern writers and Christians possess greater spiritual insight into the Scriptures than did Christians in previous eras. To the amazement of his co-worker my friend disagreed pointing out that very few people presently had a satisfactory understanding of important Bible doctrines such as justification. The ruffled co-worker replied, “What’s that?”

This conversation suggests, *first*, a major reason for submitting to the public a new book on justification. Although many claim to be “spirit-filled, Bible-believing” Christians, frequently they are unfamiliar with Biblical concepts such as justification, even though it is an important Bible term. Nor in the face of this lack of knowledge do they take the trouble to examine the term and to understand the rich spiritual meaning it conveys. Yet, careful study is in order, because we live in a mentally bankrupt society which discourages independent thought and often fails to equip people to examine and think about a topic. In obedience to God, Christians should be eager to seek out the answers to Biblically revealed truth, but many professing believers in modern society have neglected to read, study, and think on the glorious themes of Scripture.

It is to be regretted that this often reflects the failure of pastors and preachers to immerse themselves in the truths of God’s Word and to apply the

implications of the divine Word to everyday life. What a sad day when men who claim to be the Lord's ambassadors cannot explain how His subjects are righteous before the thrice Holy God! How can these men proclaim reconciliation to sinners if they do not have a clear grasp of the subject of justification, or even worse, consider the subject irrelevant or not worthy of belief? Their sermons, Bible lectures, and studies, consequently, are filled with stale second-hand material or non-Biblical platitudes and demonstrate little first-hand knowledge of God's truth. This refusal to study produces snappy rhetoric which quickly becomes meaningless and insincere jargon passed from one borrowed sermon to another at the expense of the spiritual health of Christendom. In anguish I cry out with Moses, "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them" ([Nu 11:29](#))!

Second, someone has said that every writer has his own sphere of influence, which means that in writing about a topic an author shares what he knows about the subject with others. This study is distributed to the people of God with the prayerful intent of spreading truth about justification.

Third, God has commanded us to contend for the faith ([Jude 3](#)). Yes, He expects us to do so even though we live in a society that has rejected absolutes and assumes that there are no abiding truths or fixed standards. We are to "earnestly contend" for all truth, including justification! Concerning this "earnestly contend," note Kenneth Wuest's excellent exposition:

"Earnestly contend" is *epagonizomai*, found only here in the New Testament. The simple verb was used of athletes contending in the athletic contests. The word speaks of a vigorous, intense, determined struggle to defeat the opposition. Our word "agony" is the English spelling of the noun form of this word. The Greek athletes exerted themselves to the point of agony in an effort to win the contest. With such intense effort does Jude say that saints should defend the doctrines of Christianity. Peter, in his first epistle (3:15), tells us how we are to do so. He says that we should "be ready always to give an answer" to the opposition. The words "give an answer" is in the Greek a technical term of the law courts, speaking of the attorney for the defense "presenting a verbal defense" for his client.[\[1\]](#)

Through prayer and study of God's Word we must acquire a thorough grasp of Christian doctrine and be ready in humility and sincerity to explain to anyone why and what we believe about God and His ways with men

([1Pe 3:15](#)). Please remember dear reader, if you stand unyieldingly for God's truth, the world will level charges of bigotry and legalism against you. And the most painful criticisms often come from those who deceitfully profess to know God but in reality are His enemies. Recall that the prominent religious leaders of His day called Christ a devil because He ignored their human traditions ([Mt 12:24](#); [Mr 3:22](#)). Did not Christ say that His sheep would be hated as He was, if they likewise stood for the truth ([Joh 15:18-20](#); [1Jo 3:13](#))?

Modern Christendom works diligently to make Biblical truths acceptable and appealing to the world. The average professor of Christ lives, talks, and dresses like the world. He goes out of his way to offend no one. Yet, this is impossible for a genuine believer, for Scripture makes clear that the unregenerate world hates the child of God. To the contrary, to live godly means to think God's thoughts after Him, to embrace His truth as your truth and to shape your life by it despite worldly opposition and hatred. Accordingly, godly living means a life of suffering and rejection ([2Ti 3:12](#)). We are not surprised then to find that to the world and the falsely religious the doctrine of justification is unpopular, boring, or frightening, but to the redeemed of Christ, it is a glorious truth! It is the truth that in grace God has not merely made it possible to be justified but has actually in eternity past declared righteous those He loved and chose to glorify in His Son, Jesus Christ!

Reader, is your preparation and defense of the truth of God's Word deficient? Have you given yourself to learn, explain, and defend the truth of justification? If not, then I plead with you to turn from your ignorance and indifference and to commit yourself to be a faithful steward of the Lord's cause. Oh, how we need obedient soldiers of the cross who will be faithful unto death and stand on the front line of battle not retreating before opposition to God's truth ([Re 2:10](#))!

BENEFITS OF JUSTIFICATION

A thorough understanding of the doctrine of justification brings to our attention a wonderful spiritual legacy bestowed upon us by our gracious and bountiful Lord. Let us consider *three* specific benefits.

ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

One advantage is the assurance of salvation. Job said "For I *know* that my redeemer liveth ..." ([Job 19:25](#)). Furthermore, Paul noted that he had "kept the faith" and that he had a "crown of righteousness" laid up for him ([2Ti 4:7-](#)

8). John repeatedly declares in his first epistle that one may know God and His truth and be quite sure of his salvation ([1Jo 2:3-5,12-14,20-22,29](#); [3:2-5,14,19,24](#); [4:7,13,15-16](#); [5:2,13,15,18,20](#)). As the above passages demonstrate, the claim that assurance of salvation is unattainable is out of step with God's Word and foreign to proper Biblical exposition. Christians have their moments of doubt, but according to God's Word this uncertainty is only a temporary condition due to sin or ignorance of one's standing before God.

When a genuine believer understands justification and knows that God, the Holy Judge, has pronounced him "not guilty," then he can sing with Fanny J. Crosby:

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
 O what a foretaste of glory divine!
 Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
 Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.[\[2\]](#)

Dear reader, do you have blessed assurance founded upon the unchanging promises of God, or are you seeking to gain acceptance with Him through your own deeds? Flee to the cross of Christ! There alone you will find assurance. Justification is a declaration by the Holy One of Israel, whose promises are eternal and absolute, that He views you judicially righteous in Jesus Christ. If you do not understand this, you will try in vain to gain peace through Bible reading, praying, church going, or good works.

Such filthy works give no hope of peace with God or the peace of God! Assurance will only come when you find yourself under the justifying righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, or what the old "divines" called "discovering a saving interest in Christ."

In our day it is quite common for men to seek peace with God on the basis of their own works. Though God has repeatedly warned that He will never justify the wicked, yet many immoral and spiritually unclean people persistently claim the peace of salvation apart from the truth of justification. Any sense of assurance other than peace with God and the peace of God, as described and defined in the Scriptures, is false and deceitful. Be warned from God's unchanging Word! Sodomites, abortionists (baby murderers), pornographers, and all other lovers of iniquity, including those who approve and defend such behavior (especially so-called "ministers" and religious people who know better), are not justified. Their claims that God approves of their evil conduct, overlooks their vile thoughts, and "loves" them as they are

products of self-deception, the love of wickedness, and a reprobate mind ([2Co 6:9-10](#); [Re 21:8](#); [22:15](#); [1Jo 3:15](#); [Joh 8:31,42-47](#); [Mt 7:21-23](#)).

Reader, in what are you trusting? Are you resting in the finished works of Christ, or in your works? Do you struggle day-by-day to obtain assurance of salvation through human goodness? If so, you too are laboring under a delusion. Do not be deceived! You will only find true peace in Christ. According to [Ga 5:4](#) (a book whose theme is justification), if you are trying to obtain assurance (to be justified) in any way but God's way, then, "*Christ is become of no effect unto you.*"

STRENGTH FOR CHRISTIAN WARFARE

A further benefit from correctly understanding justification is strength for Christian warfare. A person who does not know the truth of justifying righteousness cannot fight against the enemies of God. He is defeated in at least two ways. *First*, instead of fighting "the good fight of faith" ([1Ti 1:9](#)), he will seek righteousness by his own works. *Second*, if truly a child of God, Satan, personal sin, and the wickedness of the world will defeat him when he tries to overcome them in his own strength or righteousness.

When a person, for example, rests in the finished works of Christ, he knows that although he falls into sin and disobeys God, he is still equipped to do battle for the Lord. He knows that he does not have to gain any favor with God in order to be saved. He knows that his access to God is in Christ. He knows that he does not have to wallow in the muck of self-pity, trying to feel good enough for God to hear his prayers.

Please understand. I am speaking about the believer who *falls* into sin, *not* a person who *practices* sin. Whoever lives in sin and takes pleasure in it is not of God ([1Jo 3:4-10](#)). Although the believer will be a sinner his entire life or until glorification, he does not use God's truths as an excuse for sin ([1Jo 1:8,10](#)). Those who do are "ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ" ([Jude 4](#)). They are in the class of the angels that sinned, Sodom and Gomorrah, Cain, Balaam, Core and others to whom the "blackness of darkness" is reserved for ever ([Jude 6-7,11,13](#)). These are "set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire" ([Jude 7](#)).

In this day when so many profess to be believers in the Lord Jesus and yet live ungodly lives, this important truth needs to be openly and plainly declared. Jesus Christ came to save His people *from* their sins, not *in* their sins ([Mt 1:21](#)). Many people are going to be surprised "in that day" when the Lord

of Glory shall say to them, “I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” ([Mt 7:21-23](#)). Note that this will be said to people who sincerely thought they worshiped Christ.

Since the believer is a sinner, plagued even during his sleep with sin, knowledge of justification stands him in good stead. For, when a believer is assaulted by his sins, Satan, or the world, the weight of this opposition and accusation will crush him unless he knows that all of his righteousness is in Christ. Unless he knows that God has pronounced him “not guilty,” he will be paralyzed in service to God. But knowing that he is forgiven and that he is truly justified before the Holy One of Israel, he can flee “boldly unto the throne of grace,” to “obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” ([Heb 4:16](#)). He knows that although he weeps and mourns over his sins and sinful condition, he does not have to wait until he becomes good enough or feels a certain way for God to hear his prayers. The believer knows that God will hear his cries through the justifying righteousness of his blessed Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ. Knowing this, he does not have to wait until he feels clean. He can relate to the sentiments of Edward Mote:

My hope is built on nothing less
 Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
 I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
 But wholly lean on Jesus, name.
 His oath, His covenant, His blood,
 Support me in the whelming flood;
 When all around my soul gives way,
 He then is all my hope and stay.[\[3\]](#)

Reader, are you fighting in your own strength, trying to do something—read, pray, sing, work—in order to get your soul in shape to do battle? Why labor for that which does not give strength? If you know man's works are powerless to provide the fortitude which is needful to wage the Christian warfare, then flee to Christ. He has never turned away any who truly turn to Him to rest alone in His finished works ([Mt 11:28-30](#)). If your soul is thirsty for true refreshment that the world and your own pathetic efforts cannot give you, then run to Christ. Eat and drink, for it costs you nothing ([Isa 55:1-3,6-7](#))! In the world there is only tribulation, but in Christ there is peace ([Joh 16:33](#)). Only he who is rooted and anchored in the knowledge of his justification by Christ's righteousness can endure the “hardness, as a good

soldier of Jesus Christ” ([2Ti 2:3](#)). Until you are settled in this justifying righteousness of Christ, you will never be strong for the Christian's warfare.

THE ONLY PROPER INCENTIVE TO A HOLY LIFE

The third benefit of a proper understanding of justification is an incentive to live a holy life before the Lord. If our conception of justification is faulty, we will misunderstand the will and nature of God and man. While the disciplined lives and dedication in religious service of some cult members put professing Christians to shame, it is fear and personal gain that motivates them ([Jas 4:3](#)). They do not understand that “perfect love casteth out fear” ([1Jo 4:18](#)).

However, the person who understands the teaching of God’s Word about justification and sees himself washed in the blood of the Lamb of God knows that he has received personal salvation which is the greatest favor man can enjoy from God. He will serve God out of love, not self-interest. In fact, he is constrained by the love of Christ to live “in all good conscience before God” ([2Co 5:14](#)) under His grace which teaches His people to deny “ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” ([Tit 2:11-12](#)). Rightly understanding the doctrine of justification makes it clear that Jesus Christ “gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from *all* iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” ([Tit 2:14](#)). The person who is truly justified and has received this justification unto his own soul by faith will not use this glorious truth as an excuse for sin. No, he is so grateful for the sovereign love of God that he delights in serving Him. He knows that his Heavenly Father has said, “Be ye holy; for I am holy” and he longs to please Him (see [1Pe 1:14-16](#)). This is the only proper incentive to a holy life. Everything else leads away from God to the bondage of self-justification.

Dear reader, what is it that causes you to labor as you do? Do you pray out of duty or love? Do you read the Scriptures for self-gratification or because it is your delight? Do you worship God for gain or out of devotion to Him? Remember that many have a “form of godliness” but deny the power thereof ([2Ti 3:5](#)). Some admit that they serve God because they have gained so many material benefits (or the reverse!), but those who consider gain (or lack of it) to be godliness are proud and know nothing ([1Ti 6:4-6](#)). The Scriptures definitely teach that “godliness with contentment is great gain.” Reader, are you content? Are you godly? Are you seeking contentment in your works and the things of the world? Peace is found only in Christ. *He* is the only source

of contentment. It is with Him that you have to do. Flee to Christ as the only source of justifying righteousness. I cannot remove your burden, nor can I lift one sin. I cannot cause you to love the Fairest of ten thousand nor to serve Him out of love and appreciation. I can only point you to the One Who is sufficient, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy One of Israel.

There are many more spiritual benefits from a proper understanding of the doctrine of justification. May the Lord of wisdom and power bless you as you study this subject further. It is to that end that this book examines and explains the Biblical doctrine of justification, its connection to the true believer's spiritual standing before God, and what it means in a practical way to our daily life before the Lord. *TO HIM BE THE GLORY!*

POINTS TO COVER

I will discuss justification under ten points. Though some of the points overlap to some degree, I believe that it is necessary to view the doctrine in this way to understand it properly. Here are the points to be considered:

1. Justification defined.
2. Justification's purpose.
3. Justification's time; when did justification occur?
4. Justification's ground; what is the cause of justification?
5. Justification and imputation.
6. Justification and faith
7. Justification and works.
8. Justification does not lead men to sin.
9. Justification causes men to walk in holiness.
10. Justification and evangelism.

Foot Notes Chapter One

[1] Kenneth S. Wuest, *Word Studies in the Greek New Testament*, vol. 4, *In These Last Days* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1966), p. 235.

[2] Fanny J. Crosby, “Blessed Assurance,” *Old School Hymnal*—No. 10 (Atlanta, GA: Old School Hymnal Co., Inc., 1964), Song No. 50.

[3] Edward Mote. “The Solid Rock,” *Old School Hymnal*—No. 10 (Atlanta, GA: Old School Hymnal Co., Inc., 1964), Song No. 203.

CHAPTER 2 JUSTIFICATION DEFINED A LEGAL DECLARATION

To understand justification, we must define our terms. Several writers have clearly defined justification. John Dick stated:

Justification is a forensic term, which denotes not a change of personal disposition, but a change of his state in relation to the law. It does not make him righteous by an infusion of holy habits, but pronounces him righteous on valid grounds.... To justify the righteous is not to make him, but to pronounce him, righteous upon proof of his innocence, and of the goodness of the cause.... In the New Testament, the word *dikaion* always bears a forensic sense, or a sense closely connected with it, importing not to make, but to pronounce righteous.... The forensic sense of justification is manifest from its being opposed to condemnation. “It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?” ([Ro 8:33-34](#)).... Justification is a change, not of our nature, but of our state.[1]

John Owen declared:

And I say, that in no place, or on any occasion, is it used in that conjugation wherein it denotes an action *towards another*, in any other sense but to absolve, acquit, esteem, declare, pronounce righteous, or to *impute righteousness*; which is the *forensic sense* of the word we plead for;—that is its constant use and signification, nor doth it ever once signify to make inherently righteous, much less to pardon or forgive: so vain is the pretense of some, that justification consists only in the pardon of sin, which is signified by the word in any one place of Scripture. Almost in all places this sense is absolutely unquestionable; nor is there any more than one which will admit of any debate, and that on so faint a pretense as cannot prejudice its constant use and signification in all other places. Whatever, therefore, an *infusion of inherent grace* may be, or however it

may be called, *justification it is not*, it cannot be; the word nowhere signifying any such thing.... This word, therefore, whether the act of God towards men, or of men towards God, or of men among themselves, or of one towards another, be expressed thereby, is always used in a *forensic sense*, and doth not denote a *physical operation*, transfusion, or transmutation.[\[2\]](#)

Again, James Buchanan observed:

Justification is a legal, or forensic, term and is used in Scripture to denote the acceptance of any one as righteous in the sight of God.[\[3\]](#)

And finally, John Gill, who wrote much on the doctrine of justification and an author whose works deserve much study, commented that:

... justification is a pronouncing a person righteous according to law, as though he had never sinned ...[\[4\]](#)

Notice, all these definitions emphasize that justification is a *forensic* or *legal* declaration. It is a pronouncement about a person's standing before the law or lawgiver, not a description of a person's internal condition, qualities, or personal goodness. For example, when a person appears before a court of law accused of a crime, the judge declares him either guilty or not guilty. The judge does not make the man guilty or not guilty. On the basis of the facts presented, the judge only declares what the facts proved.

Of course a human judge may make an erroneous declaration, but in the case of Biblical justification the Righteous Judge is God—"It is God that *justifieth*" ([Ro 8:33](#))—Who knows His holy law, knows the heart of man, and will not declare the wicked innocent.

According to human law, if the facts indicate an individual is innocent, he is declared not guilty. Under the law, he is looked upon "*as though he had never sinned.*" What a glorious illustration of what God does to believing and repentant sinners! No wonder Job exclaimed, "I know it is so of a truth: but how should man be just with God?" ([Job 9:2](#)).

DEFINED BY THE SCRIPTURES

There are several passages of Scripture that unquestionably prove to the Bible believer that justification does not make one internally righteous, but only declares one legally righteous. Obviously, in such an important matter human opinion is worthless. It is something which must be settled by the Word of the Lord.

[Ro 3:4](#) AND [Ps 51:4](#)

First, let us compare [Ro 3:4](#) and [Ps 51:4](#) in the context of [Ro 1:18-3:13](#), where Paul proves that both Jew and Gentile are guilty before God ([Ro 3:9](#)). In this context Paul asks if God's purposes had failed in His dealing with the Jews. Since God had given them the Scriptures, and they had rejected them, did this make the faith of God without effect"? Paul's answer is "God forbid." We are to "let God be true, but every man a liar." This is hard for unregenerate man to accept, because no one enjoys being exposed as a liar, yet the Word of God declares that before the Lord our lives are full of falsehood. Furthermore, the passage implies that man constantly but unsuccessfully tries to mask his disobedient condition by false fronts, pride, and celebration of personal accomplishments.

If this deception and falsehood are so obvious to God, why is it necessary to state that all men are liars? The verse "That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou are judged" provides an answer. The emphasis is that God might be justified, not in the sense that vile human sinners infuse holy traits in God Who is perfect and absolutely righteous, but in the sense that when sinful man acknowledges that he truly is a liar as God has said, then he is declaring God to be righteous and true in His judgments.

This is a difficult concept and deserves further explanation. Note that [Ro 3:4](#) is a quote from [Ps 51:4](#), a penitential psalm written by David after God confronted him with the murder of Uriah and adultery with Bathsheba. When David admitted that he had sinned against God, he declared God to be true and right. In other words, David did not try to justify nor excuse his sinfulness. Instead, David declared God's judgment to be just and valid. It is in this sense that David "justified" God.

Take note that David did not make God righteous, nor did he change God's nature or character. David only made a declaration about God, and in so doing he made clear the meaning of justification.

Having considered this, reader, are you angry? If so, perhaps you have not submitted yourself to God's holiness. To submit to it means to see yourself as God sees you under His holy law—vile, guilty, wretched, and sinful. Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God. Submit yourself to His Word. Repent and turn from your own self-righteousness and trust in nothing but the finished works of Christ Jesus of Nazareth. If you do this, you declare that God is just, but if you trust in your own righteousness, you are declaring that you are just and that God is unjust. If you continue in your way, you will know that God

is “just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” ([Ro 3:31](#)). You will know at the white throne judgment that God is true and that you are indeed the liar.

Job 32:2

Second, let us look at [Job 32:2](#). Elihu, one of Job’s “friends,” was angry because Job initially maintained his righteousness at the expense of God’s justice. Job argued that if he could find the Almighty, he would order his cause, fill his mouth with arguments, and know the answer concerning him ([Job 23:3-6](#)). Job went on to say (in verse seven) that the *righteous* were competent to dispute with the Almighty and to be delivered from His judgment. So, in declaring that God had unfairly sent adversity upon him, Job “justified himself rather than God.”

Yet, when the Lord appeared to him and demanded an account for these rash words, Job admitted that he had spoken out of turn: “Behold I am vile: what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer; yea, twice; but I will proceed no further” ([Job 40:4-5](#)). When Job declared God to be true, he justified God. This illustrates again the central meaning of justification. It does not mean to make one righteous. Rather, it is a declaration that one is to be regarded as righteous before a divine standard. Job pronounced himself vile and the Judge right in His judgments.

Reader, how often do you have the spirit of Job in your daily life? Are there times when things seem to be going contrary to your ways? Do you question God’s dealings with you in these instances? Do you conclude that you deserved better than what God sends you? Can you see that in such instances you are justifying yourself instead of God? Yet, God may have blessed you and sent a spirit of humility causing you to cry with the publican, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” If so, at that point you received to your soul the benefit of submitting to God’s righteous declaration (justification) about your sinful condition and His perfect dealings in your life ([Lu 18:13-14](#)). However, if you have never humbled yourself and are trusting in your righteousness as did the Pharisee, you are seeking to justify yourself ([Lu 18:9](#)). You have denied the Lord Jesus Christ and His righteousness. May God bless you by His grace to be humbled before Him through the operation of the Holy Spirit. This is your only hope.

Lu 7:29-30

Last, [Lu 7:29-30](#) further demonstrates that justification is a forensic term and that it does not refer to a change in one’s disposition but is a

pronouncement that one is righteous according to the law. According to verse twenty-nine, those who submitted to John's baptism "justified God." Here again is a Scriptural affirmation that man can justify God. This is in complete harmony with the other passages we have studied. John announced the kingdom of God (heaven), which message according to [Mr 1:1](#) was the gospel of Jesus Christ. John proclaimed Jesus Christ to be the Lamb of God and the only One who could forgive sin ([Joh 1:29](#)).

When John preached repentance and baptism, he proclaimed Christ to be the only way whereby man could be just. Those who saw themselves and their works as vile and useless, became contrite and submitted to the command of God. Yet, when the multitude (particularly the Pharisees and Sadducees, cf. [Lu 3:7](#) with [Mt 3:7](#)) went to John to be baptized, he rebuffed them. Why? The answer again has to do with man choosing his opinions over God's truth. The crowds clung to their self-righteousness yet wanted to claim baptism as merely another work. John, simply, would have no part of this, nor was he afraid that he might lose a convert. In righteous indignation he branded them a "generation of vipers," a remark which definitely was not in step with the psychological pressure of the modern invitation system nor with "easy-believism." Some submitted to John's message and received baptism. They agreed with John that they were like a vile reptile with "the poison of asps ... under their lips" ([Ro 3:13](#)).

Further, they were in agreement with Paul who said, "yea, let God be true, but every man a liar" ([Ro 3:4](#)), and with David: "I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" ([Ps 51:5](#)). God graciously showed them that they needed to be washed in the blood of the Lamb to take away sin. Therefore, in submitting to baptism (which is a picture of the work of Christ), they justified God—they declared that God was right about them and that they were wrong.

Look again at [Lu 7:30](#). Those who did not submit to baptism "rejected the counsel of God against themselves." This certainly shows that baptism is a very significant event. When the truth of God is presented to you, and you refuse to submit to it in baptism, you commit a very serious mistake. You reject what God has declared about Himself and His purposes. In essence, you are saying that God is wrong and that you (the man) are correct. In other words you are justifying yourself and ignoring God.

Reader, how do you stand before God? Have you justified God in baptism? That is, have you declared Him to be true, or are you still maintaining that you are as good as the next person and that you have nothing from which to repent?

If so, you are not under grace ([Ga 5:4](#)). Unless the Lord of Glory has mercy on your soul, you will be judged according to your works and cast into the lake of fire ([Re 20:12-15](#)). Yet, if you submit to the Scriptures, you agree with God (you justified God) that He is right and that you are wicked and vile, and deserve to be banished forever from His presence. What a glorious thought!

Clearly, the above passages prove conclusively that justification is a declarative act. Justification does not change a person's disposition, nor does it infuse holy habits or make one righteous. It pronounces one righteous according to the law,^[5] in the words of Gill, "as though he had never sinned." God's justice is preserved because, as Dick said, justification "pronounces him righteous on valid grounds." "O, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out" ([Ro 11:33](#))!

MORE THAN PARDON OR FORGIVENESS

Justification is more than pardon or forgiveness. Without enlarging on this point, we will quote Gill:

... it is one thing for a man to be tried by law, cast, and condemned, and then receive the king's pardon; and another thing to be tried by the law, and, by it, to be found and declared righteous, as though he had not sinned against it.^[6]

IT IS NOT SANCTIFICATION

Justification is not infusing righteousness into a person. Infused righteousness is sanctification; imputed righteousness is justification. We will say more about imputation later.

Justification is not the new birth nor faith *per se*. The new birth is a part of sanctification. Justification and sanctification are not the same thing. As to faith, all the orthodox confessions maintain that justification and faith are not synonymous, nor does faith justify. The 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith states:

Those whom God effectually calleth, he also freely justifieth, not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous; not for anything wrought in them, or done by them; but for Christ's sake alone; NOT IMPUTING FAITH ITSELF, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their righteousness; but by imputing Christ's active obedience unto

the whole law, and passive obedience in his death, for their whole and sole righteousness, they receiving, and resting on him, and his righteousness, by faith; which faith they have not of themselves, it is the gift of God.^[7]

I would invite the reader to compare also the Baptist London Confession of 1644, the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Savoy Declaration, and the Belgic Confession. The 1742 Baptist Confession in America was the 1689 London Confession, with two sections added—"Laying on of Hands" and Singing of Hymns." Concerning justification, they are one and the same.

Foot Notes Chapter Two

[1] John Dick, *Lectures on Theology* (Cincinnati: J. A. & U. P. James, 1850), p. 371.

[2] John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold (London: Johnstone & Hunter, 1850-1853 repr., London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1965). vol. 5, pp. 125-126.

[3] James Buchanan, *The Doctrine of Justification, An Outline of Its History In the Church and of Its Exposition From Scripture* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1867: repr., Grand Rapids: Baker Book Houses 1977), p. 226.

[4] John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, (London: T. Smith. 1814; repr., Streamwood, IL: Primitive Baptist Library, 1981). vol. 2, p. 457.

[5] It is man that is under the law. God is righteous in Himself and is not to be measured by the law.

[6] Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, vol. 2, p. 457.

[7] Chapter XI, Article 1.

CHAPTER 3 THE PURPOSE OF JUSTIFICATION JUSTIFICATION IS FOR THE GLORY OF GOD

In the previous chapter I established that justification is a legal declaration of man's righteousness before God in Christ. It is not a reworking or refurbishing of human nature. Therefore, justification is not the same as forgiveness or sanctification. What purpose, then, does this declaration serve?

It is the contention of this chapter that the purpose of justification is first and foremost for the glory of God.

[Eph 1](#) demonstrates that the salvation of man which was accomplished in justification is for the glory of God. Though the word justification is not mentioned here, the concept is clearly set forth. In [Eph 1:4](#), the Scriptures declare that the chosen in Christ Jesus are “holy and without blame” before God. Standing in God’s presence having been declared righteous before the law as though one had never sinned surely pictures justification.

Why is it that God predestinated the chosen to such a condition? The answer is found in [Eph 1:5-6](#): “Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, *according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace*, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.” Notice that the chosen are made *accepted in the beloved*. This too is justification. Later in this chapter Paul declares in two more verses that our salvation in the justifying righteousness of Christ is to the glory of God. [Eph 1:12,14](#) declare, “That we should be *to the praise of his glory*, who first trusted in Christ,” and “*unto the praise of his glory*.”

GOD’S GLORY SEEN IN [Isa 43-45](#)

Dear reader, why do you serve God? Is it to gain favor with Him or is it because of justifying righteousness found in Christ Jesus? Remember that you are not made for your own self. You are to serve and glorify the God of all grace. While the Scriptures verify this point repeatedly, we shall only consider a few verses in [Isa 43-45](#). (I highly recommend that the reader make a careful study of [Isa 40-49](#).)

To understand the passages in Isaiah, we need an understanding of the context. Some consider Isaiah the Bible in miniature. The Bible has sixty-six books, while Isaiah has sixty-six chapters. There are thirty-nine books in the Old Testament and twenty-seven books in the New Testament. Correspondingly, Isaiah has two distinct sections. The first contains thirty-nine chapters and presents a distinctly Old Testament message. The second of twenty-seven chapters addresses themes central to the New Testament.

[Isa 40](#) proclaims the message of comfort and redemption found in Christ. The chapter also announces the ministry of John the Baptist, forerunner of the Messiah, whose ministry was the beginning of the New Testament gospel ([Mr 1:1-4](#)). Yet, the pivotal chapters in [Isa 40-66](#) is [Isa 53](#) which prophesies the sufferings of the Servant of Jehovah. [Isa 53:11b](#) states, “By his knowledge shall my righteous servant *justify many*, for he shall bear their iniquities.”

Though there is much more proof that [Isa 43-45](#) harmonizes with the New Testament doctrine justification, the above material is sufficient to establish for believers that relationship. Providentially, [Isa 53](#) is the center chapter of these twenty-seven chapters. Indeed, the gospel message of the justifying righteousness of Christ Jesus is in this chapter.

There are, of course, scoffers and unbelievers who maintain that Isaiah did not write both sections. Isaiah, they contend, wrote only chapters 1-39, while one or more other authors completed chapters 40-66. Many books disprove this foolishness. However, the definitive answer to this claim comes from the inspired Scriptures many years before any man ever questioned the unity of Isaiah. John quoted from [Isa 6](#) and [Isa 53](#) to the effect that Isaiah wrote both passages ([Joh 12:37-41](#)). In line with this, Jesus quoted from the first section of Isaiah ([Mt 13:14-15](#)) and read from the second section ([Lu 4:16-21](#)). This is Divine testimony that Isaiah wrote both sections. Curiously, in 1972 while on a tour in the Middle East I discussed these things one evening in Ashkelon with two Catholic priests. When I pressed the argument that Christ believed Isaiah wrote both sections, they responded that Jesus was ignorant of modern archaeological finds and that we are smarter than He was on such matters. This terminated our convocation according to [Pr 26:4](#). If one refuses to hear the Word of God, he will not hear though one came forth from the dead ([Lu 16:31](#)).

[Isa 43-45](#) falls within the portion of Isaiah's prophecy ([Isa 40-46](#)) where there is a "contrast between Jehovah and the idols, and between Israel and the heathen."[\[1\]](#)

In contrast to the sterility of idols Jehovah sets forth His divine power. Accordingly, B.H. Carroll entitled the subsection [Isa 43-45](#) as the "Free Grace of Jehovah Brings Redemption."[\[2\]](#)

As we review these chapters, keep in mind that these verses apply to all of God's people, not just to Israelites. In fact, the promises did not even apply to every Israelite, because the Scriptures caution that "they are not all Israel, which are of Israel" ([Ro 9:6b](#)). The Bible makes it plain that Gentiles are no more "strangers from the covenants of promise," but are "made nigh by the blood of Christ." Further, Scripture indicates that the "middle wall of partition" has been broken down and the promises given to the Israelites now include the Gentiles ([Eph 2:11-22](#)). So, all the promises of Isaiah apply in some sense to the people of God and to you in particular if you are a believer in Christ Jesus.

[Isa 43](#)

In [Isa 43](#) God urges His people not to be afraid in the midst of trials and afflictions. The Lord states that He is their God and that He is their Savior ([Isa 43:3](#)). However, those He saves and are called by His name, He “created” for His glory ([Isa 43:7](#)). Here it is clear that God loved and called the redeemed unto Himself for His glory. They were not redeemed primarily to be saved, nor to be lifted up to some high position. God brought them to salvation, justified them, for His glory.

In [Isa 43:10-12](#), we see the same theme:

“Ye are *my witnesses*, saith the Lord, and *my servant whom I have chosen*: that ye may *know* and *believe me*, and *understand* that I am he: before me there were no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord; and *beside me there is no saviour*. I have declared, and *have saved*, and have shewed, when there was no strange god among you: *therefore ye are my witnesses*, saith the Lord, that I am God.”

Here we see that God saved His people so that they would witness unto Him; that is, to glorify Him. Even in [Isa 43:14](#) the Lord declares Himself to be the Holy One of Israel, its redeemer. Again in verse 21, God declares “this people have I formed *for myself*; *they shall shew forth my praise*.” Lastly in this chapter we see in [Isa 43:25](#), “I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions *for mine own sake*, and will not remember thy sins.” Oh, glorious thought! The Lord of Glory, the Holy One of Israel, the Savior and Creator of His people has removed their sins! Why? Because it seemed good in His sight; that He might receive the glory and praise; that His name be glorified.

Regarding [Isa 43:25](#) Delitzsch commented aptly:

Jehovah Himself here announces the *sola gratia* and *sola fides*. We have adopted the rendering “I alone,” because the threefold repetition of the subject, “I, I, He is blotting out thy transgressions,” is intended to affirm that this blotting out of sin is so far from being in any way merited by Israel, that it is a sovereign act of His absolute freedom; and the expression “for my own sake,” that it has its foundation only in God, namely, in His absolute free grace, that movement of His love by which wrath is subdued.[\[3\]](#)

Then in [Isa 43:26](#), the Lord calls to Israel concerning her justification in an allusion to [Isa 1:18](#): “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” Again the observations of Delitzsch bear repeating:

Jehovah here challenges Israel to a formal trial. ... In such a trial Israel must lose, for Israel's self-righteousness rests upon sham righteousness, and this sham righteousness, when rightly examined, is but unrighteousness dripping with blood. It is taken for granted that this must be the result of the investigation. Israel is therefore worthy of death. Yet Jehovah will not treat Israel according to His retributive justice, but according to His free compassion. He will remit the punishment, and not only regard the sin as not existing, but change it into its very opposite. The reddest possible sin shall become, through His mercy, the purest white.[\[4\]](#)

Discussing the symbolism of the colors in [Isa 1:18](#), Delitzsch gives the following concerning the color white:

It is a deeply significant symbol of the act of justification. Jehovah offers to Israel an *actio forensis*, out of which it shall come forth justified by grace, although it has merited death on account of its sins. The righteousness, white as snow and wool, with which Israel comes forth, is a gift conferred upon it out of pure compassion, without being conditional upon any legal performance whatever.[\[5\]](#)

By this we see that Isaiah speaks of justification from the beginning and this, as in all of God's works, is essentially for the glory of the Lord.

[Isa 44](#)

[Isa 44:1](#) declares Israel to be God's chosen people. [Isa 44:6](#) sets forth "the Lord the King of Israel" as Israel's redeemer, a promise of salvation. (You should recall, that is valid not only for Israel as a nation but also for the children of God—elect believers in Christ—throughout the world in the every age.) Further, [Isa 44:21-23](#) explains why the Lord redeemed Israel in language reminiscent of the previous chapter: "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me, for I have redeemed thee." Here is God's justification of Israel. We also see in [Isa 44:23](#) that God justified Israel to glorify Himself: "Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and GLORIFIED HIMSELF IN ISRAEL."

Here is something about which to shout! Today when many shout and get excited about wealth and all kinds of physical and natural benefits, we hardly see anyone getting beside himself concerning the glorious truth of

redemption through the justifying righteousness of Christ. While the majority of prayers are full of petitions for natural benefits, I wish men would pray for an accurate understanding of justification. When have you heard someone pray for greater insight and understanding of the doctrine of justification? Regrettably, most of us have never heard such a petition. But if a sinner sees his sins and sees himself for what he really is; sees the Lord of Hosts, the Holy One of Israel, as his Redeemer; sees that this One Who is the first and the last has formed him from the womb (cf. [Isa 44:24](#)); sees that this One Who alone is God has justified him; then he will shout and sing praises unto the God of all grace. Yea, his life will be ordered for the primary purpose of glorifying Jehovah. May the God of mercy give both reader and writer a greater appreciation for the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

O for a heart to praise my God,
 A heart from sin set free,
 A heart that always feels Thy blood,
 So freely spilt for me![\[6\]](#)

[Isa 45](#)

Still concerned to show that the primary purpose of justification is to glorify God, I wish now to consider [Isa 45:20-25](#). In this passage we find that the purposes of God are not limited to Israel alone, but also extend to the Gentiles.

Notice that in [Isa 45:20-21](#), the Lord contrasts Himself to the false gods. Jehovah makes the claim (as He does again and again in these chapters) that “there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me.” In [Isa 45:22](#), the Lord declares that salvation is found in Him, not only for Israel but even to the “ends of the earth.” In [Isa 45:24](#) He presses the point by asserting that righteousness is in the Lord. Ultimately “every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear” and “confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the *glory* of God the Father” (Cf. [Isa 45:24](#) and [Php 2:10-11](#)). Those whose hearts the Lord opens will bow, swear, and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord in this life and trust in Him for their salvation ([Joh 6:44-45](#); [10:27-28](#); [Heb 8:10-11](#)). But “all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed” ([Isa 45:24b](#)). Even the wicked will have to bow in the day of judgment and with detestation and disgust admit that Jesus is Lord. And praise be unto God, as [Php 2:11](#) states, this too is “*to the glory of God the Father!*” But the righteous, the seed of Israel that are justified ([Isa 45:25](#)), “shall glory.” They

shall freely render praise and adoration unto the Holy One of Israel, the only God and Savior. In this, too, God shall be glorified.

Note that “the seed of Israel” refers to the children of God. Paul clarifies this in his epistle to the churches of Galatia. He points out that the “blessed with faithful Abraham” are those that have faith ([Ga 3:7,9](#)). This promise did not stop with Abraham; it extended on to Isaac and Jacob (Israel) and was confirmed in Jacob. ([1Ch 16:16-17](#)). Take note of Leupold’s comment on the word righteousness in [Isa 45:24](#):

The aspect of the word “righteousness” that is here under consideration is the righteousness that justifies, even as this appears in Holy Writ from [Ge 15:6](#) on. And where faith grasps this righteousness a new hidden source of “strength” opens up that man can appropriate in no other way.[\[7\]](#)

These few passages show clearly to Bible believers that the chief purpose of justification is to glorify God. Yes, the believer benefits greatly from his being justified, but first God is to have His glory.

Dear reader, have you bowed to the Lord Jesus Christ? Have you despised your righteousnesses as nothing but filthy rags (cf. [Isa 64:6](#))? Have you counted all things as dung that you might be found in Christ Jesus and His righteousness (cf. [Php 3:7-8](#))? If so, then, you know the exceeding great joy that ever flows forth from your soul in praise to God. But, if not, then you shall be broken by the all glorious God and Saviour:

... when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glow of his power; When he shall come to be *glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe* (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day ([2Th 1:7-10](#)).

If you are heavy laden with guilt and sin ([Mt 11:28-30](#)), thirsty ([Isa 55:1](#)) and hungering after righteousness, then flee to Christ. There, and only there, can you find relief. For it is “by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses” ([Ac 13:39](#)).

Foot Notes Chapter Three

- [1] Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on The Prophecies of Isaiah*, trans. James Martin (n.p., 1887; repr., Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. 1967). vol. 2, p. 129.
- [2] B. H. Carroll, *An Interpretation of the English Bible*, vol. 7, *The Prophets of the Assyrian Period*, ed. J. B. Cranfill and J. W. Crowder (n.p.: Broaden Press, 1948; repr. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973), p. 188.
- [3] Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on The Prophecies of Isaiah*, p. 200.
- [4] Ibid., vol. 1, p. 98
- [5] Ibid, p. 99.
- [6] Charles Wesley, “O For A Heart To Praise My God,” *Old School Hymnal*—No 10 (Atlanta, GA: Old School Hymnal Co., Inc., 1964), Song No. 24.
- [7] H. C. Lcupold, *Exposition of Isaiah* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1968, 1971), vol. 2, p 133.

CHAPTER 4 THE TIME OF JUSTIFICATION

Having established the meaning of justification and its purpose, I will now consider the question of when justification takes place. This is a very difficult enterprise which will stretch theology and human logic to their greatest capacities. My purpose is to proclaim the Word of the Lord and to interpret properly and reverently the Word of Truth ([2Ti 2:15](#)). In such matters, of course, we must come to God’s Word as Moses approached the burning bush conscious that we are standing on holy ground ([Ex 3:4-6](#)).

As to when justification takes place, there are four possible instances:

1. as an eternal and transcendent act of God outside of time and history.
2. as an act coincidental with the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.
3. as a declarative act to and upon the conscience of a believer in time at the moment of true saving faith.
4. as a notification to men and angels at the final judgment.

THREE IMPORTANT POINTS

Before examining these alternatives, one should remember three very important facts. *First*, justification is a legal (forensic, judicial) term. This means that justification does not affect a person’s character. Justification only

declares a person to be what he is. It does not make a man righteous; it merely pronounces him to be righteous on valid grounds.

Second, all the elect are declared righteous at one time or period. This includes past, present, and future children of God—Old Testament saints and New Testament saints alike. God does not justify His people at different times. (Remember, “It God that justifieth” [Ro 8:33b](#)).

And *third*, all are justified the same way. God did not justify the Old Testament saints by the law and New Testament saints by grace. No, God declares all of His people not guilty the same way. No Bible believer will deny this. All stand on an equal footing in their salvation.

Now let us see what Scripture says about the moment at which God justifies His people.

NOT AT THE JUDGMENT

First, it is evident, based on the sense of Scripture, that justification will not take place at the final judgment. [Ro 3:24](#), for example, states, “being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” Note that “*being justified*” is *present tense*. Since the saints at Rome (and by implication all other believers as well) were declared to be justified at that particular time, then it is clear that justification is not delayed until the last judgment. Further, [Ro 3:28](#) says, “Therefore we conclude that a man is *justified* by faith without the deeds of the law.” Or we find in [Ro 8:33](#) that, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that *justifieth*.” These last two passages are likewise in the present tense. But this is not the only tense in which we find this word. In [Ro 5:1](#); [8:30](#), the believer’s justification is expressed in the past tense:^[1] “Therefore being *justified* (literally *having been justified*) by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;” and again, “Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also *justified*: and whom he *justified*, them he also glorified.” Since these passages are in the past tense, justification must have been prior to the time at which Paul wrote. Therefore, these verses prove conclusively that God does not delay justification until the final judgment.

It is true that the elect will be declared not guilty, righteous, or just on the day of judgment according to [Re 22:11](#). But this passage affirms that justification is prior to that day. How sad if the saints had to wait until the day of final judgment to learn whether or not God would declare them to be not

guilty (justified). Oh precious thought—the believer *now* knows his righteousness is in the Lord Jesus!

NOT AT FAITH

Second, justification does not occur at the time of faith. We are justified by the redemptive work of Jesus Christ ([Ro 3:23-26](#)). He was made sin for us “that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” ([2Co 6:18](#)). Since justification is a legal declaration before God that one is righteous, then faith does not cause justification. One must be legally constituted righteous and just by God before he can receive this fact by faith. Faith *does not* create! Faith is the hand of the soul that receives the redemptive work of Christ whereby one is justified. John Owen precisely described the relationship between justification and faith:

Faith is that act of the soul whereby convinced sinners, ready otherwise to perish, do look unto Christ as he was made a propitiation for their sins; and who so do “shall not perish, but have everlasting life.” He is, therefore, the object of our faith....

The nature of justifying faith, with respect unto that exercise of it whereby we are justified, consisteth in *the heart’s approbation of the way of justification and salvation of sinners by Jesus Christ proposed in the gospel, as proceeding from the grace, wisdom, and love of God, with its acquiescency therein as unto its own concernment and condition.*[\[2\]](#)

Faith (like works, [Jas 2:14-16](#)) is the fruit or evidence of justification and not the cause.[\[3\]](#) This is why the justified have faith, but faith *per se* does not justify. On this point John Gill aptly remarked:

Faith is the evidence, not the cause of justification, and if it is an evidence, that of which it is an evidence must exist before it. *Faith is indeed the evidence of things not seen*; but it is not the evidence of things that are not: what the eye is in the body, that faith is in the soul. The eye, by virtue of its visive faculty beholds sensible objects, but does not produce them; and did they not previously exist, could not behold them. We see the sun shining in its brightness, but did it not exist before, it could not be visible to us; the same observation will hold good in ten thousand other instances. Faith is the hand which receives the blessing of justification from the Lord, and righteousness, by which the soul is justified from the God of its salvation; but then the blessing must exist before faith can receive it.[\[4\]](#)

The Scriptures declare that “by him (Christ) all that believe *are justified* from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses” ([Ac 13:39](#)). Commenting on this verse, Gill states: ([Gill: Ac 13:39](#), **And those that believe in Christ**)

And those that believe in Christ with the heart unto righteousness, are openly and manifestatively justified in their own consciences, and can claim their interest in it, and have the comfort of it, as well as they were before secretly justified in the mind of God, and in their Head and Representative Jesus Christ.[\[5\]](#)

Even nature teaches that cause comes before effect. Therefore, justification must be prior to faith. The man in jail may believe that he is not condemned by the law, but his belief is not based on evidence until the court has pronounced him so. I may believe that I have a million dollars in the bank, but I have no reason to do so until the banker presents the receipt stating the fact. Belief will not cause the court to pronounce the victim not guilty nor produce the million dollars. So likewise justification must be a reality before one can have faith that his sins are “blotted out.”

It is true that the word “faith” sometimes stands for the *object of faith*, which is the Person and work of Christ Jesus. [Ga 3:23](#) is one place where the word faith is referring to the object of faith. John Brown maintains that it is the object of faith intended here. He declares:

By faith, I apprehend we are to understand, not the *act of believing*, but the *revelation believed*, as in our language we call the article which a man believes his creed, his belief, his faith. The expression literally rendered is, *the faith*, and looks back to the phrase, *faith of Christ*, in the preceding verse. “Before the faith of Christ came,” is just equivalent to, ‘before the Christian revelation was given.’[\[6\]](#)

But can “the Christian revelation” and Christ be separated? We agree with Matthew Poole here:

Before faith came; before the covenant of grace, or the doctrine of the gospel, or Christ himself, was revealed.[\[7\]](#) ([Poole: Ga 3:23](#), CTRL+F, Search **Before faith came; before the covenant**)

The three phrases are like the Trinity—one and inseparable. But we will study faith in detail in Chapter VII.

There are many verses which definitely declare how it is that one is justified. First, let us look at [Ro 3:24](#): “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” Notice that justification is *by*

grace through redemption that is in Christ Jesus. If justification is by faith as a means or cause, then, Paul was in error when he penned this. But no violence is done if justification is considered to be by faith when faith means Christ and His work. Also the verse teaches that our justification is *freely* given and not by any condition on our part. This word *freely* (dwrean) is defined by Thayer as *a gift: ...freely, for naught, gratis, gratuitously, etc.* [8] It is the same word used in [Joh 15:25](#) where our Lord quoted from the Psalms concerning Himself, “They hated me *without a cause*.” Just as there was nothing in Christ for the people to hate him, so likewise is nothing in (nor of) us whereby God should justify us—no, not even faith.

Again in [Ro 5:16-17](#), we see that justification is a free gift. Yes, it is graciously given. But if justification is given on a condition of faith, it is not free. It cannot be free and conditional at the same time. The two are mutually exclusive of each other. The one is of grace, the other is of works. Justification cannot be by grace and works ([Ro 11:6](#)). [Tit 3:7](#) declares that justification is “by his (God’s) grace.” How can justification be by *grace (freely given)* and by *faith as a condition* at the same time? The Scriptures affirm constantly that this cannot be.

[Ro 5:9](#) states, “Much more then, being *now justified by his blood*, we shall be saved from wrath through him.” There is no contradiction in being *justified freely, by his grace*, as a *free gift, by his blood*, nor *by faith as the object*. If faith is the condition, instrument, or medium of justification, then, the Scriptures do not agree.

While we maintain that it is faith as the object which justifies, we shall wait until later to discuss this in detail. The above should be enough to satisfy any Bible believer that justification does not originate nor come to be at faith.

NOT AT THE CRUCIFIXION

Third, it is also clear that justification was not at the crucifixion. [Ro 4:2](#) indicates that Old Testament believers were justified prior to Christ’s death: “For if Abraham *were justified* by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.” The point is that Abraham in his lifetime was justified. Abraham was justified prior to Christ’s shedding His blood and making expiation for Abraham’s sins. And it is certain that all those saints prior to Christ’s atoning sacrifice were justified as was Abraham.

In making this claim I am not minimizing the significance or historical reality of the death of Christ. Without the Person and work of Jesus Christ there could not be any justification. Even [Ro 3:24](#) maintains that justification

is “*through the redemption* that is in Christ Jesus.” The death of Christ (and by this I mean the whole Person and work of Christ) is the foundation of justification.^[9] Notice two passages, [2Co 5:21](#) and [Jer 23:6b](#).

[2Co 5:21](#) states, “For he (God) hath made him (Christ) to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” George Smeaton has accurately defined the phrase *the righteousness of God* as being:

... descriptive of the finished work of Christ, as approved at the divine tribunal, and the meritorious cause of our acceptance....

The term righteousness ... does not in any passage mean the state of justification. If the state of justification does not proceed on an underlying righteousness as its basis, we are lost in the mists of uncertainty.^[10]

As Smeaton indicates, this is the righteousness whereby we are declared just or not guilty. Therefore, faith is not that which justifies. [Jer 23:6b](#) also makes this point clearly: “and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.” Oh, the glorious name *Jehovah-tsidkenu!* Regarding this phrase we can do no better than to quote Gill: ([Gill: Jer 23:6](#), **for all the salvation and**)

... for all the salvation and safety of the Lord’s people are owing to the righteousness of Christ; the effect of which is peace, quietness, and assurance for ever: *and this is his name whereby he shall be called*, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS; because he is the Author of righteousness to his people, and is only so; no creature could be the author of it; unrighteous man cannot be the author of righteousness; and the righteousness of an angel is of no advantage to man; and indeed neither of the other divine Persons is the Lord our righteousness; for though they are both Jehovah, the Father and the Spirit, yet not our righteousness: the Father appointed and sent Christ to work it out; he approved and accepted of it, when wrought out; and imputes it to his people, but is not the author of it: so the Spirit convinces of the need of it; reveals it, and brings it near; works faith to receive it; and applies it, pronounces a person justified by it; but is not the author of it; that the Son of God only is; who is become so by his obedience to the law, and by bearing the penalty of it; and who, having been delivered for our offenses, rose again for our justification: and this righteousness, which he has wrought out to the satisfaction of law and justice, becomes *ours*; it being designed for us, and wrought out for us,

by a free gift of it is given to us; ours through the imputation of it to us by the Father, and in virtue of our union to Christ, and interest in him; and through the application of it to us by the Spirit of God; who puts it upon us, and clothes us with it, and enables us to lay hold upon it, and claim interest in it; and which may be meant by Christ being *called our righteousness*; for the meaning is, not that he should commonly go by this name; but only that he should be that unto us which it signifies; and that we should by faith, even every true Israelite, every believer, can him our righteousness; say that we have righteousness in him; make mention of that continually, and express our desires to be found alone in it; for so the words may be rendered, *and this is the name whereby he shall call him*, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS; and a sweet name to a sensible sinner it is; to one that has felt the guilt of sin in his conscience; seen his need of a righteousness, and the worth of it. That the Messiah is here is meant is acknowledged by the Jews, ancient and modern.[\[11\]](#)

Dear reader, is this name sweet to your soul? Do you know what it is to feel the guilt of your sins in your conscience? Have you ever seen your need of a righteousness found outside of yourself? Oh, how we find so few today who have felt the guilt of their sins! Many are sorry for being caught, but few, we fear, know what it is to weep in their closet. Because of modern preaching, those of you who may weep do not know the balm of Gilead ([Jer 8:22](#)) that is sufficient to heal the hurt of the people of God. If your sins have risen up before you as Sinai, flee to the source of righteousness, Jesus Christ. Seek Him and do not let Him go, as Jacob of old, until He blesses you with the peace of justifying righteousness (cf. [Ge 32:24-28](#)). Jesus declared that “him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” ([Joh 6:37b](#)). He has never turned away one that was truly repentant. And blessed be His gracious name, He never will disregard one who flees to Him. But if you are satisfied with yourself, and sin does not bother your soul, then you stand on slippery ground. You are disregarding the only source of righteousness and are rejecting the counsel of God against yourself (cf. [Lu 7:30](#)). Jesus said no one could go to God but by Him ([Joh 14:6](#)) and that to know Him is to know the Father ([Joh 14:7](#)). He also asserted that if you hate Him, you also hate the Father ([Joh 15:23](#)). Do you love Christ? If so, then, you are keeping His commandments ([Joh 14:21](#)). Do you keep His commandments? Oh, dear reader, if you do not know the answers to these questions, then how can you retire this day without seeking to know the truth? Only God can give you the

answers. May God bless writer and reader with greater awareness of the importance of being honest with ourselves before the all-seeing eye of God.

Though faith is important and by it the believer receives the justifying righteousness of Christ, it does not justify. To this, all standards of orthodoxy agree. Look again at the London Confession of Faith of 1689: “Not by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their righteousness” (in agreement with the Westminster Confession and the Savoy Declaration). Remember, it is God that justifies ([Ro 8:33](#)). Modern preachers cry for man to get right with God, but man cannot *get right* with God. Only God can make man right. Anything other than this is filthy rags ([Isa 64:6](#)), fig leaves ([Ge 3:7](#)), and even dung ([Php 3:8](#)). Again, let it be said that *it is God that justifies!*

ETERNAL JUSTIFICATION

Having examined three of the possible times of justification, we have seen that it did not take place at the judgment, the crucifixion, or at belief. This brings us to the *fourth* position. It is the writer’s belief that justification is an *eternal* act of God[\[12\]](#) or what Gill regarded as *active justification*. Of this, he writes that it:

... is an act internal and eternal, taken up in the divine mind from eternity, and is an immanent, abiding one in it; it is, as Dr. Ames expresses it, “a sentence conceived in the divine mind, by the decree of justifying.” Now ... as God’s will to elect, is the election of his people, so his will to justify them, is the justification of them; as it is an immanent act in God, it is an act of his grace towards them, is wholly without them, entirely resides in the divine mind, and lies in his estimating, accounting, and constituting them righteous, through the righteousness of his Son; and, as such, did not first commence in time, but from eternity.[\[13\]](#)

Also Goodwin acknowledges this fact concerning justification as an eternal act:

The first progress or step was at the first covenant-making and striking of the bargain from all eternity. We may say of all spiritual blessings in Christ what is said of Christ, that their ‘goings forth are from everlasting.’ Justified then we were when first elected, though not in our own persons, yet in our Head, as he had our persons then given him, and we came to have a being and interest in him. ‘You are in Christ,’ saith the apostle, and so we had the promise made of all

spiritual blessings in him, and he took all the deeds of all in our name; so that in Christ we were ‘blessed with an spiritual blessings,’ [Eph 1:3](#); as we are blessed with all other, so with this also, that we were justified then in Christ. To this purpose is that place, [Ro 8:30](#), where he speaks of all those blessings which are applied to us after redemption, as calling, justification, glorification, as of things already past and done, even then when he did predestinate us: ‘Whom he bath predestinated, them he bath called, them he hath justified, them he hath glorified.’...

But these two acts of justification are wholly out of us, immanent acts in God; and though they concern us, and are *towards us*, yet are not acts of God *upon us*, they being performed towards us, not as actually existing in ourselves, but only as existing in our Head, who covenanted for us, and represented us: so as though by these acts we are estated into a right title to justification, yet the benefit and the possession of that estate we have not without a farther act to be passed upon us, whereby we have not as existing in our head only, as a feoffee in trust for us, as children under age, this excellent grace given us, but are to be in our own persons, though still through Christ, possessed of it, and to have all the deeds and evidences committed to the custody and apprehension of our faith....[\[14\]](#)

I trust that the reader will bear with me while I give another lengthy quote from Abraham Kuyper:

It is also evident that the sinner’s justification need not wait until he is converted, nor until he has become conscious, nor even until he is born. This could not be so if justification depended upon something within him. Then he could not be justified before he existed and had done something. But if justification is not bound to anything in him, then this whole limitation must disappear, and the Lord our God be sovereignly free to render this justification at any moment that He pleases. Hence the Sacred Scripture reveals justification as an *eternal* act of God, *i.e.*, an act which is not limited by any moment in the human existence. It is for this reason that the child of God, seeking to penetrate into that glorious and delightful reality of his justification, does not feel himself limited to the moment of his conversion, but feels that this blessedness flows to him from the eternal depths of the hidden life of God.

It should therefore openly be confessed, and without any abbreviation, that justification does not occur when we become

conscious of it, but that, on the contrary, our justification was decided from eternity in the holy judgment-seat of our God.

There is undoubtedly a moment in our life when for the first time justification is *published* to our consciousness; but let us be careful to distinguish justification itself from its publication. Our Christian name was selected for and applied to us long before we, with clear consciousness, knew it as our name, and altho there was a moment in which it became a living reality to us and was called out for the first time in the ear of our consciousness, yet no man will be so foolish as to imagine that it was then that he actually received that name.

And so it is here. There is a certain moment wherein that justification becomes to our consciousness a living fact; but in order to become a living fact, it must have existed before. It does not spring *from* our consciousness, but it is mirrored in it, and hence must have being and stature in itself.[\[15\]](#)

Though I could have cited many other sound men who maintain this position, I quoted these three because they clearly support the position of eternal justification, and they show that my position is not “some new thing” to excite someone with the spirit of the Athenians ([Ac 17-21](#)).

Let us look at [Ro 8:30](#) concerning this subject. The verse states, “Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” This verse recites successive acts, as they appear to us, or as we experience them. But this verse is not teaching an order of successive acts of God. Shedd argues:

The future glorification of the believer is designated by the aorist, as his justification, calling, predestination, and election have been; because *all of these divine acts are eternal, and therefore simultaneous for the divine mind.*[\[16\]](#)

This was not any transient thought of Shedd’s because elsewhere he maintains this same truth:

The one eternal act of justification is *executed* successively in time, as the Divine decree is.... “God doth from all eternity decree to justify all the elect; nevertheless, they are not [consciously] justified, until the Holy Spirit doth in due time actually apply Christ unto them.”[\[17\]](#)

Alford states the following concerning [Ro 8:30](#):

... and whom He called, them He also justified (the Apostle, remember, is speaking entirely of *God's acts* on behalf of the believer: he says nothing *now* of that faith, through which this justification is, *on his part*, obtained): **but whom He justified, them He also glorified** (He did not merely, in His premundane decree, acquit them of sin, but also *clothe them with glory*: the aorist *edoxasen* being used, as the other aorist, to imply the completion in the divine counsel of all these, which are to us, in the state of time, so many successive steps,—simultaneously and irrevocably. So we have the perfect in [Joh 17:10,22](#)).[\[18\]](#)

JUSTIFICATION IN LIGHT OF GOD'S NATURE

To understand this point, we need to examine the nature of God. *First*, let us consider God's eternity. Simply stated, eternity means having no beginning nor ending. It suggests that from a divine viewpoint there are no successive moments. Note in this lengthy quotation from Charnock the dimensions of God's eternity in relation to time:

Though the eternity of God be one permanent state without succession, yet the Spirit of God, suiting himself to the weakness of our conception, divides it into two parts, one past before the foundation of the world, another to come after the destruction of the world, as he did exist before all ages, and as he did exist after many ages....

God is of an eternal duration. The eternity of God is the foundation on the stability the covenant, the great comfort of a Christian....

The notion of eternity is difficult, as Austin said of time:[\[19\]](#) If no man will ask me the question what time is, I know well enough what it is; but if any ask me what it is, I know not how to explain it. So may I say of eternity; it is easy in the word pronounced, but hardly understood, and more hardly expressed; it is better expressed by negative than positive words.

Eternity is a perpetual duration, which hath neither beginning nor end. Time hath both. Those things we say are in time, that have beginning, grow up by degrees, have succession of parts. Eternity is contrary to time, and is therefore a permanent and immutable state, a perfect possession office without any variation. It comprehends in itself all years, all ages, all periods of ages. It never begins! It endures after every duration of time, and never ceaseth. It doth as much outrun time as it went before the beginning of it. Time supposeth something before it, but there can be nothing before eternity; it were not then eternity.

Time hath a continual succession; the former time passeth away, and another succeeds; the last year is not this year, nor this year the next. We must conceive of eternity contrary to the notion of time. As the nature of time consists in the succession of parts, so the nature of eternity in an infinite immutable duration.^[20] Eternity and time differ as the sea and rivers; the sea never changes place, and is always one water, but the rivers glide along, and are swallowed up in the sea; so is time by eternity.

Eternity is a negative attribute, and is a denying of God any measure of time, as immensity is a denying of him any bounds of place, as immensity is the diffusion of his essence, so eternity is the duration of his essence; and when we say God is eternal, we exclude from him all possibility of beginning and ending, all flux and change. As the essence of God cannot be bounded by any place, so it is not to be limited by any time; as it is his immensity to be everywhere, so it is his eternity to be always. ... His duration is as endless as his essence is boundless; he always was and always will be, and will no more have an end than he had a beginning; and this is an excellency belonging to the Supreme Being.^[21] As his essence comprehends all beings and exceeds them, and his immensity surmounts all places, so his eternity comprehends all times, all durations, and infinitely excels them.^[22]

Many passages can be quoted to prove the eternity of God, we will only give one, [Ps 90:2](#). “Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.” By this we see that God “was before the world, yet he neither began nor ends.”

Since all the elect are declared righteous at one time, a second consideration relative to God’s eternal justification is God’s omnipresence. Again, comments by Charnock on [Jer 23:24](#)—“Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord”—illuminate this divine quality:

As eternity is the perfection whereby he hath neither beginning nor end, immutability is the perfection whereby he hath neither increase nor diminution, so immensity or omnipresence is that whereby he hath neither bounds nor limitation. As he is in all time, yet so as to be above time, so is he in all places, yet so as to be above limitation by any place. It was a good expression of a heathen to illustrate this, that God is a sphere or circle, whose center is everywhere and circumference

nowhere. His meaning was, that the essence of God was indivisible, *i.e.* could not be divided. It cannot be said, here and there the lines of it terminate; it is like a line drawn out in infinite spaces, that no point can be conceived where its length and breadth ends. The sea is a vast mass of waters, yet to that it is said, ‘Hitherto shalt thou go and no further.’ But it cannot be said of God’s essence Hitherto it reaches, and no further; here it is, and there it is not. It is plain that God is thus immense, because he is infinite; we have reason and Scripture to assent to it, though we cannot conceive it. We know that God is eternal, though eternity is too great to be measured by the short line of a created understanding. We cannot conceive the vastness and glory of the heavens, much less that which is so great as to fill heaven and earth, yea ‘not to be contented in the heaven of heavens,’ I Kings viii 27.[\[23\]](#)

So, God is not merely eternal but also omnipresent. That is, using the language of time to express that which is timeless, God is omnipresent from eternity past to eternity future. The Lord told Moses on the mount that His name was I AM ([Ex 3:14](#)). Our Lord declared, Before Abraham was, “I am” ([Joh 8:58](#)). Everything (past, present, and future) is *now* with God. With Him there is no yesterday, nor tomorrow. It is now! He is ***I AM!***

Oh, wonder of wonders! Such thoughts are beyond our comprehension, yet they are true. Neither human wisdom nor logic, but instead the clear teaching of the Word of God reveals the full extent of the greatness of Jehovah, particularly His power and timeless existence.

[Ro 8:30](#) presents predestination, calling, justification and glorification in the past tense and as a cluster of events that stand or fall together. They are not cited as successive experiential conditions, even though calling and justification might fit in such a scheme. But clearly glorification does not fit an experiential scheme and must be considered as a reality only in the eternal perspective of God. In as much as God’s acts are timeless from His vantage point, we must regard justification as an eternal act of God, just as glorification is said in [Ro 8:30](#) to be a reality even though experientially we have not yet realized it. From God’s viewpoint, however, it is already an accomplished fact.

To illustrate this point in another way Jesus Christ died approximately two thousand years ago and removed all of the sins of the elect. But one might also ask “How could Christ remove sins which had not yet been committed?” Or, “How could Christ have removed sins then which I shall commit tomorrow, next week, or next year?” In human terms this is apparently impossible, but

thanks be unto God, His ways and thoughts are as far above our ways and thoughts as the heavens are above the earth ([Isa 55:8](#)). With the omnipresent God, Christ's death atoned for our sins committed in time before and after the actual event of crucifixion. This is nearly incomprehensible. Yet, it illustrates that justification similarly may be an accomplished event in God before it is an experiential reality for us. Just as Christ was from all eternity a Lamb slain ([Re 13:8](#)), so likewise He bore our sins, an event from God's perspective that is always "now"—"Before Abraham was, I am."

Indeed, as we contemplate this, we should proceed carefully and reverently. Yet I hope God will bless both reader and writer and sanctify our thoughts about this blessed truth to His honor and glory. He alone is to receive the praise. And as we continue to search the glorious mysteries of the work of God in justifying sinners, we need to look again at this from the other side of the cross.

Approximately two thousand years prior to the death of Christ, God told Abraham to leave Ur in faith and obedience to the Word of God (Abraham had faith in Ur; see [Heb 11:8](#).) Abraham believed the testimony of God concerning Christ Jesus. Listen to [Joh 8:56](#): "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and saw it, and was glad." Abraham was justified ([Ro 4:2](#)), pronounced not guilty, and treated as if he had never sinned. Now two questions are raised, "How could God declare Abraham not guilty when as yet his sins were not removed by the blood of Christ?" and, "How could Abraham have received justification by faith prior to the sins being removed 'as far as the east is from the west'?" ([Ps 103:12](#)). Normally, as man thinks, the guilty cannot go free unless the debt is paid. The sinner cannot be declared not guilty unless he has no sins. And when we understand the eternal God working His purposes omnipresently, then, and only then, do we begin correctly to discern justification.

Such truths should constantly humble the sinner at the feet of the thrice holy God. "Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!" ([Ps 107:15](#)). Here we see [Ro 8:30](#) describes God's wonderful works to His people. While calling, justification, and glorification come to us successively, with God they are simultaneous, because God is I AM. All is now with Him.

I trust the reader will benefit from this simple examination of justification even though it is sometimes difficult from a human perspective to grasp how an event could always be a truth or a reality in God, but not yet have happened in history and in our experience. Remember what is impossible with man is

possible with God. Everything is *now* with God. My sins were there at Christ's death and so were Abraham's. *All sins* of all of the elect of God were at Calvary. **ALL** of the *sins* of the people of God were removed at the crucifixion. Christ always stood as a LAMB slain from eternity ([Re 13:8](#)). He was not slain until He was crucified. Yet, legally before God He was slain before the creation of the world. Christ was *always* our SURETY. The sheep of God have always been viewed as in Christ. Listen to the words of Arthur W. Pink:

However, difficult it be for us to grasp, it is important we should recognize that God's eternal decree gave the elect a super-creation subsistence before Him, so that they were capable of being loved and of receiving a grant of grace. In other words, in God's eternal thoughts and forviews, the elect were conceived and contemplated by Him in the Divine mind as real entities in a state of pure creaturehood, above and beyond any consideration of the fall. Even then they were "Blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ" and "accepted in the beloved" ([Eph 1:3,6](#))....

"Behold I and the children whom the Lord hath given me" ([Isa 8:18](#)). Such were "sons" *before* God sends forth the Holy Spirit into their hearts ([Ga 4:6](#)); they were "children" while "scattered abroad" *before* the Redeemer became incarnate ([Heb 2:14](#)). The elect were "children" *from* all eternity and decreed to be so *unto* all eternity. They did not lose their sonship by the fall, neither by any corruption derived from that fall in their nature. "Children" they continued, *though* sinful children, and as such, justly exposed to wrath. Nevertheless, this relationship could not be revoked by any after-acts in time: united to Christ from all eternity, they were always one with Him. It is a remarkable fact that never once has the Holy Spirit used the prepositional form "into Christ" with reference to God's *election* of the Church although *eis* occurs in the epistles over six hundred times; it is always in "(Gk. *en*) Christ," because the Church was *never out of Christ*!...

How this exposes the makeshift compromise of sublapsarians![\[24\]](#)

In conclusion I repeat that I am not denying justification at the judgment. It is true that the redeemed will be declared not guilty before men and angels at that time. And, I also do not deny that the believer receives justification at faith. Nor do I deny that the elect were justified in the Person and work of Christ. Scriptures are too clear to deny such teachings. But my objective is to

maintain the truth of the Scriptures that justification is an eternal act that originated in God. This is as real and certain as the other truths of justification. May we rejoice in the fact that our salvation *via* the justifying righteousness of Christ Jesus was not an afterthought with God in any way. We should continually praise and adore the eternal God that the justification of His people has always been in Christ our legal Head for the glory of Jehovah. May both reader and writer exclaim with the psalmist, “Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me bless his holy name” ([Ps 103:1](#)).

Foot Notes Chapter Four

[1] The word “justified” in these verses is in the aorist tense in the Greek. Though the aorist is considered by some as point action without reference to time, it is considered by others to include past time. See H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, (Toronto: The Macmillan Company, 1957), pp. 194-195.

[2] John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold (London: Johnstone & Hunter, 1850-1853; repr., London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1965), vol. 5, pp. 91, 93.

[3] Faith is a fruit of the Spirit ([Ga 5:22](#)) and the gift of God ([Eph 2:8](#)). When one believes in the finished work of Christ, it is because he already has life and is represented in Christ Jesus. God does not give His Spirit and faith to a person who is not under the mediatorial work of Christ. Therefore, faith is an evidence that Christ is one's Surety.

[4] John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts* (London: T. Smith, 1814; repr., Streamwood, IL: Primitive Baptist Library, 1981), vol. 2, p. 478.

[5] John Gill, *An Exposition of the New Testament* (Ireland: Bonmahon Industrial Printing School, 1851; repr., Atlanta, GA: Turner Lassetter, 1954), vol. 1, p. 905.

[6] John Brown, *An Exposition of the Epistle to the Galatians* (repr., Marshallton, Delaware: Sovereign Grace Publishers, 1970), p. 171.

[7] Matthew Poole, *A Commentary on the Holy Bible* (repr., McLean, VA: MacDonald Publishing Company, n. d.), vol. 3, p. 651.

[8] Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1967), p. 161.

[9] Though the elect were “objectively” justified when Christ finished His work, we are here showing that justification was prior to His death.

[10] George Smeaton, *Atonement According to the Apostles* (repr., Grand Rapids: Sovereign Grace Publishers, n.d.), pp. 52, 55.

[11] John Gill, *An Exposition of The Old Testament* (Ireland: Bonmahon Industrial Printing School, 1851; repr., Atlanta, GA: Turner Lassetter, 1954), vol. 4, p. 105.

[12] For a discussion concerning the doctrine of eternal justification suggesting the eternality of matter see Appendix A. ([Justify 13 Appendix A \(An Objection of Eternal Justification Considered\)](#))

[13] John Gill, *Body of Divinity* (London: n.n., 1839; repr., Atlanta, GA: Turner Lassetter, 1965), p. 203.

[14] Thomas Goodwin, *The Object and Acts of Justifying Faith* (repr., Marshallton, DE: The National Foundation for Christian Education, n. d.), pp. 135, 137.

[15] Abraham Kuyper, *Work of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics, n.d.) pp. 190-191.

[16] William G. T. Shedd, *A Critical and Doctrinal Commentary of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans* (n.p.: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1879; repr., Grand Rapids Zondervan Publishing House, 1967), pp. 266. (Emphasis mine.)

[17] William G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology* (n.p., 1888; repr., Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1969), vol. 2, p. 546. (Shedd’s quote is from the Westminster Confession on the subject of Justification. The word “consciously” was put in brackets by Shedd.)

[18] Henry Alford, *The Greek Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1958,1968), vol. 2, p. 399.

[19] Consul. Lib. ii. Confes. 15.

[20] Moulin. Cor. i., Ser. 3, p. 52.

[21] Crellius, de Deo, cap. xvii. p. 41.

[22] Stephen Charnock, *The Existence and Attributes of God* (repr., Evansville, IN: The Sovereign Grace Book Club, n.d.), pp. 71-73. The quote ended with the following footnote: Lingend, tom. ii. p. 496.

[23] Ibid., pp. 147-148.

[24] Arthur W. Pink, *Spiritual Union and Communion* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1971), pp. 55-56, 60.

CHAPTER 5 THE GROUND OF JUSTIFICATION THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

Many passages of Scripture, including [Ro 1:16-17](#); [3:21-22](#); [10:3-6](#); [2Co 5:21](#); [Php 3:9](#); and [2Pe 1:1](#), declare that the *ground* or *cause* of justification is the *Person and work of Christ*, or *the righteousness of God*. There are at least four erroneous ways to interpret the phrase *the righteousness of God* as it relates to justification. They are: (1) it refers to the attribute of God, (2) the Arminian concept that the righteousness is faith exercised by the sinner; (3) the Roman Catholics claim that the righteous refers to works done by grace after regeneration; (4) the legalist view, which asserts that this righteousness is composed of works performed in obedience to the law of God. Since these are erroneous views, we will not consider them in detail, but instead expose their fallacies as we outline the Scriptural definition of *the righteousness of God*. But before doing so we shall quote from some sound men of the past in order to make clear our meaning of the phrase.

George Smeaton, for example, stated that *the righteousness of God*:

... is descriptive of the finished work of Christ, as approved at the divine tribunal, and the meritorious cause of our acceptance....

The term righteousness ... does not in any passage mean the state of justification. If the state of justification does not proceed on art underlying righteousness as its basis, we are lost in the mists of uncertainty.[\[1\]](#)

And when showing that this righteousness is not God's attribute he states: God does not demand from man His own essential righteousness, but that which is competent to a creature....[\[2\]](#)

Further, Charles Hodge stated:

Hence this righteousness is not our own. It is nothing that we have either wrought ourselves, or that inheres in us. Hence Christ is said to be our righteousness; and we are said to be justified by his blood, his death, his obedience; we are righteous in him, and are justified by him or in his name, or for his sake. The righteousness of God, therefore, which the gospel reveals, and by which we are constituted righteous, is the perfect righteousness of Christ which completely meets and answers an the demands of that law to which all men are subject, and which all have broken.[\[3\]](#)

Commenting on [Ro 1:17](#), John Gill states that this phrase does not mean:

... the essential righteousness of God, the rectitude of his nature, his righteousness in fulfilling his promises, and his punitive justices which though revealed in the gospel, yet not peculiar to it; nor the righteousness by which Christ himself is righteous either as God, or as Mediator; but that righteousness which he wrought out by obeying the precepts and bearing the penalty of the law in the room of his people, and by which they are justified in the sight of God[4] ([Gill: Ro 1:17](#), **the essential righteousness of God**)

Many other citations also affirm that the righteousness of God refers to the finished work of our glorious Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. But before we enlarge on the ground of our justification, let us pause and consider the blessedness of this truth. Oh, the wonder that a sinner is found not guilty before the bar of God and that Christ Jesus has taken his sins and paid the debt in full! Dear reader, is this your hope and stay? Are you trusting only in the finished work of Christ? Do you have rest and peace in falling at the feet of the Lord Jesus and offering sacrifices of praise unto Him? How miserable are those who look to anything or anyone else for acceptance with God. Know well that God will accept nothing other than pure, flawless, complete, and total obedience. One can never meet God's conditions. *It is Christ or nothing!*

ACCORDING TO [2Co 5:21](#)

We first call your attention to [2Co 5:21](#), "For he (God) hath made him (Christ) to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Some commentators argue that there was no transfer of sin made. They also deny the penal and vicarious substitute of Christ. They glory in their wisdom and logic, and, thereby deny the truth of God's Word. Oh, that man would forsake his reason and logic and bow to "thus saith the Word of the Lord." But this passage declares that Christ was *made sin for us*. This is not to say that Christ sinned. To sin was an impossible happening with Him. He was impeccable ([Heb 4:15](#); [7:26](#)). Our Savior was faultless in every way. The assaults and temptations heaped upon Him by Satan and man found no place in Him. All that the enemy could hurl at the Blessed Son of God only proved Him to be the impeccable Christ. Turretin said:

How can he be said "*to have been made sin*," i.e., an offering for sin, by God as a judge; and a "*curse*," i.e., a subject of the malediction which the law pronounces against sinners; not, indeed, for himself, seeing he was most holy and supremely beloved by his Father, but *for us*; unless

it was as being substituted in our place, and taking upon himself that curse which the law justly pronounces against our sins, in order that he might bear it, and by bearing it take it away? ... What reference is there here to an example of patience, or to a confirmation of doctrine? Is it not most evident that there was a real substitute of Christ in our room; and that in consequence of this substitution, a real satisfaction, expiation or atonement has been made, and that this is the doctrine taught by these Scriptural phrases? The force of this argument cannot be evaded by objecting that Christ is said to have been a curse, not on account of having really borne the curse of the law, which could not have been laid on him, a perfectly blessed and holy person; but because he suffered crucifixion, which, under the law, was denominated a curse. The very words of the apostle, and the redemption from the curse of the law, which Christ by his death procured for us, evince the futility of the objection. How can he be a curse, and that for the express purpose of delivering us from the curse, unless he took it upon himself? It is no solid objection to this reasoning, that he is the only-begotten Son, and the ever-blessed God; for he did not endure the curse, in and for himself as the Son of God, but as our surety and on our behalf. Hence as to his person, he is styled “blessed forever,” and in his official character as our representative, he is said to have suffered the punishment due to our sins.^[5]

Commenting on this verse, John Gill wrote: ([Gill: 2Co 5:21](#), **he was made sin itself**)

... he was made sin itself by imputation; the sins of all his people were transferred unto him, laid upon him, and placed to his account; he sustained their persons, and bore their sins; and having them upon him, and being chargeable with, and answerable for them, he was treated by the justice of God as if he had been not only a sinner, but a mass of sin: for to be made sin, is a stronger expression than to be made a sinner; but now that this may appear to be only by imputation, and that none may conclude from hence that he was really and actually a sinner, or in himself so, it is said he was *made sin*; he did not become sin, or a sinner, through any sinful act of his own, but through his Father’s act of imputation, to which he agreed; for it was *he* that made him sin.... The end of his being made sin, though he himself had none, was, *that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*; not the essential righteousness of God, which can neither be imparted nor imputed; nor any righteousness of God wrought in us: for it is a righteousness *in him*,

in Christ, and not in ourselves, and therefore must mean the righteousness of Christ; so called, because it is wrought by Christ, who is God over all, the true God, and eternal life; and because it is approved of by God the Father, accepted of by him, for, and on the behalf of his elect, as a justifying one; it is what he bestows on them, and imputes unto them for their justification: it is a righteousness, and it is the only one which justifies in the sight of God. Now to be *made the righteousness of God*, is to be made righteous in the sight of God, by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ. Just as Christ is made sin, or a sinner, by the imputation of the sins of others to him, so they are made righteousness, or righteous persons, through the imputation of his righteousness to them; and in no other way can the one be made sin, or the other righteousness.[\[6\]](#)

Some object to limiting this to any elect due to the language of verse 19. It states “that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” The objectors maintain that Christ died for all the world, head-for-head. But if that be true, then, God imputed all the sins of each and every person unto Christ. If this is the case, how is it many will spend eternity in the lake of fire where the “worm dieth not”? Surely not for the sin of unbelief. Since unbelief is a sin, and Christ made expiation for all sins, as the objector affirms, then, Christ paid for unbelief also. If He did not die for unbelief, it goes without saying that He did not die for all sins. This illustrates the dilemma in which the scoffer finds himself. When will man learn to submit to the truth of God’s Word and not lean on the straw of his reasonings?

But what about the word *world* in the verse? Did not Christ die for the world? The answer is definitely, “Yes.” And the world for which Christ died was completely represented in Him. But the Scriptures declare in no uncertain terms that the word *world* does not always include the same people. The Lord Jesus instructed the disciples in His day that they were *not of the world*, and that He had *chosen* them *out of the world* ([Joh 15:15-19](#)). Surely none would contend that Christ did not die for His own disciples, even the apostles. How could they be saved and Christ not die for them? Yet [2Co 5:19](#) declares that Christ died for the world. True, these questions are trifling, but no more than the interpretation which some give of the Scriptures. It is plain that our Lord’s use of *world* here is different from that of [Joh 3:16](#). The Scriptures declare that Christ died for the *world*, and the *world* for which He died shall be forever saved. It is the *world* that was represented in Him before creation. It was those whom the Father had given Him ([Joh 17:9,12,16,20](#)). That world for whom

Christ died had their sins imputed to Christ, and they were made (legally constituted) righteous in His finished work. And if Christ did not die for all the sins of that world, then none shall be saved. God will not allow one sin to go unpunished. Sin is either blotted out in the blood of Christ or you, dear reader, must answer for it world without end where the fire is never diminished nor the gnawing worms satisfied. But you who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who have found peace in your soul by resting in the finished work of Christ, lift up your voices in praise unto Him Who sits on the throne encircled with the rainbow, and vie with the angelic host in adoring the Lamb of God ([Re 4:2-11](#)).

[2Co 5:19,21](#) also allude to the sacrificial offering which God gave to the Israelites. On the Day of Atonement, the high priest took a goat, placed his hands on its head and confessed all the sins, iniquities, and transgressions of Israel for the past year. Then a fit person carried the goat away into the desert to be lost forever (see [Le 16](#) and [Le 23](#)). This pictured Christ taking away the sins of His people.^[7] Did the priest confess the sins of those outside of Israel? Did he intercede for the Canaanites? Were the Egyptians under the blood? No. The whole Gentile world was disregarded. God only honored the Jewish world. And just as the sins of Israel were the only ones imputed to the goat sacrifice, so also only the sins of the elect were imputed to Christ. It is this world that is made *the righteousness of God in Him*.

Dear reader, do you not stand in awe and wonder at this blessed truth? Here, and here alone, is our only hope. Unless our sins were imputed to the Lord Jesus Christ, and we were thereby made the righteousness of God, there is no hope for us. Our prayers, sacrifices, and works are an abomination unto God unless we stand in Christ ([Pr 15:8,26](#); [21:4,27](#)). Can you rest in this blessed truth? Are you striving, laboring, and toiling with a fretful mind trying to obtain peace with God? Then cast away your works and flee to Christ where only peace is found. Do not wait to see if you are an elect. The Scriptures declare that you are to flee to Christ. If you flee to Him, you are one of His. But if you continue to try to get good enough for Him to accept you, then you are casting odium on the finished work of Christ. This message is beyond description, but it is glorious. Believers are guilty sinners who stand before the bar of the thrice holy God as though they had never sinned. This does not cause one to rest on his feelings, but on the truth of God's Word. Do you believe this truth? May both reader and writer daily seek the face of the Lord Jesus that through the operation of the Holy Spirit we will understand more and more of this blessed truth. Commenting on [Mt 11:28-30](#), Samuel Stennett rightly stated:

What it is to be a Christian, or as our Lord here expressed it, to take his yoke upon us, I shall not stay particularly to show.... It is to believe in Christ as our Saviour and Friend, and to submit to him as our Lord and Sovereign. It is to rely upon his mediations and righteousness of our acceptance with God, and to make his will the rule of our lives.[\[8\]](#)

ACCORDING TO [Ro 3:24](#)

Another passage which demonstrates that the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ is the ground of our justification is [Ro 3:24](#). Notice that it declares that our justification is through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. It is not through works, faith, nor through anything else but the redemptive work of the Lamb of God.[\[9\]](#) There are many who deny the truth of this verse. Instead of believing that the redemptive work of Christ actually justified His sheep, they would say that it only provided the way to salvation. Jesus Christ did not come into the world to announce salvation, not to make the way of salvation; he came to *save His people from their sins* ([Mt 1:21](#)). However, some omit the redemptive work of Christ entirely from this verse. We cannot see how any honest Bible believer can give the following for this verse: “Yet now God declares us ‘not guilty’ of offending him if we trust in Jesus Christ, who in his kindness freely takes away our sins.”[\[10\]](#)

First, this verse says nothing about trusting in Christ. Second, sin is more than an offense to God; it is a violation of the just and holy law. Third, sin is not removed by kindness. The strict obedience and extreme suffering of Christ is what removes sin. What a sad day in which we live! Men proclaim God as a weak, loving, old doting grandfather Who can hardly stand to see anyone punished for breaking His law. This generation needs to see the holiness of God in conjunction with His wrath. Until this is understood, this society will continue to release murderers, rapists, and all other law-breakers, while allowing, baby-murder, sodomy, and all other uncleanness to fill our homes. It is not the “social gospel” that will help society. It is the truth of God’s Word fearlessly proclaimed by God-fearing, God-honoring men that God blesses to the benefit of man. Dear reader, will you not pray for the Lord of the harvest to raise up such laborers to toil in His kingdom?

The word *redemption*, in [Ro 3:24](#), will not allow us to use such weak language. After giving a good and careful study to this word, Martyn Lloyd-Jones gives the following clear and rich comments:

The Greek word used by the Apostle is prefixed by a word which means ‘away’; we can translate therefore by the expression ‘ransomed

away'. I am not concerned to argue that the word does not mean 'delivered', because it does mean that. The point is that it does not only mean that, but that it is a much stronger and more powerful word. This word 'redemption', however, takes us yet further. If we need to be ransomed away from something, what is this? And the biblical answer is that it is from slavery and captivity. Man as the result of sin not only has become guilty before God, he has also become the slave of sin and of the devil. In this condition he is entirely helpless, as he is a complete slave.

Now redemption means, as we have seen, release as the result of the payment of a price. This is an essential part of the meaning of the word and it must never be omitted. The truth about us all is that we are not able to pay the adequate price, but, thank God, Another has come and paid the price for us. Here we have the great idea of substitution. The Lord Jesus Christ came to ransom us, to deliver us, He has paid the price, and so the prison in which we were held captive by the devil has been opened, and we who were slaves have been made free. This is the doctrine which is taught here so plainly by the Apostle.[\[11\]](#)

That the redemptive work did not stop at the cross *per se* can be seen in [Ro 4:25](#). Here it is seen that the resurrection of Christ is also an important aspect of our justification. Paul declared this truth elsewhere, "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" ([1Co 15:17](#)). In this day of reason and rationalization when the resurrection of Christ is either denied or given a small place in man's thinking, is it a small wonder that man's faith is found in so-called extraterrestrial beings? Man must believe in the supernatural. His faith will be either in the supernatural truth of God's Word, or it will rest in the visionary ideas of his own mind. History proves this. It matters not whether it be the gods of the Greeks, Babylonians, Chinese, Romans, Indians, or modern man. They all express themselves sooner or later in the supernatural. But truth is found in Christ, and everyone that is of the truth hears His voice ([Joh 1:17](#); [14:6](#); [18:37c](#)). Those who give some semblance of belief in the glorious resurrection of Christ cheapen it by the show and fanfare made at Easter time. Some believe that by Christ's resurrection being put in the center of attention at that time, that it has reformed the pagan holiday to a Christian holiday. But is this really the case? Do not the pagan symbols of fertility (the rabbit, the chicken, and the egg) remain in the holiday? This depreciates the value of the resurrection of Christ for our justification. The justification of sinners through the finished work of Christ is not dressing up for pride one day out of the year and playing games.

This glorious truth is the central theme in the believer's life every day. It is his meat and drink; it is his peace and comfort; it is his joy and delight.

Dear reader, what is your delight? Is it a new suit or Christ? Is it fun and games or justification? If Christ is not your joy, peace, and life, then, you are deceived. The perishing things of this world will never give you contentment. You will never know joy, peace, and life unless you know Christ. If you think that *gain is godliness*, you are standing on slippery ground (See [1Ti 6:3-5,9-10,17-19](#)). Do not be deceived. Either Christ is your righteousness, or you have none.

ACCORDING TO [Ro 5:18-19](#)

Roomans 5:18-19 also declares that justification is by the righteousness of another. Many read these verses and think that Christ died for as many as were condemned in Adam. They believe that the *all men* in verse eighteen and the *many* in verse nineteen are the exact same in number. But this is not the case. In order to understand these verses it is necessary to understand the context. From Romans chapter three the theme is justification, and it continues through chapter eight.[\[12\]](#) In chapter five, Paul deals with it by showing the analogy of justification to the fall of man. After discussing Christ's death for the ungodly and being justified by His blood, Paul introduces in verse twelve the fall of man. In verses thirteen through seventeen there is a parenthesis which enlarges on verse twelve. It is on the base of verses twelve through seventeen that eighteen and nineteen rest.

[Ro 5:12](#) states, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Here it is declared that the human race fell in the sin of one man, Adam. The parenthesis ([Ro 5:13-17](#)) enlarges on this by pointing out that Adam prefigured Christ. All who were represented in Adam received the condemnation which fell on him in the transgression. And though Adam was a federal representative as was Christ, yet the analogy was not parallel in every respect. Concerning verses fifteen and sixteen, John Owen stated:

The apostle proceeds to explain his comparison in those things wherein there is a dissimilitude between the comparates....[\[13\]](#)

He further explained that the opposition is between the *offence* on the one hand and the *free gift* on the other:

... between which a dissimilitude is asserted, not as unto their opposite effects of death and life, but only as unto the degrees of their efficacy, with respect unto those effects.[\[14\]](#)

When one views these verses as a unit, it is obvious that the *sin*, the *transgression*, the *fall*, the *offence* was by *the disobedience of one*, (verse nineteen). The first sin of Adam is the fall whereby many fell and many offenses issued forth overwhelmingly. In opposition, there is the *free gift*, the *justification*, the *righteousness* which was by one, Jesus Christ. Concerning verse fifteen, “The grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ,” the contrast is seen by the gift or “the free gift” (carisma). Owen stated:

Wherefore, although this word, in the next verse, doth precisely signify the righteousness of Christ, yet here it comprehends all the causes of our justification, in opposition unto the fall of Adam, and the entrance of sin thereby.[\[15\]](#)

In order to further explain the *comparates*, the writer can do no better than quote again at length from John Owen.

The consequent and effect *tu paraptwmatoj*,—“of the offense,” the fall,—is, that “many be dead.” No more is here intended by “many,” but only that the effects of that one offense were not confined unto one; and if we inquire who or how many those many are, the apostle tells us that they are all men universally; that is, all the posterity of Adam. By this one offense, because they all sinned, therein they are all dead; that is, rendered obnoxious and liable unto death, as the punishment due unto that one offense. And hence also it appears how vain it is to wrest those words of verse 12, “Inasmuch as all have sinned,” unto any other sin but the first sin in Adam, seeing it is given as the reason why death passed on them; it being here plainly affirmed “that they are dead,” or that death passed on them by that one offense.

The efficacy *tu carismatoj*,—“Of the free gift,”—opposed hereunto, is expressed, as that which abounded much more. Besides the thing itself asserted, which is plain and evident, the apostle seems to me to argue the equity of our justification by grace, through the obedience of Christ, by comparing it with the condemnation that befell us by the sin and disobedience of Adam. For if it were just, meet, and equal, that all men should be made subject unto condemnation for the sin of Adam; it is much more so, that those who believe should be justified by the obedience of Christ, through the grace and free donation of God. But

wherein, in particular, the gift by grace abounded unto many, above the efficacy of the fall to condemn, he declares afterward. And that whereby we are freed from condemnation, more eminently than we are made obnoxious unto it by the fall and sin of Adam, by that alone we are justified before God. But this is by the grace of God, and the gift by grace, through Jesus Christ alone, which we plead for, verse 16. Another difference between the *comparates* is expressed, or rather the instance is given in particular of the dissimilitude asserted in general before:—

“And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offenses unto justification.”

But yet though the apostle doth thus distinguish these things, to illustrate his comparison and opposition, that which he intends by them all is the righteousness and obedience of Christ, as he declares, verses 18, 19. This, in the matter of our justification, he calleth, (1.) *Carisma*, with respect unto the free, gratuitous grant of it by the grace *Dikaiwma*, with respect unto its effect of making us righteous.[\[16\]](#)

The parenthesis is brought to a close in verse seventeen by declaring that those who receive the “abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.” Herein it is seen that nothing is required by anyone whereby he is justified. However, those who were represented in Christ were to *receive* the “abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness.” Of this John Owen has accurately written:

And as this excludes all work of righteousness which we do,—for by none of them do we receive the abundance of grace, and the gift of righteousness,—so it doth also the imputation of faith itself unto our justification, as it is an act and duty of our own: for faith is that whereby we receive the gift of righteousness by which we are justified. For it will not be denied but that we are justified by the gift of righteousness, or the righteousness which is given unto us; for by it have we right and title unto life. But our faith is not this gift; for that which receiveth, and that which is received, are not the same.

And by faith we receive what is so given and imputed; and otherwise we contribute nothing unto our participation of it. This it is to be justified in the sense of the apostle.[\[17\]](#)

With the parenthesis (verses thirteen through seventeen) briefly explained, we now can understand verses eighteen and nineteen. These verses take up

the thought and analogy which was presented in verse twelve. That is, just as all who were represented in Adam sinned and fell under the condemnation, even so all who were represented in Christ were made righteous and were justified thereby. The *all men* and the *many* plainly refer to as many as were represented by their head.

It is plain that the *all men* in Adam are not the same in number as the *all men* in Christ. This is due to the fact that the same number in both cases do not receive the same results. In other words, all that sinned in Adam and were condemned do not have the righteousness of Christ unto justification of life. If this were not true, none would be cast into the lake of fire. The Scriptures plainly declare that the non-elect, goats, unbeliever, disobedient, and wicked will be cast into the pit (See [Mt 25:41-46](#); [Joh 3:36](#); [10:26](#); [1Pe 2:7-8](#); [2Th 1:7-9](#); [1Jo 2:4,22](#); [Re 20:11-15](#)).

If the reader will forgive me, another quote will be given from John Owen because he has clearly summarized this point:

Some vainly pretend from hence a *general grant of righteousness and life* unto all men, whereof the greatest part are never made partakers; than which nothing can be more opposite nor contradictory unto the apostle's design. Men are not made guilty of condemnation from the sin of Adam, by such a divine constitution, as that they may, or on some conditions may not, be obnoxious thereunto. Every one, so soon as he actually exists, and by virtue thereof is a descendant from the first Adam, is actually in his own person liable thereunto, and the wrath of God abideth on him. And no more are intended on the other side, but those only who, by their relation through faith unto the Lord Christ, the second Adam, are actually interested in the justification of life. Neither is the controversy about the universality of redemption by the death of Christ herein concerned. For those by whom it is asserted do not affirm that it is thence necessary that the free gift unto the justification of life should come on all, for that they know it doth not do. And of a provision of righteousness and life for men in case they do believe, although it be true, yet nothing is spoken in this place. Only the certain justification of them that believe, and the way of it, are declared. Nor will the analogy of the comparison here insisted on admit of any such interpretation; for the "all," on the one hand, are all and only those who derive their being from Adam by natural propagation. If any man might be supposed not to do so, he would not be concerned in his sin or fall. And so really it was with the man Christ Jesus. And those on the other hand, are only those who derive a spiritual life from Christ.

Suppose a man not to do so, and he is no way interested in the righteousness of the “one” unto the justification of life. Our argument from the words is this:—*As the sin of one that came on all unto condemnation, was the sin of the first Adam imputed unto them; so the righteousness of the one unto the justification of life that comes on all believers, is the righteousness of Christ imputed unto them.* And what can be more clearly affirmed or more evidently confirmed than this is by the apostle, I know not.[\[18\]](#)

The truth that the ground or cause of justification is the righteousness of Jesus Christ is clearly set forth in [Ro 5:18-19](#). From first to last, justification is found only in Christ. No wonder the Scriptures declare, “*Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life*” ([Tit 3:5-7](#)).

Dear reader, study the above carefully and seek to understand this truth in its fullness. If you do understand the thought found in [Ro 5:12-19](#), then your assurance of salvation will not wax and wane with your emotional ups and downs. You can see that salvation, with its peace and joy, rest in the work of Him who became the Surety before the world was. You will believe that all your salvation is in Christ and that in Him you are righteous. Therefore, God says that you are justified in His sight. Oh, the joy to know that salvation is not found in the wicked heart of man! Truly peace floods the soul of him who rests in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. But if you do not find peace in your soul, dear reader, I beseech you to flee to Christ. To seek the rest and comfort of salvation in any other place but Christ is to despise the truth of God. May both writer and reader daily strive to know the consolation of being found in Christ and His righteousness ([Php 3:9](#)).

ACCORDING TO [Isa 45:24-25](#)

Now we focus our attention on [Isa 45:24-25](#), which declares that the ground of our justification is in Christ’s righteousness.

The context of this passage is what B. H. Carroll calls “The Free Grace of Jehovah Brings Redemption.”[\[19\]](#) In these chapters ([Isa 40-66](#)), Jehovah is contrasted to the gods of this world. Here it is proclaimed that Jehovah alone is God and that salvation is only in Him.

In [Isa 45:21](#), we see that the Lord (Jehovah) is God, and that He is the only God and Saviour. In verse twenty-two, it is emphasized again that there is no god beside Him and that salvation is found only in Him. Therefore, men are encouraged to look to Him as the only source of salvation. Ultimately all men shall bow before Him and acknowledge Him as the one and only God ([Isa 45:23](#); [Php 2:10-11](#)). No one shall escape. Even the wicked (those who are “incensed against him”) shall have to bow and confess (to their shame) that He is the Lord. But the “seed of Israel” (verse twenty-five), who bow and confess in this life, shall surely say, “in the Lord have I righteousness.” And because of this righteousness, which is in Christ, “shall all the seed of Israel be *justified*, and shall glory.”

Do not think that the phrase “seed of Israel” is limited to Israelites, nor that it included all Israelites. In Ephesians chapter two, Paul instructs the congregation at Ephesus that in Christ Jesus there is no difference between Gentiles and Israelites. Though at one time the Gentiles were “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, ... now in Christ” they were “made nigh” by His blood. Paul showed that the Israelite and Gentile can now sit on the same seat and worship God through the same Mediator. The Gentile in Christ is included in **ALL** the promises given to Israel in the Old Testament. Though there are passages in the Old Testament which declare that Gentiles would be included in the salvation of Jehovah, the New Testament shows that the Gentile is not a *stranger* nor *foreigner*, but a *fellowcitizen* ([Eph 2:19](#)). This point is underscored also in [Ga 3:7-14,29](#); [Php 3:3](#); [Heb 8:8-13](#); [Ro 4:14-16](#); [2:28-29](#).

The fact that the phrase “seed of Israel” does not include all Israelites is found in the ninth chapter of Romans. [Ro 9:6](#) says, “For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel.” Paul shows throughout the chapter that because one had Israelite lineage, he did not necessarily have salvation. He writes that though Ishmael and Esau were in the lineage, both were not in the promise of God. Salvation, whether Jew or Gentile ([Ro 9:24](#)), was only to the elect ([Ro 9:11](#)). Paul further shows that only a remnant were saved among Israel ([Ro 9:27](#)). In fact, unless God had had a remnant among Israel, the nation would have been destroyed as Sodom and Gomorrah ([Ro 9:29](#)). Therefore, the “seed of Israel” cannot be limited in its application to Israel as a nation. It includes the elect of God among Gentiles. (Study the entire ninth chapter of Romans closely for further insight on this point.)

The “seed of Israel” in [Isa 45:25](#), is justified in the Lord. It is His righteousness, given to the people of God, which pronounces them not guilty

before the “Holy One of Israel ([Isa 47:4](#)). Commenting on [Isa 45:24](#), Matthew Poole says:

This plainly points us to the Messiah, whose very name is, *The Lord our Righteousness*, Jer. xxiii 6, and whose great business it was to *bring in everlasting righteousness*, [Da 9:24](#), and who is *made unto us of God righteousness*, [1Co 1:30](#).^[20] (Poole: [Isa 45:24](#) This plainly points us to the Messiah)

ACCORDING TO [Isa 54:17](#)

This truth is set forth again in [Isa 54:17](#), “This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and *their righteousness is of ME, saith the Lord.*”

While many other passages show that the ground of justification is the righteousness of Jesus Christ (called the righteousness of God), we will stop with these. If the reader studies this further, he should examine [Ro 8:3-4](#); [10:3-4](#); [Ga 3:13](#); [Eph 1:3-4,7](#); [2:5-10](#); [Col 1:19-22](#); [2Ti 1:9](#); and [Tit 1:2](#). These passages are only a few among many that prove the above position.

Since we have seen that the ground (reason, cause) of justification is *the righteousness of God*, it follows that faith cannot be the cause of justification. The justified do have faith and works, but justification is only by the Person and work of Jesus Christ. If faith is the cause of justification in any way, then, the righteousness of Christ Jesus is not sufficient in and of itself.

Dear reader, can you not rejoice in this glorious truth? Is it not a rich delight to your soul to know that your acceptance with God is not by your mental assent or works? Do you not believe this? If so, then you are justified. If you, by faith, rest your whole soul and being on the finished works of the Lord Jesus Christ, you are made righteous in Him ([Ro 3:22](#)). Oh, the glorious delight when God works in the heart of a sinful man and causes him to lift his soul to God and sing those words of Philip Doddridge:

O happy day that fixed my choice
On Thee, my Saviour and my God!
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,
And tell its raptures all abroad.
O happy bond, that seals my vows
To Him who merits all my love!
Let cheerful anthems fill His house,

While to that sacred shrine I move.

‘Tis done; the great transaction’s done!
I am my Lord’s, and He is mine;
He drew me, and I followed on,
Charmed to confess the voice divine.

Happy day, happy day,
When Jesus washed my sins away!
He taught me how to watch and pray,
And live rejoicing every day.[\[21\]](#)

Foot Notes Chapter Five

[\[1\]](#) George Smeaton, *Atonement According to the Apostles* (repr., Grand Rapids: Sovereign Grace Publishers, n.d.), pp. 52-55.

[\[2\]](#) Ibid.

[\[3\]](#) Charles Hodge, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (n.p., 1886; repr., Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968), p. 31.

[\[4\]](#) John Gill, *An Exposition of the New Testament* (London: William Hill Collingridge, 1852; repr. Atlanta, GA: Turner Lassetter, 1954), vol. 2, p. 6. (See [Gill: Ro 1:17](#))

[\[5\]](#) Francis Turretin, *The Atonement of Christ*, trans. James R. Willson, new rev. ed. (n.p.: Board of Publication of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church, 1859; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), pp. 42-43.

[\[6\]](#) John Gill, *An Exposition of the New Testament*, vol. 2, pp. 310-311. (See [Gill: 2Co 5:21](#))

[\[7\]](#) The reader must keep in mind that the Old Testament form of worship with Israel was only a type. I do not mean to imply that all the Israelites were saved. [Ro 2:28-29](#); [9:7-13](#) and other passages make it clear that all Israelites were not saved.

[\[8\]](#) Samuel Stennett, *Discourses on Personal Religion* (London: R. Hett, 1769). vol. 1, p.237.

[\[9\]](#) We will study the phrases *justified by faith* and *justified by works* later, but now we are limiting our remarks to the cause of justification.

[\[10\]](#) *The Living Bible*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers. 1971).

[11] D. M. Lloyd-Jones, *Romans — Atonement and Justification — An Exposition of Chapters 3:20-4:25* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970), p. 61.

[12] Though Paul discusses sanctification in [Ro 6; 7](#), and part of 8, he continues the theme he introduced in [Ro 1:16-17](#).

[13] John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold, (London: Johnstone & Hunter, 1850-1853; repr., London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1967), vol. 5, p. 326.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid., page 327.

[16] Ibid., pages 327-328.

[17] Ibid., pages 330, 331.

[18] Ibid., pages 332-333.

[19] See Chapter 3, page 26.

[20] Matthew Poole, *A Commentary on the Holy Bible* (n.p.; repr., McLean, VA: MacDonald Publishing Company, [n. d.]), vol. 2, p. 430.

[21] Philip Doddridge, “O Happy Day,” *Old School Hymnal* — No. 10 (Atlanta, GA: Old School Hymnal Co., Inc., 1964), Song No. 249.

CHAPTER 6 JUSTIFICATION AND IMPUTATION

In our study of justification, we first explained the meaning of the word. We saw that it is not an act whereby one is made better. The person’s inclinations are not changed. There is no *infusion of holy habits* into the individual.[\[1\]](#)

Justification is a courtroom term in which one is pronounced *not guilty*. Next we noted that this doctrine (like all Biblical doctrines) is primarily for the glory of God. Following that, we saw that justification was not an afterthought with God, but that its origin was in the mind and purpose of the Lord of Glory. In our last chapter, we found that the cause of justification was the finished work of Jesus Christ. Now we desire to see the relationship between justification and imputation.

IMPUTATION DEFINED

Imputation means “*to account to one, in law-reckoning, what himself, or another in his room, hath done, in order to reward or punish him for it.*”[\[2\]](#) Much confusion and erroneous teaching have arisen concerning this

subject. However, if one properly understands the fourth chapter of Romans, he will gain a working knowledge of imputation. In fact, out of the nineteen times that Paul used the word in the Roman letter, it is mentioned eleven times in [Ro 4](#). The words are *counted*, *reckoned*, *imputeth*, *impute*, and *imputed*. Now we turn to [Ro 4](#).

ABRAHAM THE EXAMPLE

Superficially, this chapter suggests that when Abraham believed, God imputed Abraham's faith as a work for righteousness. This is what Christendom presently teaches. Consequently, many people think that it is in [Ge 15](#) when God saved Abraham. But when we study the life of Abraham, we see that Abraham had been serving God for some time prior to [Ge 15](#). Abraham had been believing and following God by faith ever since he left his native land.

We read in [Jos 24:2-3](#), "And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods. And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac." Here we see that when Abraham was living on the other side of the Euphrates River ("the floods"), he worshiped false gods.^[3] While living in the city of Ur, God called him out of that place to go into the land that he would inherit ([Ac 7:2-3](#)). [Heb 11:8](#) declares that Abraham "went out" of the city "by faith." By this we find that Abraham was a believer in the Lord God prior to leaving Ur. Before Abraham left the land of Mesopotamia, God had changed his heart. Though Abraham was a worshiper of false gods while living in a land of wickedness, God implanted divine life in him. Abraham was no better than the prodigal when he "came to himself" ([Lu 15:17](#)). Surely this indicates sovereign grace in the life of Abraham. No wonder the Scriptures declare that those who have the same faith as Abraham are the children of Abraham ([Ga 3:7,9](#)). God did not call Abraham out of his native land because he was any better than the others who were living in Ur. In like manner, the Lord does not give a new heart to someone and call him out from the world to serve Him because he is better than anyone else. "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed" ([La 3:22a](#)). It is by His grace that we are saved ([Eph 2:1-9](#)). If the Lord had not changed and called us as He did Abraham, we would still be worshipping false gods.

The Scriptures declare that when Abraham went out of his homeland, he did not know where he was going ([Heb 11:8](#)). No doubt he followed the major route out of the city which ran beside the Euphrates River. Though Abraham did have faith when he left his country and was truly a child of God, he did not follow the Lord whole-heartedly. Note the words of A. W. Pink:

In order to learn what response Abram made to God's call it is necessary to revert again to the previous chapter — “And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife, and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan and they came unto Haran and dwelt there” ([Ge 11:31](#)). From these words we discover a two-fold *failure* on Abram's part. Three things were commanded him by God; he was to leave his own country, he was to separate himself from his kindred, and he was to go forth unto a land which Jehovah had promised to show him. In respect to the first requirement Abram obeyed, but with reference to the last two he failed. He left Chaldea, but instead of separating himself from his kindred, Terah his father and Lot his nephew accompanied him. Terah means “delay,” and thus it is proved. Terah's accompanying Abram resulted in a delay of at least five years in Haran, which word means “parched”!^[4] Abram's response to God's call then, was partial and slow, for observe that in [Isa 51:2](#) we are expressly told that God called Abram “alone,” yet in the end he “obeyed.” How beautiful it is to note that when we come to the New Testament Abram's *failure* is not mentioned — “By faith Abram, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, *obeyed*, and he went out, not knowing whither he went” ([Heb 11:8](#)), his obedience in leaving Ur is thus singled out, but no notice is here taken by the Holy Spirit of his *disobedience* in taking his “kindred” with him — that sin, with all of his others, had been “blotted out”!^[5]

In [Ge 12:1-4](#), we find that Abraham was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. How old Abraham was when he left Ur is not stated. However, it goes without saying that some time passed from the time he left his home and traveled to Haran until his father died and was buried. A. W. Pink stated that Terah delayed Abraham “at least five years.” But however long it was does not matter for our purpose. The point is that all this time Abraham was a child of God and followed the Lord in faith. All this time he was justified. God had given him His word, and he *obeyed*. And now that his father was dead, he traveled on in faith to the land of his inheritance. After “passing through the

land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh” (verse six), the Lord appeared unto Abraham again. (It is to be noted that *Moreh* means “the hill of the teacher.”)[6] There the Lord confirmed His word to Abraham and instructed him that he was in the land of his inheritance. In verse eight, we find Abraham in the area of Bethel. There he built an altar and worshiped the Lord. Here is a man who traveled at least one thousand miles over several years and had worshiped the Lord. Surely this does not convey the idea that Abraham was a lost man.

Next we find Abraham journeying into Egypt. Abraham, like all of the Lord’s people, had his faults. Nevertheless, even in Egypt the Lord protected him and was his shield (cf. [Ge 15:1](#)). God’s protection of Abraham was not because of his obedience to the Lord. In this we find another example of the sovereign mercy of the Lord God of heaven and earth. The Lord delivered Abraham in spite of his sins of going to Egypt in a time of famine and not relying on God, fearing for his life, making an unlawful agreement with Sarah, allowing her to be taken into the harem of Pharaoh, and, thereby tempting God. Oh, dear reader, how many times has the Lord had mercy on you and delivered you from your wicked and sinful ways? Can you not lift up your soul unto the sovereign God of heaven and earth in praise and adoration for the many times He has shown compassion unto you? Can you not see yourself in Abraham straying away from God after He has shown you great benefits? Again we see that Abraham is the pattern as to how God deals with His children. By this it is clearly seen that man cannot take any credit for his salvation. Salvation is of the Lord!

After Abraham was delivered from the hand of Pharaoh, we find him back at Bethel ([Ge 13:1-4](#)). (Bethel means the house of God.)[7] Whenever man leaves the house of God, he is sure to find himself in sin. And it is equally as certain that he will not be able truly to see God until he returns unto the place of the Lord’s abiding. However, our point is that though Abraham did stray from the path of the Lord, he did not lose his salvation. He was still a worshiper of God. In [Ge 13:14-18](#), we find God reminding him of the promise given unto him, and his building altars unto the Lord and worshipping Him.

In [Ge 14](#), we find that Abraham rescued Lot from the kings which had captured the city of Sodom. Upon the return of Abraham, he was met by Melchizedek, “the priest of the most high God.” This priest of God blessed Abraham ([Ge 14:19](#)). [Heb 7:7](#) declares that “the less is blessed of the better.” Therefore, Melchizedek, the priest of God, who was the greater, blessed Abraham. Surely no Bible believer will declare that Abraham was in a state of unrepentance at this time. Here we find that the representative of the “most

high God” blessed Abraham. This is further evidence that Abraham was a child of God and looked upon by the Lord of Hosts as a worshiper and follower of Him.

Though we have only given a brief history of Abraham, we can see that from the moment he left Ur until this time he knew the Lord. Since he was a follower and worshiper of the Lord all this time, he was covered by the blood of Christ. And if covered by the blood of Christ, he was justified before God. Therefore, [Ge 15:6](#), which Paul quoted in [Ro 4:3](#), is not when Abraham first believed in the Lord and became justified before God. Though in [Ge 15:6](#) is the first time belief is mentioned in the Scriptures, this does not mean that Abraham had no faith in God prior to this occasion. [Heb 11:8](#) definitely declares that Abraham had faith prior to (or at the time of) leaving Ur. Seeing that Abraham was a believer in the Lord for several years and was no doubt a justified man all this time, we must now study [Ge 15:6](#) in some detail in order to arrive at the truth of the matter.

ABRAHAM AND [Ge 15:6](#)

When the Scriptures declare, “And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness,” we are not to understand that the “*it*” refers to Abraham’s faith meritoriously. This is contrary to the Word of God. Salvation is not by the meritorious works of man ([Ro 11:6](#); [Eph 2:9](#)). We have seen, in Chapter 4, that the ground or cause of justification is the Person and work of Jesus Christ. Therefore, an individual cannot be justified by his faith and Jesus Christ at the same time. This is to mix man’s works with those of the finished works of Christ. The Scriptures plainly declare that we are “justified freely (without a cause) by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” ([Ro 3:24](#)). Seeing then that justification is by Christ Jesus and not by the works of man, we are led to believe that the “*it*” in [Ge 15:6](#) refers to the “*seed*” (the object of faith) in verse five. When Paul discusses justification in Galatians chapter three, he definitely declares the seed to be Christ: “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy *seed*, which is *Christ*” ([Ga 3:16](#)). That Abraham was blessed to see Christ cannot be denied by any Bible believer because Jesus stated, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad” ([Joh 8:56](#)). In [Ro 4](#), Paul speaks of Abraham’s faith with reference to the “*seed*”: “Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was spoken, So shall thy *seed* be” ([Ro 4:18](#)). Concerning [Ge 15:6](#), note the words of Gill: ([Gill: Ge 15:6](#), **he believed in the promise of God**)

. . . he believed in the promise of God, that he should have a seed, a very numerous one; he believed that the Messiah would spring from his seed; he believed in him as his Saviour and Redeemer, he believed in him for righteousness, and he believed in his righteousness as justifying him before God: *and he counted it to him for righteousness*; not the act of his faith, but the object of it; and not the promise he believed, but what was promised, and his faith received, even Christ and his righteousness; this was imputed to him without works, and whilst he was an uncircumcised person, for the proof of which the apostle produces this passage, [Ro 4:3,10,22-24](#); wherefore this is not to be understood of any action of his being esteemed and accounted a righteous one, and he pronounced and acknowledged a righteous person on account of it; for Abram was not justified before God by his own works, but by the righteousness of faith, as all that believe are, that is, by the righteousness of Christ revealed to faith, and received by it; what is imputed is without a man, and the imputation of it depends upon the will of another; such is the righteousness of Christ without works imputed by God the Father. This is the first time we read of believing, and as early do we hear of imputed righteousness.[\[8\]](#)

By further explanation, note the words of A. W. Pink:

And this faith was reckoned or counted unto him for righteousness, not that faith is accepted by God in lieu of righteousness as an equivalent for righteousness, else would faith be a meritorious thing, but that faith is the *recipient* of that righteousness by which we are justified. The force of the preposition is “unto” rather than “instead of” — it was “counted to him *unto* righteousness.” Abram’s case was a representative one. Today justification (to be declared righteous) is by faith, but with this important difference that whereas Abram believed God *would* give him a son through the quickening of his body, we believe that God *has* given us His Son and through His death and quickening from the dead a Saviour is ours through faith.

Just here we would pause to consider what seems to have proven a real difficulty to expositors and commentators. Was not Abram a “believer” years before the point of time contemplated in [Ge 15:6](#)? ... But are we not expressly told that it was “*By faith*” ([Heb 11:8](#)) he had left Ur of the Chaldees and went out “not knowing whither he went”? Yet, why are we *here* told that “he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness”? Surely the answer is not far to seek. It is true that in the New Testament the Holy Spirit informs us that Abram was a believer when he left Chaldea, but his faith is *not there* (i.e., [Heb 11:8](#)) mentioned *in connection with his justification*. Instead,

in the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians the incident which the Holy Spirit singles out as the occasion when Abram's faith was counted for righteousness is the one in [Ge 15](#) now before us. And why? Because in [Ge 15](#) Abram's faith is directly connected with God's promise respecting his "seed," which "seed" was *Christ* (see [Ga 3:16](#))! The faith which was "*counted for righteousness*" was the faith which believed what God had said concerning the promised Seed. It was *this* instance of Abram's faith which the Holy Spirit was pleased to select as the *model* for believing unto justification. There is no justification apart from Christ — "*Through this Man* is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins. And by *Him* all that *believe are justified* from all things" ([Ac 13:38-39](#)). Therefore we say it was not that Abram here "believed God" for the first time, but that here God was pleased to *openly attest his righteousness* for the first time, and that for the reason stated above. Though Christians may believe God with respect to the common concerns of this life, such faith, while it evidences they have been justified is not the faith by which they were justified — the faith which justifies has to do directly with the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was the character of Abram's faith in [Ge 15](#); he believed the promise of God *which pointed to Christ*. Hence it is in [Ge 15](#) and not in [Ge 12](#) we read, "And He counted it to him for righteousness." How perfect are the ways of God![\[9\]](#)

The above shows that Romans chapter four does not teach that God justifies man because of his faith. Commenting on [Ro 4:3](#), Geoffrey Wilson says:

... it is obvious that 'faith' is not to be understood as a work which is reckoned as righteousness by God. The preposition (*eis*) must rather mean that faith is *unto* righteousness, it is the instrument through which the believer becomes personally interested in the justifying righteousness of Christ.[\[10\]](#)

CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS IS IMPUTED, NOT FAITH

Therefore the *it* in [Ge 15:6](#) refers to the *seed* of verse five. The *seed* (*Christ*) was imputed unto Abraham for righteousness. And when Paul quotes [Ge 15:6](#) in [Ro 4:3](#), he was teaching the same doctrine. But not knowing the truth of [Ge 15:6](#), one would get the idea that what Paul was saying in [Ro 4:3](#) was that God accepted the faith of Abraham as righteousness. By understanding the life of Abraham, we know that he was a righteous man before God prior to [Ge 15](#). Whether Abraham understood that the Seed ([Ga 3:16](#)) was to be his righteousness prior to this time we cannot say. We do know that prior to this time he had been a follower of God for

several years, and he had faith all this time. How much he understood concerning the righteousness of God prior to this time we are not prepared to argue. That an individual may think he is in disfavor with God when in reality he is not is a certainty. Did not Jacob think that he was under God's disfavor when he said, "All these things are against me" ([Ge 42:36](#))? However, the truth of the situation was that all of those things were for the good of Jacob and the reuniting of his family to him. And so it was with Abraham. Though he may not have considered himself justified before the Lord prior to [Ge 15](#), we know from the study of his life that he was. This shows that the time of actual justification does not occur at belief. Faith manifests to the believer the reality of his justification. *Faith does not create!* Gill states the following concerning this issue:

Faith is the evidence, not the cause of justification; and if it is an evidence, that of which it is an evidence must exist before it. *Faith is indeed the evidence of things not seen*; but it is not the evidence of things that are not: what the eye is in the body, that faith is in the soul.[\[11\]](#)

By this we find that the faith that was imputed to Abraham was the object of faith which was Christ. If it is the subjective faith of man which is imputed to man for righteousness, then justification would be by the works of man. Paul continually denies this in Romans four. The whole crux of Paul's argument in the fourth chapter of Romans is that righteousness is imputed "without works" ([Ro 4:6-8](#)). As has been shown in the previous chapter, the ground of justification is the righteousness of Christ. Therefore, it must be that the righteousness which is imputed is none other than that of Christ's.

Since Christ was Abraham's Surety from eternity, and the righteousness of Christ was given to him in the purpose of God from the beginning, then what benefit is there in Abraham believing in the promise of God? Though we shall study the relationship of justification to faith in the next chapter, we must look at it somewhat now, especially as it pertains to imputation. But it must be understood that in Abraham's believing the promise of God as given in [Ge 15](#), he received great benefit which he could not have received otherwise.

FAITH RECEIVES WHAT IS IMPUTED

According to Girdlestone, the word *imputation* "signifies a mental process whereby some course is planned or conceived." After giving many passages to support this definition, he further states, "In all these passages a mental

process is involved whereby a certain thing or a course of action is subjected to a sort of estimation as to value or position. It is not an artificial proceeding, a mere fancy, but a distinct judgment, founded either upon the nature of things, or upon the mind of him who is passing certain things under review. Sometimes the word is used in our ordinary sense of reckoning — that is to say, to represent the arithmetical process of counting up.” Then in summation he declares, “We see therefore that to reckon, to impute, and to account are one and the same thing, and that the word is used in Scripture to indicate what may be called a mental process whereby the love and mercy which exists in the Divine nature, and which was embodied in Christ, is brought to bear upon the case of every individual who believes in (and acts upon) the Word of God.”[12]

When it is stated, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness” ([Ge 15:6](#); [Ro 4:3](#)), what actually happened? Hear again the words of Geoffrey B. Wilson: “... it is obvious that ‘faith’ is not to be understood as a work which is reckoned *as* righteousness by God. The preposition (*eis*) must rather mean that faith is *unto* righteousness; it is the instrument through which the believer becomes personally interested in the justifying righteousness of Christ.”[13] It was not when Abraham was legally constituted righteous before the bar of justice. It was that act of God whereby Abraham received the righteousness of Christ which was the ground of his justification. As Wilson says, it is that act by which the believer comes to know that the righteousness of Christ is his. And this righteousness shall be received by everyone that believes because the Scriptures declare, “Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification” ([Ro 4:23-25](#)).

In order to explain this further, notice the words of Haldane:

Faith is the recipient of that righteousness by which we are justified.... The expression ‘unto righteousness’ is elliptical, and signifies unto the receiving of righteousness.

That faith is not itself the justifying righteousness, is demonstrably evident from the phraseology of many passages that speak of faith and righteousness in the same place.[14]

Martyn Lloyd Jones clearly described the position of faith in the following:

... ‘justification’ cannot be taken whenever you like. No man can decide in an almost casual manner when he is going to be justified; it is the

action of God, it is something that happens to us. Let us never forget that! Even our justification is given; it is something that comes to us through the instrumentality of faith. But faith is never anything more than the channel. It is not our faith that lays hold of it; it is, rather, that it comes to us ‘through’ faith. It is not our faith that justifies us; we are justified through faith.[\[15\]](#)

We conclude then that one cannot be justified by any works of man, whether physical or mental. That justification is a legal act based on the meritorious works of the Lord Jesus Christ is indisputable. In the mind and purpose of God those whom God placed in Christ before the world was were seen by Him as though they were as pure and righteous as Christ Himself. They were constituted “holy and without blame” ([Eph 1:4](#)) even then. But faith is the channel whereby we receive justification.

By this we do not mean to imply that the sins of the elect were not actually imputed to Christ. We totally reject the doctrine taught by many today that the sins of the people of God were not really placed on the Savior. If the sins of those for whom Christ died were not really imputed to Him, justification could never have been accomplished. If this legal transaction of imputation (that is, our sins imputed to Christ and His righteousness imputed to us) did not occur, there could be no receiving of this righteousness by faith. The transaction must be prior to faith. Faith does not create the transaction, nor does it make the transaction a fact. Faith receives the blessings of the transaction; that is, it receives into the soul that righteousness that is ours which was given us in Christ Jesus. Seeing that Christ was the Surety for His people before the creation, that He accepted full responsibility for them and that they were elected in Him then, and that all of the benefits which belonged to Christ were also the elect’s in the legal transaction between the Father and the Son, then there was a legal transaction or imputation in eternity. This is the *actual* or *real* imputation. And though Christ had not died on the Cross as yet when Abraham believed, the transfer of Christ’s righteousness to Abraham and Abraham’s sins to Christ was already a certainty. But when Abraham believed the promise of God concerning the Seed being his righteousness, he received the blessing of the imputation experimentally. This is the teaching of Romans four concerning imputation.

Oh blessed thought! That God elected us in the Lord Jesus Christ before the world was created and placed to our account the righteousness of Christ is beyond comprehension. Yet when we study the Scriptures and see that this glorious truth is written large and clear from Genesis to Revelation, our hearts are made to rejoice greatly in the testimony of God’s Word. Dear reader, can

you too not rejoice in this glorious truth? Can you not find consolation in your sins being imputed to the Lord Jesus Christ and that He took them out of the way and nailed them to the cross thus spoiling all “principalities and powers” ([Col 2:13-15](#); [Eph 2:15](#))? If not, I would point you to the only source of comfort — Jesus Christ. Prayerfully seek the God of all mercies that He would show you the wondrous doctrine of the imputation of the righteousness of Jesus Christ to sinners. Pray that God would bless you to know that this righteousness is yours. Do not argue that you cannot know this unless you are one of the elect. The Scriptures declare that you must flee to Christ in order to find peace and comfort for your soul. The Scriptures do not say for you to first find out if your name was written in the book of life before the world was created. The command is “come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” ([Mt 11:28](#)). And Jesus Himself stated, “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37). May God bless both writer and reader to understand and rejoice more in this truth.

Though the world hate and despise this doctrine, it is the cry of the believer to know and appreciate it more and more each day. Those who do not know the Lord nor love His Word cannot understand and rejoice in His truths. It is a sad fact that often the believer’s heart is so cold and indifferent that he cannot delight in the truths of God as he would. Still he can sing with Berridge:

Imputed righteousness is strange.

Nor will with human fancies range;

We guess the lurking motive well,

And Paul the hateful truth shall tell.

The lofty heart can not submit

To cast itself at Jesus’s feet;

It scorns in borrowed robes to shine,

Though weaved with righteousness divine.

Proud nature cries, with loathing eyes

“This imputation I despise”,

And from it she will pertly start,

Till grace has broken down her heart.

O give me, Lord, thy righteousness,

To be my peace and wedding dress!

My sores it heals, my rags it hides,

And makes me dutiful besides.[\[16\]](#)

Foot Notes Chapter Six

[1] John Dick, *Lectures on Theology* (Cincinnati: J. A. & U. P. James, 1850), p. 371.

[2] John Brown, *A Dictionary of The Holy Bible* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1835), p 288.

[3] I am not saying that Abraham was a believer while worshiping false gods. I am only showing that God changed Abraham's heart and he had faith prior to leaving Ur.

[4] Here Pink had a note which said, "Haran was the point which caravans for Canaan left the Euphrates to strike across the desert." Also the idea that Haran means parched is derived from the Greek word "Carran" as found in [Ac 7:2](#).

[5] Arthur W. Pink, *Gleanings in Genesis* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1922, 1950, p. 141.

[6] William Gesenius, *Hebrew And Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures*, trans. Samuel Prideaux Tregelles (repr., Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967, p. 459.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 117.

[8] John Gill, *An Exposition of The Old Testament* (London: William Hill Collingridge, 1852; repr., Atlanta, GA: Turner Lassetter, 1954), vol. 1, p. 88.

[9] Pink, pp. 167

[10] Geoffrey B. Wilson, *Romans: A Digest of Reformed Comment* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1977), p. 67.

[11] John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, (London: T. Smith for W. Hardcastle, 1814; repr., Streamwood, IL: Primitive Baptist Library, 1981), vol. 2, p. 478.

[12] Robert Baker Girdlestone, *Synonyms of The Old Testament*, 2d ed., (n.p., 1897; repr., Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, n.d.), p. 171-174

[13] Wilson, p. 67.

[14] Robert Haldane, *The Epistle To The Romans* (repr., London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1966, pp. 162-163.

[15] D M. Lloyd-Jones, *Romans: The Sons of God — An Exposition of Chapter 8:5-17* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975), pp. 269-270.

[16] John Berridge, "The Carnal Mind & Christ's Righteousness," *A Selection of Hymns for Public Worship* by William Gadsby, ed. J. C. Philpot (London: Gospel Standard Publications, 1965), Hymn No. 115, p. 93

CHAPTER 7 JUSTIFICATION AND FAITH FAITH IS A GIFT OF GOD

Though previous chapters have touched upon the topic of faith, now we shall study it more in detail, relying heavily upon the foundation established so far in our study of justification. The majority of the religious world considers faith a product of the natural will of man. Though there are many definitions of faith, they ultimately ascribe faith to be either the work of man or the work of God. But the Scriptures declare that faith is solely the work of God. [Eph 2:8-9](#), for example, plainly declares that faith is “*the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.*” Concerning faith as a gift of God, note the observations of Charles Hodge:

Ye are saved by grace; ye are saved by faith and not by works; and even faith is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.[\[1\]](#)

After discussing various interpretations of this passage, Hodge states concerning verses eight and nine:

The middle clause of the verse is therefore parenthetical and refers not to the main idea *ye are saved*, but to the subordinate one *through faith*, and is designed to show how entirely salvation is of grace, since even faith ... is the gift of God. The analogy of Scripture is in favor of this view of the passage, in so far that elsewhere faith is represented as the gift of God. 1 Cor. 1,26-31. Eph. 1,19. Col.2,12, *et passim*.[\[2\]](#)

Concerning this passage, Lenski gives the following:

Faith is not something that we on our part produce and furnish toward our salvation but is produced in our hearts by God to accomplish his purpose in us.

Now the simple fact is that even in human relations faith and confidence are produced in us by others, by what they are and what they do, we never produce it ourselves. Even deceivers know that they must cunningly make their deceptions of such a nature that they may appear true and grand, and that they may thus produce faith in those whom they wish to deceive. There is no self-produced faith; faith is wrought in us. Saving faith is wrought by the saving grace of God.[\[3\]](#)

Abraham Kuyper's agreed with Hodge also:

“I had the right to speak about ‘the surpassing riches of his grace’ *for* it is, indeed, by grace that you are saved, through faith; and lest you should now begin to say, ‘But then we deserve credit, at least, for *believing*,’ I will

immediately add that *even this faith* (or: even this exercise of faith) is not of yourselves but is *God's gift*.”[\[4\]](#)

Other quotations could be given to support this view. Clearly, the Scriptures are plain on this point, so our concern is not how man acquires faith, but the relationship of faith to justification.

A CONFUSION CONCERNING FAITH AND JUSTIFICATION

Regretfully, many authors have not addressed this subject carefully and clearly. Frequently we discuss such topics as the relationship between faith and justification assuming that others understand what we mean when in reality they are confused. Jonathan Edwards lamented the confusion over the role of faith in justification.

Here, if I may humbly express what seems evident to me, though faith be indeed the condition of justification so as nothing else is, yet this matter is not clearly and sufficiently explained by saying that faith is the condition of justification; and that because the word seems ambiguous, both in common use, and also as used in divinity. In one sense, Christ alone performs the condition of our justification and salvation; in another sense, faith is the condition of justification; in another sense, other qualifications and acts are conditions of salvation and justification too. There seems to be a great deal of ambiguity in such expressions as are commonly used, ... such as condition of salvation, what is required in order to salvation or justification, the terms of the covenant, and the like; and I believe they are understood in very different senses by different persons. And besides, as the word condition is very often understood in the common use of language, faith is not the only thing in us that is the condition of justification; for by the word condition, as it is very often (and perhaps most commonly) used, we mean any thing that may have the place of a condition in a conditional proposition, and as such is truly connected with the consequent, especially if the proposition holds both in the affirmative and negative, as the condition is either affirmed or denied. If it be that with which, or which being supposed, a thing shall be, and without which, or it being denied, a thing shall not be, we in such a case call it a condition of that thing. But in this sense faith is not the only condition of salvation or justification; for there are many things that accompany and flow from faith, with which justification shall be, and without which it will not be, and therefore are found to be put in Scripture in

conditional propositions with justification and salvation, in multitudes of places; such are love to God, and love to our brethren, forgiving men their trespasses, and many other good qualifications and acts. And there are many other things besides faith, which are directly proposed to us, to be pursued or performed by us, in order to eternal life, which if they are done, or obtained, we shall have eternal life, and if not done, or not obtained, we shall surely perish. And if faith was the only condition of justification in this sense, I do not apprehend that to say faith was the condition of justification, would express the sense of that phrase of Scripture, of being justified by faith. There is a difference between being justified by a thing, and that thing universally, necessarily, and inseparably attending justification; for so do a great many things that we are not said to be justified by. It is not the inseparable connexion with justification that the Holy Ghost would signify (or that is naturally signified) by such a phrase, but some particular influence that faith has in the affair, or some certain dependence that effect has on its influenced.[\[5\]](#)

Edwards continues in this discussion, but the above is sufficient to show the confusion that is given by such language. Edwards further labors to show that faith is the condition of justification, though it is not the condition as men ordinarily think of it. However, this only confuses the issue. Either faith is the condition of justification, or it is not. While those who believe the Calvinistic doctrine do not maintain that faith is the ground or cause of justification, it seems to be misleading to use such phrases as “faith is the condition of justification,” or “faith is the instrument of justification.”

FAITH IS NOT THE MEANS OF JUSTIFICATION

The Scriptures clearly show that faith is not the means, cause, nor condition of justification. While we have stated previously that faith is an evidence of justification, we shall endeavor to show this clearly from the Scriptures.

[Ro 3:24](#) declares that we are *justified freely by his grace*. If justification is *freely* given (*without a cause*), how then can faith be the cause of justification? Justification cannot be by the condition of faith and *without a cause* at the same time. It is confusing to maintain that faith is the condition of justification when the Scriptures declare that it is *freely* given to us.

[Ro 5:18-19](#) declares justification to be a *free gift*. If a free gift, why say that it is on the condition of faith? Verse nineteen affirms that those who are justified are *made righteous*. If the redeemed are *made righteous by a free gift*

without a cause, then what else is needed? Why say that man is justified by any condition or cause on man's part? Why teach that man must exercise faith in order to be justified when the Scriptures teach that God justifies man *freely*?

Another passage which shows the error of maintaining that justification is on the condition of faith is [2Co 5:19](#).^[6]

Here it is clearly stated that God *reconciled* the world in Christ Jesus. Vine defines *reconcile* (katallassw) in the following words:

KATALLASSO (katallassw) properly denotes to change, exchange (especially of money); hence, of persons, to change from enmity to friendship, to reconcile. With regard to the relationship between God and man, the use of this and connected words shows that primarily *reconciliation is what God accomplishes*, exercising His grace towards sinful man on the ground of the death of Christ in propitiatory sacrifice under the judgment due to sin, [2Co 5:19](#), where both the verb and the noun are used.... ^[7]

Since believers are *reconciled* to God, what need is there of anything else? Seeing that God made those who were in Christ to be His *friends*, why should man need to exercise faith to make what already exists a truth? Faith does not produce that which is not. Instead, faith is the *evidence* ([Heb 11:1](#)) of that which is. Faith does not create. Faith lays hold on that which has been created. The world of God's elect are *reconciled* in Christ Jesus; therefore, why the need for faith?

[2Co 5:21](#) also adds to our argument that faith is not a condition or cause of justification. In this passage we see that we are *made the righteousness of God in him* (i. e. in Christ). What else is to be added to one who is *made the righteousness of God*? What need is there to say that faith is the condition of justification in light of these passages?

Note carefully the words of John Owen along this same line as he explains [Ro 5:17](#):

It is plain in this verse that no more is required of any one unto justification, but that he receive the "abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness;" for this is the description that the apostle gives of those that are justified, as unto any thing that on their part is required. And as this excludes all works of righteousness which we do,—for by none of them do we receive the abundance of grace, and the gift of righteousness,—so it doth also the imputation of faith itself unto our

justification, as it is an act and duty of our own: for faith is that whereby we receive the gift of righteousness by which we are justified. For it will not be denied but that we are justified by the gift of righteousness, or the righteousness which is given unto us; for by it have we right and title unto life. But our faith is not this gift; *for that which receiveth, and that which is received, are not the same.*[\[8\]](#)

Now we draw your attention to [Eph 2:5-9](#). This passage declares the legal position of the believer in Jesus Christ. In verse five we find that we have been *quickened ... together with Christ*. *Quickened us together with* is the Greek word *suzwopoiew*. The idea expressed by Paul is that when Christ was quickened, we were quickened with Him. It is beyond dispute that Christ needed no spiritual quickening. The only quickening He received was His resurrection from the dead. By this we see that when He was quickened (resurrected), we were quickened with Him. Verse 6 makes clear that when Christ ascended into heaven we did also. This is a continuation of Paul's theme begun in [Eph 1:3](#). There, he declared that we are positioned in Christ *in heavenly places* (literally, the *heavenlies*). By studying the phrase in the general context of the epistle, we find that it refers to where Christ resides, *in the heavenlies*. Therefore, since Christ has been raised from the dead and ascended *into heaven itself* ([Heb 9:24](#)), and we were represented in Him at that time, then we were quickened with Him representatively (i.e. legally) when He was quickened. The *chosen* in Christ ([Eph 1:4](#)) are now seated *together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus* ([Eph 2:6](#)). Notice the correlation of *quickened us together, raised us up together, and made us sit together* as found in [Eph 2:5-6](#). This denotes that legal transaction of Christ made on the behalf of His people. Therefore, the quickening of Ephesians chapter two is not showing the new birth but our standing in Christ Jesus based on His work and not ours. Here we see that salvation is by grace and not by any works of man whatsoever.

Since we are legally constituted dead, resurrected, and seated in the heavenlies in Christ, what else is needed to justify us? Surely faith does not legally constitute us justified before God. He is to be pitied who rests in his own faith for justification. May the Lord Jesus, in sovereign mercy, reveal Himself and His righteousness to anyone who seeks comfort in his faith for justification. May the reader and writer rejoice in the truth that the Lord of Glory settled justification in His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension into heaven. We must ever ask ourselves if we are resting in the finished work of Christ, or are seeking to find peace and comfort in our faith? Surely the difference can be seen in man's feeble efforts and Christ's righteousness.

Surely man knows that his faith is indeed weak and faulty. If justification is dependent on man's faith, then his standing before the Righteous Judge waxes and wanes as his faith does. If this were the case one might be more justified today than tomorrow. But one cannot be clear of guilt by degrees. He is either guilty or not guilty. If he is not guilty, he is justified.

When one is brought before the court of the land, tried, and found to be not guilty, he is free. It does not matter, as far as the law is concerned, whether the man believes it or not. The man's faith does not make him not guilty, nor does his lack of faith cause him to be guilty. The law has no hold on him. He is a free man. It would be a sad situation for this man to continue to think himself guilty when in fact he is not guilty. But God's will is effectual. He will bring the sentence of not guilty to His chosen ones and give them the heart to believe it. However, we shall cover this later.

Many other passages show that justification from first to last is completely by the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that man's faith is not the cause or condition of justification. Yet for further study along this line we call your attention to such passages as [Ro 4:25](#); [6:6-11](#); [Col 1:20-22](#); [2:10,13](#); etc. However, before leaving this point we shall give a lengthy quote from Hawker.

Overlooking the sole cause of this divine blessing (i.e. salvation), which is in the free gift of God through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord, some have been led to suppose, that faith and repentance, and a new life, are the *conditional* terms on the part of man for partaking of the rich mercies of redemption. But this is a mistaken apprehension, for want of attending more closely to the sense of Scripture. A real Christian would be much hurt if it was suggested to him that he thought his righteousness and good deeds became profitable unto God, or were admitted as a part in the cause of his justification before him. But yet in effect every believer entertains sentiments similar to this, when he supposes that his faith and repentance are so many helps towards it. For the truth is, neither the one nor the other are any more the efficient means of obtaining eternal salvation than morality or good works. "It is by grace (says the apostle) that ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God," ([Eph 2:8](#).) It is all therefore a gift, a free gift, and there can be no more merit or value in one quality than in another. The ability of performing either comes from God; and therefore it cannot be supposed, that what is first given can afterwards be brought forward as our own. And indeed were we to suppose it possible that man could produce an atom, as co-operating with his

Redeemer in the means of obtaining mercy, from that moment we should rob Christ of his honour; and every virtue which now, by being wrought by Divine Grace, reflects back the praise unto Him to whom alone it is due, for imparting the ability of performing it, would then derogate from his free gift of unmerited salvation, and become a diminution of the Redeemer's glory. It is therefore the peculiar excellency of the blessed Gospel, "that the gifts and calling of God are without repentance," ([Ro 11:29](#).) Nothing of human worth moving God to such bounty in bestowing them. If it be asked, What then is faith, and to what purpose serves repentance? The answer is direct. They are so many seals and testimonies that a spirit of grace has taken place in the soul; evidences that a life of regeneration is begun in the believer's heart. But while we look upon them in this light, as most essential principles, we cannot, we dare not indeed, consider them as among the means of salvation. Though indispensable *duties*, they are not efficient *operations*. The great work of man's redemption is wholly accomplished by "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all," ([Heb 10:10](#).) And therefore "of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things: to Him be glory for ever. Amen," ([Ro 11:36](#).) I thought it proper to state this doctrine as it appears in Scripture, and shall be happy if these cursory observations serve to explain it to any one, who may not before have had right notions concerning it.[\[9\]](#)

FAITH DEFINED FROM [Heb 11](#)

Having shown that faith is not the ground, cause, or condition of justification, we shall explore the Biblical definition of faith. [Heb 11:1](#) declares, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." According to this passage, there are two aspects of faith: (1) "the *substance* of things hoped for"; (2) "the *evidence* of things not seen." Let us study this verse somewhat in detail so that we might more fully understand what faith is.

First, take note of the word *substance*. The Greek word is *upostasij*; Concerning its meaning, Thayer gives the following:

. . . **1.** *a setting or placing under; substructure, foundation:* ... **2.** *that which has foundation, is firm; hence, a. that which has actual existence; a substance, real being: ... b. the substantial quality, nature, of any person or thing: ...* [\[10\]](#)

Also, please note some of the synonyms given by Soule:

... reality, hypostasis, ... essential nature, real being, real existence, ... essence, ... soul, chief part, essential part, vital part, body, ... stuff, ... (*Theol.*) divine essence, divine being.[\[11\]](#)

By this we find that *faith* is the real *existence*, the *essence*, the *essential part*, the *vital part*, the *stuff* of things for which we hope. Faith is not a dream. It is not self-persuasion. It is not the product of one's imagination or something which has been conceived in the mind by emotional desires. This would be mysticism and existentialism. However, this is usually the contemporary concept of faith: a leap in the dark. But faith cannot actually be unless that in which faith rests is an actual fact.

The word *hope* in this passage is more than a wish for something. It is defined by Buck as follows:

Hope is the desire of some good, attended with the possibility, at least, of obtaining it; and is enlivened with joy greater or less, according to the probability there is of possessing the object of our hope.... The hope of the Christian is an expectation of all necessary good both in time and eternity, founded on the promises, relations, and perfections of God, and on the offices, righteousness, and intercession of Christ. It is a compound of desire, expectation, patience, and joy, [Ro 8:24-25](#). It may be considered, 1. As *pure*, [1Jo 3:2-3](#); as it is resident in that heart which is cleansed from sin. — 2. As *good*, [2Th 2:16](#); (in distinction from the hope of the hypocrite) as deriving its origin from God, and centering in him. — 3. It is called *lively*, [1Pe 1:3](#); as it proceeds from spiritual life, and renders one active and lively in good works. — 4. It is *courageous*, [Ro 5:5](#); [1 These. v. 8](#); because it excites fortitude in all the troubles of life, and yields support in the hour of death, [Pr 14:32](#). — 5. *Sure*, [Heb 6:19](#); because it will not disappoint us, and is fixed on a sure foundation. — 6. *Joyful*, [Ro 5:2](#); as it produces the greatest felicity in the anticipation of complete deliverance from all evil.[\[12\]](#)

Therefore, faith is not anything that comes from man. Faith is not merely resting in those things which one expects to receive. Faith is not just resting in those things which one is convinced by clear evidence that he is to receive. Faith is partly this, but it is more than this. Faith is the *real existence* or *divine essence* of those things in which one is divinely convicted that he is to receive. By this we see that when it says, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for," we understand that faith is more than trusting in those expected things. Faith is already possessing those things in which one expects to receive. Faith

is the *personal* assurance of the truth of God's promise which is essentially Christ.

Oh, what joy we see here! We do not have to see by our sight those things which God has for us who love Him. We do not have to understand how God could justify such sinful men as we are. We not only believe these things by faith, but we now enjoy them because of the *real existence* that resides in that faith through the operation of God. This is far from the modern idea of faith which is presented in the pulpits around the world today. May both writer and reader pray that God would bless the truth to be proclaimed and that error would be cast down to the dust of the earth. Yet this can only be if we know the truth for ourselves and spread it in all our activities to those with whom we daily come in contact.

Now we come to the *second* part of [Heb 11:1](#). Here we must study that part of faith which is "the *evidence* of things not seen." The word *evidence* carries the idea of proof or conviction.[\[13\]](#) Commenting on this word (*elegcoj*), Trench gives the following:

... but *elegcoj* implies not merely the charge, but the truth of the charge, and further the manifestation of the truth of the charge; nay more than all this, very often also the acknowledgement, if not outward, yet inward, of its truth on the part of the accused; it being the glorious prerogative of the truth in its highest operation not merely to assert itself, and to silence the adversary, but to silence him by convincing him of his error.[\[14\]](#)

And in line with this agrees John Owen:

Of these *invisible* things, as they have an influence into our profession, faith is said to be the *elegcoj*; the "evidence," the "demonstration," that which demonstrates, the "revelation " Properly, it is such a proof or demonstration of any thing as carries with it an answer unto and a confutation of all objections unto the contrary: a convincing evidence, plainly reproving and refuting all things that pretend against the truth so evidenced. So it is sometimes used for a *reproof*, sometimes for a *conviction*, sometimes for an *evident demonstration*. See the use of the verb to this purpose, [Mt 18:15](#); [Lu 3:19](#); [Joh 3:20](#); [8:9](#); [16:8](#); [1Co 14:24](#); [Eph 5:13](#); [Tit 1:9](#); [Jas 2:9](#): and of the noun, [2Ti 3:16](#)....

Faith is that gracious power of the mind whereby it firmly assents unto divine revelation upon the sole authority of God, the revealer, as the first essential truth, and fountain of all truth. It is unto faith that the

revelation of these invisible things is made, which it mixeth and incorporates itself withal, whereby it gives an evidence unto them....

Faith, in its being thus “the evidence of things not seen,” is the great means of the preservation of believers in constant, patient profession of the gospel, against all opposition, and under the fiercest persecutions; which is the thing the apostle aims to demonstrate.[\[15\]](#)

After studying the above, we see that in the average pulpit today, faith is not, correctly presented. Faith is a work of God in the soul whereby the believer has been given the *essence* and *evident demonstration* of the truths of God. And before one can exercise faith in something, that something must be a fact. Faith is not the essential part of that which is **NOT** but of that which **IS**. Faith does not create. Faith only finds security in that which exists. Faith can only show and make manifest that which already exists. “*Faith is indeed the evidence of things not seen*, but it is not the evidence of things that are not....”[\[16\]](#)

William Styles concisely points out this twofold aspect of faith as follows:

We believe that Faith should be regarded — Firstly as a **principle** or faculty imparted by the Holy Spirit to every Regenerated person ([Eph 2:8](#); [Php 1:29](#); [2Ti 1:5](#); [2Pe 1:1](#)); and Secondly as an **act** which arises from the existence of this principle and which specially characterises the true children of God ([Mr 4:40](#); [11:22](#); [Ro 4:19](#); [10:17](#); [2Co 1:24](#); [Eph 3:17](#); [Col 1:4](#); [2:5-7](#); [1Jo 5:4](#); [Heb 6:12](#)).[\[17\]](#)

Later Styles quotes William Huntington:

Faith, which is a fruit of God’s Spirit, is a Divine and unshaken persuasion of the reality of a Divine report, deeply impressed on the mind, and is the result of an eternal union which subsisted between Christ and His elect from everlasting; the bond of which union is God’s everlasting love to Christ and His elect in Him.[\[18\]](#)

“Faith is not what we FEEL or see, it is a simple TRUST In what the God of Love has said of Jesus, as the ‘just,’ What Jesus is, and that alone, is faith’s delightful plea; It never deals with SINFUL self, nor RIGHTEOUS self, IN ME.

It tells me I am counted ‘DEAD’ by God, in His own word; It tells me I am ‘BORN AGAIN’ in Christ, my RISEN Lord. If He is free, then I am free, from all unrighteousness; If He is just, then I am just, He is MY righteousness.”[\[19\]](#)

Having seen that faith is both *substance* and *evidence*, a *principle* and an *act*, we need to notice another way in which faith is used in the Scriptures. Sometimes faith is given to indicate its object.^[20] This can be clearly seen in [Ga 3:23,25](#). The faith that came is Christ, that is, His Person and work which is the righteousness that justifies the believer. Notice the words of Lenski:

“The faith” is to be taken objectively yet not as designating a period. It designates the substance of an justifying and saving faith in the hearts of believers. Before this substance came in Christ it existed only in promise and was embraced by faith as the sure promise of God (Abraham is the example). Then Christ brought the fulfillment, and in him this stood fully revealed, from then on believers embraced the fulfilled and revealed promise, i.e., the Christ who had actually come as promised, “the faith” in this sense.^[21]

Commenting on [Ga 3:25](#), John Brown gives the following:

In strict propriety of language, it is not Jesus Christ personally considered, but the truth about Jesus Christ. which is the object of faith; and though we have no doubt that the coming of the Seed, in reference to whom the promise was made, and the coming of faith, refer to the same period, yet it does not follow that the expressions are synonymous. The Son of God and the Messiah are descriptive denominations of the same individual, but they are by no means synonymous terms, just as the prince of Wales, and the eldest son of the monarch of Great Britain, and the heir-apparent to the British throne, may all be descriptive appellations of the same individual, though each appellation has its own distinct signification. The departure of the sceptre from Judah and the coming of the Messiah, are descriptions of the same period; but it would be absurd to say the two phrases mean the same thing. In the same manner, the coming of the Seed and the coming of faith refer to the same period, but it does not follow that the phrases are synonymous.

By faith, I apprehend we are to understand, not the *act of believing*, but *the revelation believed*, just as in our language we call the article which a man believes his creed, his belief, his faith. The expression literally rendered is, *the faith*, and looks back to the phrase, *faith of Christ*, in the preceding verse.^[22]

Though Brown makes a distinction between the Seed, which is Christ, and that which Christ accomplished in His Person and work, the two are closely

connected and may at times be hard to distinguish from one another. In fact, when one looks to Christ as his justifying righteousness, he looks not only at what Christ did in His work but also to Christ Himself. Faith rests in Christ's Person as well as His work. Therefore, the Person of Christ and the work of Christ together are the object of one's faith, and this is what justifies the believer. This is what is in view in [Ro 3:30](#). Here we see that the circumcision (the believers under the law prior to Christ's coming) and the uncircumcision (the believers since the coming of Christ) are justified by faith as its object (the Person and work of Christ).

THE PHRASE "JUSTIFIED BY FAITH"

With this in mind, we shall now study the Biblical phrase *justified by faith*. The Scriptures declare that we are *justified by faith*. It is, therefore, essential that we understand what is meant by this if we are to have a proper perception of justification.

It is evident that the modern concept (that it is man's faith) is erroneous. If the faith under consideration be that which is conceived in the mind and heart of man as that which justifies him, then faith would be a work of man. This is a violation of the Scriptures ([Ro 3:28](#); [4:2](#); etc.).

Sound and honest men interpret the phrase *justified by faith* two ways. *First*, that *justified by faith* means justified by *the object of faith*. This is seen in passages such as [Ro 4:3](#); [Ge 15:6](#); [Ga 3:16](#) compared to [Ga 3:23,25](#). *Second*, the phrase *justified by faith* means the experimental reception of justification and faith is the evidence of the legal (judicial, immanent) act. After giving much study to both opinions, I believe that the term *justified by faith* includes both. The two are so interwoven that they provide the warp and woof of God's work of justifying man.

I trust that the reader will forgive me for quoting at length from Hawker. Commenting on [Ro 5:1](#), he states the following: [Ro 5:1](#)

I beg the Reader to observe the difference between the righteousness of God in Christ, which is the sole *cause* of justification and faith, which is the *effect* of that righteousness, and by which it is enjoyed. A sinner is not justified by his faith, for, if so, in that case it would be the work of faith; and what difference would there then be whether the work of faith, or the deeds of the law, became either in part, or the whole, the cause of his justification? The Apostle, in one of the preceding Chapters, hath clearly stated the difference between the righteousness of God which justifieth, and the faith of the believer, who

by faith enjoys that justification. *The righteousness of God* (saith he), *which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe.* [Ro 3:22](#). — It is the righteousness of God which justifies. And this is *unto all*, and *upon all*, not their act, but the Lord's; not their merit, but the Lord's grace. It is revealed *from* faith *to* faith, [Ro 1:17](#) — not procured *by* faith, for faith comes *from* it, and is not the cause of it. For faith itself, as an act of our's, goes no further towards our justification than any other grace. And faith, as well as every other grace, is received wholly from Christ, and can constitute no part, no, not an atom, in justification; for this is solely in and by Christ.

I have thought it proper to state this doctrine in the clearest manner possible, to guard against any mistake which might arise either here or elsewhere, when the doctrine of justification by faith is the subject. The Apostle did not mean to say, that our justification is by our faith, for he had in the very concluding verse of the former Chapter declared, that *Christ was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification*. Hence the act had already past. And the *therefore* with which he begins this Chapter, is the immediate consequence of it. And some indeed read the verse in this way: *Therefore being justified through our Lord Jesus Christ, by faith we have peace with God*.

Pause, Reader! and contemplate the boundless mercy! We have *peace with God*! peace in the blood of the cross. *We who were enemies to God by wicked works, hath he now reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present us holy, and unblameable, [sic.] and unreprouable in his sight.* [Col 1:20-22](#). — Oh! the blessedness of a justified state in Christ! Oh! the comfort, when by faith in Christ, the soul enjoys it! And we have *access* also by Christ's justification to the throne of grace, We are said to *stand* in this grace before the Lord. For by our adoption character, we have the privilege of children, whereby we cry *Abba*, Father. An holy boldness, a familiarity at the heavenly court, as those who are well known there, and well beloved there, in Christ. Reader! do you know the blessedness of this state, and are you in the daily habit of using it? Oh! Sir! it is a blessed, yea, a very blessed way, of maintaining fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, when, by virtue of a conscious justified state in Christ, we go often to court, and feel ourselves there as children at home, when in their father's house. And ought it not to be so with every child of God? Hath not Jesus opened this new and living way by his blood? And doth he not dwell in the midst of the

throne, to keep it open by his intercession! Oh! then, if you know the Lord, if you are in a justified state in Christ, let us make use of our high privilege. *Let us (saith the Psalmist) enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the Lord is good, his mercy is everlasting, and his truth endureth to all generations.* [Ps 100:4-5.\[23\]](#)

Even John Brine, who believed in eternal justification and in faith not being a duty to be performed by all men for salvation, maintains that faith is the instrument by which the believer receives justification.[\[24\]](#) The following outlines Brine's view:

Justification, properly speaking, as it seems to me, is an immanent Act in God, *viz.* the Act of his Will not to impute Sin to his Elect, but to impute to them the Righteousness of Christ; wherefore, in his Mind, they are discharged of Guilt, and reputed righteous. Now, as this is not a transient, but an immanent Act, it requires not so much as the present Existence of the Object, much less the Being of Faith in the Object justified. God's Purpose to lay their Sins on Christ necessarily supposes, that it was his Intention not to impute them unto their Persons: And his Decree, that Christ should come under their Obligation to the Law, that he might obey it for them, as necessarily supposes a Will in God to impute his Obedience to them, which is their Justification in the divine Mind. Yet, I deny not Justification, when it is understood of the *declared manifest* State of this, or that *particular* Person, to be by Faith, and do not think that it is *previous* to Regeneration.

I am not able to discern the least Mistake in this Account of Justification. Permit me to recite what some eminent and *learned Divines* have said upon the Subject. *Justification is understood either actively in Respect of God, who justifies, or passively in Respect of Man, who is justified. Justification active signifies the Absolution of God, whereby he absolveth a guilty Man from Guilt, on Account of the Satisfaction of Christ, and reputeth him just for the Sake of his Righteousness imputed. From hence, first, it is evident, that this differs from passive because it is done by one undivided Act. But passive, which consists in the Application of the Righteousness of Christ, is not; for, as often as we sin, we should apply to the Righteousness of Christ. Hence, in the Lord's Prayer; we are commanded to pray daily that God would remit to us our Sins. Secondly, active precedeth Faith, passive followeth, as that which is thro' Faith.* For, thro' Faith, we receive

Remission of Sins, and an Inheritance among them that are sanctified.[\[25\]](#)

Brine gives many other quotes which show that such men as William Pemble, Dr. Ridgley, and others believed that faith is the means of receiving justification. Also many quotes could be given to show that this is not an obscure opinion of Brine's. And we could give quotes from such men as John Owen, Thomas Goodwin, John Gill, Thomas Boston, and others to show that sound and honest men do not differ on the fact that it is faith as the *object* (i. e., faith as it lays hold on its object, Jesus Christ) that justifies, and that faith exercised in the soul *receives* and *gives evidence* of justification.

Therefore, the phrase *justified by faith* does not teach that faith is the cause of justification any more than the phrase *justified by works* teaches that works is the cause of justification. We have previously shown that the cause, condition, and ground of justification is the Person and work of Christ. Though faith, which is the work of God in the soul, receives justification, it is also an evidence of one's justification.

Reader, can you not rejoice in this truth? Is it not precious to you that your faith is not the cause of your justification? If it were, then, when your faith is weak, so is justification. No, your legal standing before the thrice holy God is not dependent on you nor anything you can do. Oh, the gracious mercy of our great God and Savior! May the Holy Spirit cause this truth to burn in your soul and provoke you to love and good works for God's honor and glory. May the God of mercy impress this on your heart so that your life would be a consuming fire to rise up as a sweet savor in His nostrils. But if you do not understand this blessed doctrine, flee to Christ. May you fall on your face in humiliation before the Lord and seek Him in His Word. The Lord has never turned away an humble sinner who honestly seeks Him.

We cannot close this chapter without making it clear that faith is very important. Sad to say, but in our day many do not give the proper respect to faith. Many deny that faith is necessary. Oh, how our heart weeps when we hear such error being proclaimed under the name of Christianity! When we study the Scriptures we see that faith is not a matter of indifference. To deny that faith is essential is to deny the effectual work of God the Holy Spirit. God is faithful to His Word and does produce faith in His people, and that faith is active. However, we shall study more about faith in the next chapter where we plan to consider the place of works in justification.

Foot Notes Chapter Seven

- [1] Charles Hodge, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians* (New York: n.p., 1856, repr., London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1964), p. 118.
- [2] *Ibid.*, page 120.
- [3] R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Galatians, Ephesians and Philippians* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1937, 1961), pp. 422-423.
- [4] William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1967), p. 122. Hendriksen's discussion of the various opinions of this passage is worth studying.
- [5] Jonathan Edwards, "Justification By Faith Alone," *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, rev. by Edward Hickman (n.p., 1834; repr., Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1974), vol. 1, p. 623.
- [6] See pages 57 ff. for some discussion of this passage.
- [7] W. E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1966), vol. 3, p. 260. Emphasis added.
- [8] John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold, (London: Johnstone & Hunter, 1850-1853: repr., London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1967), vol. 5, p. 330. Emphasis added.
- [9] Robert Hawker, *The Works of the Rev. Robert Hawker* (London: E. Justins & Son, 1831), vol. I, pp. 404-405n.
- [10] Joseph Henry Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1967). pp. 644-645.
- [11] Richard Soule, *A Dictionary of English Synonymes*, rev. ed. by George H. Howison (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, and Company, 1891, 1920). p. 413.
- [12] Charles Buck, *A Theological Dictionary*, ed. George Bush (Philadelphia, PA: J. J. Woodward, 1935), pp. 171-172.
- [13] Friedrich Büchsel in Gerhard Kittel, ed. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964). vol. 2. p. 476.
- [14] Richard Chenevix Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament* (repr., London: James Clarke & Co. Ltd., 1961). p. 14.
- [15] John Owen, *An Exposition of Hebrews*. ed W. H. Goold (London: Johnstone & Hunter. 1855: repr., Marshallton, DE: The National Foundation for Christian Education, 1969). vol. 7, pp. 11-12.

[16] John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts* (London: T. Smith, 1814; reprs., Streamwood, IL: Primitive Baptist Library, 1981), vol. 2, p. 478.

[17] William Jeyes Styles, *A Manual of Faith and Practice: Designed for Young and Enquiring Christians* (London: Robert Banks & Son and J. Parnell, 1897), pp. 186-187. Some of the Scriptural references are mine.

[18] Ibid., p. 190.

[19] Ibid., p. 190.

[20] Though faith is also given in some passages to designate a system of belief ([Jude 3](#): [Eph 4:5,13](#)), this usage is not germane to our present discussion.

[21] R. C. H. Lenski. p. 178.

[22] John Brown, *An Exposition of the Epistle to the Galatians* (repr., Marshallton, DE: Sovereign Grace Publishers, 1970), pp. 170-171.

[23] Robert Hawker, *The Poor Man's Commentary on the New Testament*, (London: Sherwood, Gilbert, and Piper, 1826), vol. 2, pp. 260-261. Emphasis his.

[24] Our purpose is not to agree or disagree with Brine on the subject of “duty faith.” All we desire to show is that he did not differ with sound men concerning the place of faith in justification. However for those who desire to study the question of “duty faith,” we recommend the works of John Brine wherein they can be found. (Many are modules in SwordSearcher, as well as on the internet. JKB, April 2010) For a list of the works of Brine see Appendix B. [Justify 14 Appendix B \(A List of the Writings of John Brine\)](#)

[25] John Brine, *Motives to Love and Unity among CALVINISTS, who differ in some Points* (London: John Ward, George Keith, and John Eynon, 1754), pages 10-11. Brine's reference for the quote given was *Justificatio fumitur vel active respectu Dei, qui justificat, vel passive, respects Hominis, qui justificatur, &c.* Hoornb. Instit Theolog p. 361, 362.

CHAPTER 8 JUSTIFICATION AND WORKS

We shall now consider the relationship of works to justification. Sometimes people read passages such as those found in the book of James concerning justification and works and erroneously conclude that man is legally justified by works. The book of James has given more than one person difficulty over the relationship between works and justification. In fact, Martin Luther did not like this epistle because he could not harmonize James'

teaching about justification with that of Paul. Luther called James *stramineam epistolam*^[1] (i. e., an epistle of straw). Philip Schaff outlines Luther's reasons for rejecting it:

He rejects the epistle first of all, "because it gives righteousness to works in flat contradiction to Paul and all other Scriptures;" secondly, "because, while undertaking to teach Christian people, it does not once mention the passion, the resurrection, the Spirit of Christ; it names Christ twice, but teaches nothing about him; it calls the law a law of liberty, while Paul calls it a law of bondage, of wrath, of death and of sin." He offered his doctor's cap to any who could harmonize James and Paul on the subject of justification, and jests about the trouble Melancthon took to do it. He made the contradiction unnecessarily stronger by inserting his *allein (sola)* before *durch den Glauben* in [Ro 3:28](#). He first attacked the Epistle of James in his book *De Captivitate Babylonica*, in 1520, where he calls it an epistle unworthy of the apostolical spirit.^[2]

Some have taken the opposite view and advocated that works are part of the ground of justification. Note the following:

We may be justified by grace, but not by grace alone; by Christ, but not by Christ alone; by blood, but not by blood alone; by the Spirit, but not by the Spirit alone; in the name of the Lord Jesus, but not by His name alone; by faith, but not by faith alone; by works, but not by works alone.^[3]

Upon the surface it appears that James and Paul are in disagreement, or that justification is produced by a combination of faith and works. However, we must consider the Scriptures as a whole to understand the truth of any doctrine. The Scriptures teach that grace and works are opposite: "And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work" ([Ro 11:6](#)). [Ro 3:14](#) and [Ro 5:18](#) declare that justification is a *free gift*. If an individual must do anything (blink his eyes, walk the aisle, mentally trust, etc.) it cannot be a free gift. That justification is free and not based on any work of man should be clear. Yet there are babes in Christ who have difficulty in rightly understanding the Word of the Lord. There are also those who hate the truth of the Scriptures and, because of their depraved heart, deny the truth of the Bible. Due to the depraved nature of the believer, he continually finds

himself seeking to gain approval from the Lord by his works. Let us study some of these works which man seeks to perform in order to gain acceptance with the thrice holy God of heaven and earth.

THE WORK OF FAITH

If justification is by the work of faith, that is, if man must exercise faith in order to be justified, then he can never have any assurance of his salvation. He would only be justified while he had faith. When he quit believing, he would not be justified. Several times a day an individual could be justified and not justified. He would be in and out of salvation as often as he would be in and out of faith. Brine explained it in this way:

If by faith we are actually brought into, or fixed in a justified state, it will follow that this grace has a causal influence on our Justification; which it is evident it has not, because Justification is no other than imputation of Christ's righteousness to us, which is an act proper to God. If our actual Justification is by faith, it is either by the habit, or the act of faith: Now, as I apprehend, there is no ground to assert that Justification is by the habit of faith, because no action can be ascribed to faith as a habit; and should any assert that it is by the act of faith, I would enquire of them, whether Justification is only by the first act of faith, and not also by renewed acts? If it is only by the first act of faith, it then evidently follows, that faith has not the same concern or use in our Justification, in its renewed acts, as in the first act of it. Besides, if our actual Justification depends upon, or is by repeated acts of faith; this, as a necessary consequence, will arise from thence, That when faith is not in exercise, believers are not justified; because, according to this, faith gives actual being to Justification.[\[4\]](#)

Dear reader, can you rightly say that you want to be justified before the Holy and Righteous God by the work of your faith? Do you desire to be found standing at the bar of Justice depending on your work of faith? How can you find peace and rest for your soul by believing that your justification is dependent on your faith? Though justification is received by faith, do not depend on faith for justification. Though your faith may wax and wane, rise and fall, due to the issues of life, justification, being a legal act, is the same yesterday, today, and forever in the finished works of the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh blessed thought:

How sovereign is the love of God
 To Israel's favoured race!
 Paid is the mighty debt they owed;
 Salvation is of grace.

His love, without beginning, knew
 Each chosen sinner's case;
 And sent his equal Son to show
 Salvation is of grace.

Immanuel had not bled and died,
 Nor suffered in our place,
 But for this truth (O sound it wide!),
 Salvation is of grace.

We had not known and loved the Son,
 Nor sung his worthy praise,
 But that himself the work begun;
 Salvation is of grace.[\[5\]](#)

WORKS OF OUTWARD GAIN

While many seek to be legally justified by their works, others seek experimental justification by works. It is a sad thing to see one working and doing in order to gain daily assurance of their justification. Often I find various individuals determining their standing before God by their religious activities, material gains, good health, and emotional experiences. This sort of religion is condemned by God. In fact, the Scriptures declare that we are to separate ourselves from those who teach such things because they are teaching contrary to godliness. Notice the words of Paul, "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself" ([1Ti 6:3-5](#)). This shows that the "prosperity doctrine" teachers are *destitute of the truth* and teach those things which are not *according to godliness*. In like manner those who teach "another gospel" are to be "accursed" ([Ga 1:6-9](#)). How we need God-honoring men in pulpits who know the truth of the Bible, and will proclaim it to the people. The reason there is so much unholiness found in professed believers is due to this lack of preaching the truth about how man comes to the Holy God. While modern

preachers are busy with their counseling sessions, seminars, youth groups, dating services, and other such functions endeavoring to persuade individuals to live godly, they need instead to learn the truth of God's Word about how man is justified and to proclaim it to them without wavering.

WORKS OF FEELING AND RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

Yet others base their acceptance with God on their feelings and so trust in their works of conscience or emotions. We need to remember the words of Edward Mote:

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.[\[6\]](#)

While some are trusting their feelings, others are depending on their religious activities such as, Bible reading, prayer, church attendance, and visiting the widows and needy. But when the individual equates his standing with God on such deeds he is looking to his works instead of the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Bible reading, for example, is good and one should read the Scriptures daily to get a steady diet of the Bread of Heaven. However, to assume that one is justified because he reads his Bible daily, is to make Bible reading a work. This is true with any other religious duty.

I often meet people who do this. They conclude that they must read the Bible so that God will bless them. If they have some sickness, or bad turn of event, they conclude that God is angry with them. But let them receive some material benefit, and they reason that they are highly favored of God. I remember visiting an individual upon one occasion and when inquiring about her condition, she responded that she must be doing something right, because she was in good health. It is amazing how often people speak of God's goodness when events seem to be going their way, but when the events seem to be against them, they cease to speak of God's goodness. The truth of the matter is, all events are for the good of the believer ([Ro 8:28](#)). Jacob concluded that everything was against him, when in fact, all those events were working for his good ([Ge 42:36](#); [50:20](#)).

Since many base their justification on emotional experiences, material benefits, and religious activities, let us again emphasize that justification is without works. It is free. [Ro 3:20](#) states, "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 verses twenty-four and twenty-five, we find that justification

is *freely* given and it is *without the deeds of the law* in verse twenty-eight. Commenting on the word *freely* in verse twenty-four, James Denney has the following to say:

dwrean is used in a similar connection in [Ga 2:21](#). It signifies “for nothing”. Justification, we are told here, costs the sinner nothing; in Galatians we are told that if it comes through law, then Christ died “for nothing”. Christ is all in it ([1Co 1:30](#)): hence its absolute freeness. th autou cariti (by his grace) repeats the same thing: as dwrean signifies that we contribute nothing, th autou caritisignifies that the whole charge is freely supplied by God.[\[7\]](#)

Many similar quotes contain this same theme.[\[8\]](#) Over and over the Scriptures declare that justification is not by our works. [Ro 4:2,5,13-16](#) make it clear that works have no place in the cause of man’s justification. This is a hard thing for sinful man to accept. It is natural for him to think that there is something that he must do. It does not seem quite right for God to let man go free without some requirements placed on him. For God to allow sinful man to go free, and not be punished for his sins, is really too good to be true. Surely we must do *something* to make things right with God. But man can do *nothing* to make things right with God, even if he wanted to do so. Fallen man is helpless. Depraved man wants nothing to do with God. Sinful man wants to exert himself and receive glory and honor to himself. This is the central turning point of the whole matter: glory to God or glory to man. The glory belongs to God. TO HIM BE THE GLORY! Wonder of wonders, the justification of sinners before this holy God is completely by His grace!

Dear reader, I realize that it is too simple. I know that it seems that you must do something. You cannot. God will not have your filthy works-righteousness ([Isa 64:6](#)). Can you not rejoice in the exceeding rich mercy and grace of the true God of heaven and earth concerning His way of justifying sinners? Can you not bow humbly and reverently to the only Way of life? Can you not submit your reasonings and high ideas to the truth of the Word of God? God has said that He will not give His to glory to another ([Isa 48:11](#)). He will not allow any other to receive the glory as to how man is just with Him. He that does not honor the Son in His redemptive work hates God ([Joh 5:23](#); [14:6](#); [15:23](#)). Often man seeks to deny that Jesus Christ is the all-important issue. But the Word of God declares, again and again, the truth of Christ: “He that hateth me hateth my Father also.” This cannot be any plainer. Those who say that God accepts man’s ignorant worship of God are teaching the opposite of what the Lord Jesus taught. This is what Paul called, “Another

gospel: which is not another” ([Ga 1:6-9](#)). The truth of God’s Word is much too simple for the wicked heart of man. Man is continually trying to add or subtract from God’s standard. Man had rather devise his own scheme than to bow his haughty opinions to “thus saith the Word of God.” But know this. He who robs God of His glory and seeks to preach another gospel shall fall under the condemnation of God’s Word: “Let him be accursed.” However, when man sees himself for what he is, bows to the truth of God’s Word, and falls on the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, then he gives glory and honor to the triune God of heaven and earth. It seems too good to be true that God justifies a sinner apart from his works. Yet, this is the truth of the matter. Salvation is by grace! Those who seek to be justified by works are not in grace ([Ga 5:4](#)). That works and grace are opposites is clearly seen throughout the Scriptures. Nevertheless, we shall study [Ga 2:16](#); [3:6-14](#), in order more clearly to understand what the Word of God has to say concerning this matter.

WORKS OF LAW CANNOT JUSTIFY

The book of Galatians was written to teach the distinction of works (i.e., of the law and all other works) and grace. B. H. Carroll’s introductory comments on [Ga 3:1-14](#) are worth quoting:

The doctrinal part of the epistle (3-4), relates to justification by faith without works. . . .

We commence this chapter with a great question, not how shall a man as originally created in righteousness, knowledge, and true holiness be justified before God, but how shall a fallen, depraved, sinful, and condemned man be made just before God? This is the great question that Paul discusses. While this question is treated fragmentarily in many passages of both the Old and New Testaments, it is discussed elaborately and logically in only two books—Galatians and Romans—the latter speedily following the former. So far as Galatians is concerned, the argument is confined to chapters 3-5, and as the argument is continuous without a break, it is a pity to have it broken up into chapter divisions.[\[9\]](#)

Paul continually declares in this epistle that man can never be justified by any of his works, and especially by the works of the law. [Ga 2:16](#) is quite clear on this point: “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the

law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.” Notice that the text asserts that we are not justified by man’s faith, but we are “justified by the *faith of Christ*.” The Scriptures declare that the believer does believe in Christ so that he might be justified by the faith of Christ; that is, he is “justified by Christ” ([Ga 2:17](#)). Concerning the word *justified*, Lenski says:

The passive *dikaioutai* has God as the agent. The verb, the noun, and the adjective are always forensic; so are the opposites; so are the synonyms, in Hebrew, in Greek, in the Old Testament, in the Apocrypha, in the New Testament. The sense is, “to *declare* righteous” and never, “to *make* righteous.” This is the sense in even secular statements. Always a judge is involved who pronounces a verdict. When the judge is God, the verdict establishes a relation to God and to his judgment, to his *dikh* or norm of right. A *dikaioj* is “righteous” because God so declares in his judicial verdict. *Dikaioj* is the quality of “righteousness” possessed by him whom the heavenly Judge pronounces righteous. The passive is to be understood in the same sense: “to be pronounced righteous,” and is never converted into the middle “to become righteous.”[\[10\]](#)

Later Lenski defines what is meant by the word faith as is used in this verse:

Πιστις is a correlative term that involves the object on which faith or trust rests, which is here “Jesus Christ,” his person as the Savior together with his office and his redemptive work....

So faith in Christ Jesus is the opposite of all works of law; they exclude each other: to be justified “as the result of faith” == to be justified *not* “as a result of works of law.” The two will not mingle. He who would put one foot on faith and the other on such works plunges into the gulf.[\[11\]](#)

This is clearly what we have seen throughout our study. Our justification before God is not by works of any kind on our part. We do not produce faith by any strength or wisdom of our own. The faith that is exercised by us, which is the gift of God ([Eph 2:8](#)), is not a work performed by us that justifies us. The faith that we exercise is trusting in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ and in nothing else for righteousness. It is the faith of Christ (“his office and his redemptive work”) that justifies us, and by faith we not only receive this justification but that same faith is an evidence ([Heb 11:1](#)) that we are justified.[\[12\]](#)

If the above passage is not clear enough, [Ga 3:6-14](#) should be. This is a rich passage in the teaching of justification. It is clearly seen in these verses that justification can in no way be by works of any sort. As we studied imputation and faith in the book of Romans and their relationship to justification, we saw that Abraham was the central figure. Remember that Abraham is used for two reasons: first, to show the Jews that their father was justified prior to circumcision and thereby excluded law works; secondly, that the first time that believing is mentioned in connection with justification in the Scriptures is with reference to Abraham in [Ge 15:6](#). Therefore, Abraham is the father not of the Jews only, but also to the Gentiles, to the believers of both. Justification is not confined to a race. Justification is always associated in the Scriptures with the believer. However, the cause, ground, condition of justification is Christ's righteousness and never any human act, not even faith. Since we have already covered the life of Abraham in an earlier chapter, we will not tire the reader by doing so again. Nevertheless, we suggest that you study this passage, and see that Paul conclusively proves that God ignores all works of man in connection with justification. At the same time, we do not want the reader to think that faith is not important. It is most assuredly essential in the life of him who is justified. It is the hand of the soul whereby the child of God receives the justification secured for him by the Lord Jesus Christ. Faith not only receives the justification of God, it is also an evidence (just as works are) to the believer that he is justified. Since faith is not given its proper place in the religious world today, considered by many as unimportant, let us study this point somewhat.

FAITH AND WORKS ARE ESSENTIAL

There are many passages of Scripture that plainly declare that the elect do have faith. The problem in a study of this nature is to know which verses to omit. I suggest that the reader study this subject further by examining all of the verses concerning belief and faith in a good concordance. We will consider only the most relevant verses here.

Let us first look at [Joh 3:18](#). "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." This shows that the believer is justified and that whoever is not a believer is under condemnation. Remember that condemnation is the opposite of justification. Christ considered belief to be an essential matter. All Bible believers consider faith to be important. John Brine, when writing against those who maintained that faith was a duty upon all men, did not deny the importance of faith. He said the following:

Regeneration and Sanctification are the proper Work of God, in the Souls of Men. Regeneration is absolutely necessary, none can be saved without it. Men are passive in it, and the human Will is not a concurring Cause, with the Grace of God, in its Production. God operates effectually herein, and is not, nor can be frustrated of his End in his gracious Influences on the Souls of his People. The regenerate Principle consents unto the Law, that it is good, delights in, and serves it. So that true Faith in Christ is productive of holy Obedience, and *worketh by Love*. . . .

It is granted, that God requires regenerate Persons to act Faith on Christ for Salvation; none deny it. . . .

And, tho' he differs from you, in thinking, that *special* Faith in Christ is not a Duty enjoined by the Covenant of Works: He believes the *Necessity* of that Faith in order to Salvation, and agrees with you fully, in respect to the *Author, Object, Nature, Fruits, and Effects of it*.[\[13\]](#)

Many passages from so-called “hyper-calvinist” writings contend that faith is not looked upon in an indifferent manner as is done today by Arminians and alleged Calvinists. We live in an age when most claim that a belief in anything is evidence of one’s salvation. This is not true: “He that believeth not is condemned already.”

In [Joh 6:35](#), Jesus affirms that the believer does not thirst nor hunger. Here our blessed Lord pressed the point that He was the bread of life and the fountain of living waters. He declares in [Joh 6:37](#), in no uncertain terms, that the elect shall believe on Him: “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” For those who maintain that “cometh” does not refer to believing, I refer them to [Joh 6:35](#) where “cometh” and “believeth” are synonymous. And the entire context of [Joh 6](#) plainly teaches that this is the meaning of these words. Jesus declared, in [Joh 6:45](#), that all of the elect will believe and come to Him. This verse teaches that this is certain because the work is of God: the Father will teach *all* of the sheep; all that are taught of the Father *come* unto Christ.

Again Jesus drives the point home to the Christ-hating Jews in [Joh 10:27-28](#). As the Jews tempted Him with their questions, He clearly explained to them that the reason they were not believing Him was because they were not His sheep. Then He further states, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.” Notice that the Lord’s sheep *hear* the Shepherd and *follow* Him. Christ taught earlier that those who were truly the children of

Abraham would do the works of Abraham; that is, they would believe in Him as Abraham did ([Joh 8:39,47,56](#)).

Oh, the great joy in knowing that the Lord will not lose one of His! The Lord will seek out His own and give them a new heart which causes them to know the Savior. Yes, when the Great Shepherd and Bishop of our soul speaks to the sinner and calls him out of darkness into His marvelous light, the sinner will come. The Lord will not allow His own to follow another. God works effectually upon the heart. His hand is not shortened, nor is His arm weak. The Lord God is omnipotent. He sees to it that His own hear the voice of the Shepherd and follow Him. Those who teach that the sheep of God will follow another are teaching another gospel. May God deliver us from such men. When we see that the Lord does bring us unto Him by His mighty power, we realize that all the glory belongs to Him. By this, we are made to bow our heads in humble adoration, and lift up our hearts in praise unto Him Who is mighty to save ([Isa 63:1](#)).

Notice [Ac 13:48](#). Here we find Paul preaching to Gentiles in Antioch, Pisidia. When the Gentiles heard the message of salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ, they believed. The text plainly declares that not all that heard Paul believed. Only those ordained unto eternal life believed. To say that some of those who were ordained to eternal life believed, and some who were ordained did not believe, is to disregard the Scriptures.

Now let us consider two passages in the book of Romans: [Ro 1:16-17](#); [10:4-17](#). The theme of the book of Romans is “the righteousness of God.”^[14] Paul teaches, in [Ro 1:16-17](#), that the just (i.e., those who are justified) live by faith. In order to live by faith, one must exercise faith or believe. This passage plainly states that the preaching of the gospel reveals “the righteousness of God.” This is why Paul gave his life to preach the gospel ([2Ti 2:10](#)). He knew how important it was for saints of God to know the truth of the work of the Lord of Glory. Paul knew that the truth of the Scriptures was identical to the truth of the work of God in the souls of His sheep. When God implants divine life in an individual, He writes the law of God in the heart and mind of that person ([Heb 8:10-11](#)). In other words, the Lord places the same word of faith in the heart of a man that is found in the Scriptures. When the gospel is preached in the power of God to a person who has the law of the Lord written in his heart, then “the righteousness of God” is revealed or manifested from the faith of the Word of God to the faith in the heart of that individual. The Scriptures tell us that all of the Lord’s people shall know Him ([Heb 8:11](#)). This is why it is so important that the Scriptures are preached in all purity. Away with those who do not seek to understand properly God’s

Word and to proclaim it clearly so that the people know what God has said. It is the gospel, and only the gospel, in all purity that makes men free. Unless men see the truth of God's righteousness and humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, they will try, as did the Jews, "to establish their own righteousness" and refuse to submit "themselves unto the righteousness of God" ([Ro 10:3](#)). In [Ro 10:4](#), we see that the believer's righteousness is Christ. The believer rests in the finished work of the Lord. Christ finished the work that the Father gave Him to do ([Joh 17:4](#); [19:30](#)). Christ is the end, or fulfillment, of the law to the believer. The believer looks only to the perfect righteousness of the Lord for justification. If a person looks to anything or anyone else, Christ is not the end of the law to him. The "righteousness which is of faith" confesses that Jesus is Lord and believes in the heart that the resurrected Lord Jesus is the only way that an individual is justified before God ([Ro 10:6-10](#)). The salvation of God is the same for the Jew as well as the Gentile ([Ro 10:12](#)). God makes no distinction. His people show forth the work of grace in the heart. Though God quickens His sheep and gives them a new heart, He also leads His own out of darkness so that they find rest in Christ. As the born again people of God hear the truth of God preached, the gift of faith comes forth and cleaves to Christ. Why? Because the work is of God. Yes, the "remnant according to the election of grace" ([Ro 11:5](#)) are reserved by God so that they will not bow the knee to false gods. God's people not only have faith in Christ, but they exercise that faith. Faith not exercised is no faith at all. It is dead ([Jas 2:26](#)). In [Ro 10](#), Paul continues the theme of "the righteousness of God," which he introduced in the first chapter. His point is that the people of God rest in Christ's righteousness for justification, that God's work among the Jews is accomplished, and that the Jew as well as the Gentile, who is a product of His grace, is a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. The people of God do not try to establish their own righteousness. They submit themselves to the righteousness of God and glorify Christ. God will not give His glory to another.

May the writer and reader rejoice in the work of God. If we are left to ourselves, we will deny the Lord of Glory and follow after the idols of this world. But God will not leave His sheep to themselves. He is the Good Shepherd; the Good Shepherd always brings His sheep unto Himself. [Heb 12](#) teaches us that without holiness no man shall see the Lord, and that God will chasten His own so that they are partakers of His holiness ([Heb 12:10,14](#)). Can you not rejoice, dear reader, in this truth? Can you not see that it is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed? Do you not rejoice in this God Who has brought you unto the Lord Jesus and caused you

to trust in Him alone for justifying righteousness? If you are trusting in anything or anyone else, may the God of mercy and grace have compassion on your rebellious heart. Christ is your only hope.

[Ga 3:7,9,11](#); [4:6](#) also teach that those who are justified have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. From what we have seen in the life of Abraham, clearly he exemplifies the life of the child of God. He believed in God, and rejoiced to see the day of Christ ([Ge 15:6](#); [Joh 8:56](#)). The true child of Abraham is the person that believes as he did ([Ga 3:7](#)). Abraham lived a life of faith, and so do all that are justified by the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ ([Ga 3:9,11](#)). No Bible believer will deny that “the just shall live by faith” (see also [Hab 2:4](#); [Ro 1:17](#); [Heb 10:38](#)). Anyone who denies this blessed truth preaches another gospel and is in great danger before God ([Ga 1:6-9](#)). The Scriptures declare that the child of God receives the Spirit of the Son of God whereby he calls God his Father ([Ga 4:6](#)). The Word of God reiterates this blessed truth repeatedly. The Lord will not leave His own in the wickedness of his ways, but He will draw him unto Christ and His righteousness. God’s work is effectual, and He will cause His sheep to follow Him in faith.

[Eph 1:3-14](#); [2:8-10](#) are two passages which teach that the Lord’s people have faith and works to the glory of God. The first passage declares that the election, predestination, adoption, redemption, belief, and praise are all the work of God. To separate any part of this passage and assert that God will not perform any part of it is to destroy the work of God. The child of God receives the earnest of his inheritance here and now. The Lord seals His own with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and causes them to trust in the work of Christ. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to take the things of Christ and to show them unto His own ([Joh 16:13-15](#)). Sad is the day when it is said that the Lord’s people may not know their Savior. Sad is the day when it is stated that the Holy Spirit is helpless to take the things of Christ and to show them unto the people of God. Sad is the day when those who claim to be the Lord’s ambassadors deny the sovereign work of the God of all grace. Sad is the day when it is believed that the merciful God will allow His sheep to worship the gods and false philosophies of religion. Sad is the day when the Holy Spirit is denied to be omnipotent in His work. Let us pray that God will raise up men who will be faithful to His Word and proclaim the truth throughout the world.

[Eph 2:8-10](#) is so clear about this point that we wonder how anyone could deny it. It is plainly stated that salvation is not by any works of man, and that the faith whereby man receives it is a gift of God. Note verse ten: “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” This verse declares that the

people of God are His “workmanship.” Those who are created in the Lord Jesus Christ are *ordained unto good works*. Some may question the word “should” in the text and say that this does not necessarily mean that the people of God will walk in good works. However, the force of the word “should” is the same as the word “should” in [Joh 3:16](#). Those who have followed us throughout the book know assuredly that those for whom the Lord Jesus died will certainly be saved and never perish. It is likewise certain that those which God has ordained to walk in good works will do so. Of this verse, Hendriksen says:

Fact is that though good works are non-meritorious, yet they are so important that God created us in order that we should perform them. We are his *handiwork*: that which he made, his product (cf. [Ps 100:3](#)). To him we owe our entire spiritual as well as physical existence. Our very birth as believers is from God ([Joh 3:3,5](#)). We are created “in Christ Jesus” (see on 1:1, 3, 4), for apart from him we are nothing and can accomplish nothing ([Joh 15:5](#); cf. [1Co 4:7](#)). As “men in Christ,” believers constitute a new creation, as the apostle had said previously ([2Co 5:17](#))

Now along with *creating us* God also *prepared good works*. He did this *first* by giving us *his Son*, our great Enabler, in whom good works find their most glorious expression ([Lu 24:19](#); [Ac 2:22](#)). Not only does Christ enable us to perform good works but he is also our Example in good works ([Joh 13:14-15](#); [1Pe 2:21](#)). God did this *secondly* by giving us *faith in his Son*. Faith is God’s gift (verse 8). Now in planting the seed of faith in our hearts, and causing it to sprout and with great care tending it, making it grow, etc., God also in that sense prepared for us good works, for good works are the fruit of faith. Living faith, moreover, implies a renewed mind, a grateful heart, and a surrendered will. Out of such ingredients, all of them God-given, God *confects* or *compounds* good works. Thus, summarizing, we can say that by giving us his Son and by imparting to us faith in that Son God prepared beforehand our good works. When Christ through his Spirit dwells in the hearts of believers, his gifts and graces are bestowed upon them, so that they, too, bear fruits, such as “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and self-control” ([Ga 5:22-23](#)).

Though good works are a divine preparation, they are at the same time a human responsibility. These two must never be separated. If salvation can be illustrated by the figure of a flourishing tree, then good works are symbolized not by its roots nor even by its trunk but by its fruit. Jesus requires of us fruit, more fruit, much fruit ([Joh 15:2,5,8](#)). . .

This doctrine of good works, when accepted by faith, deprives man of every reason for boasting in self but also takes away from him every ground for despair. It glorifies God.[\[15\]](#)

Let us now consider [Php 1:29](#): “For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.” The word “given” carries the idea *to give freely even to the point of forgiving one of trespasses*. In [Ro 8:32](#), it is the word for “freely give.” Surely if God did not spare His own Son and delivered Him up to be sacrificed for our sins, he will give us freely all things that pertain unto life and godliness—even faith. [1Co 2:12](#) tells us that God gives us His Spirit “that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.” The word for “freely given” is the same word. How are we to *know* those things without believing God and the things which He has revealed to us from His Word without faith? [Php 1:29](#) definitely declares that belief is given to the child of God. Any other position is contrary to the truth of God’s Word.[\[16\]](#)

Next notice [1Pe 1:21](#). As Peter writes to these saints who were persecuted and had been driven from their homes for their faith, he points them to a better inheritance waiting for them in heaven. He reminds them that God redeemed them by something far better than the gold and wealth which they had lost and which will wear away. He further tells them that they were redeemed from their previous life of vanity. Then Peter explains that Christ worked effectually in them so that their “faith and hope might be in God.” No, they were not left on their own. They were not thrown out into the world to make it the best of it. They were not given a new heart and allowed to continue in the “vain conversation” of their past life. Salvation is deliverance. *There is no salvation when one is allowed to continue living as he has in the past.* Justification is declaring one not guilty. By faith one receives this in his heart and soul. Those who are living in the wickedness of this world are guilty. They have no peace. But the child of God does believe, and walk, in the way of the Lord.

The last passage that shows that those who are justified do have faith and exercise that faith in obedience to God is in [1Jo 5:4-5](#). “For whatsoever is

born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" This passage should be crystal clear to all that those who are born of God exercise faith in the Son of God. Notice the words of Hawker:

He that is born of God, seeth himself a needy, lost, and helpless creature. He beholds a glory in Christ, and a fulness and suitableness in Christ, for salvation. He discovers, also, a warrant in God the Father, to come to Christ, as a remedy of God's own providing. He feels an hungering and a thirsting for Christ, excited by the Holy Ghost, in his soul; and thus he comes to Christ, and finds him to be wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. [1Co 1:30](#).—This is to overcome the world, and to have a real soul-enjoying faith, in the assured conviction that Jesus *is the Son of God*.[\[17\]](#)

These New Testament passages show that this theme is not confined to one book, writer, or obscure passage. These and other passages are sufficient proof for anyone who desires to submit his thinking to the testimony of God's Word. Each and every child of God does not have the same measure of faith, because we are not all alike. All do not have the same degree of faith. While our faith may be weak, small, or strong, it is nevertheless faith.

THE INFANT AND FAITH

It is also important to consider the case of infants and their faith. Do infants have faith? According to [De 29:29](#), "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law." God has not revealed in His Word exactly how He deals with the infant, so we must be content to leave the situation of infants in the hands of the sovereign, merciful God, knowing that He is just and holy in all His acts. We believe that our forefathers acted with much wisdom concerning this matter when they penned the London Confession of Faith:

Elect infants dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit; who worketh when, and where, and how he pleaseth; so also are all other elect persons, who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the word.[\[18\]](#)

THE JUSTIFIED MAINTAIN GOOD WORKS

Just as the work of faith is evident in the life of those who are born of God, so are other works. As we have already seen in [Eph 2:10](#), the child of God is *created* in the Lord Jesus and *ordained* to walk in good works. Though the Scriptures teach that “by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight” ([Ro 3:20](#)), yet those who are justified do perform works which show their justification. The expressions “justified by works” and “justified by faith” should be understood in light of “being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” and “justified by his blood.” That the ground of justification is the work of Christ no Bible believer will deny. Yet, the justified do manifest faith and works which demonstrate their justification. That the justified do have works is seen clearly in [Jas 2:14-26](#).

James teaches that talk is cheap. It is one thing to be a professor of Christianity and quite another to live the Christian life. James makes it clear that those who profess Christ and do not show their profession by their work do not have a genuine faith. Works reflect faith. And those whose works are not Christian do not have Christian faith. Hawker’s comments on these verses are clear and to the point:

The Apostles are in perfect harmony with each other, And *James*, so far from militating against what *Paul* hath said on the subject, doth very blessedly confirm the whole; and his observations, when rightly considered, strengthen the precious arguments of *Paul*, on the great subject of justification alone by faith. . . .

There is a striking difference in the manner of expression, between those great Apostles. In all the writings of *Paul*, in relation to justification, he is uniformly speaking of the method of a sinner’s justification *before* God. *James*, on the contrary, is solely considering the subject, in respect to our being justified in the *sight of men*. *Paul* never loseth sight of the *cause* of justification, which is Christ. *James* is speaking of the *effect*. Hence we hear the former, observing, concerning *Abraham*, that if he had been justified by works, whereby he had to glory; yet still *not before God*. [Ro 4:2](#).—Whereas *James* puts the case of a brother or sister, being destitute of food; and one say, depart in peace, are ye warmed or filled; notwithstanding ye gave them not those things that are needful; what doth it profit? Even so, saith he, faith is dead, being alone, that is alone in justification before men. The world can form no judgment whatever, by

what a man professeth; but by what he practiseth. And therefore (saith *James*) what doth it profit the world, that a man have faith, if that faith be unaccompanied with deeds? . . .

. . . I venture . . . to observe, that God the Holy Ghost, the Almighty Author, by inspiration, of all Paul's writings, and those of *James* no less, hath himself explained the whole, and settled the point, by placing the great doctrine of faith on its own proper basis; and in so clear, and circumstantial a manner, as, under his divine instruction, cannot be mistaken.

In proof of this, I beg the Reader once more, and somewhat more particularly, to notice *James's* words: *Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was made perfect.* Now, not to notice again what hath been before observed, that the works which made perfect *Abraham's* faith, hath no respect whatever to works of morality or virtue; it must strike every man's mind with full conviction, that *James* hath no other meaning whatever, by what is here said of works, than works of faith. The faith of *Abraham* was proved to be real, by his proceeding to act upon it. And God the Holy Ghost explains this in another part of his sacred writings, when he saith: *By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac. And he that had received the promises, offered up his only begotten son. Of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called. Accounting that God was able to raise him even from the dead, from whence also he received him in a figure.* [Heb 11:17-19](#).—Now let the Reader pause over this statement, which, let him remember, is God the Holy Ghost's own. And then let him say, is not this whole transaction of the Patriarch, faith, and faith only, in the deeds of faith acting upon faith? What is the plain sense of it but this? God promised *Abraham* a son. God declared, with this son, that the promised seed, meaning Christ after the flesh, should, in process of time, come from him. *Abraham* believed what God had said, and took God at his word. Soon after, *Abraham* receives a command to offer up this son, as a burnt-offering. Being strong in faith, and concluding that God was able to raise his son again from the dead, he proceeded to obey God. Here then was faith carried into practice. Now,

saith *James*, was not *Abraham our father justified by works*? Yes! most assuredly; for his faith was hereby proved, not to be a dead faith, but a living faith, and acted upon by the works of faith.

When, therefore, we hear the Apostle demanding, was not *Rahab the harlot justified by works*? we cheerfully answer, Yes! Her receiving the spies in peace, was a work of faith indeed, which proved how true and genuine her faith was; and became the precious *effect* of that sure *cause*. And God the Holy Ghost elsewhere bears testimony to this act of her's [sic.], upon the faith the Lord had given her, when he saith, *By faith, the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not.* [Heb 11:31](#).

From the whole, therefore, I cannot hesitate to conclude, that the Apostles *Paul*, and *James*, were both taught of God; both inspired by the Holy Ghost, when writing their Epistles; both had the same views of that faith which is of the operation of God; and both knew that the Church hath justification before God in Christ alone, without the deeds of the law, and solely in the blood and righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ. *James*, therefore, is only strengthening his brother *Paul's* statement of faith, in shewing, and in two such memorable instances as he produceth, how real living faith is always acted upon by real living principles, and thereby becoming subject of joy in the faithful soul, when such blessed *effects* spring out of so blessed a *cause*. . . .

Reader! do not overlook the design of the Holy Ghost, in this precious record of the Patriarch: *These things are our examples*. Every son and daughter of faith is, in like manner, the friend of God, and proved to be so by the same effects. Am I speaking to a truly regenerated child of God, who, like *Abraham*, hath been brought to believe the record God hath given of his dear Son? Then doth he know, as *Abraham* knew, God's friendship to him. My brother! what was it but the ancient, everlasting, unchanging love and friendship of God in Christ, which gave his Son to you, and for you, and chose you in him, before the foundation of the world? And what was it but from the ever-flowing streams of the same unalterable friendship, which gave Christ to the cross, and the Holy Spirit

to the regeneration of your soul, when you neither knew that friendship, or your need of it, and was altogether unconscious of either, and was *living without God and without Christ in the world*? Do you not thereby prove God's friendship to you?

Now, then, see for the *effects* arising from such a *cause*, which, like *Abraham*, may testify, that you are also *the friend of God*. Nay, start not back, nor shrink at the comparison, though your faith is not so illustrious as this great father of the faithful. Have you made no sacrifice to the Lord? Have you no *Isaacs*, no offerings to give up, on which nature would wish to lean? Doth not every regenerated child of God, in deed and in truth, sacrifice his *Isaacs*, and all that nature would fain cherish, when laying low in the dust before God, desiring to be stripped of every thing, so that Christ be glorified in his salvation? Surely, however small the grace of faith, though but like a grain of mustard seed it be, in the heart of every child of God; yet is it of the same source, which the Lord gave to *Abraham*, when, in the exercise of it, he manifested himself as *the friend of God*? It is not the greatness of our attainments, but the Lord's love, in taking it so kindly of his redeemed ones, when at any time they are enabled to bear testimony to the word of his grace. And, what the Lord said to *David*, he in effect saith to all the seed of our Almighty spiritual David: *Whereas it was in thine heart to build an house to my name; thou didst well, that it was in thine heart.* [1Ki 8:18](#).—It were well if God's children would live more upon the Lord's love *to them*, than form conclusions of their interest in the Lord's friendship from their love *to him*. The faithful in Christ Jesus, will at length sit down with *Abraham*, and *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, in the kingdom. And it will then be discovered, that the Lord's friendship, and not our deservings, hath been, and everlastingly must be, the source of all our blessedness. *If we love him, it is because he first loved us.* [1Jo 4:19](#).[\[19\]](#)

Many claim to believe in God, but our text indicates their profession is insufficient. They must be followers of Christ. They must prove their profession by their works. Politicians, religious leaders, "faith healers," business men, movie stars, and worldly people of all sorts claim to believe in God, but their filthy lives discredit this claim and they are no better than devils

([Jas 2:19](#)). By their works they deny the faith that is worked in the heart of the Lord's sheep.

Misunderstanding about this point demands that we give much attention to it. We live in a day when there is much teaching that is not God-honoring and allows men to live as they please. This is not the truth of the Scriptures. God's work is effectual in the heart of man. When God works in man's heart, his heart is changed and seeks after the things of God.

Dear reader, how is it with you? Have you professed to belong to the Lord and yet still live a wicked life? Are you trusting in your goodness, thinking that you are not as bad as others? Do you think that because you attend church, have been baptized, have become a member of some religious establishment, or some other institution that you are safe? Do not deceive yourself. The Word of God declares, in no uncertain terms, that those whom the Lord has touched, walk in His way and perform the good works which He has ordained. May both reader and writer never be found resting in our works, but at the same time may we be found in works. Just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also are we dead of faith if we do not have works.

Foot Notes Chapter Eight

[1] Thomas Manton, *The Complete Works of Thomas Manton*, (repr., Worthington, PA: Maranatha Publications, n.d.), vol. 4, p. 10.

[2] Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church* (repr., Grand Rapids: Associated Publishers and Authors, Inc., n.d.), vol. 7, p. 329, n. 24.

[3] T. W. Brents, *The Gospel Plan of Salvation* (Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Company, 1957), p. 545.

[4] John Brine, *A Defence of the Doctrine of Eternal Justification* (London: A. Ward & H. Whitridge, 1732), pp. 18-19.

[5] Anonymous, "Salvation is of Grace," *A Selection of Hymns for Public Worship* by William Gadsby, ed. J. C. Philpot (London: Gospel Standard Publications, 1965), Hymn No. 206, p. 171.

[6] Edward Mote, "The Solid Rock," *Old School Hymnal—No. 10* (Atlanta, GA: Old School Hymnal Co., Inc., 1964), Song No. 203.

[7] James Denney, "St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans," in *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967), vol. 2, p. 610. Explanation added.

[8] See Robert Haldane, *The Epistle to the Romans* (London: repr., Banner of Truth Trust, 1966), p. 146; William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), p. 130; Charles Hodge, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (n.p., 1886; repr., Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968), p. 91; John Brown, *Analytical Exposition of the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans* (n.p.: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1857; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), p. 35.

[9] B. H. Carroll, *Galatians, Romans, Philippians, Philemon*, Vol. XIV in *An Interpretation of the English Bible*, ed. J. B. Cranfill and J. W. Crowder, (n.p.: Broadman Press, 1948; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973), p. 4, 20. See also William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1968), pp. 3-4, 16-20, 21-22; John Calvin, *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians*, trans. T. H. L. Parker, and ed. David W. and Thomas F. Torrance (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1965), p. 6; et. al.

[10] R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Galatians, Ephesians and Philippians* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1937, 1961), p. 105.

[11] Ibid., pp. 106, 107.

[12] See also John Brown, *An Exposition of the Epistle to the Galatians* (repr., Marshallton, DE: Sovereign Grace Publishers, 1970), pp. 91-93; Matthew Poole, *A Commentary on the Holy Bible*, (repr., McLean, VA: MacDonald Publishing Company, n.d.), vol. 3, p. 646.

[13] John Brine, *Motives to Love and Unity among CALVINISTS, who differ in some Points* (London: John Ward, George Keith, and John Eynon, 1754), pp. 5, 44, 58.

[14] See Chapter 5, on the "Ground of Justification," for an explanation of the meaning of this phrase. ([Justify 05 The Ground of Justification - The Righteousness of God](#))

[15] William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1967), pp. 124-125.

[16] For further study of this word see the word *forgive* in [Lu 7:42-43](#); [2Co 2:7,10](#); [12:13](#); [Eph 4:32](#); [Col 2:13](#); [3:13](#); *give* in [Lu 7:21](#); [Ac 27:24](#); [Ga 3:18](#); [Phm 22](#); *deliver* in [Ac 25:11,16](#); and, *grant* in [Ac 3:14](#).

[17] Robert Hawker, *The Poor Man's Commentary on the New Testament* (London: Sherwood, Gilbert, and Piper, 1826), vol. 4, p. 151.

[18] Chapter X, Article 3.

[19] Robert Hawker, pp. 17-23.

CHAPTER 9 JUSTIFICATION DOES NOT LEAD MEN TO SIN

It has often been said that if an individual plays no role in his justification that he will be immoral. This is not true. We do not deny that there have been and still are those who will use the mercy and grace of God as an excuse for their sinful lives. However, those who do this do not enjoy the justifying righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. If a person uses the doctrine of free justification as an excuse for sin, he either does not understand the doctrine, or he is totally wicked. An individual may be misinformed for a time and not understand the truth of the Word of God, especially when new to the faith. But God will not allow a person to remain in this condition throughout his life. As we have seen in previous chapters, the Scriptures assert that God will bring His people unto Him and cause them to rest in the righteousness of Christ. But it is a sad truth that there are those who claim to be the Lord's and yet walk in wickedness. This is not new. Jude speaks in his epistle of those who do this. In fact, Jude warns us to "earnestly contend for the faith" because of the wickedness that is to come. He says, "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ" ([Jude 4](#)).

UNGODLY MEN TURNING THE GRACE OF GOD INTO LASCIVIOUSNESS

Seeing that Hawker's works are not in print today (This work is now in a SwordSearcher module; nevertheless, the quote is left as is since it is part of the book as originally printed. JKB, April, 2010.) and his thoughts are so clear, they need to be made available whenever possible. So, again I wish to quote from him at length:

*First, They are said to have been certain men, which had crept in unawares. By which we learn, that the Apostle is not speaking of men of the world among the infidels, who totally disown Christ; but certain men, which had crept into the professing Church; and therefore acknowledged him. Paul had foretold of such apostates, [Ac 20:29-30](#); and Peter had drawn, somewhat more fully, their characters, [2Pe 2:13](#). — But Jude had lived to see some of them, in his day, as actually come into the professing Church; and, consequently, he foresaw swarms would follow. And I admire the expression, *they had crept in unawares*. . . . Serpent-like, they had wormed themselves in, by wriggling; and as Satan*

transformed himself into an angel of light, the more successfully to deceive, so those his ministers, for a while, appeared, in form, as the ministers of righteousness, in a pretended love for Christ, before the people. [2Co 11:14-15](#).—Reader! what a mercy is it, in all ages of the Church, that the child of God, in whose heart a saving work of grace, by regeneration, is wrought, hath this grand consolation for himself, amidst all the coverings of men: *The Lord knoweth them that are his!* [2Ti 2:19](#).—And it is an additional mercy, when, in proof of this, the child of God desires to be tried, and examined, and brought to the test, for the knowledge of himself, and his real character. And, fearing he may be tempted, from self-love, to judge too favorably of himself, on this great point of decision, from the judgment of man, he flies to the scrutiny of God. *Try me, O God, and seek the ground of my heart; prove me, and examine my thoughts; look if there be any way of wickedness in me; and lead me in the way everlasting!* [Ps 139:23-24](#)—Here is a standard no hypocrite will have recourse to. This is a fire, and which no tinsel of unregenerated men can bear.

Secondly, Those certain men, which, the Apostle saith, had crept in unawares, appear to have been somewhat more than mere professors of the Gospel among the people. It should seem, from the mention of certain characters, to whom they are compared, that they were the *Korahs* and *Balaams* of their day; *famous in the congregations, men of renown!* See [Nu 16](#) and [Nu 22](#)(&c)—They blazed like comets for a while; and like *wandering stars*, as *Jude* calls them, they soon went out; *to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever*. Hence, those strong expressions, as descriptive of their real character: *clouds without water, carried about of winds*. No grace of God in their heart. No work of regeneration upon their soul. A noisy profession only of a name to live, while virtually dead before God. Yea, *twice dead*; dead in the original state of nature, in the *Adam-fall* transgression in which they were born; and under the sentence of the *second death*, from having no part in the *first resurrection*. Observe the expression! *Certain men*; and *of old ordained to this condemnation!* [Re 20:6](#).

Thirdly, The Apostle hath drawn the outlines of their profession and practice: *Ungodly men, turning the grace of our*

God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. I pray the Reader to observe with me, that here are no charges of immorality. Had their lives been notorious for any breaches of the moral law, surely it would have been said. Moreover, as they had crept in unawares into the Church, had their conduct been notoriously corrupt, in any flagrant acts of licentiousness, they would soon have been discovered, and turned out. But they are called *ungodly men*; by which term, it should seem, that their conduct was directly levelled against the truths of God. And, indeed, the Apostle adds: *Turning the grace of God into lasciviousness.* By which, I apprehend, they presumed to charge the free grace of God, which bringeth salvation, with leading to lasciviousness; as if that grace countenanced evil; and that glorious plan, of God's own contriving, in pardoning freely, fully, and completely, the sinner, on the sole account of Jesus's blood and righteousness, was (as modern enemies to the free-grace salvation of Jesus have charged the same) opening the flood-gates of sin. This seems to have been their ungodliness, and for which they are condemned as ungodly men. And it yet appears the more probable, because it is added, that their turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, was also accompanied with *denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.* How could they be said to deny the only Lord God, but in denying his free grace? They could not be supposed to deny his Being. They could not, while they made a *profession* in the Church of Christ, either deny the Being of God, or the Being of Christ.^[1] But they indeed virtually denied both, if, like certain modern professors of Christianity, they denied the only Lord God, as existing in a Trinity of Persons; and denied our Lord Jesus Christ in his Godhead, and in the efficacy of his blood and righteousness. Reader! look at this Scripture, in every way and direction in which it can be placed, and look for grace from the Almighty Author of inspiration, to have a right understanding of it. And then ask your own heart, what was Jude directed by the Holy Ghost to give all diligence to write to the Church of the common salvation, unless to have guarded the minds of the faithful against the creeping in of such certain men as are here described? What faith but the faith of God's elect, in God the Father's everlasting love, and God the Son's complete and finished salvation, could the Apostle mean, when he exhorted the

Church, *earnestly to contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints?*

Fourthly, The judgments which are here threatened to such characters, bear an exact correspondence to the conduct, as I have described, under the former observation. When the Lord cometh, with ten thousand of his saints, he is said to come to convince all that are *ungodly among them*. (Mark! here are the same characters as before called *ungodly men*, [Jude 4](#)). And he is said to convince them, not only of their *ungodly deeds*, but of all their *hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him*. Who is this Lord, that is here said to come, but the Lord Jesus Christ? *For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son*. And the reason is immediately subjoined: *That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father*. [Joh 5:22-23](#).—And all the parts of Scripture which describe the day of judgment, speak of Christ the Son of God, as the Judge in that day. [Mt 25:31-32](#); [Ac 10:42](#); [2Th 1:7-10](#).—And who is to convince these men of their ungodly deeds, and ungodly speeches, but He whose eyes are as a flame of fire, and who, as the Holy Ghost, by *Paul*, saith, *shall judge the quick and the dead, at his appearing, and his kingdom?* [2Ti 4:1](#).—And who is this *Him*, which they are here said to have spoken all their *hard speeches against*, but the Lord Jesus Christ? Reader! ponder well the subject. Look at it again and again. Beg for light from above, to shine upon this solemn Scripture, and to shine in your heart. Then look at the world, yea, the professing world, as it now is. Hear the hard speeches spoken daily against Christ, and by certain men, crept in unawares into the professing Church, and, by a misnomer, calling themselves Christians. They deny his Godhead, deny the efficacy of his atonement, deny the merit of his blood and righteousness, and would fain reduce him to the level of a mere man, like themselves! Can your imagination conceive any thing more suitable, between the sin and the punishment here foretold to all such characters, than when Jesus shall come in his glory, and all his holy Angels with him, and, by the overwhelming brightness of his Person, shall convince and confound, into everlasting paleness and horror, those awful men? Reader! do dwell upon the Apostle's words, concerning this tremendous judgment! *To execute judgment upon all, and to*

convince all, of their hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him; yea, against Him! Mark that!

Fifthly, There is one point more, which gives a satisfying account to the Church of God, respecting those men, in explaining the cause, wherefore, though they have crept in unawares into the Church, by profession, they are wholly void of the smallest possession, in respect to vital godliness; namely, they are sensual, having not the Spirit. Here is the discrimination of character, which, in all ages, ever hath, and to the end of the world, ever must, and will mark the feature, between the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not. [Mal 3:18](#).—Hence, all we read in this Epistle, yea, and all we read in the other parts of God's holy word, concerning men who are sensual, having not the Spirit; that is, who remain in the old Adam-nature of sensual corruptions, unawakened, unregenerated, and never quickened into a new and spiritual life by the Holy Ghost; is in exact correspondence to what might be expected. They speak evil of those things which they know not; but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves. They have gone into the way of Cain; they have ran greedily after the error of Balaam, for reward; and perished in the gainsaying of Core. These are spots in your feasts of charity. Their mouth speaketh great swelling works, having men's persons in admiration, because of advantage. These are different descriptions, like so many shades in the painting; but all belong to one and the same character, of sensual men, who have not the Spirit; that is, all that are unregenerate. Not that all men, while unregenerate, are like Cain, the first Deist the world ever had; for God's children, while in nature, are so. Neither that all unregenerate men hire themselves out, as Balaam did, to curse God's people, while conscious in his heart that Israel was God's people. Neither do all, that with unhallowed hands dare to enter the Priesthood, as Korah and his company, uncalled of God, perish, as they did, in the moment of their presumption. Neither do all unregenerate men, who mingle in the feasts of God's people, at his house, or at his table, though spots of defilement at those places are bad enough; yet neither injure the Lord's people, nor benefit themselves. Neither do all unawakened professors bolster up

the *Pharisees* they meet with in their places of worship; though too often compliments to men's persons, whom they have in admiration, are paid, it is to be feared, at the expence of God's saving truths. These different shades, are differently seen in different men; but they all belong to one family, and have, in this respect, the same family feature; namely, as *Jude* saith, they are all *sensual, having not the Spirit!* Reader! pause once more, and ponder these things well. And observe, from the Lord's teaching, as plain and luminous as though written with a sunbeam, that regeneration, or the new-birth, is the only criterion and standard of character before God. All the flaming professions in the world; all the seeming zeal, in compassing sea and land to make one proselyte; all the high pretensions, of more love than God himself, to convert all the earth, and to save whom God hath not saved; all the alms-giving, and alms-gathering, for the innumerable societies, to manifest their possessing the milk of human nature; yea, even the martyrdom of the body, where there is no regeneration of the soul: all these, and every other, leave the professor just where Nature found him, in the old *Adam*-nature of sin, unrenewed by the Holy Ghost, unwashed in the blood of Christ, unsanctified, and unchosen by the Father; and plainly demonstrate, from Scripture testimony, that they have no lot or part in the matter. So that, as I have more than once before observed, in this *Poor Man's Commentary*, those five words of the Lord Jesus Christ, throw to the ground all pretensions void of spiritual life, and dash the hopes of all hypocrites: *Ye must be born again.* [Joh 3:7](#).

Lastly, to add no more: What *Jude* begins with, in this awful account, the Church makes her first and last conclusion, in tracing the whole to its source; namely, the *certain men* (the Apostle saith) which *crept in unawares*, under those several specious forms of character, *were before of old ordained to this condemnation*. This testimony to God's sovereignty, so hateful to the sensual, *who have not the Spirit*, and so precious to the faithful, who know, by distinguishing grace, their *adoption in Christ Jesus*; places the whole truths of God upon their proper basis; and explains the subject, in all its different bearings, and in all the variety of circumstances, in which, through all ages, the grace of God hath appeared. Reader! pause once more. If the

Lord hath mercifully brought you into an acquaintance with the plague of your own heart; and if (as cannot then but be the sweet and precious testimony to the truth as it is in Jesus) your views of God's sovereignty, and your acquaintance with Christ, arising out of it, be in your own soul's experience; look with astonishment at the distinguishing mercy, in partaking in *the faith once delivered to the saints*. Every child of God, in the present awful day, of a Christ-despising generation, is a wonder to himself, as well as to many. He is a living witness for God; and, Oh! how ought he to esteem it his highest honor, to bear this loudest testimony to his Holy Name; that though the day is not unlike the day of *Elijah*, yet God hath still reserved to himself, thousands that *have not*, and will not *bow the knee to the image of Baal*. *Even so now, (saith the Holy Ghost, by the Apostle), at this present time also, there is a remnant, according to the election of grace.* [Ro 11:4-5](#).

I do not think it necessary to dwell long on these several verses in this Epistle, which might be gratifying, in a way of curiosity, but are immediately necessary to be known, in a way of salvation. *Jude* reminds the people, concerning the visible Church in *Egypt*; though numbers of *Israel*, after the flesh, which accompanied the people of God on their deliverance from *Pharaoh*, and thereby had all the advantages of a *temporal* salvation; yet, having no part nor lot in the matter, in the *spiritual* salvation by Christ, went no further, for their carcasses fell in the Wilderness. [Ro 9:6-7](#); [Heb 3:16](#) to the end.—And the Angels which kept not their first estate, not being *elect* Angels, but left to the mutability of their own will, fell, and, in that fall, were everlastingly condemned. The Reader, in the view of this subject, if taught of God, will find subject for endless praise. For such is the unavoidable consequences of all created nature, whether in Angels or men, that, if not preserved in Christ Jesus, must have been subject to fall. No one creature, either Angel or man, being, in their own nature, secured from falling, unless kept by a power superior to their own. That power can only be the God-Man Christ. Not as God only; for then there could be no standing in with God. And as man only, there would have been no omnipotency to have upheld. But as both, God and Man in one Person, there is a suitability to the glorious deed. And,

therefore, both Angel and man, in the election of grace, the *former* by dominion, and the *latter* by union, are elect and preserved. Oh! what cause there is, for unceasing thanksgiving and praise, for the remnant, according to the election of grace! And truly, we may say with the Prophet, *Except the Lord of Hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah.* [Isa 1:9.\[2\]](#)

Hawker's comments are so apropos. He has clearly shown that it is not the righteous that walk in sinful ways, but it is those who are wicked that bring shame on the cause of Christ. No one who accurately understands the justification of God will live in sin, nor seek to excuse his sins because they are removed by the blood of Christ. Nevertheless, there are many scoffers today, as there were in the day of Paul, who lay this error at our door. Paul says about such persons (see [Ro 3:5-8](#)) that their "damnation is just."

WHOSE DAMNATION IS JUST

In order to understand what is being taught here we need to study [Ro 3:5-8](#). As was seen in earlier chapters, the subject of the book of Romans is "the righteousness of God." Paul introduces this in the first part of chapter one. He shows that this righteousness is opposed to the "ungodliness and *unrighteousness* of men" ([Ro 1:18](#)). In the verses following, Paul vividly portrays the wickedness of men and leaves them condemned at the bar of God. Paul even denies the Jew, who had the Scriptures, comfort from having the law because it does not bring one the righteousness of God. Nor could the Jew glory in his circumcision. The Gentile, who had never been circumcised, but showed from his life that he feared God and followed after Him, was in God's favor. Therefore, the question is not circumcision or uncircumcision, law or no law, but the new birth — the circumcision of the heart. Since the Jew and the Gentile are in the same position before God, Paul asked what advantage the Jew had over the Gentile? If the law or circumcision did not benefit the Jew by helping him to receive the righteousness of God, then what were the advantages of the Jew ([Ro 3:1](#))? The answer is that the Jew profited because he had "the oracles of God." God entrusted the Jews with the revelation of Himself. No other nation had this privilege. God left all others to their own pagan ways and vile affections. And though the Jews had the Scriptures but disregarded them and thereby brought judgment upon themselves, this did not

hinder the faithfulness and work of God. In fact, the unrighteousness of the Jews and Gentiles together actually extols the righteousness of God ([Ro 3:4-5](#)). When the *unrighteousness* of man is placed beside the *righteousness* of God, the contrast exalts the righteousness of God. Since God's righteousness is so richly exhibited through man's sins, does this show God to be unrighteous for judging man for that which glorifies God? Paul declares, "God forbid." Hendriksen says it this way:

With another "Perish the thought" (or "By no means") the apostle, filled with holy indignation, crushes this wicked type of reasoning. It is as if he were saying, "What? God unfair? How do you even dare to suggest this? It is agreed, is it not, that God is qualified to judge and actually will judge the world? Well, then, how could he be unfair? Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?" ([Ge 18:25](#)).[3]

In verse seven, Paul again makes a comparison between the *truth* of God and his *lie*. Man, "every man" ([Ro 3:4](#)), is a liar. "It is through my lie," Paul says, "that the truth of God is abounded." Paul declares it is because of his sinfulness that he is judged and not due to God's truthfulness. Many charge that those who preach free justification without works provide a license to sin, and that if our unrighteousness does glorify the righteousness of God, then we should sin more to give more glory to God. But Scripture declares that those who say such things justly deserve their "damnation." We have many today who use this same philosophy when making our public policies. It is argued that we need to have more race tracks and allow gambling so that our taxes will not be so great. They say that it is going to be done anyway so why not get good out of the evil. This line of argument is used with reference to prostitution, drugs, pornography, and other such wickedness that is destroying our society. The sad part is that most people do not see the truth of the matter. For those who say, "Let us do evil that good may come" ([Ro 3:8](#)), and "Let us continue in sin, that grace may abound" ([Ro 6:1](#)), Hendriksen says:

The apostle concludes by saying, "Their condemnation is deserved." He means, "Those who flaunt this slogan will receive a just retribution. The people who so wickedly misrepresent the doctrine we proclaim will get what they deserve." [4]

THE GODLY DO NOT WALK WICKEDLY

Those who hate the truth of God have always charged that free justification causes men to sin. As Paul denied the slanderous charge in his day, so do we

today. Wicked men will use anything to justify their ungodliness. Wicked men will act in a wicked manner no matter what. But those who understand and know the truth of God in the heart (note the heart and not only in the head) will not use it to justify their ungodliness.[\[5\]](#) Many godly men, who believe in free justification by the imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, do not think that this truth causes men to walk in sin. John Gill comments:

Sanctification is also an effect of justification: faith . . . follows upon it, and is a very considerable part of sanctification.[\[6\]](#)

Turretin agreed:

Sanctification necessarily follows saving faith, because it purifies the heart, [Ac 15:9](#), and is efficacious through love, [Ga 5:6](#); so pathetically does it represent the incredible love of God towards us, and the supreme love of Christ dying, that it inflames the believer with a mutual love of his most kind Saviour, that he thinks nothing preferable to living and dying again for him, [2Co 5:14-15](#); [Ga 2:20](#), impresses upon the soul with such deep characters the form of virtue, that it supposes nothing more beautiful for itself, than to give all diligence to the cultivation of it, and so deeply inscribes the meditation of the promised happiness, that he is prepared to try and endure all things for it, [2Co 4:16-17](#).[\[7\]](#)

John Owen in his preface to the reader concerning the doctrine of justification said:

The fiercest charges of such men against any doctrines they oppose as inconsistent with the necessary motives unto godliness, are a recommendation of it unto the minds of considerative men. And there cannot be a more effectual engine plied for the ruin of religion, than for men to declaim against the doctrine of justification by faith alone, and other truths concerning the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, as those which overthrow the necessity of moral duties, good works, and gospel obedience; whilst, under the conduct of the opinions which they embrace in opposition unto them, they give not the least evidence of the power of the truth or grace of the gospel upon their own hearts, or in their lives. Whereas, therefore, the whole gospel is the truth which is after godliness, declaring and exhibiting that grace of God which teacheth us “to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and that

we should live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this world;” we being fallen into those times wherein, under great and fierce contests about notions, opinions, and practices in religion, there is a horrible decay in true gospel purity and holiness of life amongst the generality of men, I shall readily grant that, keeping a due regard unto the only standard of truth, a secondary trial of doctrines proposed and contended for may and ought to be made, by the ways, lives, walkings, and conversations of them by whom they are received and professed. And although it is acknowledged that the doctrine pleaded in the ensuring discourse be liable to be abused, yea, turned into licentiousness, by men of corrupt minds, through the prevalency of vicious habits in them (as is the whole doctrine of the grace of God by Jesus Christ); and although the way and means of its efficacy and influence into universal obedience unto God, in righteousness and true holiness, be not discernible without some beam of spiritual light, nor will give an experience of their power unto the minds of men utterly destitute of a principle of spiritual life; yet, if it cannot preserve its station in the church by this rule, of its useful tendency unto the promotion of godliness, and its necessity thereunto, in all them by whom it is really believed and received in its proper light and power, and that in the experience of former and present times, I shall be content that it be exploded.[\[8\]](#)

John Newton, the author of the wonderful song “Amazing Grace,” wrote of saving faith:

True saving faith in Jesus Christ is only distinguishable by its different degrees; but in every degree, and in every subject, it is universally of the same kind, and produces (according to its degree) the same uniform effects. It purifies the heart from the love and practice of sin; it works by love to the Lord Jesus Christ, his ordinances, ways, and people; and it enables the professor to overcome the world, to stand fast against its frowns, and to resist the more pleasing but not less dangerous influence of its smiles.[\[9\]](#)

Next, notice the words of Witsius in his discussion concerning justification:

This doctrine is exceedingly powerful to promote godliness.
1. Because it lays, as a foundation, a submissive humility of soul,

presuming nothing of itself, without which there is no holiness that deserves the name. 2. Because we teach, that no faith justifies, but what is the fruitful parent of good works. And can any one really believe, that he, who is himself a most unworthy sinner, is, without any merit of his own, received into the favour of God, delivered from the expectation of hell, and favoured with the hope of a blessed eternity, and not, in every respect, and by all means be obedient to so benevolent a Lord? Can he believe that God the Father spared not his own Son, that he might spare this slave: that God the Son bore so many things grievous to mention and hard to suffer, that he might procure pardon for the guilty, and a right to life: that God, the Holy Ghost, should enter his heart, as the messenger and earnest of so great a happiness, and love those so ardently, who had no love for him? Can he then provoke the Father by disobedience? Trample on the Son by his wickedness, and profane his blood? Can he grieve the Spirit the Comforter? Indeed, such a one knows not what faith is, who imagines, that it consists in a strong persuasion destitute of good works. 3dly. Because it teacheth a sublime pitch of holiness, by which a person, laying aside every mercenary affection, can love God and virtue for itself, direct every thing to the glory of God alone, and securely trust him with the free reward of his works. Here now we appeal to the conscience of our adversaries, which is the safer way, whether that which we point out to our people, or what they would have theirs to walk in?[\[10\]](#)

These quotes show that those who believe and teach the doctrine of free justification by the sovereign grace of God do not believe that it promotes sin. Though labeled Calvinists, these writers maintained justification by the sovereign mercy of God, but they strongly denied that it led men to walk in sin. However, it is a sad but true fact, that there are individuals who claim to believe in these doctrines and use it for an excuse to sin. But the fault is not the truth of God's Word. The fault is the wickedness and depravity of man's heart. These ungodly men, who turn the grace of God into lasciviousness ([Jude 4](#)), are justly condemned ([Ro 3:8](#)). There are many who claim the name of Christ and live no differently from the world, but this does not make anything that Christ taught to be in error. The Scriptures warn us that in the latter days we would be inundated with such people ([2Th 2:3,10-12](#); [1Ti 4:1-3](#); [2Ti 3:1-7](#); [4:1-4](#); II Peter chapters two and three; [1Jo 4:1-6](#); [3Jo 11](#); the epistle of Jude). May we live in such a way that we not bring shame on the

truth of Holy Writ. The enemy seeks always to destroy and to bring wicked charges against the teaching of the Scriptures. But they shall not escape. They shall receive their just due.

Dear reader, how is it with you? Do you proclaim to believe the doctrine of justification by free and sovereign grace? Do you stand unyieldingly upon this truth? Then I trust that your life is likewise in conformity to the Word of God. Do you continue to seek the Lord by coming to the Bible and feeding your soul? Do you commune with the Lord in prayer, or do you conclude that since God is sovereign, and if you are meant to have a particular thing that it makes no difference if you pray or not? Do you excuse your sins by claiming that God knows your frame and if they are paid for by Christ, it does not matter? Do you not consider that if you fit this picture that you may very well be among the class of which Paul and Jude spoke? Do you use the doctrine of election as an excuse for not running to Christ? If so, I pray that God might awaken you to your hardened condition and cause you to see the slippery place on which you stand.

What, then! shall Christians sin,
Because freed from the law?
Shall sinners, saved by grace divine,
From holiness withdraw?

Shall grace seduce the mind,
And lead the soul astray?
And souls who under grace are found,
Delight to disobey?

Great God, forbid the thought!
Preserve thy saints in love,
While Pharisees set grace at nought,
Saints shall thy ways approve.[\[11\]](#)

We shall close this chapter by quoting from a sermon of Charles Spurgeon along this line:

It is a very great fault in any ministry if the doctrine of justification by faith alone be not most clearly taught. I will go further, and add, that it is not only a great fault, but a fatal one; for souls will never find their way to heaven by a ministry that is indistinct upon the most fundamental of gospel truths. We are justified by faith, and not by the works of the law. The merit by which a soul enters heaven is not its own; it is the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. . . . At the same time, it is a

dangerous state of things if doctrine is made to drive out precept, and faith is held up as making holiness a superfluity. Sanctification must not be forgotten or overlaid by justification. We must teach plainly that the faith which saves the soul is not a dead faith, but a faith which operates with purifying effect upon our entire nature, and produces in us fruits of righteousness to the praise and glory of God. It is not by personal holiness that a man shall enter heaven, but yet without holiness shall no man see the Lord. It is not by good works that we are justified, but if a man shall continue to live an ungodly life, his faith will not justify him; for it is not the faith of God's elect; since that faith is wrought by the Holy Spirit, and conforms men to the image of Christ. We must learn to place the precepts in their right position. They are not the base of the column, but they are the capital of it. Precepts are not given to us as a way to obtain life, but as the way in which to exhibit life. The commands of Christ are not upon the legal tenor of "this do and live," but upon the gospel system of "live and do this." We are not to be attentive to the precepts in order to be saved, but because we are saved. Our master motive is to be gratitude to him who has saved us with a great salvation. . . . The regenerate never rebel against any precept, saying, "This is too pure;" on the contrary, our new-born nature is enamoured of its holiness, and we cry, "Thy word is very pure, therefore thy servant loveth it. O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes." Even though we find that when we would do good evil is present with us, yet our inmost soul longs after holiness, and pines to be delivered from every evil way. At any rate, dear friends, if it be not so with you, you may well question whether you are indeed the children of God. . . .

A Christian professes himself to be a renewed man; he has learned the evil of sin, repented of it, and fled from it to Christ Jesus; he professes to have been pardoned, and to have received a new heart and a right spirit; he profess, also, to be a child of God, and an heir of heaven. . . . Now Christian, if you profess this, your life must prove it, or else, if your life gives the lie to your religious pretensions, you stand convicted of a flagrant falsehood, a fraud on men and a felony against God. It is a high crime and misdemeanor for a man to assume the name of a son of God, when he is utterly devoid of the divine nature, and lives

in unholiness. In proportion as the privilege and the honour of a child of God is great, the sin of false pretensions to grace is increased. If you say you are regenerated, renewed, and sanctified, then be all that this means, or else cease your boasting. . . . Ye professors are the successors of the early saints, but do you not dishonour their names? In how many cases may your pastors blush for you, and weep over you, because you cause the holy name to be blasphemed. We have all much cause for heart-searching here, but the misery is that the very men who have most cause to be anxious will refuse to search themselves. . . . God save us from making a profession if we have not grace to live up to it.^[12]

Footnotes on Chapter Nine

[1] I believe that if Hawker were alive today that he would not be so charitable in his evaluation of these *ungodly men*.

[2] Robert Hawker, *The Poor Man's Commentary on the New Testament*, (London: Sherwood, Gilbert, and Piper, 1826), vol. 4, pp. 178-184.

[3] William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), p. 112.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 113.

[5] For further study on [Ro 3:5-8](#), see John Gill, *An Exposition of the New Testament*, (London: William Hill Collingridge, 1852; repr., Atlanta, GA: Turner Lassetter, 1954); ([Gill: Ro 3:5](#)) Robert Haldane, *The Epistle to the Romans* (repr., London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1966).([Haldane: Ro 3:5](#))

[6] John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, (London: T. Smith, 1814; repr., Streamwood, IL: Primitive Baptist Library, 1981), vol. 2, p. 505.

[7] Francisco Turretino, *Theological Institutes*, Selections (Grandville, MI: Theological School of the Protestant Reformed Churches, 1980), p. 466.

[8] John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold, (London: Johnstone & Hunter, 1850-1853; repr., London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1967), vol. 5, p. 5.

[9] John Newton, *The Works of John Newton*, (London: Hamilton, Adams & Co., 1820; repr., London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1985), vol. 2, p. 586. Newton had these passages footnoted: [Ac 15:9](#); [Ga 5:6](#); [1Jo 5:4](#).

[10] Herman Witsius, *The Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man*, trans. William Crookshank (London: R. Baynes, J. Maitland, T. Lochhead, and T. Nelson, 1822), vol. 1, p. 427.

[11] William Gadsby, “Shall We Sin Because . . . Not Under Law?” A *Selection of Hymns for Public Worship* by William Gadsby, ed. J. C. Philpot (London: Gospel Standard Publications, 1965), Hymn No. 601, p. 456.

[12] Charles H. Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1872; repr., Pasadena, TX: Pilgrim Publications, 1971), vol. 18, pp. 13-16.

Chapter 10 JUSTIFICATION AND HOLINESS TRUTH LEADS TO GODLINESS

In our last chapter, we discussed the fact that justification does not lead men to sin. Therefore, those who rightly understand the truth of God’s Word walk in holiness. Let us examine this point further so that we might better appreciate the sovereign work of Almighty God. Those who correctly know the Scriptures live godly. If one does not have a genuine Christian lifestyle, it is certain that he does not comprehend the truth of Christ Jesus. We do not mean by the Christian lifestyle what is commonly practiced in the world of Christendom today. The majority of what goes under the name of Christian today is nothing but human religion. Most who claim to be Christian not only do not read and know the contents of the Bible, but also are not concerned with keeping themselves unspotted from the world ([Jas 1:27](#)). Most people attend worship each week covered with a religious veneer and have no idea what it is to suffer for the cause of Christ. Christendom is busy selling itself to be accepted by the world. But the Scriptures continually affirm that those who love Christ and have the love of God in them will separate themselves from the world and live a life of holiness.

[Tit 1:1](#) says, “Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God’s elect and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness.” Note well this verse. The passage says that truth and godliness go together. It also affirms that godliness cannot be separated from the faith of God’s elect. Paul taught constantly that when truth is rightly believed, it leads to holiness. Thomas Taylor has clearly explained this:

Every hearer of the truth must examine whether by it his heart is thus framed unto godliness, for else it is not rightly learned; for as this grace has appeared for this purpose, to teach men to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly and justly and godly in this present world, then it is not properly learned when men can only discourse upon the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ, unless there is also: (a) Some experience of the virtue of his death in themselves, killing their sins so that henceforth they may not serve sin ([Ro 6:6](#)). (b) Some feeling of the power of his blessed resurrection, being engrafted with him into its similitude ([Php 3:10](#)). (c) Some ascent of our affections after him into heaven, seeking the things which are above ([Col 3:1](#)). A bare and unfeeling speculation is not only unprofitable but also dangerous and damnable. The Jews could boast that they were free born, and of Abraham, as many among us boast of being strong believers; but Christ said to them, “If the truth has set you free, you are free indeed” ([Joh 8:32,36](#)). The truth is, the son has not freed them, for they are not free from their lusts; they are not kings to rule over their lusts, but vassals under them still. The Spirit of God in the ministry has not freed them from serving death and sin, for where the Spirit is, there is liberty ([2Co 3:17](#)).

It is a dangerous thing that men so chained in ignorance and manifold lusts should overthrow themselves by overweening conceits; feeding fancies for faith carnal presumption for confidence, error for truth; bringing themselves into a fools’ paradise for the present, but the end will be the sinking and sorrow of their souls. The good scholar in the school of God is not he who can talk well, and give religion some good words, but he who has so far profited in sound godliness that he has attained unto faith, the fear of God, humility endeavour in obedience, thankfulness, uprightness; and has proceeded in the true worship of God according to his word, in hatred of false worship, in glorifying the name of God, sanctifying his sabbaths, reverencing his sanctuary, loving the image of God in his brethren, etc. Such a man shows that the truth has sanctified him ([Joh 17:17](#)), and that pure religion and its power have possessed his heart. These things seek and find in yourself, and you have profited in this truth; else whatever may seem a body of religion in you is turned into a shadow without substance, without truth.^[1]

Now let us consider [Ro 6](#). From [Ro 1:17](#) to the end of [Ro 5](#), Paul described the sinfulness of man in contrast to God’s grace. [Ro 5:20](#) teaches that though man’s sins are magnified through the entrance of the law, the grace of God is amplified exceedingly, abundantly above that of the law. The law did not cause man to sin, nor did it increase sin. Like a microscope, it magnifies the power and depth of sin beyond what the naked eye can detect. It also shows

sin in all of its arrogant wickedness and ramifications. In fact, the Greek word for “abounding” is *pleonazw*. It means to be *in great abundance or superabundance*. By way of contrast, the Greek word for “much more abound” is *uperperisseuw*. It is difficult to translate some of the Greek words into English and maintain their force and fullness. In the Greek language, to make words stronger and more expressive, prepositions are sometimes added to them. Here Paul takes the word *perisseuw*, which is stronger than *pleonazw*, and adds the preposition *uper* to it. While *pleonazw* means to be in great abundance, *perisseuw* carries the meaning of *being in such abundance as to excel or to have the preeminence*. *Perisseuw* also signifies *to excel beyond a certain number or measure even to the point of overflowing*.^[2] Therefore, when Paul takes this word and intensifies it with the preposition *uper* (from which our English word *hyper* comes), he is asserting that though sin has abounded beyond measure, grace has abounded exceedingly beyond that in superabundance over and above sin.^[3] William Hendriksen comments on this verse:

Moreover, this increase in the knowledge of sin is very necessary. It will prevent a person from imagining that in his own power he can overcome sin. The more he, in light of God’s law begins to see his own sinfulness and weakness, the more also will he thank God for the manifestation of his grace in Jesus Christ. Result: where sin increases, grace increases also. Not as if these two forces, sin and grace, were equal. On the contrary, grace not only pardons as verse 21 shows, it does far more: it brings “everlasting life through Jesus Christ our Lord!” Truly, where sin increases, grace increases *all the more*!^[4]

With this ending in chapter five, Paul introduces in chapter six the question, “Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?” Paul answers those (see [Ro 3:8](#)) who sought to distort the truth of God’s Word. Even Peter mentioned those who twisted Paul’s writings and charged him with erroneous ideas ([2Pe 3:16](#)). There may be some today that use God’s grace as an excuse to sin, but we agree with Paul that those who are dead to sin will not continue to live in sin ([Ro 6:2,15-22](#)). A thorough study of [Ro 6](#) shows that those who have the grace of God reigning in their hearts live in holiness. In verses two through five, Paul demonstrates that those who have been baptized have proclaimed that they are dead to the things of the world and have risen to walk in holiness. In verse six, it is declared that since the old man is crucified with Christ, we should not serve sin. In the verses following, it is pointed out that since Christ is risen from the dead, and we who have believed in Him have also risen with Him, we are not to allow sin to reign in us. Paul did not say

that the Christian would not sin. He stated that sin is not to *reign* in us. The Christian who lives a life of holiness does sin ([1Jo 1:8,10](#)). However, he does not live in sin and consciously practice sin on a continual basis. For example, a person may have a problem with anger, and at times allow it to get the best of him, but he will through the grace of God bring his anger under control so that it will not rule his life. Anger will not reign over him.

[Ro 6:14](#) definitely states, “For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.” Here it is plainly asserted that those under grace are not under the dominion (the reigning power) of sin. Verse sixteen teaches us that if we are under the dominion of sin, we are the servants of sin. Jesus came to save us *from* our sins ([Mt 1:21](#)), not in our sins. Therefore, those who claim to be justified by the grace of the Lord Jesus and continue to live in wickedness are living contrary to the truth of God’s Word. Though man in his fallen condition is a servant of sin, yet when he is made free from being a servant of sin, he becomes the servant of righteousness verses seventeen through twenty-two). Verse twenty-two definitely states that those who are free from sin are servants of God and have fruit unto holiness. God’s Word leaves no excuse for sin. Those who live in wickedness and walk opposite to holiness are not under grace. Commenting on verse fifteen, Robert Haldane says:

The Apostle had been proving that his doctrine of a free justification by faith without works furnishes no licence to believers to continue in sin, but, on the contrary, that the death of Jesus Christ for the sins of His people, and His resurrection for their justification, secures their walking in holiness of life. On this ground, in verses 12 and 13, he had urged on them the duty of obedience to God; and having finally declared, in the 14th verse, that, by the blessing of God, they should be enabled to perform it, he now proceeds to caution them against the abuse of this gracious declaration. If a man voluntarily sins, on the pretext that he is not under the law, but under grace, it is a proof that the grace of God is not in him. ‘Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.’ [\[5\]](#)

Paul teaches in the following verses that those who are justified by the righteousness of Christ Jesus are no longer servants, or slaves, to sin. Though they were servants to sin in the past, now they have been delivered from that bondage. Now they are “servants of righteousness.” Since they are “made free from sin,” they are “servants to God,” and have “fruit unto holiness” ([Ro 6:18,22](#)).

THE RIGHTEOUS WAR AGAINST SIN

While the Christian does not live in sin and wickedness, he is engaged in a continuous struggle against his wicked nature, sin (within and without), and the wiles and cunning craftiness of Satan. In Romans seven, Paul discusses this warfare. He wants the believer to be aware that while he does live in righteousness, he will not live without sin. After teaching the saints about the continuous warfare in which Christians are engaged, Paul returns to the theme of holiness.

In Romans eight, he again addresses the people of God concerning justification and holiness. Verse one declares that there is “now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” If there is no condemnation, it follows that justification is present. But the verse does not stop there, it continues with a descriptive comment which designates those who are justified: “who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” It is self-evident that this passage teaches that the justified “walk” in righteousness and not after the flesh. The word “walk” is in the present tense. This shows that the man who has no condemnation (i.e. who is justified) is walking according to holiness. Geoffrey Wilson says:

The apostle has *all* believers in view [cf v 9]! Negatively, they are described as those whose life-style is no longer determined by the dictates of the flesh. Positively, they are shown to be those who are willingly walking (a walk is a voluntary progress!) under the gracious direction of the Holy Spirit.[\[6\]](#)

I am well aware that many theologians and Bible commentators teach that the last part of verse one — “who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” — is not in some manuscripts. It is not my purpose here to discuss, defend, and criticize the different manuscripts. I unashamedly confess that I believe that the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts behind the King James Version are accurate and reliable.[\[7\]](#) The phrase “who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit,” is not only found in verse four, but also it is in perfect agreement with the context. As for those who delight to cut and to destroy the Scriptures as Jehoiakim ([Jer 36:21-23](#)), God will do with them as He sees fit according to [Re 22:18-19](#).

The argument continues that the law, due to the sinfulness of man, could not justify man, and that God sent Christ Jesus so that God’s righteousness might be fulfilled in us, “who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Paul is still discussing the “righteousness of God” which he introduced in [Ro 1:17](#). This “righteousness of God” is the ground of justification for the

people of God. And those who have this righteousness walk accordingly. It is a contradiction of terms for one to be righteous and walk in wickedness. Paul makes it clear in verses four through six, that those who are of the “flesh” and are “carnally minded” are dead in their condition. To the contrary, those who are of the “Spirit” and are “spiritually minded” have life and peace. Note the words of Charles Hodge:

To walk means to regulate the inward and outward life. It includes, therefore, the determination of the judgments, the feelings, the purposes, as well as the external conduct. The controlling principle in believers is not the *flesh*, *i.e.* the corrupt nature, but the Holy Spirit who dwells in them, as the source of knowledge, of holiness, of strength, of peace and love. . . . The only evidence therefore to ourselves, or to others, of our being in Christ, is this subjection of the whole life to the control of his Spirit, so that we discern and believe the truth, [1Co 2:14-16](#), and are governed by it. . . .

The utter incompatibility between the indulgence of sin and a state of salvation is thus clearly expressed. It is impossible that justification should be disconnected with sanctification, because a sinful and carnal state of mind is death.[\[8\]](#)

Commenting along this line on [Ro 8:13](#), notice the words of John Gill:

Such persons are dead, whilst they live, and shall die a second or an eternal death, if grace prevent not. It may be asked, whether one that has received the grace of God in truth, can live after the flesh; flesh, or corrupt nature, though still in such a person, has not the dominion over him; to live in sin, or in a continual course of sinning is contrary to the grace of God; but flesh may prevail and greatly influence the life and conversation, for a while; how long this may be the case of a true believer, under backslidings, cannot be known; but certain it is, that it shall not be always thus with him. It may be further inquired, whether such an one may be so left to live after the flesh, as to die and perish eternally; Christ expressly says, such shall not die that live and believe in him; grace, which is implanted in their souls, is an incorruptible and never-dying seed; grace and glory are inseparably connected together; but then such persons may die with respect to their frames, their comforts, and the lively exercise of grace, which seems to be here intended; as appears from the next clause, *but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live*.[\[9\]](#) [Ro 8:13](#)

THE RIGHTEOUS ARE SANCTIFIED

Let us examine [1Co 6:11](#). Paul instructed the church at Corinth concerning the various disorders among them. Chapter six begins with instruction concerning church members going to the courts of the world to settle their differences. Here we see that God's Word explicitly says that it is shameful for two believers to go before a judge in the courts of law to have a matter settled. In fact, the Scriptures declare that it is better to take the wrong and be defrauded than to go to court ([1Co 6:1-8](#)). This does not mean that the one who defrauds is blameless (verse eight). However, it does show that it is better that one suffer wrong than to have the things of God settled by the unrighteous or unjust judges. No matter how we feel about the matter, or how much we want to prove that we are indeed correct in the matter, we must realize that the kingdom of God, and His name and cause, are more important than we are. Needless to say, little is taught concerning this today. Many in fact promote pride and self-assurance under the name of "Christian self-esteem." The Scriptures teach throughout that we are to humble ourselves ([Jas 4:6-10](#); [1Pe 5:5-6](#)), to be lowly ([Mt 5:3](#); [11:29](#); [Ro 12:10](#); [Php 2:3](#)), to be meek ([Mt 5:5](#); [11:29](#); [Eph 4:2](#); [Col 3:12](#)), and to crucify self daily in every way ([Lu 9:23-26](#)). Paul taught that differences among the brethren should be settled by the church of God and not by worldly judges, but if brethren will not allow the church to settle the differences, it is better to suffer than to seek the wisdom of the world.

In verses nine and ten, Paul gave another reason why the saints should not go before the unjust. The unjust will not inherit the kingdom of God. (It is interesting to note that the words "unjust" and "unrighteous" are the same in the Greek.) Since the unrighteous are not in the kingdom, how can they make proper judgment concerning the saints? Paul reminds them of their past when they were unjust and lived unholy lives. But this was no longer the case. Now they were sanctified. They were living differently from what they had been doing (verse eleven). Therefore, since they were no longer living according the pattern of their previous condition, why go back to that standard? Now all of this points to the fact that those who are justified and rest in the righteousness of Christ (Christ's righteousness) do not live in sin. Those who are found in the Lord Jesus walk in holiness.

Of the phrase *but ye are sanctified* John Gill has clearly summarized:

... which designs not their sanctification by God the Father, which is no other than the eternal separation of them from himself, or his everlasting choice of them to eternal happiness; nor the sanctification of them, or the expiation of

their sins by the blood of Christ, this is meant in the former clause; nor their sanctification in Christ, or the imputation of his holiness with his obedience and death for their justification, which is intended in the following one; but the sanctification of the Spirit, which lies in a principle of spiritual life infused into the soul, in a spiritual light in the understanding, in a flexion of the will to the will of God, both in grace and providence, in a settlement of the affections on divine objects, and in an implantation of every grace; which is a gradual work, as yet not perfect, but will be fulfilled in all in whom it is begun.[\[10\]](#) [1Co 6:11](#),

BIBLICAL ASSURANCE ATTAINED BY A LIFE OF HOLINESS

Now we turn our attention to First John. While this short letter teems with passages which prove that Biblical assurance is attained by a life of holiness, we will consider only one. [1Jo 3:3](#) says, “And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” If there were no other passages in God’s Word which proclaimed this truth, this one would be sufficient to prove that the truth of justification causes men to walk in holiness. While it is true that the two verses prior to this one speak about the assurance of salvation and the resurrection, they are not to be separated from the doctrine of justification. How can one have true assurance of his salvation if he does not see himself justified by the blood of Christ? As we have shown earlier, this cannot be. A proper understanding of justification inevitably leads to Biblical assurance of salvation. Biblical assurance unavoidably bestows peace and confident expectation concerning the glorification. He who has this expectation (hope) within his soul will walk in purity. According to this passage, it is impossible for an individual, who understands the doctrine of justification, to live in wickedness. Who will deny that Christ is pure? In like manner, no Bible believer can deny that the man that has “this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he (Christ) is pure.” In fact, John continues the argument in the verses that follow by showing that because God has implanted the divine seed in the soul at the new birth, that person cannot live in sin ([1Jo 3:7-9](#)). The work is of God. When God works, He is efficacious. *The faith of justification overcomes the world* ([1Jo 5:4-5](#); [4:4](#)). Therefore, the doctrine of justification (if correctly understood and believed) *causes* men to walk in holiness. He who denies this truth teaches contrary to the Scriptures and turns the grace of God into lasciviousness ([Jude 4](#)).

John Brine, John Gill’s first convert and a Baptist minister in the eighteenth century, also believed in eternal justification. Nevertheless, he, like Gill, was

not an antinomian. Concerning the “assurance of faith,” he wrote the following:

When this holy Assurance is maintained in the souls of Believers, it influences them unto a humble and close Walk with God. Pride, Carnality, and Neglect of Duty are not Attendants of the Assurance of Faith. If Lusts, either of the Flesh, or of the Mind are indulged, and a Man is careless and negligent in his Conversion, let him not imagine, that this Favour is vouchsafed to him, by the blessed Spirit. For when the Spirit of God operates as a Comforter, He also does as a Sanctifier. This strong Consolation is never enjoyed, without a heavenly constraint upon the Mind to love God, and cheerfully [sic] obey Him. . . .

. . . How absurd is it to imagine, that a Man can enjoy this Assurance, while he is *pampering and gratifying the Flesh*? That Man deceives himself, who is confident of enjoying future Happiness, which consists very much in a perfect Freedom from all Sin, who allows himself in the present Practice of it. I *utterly* deny, that, that Man desires to be free from Sin hereafter, who does not desire to forsake it now. This Assurance, therefore, cannot, in Fact, give the least Encouragement to Sin. It is an Act of the spiritual Part in a Believer, which never gives any Advantage to the fleshly Part in him.

It is a sacred Truth, and as such it is firmly believed by us, that *Faith without Works is dead*. This Grace *purifies the Heart*, and it produces good Works in the Life of him, who is the Subject of it. How then can this excellent Grace be, where the genuine Fruits of it are not found? This Objection is no better than *mere Calumny*, designed to traduce and reproach a precious evangelical Truth. . . .

That Man, to whom it would be a Satisfaction to continue in Sin, upon having an Assurance of Impunity, most certainly is in the broad Road to Destruction. He, who desires not to be holy now, is dreadfully mistaken, if he imagines, that he desires Holiness hereafter. The eternal Ruin of such Sort of Persons, whose real Principle this Objection expresses, is inevitable, without sovereign Grace and Mercy works a Change in their Hearts; and their everlasting Damnation will be just. If any pretend unto an Assurance of the Pardon of their Sin, and of the Salvation of their Souls, by the Blood and Righteousness of Christ, who have no Experience of *heartly* Sorrow for Sin, Indignation against it, and against themselves, because of their Transgressions, they know nothing at all what that holy Assurance is. They undoubtedly are, *in the Gall of Bitterness, and Bonds of Iniquity*. Some such *bold* Pretenders, and *impious* Boasters it may be there are; but their

Condition is most dreadful, for Death, eternal Death, in Fact, can only be expected by them. I am sure, that Heaven is not their Choice, and, that they have nothing to look for, but the *fiery* Vengeance of an incensed God. This I know is true, that Assurance of Pardon through the Blood of the Son of God, never fails to produce in the Mind, the greatest Abhorrence of Sin, and the most earnest Desires of its *utter* Destruction.[\[11\]](#)

Dear reader, let us pause and honestly reflect upon what has been said. Let us sit before God and His Word and survey our condition. We may fool ourselves and each other, but we cannot fool God. We cannot live as the world and claim to be born of God. We cannot believe that we are justified by the blood of Christ and continue to live throughout our life without a change. No, I do not mean to frighten you, nor do I desire to scare you into serving God. This will never work. Only the truth of God abiding in the soul will cause any to live unto the Lord. However, I do desire to be honest with you and myself as well. We do not have a right to claim God and His kingdom without a life of holiness. Therefore, from a heart of love and kindness, I ask you, “How is it with your soul?”

THE JUSTIFIED HAVE A PURE HEART

Next I draw your attention to [Ps 32:1-2](#). Of this passage Hawker wrote:

It is our mercy that we are not left to make our own comment upon this Psalm without a guide. The Holy Ghost by his servant the Apostle *Paul* hath done it to our hands. In the fourth chapter of his epistle to the Romans, in the person and character of *Abraham*, the great truth here set forth is explained. The blessedness here spoken of is pardoned sin, and iniquity not imputed, is expressly said to be to that man *unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works*. Hence therefore, nothing can be more plain from the Holy Ghost’s own explanation, as instanced in the case of *Abraham*, the great father of the faithful, than that every believer in Christ as *Abraham* was, hath his sins covered and Christ’s righteousness imputed unto him, though he himself hath wrought no righteousness to entitle him to such mercy.[\[12\]](#)

Since Paul quoted this passage in [Ro 4](#) while discussing on the doctrine of justification and imputation, we cannot be accused of selecting passages to sustain a private interpretation of the Scriptures. Our purpose for giving this passage, however, is not to examine imputation again. We draw your attention to the phrase in verse two — “in whose spirit there is no guile.” The psalmist David described the blessedness of that individual who is justified before God due to his legal standing. He also gives a description of the heart of the

justified — *in whose spirit there is no guile*. Here it is clearly taught that those who have received the imputed righteousness of God by faith, have also a pure spirit (cf. [Mt 5:8](#)). Those who are justified from their sins are sanctified from a life of sinfulness. It is one thing to be forgiven, pardoned, or declared not guilty of a crime, but it is something else to be clean in the heart. J. W. Reeve said:

True faith knows not only that “*guile*” before God is impossible, but also that it is no longer necessary. The believer has nothing to conceal: he sees himself as before God, stripped, and laid open, and bare; and if he has learned to see himself as he is, so also has he learned to see God as he reveals himself. . . . There is no guile in the spirit of him who sees the truth of himself in the light of the truth of God. For the truth of God shows him at once that in Christ he is perfectly righteous before God, and in himself he is the chief of sinners. Such a one knows he is not his own, for he is bought with a price, and therefore he is to glorify God. There is no guile in the spirit of him whose real object is to glorify Christ and not himself. But when a man is not quite true to Christ, and has not quite ceased to magnify self, there may be guile, for he will be more occupied with thoughts about himself than with the honour of Christ. But if the truth, and honour, and glory of Christ be his supreme care, he may leave himself out of the question, and, like Christ, “O commit himself to him that judgeth righteously.” [\[13\]](#)

[Ps 116:8-9](#) concurs: “For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.” Those who are delivered from death, tears and falling, will furthermore “walk before the Lord in the land of the living.” While this may have reference to the glory world, it is not limited to that. As we have seen, he who does not walk before the Lord while living in this land will not do so in the future world. This truth is irrefutable in light of all the verses which we have studied in this book, much less the multiplied hundreds of passages which we have not considered. May the Lord deliver us from those who twist the Scriptures to their own destruction ([2Pe 3:16](#)) by teaching otherwise. It is beyond question that the righteous, upon whom the efficacious Spirit of God has worked, will be governed and controlled by Him Who is omnipotent. Those who teach that God is hindered by the will and rebellion of man are guilty of denying the power and glory of God. We agree with W. J. Styles:

We believe that Justification, through the blood of Jesus, and Sanctification, through the indwelling of the Spirit, are inseparable blessings, and that all justified and forgiven sinners are the subjects of that inwrought work, but which alone we can walk in newness of life. [\[14\]](#)

CHASTISED UNTO HOLINESS

Before closing this chapter, we direct your attention to [Heb 12](#). In the verses at the beginning of the chapter, the author instructs us regarding chastisement. Here we find that *all* children of God received chastening from the Lord. In fact, if we do not receive chastisement from God, then, we are not His sheep. No Bible believer will (nor can he, honestly) deny this ([Heb 12:5-8](#)). If an individual does not receive chastisement from God, he is not loved of God. Now, what is the purpose of chastisement? Verse ten tells us that we receive chastisement “that we might be partakers of his (God’s) holiness.” In verse fourteen, it is emphatically stated that *no man shall see the Lord* if he does not have holiness. In [Re 22:11](#), the Scriptures teach that those who walk unjustly and wickedly now shall be confined to their vile condition: “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.” *Those who shall be holy in the world to come are holy in this world*. He who does not walk in holiness now has no reason to conclude that he is just.

Footnotes Chapter Ten

[1] Thomas Taylor, *Exposition of Titus* (repr., Evansville, IN: Sovereign Grace Publishers, 1962), pp. 22-23.

[2] See Joseph Henry Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1967), pp. 505, 516.

[3] For an excellent study of Paul’s use of the Greek preposition *uper*, see William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of The Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1957), p. 75.

[4] William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of Paul’s Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), p. 184.

[5] Robert Haldane, *The Epistle to the Romans* (repr., London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1966), p. 258.

[6] Geoffrey B. Wilson, *Romans: A Digest of Reformed Comment* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1976), p. 130.

[7] Much has been written of late to prove this.

[8] Charles Hodge, *Commentary of the Epistle to the Romans* (n.p., 1886; repr., Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968), pp. 249-250, 256.

[9] John Gill, *An Exposition of the New Testament* (London: William Hill Collingridge, 1852; repr., Atlanta, GA: Turner Lassetter, 1954), vol. 2, p. 60.

[10] Ibid., p. 184.

[11] John Brine, *A Treatise on Various Subjects* (London: George Keith, 1766), pp. 155, 161-163.

[12] Robert Hawker, *The Poor Man's Commentary on the Bible* (London: A. A. Paris, 1822), vol. 4, pp. 113-114.

[13] J. W. Reeve, Lectures on the Thirty-second Psalm, in C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, (repr., Byron Center, MI: Associated Publishers and Authors, Inc., 1970), vol. 2, p. 100.

[14] William Jeyes Styles, *A Manual of Faith And Practice: Designed for Young and Enquiring Christians* (London: Robert Banks & Son and J. Parnell, 1897), p. 141.

CHAPTER 11 JUSTIFICATION AND EVANGELISM

Thus far, we have seen that justification is a legal transaction, which is set over against condemnation, for the glory of God; that “it is God that justifieth” apart from any works of man due to Christ being the Surety for the elect from all eternity; that the imputation of the Person and work of Christ is the ground of justification; consequently, faith and works are evidences and not causes of justification; and, that this doctrine properly believed and understood leads men to live “soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” ([Tit 2:12](#)). Now we will consider the connection of the gospel with justification.

THE MEANING OF THE GOSPEL

Before discussing this connection, we need to define what we mean by the gospel, because there are many opinions and ideas about the gospel and its purpose. The word “gospel” is found more than one hundred times in the New Testament. The basic meaning of the word is *good news, glad tidings*.^[1] While this is the meaning of the word, it does not fully describe what one means when he claims to preach the gospel of the Son of God. What one person understands as good news, another may consider irrelevant or trivial. Therefore, we need a specific definition of the gospel based upon the Scriptures.

First, it is plain that there are not several equally acceptable gospels. The Holy Spirit clearly speaks through the mouth of the Apostle Paul that there is only one gospel: “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ” ([Ga 1:6-7](#)). Paul informed the Galatians that if any one, even an angel, preached a gospel other than that which he had preached to them, they were cursed (literally, in danger of hell fire). This is strong language, but it is the inspired language of God. Though some speak about a gospel for the Gentiles, another for the Jews, a gospel of the kingdom of heaven, another for the kingdom of God, etc., they are guilty of erroneously dividing God’s Word.

Second, in light of this warning, it is unequivocally true that the gospel found in the Scriptures is not outdated. The Scriptures state, “For ever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven” ([Ps 119:89](#)). Thus, the gospel of the Bible is as apropos today as it was in the days of the Apostle Paul. Those who say that we need a “modern gospel,” a “social gospel,” or some other “gospel” contrary to the Scriptures, violate Scripture and endanger themselves ([Ga 1:8-9](#)). The only thing that will benefit modern man (or man in any age) is the truth of God’s Word. If it is watered down to make it palatable to sinful, depraved man, it becomes a useless and false message. Contrariwise, forcing the gospel upon man by extreme measures also is harmful. The truth of God’s Word as stated in the Bible is sufficient, and it is the only thing that God will bless. We do not have a promise from the Lord that He will bless the wisdom and ideas of man, but God will bless and honor His Word. [Ps 138:2](#) says of God: “Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.” And [Ex 20:7](#) states that “the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.” Therefore, since the Lord will judge the man who blasphemes His name, what shall He do to him who disregards the Scriptures? In like manner, since the Lord will honor those who honor Him ([1Sa 2:30](#)), He will honor those who honor and esteem His Word. According to [Joh 5:23](#), to honor the Son is to honor the Father, and to dishonor the Son is to dishonor the Father. We cannot change the gospel to make it fit the opinions and philosophies of men without bringing God’s judgment upon us. The same gospel preached to Abraham ([Ga 3:8](#)) and preached by the Apostle Paul ([Ga 1:6-12](#)) is what we should preach today.

Abraham has been a central figure throughout our study of justification. In fact, the first time that imputation is mentioned in the Scriptures, it is in connection with Abraham. The first time belief and righteousness are brought up in the Bible it is in connection with the life of Abraham And when Paul

taught justification to the churches of Galatia, he pressed the point of the one true gospel and its presence in the life of Abraham ([Ga 1:6-12](#); [3:6-8](#)). When Abraham heard the gospel its essence was Christ ([Ga 3:15-16](#)). Here we learn that we cannot divorce justification from the gospel. The brief definition of the gospel given by Buck is useful:

Gospel, the revelation of the grace of God to fallen man through a mediator. It is taken also for the history of the life, actions, death, resurrection, ascension, and doctrine of Jesus Christ. The word is Saxon, and of the same import with the Latin *evangelium*, which signifies glad tidings or good news. It is called the *Gospel of his Grace*, because it flows from his free love, [Ac 20:24](#). The *Gospel of the kingdom*, as it treats of the kingdoms of grace and glory. The *Gospel of Christ*, because he is the author and subject of it, [Ro 1:16](#). The *Gospel of peace and salvation*, as it promotes our present comfort, and leads to eternal glory, [Eph 1:13](#); [6:15](#). The *glorious Gospel*, as in it the glorious perfections of Jehovah are displayed, [2Co 4:4](#). The *everlasting Gospel*, as it was designed from eternity, is permanent in time, and the effects of it eternal, [Re 14:6](#).^[2]

Buck makes it clear that, *first*, the gospel is one and not many. *Second*, the gospel is the truth of God. *Third*, the gospel centers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, we simply define the gospel as being the good news *concerning the truth of God revealed in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ*. With this in mind, we shall look at the gospel and its relationship to justification.

THE PURPOSE OF THE GOSPEL

Since salvation is from the Lord ([Jon 2:9](#)) apart from the works of man, and God has elected those whom He will save, what is the purpose of the gospel? The answer from God's Word is that the Lord has ordained the preaching of the gospel. In [1Co 2:7](#), we read, "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory." The Greek word for *ordained* is *proorizw*. It is the same word which is translated *determined* before in [Ac 4:28](#) and *predestinate* in [Ro 8:29-30](#); [Eph 1:5,11](#). Clearly the gospel is not an afterthought with God. It is part of the counsel of God which He *ordained* in eternity for the benefit of His people. The world does not know, nor does it desire to know the gospel. In fact, in the verses following [1Co 2:7](#), the Scriptures plainly show that if the world, in the day of the Lord Jesus, had understood the gospel, He would not have been crucified.

The world is dead to the things of God, but those who have the Spirit of God understand and search the things of God—“yea, the deep things of God” ([1Co 2:8-16](#)). Therefore, among the many purposes of the gospel, one is that those who have the Spirit of God will be led to understand the things of God — the salvation of God.

Paul instructed the Corinthian church concerning the gospel. Though it is foolishness to the world, it is “the power of God” to the saved ([1Co 1:18,24](#)). Later in II Corinthians, Paul shows that the minister who proclaims the truth of God is “unto God a sweet savour of Christ” ([2Co 2:15](#)). You cannot be indifferent about the gospel. It is the “wisdom of God” ([1Co 1:24](#); [2:7](#)), “ordained” by Him, for the purpose of revealing the things of God unto His people and being a savour of life to them.

The gospel is even “a sweet savour of Christ” unto God when preached to the wicked ([2Co 2:16](#)). An individual who rejects the Word of God and the Lord Jesus Christ, declares his lost condition. May we never be found considering the gospel as a matter of indifference. To disregard the gospel speaks volumes concerning the state of a person’s soul.

There are many benefits and dangers surrounding the gospel, but we will focus upon its connection to justification. Herein we shall see that just as the elect were *predestinated*, they shall also receive the benefits of justification through the gospel which was *ordained* for that purpose.

The Lord Jesus told the apostle Paul that He was sending him to the Gentiles “to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me” ([Ac 26:18](#)). We see when Paul preached the gospel, there were mixed results. Some believed, and some did not. Yet the Scriptures declare that “as many as were *ordained* to eternal life *believed*” ([Ac 13:48](#)). What did they believe? The answer to this question is found in verses thirty-eight and thirty-nine: “Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.” Paul preached justification by the free grace of God. It was no accident that the people in Antioch heard the gospel. It was no accident that those who were “ordained to eternal life believed.” When the people of God, who have the Spirit of God, hear the gospel, they *by him* believe.

God’s sheep are not left in a blind condition concerning their justification. No, the same God Who *ordained* (*predestinated*) them to eternal

life, *ordained* the gospel for them so that they would be delivered “from this *present evil world*, according to the will of God and our Father” ([Ga 1:4](#)). In fact, God’s Word declares more than once that Jesus came to deliver the people of God *from* their sins ([Mt 1:21](#)). And though we have covered this in previous chapters, it is related to our present topic. The preaching of the Word opens the eyes of the people of God, turns them from (not out of) darkness to light, and turns them from the power of Satan unto God. It also causes them to receive the forgiveness of sins and to receive an inheritance among the sanctified. ([Ac 26:18](#)). We are well aware that there are many who teach that God will leave His sheep at the mercy of sinful men and allow them to live according to their own way. But this violates what the Scriptures teach. It is also contrary to the prayer of Christ ([Joh 17:17](#)). It makes Christ a defeated savior; in fact, no savior at all. The saints of God were not only chosen unto salvation, but they were also chosen to “belief of the truth” by the gospel ([2Th 2:13-14](#)).

I well remember my early years as a professed believer. Due to erroneous teaching along this line, I tried to justify myself in ungodly practices. Even in my early years of the ministry, I misrepresented the truth in this area. But the Lord, in sovereign mercy, convinced me through prayerful study of God’s Word that my youthful notions were false. As God opened His Word to me, I saw that God does not leave His people in bondage. God delivers (saves) His people from their sins. The more I studied, the more I could see that God, Who is a perfect Father to His children, does not leave His children to themselves to live according to their sinful desires. I also discovered that God not only justifies His own, but He also blesses them to receive justification as well. Salvation, from beginning to end, is of the Lord ([Jon 2:9](#)). The person who teaches differently robs God of His glory.

Regarding the purpose of the gospel, let us examine several Scriptures that present it in various ways. Paul stated that he endured “all things for the elect’s sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” ([2Ti 2:10](#)). The passage did not say that he endured all things so that some may be elected. Nor did he say that he endured all things that some of the elect be translated out of the kingdom of Satan. He did not say that he endured all things that the elect may receive divine life. Paul endured all things so that the elect may *obtain* salvation, “the salvation which is in Christ Jesus.” What did he mean by *enduring all things*? Paul was speaking about the trials and afflictions he suffered for preaching the gospel. He wrote to Timothy that he should not be “ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel

according to the power of God” ([2Ti 1:8](#)). Paul preached the gospel so that the elect would have their eyes opened, turn from darkness to light, turn from the power of Satan to God, receive forgiveness of sins ([Ac 26:18](#)), obtain salvation ([2Ti 2:10](#)), obtain glory ([2Th 2:14](#)), receive the justification of God ([Ac 13:39](#)) and many other blessings. In short, *the gospel is the ordained channel of God whereby His people receive, by faith, the salvation which is in Christ Jesus*. The gospel is not an afterthought on God’s part, nor is it left to the fortuitous actions of men.

I have tried to limit my remarks to the very basics. To go into great depths concerning the purpose of the gospel would extend the chapter beyond its design. Though I desire to be as clear and direct as possible concerning the relationship of the gospel to justification, it is necessary that I broaden the scope of our study to avoid misunderstanding.

THE EFFECT OF THE GOSPEL

Many proclaim a message today under the guise of the gospel of God which does not produce effects seen in the Scriptures. Many think that the gospel is no longer capable or sufficient for man. But we shall see that the problem is not in the gospel. The gospel is as powerful today as it was in the days of the apostles. The problem today is that there is so little genuine gospel proclaimed. In the days of the apostles, they proclaimed the gospel in purity and the saints endured much persecution and suffering. I am fearful that the present lack of persecution and suffering, so common in the Bible, is due to the gospel not being proclaimed in truth as ordained by God. [Php 1:29](#) reads, “For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.” We seldom hear a sermon on “The Gift of Suffering.” However, the passage plainly teaches that suffering is *given*. The word *given* comes from the word which is translated *grace*, and it means *to give graciously, give freely*.^[3] [Php 1:29](#) teaches with equal weight that belief is given to the child of God. In other words, it is no accident that an individual believes the gospel. Belief is *graciously given* to the people of God. In fact, this is stated throughout the epistle of Philippians. In chapter one, verse six, Paul was confident that God would continue His work in the life of the person after that work was begun. Though he later taught the Philippian saints that they were commanded to work out their own salvation, he concluded that, “It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” Here we observe that God works both the *will* and the *do*. Not only are the people of God made *willing* in the day of God’s power ([Ps 110:3](#)), but they are also efficaciously *given* belief. Nevertheless, they are not *given* to believe

a false gospel. They are to believe the truth. They rest alone on the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ for their salvation. And in order for man to know, understand, and believe the truth of the Son of God, it is essential to proclaim the truth concerning Him. Man cannot rightly know, understand, and believe the truth of justification unless that truth is proclaimed to him. How can one know that he is justified unless the truth of justification is presented to him? How can a person believe that he is not guilty unless he has a proper understanding of the concept of justification? In light of the passages in Philippians, when justification is presented to those who have the work of God in their hearts, they do believe and follow it. The true gospel is effectual. It does bring forth fruit unto the glory of God.

Paul teaches this same fact in all of his epistles, and while some places are clearer than others, we draw our attention to the book of Romans. After showing the depravity of man and his utter inability to recover himself from his sinful condition, Paul sets forth the glorious truth that grace in the heart effectually delivers one from the reigning power of sin. This point is so important that Paul repeated it: “But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:” ([Ro 5:20](#)); “Know this, that our old man is crucified with him . . . that henceforth we should not serve sin.” ([Ro 6:6](#)); “For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.” ([Ro 6:14](#)); “But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.” ([Ro 6:17-18](#)); “For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.” ([Ro 6:20,22](#)). Similarly many passages show that grace is effectual in the heart of an individual. Let us examine [Ro 6:17](#) in particular. This passage declares that after grace enters and reigns in an individual, he obeys *from the heart that form of doctrine* which is presented to him. It goes without saying that the *form of doctrine* is justification. Not only is justification the theme of the book of Romans, but also chapters three through eight discuss this doctrine extensively. Here we see the effect of believing this glorious doctrine — holiness in the lives of those who believe it due to the reign of grace in the heart.

We have shown throughout the book, and more particularly in Chapter 7 (Justify 07 Justification and Faith), that God works faith (belief) in the heart of His people. It is totally inconsistent with the Scriptures to teach that the elect of God will not come to faith in Christ Jesus

([Php 1:29](#); [Eph 1:19](#); [2:8](#); [1Th 2:13](#); [2Th 2:13](#)). We are aware that many try to follow the philosophy of the world and rationalize that the elect infants and imbeciles cannot perform this function. But God commands the Christian to follow the teaching of His Word and not to depend upon human logic. The Scriptures are silent about how the Lord works with the elect infants and imbeciles. It is difficult to resist speculating about this situation. It is best to leave this matter with the holy and righteous God and follow the admonition of [De 29:29](#): “The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.” The Scriptures clearly reveal that the Lord feeds and sustains His people with the Bread of heaven ([Joh 6:25,45](#); [8:47](#)). This Word, when presented to the sheep of God, is not ineffectual; it works effectually in them.

It is no accident that God’s elect come to faith. [Eph 1:19-21](#) states that the elect believe the gospel by the same power that raised the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead and carried Him to heaven. The child of God may not feel great waves of energy flowing through him as he believes the things of God. Nevertheless, Divine force moves in him and causes him to believe the gospel. The word *wrought* in [Eph 2:20](#) is the same Greek word as *effectually* in [1Th 2:13](#). In [Eph 1:19](#), the word *working* is the noun form of this same word. Our English word *energy* comes from this Greek word *energeia*. Thayer said that in the New Testament it is “used only of superhuman power, whether of God or of the devil.”^[4] Therefore, when the gospel is proclaimed to those who have new hearts, the *righteousness* of God^[5] is revealed to them ([Ro 1:16-17](#)). This is not because of any inherent power in the believer, preacher, nor message proclaimed. It is due to the sovereign work of the Triune God as He directs and applies the Word of God to the hearts of His people.^[6] Faith, which is a gift of God ([Eph 2:8](#); [Php 1:29](#)) and fruit of the Spirit ([Ga 5:22](#)), in the heart of an individual lays hold of and attaches itself to the *word of truth* ([Eph 1:13](#); [Col 1:5](#); [Jas 1:18](#); [2Co 6:7](#)) and to the *word of faith* ([Ro 10:8](#)) as the gospel is proclaimed to him. This is what the phrase “from faith to faith” in [Ro 1:17](#) means. The gospel is effectual to the believer.

However, the person who has not the work of God in his heart will not ([Joh 5:40](#)), and cannot ([Joh 8:43,47](#)), understand the truth of justification. He will consider it foolishness ([1Co 1:18](#)), will seek to be justified by his own righteousness, and will not submit himself to the righteousness of God ([Ro 10:3](#); [3:19-20](#); [Ga 3:11,21](#)).

WHAT THE GOSPEL IS NOT

Earlier in the chapter we saw that according to [Ga 1:6-7](#), there is only one gospel, and all other so-called gospels are, in reality, no gospels. Also we defined the gospel as being *the good news concerning the truth of God as it is revealed in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.*[\[7\]](#) Before we discuss the content of the gospel, we will look at the subject negatively. In this case, the content of the gospel will be more vividly seen by first showing what it is not.

NOT MORALITY

Many people erroneously equate morality with the gospel. This is not the case, because it is possible to live a moral life and still not submit to the gospel of the Son of God. This is what Paul meant when he said that he counted his moral, righteous life as refuse so that he might win Christ, and be found in him, not having his own righteousness, which was of the law, “but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith” ([Php 3:8-9](#)). Morality, as a substitute for faith in Christ, is wickedness before God. This is seen in the lives of the Pharisees. They were the religious orthodoxy of the day. They believed in angels, the resurrection, and predestination, but their hearts were far from God. They worshiped Him in vain ([Mt 15:8-9](#)). They performed many religious works, but simply to receive the applause of men, not for the glory of God ([Mt 23:5](#)). The Pharisees appeared to be outwardly moral and righteous, but Christ said that their hearts were nothing but corruption and filth ([Mt 23:25-28](#)). *The morally righteous hated and crucified the Son of glory.*

A man may preach against the sins of society yet not preach the gospel. In fact, many radio and television personalities rail speaking against pornography, abortion, sodomy, lying, adultery, drunkenness, stealing, and many other wicked practices. Yet, they are not preaching the gospel. It is one thing to expose sin and quite another to preach the gospel of the Son of God.

Several years ago, during my first pastorate, some of the church members listened to a well-known radio preacher. They responded favorably to his daily lectures on the evils and advancements of communism. After I explained to them the proper role of a gospel minister, they saw that this man, though he claimed to be a minister of God, did not preach the gospel of the Son of God. This is frequently true of many contemporary ministers. To teach against the evils of society or to produce a program on family living is not preaching the

gospel. Do not misunderstand me at this point. These issues are important and should be addressed. In fact, when the gospel is correctly presented and believed, these problems will be properly understood and resolved. The only thing that will produce a genuine morality in a society is knowledge of and obedience to the gospel of God. If a nation obeys the gospel, it will not need to make any laws. Laws are made for the lawless, not the righteous ([1Ti 1:9-10](#)). Law reveals, magnifies, and condemns sin ([Ro 7:7](#); [5:20](#); [3:19](#)). Due to the depravity of man, the law brings death and never produces the righteousness of God ([Ro 7:5](#); [8:3-4](#)). Therefore, morality (law keeping) and issue-oriented programs and messages are not the gospel set forth in the Scriptures. Search the Bible. You will never find the gospel presented as a family seminar nor a campaign against abortion, pornography, or sodomy. The gospel is not a political action committee nor entertainment to meet social needs. It is exclusively the message of the holiness of God and the justification of sinners by the imputed righteousness of Christ Jesus.

To explain further, let us consider an organization established for the purpose of strengthening the family. But before doing so, let me again be clear about this matter. The family is in terrible shape, being undermined on all sides, and in great need of prayer. We need to do all within our power to strengthen the home. The family is in many ways “the backbone of the society.” But again preaching family living is not preaching the gospel.

Family living programs and messages often leave the impression that if an individual organizes his life according to the Scriptures, God will bless the family to follow him immediately. This is untrue. The natural man is not subject to the Word of God, “neither indeed can be” ([Ro 8:7](#)).

Jesus Christ did not come to strengthen every family. In fact, He said that He came to divide families. Notice the words of Christ: “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me” ([Mt 10:34-38](#)). And again He said, “Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law

against her mother in law” ([Lu 12:51-53](#)). Jesus further stated, “If any man come to me and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple” ([Lu 14:25-27](#)).

Unless an individual understands and believes the truth of God, he will live under a false view of the family. When an individual is living under the authority of the Scriptures, and his spouse is not following in same path or even actively opposing him, he will feel that he has failed in some way unless he fully understands the truth of God’s Word. Many believers have been made to feel guilty because their unbelieving spouses have left them. Many husbands have been made to believe that they did not love their wives enough, or the wives would have submitted to them. And likewise, many wives have been led to believe that if they had submitted perfectly to their husband, he would have loved them as Christ loved the church. I do not mean to imply that every Christian husband or wife is faultless when a marriage fails. Nor do I want to leave the impression that I have exhausted this subject. I wish only to show that the gospel is more than preaching about how to make a marriage work. Christ did not come to make marriages work. He came to justify the ungodly ([Ro 5:6](#)).

Any marriage seminar, program, or message that fails to deal with the Person and work of Christ is contrary to the gospel of God. Many family living “ministries” are only teaching family morality. And they fail, because they believe that man has a “spark of goodness” in him. They think if they fan that “spark” with the right environment, they can cure man of his sickness. But man is not sick. Man is dead in sin and depraved. He is under the wrath of God, and he can do nothing to correct the situation. And God will accept nothing but pure holiness. ([Hab 1:13](#)).

Martyn Lloyd-Jones expressed it in the following:

. . . it is sinful and insulting to God to believe that morality or righteousness is possible apart from Him. And that is what is implied when people put righteousness before godliness. It suggests that you can have a morality apart from God. . . .

The trouble is that for a number of years . . . men have been interested in ‘religion without God’, or, if you like, they have been interested in morality without God, or in righteousness without holiness. . . .

‘Religion produces morality’, these people say. They are not interested in glorifying God. . . . ‘But’, they say, ‘teach religion in the schools; it will make for better discipline; it will make children behave better. Just get these great

principles of behaviour and morality into their minds — moral teaching is very good'. Now I am afraid that in many respects Thomas Arnold of Rugby was mainly responsible for this — the so-called Public School religion, which is concerned about producing a gentleman, not a saint, but a gentleman. You see the distinction! A man must behave properly. He has got to be orderly in his conduct. But they are not really interested in a vital knowledge of God. That is an attempt to have righteousness without godliness. Oh! it is an appalling thought, this, but you can be religious without being godly! You can enjoy public worship without knowing God! You can like the thing itself — religion, preaching, singing, praying, and all these things — but there is no real knowledge of God, and no real thirst for Him. And there is nothing more terrible than that.[\[8\]](#)

NOT FORGIVENESS OF SINS

The gospel of God is not limited to the forgiveness of sins. The religious world advocates forgiveness of sins, but does not believe in justification by the imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. All too often men present the death of Christ as a soldier giving his life in the behalf of his country. While that is a noble deed, the death of Christ is more than that. God can never allow sin to go unpunished. To make the death of Christ a mere example, or exposition of the wrath of God is to make a mockery of the cross. This is proved by the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah as an example, as well as an exposition, of God's wrath. But in no way can the sacrifice and death of the Lord Jesus Christ be equated with the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Nor is the crucifixion of Christ like a soldier or some individual dying for a particular cause and, thereby, forgiving man his sins. Neither is the death of Christ a display of the love of God so that He might forgive sinful man. The death of the Lord Jesus Christ was an act of the justice of God. And to consider it less than that is to do disservice to the purpose of God the Father, the Person and work of Christ, and the administration of the Holy Spirit.

God, as we have said, can never allow sin to go unpunished. The holiness of God demands that all sin be punished. Because of His holiness, God does not consider sin an abstract idea that is presented as a teaching aid to display the depth of His love and forgiveness. Sin is real. Christ died for sins, not for some abstract idea called sin. While many passages support this truth, [1Co 15:3](#), treats it thoroughly. "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our *SINS* according to the scriptures." This plainly teaches that Christ died for sins, and that it was not for His sins (for He had none) but ours. Therefore, if the gospel is merely a

proclamation of God forgiving man of his sins, what then is the purpose of Christ's death? Man can be forgiven without a sacrifice. Many criminals have been forgiven and even pardoned, only by the good pleasure and will of a ruler or by the person offended. Notice again the words of John Gill:

. . . it is one thing for a man to be tried by law, cast, and condemned, and then receive the king's pardon; and another thing to be tried by the law, and, by it, to be found and declared righteous, as though he had not sinned against it.[\[9\]](#)

Commenting on [Ro 1:17](#), Martyn Lloyd-Jones said:

Is the gospel of Jesus Christ merely to give me forgiveness, and to deliver me from hell? Is the gospel of Jesus Christ merely designed to make me happy, and to take certain problems and troubles and worries out of my life, and to give me a certain amount of help with things that tend to get me down? Thank God it does all that, but that is not the real object of the gospel; that is not why the Lord Jesus Christ came; that is not the real intent and purpose of the Christian way of salvation.

What is it then? Well, here it is stated for us: the ultimate end and objective of the Christian gospel is to answer the question that was propounded by Job long centuries ago: 'How shall a man be just with God?'[\[10\]](#)

The gospel concerns the justice of God. It teaches the sinfulness of man and his utter depravity. It declares man's complete inability to recover himself. Due to his sinfulness, he deserves to be thrown into hell to suffer forever the wrath of God. But the gospel does not stop at this. It displays the work of God in the Person and work of Jesus Christ. It continues by relating the effectual work of the Holy Spirit in applying the work of Christ to the soul. The gospel concerns itself with justifying God and not man. Yet, in the process, God justifies man — the elect. All for whom Christ died receive the justifying righteousness of God, shall stand before Him "holy and without blame," and shall be presented "faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy" ([Eph 1:4](#); [Jude 24](#)).

NOT RECEIVING BENEFITS FROM GOD

Lamentably, many people leave the impression that if one submits himself to the gospel, then all of his problems will be solved. Nothing is further from the truth than this. All the cults present their gospels in this fashion. This is even the teaching of modern psychology. They teach that if you will just do

this thing, follow that line of argument, practice a certain set of rules, then all problems in life will be answered.

The purpose and content of the gospel is not to overcome sin, to practice religious toleration, to exercise positive thinking, to love the world, to fulfill the law, or to feed the poor. The world seeks these things. Who would not want to overcome sin? No person in his right mind would want to live in sin and to suffer its consequences forever. But to repeat, the purpose of the gospel is not to overcome sin. Even though those who believe the gospel of Christ do overcome sin, that is not the concern of the gospel. *The gospel concerns itself with the “righteousness of God”* ([Ro 1:16-17](#)).

Most people today are more interested in overcoming some difficulty in their lives than they are in submitting to the gospel of God. Too many people flee to the drugs and false security of the psychologist, instead of facing their sins before the holy and righteous God.[\[11\]](#) Nothing is more delusive than for an individual to think that he can escape the consequences of his action or that he is not responsible for his sins. Most people are lost in their own false world of sinfulness, trusting in their own false hopes and aspirations. Of this vain and fabricated world, Calvin wrote this:

For so blindly do we all rush in the direction of self-love, that every one thinks he has a good reason for exalting himself and despising all others in comparison. If God has bestowed on us something not to be repented of, trusting to it, we immediately become elated, and not only swell, but almost burst with pride. The vices with which we abound we both carefully conceal from others, and flatteringly represent to ourselves as minute and trivial, nay, sometimes hug them as virtues. When the same qualities which we admire in ourselves are seen in others, even though they should be superior, we, in order that we may not be forced to yield to them, maliciously lower and carp at them; in like manner, in the case of vices, not contented with severe and keen animadversion, we studiously exaggerate them. Hence the insolence with which each, as if exempted from the common lot, seeks to exalt himself above his neighbour, confidently and proudly despising others, or at least looking down upon them as his inferiors. The poor man yields to the rich, the plebeian to the noble, the servant to the master, the unlearned to the learned, and yet every one inwardly cherishes some idea of his own superiority. Thus each flattering himself, sets up a kind of kingdom in his breast; the arrogant, to satisfy themselves, pass censure on the minds and manners of other men, and when contention arises, the full venom is displayed. Many bear about with them some measure of mildness so

long as all things go smoothly and lovingly with them, but how few are there who, when stung and irritated, preserve the same tenor of moderation? For this there is no other remedy than to pluck up by the roots those most noxious pests, self-love and love of victory This the doctrine of Scripture does.[\[12\]](#)

Here we see that man can rightly understand the truth about himself and the world only by having a proper knowledge of the Scriptures. This is why it is so important that we know what the gospel and its purpose is. We can never know these things by subjective reason. We live in an age that presents the “Bible” on the radio, television, and through the printed page, but immorality and ungodliness abounds. Sad to say, but the wickedness is not limited to the world. It is abundant among the professors of Christianity. Therefore, we must conclude that the gospel is not being preached, and if it is being proclaimed in truth, evidently, it is not in power ([2Ti 3:5](#)). Let us hear again from Martyn Lloyd-Jones:

But we have become so subjective, we are so much interested in ourselves and in our problems, that we conceive of salvation, not as something primarily that brings us to God, but as something that gives us something. And what is the result? A lack of the sense of God in our services, a lack of reverence, a lack of awe, a lack of holiness, a lightness, a glibness, such as you will never find in the Scriptures, which is unthinkable in the case of the Apostle Paul, and still more in the case of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The superficiality, the glibness, the lightness! All those things come in because we have forgotten to put godliness before righteousness.

Of course the gospel delivers us from particular sins and gives us particular experiences, but we must not start with them, we start with God — our relationship to God. When that is so terribly wrong, it is much worse than everything else. And until that is put right it will avail us nothing even if the other things are put right. So you see, it follows that because there is such an inadequate conception of God’s love and of the grace of God, and of the holy character and being of God, that is why there is so little true heartfelt praise and joy and thanksgiving. A mateyness and a cheeriness is not Christian joy. Christian joy is that which realizes the holiness of God, the depth of sin, and Christ coming from heaven and giving Himself unto blood for ruined man. That leads to a holy joy and a thanksgiving — a joy unspeakable and full of glory. Am I being unfair when I say that I fear at times there is an absence of

such joy and true rejoicing among us? If there is, it is due to the fact that we have put something before godliness.

Well, let me sum it up by putting it like this: there is, therefore, no true evangelism without putting these things in the right order. The primary purpose of evangelism is to bring men and women to God, to the right relationship to God, to have a right attitude to God. Nothing must come before that. No benefit must even be considered before that. . . . For us to fail in this is to open the door to all the cults and all these other agencies that can make people happy and give them deliverance, and so on; and, let us be quite plain about this, the cults are succeeding. Christian Science is flourishing; Seventh Day Adventism, Jehovah's Witnesses (so-called) and all these things; they get their crowds, they get their results, and people testify to the marvellous difference it has made to them. Psychology, and all sorts of other things can do the same.

But that is not the serious argument; the serious argument is that it is violating the order that God Himself has laid down.

. . . when we evangelize we are not primarily interested in people's worries, how they have lived, or what they have done; we know that every one of them is a sinner — the respectable as well as the others. And that is why, in a sense, testimony-giving is really beside the point if you start with godliness. This is the object: are they in right relationship to God? Do they know Him? Are they honouring Him and living to His glory? Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came into the world primarily to bring us to God. 'God was in Christ' — doing what? — 'reconciling the world unto himself'. That is the first thing: bringing men and women back to the relationship in which He originally made them and for which He intended them.[\[13\]](#)

Foot Notes Chapter Eleven

[\[1\]](#) Joseph Henry Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1967), p. 257.

[\[2\]](#) Charles Buck, *A Theological Dictionary*, rev. by George Bush (Philadelphia, PA: J. J. Woodward, 1935), p. 157.

[\[3\]](#) Thayer, p. 665. See also [Lu 7:42](#); [Ro 8:32](#); [1Co 2:12](#).

[\[4\]](#) Ibid., p. 215. The reader will profit greatly by studying this word as it is used throughout the New Testament.

[5] See chapter 4, pages 35-36 and chapter 5, page 57.

[6] [2Th 2:13-14](#); [Eph 1:19](#); [Jas 1:18](#); [1Pe 1:2,5,21-25](#); [2Pe 1:1-4](#); [Heb 8:10-12](#); [Joh 6:45](#); [8:47](#); [10:5,14](#), [16, 26-27](#); [Ro 6:17-18](#); [8:13](#); [9:16,24](#); [1Jo 4:10,19](#); [2:22-23](#); [5:4-5](#). These are a sample of the many passages which show this truth.

[7] See page 181

[8] D. M. Lloyd-Jones, *Romans — The Gospel of God: An Exposition of Chapter I* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1985), p. 359-360, 361.

[9] John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts* (London: T. Smith, 1814; repr., Streamwood, IL: Primitive Baptist Library, 1981), vol. 2, p. 457.

[10] D. M. Lloyd-Jones, p. 300.

[11] That man will never find the solutions to life among the psychological world is indicated by the high rate of suicide among psychiatrists. See Jay E. Adams, *Competent to Counsel* (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1970), page 21, note 3. One would do well to also read William Kirk Kilpatrick, *Psychological Seduction* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1983).

[12] John Calvin, *Institutes of The Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1966), vol. 2, pp. 9-10.

[13] D. M. Lloyd-Jones, pp. 363-364.

CHAPTER 12 JUSTIFICATION AND EVANGELISM (CONTINUED)

NOT AN OFFER OF SALVATION

In our discussion of the gospel and what it is not, we now come to the topic of the so-called free offer of the gospel. Through the years much has been written on this subject, and I do not expect to settle the matter in this small chapter. [1] I will present the subject as I understand it in the hope God will be glorified and His Word honored.

While the views differ among those who believe in a *free offer*, they generally teach that salvation is offered to all who hear the gospel. John Murray and Ned B. Stone describe this “free offer of the gospel” as follows:

. . . there is in God a benevolent lovingkindness towards the repentance and salvation of even those whom he has not decreed to save. This pleasure, will, desire is expressed in the universal call to repentance.

The full and free offer of the gospel is a grace bestowed upon all. Such grace is necessarily a manifestation of love or lovingkindness in the heart of God. And this lovingkindness is revealed to be of a character or kind that is correspondent with the grace bestowed. The grace offered is nothing less than salvation in its richness and fulness. The love or lovingkindness that lies back of that offer is not anything less; it is the will to that salvation. In other words, it is Christ in all the glory of his person and in all the perfection of his finished work whom God offers in the gospel. The loving and benevolent will that is the source of that offer and that grounds its veracity and reality is the will to the possession of Christ and the enjoyment of the salvation that resides in him.^[2]

While this may seem to extol the love and compassion of God, in reality it presents God as longing to bestow benefits contrary to what He decreed. To present God as being helplessly enslaved to His decrees while, at the same time, longing to work differently, depicts a frustrated God. The Scriptures declare that God's purposes are never thwarted: "But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased" ([Ps 115:3](#)).^[3] The omnipotent God of the Bible does His will "in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth" ([Da 4:34](#)). On the other hand, those who believe in a "free offer of the gospel" cite various Scriptures which seemingly teach that God pleads with all men without exception to accept His offer of life. One such passage is [Eze 18:31](#): "Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Commenting on this passage, Augustus Toplady, the author of the song *Rock of Ages*, made this statement:

There is a passage very frequently, but very idly, insisted upon by the Arminians; as if it were a hammer which would at one stroke crush the whole fabric of free grace to powder. The passage is, Why will ye die, O house of Israel?^[4] But it so happens, that the death here alluded to is neither spiritual death, nor eternal death: as abundantly appears from the whole tenor of the chapter. The death intended by the prophet is a political death; a death of national prosperity, tranquillity, and security. And the sense of the question is fairly and precisely this: What is it that makes you in love with captivity, banishment, and civil ruin? Abstinence from the worship of images might, as a people, exempt you from those calamities, and once more render you a respectable nation. Are the miseries of public devastation so very alluring as to attract your determined pursuit? Why will ye die? die as the house of Israel; and

considered as a political body? Thus reasonably did the prophet argue the case. Adding, at the same time, this no less reasonable declaration: As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth. Wherefore, turn yourselves, and live ye. Which imports these two things: 1. That the national captivity of the Jews added nothing to the happiness of God. It brought him no accession either of profit or pleasure. And I should wonder much if (philosophically speaking) any thing whatever could add to the divine felicity, which is already infinite; and consequently insusceptible of augmentation.—2. That if the Jews turned from idolatry, and flung away their images, they should not die in a foreign, hostile country, but live peaceably in their own land, and enjoy their liberties as an independent people.

And now what has all this to do with the blessings of grace and glory? No more than it has to do with Gog and Magog. Would it not be very absurd, if I was to stand in a church-yard, and say to the dead bodies there interred, Why will ye die? Nor, in my idea, would it be less so, were I to ask a spiritually dead sinner, Why wilt thou die? Alas, he is dead already:[5] and to put such a question to one in such a state would be, in reality, to ask a man who is already fallen in Adam (as every man is), Why wilt thou fall in Adam? Let Arminians rant in this manner if they think fit. They shall, for me, have all the ranting, unenvied and unrivalled, to themselves. I think it will not bear water.[6]

Every passage which invites individuals to flee to Christ has a limited scope. [Isa 55:1](#), for example, is limited to the *thirsty*. [Mt 11:28-30](#) is for those who are *heavy laden*. [2Pe 3:9](#) addresses the *usward*, which verse eight calls the *beloved*.^[7] [Re 22:17](#) is directed to those who *hear*, are *thirsty*, and have a *will* (or *desire*) to come. All of these verses indicate that they are addressed to individuals who have been regenerated by the Spirit of God. The remaining verses presented by those who believe in a *free offer* are subject to the same comments and observations delivered by Toplady. Further, these verses also concern those who are already made alive by the Spirit of God.

The meaning of the word *gospel*, in Greek or English, never implies the idea of an invitation. As was noted in the previous chapter, the word means: “to bring good news, to announce glad tidings.”^[8] Worcester stated that the English word “gospel came from the Anglo-Saxon “*god-spell*; *god*, good, and *spell*, history or tidings; — of the same meaning as the Gr. *euangelion*, which signifies *good news*, applied especially to the coming of the Messiah.”^[9] The idea of an universal invitation or offer to all men without exception is foreign to the meaning of the word. One verse of Scripture which

illustrates what the gospel is and, at the same time, connects the Old and New Testament together is [Ro 10:15](#). In this passage [Isa 52:7](#) is partly quoted: “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!” [Ro 10:15](#) quotes from this verse by saying, “How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” Here we find that *preach the gospel of peace* is equivalent to *publisheth peace*, and we can safely add that it is the same as *publisheth salvation*. Therefore, the word *preach* stands for the word *publisheth*. The Greek word *preach*, as found in [Ro 10:15](#), is *khrussw*.^[10] It is used in the New Testament sixty-one times,^[11] and Thayer defines it as follows: “*to be a herald; to officiate as herald; to proclaim after the manner of a herald; always with a suggestion of formality, gravity, and an authority which must be listened to and obeyed; a. univ. to publish, proclaim openly: something which has been done, . . .*”^[12] It is clearly seen that the concept of a “free offer of the gospel” is not found in the meaning of these words.

Commenting on [Isa 52:7](#), Leupold wrote:

Practically each line is a jubilant note of victory. As indicated above the scene is cast in military terms — just after the battle. People and officials are gathered anxiously waiting for a report on the outcome of the battle. . . . Suddenly they spy a runner. He must be the messenger with a report on the outcome. All can tell even at a distance from the eager attitude of his running that good news is speeding his course. Oh, how “attractive” those feet appear! . . . As the messenger comes near, his first cry is “All is well!” The announcements tumble over his lips: “good news,” “deliverance.” He finally manages to sum it all up effectively: “Your God has proved himself king.” Of course, Yahweh has been king right along. But now, by liberating his people he has demonstrated conclusively that the reins of world-government are firmly in his hands.^[13]

Nowhere is the idea of an *offer* or *invitation* seen in the above. A runner (herald) with such news does not invite the people to accept the message nor does he *offer* deliverance to the waiting crowd. In fact, the idea of an invitation or offer in [Isa 52:7](#) is foreign to the text. *First*, the runner did not have a message for any nation but Israel. It was limited. *Second*, the message was not *good news* to the Babylonians. In like manner, the gospel of God is not *good news* to all who hear it. People who do not see the need of deliverance do not have any interest in such news. However, this is good news to those who have been made to see their sinful condition through the

operation of the Holy Spirit upon the heart. Those who are self-sufficient and self-righteous do not see the need of salvation. The gospel is for those who are *thirsty, heavy laden, weary, etc.* “They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick” ([Mt 9:12](#)). *Third*, the message was an accomplished fact. Those who heard the message did not ratify, establish nor make the message true. It was a settled fact whether believed or not. So likewise is salvation. Jesus did not come to make salvation possible. Jesus finished the work ([Joh 19:30](#)). He *saved* His people from their sins ([Mt 1:21](#)), *reconciled* them to God ([2Co 5:21](#)), *made* them *righteous* ([Ro 5:19](#)), and *justified* them through the redemption accomplished by His Person and work ([Ro 3:24](#)). This is the message of the *herald: the gospel of peace*. Peace has been established between God and man. The battle is over, and the enemy is conquered. Deliverance (salvation) is a fact. The runner did not *offer* conditions of peace. He *published* peace. He did not invite the audience to be saved. He *published* salvation. Therefore, the gospel minister is to proclaim the salvation of God. He is not to make overtures of peace. He is to speak forth the fact of salvation which was achieved by Christ.

WHAT THE GOSPEL IS

Now we shall consider this topic positively. The preaching of the gospel of God is no light matter. Though man is not justified by believing the gospel, belief, nonetheless is an important component in the salvation of God. The person who esteems the gospel lightly hurts his own soul. The minister who looks upon the preaching of God’s Word as a light thing has little understanding of the over-all concept of the economy of grace. In fact, I shall venture to say that *any minister who underestimates the value of the gospel of redeeming grace does not have a proper understanding of justification*. As we saw in the previous chapter, the gospel is not an afterthought nor an option in the salvation of God. It is lamentable, to say the least, that the concept of salvation is grossly misunderstood by the modern religious world. Basically, it is considered to be nothing more than an escape from hell or the new birth. While both of these are included, salvation encompasses far more. Salvation, as marked out in the Scriptures, not only embraces the work of the Triune God in saving man, but it includes the preaching of the gospel to the people of God. Modern preachers have invented the idea that ultimately it does not matter what is preached, nor is it essential that anyone believes the gospel. The common saying, “It does not matter what one believes so long as he is sincere,” is a dangerous and devilish statement. This sentence indicates corrupt theology. Such notions have led modern preachers to tell their

audience to go and join “the church or synagogue of their choice.” If this is correct, there is no truth; there would be many truths. But the Scriptures declare plainly that there is only one Lord, one faith and one God ([Eph 4:5-6](#)). The idea that one “gospel” is as good as another is foreign to the teaching of God’s Word. The idea that God will allow His beloved sheep to wander in the dark and not to know their Lord is likewise strange to the Bible ([Joh 10:3-5,14,16,27](#); [6:45](#); [8:47](#); [2Th 2:13-14](#); [1Pe 1:2,5](#); [1Jo 5:4-5](#)). There is only one gospel ([Ga 1:6-7](#)). Therefore, the gospel will bless men to be free ([Joh 8:32](#)). Anything else puts men in bondage, which is the opposite of salvation (deliverance).

A PROCLAMATION OF PEACE

Again we draw your attention to [Isa 52:7](#), “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!” The words *peace* and *salvation* imply fear and captivity. Just as a group of people wait anxiously for the news of peace and victory concerning a battle, so also those who see and know their sinful condition want to hear the message of peace and salvation. Therefore, until the Holy Spirit makes a person aware of his sinful condition before God, he will not love the gospel of Jesus Christ. He may be religious and have definite opinions about God, but he will not delight in the truth of God’s Word. Jesus said, “They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick” ([Mt 9:12](#)). In like manner, those who believe that they have some righteousness or goodness which makes them acceptable to God will not see the need of submitting themselves continually to God’s Word. In fact, Christ further stated that He did not “come to call the righteous” ([Mt 9:13](#)). The message of justification by the imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ means nothing to those who are “whole” and “righteous.” They do not think that they need any salvation. They believe that they are at peace with God. Therefore, when the gospel minister “publisheth peace,” they are totally ignorant of the message. How sad it is to see people in this woeful condition. They conclude that all is well with them while they continue to disregard the Word of God. They live according to the fashion of this world and follow its teachings, and, sad to say, many who attend worship services week after week are so involved in their denominational liturgies, that they fail to see the beauty of the message of salvation. But when one is in distress for his soul and sees himself for what he really is before the holy God, he longs to hear the message of peace.

The gospel of God is indeed good news to the broken hearted. The man who is sick unto death longs for the physician. It does not matter what it costs, he will sell all that he has, if need be, to stay alive. He will give his undivided attention to the doctor who prescribes the medicine and will follow the instruction religiously. And when one sees his sinful condition under divine condemnation, he longs to know how he may stand before the righteous Judge. He knows that his righteousness is vile and wicked before God ([Isa 64:6](#)). Likewise, if he did everything required of him, he understands that he still would not deserve any benefits, much less salvation, from God ([Lu 17:10](#)). He is helpless, hopeless and horror stricken. There is no way out for him. He is in bondage to sin, self, and Satan. He knows that the only thing left for him is the judgment of God. He will be cast into the lake of fire to be punished eternally. To him “is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever” ([Jude 13](#)). Not a ray of hope can he see.

But wait! The minister of God anxiously appears over the horizon. He knows that there is hope. He has the message of salvation. His heart is full. His soul longs to “proclaim liberty to the captives” ([Isa 61:1-2](#); [Lu 4:18-19](#)). He arrives on the scene and publishes peace. He cries that the “warfare is accomplished” ([Isa 40:1](#)), that reconciliation has been made between him and the offended God ([2Co 5:19](#)). To the man who is hungry and thirsty, the message is to flee to the Lord Jesus Christ, so that he may eat and drink ([Isa 55:1-3](#); [Mt 11:28-30](#)). The Lord, the Righteous Judge, said, “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” ([Joh 6:37](#)). The man of God proclaims the salvation of God. He sets forth the fact that salvation has been accomplished. The sinner does not have to make himself fit for God to accept him. The minister points to the certainty that salvation is not based on the merit of man, and that it is solely by the finished work of Christ. The messenger of God knows that he can not offer salvation to anyone. How can that which is an accomplished fact be offered to another for completion? No, man does not accept the finished work of Christ in order to make it effectual. Though the man who is born again by the Spirit of the living God will accept the message, he does not do so in order to make the message true or effectual. It is God and His work of grace that makes the message effectual unto the sinner. This is what is stated in [Ro 1:17](#), “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”

The preaching of the gospel does not give life nor produce salvation. Life is given by the Spirit of God ([Joh 3:8](#)). Salvation is based entirely on the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ ([Joh 19:30](#); [Ro 3:24](#); [2Co 5:21](#)). When the sovereign Spirit of God imparts divine life into the soul of an individual,

that person is given what Peter calls “like precious faith” ([2Pe 1:1](#)). The old theologians called it the “habit of faith.” [\[14\]](#) Concerning this matter Francis Turretin said the following:

Habitual or passive conversion takes place by the infusion of supernatural habits by the Holy Spirit. Actual or active, on the other hand, by the exercise of these good habits, by which the acts of faith and repentance are both given by God and elicited from man. . . . This therefore, is the first degree of efficacious grace, by which God regenerates the minds of the elect by a certain intimate and wonderful operation, and creates them as it were anew by infusing his vivifying spirit, who gliding into the inmost penetralia [*sic*] of the soul reforms the mind itself, healing its depraved inclinations and prejudices, and enduring it with strength, and eliciting the formal principle to spiritual and saving acts, in which sense we are said to be the work of God created in Christ unto Good works, [Eph 2:10](#). And we obtain the new birth, from which acts of faith and love flow forth, [1Jo 4:7](#), and [Joh 5:1](#). Thus this habitual conversion consists in principles of action, which God confers upon the faculties of corrupt man, which are supernatural qualities, or habits, and dispositions, from which results an active power of converging [\[15\]](#) himself, such as the scriptures mean by the new heart, the seed of God, eyes, ears, mind and the like, denoting something inherent and permanent. [\[16\]](#)

Though faith, *habitually*, resides in the heart of an individual from the moment of the new birth, it is by the preaching of the gospel that it comes forth *actively* ([Ro 10:17](#)). Likewise, the preaching of the gospel reveals the “righteousness of God” to the regenerated person ([Ro 1:16-17](#)). The phrase “from faith to faith” is interpreted many ways. In light of the context, it is our opinion that the idea presented here is that the righteousness of God is revealed from the faith of God’s Word to the faith within the individual. In other words, as the minister proclaims the Word of God which testifies of the Person and work of Jesus Christ, the inward work of faith (the *habit of faith*) *actively* responds by manifesting the righteousness of God to the believer. This may be further seen by examining other passages of Scripture.

[Heb 8:10-11](#) give some insight concerning this matter. It reads as follows: “For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.” This is saying that when God regenerates someone, He inscribes His Word in the

mind and heart. This “word of faith,” which is in the heart ([Ro 10:8](#)) of the regenerate man, testifies to the same truth which is contained in the Scriptures. Therefore, when the Word is preached to an individual, the righteousness of God is revealed to him “from faith to faith;” that is, from the faith of God’s Word to the faith in the heart.^[17] Yes, the Word is nigh to the person who has been given divine life, “even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith,” which is preached ([Ro 10:8](#)).

By this we see that the gospel does not give life or offer salvation to any. When the gospel is preached, salvation is proclaimed as an accomplished fact, and those who believe have the righteousness of God revealed to them ([Ro 1:17](#)). The believer is blessed of the Lord to know and to understand that his righteousness is not of himself. He is enabled to know that he has a righteousness outside of himself which is far superior to anything that he could produce. The man of faith knows that he can flee to God trusting in the merits of the Lord of glory. He knows that though his faith and love waxes and wanes, the righteousness of Christ is always the same and never fails to grant him access before the throne of grace whereby he “may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” ([Heb 4:16](#)). When one is blessed of God to rest in the finished works of the Lord Jesus Christ, he knows that he has a sure salvation. He rejoices in the fact that though his feelings are not what he desires, he still can fall on his face and beseech the throne of grace. He has confidence in knowing that though he is a sinner he has “an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous,” and that Christ is the propitiation for his sins ([1Jo 2:1-2](#)). [Isa 32:17](#) describes the peace and assurance of which the believer has. It says, “And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.”

Dear reader, how is it with your soul? Are you resting in the finished works of the Lord Jesus Christ? Can you see that salvation from beginning to end is of God? Do you rejoice in hearing the gospel of the Son of God proclaimed to sinners? Can you not see that the reason many today do not have proper assurance of their salvation is due to the fact that they do not understand the doctrine of justification? It is our prayer that you are able to behold the pure and perfect work of God in saving your soul and be blessed of Him to praise His holy name for having mercy on you. Here is the only message for evangelism. To invite man, who is dead in sin, to break the chains of bondage and exercise himself unto godliness in order to be saved is to cast him further into bondage. To offer salvation to a dead man is to mock him and to present a helpless god to him. But we offer no such thing. We proclaim the free and sovereign grace of the omnipotent God of heaven and earth. We proclaim

salvation. Do you believe this? If so, you are a sheep of God. [Joh 10:27-28](#) says, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.” Notice the progression in this passage. The sheep of God hear the voice of the Shepherd and follow Him. (Likewise, see [Joh 10:4-5,14](#)) Those who hear the voice of the Savior are known of Him. They have eternal life and will never perish. Notice closely the words *hear, know, follow, and give* in [Joh 10:27-28](#). All of them are in the present active indicative in the Greek language. This means continuous action. The sheep of God do not hear at one time and then quit, but they continue to hear the voice of the Shepherd. Beyond that they continue to be known by the Shepherd and continue to follow Him, thereby He continues to give them eternal life. This gives certainty to the gospel. There is no falling from grace here. No sheep are left in the dark. No wonder Isaiah said, “And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever” ([Isa 32:17](#)).

Let us pray for the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers who know this glorious truth and proclaim it throughout the world so that the captives may be set free. Oh! That you, dear reader, would take this message to heart and proclaim it to all who will listen. Do you not have a love of souls that men may be set free from the bondage of seeking to obtain favor from God? This message is sure. It needs nothing added to it. By it the elect receive the righteousness of God which is imputed to them. Hereby, the believer is blessed to see that he is justified before the Thrice Holy God. He rejoices in the fact that no one can lay anything to the charge of God’s elect ([Ro 8:33](#)).

Such a message frees the mind and heart of the minister. He knows that though he must study and labor to preach the Word in truth, he is not expected to produce results. He knows that if he proclaims the truth of God, it will either be a “savour of death unto death” or a “savour of life unto life” ([2Co 2:16](#)). The man of God knows that when the seed falls on good ground, it will bring forth fruit unto God ([Mt 13:23](#)). He does not have to work to get man to be willing because he understands that the people of God are willing in the day of the power of God ([Ps 110:3](#)). On the other hand, he can freely invite everyone who is hungry and thirsty for righteousness to come to the Lord Jesus Christ ([Mt 11:28-30](#); [Isa 55:1-3](#)). But to invite those dead in sin, who do not see their need for a Savior, to lay hold on the salvation of God is to teach “another gospel: which is not another” ([Ga 1:6-7](#)). In fact, to teach that which is not true is not, and cannot be, good news. But to the sinner, who is sick of sin and his sinful ways, the message of finished work of Christ is music

to his ears and joy to his soul. The following song by Isaac Watts sums it up well.

Let every open ear attend,
 And broken heart rejoice;
 The trumpet of the gospel sounds
 With an inviting voice.

Ho! all ye hungry, starving souls,
 That feed upon the wind,
 And vainly strive with earthly toys
 To fill an empty mind;

Eternal Wisdom has prepared
 A soul-reviving feast;
 And bids your longing appetites
 The rich provision taste.

Ho! ye that pant for living streams,
 And pine away and die;
 Here you may quench your raging thirst,
 With springs that never dry.

Rivers of love and mercy here
 In a rich ocean join;
 Salvation in abundance flows,
 Like floods of milk and wine.

Ye perishing and naked poor,
 Who work with mighty pain
 To weave a garment of your own
 That will not hide your sin;

Come naked, and adorn your souls
 In robes prepared by God,
 Wrought by the labours of his Son,
 And dyed in his own blood.

Dear God! the treasures of thy love
 Are everlasting mines;
 Deep as our helpless miseries are,
 And boundless as our sins!

The happy gates of gospel grace
 Stand open night and day;

Lord, we are come to seek supplies,
And drive our wants away.[\[18\]](#)

[\[1\]](#) See Appendix C. ([Justify 15 Appendix C](#))

[\[2\]](#) John Murray and Ned B. Stonehouse, *The Free Offer of the Gospel* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1979), p. 27. This booklet is a reprint of a study which was prepared by the authors and was presented as the report of a committee to the Fifteenth General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. It is found in their *Minutes*, 1948, Appendix, pp. 51-63.

[\[3\]](#) A study of the following passages, in their context, will abundantly show that God is never hindered in His purposes: [Job 23:13](#); [Ps 33:11](#); [110:3](#); [147:15-18](#); [Pr 16:1,9,33](#); [19:21](#); [21:1,30](#); [Isa 46:9-10](#); [Am 4:7-10](#); [Ac 2:32](#); [13:48](#); [17:28](#); [Ro 9:22-23](#); [Eph 1:11](#); [Php 2:12-13](#); [Heb 1:3](#).

[\[4\]](#) [Eze 18:31](#) was footnoted at this point.

[\[5\]](#) Toplady's footnote at this place is found in Appendix D. ([Justify 16 Appendix D](#))

[\[6\]](#) Augustus Toplady, *The Works of Augustus Toplady* (n.p., 1794; repr., Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle Publications, 1987), pp. 366-367.

[\[7\]](#) It is evident that Peter wrote to believers because in the first verse of the first chapter he addresses them as having *obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ*.

[\[8\]](#) Joseph Henry Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1967), p. 256.

[\[9\]](#) Joseph E. Worcester, *A Dictionary of the English Language* (Boston: Brewer and Tileston, 1864), pp. 630-631. This is supported by *Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language*, 2d ed. (Cleveland, OH: The World Publishing Company, 1970), p. 788.

[\[10\]](#) There are other words which are translated *preach* or denote the idea of preaching, but they do not in anywise imply any concept contrary to that found in the word *khrussw*.

[\[11\]](#) J. B. Smith, *Greek-English Concordance to the New Testament* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1955), p. 202.

[\[12\]](#) Thayer, p. 346.

[13] H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Isaiah*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1971), vol. 2, p. 216.

[14] John Brine, *A Defence of the Doctrine of Eternal Justification* (London: A. Ward & H. Whitridge, 1732), p. 18.

[15] This may be a misprint for the word *converting*.

[16] Francisco Turretino, *Theological Institutes*, Selections (Grandville, MI: Theological School of the Protestant Reformed Churches, 1980), p. 402. The author further discusses the distinction between the work of grace as a “habit” and an “act.”

[17] A thorough study of such passages as [Joh 6:63](#); [Jas 1:15-18](#); [1Pe 1:23-25](#), etc., in connection with those mention above will give greater insight to this fact.

[18] Isaac Watts, *Gospel Invitation, A Selection of Hymns for Public Worship* by William Gadsby, ed. J. C. Philpot (London: Gospel Standard Publications, 1965), Hymn No. 56, pp. 57-58.

APPENDIX A AN OBJECTION OF ETERNAL JUSTIFICATION CONSIDERED

Some object to eternal justification on the ground that it equals to suggesting the eternality of matter or the eternal existence of time. They maintain that the actual eternal justification of a finite, temporal being is a contradiction of terms. They say that eternal justification is no contradiction as a *purpose* or *decree* but it is as a material reality.

If this reasoning were true then God could not have actually loved and chose the elect in Christ in eternity. Scripture plainly declares that God loved and chose His people in eternity before they actually existed in time ([Jer 31:3](#); [Joh 17:23-24](#); [Eph 1:4](#)).

[Isa 42:1](#) speaks of Christ Jesus as being God’s Elect (see [Mt 12:18-21](#)). It is Christ as man and not the Divine nature that is chosen. Leupold said:

First of all he is the Lord’s own servant (“my”). Then he is a man whom the Lord upholds or “supports.” He needs help in his task and he enjoys the very maximum of help in that the Lord upholds him in every difficulty.[\[1\]](#)

Likewise, A. R. Fausset declared:

But this ideal is realized only in the antitypical Israel, its
representative-man and Head, Messiah

(cf. [Mt 2:15](#) with [Ho 11:1](#)). “Servant” was the position assumed by the Son of God throughout His humiliation. . . . **mine elect**—chosen by God before the foundation of the world for an atonement ([1Pe 1:20](#); [Re 13:8](#)). Redemption was no after-thought to remedy an unforeseen evil ([Ro 16:25-26](#); [Eph 3:9,11](#); [2Ti 1:9-10](#); [Tit 1:2-3](#)). In [Mt 12:18](#), it is rendered, “my beloved:” *the only beloved Son*, beloved in a sense distinct from all others. *Election* and the *love* of God are inseparably joined.^[2]([JFB: Isa 42:1](#), But this ideal is realized only)

John Gill states the following concerning [Isa 42:1](#):

. . . for the prophet speaks not of himself, . . . but of Christ, as it is applied, [Mt 12:17-18](#); who is spoken of under the character of a *servant*, as he is; not as a divine Person, for as such he is the Son of God; but as man, and in his office as Mediator; a servant of the Lord, not of angels, or men, but of his Divine Father; who chose him, called and sent him, and assigned him his work; which was principally the redemption of his people, and which he diligently, faithfully, and fully performed; in which he was *upheld* as man and Mediator by his Father, not only in his being man, but was strengthened and helped in his mediatorial service, so that he did not sink under the mighty weight of the sins of his people, or of the wrath of God: . . . *mine elect*, in whom *my soul delighteth*; this character of *elect* may respect the choice of the human nature to the grace of union with the Son of God; which was chosen out from among the people, and separated from them for that purpose; and was pre-ordained to be the Lamb slain for the redemption of man, and appointed to glory; and likewise the choice of Christ to office, to be the Mediator between God and man; to be the Saviour and Redeemer of the Lord’s people; to be the Head of the church, and to be the foundation and the corner-stone of that spiritual building; and to be the Judge of quick and dead: and with him, as such, was the Lord *well-pleased*, or *delighted*; with his person, as the Son of God; and with all his chosen, as considered in him; with what he did as his servant; with the righteousness he wrought out; with the sacrifice he offered up; and with his sufferings and death, through which peace and reconciliation were made with God

for sinners: [\[3\]](#) ([Gill: Isa 42:1](#), for the prophet speaks not of himself)

Note that the verses quoted earlier do not say that God *purposed* or *decreed* to love and choose Christ or the elect.[\[4\]](#) God did not potentially love His people, nor did He potentially elect them in Christ. God actually loved Christ and the sheep prior to their physical existence. And [2Ti 1:9](#) states that our salvation (of which justification is included) “was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” Regeneration, faith, hope, and all other graces which arise out of this salvation were not given before the world was. To suggest this would indeed suggest the doctrine of the eternality of matter. But our legal standing before God, or the bar of justice, has always been in our Surety, the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who charge the doctrine eternal justification with suggesting eternal matter confuse justification (the legal declaration of one’s righteousness) and the reception of justification by faith. They do not properly distinguish between justification and the experimental application of justification to the believer. A person can be legally justified and not be present, but he must be present to receive justification by faith.

As the elect were surely loved and chosen before the creation of the world, so their names were written in the book of life ([Re 13:8](#); [21:8](#)). They were not potentially loved and chosen any more than their names were potentially written in the book of life.

I agree that these things cannot be understood by our finite minds. That which is impossible with men is possible with God ([Lu 18:27](#)). We must bow to the Scriptures and not try to explain the ways of God according to reason and logic. When discussing the sovereignty of God in [Ro 9:9-24](#), Paul did not try to answer the objections which are raised but simply stated that man is not to question God. Often we try to fit the Scriptures into our theological framework. Instead we should mold our theological ideas to God’s Word. Yet, due to our depraved condition, lack of equal study time, unequal mental conditions, and prejudices, we will not agree nor explain God’s Word alike. May the Lord give both reader and writer understanding so that we may worship Him correctly.

Foot Notes Appendix A

[\[1\]](#) H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Isaiah* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1968, 1971), vol. 2. p. 61.

[2] Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *A Commentary Critical, Experimental and Practical on the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1967), vol. 3, p. 693.

[3] John Gill, *An Exposition of the Old Testament* (London: William Hill Collingridge, 1852; repr., Atlanta, GA: Turner Lassetter, 1954), vol. 3, p. 920.

[4] God did decree to love and choose prior to actually doing so, but that is not directly related to his topic.

APPENDIX B A LIST OF THE WRITINGS OF JOHN BRINE

1. *A Defence of the Doctrine of Eternal Justification, From Some Exceptions made to it by Mr. Bragge, and others.* 1732. [1] ([BrineSerm 01 Sermon 1 Eternal Justification](#))

2. *The Covenant of Grace open'd, in a Sermon occasioned by the Death of Mrs. Margaret Busfield.* Who departed this life on May 13th, 1734. 1734. ([BrineSerm 02 Sermon 2 The Covenant of Grace Opened](#))

3. *God the Defence and Glory of his Church.* 1734. ([BrineSerm 03 Sermon 3 God The Defense and Glory of His church by John Brine](#))

4. *The Believer's Triumph over Death. Considered in a sermon occasion'd by the decease of Mr. Hugh Lloyd.* Who departed this life on February 11, 1735. 1735. ([BrineSerm 04 Sermon 4 The Believer Triumph Over Death](#))

5. *A sermon preached at an ordination of deacons.* March 5, 1735. 1735. ([BrineSerm 05 Sermon 5 A Sermon Preached at an Ordination of Deacons by John Brine](#))

6. *A Discourse on the Prayer of Jabez, [1Ch 3:10](#).* 1736. ([BrineSerm 06 Sermon 6 A Discourse on the Prayer of Jabez by John Brine](#))

7. *Remarks Upon A Pamphlet, Intitled, Some Doctrines in the Superlapsarian Scheme impartially examin'd by the Word of God.* 1736.

8. *The Certain Efficacy on the Death of Christ, Asserted; in Answer to a Book, called, The Ruin and Recovery of Mankind [by Isaac Watts].* 1743. ([Efficacy 01- The Certain Efficacy of the Death of Christ Asserted](#))

9. *The Christian Religion not destitute of Arguments sufficient to support it. In Answer to Christianity not founded on Argument.* 1743. ([BrineSerm 08](#))

[Sermon 8 The Christian Religion not Destitute of Arguments Sufficent to Support it By John Brine](#))

10. *A Refutation of Arminian Principles, Delivered in a Pamphlet, intitled, the Modern Question Concerning Repentance and Faith, examined with Condour, &c.* 1743. ([BrineSerm 09 Sermon 9 A Refutation of Arminian Principles](#))

11. *A Vindication of some Truths of Natural and Revealed Religion; in answer to the False Reasoning of Mr. James Foster.* 1746. ([BrineVind 01.001 A Vindication of Some Truths of Natural and Revealed Religion:](#))

12. *The Chief of Sinners saved, thro' Jesus Christ: a sermon occasioned by the death of Mrs. Anne Wildman. Who died July 12, 1747. Preached July 19. 1747.* ([BrineSerm 10 Sermon 10 The Chief of Sinners Saved Through Jesus Christ by John Brine](#))

13. *The Nature of true Holiness explained; in a sermon on the 20th April, 1749.* 1749. ([BrineSerm 11 Sermon 11 The Nature of True Holiness](#))

14. *A Treatise on Various Subjects.* 1750.

14a. *A Treaties on Various Subjects*, 2nd. ed. 1766. ([Treatise 01.001 Treatise on Various Subjects By John Brine](#))

14b. *A Treatise on Various Subjects, and some account of the choice experience of Mrs. Anne Brine, written by herself. revised (sic.) by James Upton . . . to which is added a sketch of the author's life.* 1813.

14c. *A Treaties on Various Subjects . . .*, 4th ed. Revised by J. A. Jones. 1851.[\[2\]](#)

15. *The solemn Charge of a Christian Minister considered. A Sermon preached at the Ordination of the Reverend Mr. John Ryland, on the 26th of July, 1750.* 1750. ([BrineSerm 14 Sermon 14 The Solemn Charge of a Christian Minister Considered by John Brine](#))

16. *A Christian's Duty and Divine Efficiency represented: in a sermon, etc.* 1750. ([BrineSerm 13 Sermon 13 Duty and Divine Efficiency Represented By John Brine](#))

17. *An Antidote Against a Spreading Antinomian Principle*. 1750. ([BrineSerm 12 Sermon 12 An Antidote Against a Spreading Antinomiam Principle By John Brine](#))

18. *The Causes of Salvation and Vocation considered*. Preached at Crispin-street, December 22, 1751. 1752. ([BrineSerm 16 Sermon 16 The Cause of Salvation and Vocation Considered by John Brine](#))

19. *The True Sense of Attonement (sic.) for Sin, by the Death of Christ, stated and defenced; in answer to a Pamphlet, intitled, The Scripture Doctrine of Atonement for Sin examined, by Mr. Taylor, of Norwich*. 1752. ([BrineSerm 17 Sermon 17 The True Sense of The Atonement by John Brine](#))

20. *Motives to Love and Unity among CALVINISTS, who differ in some Points. Wherein is contained an ANSWER to Mr. Alverey Jackson*. 1753. ([BrineSerm 18 Sermon 18 Motives to Love and Unity Among Calvinists, who differ on some points by John Brine](#))

20a. *Motives to Love and Unity among CALVINISTS, who differ in some Points. Wherein is contained an ANSWER to Mr. Alverey Jackson*. 2nd ed. 1754.

21. *The Proper Eternity of the Divine Decrees, and of the Mediatorial Office, of Jesus Christ: asserted and proved, in a discourse, etc*. 1754. ([BrineSerm 19 Sermon 19 The Proper Eternity of The Divine Decrees and Mediatorial Office of Jesus Christ: Asserted and Proved By John Brine](#))

22. *A vindication of divine justice, in the infliction of endless punishment for sin: containing an answer to an anonymous pamphlet (by Samuel Bourn), intitled, The Scripture-account of a future state considered . . .* 1754. ([BrineSerm 20 Sermon 20 A Vindication of Divine Justice, In The Infliction of Endless Punishment By John Brine](#))

23. *Job's epitaph explained: a sermon occasioned by the death of Mrs. Elizabeth Turner*. 1755. ([BrineSerm 22 Sermon 22 Job's Epitaph Explained by John Brine](#))

24. *Some mistakes in a book of Mr. Johnson's of Liverpool, entitled The faith of God's elect*. 1755. ([BrineSerm 23 Sermon 23 Some mistakes in a Book of Mr. Johnson's of Liverpool, Intitled, The Faith of God's Elect Noted and Rectified By John Brine](#))

25. *Charge of publishing a palpable falsity, exhibited against the authors of the Monthly Review.* 1755. ([BrineSerm 21 Sermon 21 A Charge of Publishing a Palpable Falsity, Exhibited against, and fully proved upon, The Authors of The Monthly Review By John Brine](#))

26. *An answer to a Welsh clergyman's twenty arguments in favour of infant baptism, with some strictures on what the said author has advanced concerning the mode of baptism.* 1756.

27. *The Baptist vindicated from some groundless charges brought against them by Mr. Eltringham, in a pamphlet, intituled, The Baptist against the Baptist, &c.* 1756.[3] ([BrineSerm 24 Sermon 24 The Baptist Against The Baptist By John Brine](#))

28. *Diligence in Study: recommended to ministers. In a sermon, preached at the ordination of . . . Richard Rist.* 1757. ([BrineSerm 25 Sermon 25 Diligence in Study By John Brine](#))

29. *The Doctrines of the Imputation of Sin to Christ, and the Imputation of his Righteousness to his People.* Clearly stated, explained, and improved, in a sermon. 1757. ([BrineSerm 26 Sermon 26 The Doctrine of Imputation](#))

30. *The Gospel not Absurd, not Contrary to Justice, nor Licentious.* A sermon. 1757. ([BrineSerm 27 Sermon 27 The Gospel Not Absurd, Not Contrary to Justice, Nor Licentious By John Brine](#))

31. *Animadversions Upon The Letters on Theron and Aspasio. Addressed to that Ingenious Author* (Robert Sandeman). 1758. ([BrineSerm 28 Sermon 28 Animadversions Upon The Letters on Theron and Aspasio, Addressed to That Ingenious Author by John Brine](#))

32. *The Knowledge of Future Glory: the support of the saints, in present troubles.* A sermon occasioned by the death of . . . Clendon Daukes. 1759. ([BrineSerm 30 Sermon 30 The Knowledge of Future Glory: The support of the Saints in Present Trouble by John Brine](#))

33. *Imputation of Christ's active obedience to His people, and the merit of it demonstrated.* In a sermon. . . December 27, 1758. 1759. ([BrineSerm 29 Sermon 29 The Imputation of Christ Active Obedience](#))

34. *Grace proved to be at the sovereign disposal of God.* A discourse, July 19, 1760. 1760. ([BrineSerm 31 Sermon 31 Grace at the Sovereign Disposal of God](#))

35. *Christ, the object of God's eternal delight: and the church, the object of Christ's everlasting delight, explained and proved in a sermon.* . . . December 31, 1760. 1761. ([BrineSerm 33 Sermon 33 Christ The Object of God's Eternal Delight, and The Church The Object of Christ's Everlasting Delight By John Brine](#))

36. *Opposition of flesh and spirit in believers, considered.* In a sermon preached February 8, 1761. 1761. ([BrineSerm 34 Sermon 34 The Oppostion of Flesh and Spirit In Believers, Considered By John Brine](#))

37. *Ancient prophecy proved to be Divine.* A discourse, February 19, 1761. 1761. ([BrineSerm 32 Sermon 32 Ancient Prophecy Proved to be Divine By John Brine](#))

38. *Right to eternal glory; a discourse, on [Tit 3:7](#).* 1762. ([BrineSerm 36 Sermon 36 Right to Eternal Glory by Christ](#))

39. *Glory of the gospel, considered.* In a sermon, preached at Kettering in Northamptonshire, May 23, 1762. 1762. ([BrineSerm 35 Sermon 35 The Glory of the Gospel considered](#))

40. *Sin reigns not, nor shall reign, in the saints.* A discourse, April 20, 1764. 1764. ([BrineSerm 37 Sermon 37 Sin Reigns not, Not Shall Reign In The Believer](#))

41. *The Moral Law the Rule of Moral Conduct to Believers, considered and enforced by arguments, extracted from the works of the late Rev. J. Brine and Vitringa.* (Extracts from J. Brine's *Certain Efficacy of the Death of Christ* and from Vitringa's *Observationes sacrae*.) 1792.

42. *A collection of nine funeral sermons preached by John Brine, Dr. Doddridge, W. Romaine, and R. Flexman.* 1754 to 1760.

43. *Some Account of the choice Experience of Mrs. Anne Brine, as written by herself, and collected out of her letters.* 1750.[4] ([BrineSerm 15 Sermon 15 Some Account Of The Choice Experiences of Mrs. Ann Brine by John Brine](#))

Foot Notes Appendix B

[1] This book has recently been retyped in modern English and printed by The Baptist Standard Bearer, Inc., No. 1 Iron Oaks Drive, Paris, AR 72855.

[2] This edition has recently been reprinted by The Baptist Standard Bearer, Inc., No. 1 Iron Oaks Drive, Paris, AR 72855.

[3] Joseph Ivimey, *A History of the English Baptist*, vol. 3, has this dated 1765. This is incorrect. Edward C. Starr in *A Baptist Bibliography*, William T. Whitley in *A Baptist Bibliography* and *The National Union Catalog Pre-1956 Imprints* give the proper date — 1756. I have this work on microfiche and it is dated 1756.

[4] The last three listings are not the writings of John Brine *per se*; however, they have been included due to their connection with him.

APPENDIX C

Many sources could be listed concerning the subject of the *free offer of the gospel*. However, most of them are out of print. Here is a short list of works that are presently available for those interested in a further study of this subject.

Edward Fisher, *The Marrow of Modern Divinity, with Notes by Thomas Boston* (repr., Swengel, PA: Reiner Publication, 1978). (The contents of this book is the same as the following.)

Thomas Boston, *The Complete Works*, ed. Samuel M'-Millan (London: William Tegg & Co., 1853; repr., Wheaton, IL: Richard Owen Roberts, 1980), vol. 8.

David Englesma, *Hyper-Calvinism & The Call of the Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 1980).

Joseph Hussey, *God's Operations of Grace But No Offers of Grace* (repr., Elon College, NC: Primitive Publications, n.d.).

William Rushton, *A Defense of Particular Redemption* (reprint, Elon College, NC: Primitive Publications, n.d.).[1]

John Macleod, *Scottish Theology*, 2d ed., (n.p.: Free Church of Scotland, 1946; repr., Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1974).

Foot Note Appendix C

[1] Hussey and Ruston's books may be purchased from either of the following places: Primitive Publications, Route 2, Elon College, NC 27244, or Primitive Baptist Publications, Inc., 65 N. Lakeside Dr., Ellenwood, GA 30049.

16 Appendix D

APPENDIX D

(Contents of footnote 5 in chapter 12)

[\(Justify 12 Justification and Evangelism \(continued\)\)](#)

An ingenious pen has lately exposed, with equal strength and delicacy, the impertinent application, which Arminianism makes, of the prophet Ezekiel's question and exhortation.

"Arise ye dead," Arminius cries;
 "Arise ye dead in sin!
 "Unstop your ears, unseal your eyes,
 "And a new life begin.

 "Why will ye die, ye wretched souls?
 "Ye dead, why will ye die?
 "Quicken and make your spirits whole:
 "To life eternal fly."

 As Baal's worshippers of old,
 Begg'd, pray'd, and cry'd aloud;
 Cutting their bodies, as we're told,
 To move a fancied god;

 So on the idol man he'll call,
 And pompously declare,
 Though slightly damaged by the fall,
 How great his powers are.

 "Rise, noble creature! Man, arise!
 "And make yourself alive!
 "Prepare yourself to mount the skies;
 "For endless glory strive."

 Deluded Seer! But man will lie
 Still senseless as a stone:

And you yourself stand fooling by,
 'Till both are quite undone:
 Unless Almighty power be mov'd
 By God's free-will, not thine,
 To quicken both, and make his love
 On both your hearts to shine.
See Serious Essays, in verse, p. 194
By the Rev. Mr. John Ryland, junior

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