

BEING JUSTIFIED BY A HOLY GOD

by A. E. Carnell

In order to understand the meaning of, and the necessity for, justification, there are certain truths we need to consider. In order to do that we must go back and notice some things the Bible says about the first man God created. After God had "formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life," He placed him in the Garden of Eden along with his wife, Eve, whom He had created from a rib of Adam. The Bible says that when God created Adam he created him in His "image and likeness." (Genesis 1:26) God gave Adam certain instructions. He told him they could eat any of the fruit that was in the garden, with the exception of one tree; that tree was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God told him that if he ate fruit from that tree, he would die. One day Satan came in the form of a serpent and tempted Eve to eat some of the fruit which God had said they were not to eat. At first she refused because God had told them not eat it, and if they did, they would die. Satan, being the father of lies that he is, said

"You will not surely die. God knows that if you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil, That's why He doesn't want you to eat it."
(Italics mine) (Genesis 3:4-5)

Well, Eve listened to the lie of Satan, ate some of the fruit, and then she gave some to Adam and he also ate it. Now God had created Adam as a sinless, perfect man, but the very moment he took that fruit and ate it he became a sinner. Consequently, we read in Genesis 5:3 that Adam "...*begot a son in his own likeness, after his image...*" To put it very simply, when Adam became a sinner, the only kind of children he could produce were sinners. All of their children came into this world as sinners; and every child that has ever been born since Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden has been born a sinner. David, whom God used to write many of the Psalms, said,

"Surely I have been a sinner from birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me." (Psalm 51:5 NIV) Again he wrote, "The wicked go astray from the womb, they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies." (Psalm 58:3)

The Bible has a lot to say about sinners. For example, it says that we are "*dead (spiritually dead) in trespasses and sins.*" (Ephesians 2:1) As sinners, we have no right to call God our Father because Jesus Christ said that our father is the devil. (John 8:44) Now, as long as our father is the devil, we are not friends of God but we are His enemies. (Romans 8:7) Furthermore, as long as a person is content to live as a sinner there is nothing he can do to please God. (Romans 8:8) That means he cannot please God by reading the Bible, the Book of Mormon, or any other religious book. He cannot please God by saying some prayers, or by giving tithes to the church. He cannot please God by giving up some of his bad habits. So, if sinners were ever going to be reconciled to God, if they were ever going to be at peace with God, if they are ever going to come to the place where they could live a life pleasing to Him, somehow there had to be a way provided for them to come into the right relationship with Him; to become His friend, but more than that, to become His child. If there was no way provided, everyone would be

eternally doomed and damned. Thank God, He has provided a way so that this could be accomplished. Notice how God Himself made that way possible. First of all, sin had to be paid for by someone. But since no man could do anything to please God, certainly he was incapable to pay for his sin in a way that would be acceptable to God. This is where God stepped into the picture. God demanded that sin be paid for by a blood sacrifice; and that sacrifice for sin which God required had to be a perfect sacrifice. In the Old Testament it was to be an animal without spot or blemish. The sacrifices which the Old Testament saints offered were offered, looking forward to the time when God would send His Son, the Lord Jesus, to be the sinless, spotless, sacrifice. The Bible gives in detail the fact that Jesus Christ came from heaven in the form of a baby, born to Mary and Joseph in a stable in Bethlehem. In addition, the Bible makes it very clear that Mary was a virgin when she conceived the baby Jesus, and she was still a virgin when she gave birth to Him. The Holy Spirit was the One who miraculously caused her to conceive and bare a son. Joseph was not the father of Jesus! Now this is very important since the blood of a baby comes from its father. The sacrifice which God required to pay for our sins had to have sinless, pure blood. Since the Lord Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit, the blood which flowed through His veins was that sinless, pure blood required by God the Father. Jesus Christ was not just another baby being born, He was God who took on Himself the form of a man, so he could die on the cross to pay the price which God demanded for every person's sins.

The Bible says, ***"...Christ Jesus...being in the form of God...made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men...humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."*** (Philippians 2:5-8)

We read in I Timothy 1:15 that the Lord Jesus came into this world for the express purpose of saving sinners like you and me. Now, as the Lord Jesus hung on that cross, he cried out seven different times. Just before He died, He cried out the final time and said, "It is finished." (John 19:30) Jesus Christ had paid in full for our sins, and since He paid for our sins in full that means there is nothing you or I can do to add to that payment. The only thing we can do is either accept that payment as our very own, or we can reject it. The choice is up to each individual.

Notice what we read in Ephesians 2:8, 9--- ***"For by grace you have been saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."***

Because Jesus Christ paid for our sins God can then offer each one of us sinners the gift of eternal life; and let me remind you, there is no way you can work for a gift and it still be a gift. That is why God says in Romans 4:4, 5,

"Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness."

Now, with all of this in mind, I turn your attention to the subject of Justification. When

God promised Sarah and Abraham they were going to have a baby born to them when she was 90 and he was 100 years of age, we read in Romans 4:20-5:1,

"He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed (credited) to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed (credited) to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed (credited), if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Remember, I said earlier that if sinners are going to ever be at peace with God, if they are ever going to be reconciled to God, if they are ever going to come to the place where they can live a life pleasing to Him, somehow there had to be a way provided for them to come into the right relationship with God; to become His friend, but more than that, to become His child. Did you notice what we just read? Jesus Christ was "delivered for our offences (our sins), and was raised again for our justification. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Simply stated, the moment a person receives Jesus Christ as His Lord and Savior, that very moment God not only forgives that person of all of his sins, but the Bible says He removes those sins (transgressions) from him "as far as the east is from the west." (Psalm 103:12) The Bible further says that He casts all of those sins behind His back. (Isaiah 38:17) Someone has said, "God never turns around to look at them!"

No one is able to enter into heaven unless he has first been justified. No one can be justified by doing their own, or any, "good works." The following Scripture explains:

Acts 13:39 (KJV)---"And by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."

The Law of Moses (the 10 Commandments) could justify no one - the Law of Moses only proved that no one can be completely perfect by obeying all the law all the time - which is God's requirement to get into heaven. To those who want to get to heaven by good works, this explains that it is utterly impossible.

Romans 3:28 (KJV)---"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."

Galatians 2:16 (KJV)---"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."

Galatians 5:4 (KJV)---"Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."

Grace plus good works cannot be combined to attain salvation. Its either all grace that saves a soul, or all works. Performing all the good works we can do, then expect Jesus Christ to make up the difference and scoot us on into heaven, is not God's revealed way of salvation. What is revealed is that anyone who relies on any works of the Law has fallen from grace (see Galatians 5:4 above) so there would be no grace available to cover where your good works left off and no one is good enough by himself because God expects perfection!

Thus, Justification from all our sins is an absolute necessity for entry into God's heaven.

There is of no simpler way to explain what it means to be justified than this very clear statement: To be justified before God is to be able to stand before Him just as if we had never sinned. All of that is made possible because of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ in payment for our sins, and our willingness to accept by faith His payment as our very own. This means we turn away from our sins, our sinful way of life, and from following Satan, and we turn with all of our heart to Jesus Christ and accept Him as our Lord and Savior, determined to follow Him and to live our lives in a way pleasing to Him. The Bible tells us what God expects, and the Holy Spirit then enables us to do what God tells us in His Word, the Bible, that He wants us to do. Since He is the one who justifies us, He expects us to live from that moment on in obedience to Him.

This ministry is dedicated to the communication of the whole counsel of God's Word to others, especially those caught in the grip of polygamy. Our desire is to use the Bible as God's tool to tell you of His love and fullness of grace to sinners. Our desire is to lead others to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ who died to save sinners, and to affirm that no righteous act a human being can do will contribute one iota to their salvation, but instead, will deprive the sinner of salvation.

Although living polygamy is considered by some as a righteous act and required lifestyle in order to be accepted and acceptable by God, the Bible tells a completely different story. Nowhere is there a Biblical command that living polygamy is a requirement for salvation or is a way to please God!

We appeal to you, as Paul the apostle appealed to his readers:

2 Corinthians 5:20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. KJV