

Christ

The Greatness of Christ Our Justifier

Introduction

The eternal security of the believer is one of the greatest doctrines in all the scriptures. At its very core is the truth that an individual can stand before God, not only with their sins forgiven, not only reconciled to God, BUT put in a privileged place before God, having the record of their guilt eternally blotted out, never to be remembered again. God has said: "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee." (Isa. 44:22). Knowing this truth Peter preached saying: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3:19). The writer to the Hebrews wrote: "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jer. 31:34). With what assurance and joy saints have sung the words:

*Complete in Thee! No work of mine
May take, dear Lord, the place of Thine;
Thy blood hath pardon bought for me,
And I am now complete in Thee*

The contemplation of this marvelous truth raises a number of questions:

- a) Why do I need justified?
- b) What were Christ's qualifications for justifying me?
- c) On what basis can I receive justification?
- d) When can I receive justification?

Why Do I Need Justified?

The scriptures present the condition of the sinner from a number of viewpoints. Man is viewed as an enemy who needs reconciled, a sinner who needs forgiveness, and regarding justification man is viewed legally as a transgressor who needs their record righteously cleared.

- a) I recall a teacher in primary school who taught us that there were sins of commission, that is, things which were done which ought not to have been done, and there were sins of omission, that is, things which were left undone which should have been done. Both the ten commandments (Ex. 20:1-17) or the beatitudes (Matt. 5:1-12) teach these truths.
- b) Therefore, sinning is more than breaking the law. It is also failing to do the right (Jam. 4:17). Paul informs us: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31).
- c) The questions:
 - i) Since the day of my birth, "Have I done all for the glory of God?"
 - ii) Have I ever taken God's name in vain?
 - iii) Have I ever stolen, or spoken wrongly against another individual?
 - 1. If so, I have transgressed the law and am a guilty sinner needing justification. I am not alone for: "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23), to which Paul further wrote: "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (Rom. 3:19).
 - 2. There is no defense lawyer can argue mitigating circumstances. There will be no excuses of poor upbringing or bad environment, the individual stands alone, guilty before God. The word "guilty" refers to an individual who is brought to trial, and under the judgment of the court. A person who denies all personal guilt of breaking the commands of God will never, while maintaining that attitude, ever be justified.

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What Were Christ's Qualifications For Justifying Me?

For Christ to be able to provide justification He had to have never failed to do what should have been done, never to have done that which ought not to have been done, and done all for the glory of God. Thank God that was the characteristic of His life. He is the only human who never sinned or rebelled against God. What He pledged was how He lived (Heb. 10:9) and in contrast to man, who have “come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23), glorified God on the earth (Jn. 17:4). Being sinless there was never any infraction of the law of God, He loved it, (Psa. 119:67, 113, 163, 165) and He came to fulfill it (Matt. 5:17). Throughout His entire life there was never any distortion of the character of God. He who was the image of God, perfectly manifested God and the Father (Jn. 1:18; 14:8). He never needed justification. Neither was there any deviation from the will of God (Heb. 10:8). Being sinless, He never had a fault to acknowledge, never had to ask forgiveness of anyone, anywhere, anytime, never did His behavior detract from the solemnity or value of His teachings, nor belittle His person or the character of God. Never did He need a mediating sacrifice to approach or be acceptable to God. With Him, no capability was distorted, defective, or dwarfed. His death was that of a substitute for the sinner. He alone was able to offer Himself as a sacrifice for the sinner. He was the first to be raised from the dead never to die again. He never had a conviction because of sin because there was no sin in Him, and nothing which desired sin or the yearning to fulfill it. Because He never needed justification, He alone was able to provide it for others.

On What Basis Can I Receive Justification?

Paul makes it very plain that the foundation for justification has two sides. On the divine side is the sufferings and resurrection of Christ, and on man's side dependence on the finished work of Christ received by faith alone. (Rom. 4:24; 5:9)

- (a) Salvation and justification is exclusively dependent on my acceptance to the work of divine persons with the focus on the finished work of Christ. Peter when preaching said: “Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven (referring to the Lord) among men whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). He was, by the Holy Spirit, endorsing the words of Isaiah: “Look unto me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else” (Isa. 45:22).
- b) Justification is by faith alone.
 - i) “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.” (Rom. 3:28)
 - ii) “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Rom. 5:1)
 - iii) “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.” (Gal. 2:16)
 - iv) “But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.” (Gal. 3:11)
 - v) “Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.” (Gal. 3:24)

When Can I Receive Justification?

- 1) It can only be received while alive.
 - a) Since there is never an opportunity for salvation after death, it is evident that if ever an individual is going to be justified, or being cleared of all guilt before God, **it** is a gift which can only be received while on my earthly sojourn and while I have the intelligence to do so.
- 2) It can only be received if I hear and understand the gospel.
 - a) Furthermore, the individual must not only hear the gospel but understand it: “And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand” (Matt. 15:10).

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3) The danger of playing fast and loose with the offer of justification.

- a) For those who refuse to hear and understand there comes a point of time when the Holy Spirit will not strive with man (Gen. 6:3), and then the dark and frightening words the Lord said will be true of them: "Seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them." (Mk. 4:12). Man cannot just decide that he will accept God's offer of justification when it is acceptable to him. The grace of God is not to be toyed with and humanity needs to understand the Holy Spirit of God is not under any obligation to fit my schedule.

Who Justifies?

Thank God justification does not depend on that which I can do and it is not maintained by what I do or fail to do. Justification is dependent on the finished work of Christ and, only on that basis can God justify. When writing to the Romans Paul throws out a challenge: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" Then the answer comes, and whether it is viewed as a statement of fact, as the KJV does: "It is God that justifieth" (Rom. 8:33), or as a question: "God that justifies"? the response is the same. Such is the fulness of justification, the accuser of the brethren can lay no charge upon them (Rev. 12:10).

The Blessing of Justification

Such is the fulness of God's justification, that immediately I transfer my faith from my works to the finished work of Christ, accepting His justifying work as all I need for salvation, depending on no merit of my own, but receiving it as a gift, I am justified. It is a perfect gift for: "By him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:39). Thus there is complete clearance from the guilt of sin, the entire erasure from every trace of former guiltiness, and never again can a charge be laid against me. It is eternal, therefore, not only is there the removal of all guilt from the past, but perfect peace in the present and all fear of the future gone. With such in our hearts we can sing:

Complete in Thee! no work of mine
May take, dear Lord, the place of Thine;
Thy blood hath pardon bought for me,
And I am now complete in Thee.

Refrain:
Yea, justified! O blessed thought!
And sanctified! Salvation wrought!
Thy blood hath pardon bought for me,
And glorified, I too, shall be!

Dear Saviour! When before Thy bar
All tribes and tongues assembled are,
Among Thy chosen will I be,
At Thy right hand, complete in Thee.

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

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