

New Covenant JUSTIFICATION

"But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away." II Corinthians 3:14-16

Beyond any question, Moses was among the greatest of all who are recorded in the bible. Many of the things he wrote in his "Law of Moses," however, only served to blind the people to the extent they rejected their long awaited messiah when He came into the world. That same Law of Moses also blinded the people to the truth of the gospel which Paul preached, and continued to hold them in bondage. We can easily see the error the Jews made in rejecting the gospel of Jesus Christ because of the blindness of their heart, but may fail to understand our modern traditions can also blind our hearts to the same gospel in our day.

At the close of the first century A.D., the church suffered a great "falling away" II Thessalonians 2:3, and by the sixteenth century A.D., the "church" had been under the bondage of the papal system for over a thousand years. The Apostle Paul wrote, "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses" Hebrews 10:28. Fifteen hundred years later those who openly disagreed with the pope and the cardinal system also "died without mercy." The people of many nations were forced to purchase forgiveness for sins with money which was used to build Saint Peter's Basilica. It was this selling indulgences for sin that so moved Martin Luther to publish his 95 theses against this abuse. It was his revelation of "justification by faith" that actually freed millions of people worldwide from the bondage of the Roman Catholic Church of the dark ages. When they understood they did not need a man other than Jesus Christ to make intercession for them, they fled the catholic system by the millions, and the protestant churches were established on the doctrine of "justification by faith."

We do not question the greatness of Martin Luther or the many other reformers of his day. Certainly God raised Luther up for this momentous work that others had suffered martyrdom seeking to accomplish. It is a sad thing, however, to note that five hundred years after Luther's reformation, much of the church has become blinded to the truth of the gospel by the traditions of Luther, Calvin, and many others of their time. Is it asking too much of the people to hold what the Bible records about "justification" above that of any other man or woman of God since the first century? I think not, so I will give for your consideration the words of the Apostle Paul.

The tradition of justification by faith says we are justified, and nothing changes except the way God sees us. According to that tradition, God sees the "guilty" as "innocent," the

"unrighteous" as "righteous," and the "unclean" as "clean." In other words, the tradition says the only thing changed by our "faith" is "the way God sees us." They use the character flaws and sins of Abraham and David among many others in the Old Testament as proof that those who are "justified by faith" continue as sinners without any change in their character whatsoever. We will show by the words of the Apostle Paul that this tradition is not true.

"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one" Romans 3:10. Many of those who are blinded by tradition use this at their "proof text." This is not, however, a blanket statement. Paul follows this with 8 verses from the Psalms of David and the prophets for confirmation, and concludes in verse 19, **"...what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law."** Paul's conclusion is that among those who trusted in the Law of Moses, there were **"none righteous, no, not one."**

"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight..." Romans 3:20. After 1500 years under the Law of Moses, the fact that not a single soul out of the millions of those who trusted in the Law was truly "righteous" is actual proof that no one can be justified by the works of the Law.

"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" Romans 3:24. There are three powerful statements in this short verse which we must consider:

1. We are **"justified freely,"** which means we are justified without our works, our money, or any other form of payment.
2. We are justified **"by His grace,"** which means our justification is a gift from God. Paul calls it a "gift of righteousness" Romans 5:17.
3. We are justified **"...through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."** With these words we begin to understand that our "justification" is not the same as that of Abraham. Abraham was **"justified by faith"** almost 2000 years before Christ died for us. Our justification requires **"the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."** We are **"the redeemed,"** but Abraham was not!

"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" Romans 3:28. To this point in explaining justification by faith, Paul has not mentioned Abraham. It is important to note that he did not need Abraham's experience to understand that justification is **"by faith without the deed of the law."** In fact, the message Paul gave from Abraham's experience is **"what Abraham found"** Romans 4:1. After it was said of Abraham, **"...he believed in the LORD, and He counted it to him for righteousness"** Genesis 15:6, he struggled for 14 years, trying to receive the promise through his own abilities and works. It wasn't until Abraham

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was 99 years of age that he finally believed God to receive the promise, and within a year Isaac was born to Sarah.

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" Romans 5:1. It is as though Paul leaped completely over the 4th chapter on "what Abraham found" to give us this nugget of truth concerning those things given to us which Abraham did not receive; "...we have peace with God **through our Lord Jesus Christ.**" Abraham also had "peace with God," but his "peace" was not "through our Lord Jesus Christ." Abraham "believed **God,**" but his "peace with God" came when he "obeyed God" Hebrews 11:8. If Abraham had not obeyed God, we would have never heard of him beyond a single mention in the lineage records. The source of our "peace with God" is revealed in Paul's message to the Colossians; "...having made peace through the blood of his cross" Colossians 1:20, and to the Ephesians; "For he is our peace..." Ephesians 2:14. This is the "peace" which Abraham could not receive.

"Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" Romans 5:9.

"Much more then..." The words "much more" are used 5 times in this 5th chapter of Romans, indicating that our redemption is "much more" than the law; that "grace" is "much more" than the law; and in this verse, that "justified by His blood" is "much more" than the justification received by Abraham.

"...being now..." The words "being now" speak of "this present time" as adverse to the time of Abraham before Christ shed His blood and died for us.

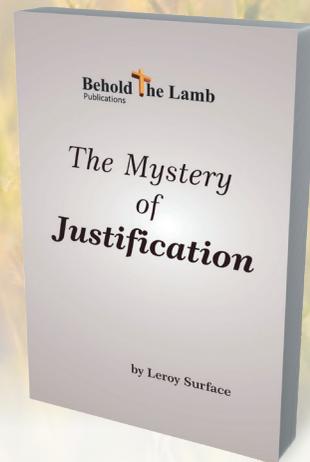
"...justified by His blood..." If we can believe them, these four words will revolutionize our thinking and bring another reformation to as many in the church as receive it. We are "justified by His blood." Paul had previously qualified our justification with the words "...through faith in His blood" Romans 3:25. Abraham was justified by "faith alone," and his character was not changed. New Covenant justification requires that God do "much more" for man. It requires everything Christ did when He shed His blood and died for us on the cross. This is what Paul called "justified by the faith of Christ" Galatians 2:16, which speaks of His complete work on the cross. These things are necessary because of the transformation that is accomplished in those who receive New Covenant justification. Tradition has told us we are "justified by faith" and nothing changes. The "revelation of Jesus Christ" tells us we are "justified by His blood" and everything changes. I offer the following example.

"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God" I Corinthians 6-10. What can be more conclusive than the language the apostle uses in these verses? Paul offers no exceptions, but is clear; these "shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

And such were some of you..." It in the four letter word

"were" that we see the power of the gospel. You "were" such as these, but "being now justified by His blood," you are totally transformed from "unrighteous" to "righteous." Paul then tells us what made the difference.

"...but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified..." I Corinthians 6:11. Somewhere between Luther and now, tradition has established that we are "justified" and nothing changes, so we enter into a process of sanctification, which must continue for the rest of our lives. Is it possible that the Apostle Paul understood more than the many orthodox theologians of our day? Is it possible that even Luther, in the heat of controversy with the church of the dark ages, failed to see what Paul understood? I say it is not only possible, but it is certain and proven by the record of the scriptures. The record Paul gave is correct. If we are not "washed," we are not "sanctified," and if we are not "sanctified," we are not "justified." For each of these the shedding of the precious blood of Christ, the Son of God, was absolutely necessary. These are not three separate works, however, but together they define what it means to be "justified by faith" under the New Covenant of grace. It is that which the apostle called "perfected (completed) forever" Hebrews 10:14. Our redemption is a complete salvation!



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