

# Simply Christ

Gospel Newsletter

*Sharing the simplicity that is in Christ*

March 28, 2022

## Justifying the Ungodly

### Part 2 of 5

What does God do with an entire world that has been found guilty in the court of Heaven? Will his justice call for damnation; or will it demand redemption? This “part 2” of “Justifying the Ungodly” begins to take us through the many aspects of God’s justice as he chose to redeem fallen humanity.

#### Through the Redemption

The Apostle Paul begins his revelation of justification with these words: ***“But now the righteousness (justification) of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness (justification) of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:”*** Romans 3:21-24. With the words “*through the redemption,*” Paul lets us know that our justification required the shedding of Christ’s blood and his death upon the cross. This simple truth reveals a difference between the justification of men like Abraham or David as

compared to what a born-again believer in Jesus Christ receives.

The scripture tells us that those who believed God, but lived before Christ came “**...all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them...**” Hebrews 11:13. The word of God also says “**...these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us...**” Hebrews 11:39-40. These men and women who trusted God, went to their grave in faith, but without the glorious work of redemption which we now walk in. It was only after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ that they received it also. What Abraham received was wonderful, but Paul tells us what we receive is “*much more*” Romans 5:9 because they were not justified “*through the redemption.*”

## **Forgiveness**

The second aspect of our justification deals with the sins of our past. Paul describes these as “*those things whereof ye are now ashamed.*” Romans 6:21. Many of us wish we could change yesterday’s actions, but we cannot. How can we have a future with God when the truth of sins already committed rise up against us in condemnation? Paul gives the answer, telling of “*... Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness (justification) for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;*” Romans 3:24-25. There are three Greek words in the original text which are very important for us

to understand correctly. The Greek word translated “*past*” means “*have previously transpired.*” These are the sins which we have already committed. Another Greek word which was translated “*remission*” means “*praetermission, that is, toleration.*” “*Praetermission*” is “*to pass over without making mention.*” The third Greek word was translated “*propitiation*” and speaks of “*a sacrifice victim.*” Jesus was offered as a “*sacrifice victim*” for a “*peace offering*” to God, so that our sins which “*have already transpired*” would be “*passed over*” by God and he would “*make mention*” of them no more. This is what we call “*forgiveness.*”

It is important to note that Paul specifies “*sins that are past*” and not “*present and future sins.*” Forgiveness of past sins does not mean you can sin with impunity. Jude refuted this sort of thinking, warning of “*ungodly men*” who were “*turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness...*” Jude 1:4, which speaks of viewing God’s grace as a license to sin without eternal consequence. As we will see later in Romans, these confessed and forsaken sins are the only sins that Christ’s blood will cover. This “*passing over*” of past sins comes to us “*through faith in his blood.*” Romans 3:24.

## **By Faith**

The third aspect Paul reveals of our “*justification*” through Jesus Christ is that it is “*by faith.*” He says, “*Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.*” Romans 3:28. This idea of “*justification by faith*” was rejected by

those who trusted in the Law. If God received someone because of faith, all their labors under the Law were in vain. This caused the message of “justification by faith alone” to be highly offensive to these who had worked so hard to “*justify*” themselves. Luke 16:15.

Paul reached back almost eighteen hundred years to lift up Abraham as precedent for “*justification by faith.*” Although Abraham was indeed “*justified by faith,*” his justification was different than ours because he was not justified “*through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*” Even so, he serves as an undeniable example of how God received a man who believed him even though he did not come by the works of the Law. The statement that “*Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness*” Romans 4:3, tells us that God considered Abraham’s faith to be both a righteous virtue and an act of righteousness. God valued the fact that someone believed and obeyed his voice more than he valued all the religious works of men.

Abraham’s faith was the basis on which God chose to give him such great promises. Paul presses on with the precedent set in Abraham showing that the promises of God do not come because of keeping a religious Law. He says, “*For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.*” Romans 4:13. Paul uses this precedent discovered in Abraham to show why redemption is only given to those who believe gospel, even as

Abraham believed the promises which God gave to him.