

Justification

by Leon O. Poole

This small book, *Justification*, by Leon O. Poole, is designed to teach you about the doctrine of justification, which is a highly important topic in the Bible that everyone should know more about. We pray this book helps draw you closer to Jesus Christ.

The doctrine of justification is a cardinal doctrine of both the Old and New Testaments. Sinful humanity cannot be made acceptable to God without this vital doctrine. Justification by faith is not a mere religious requirement. Its substance rises out of the sacrifice of the spotless Son of God on Calvary. Its function is the result of Christ's triumph over sin, the curse, death, hell and human mortality. The reason that mankind must be justified from our sins is that "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God", Romans 3:23. The doctrine of justification by faith is a revelation from God as to how He reconciles repentant sinners to Himself.

First, let me call your attention to Galatians 3:8,9: *"And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham."* Notice that justification precedes blessing. Notice also, that justification is obtained through faith.

Let us see how that faith and justification works righteousness in a man in the sight of God. Romans 4:16-5:1: *"Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law (i.e., the Law of Moses), but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, [17.] (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. [18.] 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.*

[19.] And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: [20.] He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; [21.] And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised he was able also to perform. [22.] And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. [23.] Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; [24.] But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; [25.] Who was delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification. [5:1] Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Thus, the Apostle Paul explained the function of faith in God as the basis for Divine justification with God, and concludes with the glorious truth of Romans 5:1. Being justified by faith, we have peace with God. That means that He counts us righteous in His sight, and that He accepts us on the basis of His justification of us, through our faith in Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins on the Cross of Calvary, and three days afterwards Almighty God raised Him to immortal, eternal, Divine life. To believe that fact in our heart, and consequently to confess with our mouth the Lord Jesus, makes us just by faith in God's sight, and we are immediately saved from our sins, being born from above, born of water and of the Spirit of God.

Observe John 3:3-5: *"Jesus answered and said, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. [4.] Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born the second time when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? [5.] Jesus answered, Verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. [6.] That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."*

That is why we must be born again. Now let us get into our study on the Biblical subject of Justification; understanding that Justification is by faith, and by faith alone. Please look at 1 Timothy 3:16: *And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."*

In that Scripture we are told that Jesus, Who is God in the flesh, was justified in the Spirit. What can that mean? We know that Jesus was justified by right being and by right doing in His life on earth, for He was without sin. But there is another reason that His being justified in the Spirit is so vitally important for us.

Hebrews 2:9-10, 14-18. *"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. [10.] For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. [14.] Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil; [15.] and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. [16.] For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. [17.] Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. [18.] For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted."*

As afore noted, All have sinned and come short of the glory of God, Romans 3:23. Ephesians 2:1 defines the case of sinners before God: *"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins."* Now let's examine the death of Jesus Christ on the cross at Calvary, and see how it relates to sinners.

Matthew 27:46 shows us Jesus on the cross at about 3 O'clock in the afternoon of the day that he was crucified. Notice Matthew 27:50: *"Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost."* That means that he cried with a loud voice and died. What did He say? Luke 23:46 tells us. *"And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said this, he gave up the ghost."* He died. Jesus had said previously, in John 10:18 that no man takes his life from him, but that he lays it down of himself. When he died on the cross, he didn't die because people killed him, but because when his work was accomplished, he laid down his life, viz., died. Thus, when the Scripture says that He gave Himself for us, it is precisely accurate.

His death came about because of 2 Corinthians 5:21, and Galatians 3:13. *"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. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."* Then in Galatians 3:13: *"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree:"* .

In His crucifixion, Jesus was **made** sin, and also a curse. He had no sin of His own, but He was made to BE sin for us. He thus became CURSED because of our sin, which He personally bore for us in His Own Body, in our place. Due to that condition, He was separated from God the Father. So complete was the 'break' (which was caused by OUR sins) between them that God forsook His Own Son!! Jesus was totally ALONE, separated from God the Father and rejected by mankind. Matthew 27:46. Yet in Luke 23:46, Jesus cried with a loud voice saying, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and then He died.

Do you hear the faith of the Son of God in that cry? That cry was His faith speaking. We might ask, "Jesus, according to you, God has forsaken you! He's not with you now! How can you say, Into Thy hands I commend my spirit?" The answer is because that Jesus knew and **believed** the Scripture! Jesus had said, Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My word shall not pass away, Matthew 24:35. God's word shall not pass away, and it CANNOT be broken.

When God forsook him, Jesus' faith HELD THE WORD OF GOD, the promises of God. Thus, when there was no way, and Jesus was forsaken, abandoned, cursed and made sin, His faith held fast to God's word. Notice Hebrews 11:1: *"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."* The Amplified version of the Bible says in Hebrews 11:1 that faith is the assurance, the title deed of the things we hope for, being the proof of things we do not see and the conviction of their reality, faith perceiving as fact what is not revealed to the senses. Note the words assurance, title deed, conviction, and proof. Jesus' faith held all those things, because God CANNOT LIE!

Here then, is the basis for JUSTIFICATION in the Spirit, as far as Christ is concerned. In His sin condition, WHILE He was CURSED, Jesus believed God's Word, and thus was justified by faith. According to Romans 6:10, Jesus died unto sin, but in His Spirit, while

He was sin, cursed, dead, and cut off from God the Father, in the very time and condition of His death (death being the ultimate human extremity) He **held by faith to God's promises in His Spirit: He believed God!**

On that ground, God JUSTIFIED Him from sin (ours) and from the curse (imposed because of OUR sins), and quickened Jesus in the Spirit (1 Peter 3:18). Do you recall how that God justified Abraham because he believed God when there was no humanly possible way for Abraham to have a son as God promised? That is exactly what God did for Jesus Christ, and on the same grounds of believing, when there was absolutely no other way. Jesus, in His death, though He died unto sin, and was made sin, was cursed, forsaken by God the Father, **o v e r c a m e** ALL of those insuperable conditions by His faith and believing!

Notice Acts 2:24: *"Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it."* Why was it not possible for death to hold Him? Because of His faith, and Divine Justification IN THE SPIRIT! Jesus overcame death by faith, believing God's Word. Gloriously for believers in Jesus Christ, it is not possible for eternal death to hold us either! John 5:24: *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life."*

Through death, in the same manner, Jesus destroyed the devil and his key strong hold over mankind! In His utter triumph, Jesus took the keys of hell and of death, gained control over the righteous dead (which satan had been holding captive against their will because satan had held the power of death) and in His resurrection led them home to heaven. Hallelujah! When He arose, Jesus received and entered into ALL power in heaven, earth, in this world, and in the world to come. Death was the strongest enemy that man had: no one could escape it alone. But Jesus defeated death! That's POWER!

Our text in 1 Timothy 3:16 states that Jesus was justified in the Spirit. The word justified means: "To pronounce Him free from guilt or blame." In other words, in God's sight, Jesus Christ looked as if He had never been made sin, never was cursed, and was never forsaken. God imputed righteousness to Him, and pronounced free from guilt or blame after the fact. His death in our place cancelled the legal claims of the sins of those who believe on Him by faith. Our sins are paid and remitted. Revelation 1:5 tells us that He loved us and washed us from our sins in His Own Blood.

By His faith, Jesus was justified in the Spirit, and was reconciled over the conditions that He had at the time of His death: over the demands of Divine Justice and the penalty for sin. He was then re-united with God, and was received with favor through faith: and His Blood which He personally carried into the Holy of Holies in heaven avails for all who believe on Him. It cries to God for mercy, for forgiveness of sins, and for reconciliation for all who are justified by faith in Jesus Christ.

GOD, in His justice MUST respond to that precious Blood! It is IMPOSSIBLE for anyone who appropriates that precious Blood, to be, or to remain condemned. Notice

Hebrews 9:14: *"How much more shall the Blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"*

Understand that the exact likeness of what God did in Jesus occurs to sinners who are spiritually dead in their trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1). A sinner is DEAD spiritually, though he walks about and is alive physically. Jesus was made sin and a curse at Calvary: He became as all sinners ARE! But Jesus believed God's Word in His Spirit, and consequently He was justified and was resurrected from death. A sinner, though he is dead in his sins CAN hear the Word of God, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the promises of God. Faith comes to that sinner by hearing God's Word (Romans 10:17). The sinner, while he is physically alive in this world, CAN choose to believe the record that God gave of His Son, the Gospel of Christ. Then God in His infinite grace JUSTIFYS, saves, and spiritually raises the dead sinner to eternal life in Christ!

The picture is exact and complete. Now, by God's grace, any sinner CAN obtain exactly the same justification that Jesus obtained. The Scripture says that Jesus was made like unto His brethren. They are brethren because they become begotten from the dead in exactly the same process as He was, and thus He is the firstborn among many brethren. It is those brethren that He is made like unto.

ALL who come into this status in Christ are made acceptable in God's Beloved son, Jesus Christ. These are all of one, BEGOTTEN by God, and Jesus is not ashamed to call them brethren, because they came through the same victory by faith as He did. They are justified in the spirit, as He was, and have one Father, even God, His Father. 1 John 4:17.

One more element is necessary in order to grasp the blessed doctrine of justification from our sins. In St. John 14:30 Jesus said Satan was coming; he came to search Jesus for some legal, moral, or spiritual flaw. But he found none, because Jesus was sacrificed as the spotless, flawless sacrifice for sin, the perfect Lamb of God.

While Satan was scrutinizing Christ and His life and works, he was compelled to watch as Jesus destroyed sin, and sin's power and claim on mankind (which was Satan's only claim on the human race) taken away, blotted out, remembered no more by God. Sin lost all of its power, dominion, and influence in the universe as far as those who are in Christ Jesus are concerned. Even Satan's chief weapon, i.e., death, no longer availed! Satan saw it all rendered powerless! He saw all of his ambition as the adversary of God and man completely obliterated in Christ! "Look, you devil, you are done!"

Jesus won the victory, as a man, through faith, by believing. That now makes it possible for ANY living person to do the same! Therefore, the Scripture says: *"whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."* John 3:16.

Will you, O, man come? Please answer Him today: "Yes, Lord I come: I believe, I confess that Jesus IS my Lord. I believe in my heart that God raised Him from the dead."

EVERY person SHALL bow to the Lord Jesus, either by faith in this world, or ELSE at the Great White Throne in final, everlasting judgment and damnation.

Revelation 20:12-15. "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. [13.] And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. [14.] And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. [15.] And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

Which will it be for you, dear reader? Will you be justified by faith in Jesus Christ, or will you refuse God's grace and mercy, and choose your sins and the consequences of eternal death in the lake of fire? You CANNOT escape the choice: and you can only choose while you live in this present world. After you die, it will be too late! If you die in your sins, being not justified by faith in Jesus Christ, you SHALL be cast into the lake of fire. Almighty God has proclaimed it.

Simply believe, trust in, and rely on the Word of God which is this: *"...Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures:"*. 1 Corinthians 15:3. He was then seen of witnesses after His resurrection.

As a result of believing those facts, confess with your mouth, that Jesus Christ IS your Lord. Romans 10:9 promises that if you DO that, you shall be saved. That means that you will be justified by from you sins by faith in Jesus Christ, and that God will impute righteousness to you. He will forgive ALL of your sins, and write your name in the Lamb's Book of Life. If you faithfull follow Him as your Lord and Savior in this world, you will NOT be cast into the lake of fire. 1 Corinthians 15:3.

Do believe and confess Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior today, while you have this fresh in your mind. Don't put it off.