

87% of Evangelical Christians Don't Know What the Gospel is or Justification

87% of Evangelical Christians

By Larry Wessels

Bible Text: Romans 10:1-4; Ephesians 2:8,9

Preached on: Wednesday, June 27, 2012

Christian Answers of Austin, Texas

9009 Martha's Drive

Austin, TX 78717

Website: www.biblequery.org

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/christiananswers

Announcer. If you would like a free newsletter on this or other subjects, just give us a call at Christian Answers. The phone number is (512) 218-8022. Or you could email us at cdebater@aol.com. Thank you.

Larry Wessels. Hello, this is Larry Wessels, Director of Christian Answers of Austin, Texas, Christian Debater. Please check out our YouTube channel page, CAnswersTV. Just type it into the YouTube search box, then click on one of our links for it. Our channel page features 19 playlists on all types of subjects such as Jehovah's Witnesses, there are 17 videos, and by the way, these are videos we produced ourselves; Mormonism, 14 videos; Seventh Day Adventist, 11 videos; Phony TV preachers and King James-onlyites, 14 videos; Nation of Islam, Black Muslims, this is of the Louis Farrakhan type, 20 videos; God-hating atheists, agnostics and know-it-alls, 18 videos; Darwin's metaphysical evolution religion, 17 videos; UFO's, ghosts, magic, spiritual warfare, 16 videos; Islam such as Sunni Muslims, Shiite Muslims. Alawite's, Sufi's, 54 videos; Roman Catholicism, idolatry and the virgin Mary, 71 videos; anti-trinitarians such as the United Pentecostal Church and church history, 36 videos; antichrist cults, the New Age and world religions, 38 videos; saved by works baptism, Church of Christ Campbellism, 69 videos; hell, lake of fire, unpopular Bible doctrines, 19 videos; predestination, Arminianism, and Calvinism, 54 videos; end times, supernatural prophecies and tough Bible questions, 20 videos; and others.

Announcer. Welcome to Christian Answers live, an outreach of Christian Answers Inc., a nationwide apologetics ministry dedicated to defending those essential truths found in the Bible, dedicated to giving Christian answers. And now from the studios of KIXL Radio in Austin, Texas, here are your hosts Lee Meckley and Jim Toungate.

Lee Meckley. Good afternoon and welcome to the show. I'm Lee Meckley, a Director of Radio Outreach for Christian Answers along with Jim T. You definitely want to stay with us for the whole show this afternoon. We'll be speaking to Michael Horton. I'm so impressed with about Michael Horton, this is what's always made him stand out from so many other people that we hear even on the radio, tv, or in the bookstores, and that is his dedication to the Gospel and that sounds kind of pat because, okay, you know, we're all

here for the Gospel, right? Well, he seems to really have a stress on it that nobody else is putting. I mean, his stress is on actually understanding justification and even I am shocked to find out how many people in the church of Jesus Christ don't understand justification and don't understand the Gospel. We all take it for granted that when we're talking with one another and we talk about the Gospel, everybody knows what we're talking about.

Jim Toungate. Yeah, and everybody understands it and that you're all using the same terminology. That's why it's so important to define your terms.

Lee. Sure. Well, today we're going to be defining our terms. Today we're going to not take anything for granted. We're going to go back to Christianity 101 and we're going to...

Jim. That's what this show is about, it's about....

Lee. My producer is giving me the thumb's-up in there on that.

Jim. This show is about the great truths of the Gospel. That is our focus.

Lee. And we've been accused many times of not defining our terms. We've been accused of assuming that people know what we're talking about and the whole purpose of our show is to convey information, is to build up the body of Christ in the knowledge of the Gospel and of the word of God so that they can not only present the Gospel but defend the Gospel.

Speaker. Martin Luther called it a doctrine by which the church stands or falls. John Calvin said that apart from a clear preaching and comprehension of this doctrine, a congregation ceases to be a true Christian church. Throughout church history, the doctrine has been defined, refined, assailed, confused, distorted and defended, and yet this amazing truth is so clearly taught and so obviously central in the Scriptures to be easily understood by the average layperson, but people continue to debate this great doctrine. That says more about the stubbornness of human arrogance and idolatry than anything else.

So what is this doctrine: justification by grace alone, through faith alone, on account of Christ alone? Protestantism was not born out of a protest against papal power, a corrupt clergy, changing social roles or a concern over moral and institutional abuses. These all came into the debate but there were loyal defenders of the Church of Rome who nevertheless pointed these out and called for reform. No, the one issue between the Reformers and Rome was this: how can a sinner be accepted by a holy God? This was, as Yale historian Roland Bainton has argued, the only issue of the Reformation out of which every other discussion flowed. In short, the Reformers really believed that they were standing on the side of the Apostle Paul against a corrupt church that had corrupted the Gospel. It was nothing short of a recovery of apostolic Christianity.

But what is this doctrine by which the church stands or falls? Well, it centers on that one word, "righteousness." At first whenever Luther, an Augustinian monk, came across that word, he understood it like any other monk of his day, righteousness was a moral quality one possessed. It was both something God poured into you and something you did because of that infusion, but either way, it was something you possessed, something you actually attained. But Luther knew his own soul and his own Bible too well. He knew that the righteousness which God demands is not the best a person can do, but the highest perfection, and yet he also knew that every person has sinned and fallen short of that highest perfection so that word "righteousness" became a word of condemnation, a horrifying guilt-producing word that served only to remind the sinner that you stood under the judgment of a holy God for failing to live up to God's righteous standards. Who wouldn't want God to be Mr. Nice Guy and let bygones be bygones?

But Luther knew that for that rosy notion, he'd find no support in the Christian Scriptures and just when Luther was at the height of despair, he ran across that line in Romans which Paul picks up from the prophet Habakkuk, "For in the gospel," the apostle writes, "a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written, 'The righteous will live by faith.'" Suddenly the lights came on. In the law, the righteousness of God is revealed, that is, we learn in the law the moral character of God, a moral character by which the whole universe, ourselves included, is measured. In the law, we find no pardon, no leniency, no let bygones be bygones. As God's character can't change, so his law can't be molded like a wax nose to accommodate our failures, but what Paul is saying here and what Luther clearly saw Paul saying here is that there's another kind of righteousness. In the Gospel, we discover not merely the righteousness of God, that is, his moral standards which only condemn us for not living up to them, but this time the righteousness from God, that is, what Paul later calls the gift of righteousness. Throughout Paul's epistle to the Romans he argues that the person who stands before the law judged and thoroughly condemned is in the perfect position for the first time to understand the Gospel. That's because the Gospel doesn't command us to attain a certain level of righteousness but rather it gives to us in one instance the gift of perfect standing before God.

So the biblical imagery is rich in explaining this great truth. In Romans it's spoken of as a righteousness that is imputed, that is, just as Adam's guilt was imputed or credited to the whole human race, so too the perfect holiness and righteousness of Christ is imputed or credited to every believer through faith alone because of Christ alone. But in every age, human nature recoils at the thought, from Adam and Eve sewing fig leaves together to cover up their shame in the garden of Eden, to you and me trying to cover it up with pop psychology and self-esteem mythology, we've been collectively engaged in an enterprise of self-deception. We like to think that we have standards that we're living up to but the issue isn't whether you're living up to your own standard, which by the way just a point of information, you are not if you really think about your life honestly, the real issue is whether you are perfectly conformed in heart, thought, mind, attitude and action to God's righteousness, loving him with all of your heart, soul, mind and strength, and your neighbor as yourself. Somehow you have to show up before God possessing perfect righteousness.

The church today, yes, even the so-called Bible-believing, conservative, evangelical churches, are as confused on this question today as the medieval church faced by the Reformers and the Galatian church faced by Paul. We are certain that a confrontation is about to take place and is already taking place between the one true Gospel and the competing gospels. If you've heard more sermons and broadcasts and read more Christian books lately on following tips and principles for the victorious Christian life, you'll understand Paul's sharp criticism of salvation by technique or spiritual program, it's just that he calls it the curse of the law and we might call it today the curse of principles and steps.

So we still face what human beings have had to face time immemorial: how can I, a sinful person, be reconciled to a holy God? That's the heart of Paul's concern about the Galatian church, a church that had confused the Gospel of an imputed righteousness that is a free gift, with a false gospel of an inherent or infused righteousness that was the Christian's own holiness that made him or her acceptable to God. No minor trifle, this, the only Gospel that can present you before God's judgment covered in the righteousness he requires.

Lee. In related matters, there are several points at which the Gospel is being attacked and we're going to try to touch on those today. We have Michael Horton on for at least an hour.

Jim. Then we also have a list if anybody is interested in some of the previous shows that we've done. We've put together a list of all the different radio programs that we've done with our guest.

Lee. That's a very, there are some very good shows in the past, of course again, Ray Comfort was a very popular show. We also have, we had on Charlie Cluett(ph) talking about the age of the earth. We've had...

Jim. ...Dr. Michael Gerard on creation science and the impossibility of evolution.

Lee. We had Tommy Ice in studio talking about spiritual warfare.

Jim. We also had an exciting show, the second hour we had in studio Pastor Jackson Boyette who is our pastor and a special guest, Dave Sitton(ph).

Announcer. Now exclusively from Christian Answers, a review of Dr. Walter Martin's Book, "The Roman Catholic Church in History." Jim Toungate co-host of Christian Answers Live and Director of Research and Publications for Christian Answers, documents Martin's position on Romanism in this eye-opening seven page book review.

Speaker. Now as Christians, what ought our attitude to be? There ought to be an attitude of gratitude, an attitude of joy because God has delivered us from this system into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. We are not the descendants of this papacy, nor do we

wish to be. We do not wish its sacraments. We do not wish its dogmas. We worship only Jesus Christ, King of kings and Lord of lords, Redeemer and Savior of lost men. We reject a corrupt Church, a backslidden Church, an apostate Church, and reach out to her people with the love of Christ.

Announcer. Other topics covered in this book review are: was Peter the first pope? Catholic tradition in the Bible. The Roman Catholic doctrine of Mary. Confession, the Mass and purgatory.

Speaker. We're talking tonight about this doctrine of justification which Paul really gets into very quickly, doesn't he, saying this is basically the only Gospel that we have and let me define it.

Speaker. Well, Galatians is Paul's angriest letter in the New Testament which many readers, listeners know. When you go through the New Testament and you look at Paul's letter to the various churches, many times he takes time to introduce himself but in Galatians he starts right off, "I am astonished that you guys are so quickly deserting the one who called you and are turning to a different gospel which is really no gospel at all." Then in chapter 3, our text for tonight, he starts right off, "You stupid Galatians." The NIV translates that, "You foolish Galatians." But it really is strong, "You stupid Galatians, who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified," that is, that Christ was publicly set forth to them as being crucified for their sins through preaching. Paul goes on to say, "I'd like to learn one thing from you, did you receive the Spirit by observing the law or by believing what you heard? Are you guys so foolish after beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?" Really the Greek there means "by the flesh." "Have you suffered so much for nothing if it really was for nothing? Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law or because you believe what you heard?"

Speaker. Okay, and then, of course, he picks up from there and contrasts that with the Old Testament passages from the Old Testament. He says, "Consider Abraham. He believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness. Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith and announced the Gospel in advance to Abraham. All nations will be blessed through you. So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. All who rely on observing the law are under a curse for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone that does not continue to do everything written in the book of the law.'" And you know, we do have a problem understanding what the curse of the law is. It's not because the law is a boogeyman but it's simply we're cursed because we can't keep it in and of ourselves. "Clearly no one is justified before God by the law because the righteous will live by faith," again that quote from Habakkuk. "The law is not based on faith, on the contrary, the man who does these things will live by them. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.' He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit."

Speaker. Before we really did into this text, I want to point out very clearly for our listeners, we really are at a time when, you know, evangelicals used to have a pretty good handle on what the Gospel was and now we are at a time when that just isn't the case. I've just returned from the Christian bookseller's convention which is an evangelical operation, the largest industry for so-called evangelism in the evangelical church.

Speaker. It is the evangelical Super Bowl, that and the National Religious Broadcasters. As a matter of fact, CBA, Christian Bookstore Association, their convention is so large it's one of the top five in the United States. It's a mega, mega-business.

Speaker. It really is a mega-business and what was fascinating was to be on the floor and to see all this Gospel stuff, the word "Gospel" was plastered everywhere, and yet how many people really understood the Gospel? Shane was down on the floor asking these questions, "What is the Gospel?" And these are Christian leaders, authors, pastors, and publishers.

Shane. Howdy, you're an exhibitor at TBA?

Convention Speaker. Yup, sure am.

Shane. What is the Gospel to you?

Convention Speaker. I think the Gospel to me is a message that, um, can be personal to any person, ah, and that's something that you could, that's something really tangible, something that you have to find within yourself in whichever means.

Convention Speaker. It's Jesus Christ living in my life every day and every situation and passing that on to everyone else.

Convention Speaker. Ah, it means you, you love the Lord, you love yourself, and you love other human beings.

Convention Speaker. Well, it means everything to me. I love the Lord with all my heart, mind and soul.

Shane. What is the good news?

Convention Speaker. The good news is that Jesus Christ is alive today and he can help us in all areas of our lives, and has in mine.

Shane. How would you define the Gospel?

Convention Speaker. Define the Gospel? I don't know. Um, oh goodness, these kind of questions. This is why I [unintelligible]. Um, I guess....

Shane. What must I do to be saved?

Convention Speaker. What must I be doing? Anybody? Um, I guess accept God and be right. Um, and I think going to church and frequent confessions and keeping up with your belief and your religion.

Mike. These are the evangelicals.

Speaker. Can I say something, Mike? And, and especially from those from our church, it's important that I make this note. I said this morning before I heard the tape that the largest field for ripe for evangelism in the world, in the Western world today has to be the evangelical church.

Speaker. Boy, that's a strong charge but when you hear the comments that evangelical people at an evangelical convention make about the Gospel, it's obvious no one has ever read the book of Galatians or the book of Romans.

Speaker. But this is a Gospel industry.

Speaker. And this is a Gospel industry. People are saying find Christ within yourself. Yeah, right. Jesus Christ living in me. No, the Gospel is not Jesus living in me, the Gospel is Jesus doing and dying for me. Nothing to do with Jesus living in me. Love the Lord and yourself? What does that have to do with Christ's life and death for me? And the one that really strikes me is, "I love the Lord with all of my heart and all of my mind and all of my strength." Then why on earth do you need a Savior?

Speaker. Isn't that what Paul's arguing in this passage? If you are trying to be justified by the law, why do you even need Christ?

Speaker. Well, that's what he says here, "Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law or by believing what you heard?"

Speaker. What has Paul so worked up, he called these brothers and sisters stupid people.

Speaker. This very thing, the fact that these people didn't, had added something to the life, the death, the burial and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Speaker. And combined two things. The first chapter he makes it clear that they have heard the Gospel, they have heard the objective Gospel, they've heard it, and then here in the third, in the third chapter he says, "You saw yourself Christ being crucified."

Speaker. Yeah, he was clearly portrayed. The idea was that the good news had been preached so that through the preaching the Galatian congregation had seen through words Christ's death on the cross for them.

Speaker. Just as Paul had told the Corinthians, "I determined to know nothing among you except Christ and him crucified," and that was the message the Galatians had heard and they believed it.

Speaker. Exactly.

Speaker. And now something had happened. They didn't deny that Gospel but they tacked on other things to that Gospel.

Speaker. It's the same thing we hear in evangelicalism when we're told that Christ's death takes care of all your sins before you become a Christian, then once you become a Christian, you're on your own and the Holy Spirit comes and helps you live a life that's pleasing to God. It's the same exact thing.

Speaker. Folks, if you're wondering why there doesn't seem to be any power in the church today, it's probably not because of signs and wonders or there aren't enough legs lengthened or not enough power in Washington, the one reason why the church has lost its power is because its lost its Gospel. Paul says it is the power of God unto salvation.

Lee. Good afternoon. Welcome back to Christian Answers Live. I'm Lee Meckley along with Jim Toungate and our guest this afternoon is Michael Horton. Michael is the Founder and President of Christians United for Reformation based here in Anaheim, CA. Michael is also the author of several books including "Putting the Amazing Back into Grace; Made in America"; and, "Mission Accomplished." He's also the editor of several books such as, "The Agony of Deceit," which a lot of our listeners might remember from a while back. Also, "Power Religion," and "Christ the Lord." Michael was educated at my old university in Westminster Theological Seminary and also, as I understand it, doctoral studies at Oxford.

Speaker. We do have a wonderful video series with Michael Horton along with our Director, Larry Wessels, and it's "The Agony of the Health and Wealth Gospel Movement."

Lee. Yes, this is a series that Michael Horton was in town and we went ahead and did a video series.

Speaker. That's right, it's six hours of video and the program titles are, "The Historical Roots, Touch Not, Miracles for Money, Call to the Televangelist, Negating Positive Confession," and then also some impact talk interviews.

Lee. We'll give that address out later on in the show so that you can get a hold of that video series.

Well, glad to have you on the show this afternoon, Michael. How are you doing?

Mike. Good to be with you guys.

Lee. First of all, tell us about before we get into the details, tell us about CURE, what is the purpose of the organization and what are you currently working on.

Mike. Okay, well, it's Christians United for Reformation and our organization is made up of a number of people from different denominations: Luther, Presbyterian, Episcopal, Baptist, Independent. And our concerns are basically to recover the great emphases and things of the Protestant Reformation for a day when we think that the church has great need of those precious truths.

Lee. Okay, and what would you, how would you list those particular truths? What are we talking about when we talk about the great truths of the Reformation?

Mike. Well, the Reformation sort of, if they had cars back then and bumper stickers, these would be the bumper stickers: Sola Scriptura, Scripture alone, that meant that the Scriptures are not only infallible and inerrant as the Roman Church believes, but that the Scriptures are sufficient to tell us everything that we need to know about God's will for our life and the plan of salvation. Then Sola Christus, Christ alone. We have Christ as our only Mediator. We don't need any other way to God. Sola Gratia, grace alone. Grace is the only method of God saving us. We don't save ourselves with his help. He does all the saving from start to finish. Sola Fide, the way he saves us by his grace is through faith alone. Justification being at the heart of the Reformation's concern that we're justified by the alien righteousness of someone else, namely Christ, rather than by the Holy Spirit working in our heart. And then Soli Deo Gloria, to God alone be glory. And especially in a day like ours when there is a tremendous human-centeredness, we believe, we need to recover all of those great teachings.

Lee. Now a lot of these with the exception of Sola Fide, are things that seems like that everybody who calls themselves a Christian would affirm. They all say, "Well, we're here for, or we're doing these things for the glory of God alone. We believe in salvation by Christ alone." A lot of them will say, "We believe in salvation by grace." And I have heard a lot of Christian groups that will say that this business of faith alone is nonsense, but other than that, they will tend to say, "Well, of course, we believe in Scripture," and so forth and so on. But again, what you're saying is the Reformation would put a particular stress on these or at least would define these in a way that would exclude these other groups. In other words, we have, again, a lot of the, or in the Catholic Church, they will quite often respond that, "This is ridiculous. We believe in salvation by grace too, so what's the big problem?" I take it that there's a semantics problem here or a problem of definition where the Reformation is actually affirming something quite different.

Mike. Yeah, it will be often asserted that this is just a semantical difference, we're just toying with words and so forth, but, I mean, this was something that people went to the stake for, they were burned at the stake for disagreeing with the Church, and these were very learned churchmen, brilliant theologians, so they were just quibbling over i dotting and t crossing. Really, it came down to the belief on the Roman Catholic side that we are justified by a process of growing in holiness, that is God's grace poured into us, helping

us to live the Christian life. Now that is very close to what is often being preached today even in evangelical circles in terms of the victorious Christian life. There is so much of an emphasis on recovery, on self-improvement, on getting over addictions and so forth, not that all of that is bad but there's such an emphasis in our preaching on getting better, on improving, on moralism, that the preaching of justification as God's legal verdict in a courtroom really is considered quite impractical by some. So you look at statistics such as the ones that Barna and Gallup and Hunter and others have done, 87% of America's evangelicals say that in salvation God helps those who help themselves, and 77% of the evangelicals said that man was basically good by nature.

Lee. Now wait a minute, 87 some odd percent of confessing evangelicals are saying that God helps those that help themselves? And 77% of confessing evangelicals are saying that mankind is basically good?

Mike. Absolutely. Aren't those staggering figures?

Speaker. It sure is.

Lee. That's hard to believe.

Mike. Now, I, you can look at the medieval slogan and the sort of saying that they had in the Middle Ages was, "God will not deny his grace to those who do what lies within their power." Well, you know, I ask people what would be a modern equivalent and immediately they say, "Well, God helps those who help themselves."

Speaker. Right.

Mike. Well, does that mean that 87% of today's professing evangelicals are medieval Roman Catholics in their doctrine of salvation?

Lee. Well, it would seem so. I don't....

Speaker. Well, you know, there's another aspect that fits into this and it's become so popular and prevalent today and that's a denial of the sovereignty of God and what God has planned for your life and what God is gonna do in submitting to his Lordship.

Mike. Yeah, there's a... I think it would all fall under a general human-centeredness. We are, we think that we are competent, "Give me a roadmap," you know, "Give me the timeline series on how to fix everything in your house. Give me the religious equivalent of that." And so you walk into a lot of Christian bookstores and you see, you know, a self-help section that is the bookstore, maybe a few theology books tossed over to the side. You look at the Bible, study Bibles that are coming out, what are they called? Life Application, Women's Application, Men's Application, a Bible for truckers, a Bible for dentists. I mean, it's becoming increasingly ridiculous how everybody's clamoring for application but there's nothing to apply anymore. There's no doctrine.

Lee. By the way, if you're ever at a CBA convention and you see this man walking in your direction with a microphone, turn around, trust me, turn around and run the other direction because he's going to....

Mike. Run, don't walk.

Lee. Run, don't walk. He's going to be asking you some questions that would seem on the surface to be very simple but we're quickly finding out just how ignorant a lot of people are about these things and they're questions about the Gospel. What is the Gospel? What is justification?

Mike. This was Shane Rosenthal, our producer, was actually the guy going around with a microphone and we played some of those responses on the air. It was his idea, our producer's. He said, "You know, this is the Christian Bookseller's Convention, this is Christian leaders, this is Christian speakers, Christian writers, Christian bookstore owners and sellers and so forth, surely here we'll get a good flavor for where the level of biblical literacy is." And it was devastating.

Lee. And you know, I was really shocked. Now I have been, in fact, I've felt kind of guilty before of that, at least, because I tended to be very pessimistic about the state of the church. You know, it just seems that there's so much biblical illiteracy and so forth like that. I was shocked when I heard these things played back and said, "Okay, we're at CBA, you know, talking to people on the floor, talking to people behind the booths and so forth like that, I'm just gonna ask them these simple questions." And to hear the response, or lack of response that you were getting to these questions was beyond shocking, it was scary. I mean, I'm sitting here thinking, "Okay, here is, you know, the CBA convention, this is the state of the church."

So anyway, this just kind of get downs to what we're going to be talking about the rest of this hour and that is the state of the church as far as the Gospel goes, as far as the knowledge of Scripture, as far as the knowledge of the Gospel and justification, and what the church is supposed to be all about.

Speaker. The Christian on the pilgrimage being pulled away by other gospels.

Speaker. And how many people are carrying that weight that they don't need to be carrying because Christ died for the guilt of all of their sins past, present and future and Christ's perfect righteousness is reckoned and credited to them, and as in "Pilgrim's Progress" at the very end, the greatest part of that whole book is when Pilgrim finally arrives at the end and has his rags taken from him and he is clothed in a fresh, clean, white garment.

Speaker. And part of the problem is we don't have those rags anymore, we're people of self-esteem. Actually the problem is we don't see that our rags are really the Emperor's new clothes.

Speaker. Yeah, that's a really good point.

Speaker. So the Romans or it says in Romans 10, being, they have a zeal for God but not according to knowledge, and being ignorant of the righteousness of God they've gone about to establish their own righteousness, and one of the reasons that I think the evangelical church is difficult to reach is because they already see themselves as righteous as they have declared it.

Speaker. What does justification mean? If someone asks you on the street, "What does it mean to be justified," could you tell them? This doctrine by which the church stands or falls, is the church standing or falling by the responses you're about to hear, again from the floor of the Christian Bookseller's convention.

Speaker. What does the word "justification" mean?

Convention Speaker. [unintelligible] by me.

Convention Speaker. You're doing great.

Convention Speaker. [unintelligible] justify. I can't answer all these questions, I just know I'm born.

Speaker. And what would the doctrine of justification mean to you guys?

Convention Speaker. I have no idea.

Convention Speaker. Caught me off guard on that one.

Speaker. What does justification mean to you?

Convention Speaker. Oh, it means that, I can't remember what it means now. I should know that. It means, um, saved without doing anything. Is that what it means?

Convention Speaker. Justification, just as if I've never sinned, starting over. That's sometimes used as a cliché but it's so true. Just starting anew once again, and that comes after being born again.

Speaker. What does it mean to be justified?

Convention Speaker. [Laughter] Ah, justified in relation to what?

Speaker. What does it mean to be justified? Have you ever heard the word "justification"?

Convention Speaker. No.

Convention Speaker. To me the Gospel means spreading the word through music, literature or by mouth.

Speaker. And what is the word that you spread?

Convention Speaker. The word of Jesus Christ.

Speaker. And what about Christ?

Convention Speaker. That he believes that he will deliver you from any kind of illness, any sickness, and in his [unintelligible] he will be there in a time of need. He's your all-in-all.

Speaker. Does God expect us to be absolutely perfect to get to heaven?

Convention Speaker. Oh, no, by no means. He just all, the only thing he expects of us is to live right and to do his will.

Speaker. Boy, that tape is really a singing indictment. This is not exactly like we're going up to pagans in a shopping mall. We're asking Christians at a Christian convention to define justification which is the article that Luther said by which the church stands or falls, and Luther gets that from Paul's letter to the Galatians. Paul comes into a congregation where Christ has been preached and they have moved away from justification and now they're back to saying, "We're trying to attain our goal by the flesh." Paul says, "That is a different Gospel which is no Gospel at all."

Speaker. And Mike, also to touch on what you, what you, I mean, because that is, it's, it's a very serious area. Paul himself says in Acts 20:28, he tells the Ephesian elders to take heed to yourselves because the church that you have been placed over has been purchased, the only thing that God has ever purchased in Scripture, by his own blood he has purchased it and for us to take it so lightly where we can't even define that which is essential to the faith. That's the message that saves people. This is the message people are out there dying for, dying to hear, and if the church isn't preaching it, who's going to preach it, the secular psychologists?

Speaker. Well, the church isn't gonna preach it because obviously the church doesn't know what it is that they're supposed to be preaching as evidenced by going to an evangelical convention. And Shane's only played just a few of the comments. It's not like we're taking the bad ones and playing them. Shane taped six hours of material and out of all the people he interviewed, there were probably two people that could get justification even remotely. One of them said justification was just as if I had never sinned, and I think some people heard that illustration but even that's not biblically correct because that leaves off the second half. God sees me just as if I had never sinned and positively as if I had kept the law perfectly. Why? Because Christ's righteousness is reckoned or imputed to me.

Speaker. Well, that gets to the question that was asked too, does God demand absolute perfect.

Speaker. Yes!

Speaker. There are about 30 or 40 of these interviews that they conducted and I listened to every one of them. Not one Christian on that floor said, "Yes, God demands absolute perfection." Where do we get that?

Speaker. Well, the bumper sticker that says, "Christians are not perfect, just forgiven," and we overlook the fact that perfection is still demanded by God.

Speaker. I think one of the real biting ironies in a convention that's supposed to be selling books but selling trinkets, is that the answer that these people gave were not from the Bible but from the bumper stickers and the t-shirts that they're selling.

Speaker. Wow. So we have to have a perfect righteousness, the question is whether we're gonna try it or whether we're going to accept the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ through faith.

Speaker. No one listening tonight will attain heaven apart from a perfect righteousness. The only way someone can enter into God's heaven clothed in any kind of sinfulness, they will not. They must be clothed in the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ. Christ must die for their sins and his righteousness must be reckoned or imputed to them or there will be no heaven. God demands absolute perfection and he gives it to us in Christ.

Speaker. Well, he hasn't changed. He hasn't lowered his standards for us. He has imputed the righteousness of Christ to raise our status or standing before him but he hasn't lowered his standard.

Speaker. You know, it's true from a lot of the comments they confuse justification with being born again, like the one woman said, "I don't know what justification means, all I know is that I'm born again." Born again, this experience has replaced this understanding of justification and chances are if we don't understand justification, we don't understand regeneration.

Caller. [unintelligible] ministry because it's so refreshing to hear great and [unintelligible] instead of legalism.

Speaker. Wow, boy, that's an exact commentary that people are not hearing the grace of God anymore.

Caller. Yeah, I was listening to all the tapes you had at the evangelical convention, and that's really sad. Galatianism is rampant.

Speaker. Yeah, it really is. We've never had so many Christian books, Christian conferences, Christian broadcasting and so little Christianity in our country.

Speaker. I think the tape proved Ken's original comment that the group that needs to be evangelized perhaps more than anybody else right now is the church.

Speaker. Absolutely, then maybe we can take the Gospel to the world effectively.

Lee. Good afternoon, welcome back to the show. You're listening to Christian Answers Live. I'm Lee Meckley along with Jim Toungate. We're to Michael Horton this afternoon about the Gospel and the attacks thereupon.

Michael, why don't you in the absence of [unintelligible] go ahead and describe Arminianism for us. Tell us what it is and how it contrasts with the doctrines of the Reformation.

Mike. Well, Arminianism first historically arose in the Netherlands when a gentleman who had studied under Calvin's successor in Geneva by the name of Jacob Arminius, became a minister in Holland in the Reformed church in Holland, and first he began teaching that the person Paul's talking about in Romans 7 where he says, "O wretched man that I am, the things that I don't want to do I keep on doing," and so forth, could not be speaking of a believer because that's not the experience of a believer. A believer is living in victory. That was the first sort of thing that caught the attention of the Reformed clergy who said, "No, that's exactly what the life of the Christian is like, wishing that he could be more faithful to God and to the law."

Then Arminius went a step further and he began to deny that God has predestined from the beginning before the beginning of the world whom he would save and who would then be lost. He then denied that God draws people irresistibly to himself by grace alone.

Lee. I've heard that this position that Arminius took came about after he had had a debate with a Pelagian. Is that correct or is that...?

Mike. Well, there were a number of crises in Arminius' thinking and that was one of them where he had a debate with at least a semi-Pelagian and he was a little shaken by the other guy's arguments and so he began to sort of lose his grip on total depravity, unconditional election, the limited scope of the atonement, irresistible grace, and the perseverance of the saints, although he never completely gave up perseverance of the saints but his followers did.

What we know today as Arminianism is even more radical than the teaching of Arminius himself that basically denies each of what's called the five points of Calvinism because the five points of Calvinism arose at a synod, a church conference, an international conference, condemning Arminianism, and those five points of Arminianism were one, man is not totally depraved, he can move toward God. 2. Election is based on foreseen faith. God knows who will believe and that's why he's chosen them. The universal scope

of the atonement and therefore the atonement is not in itself a substitutionary atonement, it's not vicarious, it's not a satisfaction, it makes salvation a possibility if people will do the right things. And then a denial of irresistible grace, people make a decision of their own free will, they choose to accept Christ and then they are born again as a result of that, and the possibility of losing one's salvation through either a loss of faith or insufficient works.

Lee. Now, as I have looked at Arminianism and looked at Catholic doctrine, which the Catholic doctrine is very strongly based on the idea that mankind has a free will, albeit a free will that is granted by prevenient grace, but nonetheless a free will and that God simply in essence grants grace to man to the extent that he chooses good with his free will, it seems to me like really at the risk of oversimplifying, the only real difference between Arminian theology which is held by a tremendous number of people in the church today, the only real distinction is that Arminian theology would still affirm that we are, in fact, fully justified at the time that we place our faith in Christ, whereas Catholicism would say that we are not fully justified until after we die, that justification is an ongoing process, where Arminianism would affirm that, no, justification is, as Luther said, a one time forensic act on the part of God whereby he declares us not guilty of the sins that we have committed in our life.

Mike. A little bit more confusing even than that because they, Arminius himself even and his disciples, did not believe that we were justified on the basis of Christ's righteousness. They believed that faith was the new law, it was an easier law than obeying the 10 Commandments. In the place of a perfect obedience, God substituted faith, and so faith becomes not just a means but the ground of our justification.

Lee. Now is this reflected in the more modern forms of Arminianism that would be seen to be extant, you can find it in quite a few of your Baptist churches and just about all of your charismatic and Pentecostal groups, and of course all of your Methodists groups, is this the nature of most of the Arminianism that you find in these groups today or has it changed?

Mike. Actually, I think it has changed. I think that most people who call, at least in my experience, most people who call themselves Calvinists are really Arminians and most people who call themselves Arminians are really Pelagians.

Speaker. It's gotten worse.

Mike. It has gotten worse. Everything has moved more and more toward moralism, more and more toward what I do, and so you end up, you know, you end up very often running into a person who...very infrequently will a true Arminian say, "I am an Arminian." Many of them will say that they are actually Calvinistic.

Speaker. I've had that experience, yes.

Mike. Yeah, but as Spurgeon said, we are all born Arminians, we have to be taught Calvinism.

Lee. The view that is being put forth now and I'm not sure how old it is. I know it goes at least back to Robert Shank in his book "Elect in the Son," which is often called corporate election, is this basically a breakoff from Arminianism or is it something completely different?

Mike. No, this is exactly what Arminius taught.

Lee. So it's nothing new.

Mike. It's nothing new. It's what ironically what 20th century, 19th and 20th century liberalism taught and it is also what was taught by Karl Barth and Emil Brunner and others.

Lee. So maybe the Southern Baptist Convention is not quite as conservative as it thinks it is.

Mike. Well, we'll see. You know, you can give people all kinds of leverage when they're talking about something that nobody really wants to face up to anyway, if you can find any way of getting around the clear passages on election.

Lee. And we'll be back right after this break.

Announcer. Are Christians little gods? Was Jesus born again in hell? Is the cross the sign of Satan? Can Christians command things into existence? Watch the Christian Answers video series, "The Agony of the Health and Wealth Gospel Movement," with author and speaker Michael Horton, editor of the book, "The Agony of Deceit," with chapters written by R. C. Sproul and Walter Martin. This enlightening six hour video series analyzes the amazing teachings of some of America's best-known television evangelists.

Speaker. What is it that makes this movement tick? As we dig, the deeper we went, the dirtier we came up. We realized that the theology that was being taught led to this very kind of distorted and weird lifestyle which is not only inconsistent with Scripture but is actually heretical. The concept says that we are little gods. They believe that when Jesus came to earth, he came not as God but as a mere mortal just like you and me. We, of course, believe that Jesus came as a mortal but not a mere mortal, he was the God-man.

Speaker. Precisely.

Speaker. Well, they teach that Jesus came not as the God-man but he came just as a man and then at a certain point in his life he was anointed by the Holy Ghost which enabled him to perform miracles. Then as an anointed man, he died on the cross but that's not even where the real redemption happened for you and me, Jesus then went to hell for three days, and in hell accepted the nature and Lordship of Satan.

Speaker. What?

Speaker. Yes, he bowed to the Lordship of Satan.

Speaker. I knew I was turning off the television too soon. I haven't heard this.

Speaker. That's right. Kenneth Hagan says Jesus received Satan's nature. Man was united now with the devil. Another one, Kenneth Copeland said Jesus accepted the sin nature of Satan in his own spirit.

Announcer. Program titles include, "The Historical Roots of the Health and Wealth Movement, Touch Not the Lord's Anointed Gods, Miracles for Money, Cult of the Televangelists," and "Negating Positive Confession." Six hours on Christian Answers, PO Box 144441, Austin, Texas 78714.

Christian Answers is on the cutting edge of Christian apologetics, that is, the defense and proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Our Director, Larry Wessels, receives many calls as a result of our ministry outreaches such as television, radio, seminars and personal witnessing. Here are but a few examples.

Caller. Larry, this is Audrey Kaufman. You came over and talked with my kids about being in the Jehovah's Witness religion. I just wanted to let you know that we did go to court and we did win our case and I do have the kids back with me now and I do want you to know and understand how much of a big part you played in that. Can I thank you and praise God that I came or you came into my life.

Caller. Hi, Larry, I want to thank you for this journal you are now putting out. It is first class, right on, and theologically sound and that's coming from a Dallas Seminary graduate. Thanks and thank you earlier for the material that you sent me. [unintelligible] also we want to contribute financially too.

Announcer. For a free resource list, please write to Christians Answers, PO Box 14 4441, Austin, Texas, 78714.

Lee. There is a great couple of lines from a great hymn from the last century, "Gracious Honor," who really grasped the essence of grace. He says,

"Thy works, not mine, O Christ
Speak gladness to this heart
They tell me all is done
They bid my fear depart
Thy pains, not mine, O Christ
Upon the shameful tree
Have paid the law's full price
And purchased peace for me

Thy cross, not mine, O Christ
Has borne the awful load
Of sins that none in heav'n
Or earth could bear but God
Thy righteousness, O Christ
Alone can cover me
No righteousness avails
Save that which is of Thee."

I'll tell you, that beats the heck out of any kind of aversion of self-esteem or anything else out there that tries to get me to believe it myself, "I'm really a good person." What I really, what really gives me security is to believe that my righteousness really is the righteousness of someone else.

Speaker. That's why these different Gospels and the Galatian heresy are back again is because the church is not preaching justification, therefore the psychobabblers, those who teach the health and wealth prosperity and word of faith, all of those guys rush in to fill the vacuum created by the fact the evangelical church has left the evangel, it's no longer proclaiming the good news.

Speaker. Well, and also, Mike, as was noticed, I noticed in those tapes the different misconceptions in the person and character of God. You know, the Gospel to me is that Jesus is there to help me and so forth, and there is a parallel, there is a twin tower of destruction along with the inability to define the Gospel and justification, is a degeneration and a debasing of the character and nature of God and those two go hand-in-hand.

Speaker. Wow. Why does Paul say consider Abraham, he believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness? What is Paul's argument here in trying to get the Galatians away from thinking that they are basically justified or saved or accepted by God by God plus the Spirit, with Spirit plus their will or whatever it is, working together to save them?

Speaker. Well, the proof of this and Paul does this not only here but in Romans 4 when he has discussed the doctrine of justification that is that Christ's righteousness is reckoned or imputed and that the believer's sin is reckoned or imputed to Christ who pays for it, he goes right back to biblical history to show that this has been taught in Scripture from beginning to end so that Abraham was declared righteous, Abraham received this righteousness of Christ through faith when he did this, when he believed the promise of God which, by the way, was 430 years before the giving of the law.

Speaker. So are we justified by faith and our obedience, or by faith and our surrender, or by faith and letting go and letting God, or by faith and something else?

Speaker. As the Reformers said with one voice, "We are justified by faith alone."

Speaker. And it is the add-ons that have really poisoned and taken the Gospel, perverted the Gospel. That's the perversion, the add-on. Something we had discussed earlier also, Steve, that's not an issue if justification is understood.

Steve. Exactly.

Speaker. AA is not a problem. The same thing Paul talks in Romans 14 and he speaks of doubtful disputation and he has two things that he cites, eating of certain foods and observing certain days. He says those things are doubtful disputations but if you read what he says in Colossians and in Galatians, he damns the people who hold those things along with justification as if this is what it takes to be justified.

Steve. Yeah, if somebody's thinking, "I'm saved by Christ plus going to AA meetings," that person has misunderstood the Gospel.

Speaker. Or if the Gospel is recovery or the Gospel is...

Steve. Exactly.

Speaker. ... or anything else. So really the Gospel is God demands absolute perfection. We don't have it, we've got to get it somewhere, right?

Steve. That's what the Gospel is. Paul defines that in 1 Corinthians 15. The Gospel is nothing whatsoever to do, has nothing whatsoever to do with what's going on in you right now. The Gospel in 1 Corinthians 15 is the life, death, the burial and the resurrection of Jesus Christ according to the Scriptures. The Gospel is objective, it is outside of us, it's what Christ has done for us. That's the Gospel.

Speaker. Yeah, it's not something that hits me in the crown of my head and goes down to the soles of my feet.

Speaker. Not an experience I had last Thursday but something Christ did 2,000 years ago for me. One of the neat things about this conference was able to spend some time with our good friend, R. C. Sproul, and R. C. had these comments about the Gospel, what we must do to be saved.

R. C. Sproul. You asked me a question that they asked Jesus a long time ago and I'd rather listen to Jesus' answer than the nine on that, but that's the ultimate question, "What must I do to be saved?" At the risk of confusing people, I say there are two ways to be saved, either by your own goodness or by somebody else's, because the one thing that God absolutely requires in order to be in his presence for eternity is the presence of righteousness. That's why Jesus said to the rich young ruler, "You know the law, thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not commit adultery," and he also said to them, "Then why do you call me good, nobody is good but God." But the young guy didn't get it. He really was missing the point that Jesus was making and Jesus was trying to instruct him on what righteousness is because the rich man said, the attorney, he said,

"Oh, is that all, all the stuff I've done from my youth?" And the guy really believed he had lived a life of sufficient righteousness to satisfy the demands of a holy God and what astonishes me more than anything, Mike, is when I run into people who say they don't need Jesus because they don't know who God is. So if God is holy, really holy, if he's perfectly righteous and the righteousness he requires of his creatures is perfection, what am I going to do?

I mean, the basic problem I face as a human being with God is this and this is why people squirm, this is why they don't want to hear about God, is that God is holy and I am not. That's the worst conceivable dilemma I can have. How can an unholy creature stand for a minute in the presence of a holy Creator? Well, the only way to be saved is through righteousness. Even when we talk about salvation by faith, what we mean is salvation by Christ who is righteous. What faith does is plugs us into the righteousness we absolutely have to have to be able to stand in the face of God, and if I approach God on my own, I am naked, and the metaphor that the Bible uses with respect to Christ's righteousness is that God covers me with a cloak, with a robe of the righteousness of Christ. So I either stand before God with my own righteousness, which is filthy rags, or dressed in the righteousness of Christ, which alone is sufficient.

People say, "What's the difference between Christianity and other religions?" I say one thing and one thing only, atonement. Buddha never died for your sins. Confucius never produced the righteousness necessary to satisfy the demands of a holy God. Mohammed with his sword never died on the cross for anybody. I need a Savior. I need someone who makes atonement, and not only that, someone who lived a life of absolute righteousness that can transfer that righteousness to me, to my account. That's what salvation is about, what Luther called a *justitia alienum*, an alien righteousness. I mean, I stand before God either naked in my own righteousness or clothed with somebody else's, and I say to people if you want to stand before God on the strength of your perfection, go ahead but it's a fool's errand. You will perish before a holy God.

Speaker. Paul says come "All who rely on observing the law are under a curse for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the book of the law.'" If you're going to set out on that course of justifying yourself by your own merit, by your own activity, good luck because cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything. God is utterly relentless in what he requires. If it's not going to be the perfect righteousness of Christ which you receive by faith, you will not stand in the day of judgment and that's the sad, the sad news. The good news is God has provided an atonement, God has provided someone who is righteous to cover our unrighteousness.

Speaker. And he is Jesus Christ and that's whom Paul says, "I glory in the fact that Christ is preached not in anything added to that."

Speaker. Now why is it, I mean, you'd think cursed is everyone who relies on the law for justification, could we say that today because nobody really even many Christians don't really care about the law, but really what they're relying on are principles and steps. We have just changed the word "law" to "steps and principles" of victorious Christian living

so that we believe that we are, well, maybe we are initially saved by grace but we get this filling of the Spirit or this victorious Christian life or whatever, by somehow doing something in addition to faith.

Speaker. I think you've hit the nail on the head. I think that many people hear that, you know, like you said, the death of Christ covers the guilt of your sins before you become a Christian and then after that God sends the Holy Spirit to help you live a life that's pleasing and acceptable to him.

Speaker. Wow. That the Holy Spirit will bear fruit in your life and that fruit will take the form of good works that we do. We are not justified by those works, those works flow from our being justified. It's a cause and effect relationship.

Speaker. And I think it is critical, especially in the contemporary church for us to be able to make that distinction that there is justification, and because of justification, there is works. There will always, one will always follow the other.

Speaker. Hand in glove. Justified by faith alone but never by a faith that is alone.

Lee. Welcome back to the show, I'm Lee Meckley along with Jim Toungate. You're listening to Christian Answers Live. We're speaking with Michael Horton about the Gospel, about justification, and before we went to the break, I wanted to mention that I brought the subject of corporate election, corporate election to define the term, is simply the view that when the Bible speaks of predestination, it means that God has predestined a group of people called the body of Christ to be saved and that individuals make a choice whether or not they're going to be in that group, and that it does not mean individual election.

Jim. There was one other thing that I also wanted to clarify and that was you used the term "forensic justification." Now forensic justification is a legal term that means you've been legally justified. It's like when a judge declares you not guilty, you are therefore no longer guilty.

Lee. Right. Michael, would you concur with what we have said thus far?

Mike. Yes, absolutely. The key difference between the Protestant doctrine of justification and the Arminian and Roman Catholic doctrine of justification is that it is by grace alone, through faith alone, because of Christ alone. Christ is the perfect righteousness that God credits to my account. Faith is the only way that I receive that. Not by faith and love or faith and obedience or faith and surrender, faith and consecration, but faith alone, and it is by grace alone, not by sort of working up our own will or our own effort to achieve it.

Lee. Okay, we've had several people that have been waiting to talk to Michael Horton very patiently, so let's go ahead and get to them. Alan, you're on the air. What can we do for you?

Alan. Thank you. Yes, Michael, I have listened to your program at the White Horse Inn and enjoyed it very much, especially the give and take among the sometimes there seems like there are three or four of you talking about a topic and it's a very enjoyable show and I have called him one time.

Mike. Great.

Alan. You know, I have, I'm a Catholic and my favorite, or at least the verse I fight a lot is Roman 10:9 which says, I believe it's Peter speaking and says that if you accept Jesus as Lord and believe that he was raised from the dead, you will be saved. Now all Catholics are, you know, honest Catholics believe that and I believe most of the Christian denominations believe that and, you know, they accept Jesus as Lord and believe he was raised from the dead, now so they're all going to be saved and I think that, you know, this constant criticism of Catholics and this constant discussion of faith versus works is counterproductive. I can cite you, there are all kinds of verses in the Bible in the New Testament that emphasize works. For example, Matthew 25 where Jesus is saying, "You can go into the kingdom because when I was hungry, you fed me." And they say, "Well, we don't remember when you were hungry," and then when he says, "Well, when you feed the least of my brethren, you feed me." Also, I think one of the most powerful passages is in Revelation 20:13 where it's talking about all the dead being brought up out of the oceans and out of the earth and it says, "They were judged every man according to their works." Now...

Speaker. And then they were thrown into hell.

Alan. Now listen, and it also says this is the second death. I mean, you keep talking... Well, anyhow, you're always talking about this lake of fire lasting forever. It's called the second death. I wish you'd read that part of the Bible too.

Lee. No, we should read the chapter 20 there where it says that the devil and the false prophet were thrown in there where they were tormented day and night forever and ever.

Alan. My point is this, I mean, I can cite many passages in the Bible which emphasize how we live our lives and works, also I can point to the judgment of Adam and Eve which was based on their actions.

Speaker. Now before we get too much further, let's go ahead and let Mike respond.

Mike. Okay, first of all, a Roman Catholic does not have to find passages in Scripture that emphasize good works because Protestants accept those passages with equal vigor. We believe as strongly in what we call the doctrine of sanctification and those passages are to the point, right to the mark of how we are to live our lives as Christians. We have no problem with those passages, but the Roman Catholic cannot show us a single passage that says that that is justification. Everywhere justification is referred to, it is referred to as a declaration in a courtroom that I am righteous even while I am not righteous in

myself. Paul, for instance, in Romans 4 puts it this way, he says, "To the one who does not work," Rome says you have to work for it, "To the one," Paul says, "who does not work but trusts in the one who justifies the wicked," Rome says God doesn't justify the wicked, he only justifies the righteous, "his faith," that ungodly man's faith, "is credited as righteousness." So Paul says all throughout the Scriptures, John as well, Jesus in the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector and so forth, that there are two kinds of righteousness, two ways of receiving God's approbation, his favor. One is by trying to obey your way into it even by his grace, even by the assistance of his grace. The other is by realizing that you have no righteousness before God and to rely completely on the imputed or credited righteousness of Jesus Christ to cover you, cover your unrighteousness before God.

Lee. Yeah, Alan, we're running out of time. I would like to get you to clarify your position. You started the conversation by pointing to Romans 10:9 saying that if you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you should be saved, then you went on to point to Matthew 25 and Revelation 22 say that we are saved by works. Which one is it?

Alan. What I was, first of all, I said that if you go through the New Testament, you can find many verses which say that you are saved by faith and you can find many passages which say you will be judged according to your works, and that's why there is this constant conflict in the church. Now I think, all I was saying, the reason I'm quoting, I believe everything you believe, I mean, everything Michael has said, I accept that, that Jesus justified, that Jesus has saved us with his death. He has enabled it to be possible that we be saved.

Mike. But you can't really agree with everything that I've just said and be a faithful Roman Catholic.

Alan. Well, look, I'm saying this, why, if Romans 10:9 says basically all Catholics are going to be saved because they accept Jesus as their Lord and they believe he was raised from the dead, why are you wasting your time beating them over the head? Why don't you go out and find people that don't even know about Jesus? I mean, I think you're wasting your time hitting people over the head who are going to be saved. Why don't you find those who don't know Jesus?

Mike. Okay, Alan, you were quoting Romans 10, go up a few verses where Paul says, "I bear witness that that my brethren according to the flesh have a great zeal for God, but not a zeal according to knowledge, for not knowing the righteousness that comes from God as a gift, it is by faith, they sought to establish their own righteousness and did not accept the righteousness that is from God, for Christ is the end of law for righteousness to everyone who believes." That's the point, that is such an important point because it is not by zeal, it is not by, "Well, everybody, we pray together or we all believe in Jesus," it's Mormons will say that. It is by laying all of our trust on Jesus Christ alone.

Lee. And we'll be back right after this break.

Announcer. You're listening to Christian Answers Live. We hope you've enjoyed the first hour of the show. Christian Answers Live comes your way every Saturday afternoon at the same time, on the same station, giving answers concerning the essential truths of Christianity found in the Bible. Stay with us. We'll be back after this short break.

Christian Answers offers many resources for the Christian believer as well as for those with sincere questions. Have you ever wondered where the Roman Catholic Church stands on the issue of salvation? The following excerpt is from the Christian Answers video "Debate with a Monsignor," between Christian Answers spokesman Rob Zins and diocese of Austin, Texas spokesman, Monsignor Ed Jordan of St. Teresa's Catholic church. Dale D., is the moderator.

Rob Zins. Okay, so you don't see baptism as essential at all?

Monsignor Ed Jordan. I think it is very very important but I can't see condemning to hell all the men and women who have lived since Christ on continents that have never even heard of Jesus because nobody preached to them, and that, I don't feel comfortable with that. When Paul says in Romans, "Where sin did abound, grace did more abound..."

Speaker. Does that mean other religions such as Islam?

Monsignor Jordan. Sure.

Speaker. And that worship Allah since they haven't heard about Christ, they would still go to heaven?

Monsignor Jordan. Yeah.

Speaker. Pagan worshipers also that worship idols and stuff like that that haven't heard about Christ, they would go...?

Monsignor Jordan. That are living in good faith...

Speaker. ...to their idols?

Monsignor Jordan. To whatever.

Announcer. Call Christian Answers today to obtain a free resource list on this subject and many others. Call 512-218-8022. That's 512-218-8022 or write Christian Answers, PO Box 144441, Austin, Texas, 78714.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, known as the Prince of Preachers and is one of the greatest evangelists of the nineteenth century, lives again in the hearts of God's people through his timeless sermons and books.

Speaker. See the distinction between the righteous man who fears God and him that fears him not. Taking all for all, God's worst is better than the devil's best and the portion of God's saints at the lowest ebb is better than the portion of the wicked even when their joys are at the flood.

Announcer. Pilgrim Publications, PO Box 66, Pasadena, Texas 77501 is the leading publisher of the works of C. H. Spurgeon in the world. Pilgrim Publications offers Spurgeon's works from all sizes from the 57 volume Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit to Spurgeon's best-selling book, "All of Grace," to inexpensive single sermon pamphlets. Call Pilgrim Publications today at 713-477-4261 or write Pilgrim Publications, PO Box 66, Pasadena, Texas 77501.

Speaker. You know, with this kind of Gospel, because it's not the amount of faith you have, it is not the activity that you perform, it's nothing that goes on inside your heart, it's not an experience that you have or emotion you workup because it's totally and squarely based on what Christ has done outside of us in history 2,000 years ago, we can freely admit as Calvin said, we are partly unbelievers until we die, and if you're caught up in this Galatian heresy, you never can be honest, you can never say that. You have to put up a front. You have to be fake and pretend you're pulling it off, don't you?

Speaker. And church and Christianity become a big show.

Speaker. Doug in San Diego.

Doug. Yes, I read your book, "Christ the Lord," and I was wondering if you could elaborate a little bit on the role of discipleship with the Christian, you said that discipleship is a category of the law, not the Gospel, and I was wondering if you could elaborate a little bit on that because I hear a lot of preachers saying or preaching it almost as if discipleship is an option.

Speaker. Yeah, thanks a lot for the call. Well, first of all, discipleship is not an option. The law is not an option. You can't have the Gospel and say, "Okay, I'll take the Gospel but not the law."

Speaker. Or I'll make Jesus my Savior but not my Lord, a person who has made Jesus Savior and not Lord is a person who has not made Jesus Savior.

Speaker. Yeah, the only question here is how are we justified. When you're talking about the matter of justification, the law has absolutely no power to justify. Only the Gospel can justify. The only thing the law can do in the matter of our standing before God is show us that we can't have a right standing before God in our own righteousness.

Speaker. And also discipleship is a natural result of saving grace.

Speaker. If we have true faith, as Luther said, it's already looking for something to do. The minute God gives us saving faith which alone justifies, it's never alone, it's out looking for friends, called works.

Speaker. And faith that trusts Christ is a faith that will work, a faith that will perform good works not to earn justification but as the Heidelberg Catechism and my tradition says, out of gratitude because of what Christ has done for us.

Speaker. Wow, amazing. Folks, can self-esteem or looking within or whatever it is that you're maybe putting some confidence in, can that compare with a hymn like this, "The terrors of law and God with me can have nothing to do. My Savior's obedience and blood hide all my transgressions from view. My name from the palms of his hands, eternity will not erase, impressed on his heart it remains in marks of indelible grace."

Speaker. I wanted to read a little passage of Scripture right quick from Romans 5:1, it says, "Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," and the reason we have that peace is because we have assurance and we know that there is absolutely nothing that we can do as a human to justify ourselves before God, it's only through his justification.

Speaker. Right. You know, people say doctrine divides, it really doesn't, it unites because the reason we keep having all these problems and divisions and splits in churches, is because we focus on trivial matters and, you know, that's one thing that being doctrinally sound does, it pushes secondary issues into the background and binds us together around a common set of ultimate truths, and as we lose our grip on those ultimate truths, we lose our unity ironically, and so it's not doctrine that divides, it's apathy toward doctrine that divides.

Lee. We'll be back right after this break.

Announcer. Have you ever encountered unwanted guests at your front door such as salesmen of one type or another? Beware, the most dangerous salesmen that come to your door are the ones selling religion such as nice young men from the Mormon church. Christian Answers offers an enlightening audio cassette series entitled, "Discussions with Mormon Missionaries." These discussions are with actual missionaries from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Just what do they believe?

Speaker. You know, we don't worship many gods. I don't understand how that statement, worship many gods.

Larry Wessels. Well, that's the point.

Speaker. We worship God the Father.

Speaker. You don't. [unintelligible] to be a polytheist, you have to just acknowledge more than one God exists. That separates you from Christianity.

Speaker. No, because we believe, we believe there is only one God we have to worry about and that's God the Father.

Larry. What about Jesus, I thought he was the one?

Speaker. He is a god and he is the mediator to God the Father.

Speaker. He's a representative. Jesus Christ is the representative for us to God, you see, because Jesus Christ created the world, he's the Father of the world.

Larry. But he doesn't deserve any worship?

Speaker. No, we don't, I do not pray to God the Father or God the Son. I do not pray to Jesus Christ.

Speaker. Jesus is not worthy of worship because of the Father?

Speaker. Worthy of worship, what do you mean?

Speaker. You know, bowing down, worship, pray [unintelligible]. Hallelujah.

Speaker. Okay, I don't understand. I get, how can I word this? God the Father is who we pray to.

Larry. So the devil is a spirit just like all the rest of...?

Speaker. Exactly.

Larry. So we're kind of like, we're like brothers with the devil or something?

Speaker. Exactly.

Larry. So the devil is my brother?

Speaker. Yeah, it's a bad way to look at it but it's true.

Larry. Is he, now God was spirit at the beginning so all the other people that have been created were spirit brothers also, you might say?

Speaker. Yep, every person on the earth was in preexistence.

Larry. So that would include like Jesus?

Speaker. Exactly.

Larry. So like Jesus and the devil were brothers?

Speaker. So it is kind of a bad way. Every once in a while you look at it and say, "The devil my brother?" Well, you know, I know exactly because I did some of that, "Oh, what a drag," but you see, what really makes it bad is then you know the Lord has said that the devil can't tempt you more than you're able to bear and that's a promise that is given to us by our heavenly Father. Well, if that's true it would only stand to reason if he is indeed our spiritual brother, if you think about it, he knows us really well.

Announcer. Get the Christian Answers to the Mormons at your door with this six tape audio series. Some of the tape titles include, "Mormon beliefs and changes; Marriage, healings and revelations; Book of Mormon changes; Prophet-hood and works; The Godhead; Jesus and the devil," and others. Be ready the next time [knocking] unexpected guests arrive. Send your order to Christian Answers, PO Box 144441, Austin, Texas 78714, or call 512-218-8022.

Christian Answers offers many resources for the Christian believer as well as for those with sincere questions. The battle for biblical truth is waged in a hostile environment. Titus 1:9 says, "Holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, refute those who contradict."

Lee. Roman Catholic theologians.

Larry. Right, but there are other guys in the Catholic Church all their life and they have to go to purgatory and they need Masses said for them, which is also another Gospel, by the way, and the whole doctrine of transubstantiation is a blasphemy.

Speaker. Well, listen, you do not believe in the church of the New Testament or the apostolic church because if you want to make fun of a blessed Eucharist which is the body and blood of Jesus Christ, then you are the blasphemer because it is scriptural that Jesus said, "This is my body, this is my blood." It is scriptural that he said, "Unless you eat my body and drink my blood, you shall have not have life within you." So you can conveniently push aside Scriptures that don't suit you.

Announcer. Debates with Black Muslims.

Speaker. Okay, what is the first question?

Speaker. Okay, do you believe this statement, "Blacks, the black race created the heavens and the earth and created themselves?" Do you believe that?

Speaker. Okay, first of all, we don't teach that the black race created the heavens and the earth and created themselves. We believe that Almighty God was the only being in existence in the beginning.

Speaker. Do you believe Elijah Mohammed?

Speaker. Yes, I believe in Most Honorable Elijah Mohammed.

Speaker. This is what he said. This is right from his book.

Speaker. He believes the black race created the heavens and the earth? We believe God created all of it.

Speaker. Well, I'll give you the reference. It's page 42 of Elijah Mohammed's book, copyright 1965, his book entitled, "Message to the Black Man." This is from Elijah Mohammed and you should be able to get your hands on that book, page 42.

Speaker. I have a copy in my house right now.

Speaker. Okay, look on page 42. Now let me ask you the next question, "The white race are all devils," do you believe that?

Speaker. You're a devil if you are the devil. That's why God, Jesus says in chapter 8, verse 44 of John, that you are of your father the devil. He was a liar and a murderer from the beginning and abideth not in the truth.

Speaker. We know about those verses which according to what you're saying we don't know if those are true or not because you don't think the Bible is true.

Speaker. If Jesus calls them the devil, then where these devils at?

Speaker. Well, why do you know that's true? The question is the white race, that's all I ask, the white race are all devils, do you believe that?

Speaker. Okay, in your Bible.

Speaker. I'm not talking about the Bible, I'm talking about this statement, "The white race are all devils."

Speaker. Prove it in your Bible. You believe in the Bible, right?

Speaker. Just answer the question yes or no.

Speaker. [unintelligible]

Speaker. Then you agree with Elijah Mohammed? That was stated in his book on "The Message to the Black Man," pages 11, 10-51, 68 and 208.

Speaker. Yes, and I believe that 100%.

Announcer. And many other debates are also available. For more information on these resources, write Christian Answers, PO Box 144441, Austin, Texas 78714.

Lee. We'll go ahead and get right to the last area that we want to talk about and that is the infamous Evangelicals and Catholics Together. And we want to talk about that in context of what we've already mentioned. ACE, which is the Association of Confessing Evangelicals which is gathering around the Gospel and we have on the other hand this movement here which is, I guess we just say it's part of the whole ecumenical thrust which has become very prevalent of late.

Speaker. Yeah, it was a meeting that Chuck Colson called. Chuck was one of the signers of, not only one of the signers, one of the framers, one of the writers of the Evangelicals and Catholics Together document, and he was getting a good deal of heat. He realized that it was dividing the evangelical community to some extent and so he called a meeting and present were R. C. Sproul, J. I. Packer, who also signed it, J. I. Packer also signed ECT2, Bill Bright, D. James Kennedy, John Ankerberg. Joe Stowell. the President of Moody Bible Institute was moderating the meeting, and John Woodbridge from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and we were, oh, and John MacArthur, and we were discussing the ramifications. First of all, let me say that I think that what's so tragic about all of this is we needed a document that spelled out where Roman Catholics and Evangelicals have something, have enough in common to work together. We needed a document that said we both believe the Apostles Creed, we both have a common history, are rooted in a common history. We both believe a lot of the same doctrine, but this document didn't say that. This document went beyond that and said we believe the same Gospel, we accept, we have reached agreement that we are justified by grace through faith because of Christ, explicitly leaving the "alone" out of there so that Evangelicals were essentially assenting to a Roman Catholic definition of those things. It was a very disappointing document on various levels not only because it was a sellout to, a sellout of Evangelical convictions but also because it didn't give us the opportunity that we might have hoped to have to see us acknowledge some advances where advances have been made.

Lee. Okay, well, I guess we've actually ended up keeping you a little bit longer than we intended to, so we'll go ahead and leave it there and we would definitely like to have you back on again sometime.

Speaker. I'd love to. I'd love to. I'm sorry that I have to go now. I'd love to...

Speaker. No, that's okay. We understand.

Lee. Okay, well, again, thank you very much and we'll be talking to you you again soon.

Speaker. I enjoyed it very much. Thank you. Bye-bye.

Larry Wessels. Hello, I'm Larry Wessels, Director of Christian Answers. Our ministry name is derived in part from 1 Peter 3:15 which states, "But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have." This is the goal of Christian Answer, to answer questions concerning the Christian faith in an increasingly anti-Christian society here in America and throughout the world. The biblical commands to fight the good fight of faith, to be set for the defense of the Gospel, to earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints, to beware of false prophets and to examine everything carefully, hold fast to that which is good, are but a few of the marching orders of the call of ministry. The inerrant word of God whereby the Gospel is preached, which is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes, is the weapon of our evangelism. This is the evangelical missionary methodology of Christian Answers, to bring the biblical perspective to a culture that is almost completely ignorant of it, to bring Christian truth, Christian answer to those who, as the prophet Isaiah said, have made lies and falsehoods their refuge, to smash lies and falsehoods with the hammer of God's word.

We are not afraid to stand up for Jesus Christ in public forums or wherever the Lord leads. For information about the resources we offer to help Christians prepare to bring the Gospel of Christ to an unbelieving world, please write Christian Answer, PO Box 144441, Austin, Texas 78714. That's PO Box 144441, Austin, Texas 78714.

Announcer. Check out our websites:

biblequery.org – this site answers 7,700 Bible questions;

historycart.com – this site reveals early church history and doctrine, proving Roman Catholicism is not historically or doctrinally viable;

muslimhope.com – this site is a classic refutation of Islam, a counterfeit religion created by Mohammad.

Free newsletters are also available.