

Pastor Jose F. Maldonado

Hillburn Drive Grace Baptist Church

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## Numbers 23:19-23

This morning and next week I would like to speak on the subject of Justification. This might sound strange coming out of the Old Testament, but it is both a New Testament and Old Testament doctrine. The difference is that we are given more light in the New Testament, that is, we can understand justification in the New Testament easier because of the finish work of Christ upon the cross. The words before us were spoken by a false prophet, Balaam who was hired to curse Israel, but God put a blessing in his mouth. He was a prophet for hire and there are many of those in our day. We do not have the time to deal with the history of this story, but we want to consider the truth of these words, *“He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel...”* These words clearly convey the true definition of justification. Again, justification is set forth both in the Old and New Testaments.

Now, the Bible is quite clear regarding salvation as being the same in the Old as well as the New Testament. There are many who believe that, there is a different way of salvation in the Old than the New. In other words, some believe and teach that Old Testament is based on works, e.g. the keeping of the law and ceremonies etc., and that the New Testament is solely by grace. Well, this is false and further from the truth, for both in the Old and New Testament is salvation by GRACE! God only knows one way of salvation and that is by grace. When Paul spoke those familiar words from Eph.2:8 & 9, he was encompassing both Old and New Testament: *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”* Of course there were different administrations and the Old pointed towards the New in shadows and types until Christ came, but SALVATION was the same. Therefore, we are able to speak on justification from the Old as well as the New. Notice a few verses in the Old Testament regarding justification:

1. Gen.6:8 & 9, *“But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. 9 These are the generations of Noah: **Noah was a just man** and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.”* Noah was a just man because he was justified. How do we know he was justified? Because Hebrews 11:7, *“By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.”* Righteousness was imputed to him, thus, Noah was a justified man.

2. Isaiah 53:11, “*He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall **my righteous servant justify many**; for he shall bear their iniquities.*” Isaiah 53 speaks of the glorious atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ justifies all sinners that come to Him in repentance and faith; this is part of His work and accomplishment on the cross.
3. Isaiah 45:25, “*In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel **be justified**, and shall glory.*” We shall look at one more Old Testament text in a moment.

Now, justification is a crucial and essential doctrine in the Bible. It is one of the most important doctrines in the Bible, so much so, that without the doctrine of justification no one can be saved! I have 5 things to share with you this morning:

- I. The Meaning of Justification.**
- II. The Must (necessity) of Justification.**
- III. The Method of Justification.**
- IV. The Moment (effects) of Justification.**
- V. The Motive of Justification.**

This morning we shall look at the first two points and continue on the rest next week. We want to concentrate on the meaning and must of justification.

## **I. The Meaning of Justification.**

First of all; the meaning of justification, before we define justification allow me to define first for you:

- The doctrine of regeneration. Regeneration or if you wish to be born again has to do with the change of the believers nature. It is the work of the Holy Spirit imparting life to a dead sinner. God takes out the old heart and putting in a new heart. Ezek.36:26 & 27. “*A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.*” Regeneration is subjective whereas justification is objective. Regeneration has to do with man’s state before God.
- Justification has to do with the change of a sinner’s standing before God. It is twofold:

1. It has to do with forgiveness. (acquittal)
2. It has to do with imputed righteousness. (acceptance)

Justification then is the judicial act of God whereby those who repent of their sins and put faith in Christ alone are declared righteous in the eyes of God and are totally free from guilt and condemnation. We have been acquitted and accepted by God. We can also say that justification is the opposite of condemnation. To justify means God declares us righteous because of the imputed righteousness of Christ Jesus. When God saves a sinner He takes away our sins and gives us His righteousness. 2 Cor.5:21 says, *“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.”* In justification we are set forth as righteous, i.e. to be declared righteous in the legal sense so that person can be put in a right relationship with God. Justification does not deal with our character or conduct; it deals with our standing before God and with our relationship with God. But you cannot separate justification from sanctification, they go hand in hand. If you are justified you are sanctified and if you are sanctified it is because you have been justified. Just because justification does not deal with our character it does not mean our character has not been affected, it has, thus, to be justified means that you will be sanctified and live a holy life. Perhaps we can say that in justification, it controls and or conditions our character. Justification has to do with the penal action of God regarding our sins, like a court room judge who hits with his gavel and says, not guilty regarding the person being charge. The law of God proclaims to the sinner, GUILTY, but those whom God saves and justifies, He declares NOT GUILTY! Col.2:13-15, *“And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; 14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; 15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.”* It doesn't make a difference what religion has to say on the matter, it make no difference what a certain denomination says on the matter, when God say's, NOT GUILTY, the sinner stands justified in God's eyes. It is religion and traditions of man that confuses this doctrine, but the Bible is quite clear when it speaks on justification. This was the liberating doctrine of the Reformation, Martin Luther as a Catholic priest suffered intense confusion and guilt until he began reading book of Romans and was finally regenerated and save, because of the peace and acceptance by God through the work of Christ, which justified him and gave him much peace and assurance. There is nothing more glorious than to hear those words, “son, daughter, thy sins be forgiven thee!” To know I stand before God justified and when He looks at Joe Maldonado He says, “NOT GUILTY!” This it the meaning of the words there in Numbers 23:21, *“He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the LORD his God is*

*with him, and the shout of a king is among them.”* I can insert my name here, that is, God hath not beheld iniquity in Joe Maldonado, how about you?

Can we do anything to help or aid in justification? No, because it is God that justifieth! Romans 8:33, *“Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? **It is God that justifieth.**”* Paul clearly sets this forth in Romans 3:26, *“To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that **he might be just, and the justifier of him** which believeth in Jesus.”* Therefore justification deals with the issue of relationship, that is, to have a right standing with God, because of what Christ accomplished upon the cross. Justification basically consists of two importance elements:

- Being acquitted by the forgiveness of sin and the removal of its guilt and condemnation.
- Being accepted by God based solely upon the merits of what Christ accomplished upon the cross, thus, freely imputing to us, the righteousness of Christ.
- Acquittal and Acceptance by God. Eph.1:6 & 7, *“To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. 7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.”*

In Romans 5:1 it says *“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”* Faith in and of itself does not justify us; it is the means not the cause of our justification. Jesus Christ is the cause of our justification, faith is the means, Paul uses the Greek word, **‘dia,’** which is, the channel thereof or the means. Jesus Christ is the chief cause of our justification, yea; our salvation. John 1:12 & 13, *“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, **but of God.**”* The word ‘of’ here at the end is the Greek word, **“ek,”** which means out of or from. God is the cause of salvation, whereas faith and believing is the means, faith lays hold of God as the means but the cause is OF GOD!

## **II. The Must (necessity) of Justification.**

Secondly let’s look at the must or if you wish the necessity of justification. Perhaps we can ask why man has to be justified before God. As a matter of fact, talk of this doctrine being in the Old Testament, perhaps the oldest book in the Bible, Job, he asked something of justification. Turn to Job 25, verses 3-5, *“How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman? 5 Behold even to the moon, and it*

*shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in his sight. 6 How much less man, that is a worm? and the son of man, which is a worm?"* Wow, thanks Job for calling me a worm, yea, less than a worm. Not only this, but he called us all, unclean! And he sets us all as being unjustified. What a way to stand before God, unclean, less than a worm and not justified. This alone teaches us the must or necessity of justification. Therefore we are all:

- **Sinful**, that is unclean, Romans 3:23, *"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."*
- **Guilty**, Romans 3:19, *"Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."* James 2:10 *"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."*
- **Condemned**, John 3:17-21, *"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. 21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."* Romans 5:18, *"Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life."*
- If this is true, that we are sinful, guilty and condemned then it sets forth true what Jesus Christ Himself said regarding this, John 3:36, *"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."* Outside Christ we are under the **wrath of God**.
- Being sinful, guilty and condemned and under the wrath of God without a shadow of a doubt necessitates JUSTIFICATION!
- Hopefully now you can better understand the question of Job, *"How then can man be justified with God?"*

We are therefore incapable of justifying ourselves, by any good works or good deeds. Amazing how many people depend on their good works and good deeds to get them to

heaven. But God has this to say to those who trust in their good works, i.e. their own righteousness, Isaiah 64:6 & 7, *“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. 7 And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.”* Outside of Christ all our good works and deeds are as filthy rags in the eyes of God. Don't get mad at me, take your argument with God, He said it and I'm just repeating it. Then on the other hand you have so many people trusting and depending on their religion or denomination to get them to heaven and all these things will not get one person into heaven. God saves us not only from our sins but also from religion. Again, Job asked, *“...how can he be clean that is born of a woman?”* What can cleanse you of your sins, or what can make you clean?

We are incapable of cleansing ourselves, we are incapable of saving ourselves and we are incapable of keeping the law of God! What we must understand that as sinful creatures we have broken and have transgressed God's Holy LAW! Let me ask again, what is sin? Let's allow the Bible to give us the answer, 1 John 3:4, *“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.”* We have broken God's holy law and even worse news, we cannot keep the law. Many believe that they can keep the law, but the Bible is quite clear in teaching that there is no one, but no one who can keep the law. Thus, we cannot be justified by the law, because it demands complete and full obedience. Please listen to this: **the law makes no provision for imperfect obedience, nay; the law condemns and slays the sinner in awful judgment and condemnation.** There is no provision of mercy in the law; the law pronounces us all guilty, and therefore DEATH TO THE SINNER! In spite of what preachers may say and in spite of the financial crises of our economy, the wages of sins is still DEATH! If you are outside Christ, the LAW of God stands before you and shakes its cold icy accusative finger, guilty, guilty, guilty, yea, says condemned, condemned, condemned, thus death, death, and death to your soul! But to the convinced and convicted sinner under the preaching of the gospel, there is also from the other side of the coin a positive aspect of the LAW of God also: The Law of God also gives knowledge regarding sin, it shows you your sins, Romans 3:20, *“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”* Paul says in Romans 7:7, *“...I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.”* The law shows us that we have missed the mark and come so short of pleasing God. Not only does the law give us knowledge of our sins, but it is also our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, Gal.3:23 & 24, *“But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should*

*afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.” Romans 7:12, “Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.” Thus, because of our sinful state everyone needs to be justified!*

As you walk out this morning from this auditorium, you will walk out of here either justified or condemned, justified or guilty. Don't live your life under the condemnation of sin and guilt, come to Christ this morning. Repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, come to Christ so that you can say with all those whom God has saved, Romans 8:1 *“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus...”* 1 John 1:9, *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

**Look to Christ this morning so that He will not behold iniquity in you.**

LET'S PRAY.