

The TIME & PLACE of Justification

Teaching/Special Meeting

By Ken Wimer

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Shreveport Grace Church
2970 Baird Road
Shreveport, LA 71118

Website: www.shrevegrace.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/shreveportgracech

I certainly always look forward to these opportunities when Brother Richard is away to come over here and be able to preach for you. That's an important way of putting it for me. I'm not preaching at you and I'm not preaching to you, but I'm preaching for you. In reality, anybody that the Lord has taught by his grace, the truth of Christ and his finished work at Calvary, would legitimately be able to stand up here and declare that truth. I just happen to be the one that was asked to do it and it really is all about just one sinner telling other sinners of the grace of God and what it is that Christ has accomplished on our behalf.

That's what I want to speak with you on this morning from a portion beginning in Deuteronomy 12, so if you'd like to take your Bibles. I notice that some of the young children were learning the books of the Bible and I heard one of them actually say, "Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy." So why do we learn the books of the Bible? Well, it's to be able to find them so this is a good test for you, Deuteronomy 12. I want to speak with you about "The PLACE & TIME of our Justification before God." I know that's a big, long title but it's the only way I could figure to describe what it is I want to talk with you about: the place and the time of when God actually declared sinners just before him.

Is there a place? Is there a time? When you ask some people, they'll say, "Yes, there is," and they'll immediately answer, "It's when you believe." They put all of the emphasis upon you believing and, you know, I was raised that way. I was taught that I had to do something first, that was the condition, and if I did what God said I should do which was, I was told, confess my sins and say that I believe that when Jesus died on a cross he died for me, that if I would make that prayer or that statement, then God in turn would declare me his; he would justify me; he would declare me acquitted of all of my sin. Well, is that the place and time? A lot of people that we know say so. They say, "That's it. You've got to do something first and then God does the rest." There are some others that say that God has always seen who it is would believe and who wouldn't and so from eternity he already declared just those that he would save. So is that the place and time?

Well, there is a place and time and here in Deuteronomy 12 we see this symbolized. It says in verse 1 of Deuteronomy 12, "These are the statutes and judgments, which ye shall

observe to do in the land, which the LORD God of thy fathers giveth thee to possess it, all the days that ye live upon the earth." Now, the book of Deuteronomy was written to a second generation of the children of Israel that had come out of Egypt. The first generation, God had caused to perish. They spent 40 years wandering in the desert. Now he gives their children, anybody that was the age 19 and younger at the time that they came out of Egypt, God spared, okay? But he tells them, "When you get into the land, there are certain things that are going to be required that you must do," and that's what we're reading about here.

First in verse 2 he says, "Ye shall utterly destroy," notice, "all the places, wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree." Isn't that interesting that the very first commandment that is given to them is to destroy false places of worship. That tells me something about God's priorities, doesn't it for you? You know, we worry about where we live, what kind of house we're going to live in, all these things take care of themselves, don't they? I mean, we're not to worry about tomorrow. We spend an awful lot of time doing it but we're not to. That's not what's vital. Do you know the most important and vital matter that you could ever settle with your family is where you worship and how you worship and what kind of message these children are being raised under? You know, some might criticize this congregation like they do ours over in Shreveport because we don't have children's programs, we don't have youth groups. We do just like what I'm seeing here, young children sitting with their families in a place of worship, sitting just like the adults with the same need to hear the Gospel, hear the message of Christ, and to be completely separated from every false doctrine or worship. That's the first thing that God lists here in Deuteronomy 12:2.

He says in verse 3, "And ye shall overthrow their altars, and break their pillars, and burn their groves with fire; and ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy the names of them out of that place." Again, that place. Now, we don't literally do that today. We're not on a campaign to go and firebomb buildings that we think are false worship. That's not the call. I know some are that zealous where they would possibly try to do that, but in our teaching, don't we make a difference? When we open this word, don't we in pointing sinners to Christ and showing them the truth concerning Christ and his work and what he has accomplished, make a difference between grace and works? Between sovereign will, the sovereign will of God and the so-called free will of man? And aren't we, whenever we make that difference, destroying every false notion? Everything that man builds upon, those altars at which they worship: free will, works, will worship?

You see, it's what we're supposed to do. We're supposed to make these things plain. I have not done what I'm supposed to do if I don't make these things plain with you or with my congregation or anybody that listens to me on the radio or any article that I write. You know, people react. You get hate mail. "Why did you say this? How can you say that? Aren't you excluding a great number by saying this or that?" People always testing your persuasion but we have to make it plain. We have to make it plain. I know this: you will never offend one of the Lord's sheep. You'll offend a lot of goats, but one of the Lord's

sheep? He's got to hear the truth and in hearing it, it may not be immediately but in hearing it, the Lord is going to draw him in his time and that's who we're after anyway. Don't worry about the goats and don't even worry about an offended sheep. You'll never be able to run off an offended sheep. They get offended for a while but they come back.

It says in verse 4, "Ye shall not do so unto the LORD your God. But," here it is and this is the point of this message, "unto the place which the LORD your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come." Unto the place, and I'm not going to read all the way through this chapter but you'll look in verse 11 of the same chapter, "Then there shall be a place which the LORD your God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there; thither shall ye bring all that I command you; your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the LORD."

Notice in verse 13, "Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest." "Well, here's a church. It's Sunday, let's just pull in here and worship. We ought to be in church on Sunday." A lot of people think that way. They don't care what's being preached but the Scriptures say, "Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest." Just because it's a church building, it might have a semblance of a so-called Christian name on it but it doesn't mean that the truth is there, that Christ is worshiped there.

Verse 14, "But in the place which the LORD shall choose in one of thy tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings, and there thou shalt do all that I command thee." What was that place? Well, it was Jerusalem at the time. It was the temple. It was the place where three times a year God required every male in all of the country to displace and go down there and offer sacrifices. Now, you think about a country where the enemy surrounded it and those enemies knew that three times a year every male was leaving his home, leaving his family supposedly exposed and going down to one place, wouldn't you think in an age of terrorism that that would be a pretty foolish thing to do? And yet God said, "You do it and I'll protect your families. I'll take care of your homes." He said not so much as a dog is going to wag its tongue or bark or growl against you.

So vital was this matter of the temple at the time. Why was it important? Well, it's a type of the Lord Jesus Christ and his sacrifice and what God requires that he might be a just God and a Savior. All of this was set forth for that one reason. Even though Christ would not come for another several thousand years, yet it was put before this people. You notice not only the place but a specific tribe? Do you know where Jerusalem was located? The tribe of Judah. There were 12 other tribes. Why Judah? Because it had been said that the sceptre would come from the tribe of Judah. Christ is called the Lion of Judah and so all of this history, all of these commands, you think about it, it wasn't about Israel at all, it was about God giving a revelation of what was vital to him and what is vital to him and that is his Son. In fact, when Christ came, that voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." That's really what all of worship is about. That's really what the most important thing that we can consider, young and old, is how is it that I can approach unto a holy God? Well, there's a place and there is a time that God

has established by which he would be satisfied and being satisfied, he does, can and does, receive unto himself sinners for whom Christ died.

How important is the place? Look over here in Luke 9:31. This is an interesting passage of Scripture's story. I remember having been taught this at a very young age, but I never saw what I'm about to show you here. It was just about the story. It was about Peter, James and John going up onto a mountain called the Mount of Transfiguration. I remember as a kid that was a big word, transfiguration. You think figs, you know, lots of figs there, but it was a place where the Lord pulled his disciples apart and, if you will, for a moment pulled back the veil because we know that Christ was God in the flesh and the veil in the tabernacle, the veil in the temple, represented that flesh. Do you remember the day that Christ died, that veil was rent in two from top to bottom at the moment that he died? That was symbolic because there wasn't any entering into the Holiest of Holies except when that veil was finally rent. Once a year the high priest went in up to when Christ came, now when the veil was rent, a new and living way was opened up.

So the place is important. The time is important. And this is what our Lord did, took these disciples apart so that they could see what he was about to accomplish, see his glory, and the reason I say that, look in verse 29, "And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening. And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias." This is interesting. Here's Moses and Elijah and it says they, "appeared in glory," and what did they speak of? They had already, well, Elijah was caught up, Moses had died, but generations had gone by since they had lived on this earth but it says they appeared in glory. They appeared in his glory and what did they speak of? It says, "his decease which he should," and that word "should" is the word "must," that he absolutely had to accomplish, notice the two words that follow, "at Jerusalem." Couldn't it have just stated "accomplish" and leave it at that? Why at Jerusalem?

Well, go back to Deuteronomy 12 because that was the place that God fixed to have his name put there and that all these other nations around when they looked and saw that the way that Israel worshiped, all the central focus was on that place, Jerusalem. In type, it was at the temple, but do you know what? Here we are today 2,000 years removed, has the focus changed? No. We worship today on the same foundation, the same faith, the same basis as what Abraham did, what Jacob did, Joseph, Moses, all of those of the Old Testament, Elijah. You can see they, even Moses and Elijah, looked forward to the accomplishment of what had been promised. I mentioned this in the Bible class that God dealt with those of the Old Testament on the basis of his forbearance. He was forbearing with their sin. It hadn't been put away yet, but he was forbearing with it, not imputing that sin to them, knowing that he would put it to the account of Christ when Christ came. That was their hope and I think as much for Peter, James and John who were with Christ as for us, it was to show that it wasn't based upon Moses' faithfulness, it wasn't based upon Elijah's being a faithful prophet in his day that God received them. Where were they looking? Where was their hope? It was in this death that Christ should accomplish at Jerusalem. That was their hope.

Where is your hope? We look back to that death that was accomplished at Jerusalem. That's an amazing thing when you stop and think about it. Can you see why the world kind of looks at you funny when you start being exclusive and telling them that there's no hope anywhere but in this man who came, lived and died, and rose again and that apart from him and apart from that work, there is no salvation? You stop and think about it. Unless the Spirit of God has taught you that, wouldn't you be of their number? Wouldn't you be scratching your head? Wouldn't you be saying at the same time, "You mean my works don't count for anything? All of my endeavors? Everything I'm doing?" The reason men think that way is because they're void of the Spirit of God and so they're left to their own natural minds and that's what a natural mind will think, "Somehow it's in the works of these hands." It's only when the Spirit of God takes this dark and depraved heart and opens it, gives it life, and causes it to see exactly what Moses and Elijah saw, that death that should be accomplished at Jerusalem, it's only then that a person will truly bow and rest and not put confidence in any other work or will than that of Christ.

That's the place and you can see the importance of it. It speaks of the death that he should accomplish. How many of you think of death as an accomplishment? We don't typically think that. We think a life is an accomplishment, men celebrate men's accomplishments in life, death is a tragedy. Death is often seen as cutting life short and yet here, the Scriptures declare that Christ's death was an accomplishment. Do you know what that tells me? That tells me that the work wasn't done until it was done. Now, I believe as strongly as anybody in God's eternal purpose to save sinners and that none are saved but those that he purposed to save, that's a rock solid persuasion that I find in Scripture, but do you know what? Salvation is not by decree alone.

Even God will not declare or decree a sinner justified apart from a satisfactory death and Christ knew it. Christ knew it. Back there in eternity, everyone that God purposed to save, he had already given to his Son. They were given to him so you can say in that sense he was their guarantor, he was their surety, but do you know what? They were given to him on condition that he would come as a man and that he would fulfill the law and actually work out that righteousness that God, a holy God required, and it wasn't done until it was done. Abraham, Isaac, Moses, Elijah, that was their hope, that when he would come, he would actually fulfill what he said he would do. That's what they rested in and that's what they waited for. That's why he's called the hope of Israel.

You know, the word "atonement" is only found in the Old Testament. One time the translators used it in the New Testament but they should have used the word "reconciliation," but atonement is a covering. The animal sacrifices were an atonement. They were a covering. It was a type of God's forbearance and that's why they had to be offered over and over and over again down through the years because there was no satisfaction. There was still that legal condemnation that stood over even the elect until Christ came and put it away because God had to be just to justify. He couldn't just declare them just on one basis and then condemn the rest. No, there had to be just satisfaction. To me, this word that we see here is so vital. It speaks of the decease which he must accomplish because without the shedding of blood there is no remission.

So the place is important but that's linked to the time, okay? Let me show you that. Look in Romans 5. Just like in the Old Testament, there was a time, a place but also a time when they were to bring those sacrifices to Jerusalem and offer them on the altar. There is a place, that's Christ and Calvary, you see, but there's a time that was required. Now, in Romans 5:9-11, this shows us the time that this was all accomplished. It says, "Much more than, being," and here's that little word we saw in our Bible class again, "now." These are time words that you find in Scripture. "Being now justified," how? "By his blood." This is important. We're not justified by his decree. The decree determined how we would be justified, we're justified by his blood. Blood is not shed until it's shed. It required the shedding of Christ's blood. It doesn't say there that we're justified by our believing, you see, some put it there, when you believe then you're justified. No, dear friends, it says very specifically, "Much more than, being now," that's a time word. There was something that had not yet been accomplished that Christ had to accomplish and now, "being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." That's so important.

It goes on to explain it in verses 10 and 11, "For if, when we were enemies," you see, there are some that will argue that from eternity, once elected by God the Father, you were no longer an enemy. Well, how do you explain this then? Because Christ didn't die for people that were already righteous, he died for sinners. "When we were enemies." How were we enemies? The law of God stood against us. Until that law was satisfied, there was no satisfaction, there was no reconciliation. Yes, there was forbearance. Yes, God loved those that he chose in Christ but their state before God was that of an enemy until reconciliation was made.

How was reconciliation made? Some people say, "Well, let's just preach the how." You can't separate the how from the when and the where. How was reconciliation made? If your Bible reads as simply as mine does, there shouldn't be an argument. What does it say? "We were reconciled to God by the death of his Son," in the death of his Son. This is a very simple message, dear friends, upon which all of my hope rests is that when Christ died, he died for me. When he died, my sin and my guilt and my debt that I owed was put to his account once for all and he paid it, and simultaneously upon completion of his death, because he finished the work, because he accomplished it, God once for all in that place and at that time and in his Son once for all charged every one of his elect with that very righteousness that Christ worked out. Do you know what that does for me? That gives me something objective to rest in, a time and a place and a person.

This is where it was done. This is where reconciliation took place if I believe the word because it says, "we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Where is he now? He ever lives to intercede. So if he died for me, rose again, there is all my hope. I rest in that.

Verse 11 says, "And not only so, but we also joy in God." This is not something that ought to stir argument and debate. It's a rejoicing for those who are taught of the Lord. My "joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received," and here's the one translation that shouldn't have been, they put, "the atonement," but if you

go back and look in the original, it's the same word in the original as the word "reconciled" up in verse 10. So I don't know if you're like me, I don't mind, I cross through it and put "reconciled," the reconciliation by whom we have, and notice the word, now received the reconciliation. Those of the Old Testament, their sin had not yet been put away. That's why they continued to offer those sacrifices. If they had been already justified before God, what would have been the need to continue those sacrifices? I'll tell you where the sacrifices ceased, it's when Christ died. No more need because he finished the work.

He did it all and that's where we have received the reconciliation. It's a determined reconciliation because God purposed it. It's a definite reconciliation because it's for a particular people for whom he died. You know, this is not some general death where he laid down his life and now he's sitting in heaven waiting and hoping that someone will make it effectual. No, it's a definite reconciliation. It's a deliberate reconciliation. You know, this didn't happen by chance. Every detail of Christ's death was accomplished exactly according to what God purposed. A decisive reconciliation. You know, you've told your kids before, "That's my decision. It's final." That's what we mean by decisive. No going back. Everyone for whom Christ died is decisively reconciled to God. Nothing you do can undo that. Doesn't that give you some peace and rest? It does me. I'm thankful that it's that way.

Look over in Hebrews 1:3. Is it important? Not only the how but the when and the where? Well, Scripture says so. In Hebrews 1:3, who was Christ? Well, it says here, "Who being the brightness of his glory." That's who he is. Just like the rays of the sun, you see the brightness of the sun, you see the rays shining. We talk about the sun and the rays but it's really one. So Christ is one with God the Father, "Who being the brightness of his glory and," notice, "the express image of his person," he was God in the flesh, "and upholding all things by the word of his power." Even as a man, it says he was upholding all things by the word of his power. All the while he was nursing at Mary's breast, he was the one providing the milk. That's hard for us to believe, isn't it? All the while that they drove those nails into his hands, he was giving the strength to those soldiers to drive those nails into his hands. He was in full command all the way through every aspect of his life. It wasn't until he gave Judas the nod that Judas was able to accomplish what he did. Do you know that? He walked with him for 3 ½ years. He told his disciples, he said, "I have chosen you but one of you is the son of perdition." He knew him. Why didn't Judas betray him before then? It wasn't his time. He said, "Now is the hour of darkness. Now is your hour." He was commanding it all in every aspect of it. "Upholding all things by the word of his power," but then it says here, notice, "when," there's a time word, "when he had by himself purged our sins." There was time where sins had to be purged.

Now, again, this is why we worship where we do and we make a difference. If your children were in any other kind of organization, church organization today, and having a Sunday school class, they would be told that their sins will be purged when and if they say a prayer. That's not what the Scriptures say. When were sins purged? When were sins put away? It says, "when he had by himself," you weren't even there. If Christ died for you, your sin was already put away. That's an amazing thing when you stop and think

about it, even before you were born in this world. Boy, you talk about stirring a hornet's nest but that's what it is. Either he put them away or he didn't. Either your salvation rests entirely in what he accomplished or you have no salvation. You say, "Well, what's the importance of faith then?" Well, faith is believing what God has revealed; believing the record is what John said in 1 John that God has given of his Son. I believe it. It's not when I believe that he put away my sin, it's when he died that he put away my sin and the Spirit of God has taken my eyes off myself, that means I don't have to strive and try to work this thing out. He has taken my eyes off of other men telling me what I've got to do, this and that, in order to have my sins purged. It's got my eyes fixed right where Moses and Elijah were fixed that day on the Mount of Transfiguration, looking to that death that he should accomplish, that he must accomplish, but I look at it as that death that he did accomplish and there I rest. There I rest. Apart from that, you don't have a plea, I don't have a plea. That's our hope and that's what we read here, "when he had by himself purged our sins."

How do we know he finished the work? Well, it says, "he sat down." Do you realize that in the Old Testament tabernacle there wasn't a chair? There was plenty of other things. There was a candlestick. There was a table of showbread. Altar of incense. A veil. There was the ark of the covenant. The mercy seat. But no chair. Those priests could not sit down. The work wasn't finished. It was all in type. They had to continue 24/7 down through the years those sacrifices. How do we know that Christ finished the work? It says here, "when he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down on the right of the Majesty on high." The right hand of Majesty, that's the place of honor and that's the place reserved for Christ alone. You say, "Well, where's my place?" That was interesting that the disciples were arguing that all the time, "Who's going to sit on the right hand and the left?" They had to be taught that if they were in Christ, they were on his right hand. It wasn't something to fight over. You know, "Who gets the seat?" Christ does. He sat down, but if your name was written upon that breastplate just like that of the Old Testament, you can be sure that that's the place where God has received you. That's in his Son. That's the time when he shed his blood. I trust that's your hope. It is mine.

I appreciate your attention.