

## Salvation—Justification (2<sup>nd</sup>)

(Our study for today continues with the subject of justification. In this study we show how it is that sinful man is declared to be righteous before the holy God in his being represented in his Surety from all eternity.)

We previously saw that justification is a legal term that does not change a person but it merely declares a person to be what he is—just or righteous. It is the opposite of condemnation; therefore, when a person is condemned in a court of law it does not make the person guilty, it simply declares him to be what he is, and conversely, when the judge declares a person not guilty he is simply publicly saying what the individual is—not guilty. Therefore, since justification is a forensic term that pronounces a person to be just, how is it that a guilty sinner can be not guilty before God? Romans 5:6 tells us that Christ “died for the ungodly.” Also in Romans 4:5 we are told that God “justifieth the ungodly.” And since all mankind died and sinned in Adams (Romans 5:12) and we are conceived in sin (Psalms 51:5), how is it that one can be declared to be just before the law of God? In other words, how can a guilty person be legally just before God? It is true that a person may commit a crime and sentenced to be punished for the crime committed and later pardoned. However, though pardoned, he is still guilty for committing the crime. Yet, in defining the meaning of justification, we saw that “justification is a pronouncing a person righteous according to law, as though he had never sinned.” (John Gill, *Sermons and Tracts*, Volume 2, p. 457.) Again, we ask, “How can this be?” I believe this can be resolved by understanding the meaning of the word “surety.” Hebrews 7:22 says, “By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.” Without explaining this verse in its context, let us focus on the word “surety.” This Greek word (ἔγγυος [éngyos, eng'-goo-os]) is only used here in the New Testament and the general meaning is that of a bondsman. In *Webster's 1828 Dictionary*, we find this definition, “In law, one that is bound with and for another; one who enters into a bond or recognizance to answer for another's appearance in court, or for his payment of a debt or for the performance of some act, and who, in case of the principal debtor's failure, is compellable to pay the debt or damages; a bondsman; a bail.” A simple illustration might give further insight to the meaning of surety. The first vehicle I purchased my father signed the note because I did not have enough collateral or security to cover the cost of the vehicle in case I failed to pay for it. My father was well known in our community and he was so well respected that he could borrow money in his name alone from banks in two separate towns. Nevertheless, when he signed the note for the vehicle I was buying it meant that in reality he was responsible for the note and would have to pay it if I failed to do so. (Obviously, I respected my father and the Barber name and did not want to spoil it either. Equally, I wanted to please my father and thereby never missed a payment.) My father was the surety for my note.

Christ is not only the “surety of a better testament,” but obviously, He is equally the surety of the election of grace. The subject of election was covered in a previous podcast, but it would be good to review it somewhat at this time. Ephesians 1:4 informs us that some were chosen in Christ “before the foundation of the world, that” they “should be holy and **without blame** before” God. This Greek word (ἄμωμος [ámōmos, am'-o-mos]) translated “without blame” carries the idea of “unblemished.” It is not only translated “without blame,” but also “unblamable” and “faultless.” Since it is only used seven times in the New Testament, it would be good to look at the other uses to get a fuller understanding of the intensity of the word. In Ephesians 5:27, we find that the ἐκκλησία (or congregation) of God is to be without “having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and **without blemish**” before the Lord. In Colossians 1:22, we are told that the redeemed will be presented “holy and **unblameable** and unproveable in his sight.” Hebrews 9:14 and I Peter 1:19 declare that Christ is “**without spot**” and “**without blimish**.” Jude 24 declares that the redeemed will be presented “**faultless** before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.” And lastly, in Revelation 14:5, we find those redeemed were identified as being “**without fault** before the throne of God.” Therefore, when we are told that we were chosen in Christ before the creation of the world to be “holy and without blame before” God, it is self-evident that Christ is the Surety of the elect and was set up to be so in eternity past. From the beginning, Christ was the Surety of the election of grace and the full payment would fall on Him. As Ephesians 1:4 says, we were chosen in Christ to be

“holy and without blame before” God. The verse furthermore says that this election was in accordance with the love of God.

This brings us to John 17:23-24. It says, “I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.” Here we find that God loved His sheep (elect, believers) as He loved the Son, and, furthermore, that this love was “before the foundation of the world.” What a profound thought! God not only loved us in Christ before the world, but He loved us as He loved the Son. In other words, there was never a moment in eternity when God began to love the election of grace. They were always loved in the Son and loved as much as He loved the Son.

We are creatures of time and the concept of eternity is beyond our comprehension. This is not the case with the eternal, triune God. There was no beginning with God and, obviously, there will be no ending with Him. He is “the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever,” Hebrew 13:10. This is what God revealed to Moses when He told him that His name is I AM. God does not change. He does not increase in any attribute, nor does He decrease. As John 17:23-24 declares, there was never a time when the Lord did not love His sheep. God did not decide at some moment that He would love and give some to Christ. This was established in His eternal being. While our love to Him waxes and wanes continually, His love is ever the same. In fact, we will not be loved more when we are glorified than we are now. Truly, we can sing the hymn by W. Tucker, as found in *A Selection of Hymns for Public Worship* by William Gadsby, No. 65.

*Election in Christ. Eph. 1. 5, 11; 2 Tim. 1. 9*

- 1 Expand, my soul, arise and sing  
The matchless grace of Zion’s King;  
His love, as ancient as his name,  
Let all thy powers aloud proclaim.
  
- 2 Chosen of old, of old approved,  
In Christ eternally beloved;  
Adopted too, and children made,  
Ere sin its baleful poison spread.
  
- 3 Though sin and guilt infest them here,  
In Christ they all complete appear;  
The whole that justice e’er demands  
Received full payment from his hands.
  
- 4 In him the Father never saw  
The least transgression of his law;  
Perfection, then, in him we view;  
His saints in him are perfect too.
  
- 5 Then let our souls in him rejoice,  
As favoured objects of his choice;  
Redeemed, and saved by grace, we sing  
Eternal praise to Christ our King.

Yes, Christ being our Surety from all eternity, Mr. Tucker stated it gloriously when he penned

In him the Father never saw  
The least transgression of his law;  
Perfection, then, in him we view;  
His saints in him are perfect too.

Yes, we fell in Adam and, by nature, are sinners from conception. Historically, we were lost and “dead in trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1), but prior to our fall and sinful condition God ever saw us justified in the imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Though Christ actually completed the payment for the sins of His people some two thousand plus years ago, God always saw us in our Surety. While it is true that we do not experience the benefits of justification in our conscience until faith, the fact of justification must first be prior to faith. Faith does not create. The truth and state of justification must first be established before we believe because justification does not change a person or make a person righteous; justification merely pronounces a person to be what he already is—righteous before the holy law of God. Yes, God ever saw His sheep secure in Christ (the Surety) from all eternity. Nothing summarizes this glorious truth more than II Timothy 1:9, “Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.”

May the Lord sanctify this truth to our soul more and more each day so that we might honor and glorify our Lord Jesus Christ increasingly as we live out our lives on this earth. However, our time is up for today. Farewell.