

HOW SHOULD MAN BE JUST WITH GOD?

John Isaac Edwards

Justification is a Bible subject. The word “justification” appears three times in Paul’s letter to the Romans (4:25; 5:16, 18). In addition to “justification,” the words “just,” “justified,” “justifier,” “justifieth,” “justify,” and “justifying” occur more than 150 times throughout the Scriptures. The Bible speaks of the just and the unjust (Mt. 5:45), the habitation of (Prov. 3:33), the path of (Prov. 4:18), the head (Prov. 10:6), the memory (Prov. 10:7), the tongue (Prov. 10:20), and the mouth (Prov. 10:31) of the just. The word “just” is used of one who is righteous before God (Gen. 6:9; 7:1). Justification is the act of God’s declaring men free from guilt of sin and acceptable to him; adjudging them to be righteous (1 Cor. 6:9-11). In the long ago Job asked, “...but how should man be just with God?” (Job 9:2). Let’s examine the teaching of the Bible on the subject of justification.

1) GOD IS THE JUSTIFIER.

All sin is against God (Gen. 39:9; Lk. 15:21; Rom. 8:7). God hasn’t sinned against us. It’s not that God needs to be just with us, but that we need to be just with Him! Paul, in his letter to the Romans, referred to God as “...the justifier...” (3:26). “Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by

faith, and uncircumcision through faith” (3:30). “...It is God that justifieth” (8:33). The Galatians were informed, “And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen...” (3:8). Since God is the justifier, we cannot justify ourselves; nor can we expect to receive justification elsewhere!

2) JUSTIFICATION IS NOT BY SOME THINGS.

Not by the law of Moses. Galatians teaches: “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law...for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified” (2:16). “But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith” (3:11). In fact, to try and be justified by the law of Moses is to be “...fallen from grace” (Gal. 5:4)!

Not by hearing alone. Hearing is important (Mt. 11:15; 17:5; Rom. 10:17), but it takes more than hearing the word of God to be just with God. It takes doing! “For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified” (Rom. 2:13).

Not by faith only. Much of what has been said and written by men concludes justification by faith only. Yet the Bible says,

“...not by faith only” (Jas. 2:24). If by faith only, then the devils are justified (Jas. 2:19)! Is the devil just with God?

3) JUSTIFICATION IS BY SOME THINGS.

By Christ. It was prophesied of Christ, “...by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many...” (Is. 53:11). Paul preached of Christ, “And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses” (Acts 13:39). All that was necessary on God’s part for our justification was effected in the death and resurrection of Christ (Rom. 4:25; 5:16, 18). Peter penned, “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (1 Pet. 3:18). Thus, Paul spoke of “...the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 3:24).

By grace. There could be no justification apart from the grace of God. “Being justified freely by his grace...” (Rom. 3:24). Titus 3:7 says, “That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” Some teach justification by grace alone, without man doing

anything. To teach such is to teach universal, unconditional justification! *"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men"* (Titus 2:11).

By faith. There is no doubt that justification is by faith. It is implied in the fact that James said *"...not by faith only"* (Jas. 2:24). Paul affirmed, *"...being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"* (Rom. 5:1). If by faith only, then grace is eliminated. If by grace only, then faith is excluded. Both are necessary! *"For by grace are ye saved through faith..."* (Eph. 2:8).

By the blood of Christ. Those who read Romans 5:1 and conclude we are justified by faith only just quit reading too soon! Verse 9 states, *"Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved*

from wrath through him." If justified by faith only, then the blood is omitted. If justification is by the blood of Christ, then the doctrine of justification by faith only is false!

By works. James 2 teaches justification by works. *"Was not Abraham our father justified by works...?"* (v. 21). *"Ye then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only"* (v. 24). *"Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works...?"* (v. 25). Some pit James against Paul when he said, *"Not of works..."* in Ephesians 2:8-10. One must realize there are different kinds of works mentioned in the Bible: evil works (Jn. 7:7), works of the law of Moses (Gal. 2:16), works of darkness (Rom. 13:12), works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19), wicked works (Col. 1:21), works of righteousness which we have done (Titus 3:5),

dead works (Heb. 6:1), works of the devil (1 Jn. 3:8), and so on. Some works justify; some do not. To say that no works are involved is to contradict plain Bible teaching (James 2:24) and nullify faith. Faith is a work! (Jn. 6:29). There are good works we are to walk in (Eph. 2:10). Are these necessary? Justification requires action on our part (Rom. 2:13). We are active, not passive in the justification process!

Reading 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 will show that the Corinthians were justified. To see how that worked, just read Acts 18:1-8. *"...and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized"* (v. 8). We plead with you to do the same so that you can be just with God!

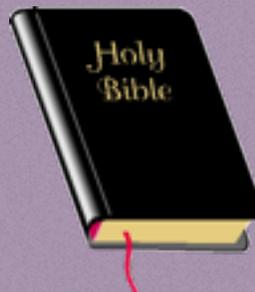
**Each one find one.
Each one bring one.
Each one teach one.
Each one win one.**

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