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PROCLAIMING THE WORD TO THE WORLD

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DOCTRINAL SERIES IV

Justification – Propitiation – Reconciliation

BY THE EDITOR

THESE three provisions, along with “**Repentance**” (already presented), are all part of God’s glorious redemption. All mankind is lost, doomed and damned by a holy God, after the incident of sin in the Garden of Eden. That abandonment from God included all men and women following Adam and Eve. “Wherefore as by one man (Adam) sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Romans 5:12).

How is the Divine image of God to be restored to the human race? It will never be by their own effort, so says Ephesians 2:8,9, plus many other places in the Bible. God has given us many different terms to explain His love and grace toward us. One, among many, is “**JUSTIFICATION**.” It is a legal term explaining His action. It is the judicial act of God in which we hear His declaration that the blood of His Son satisfied all the demands of His law for the believer in His Son’s redemptive action on the cross. “For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Romans 3:23,24). “To declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus” (v.26).

“That being justified by His grace, we should be saved from wrath through Him” (Titus 3:7). Christ took our deserved punishment for our sin upon Himself on the cross. Is it any wonder that we love, appreciate, and serve Him? Note in this verse that we learn of this provision upon the basis of His grace, without any petition or labor on the part of the sinner declared **justified**. Our faith is resting upon Christ’s shed blood, which means taking upon Himself our deserved and pronounced death. “Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him” (Romans 5:9). In **justification** we possess God’s peace in the place of His wrath. “Being justified by faith we have peace with God through Our Lord Jesus Christ. By whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God” (Romans 5:1,2).

Faith personally appropriates that righteousness God has provided in His Son, that God may be just in justifying everyone who believes Christ, that we might be acceptable before a holy God without the accusation of the law — no more condemnation or guilt. (Romans 8:1) Our heavenly record is clean with nothing to be remembered against us. *When God says it, it is done!* **Justification** is essential to redemption because the condemnation of the law must be removed if the sinner is going to be acceptable to God, with our dwelling with Him throughout eternity.

Propitiation

This work of God’s grace states that by the blood of Christ the holy character of God is satisfied for all offenders, with the mercy seat being a place of communion with God. Oh, how we need to realize that sin is not tolerated in the presence of a holy God! In the redeemed children of God, this manifestation of such improved character is within the believers. That is why we Christians are called saints in the Bible. “God’s wrath is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness” (Romans 1:16). Both God’s anger and wrath are mentioned many times in the Bible. Today, the love of God has been emphasized to the extent that God seems to have no other attributes, such as holiness or judgment.

God has provided only one escape from His judgment and the consequence of His wrath. It is found in His Son, Jesus Christ. “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God” (Romans 3:25). Christ sprinkled with His own blood, the mercy seat, the place of communion with the Father. Here the Father accepts the righteousness of His Son in behalf of all that believe in His propitious blood. “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son so to be the propitiation for our sins” (I John 4:10). Remember, friend, Christ did not only cover our sins, He also put them away by the sacrifice of Himself. (Hebrews 9:26)

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THE DREAMS (continued from page 4)

lived and met the dreams each night. They weren't all the same. Perhaps tonight I would sleep and wouldn't dream, wouldn't sweat nor fear. I wouldn't drown after all. Perhaps tonight I would get an answer to my question. I knew better.

The story is one that haunts many people before salvation. It is subtly, but openly taught in most public places where people can be influenced. It is a hopeless godlessness. Despair. Our present generation is steeped in it. From politicians to gangs, and everything in between, we see this evil move afoot.

Ephesians 2:12 sums it up this way: *"That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world."*

Romans 3:13-18 says this: *"Their throat is an open sepulcher; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood; Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes."*

No hope and without peace! What a combination. And they reside dormant in each individual that is without the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior from sin. These two areas are allowed to be awakened by a system that pays professors and teachers and even some preachers to so influence the mind that most never seek the truth from the Word of God. Publishing houses are quick to retain authors who can write well and have a good following in order to make sure the hopelessness and the absence of peace dominates the book. Those authors who write of peace and hope in Christ are quickly criticised and relegated to unknown publishing houses without great exposure.

Kind of unbalanced? Of course it is. The world system is unbalanced in favor of sin, corruption, deceit, no peace, no hope: just whatever man-made system of government, education, and religion are in power at the time. When the Lord Jesus Christ walked the earth in His public ministry, He challenged and refuted what organized Judaism had become: burdensome hypocrites (read Matthew 23 slowly — this was what had happened as the Jews walked away from God and to their own view of how things should be in religion). Roman rule had no use for Judaism and less use for biblical Christianity. The Romans were proud pagans. Anything else was always at risk and in danger of prison or the loss of one's life. Look at how things are today. In the United States, that same biblical Christianity that existed in the New Testament is the only belief system that is allowed by law to be discriminated against and persecuted; that same biblical Christianity has been ruled to be unconstitutional, and as a result, legal precedence is given to outlaw real prayer, Bible reading or study, and Jesus Christ. The world's religions, however, are all safe havens for these strange birds of prey on the unknowing and ignorant.

Hold on, however, for in the end, it is biblical Christianity that wins! The Lord Jesus Christ has already secured the victory in Himself through His substitutionary sacrifice by blood on the cross, His subsequent death, and His literal, bodily resurrection from the dead three days and three nights later. The debt of deceit, corruption, sin, without hope or peace, has been paid in full by Christ. Your sin debt is no more, unless you die in your sins without Christ.

Accept Christ as personal Savior from sin, realizing that neither you, nor anyone else can pay their own debt, but can only rely on what Christ has done — change your mind concerning salvation — and trust Christ solely by faith alone. He can, and only He can save you. He wants to right now, not next week, next month, or next year, but right now where you sit or stand. Won't you come to Him by faith?

Ephesians 2:1,2,4,8-10,13-14,18 says: *"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us; 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, For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. But now in Christ Jesus ye who were sometimes far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace . . . For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father."*

Only Jesus Christ can do for you what you, the world, or the world's religions could never do. Save your soul for all eternity, give you peace with God now (Romans 5:1), and instill in you through the power of the Holy Spirit, that He, the Lord Jesus Christ is your Blessed Hope (Ephesians 1:-13-14; 4:30, 5:18; Acts 1:8; Titus 2:11-13!

A genuine salvation and a changed life are the only combination that works and lasts! And it is found only in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

From Box 400

Sometimes I hear from the wives of prisoners, who recognize the difference in their husband. This prisoner's life change indicates his possession of and position

in Christ. (II Corinthians 5:17) I share this letter with you:

I know that my God, through Jesus Christ, is going to send him home

in His timing. Pray for him. I have seen a 180 degree turn with him. My husband sent your Bible Study Course to me. I thank Jesus Christ for people who want to reach the lost. — Texas

Personal Word

We were unable to publish *The Challenger* in August due to lack of funds. This came as a surprise to us. We hope to be back on schedule with this September issue without another such happening. Some of you dear readers share no responsibility for a lack of funds, and I thank God for every one of you. Please be assured of the following facts:

1. We realize the Lord must lay our financial needs upon the hearts of His children.
 2. We will operate within our income and will not go into debt.
 3. Our policy of no financial solicitation will continue. (We will call for prayer!)
 4. We pay no salaries. We keep operation as efficient as possible.
5. We now have twelve people donating their labor in our various fields of endeavors. This number does not include additional volunteers who handle and mail our literature, cassettes and CDs.
 6. We no longer have any financial reserves. Our commitment to God is to accomplish all He enables us to do for His praise and glory, the salvation of souls, and their spiritual growth. We thank God for your participation.

Do you have any concept of your coverage during your ministry? Many years I was heralding forth God's Word by radio, television, and the printed page. Any idea as to the number of people hearing the Word? Of course not! But God knew every listener and reader. How thrilling to have brought glory to His dear Name. How many came to Christ and accepted Him as their personal Savior and Lord? I have no idea. Will you know someday? Perhaps, but the numbers are incidental. I already know what God has declared as the result of proclaiming His Word in obedience to His command. Never will it return void. God's purpose in its declaration will never be thwarted or denied. Let's together praise Him for the glorious privilege of being a collaborator in the field white unto harvest. What a privilege to minister with some of the finest people on earth. Paul said he was a minister by the grace of God. What privileges God has given to this undeserving soul!

Justification . . . (continued from page 1)

Propitiation is that meeting place where our sin comes face to face with both God's love and wrath. The sinner comes face to face with the forgiveness of God through the shed blood of His Son. Our **propitiation** is now and forever established. The believer is admonished to "come boldly unto the throne of grace (mercy seat) that he may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:16) **Propitiation** and redemption becomes a reality and reconciliation is made possible.

Reconciliation

Here is one of the most thrilling doctrines declared in the entire Bible. It signified the change of places, coming over from one side to the other. It involves changing the judicial status from one estrangement and condemnation to the opening of acceptance and fellowship.

"WE WERE RECONCILED TO GOD BY THE DEATH OF HIS SON" (Romans 5:10). Christ is called "the high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people" (Hebrews 22:17). Remember, **reconciliation**

was not necessary from God's side. Man is the offender, since his sin estranged him from a holy God; and man is at enmity with Him. Someone had to make possible a **reconciliation**. Christ, assuming human nature, satisfied the divine justice for our sins at Calvary, and through our acceptance of Him as Savior, we are received back into fellowship with an offended God. Christ is the reconciler, reconciling enemies to His Father. (Romans 5:10, Colossians 2:20-22, II Corinthians 5:18-21) This doctrine then is restoration to divine favor. God not only removes the penalty of our guilt and blots out our guilty past, but He also places us where we can partake of His promises and rewards of those who are reconciled.

How thrilling to realize, if we ourselves are reconciled to God, we can preach the word of **reconciliation** to others. "And all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be you reconciled to God" (II Corinthians 5:18,19) As hopeless, helpless, damned sinners, we cling to the cross where our Savior met all the righteous demands of a holy God in their eternal behalf. He took our deserved and promised suffering from our sin. He arose to indwell sinners who have repented of their sin and rest upon the finished work of Christ in our eternal behalf. He has made our **reconciliation** a blessed reality. Friend, let's love and serve Him with our whole heart.

From Box 400

Thank you for the Christian literature. I appreciate it. I have no funds, but you can be sure that I will pray for you. I am in High Security, and it is hard to get literature, but our chaplain helps us. -Texas

Since I have started your prayer study, I find myself in a midst of prayer. It is awesome! The more I read and study, the more I pray. It has been a true blessing to me. Thank you for all you do for those in prison. - Florida

FROM THE DESK OF . . .

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THE DREAMS

*“And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar,
Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams whereby his spirit was troubled,
And his sleep brake from him” Daniel 2:1*

The face was sort of known to me, but without a name from my memory. She walked into the somewhere that I was and approached quickly to where I was seated. She smiled an unfamiliar smile, and without a word, directed a young girl out from behind her to stand before me.

“Okay, go ahead and say hello.”

“Hi.”

The word was soft, alive, and with great expression. Unpracticed, yet anxious; anticipated, but unnatural. I looked at her carefully and then up to the face with the unfamiliar smile.

“I don’t understand,” I stated honestly.

“Look at her, so tall and skinny for all of her eight years: That flowing raven hair, those penetrating green eyes, and the broad and inviting smile. Surely you understand.”

I look hard as my heart raced, with a deep inspection this time. She was in many ways like the woman who stood before me, though her hair was red. The confusion was choking, but the words came eventually.

“Hello, darling. Can you tell me your name?”

The girl looked toward the smiling face with no name, which quickly turned down to me with a detached compassion. What a contradiction. I had no idea what was happening here. As my eyes darted from the woman to the girl, the woman disappeared from sight. The young girl followed her dutifully, smiling at me into a fading nothingness.

I looked around to see if anyone else saw the scene played out before me. I saw no one. There was no detail to where I was: table and chair, and me — somewhere. I bowed my head into my hands and sighed deeply. My eyes remained closed. My mind was jumbled, my thoughts, on edge.

I opened my eyes and lifted my head quickly, sweating profusely, and turned on my side in the bed. Just as quickly I turned on my back, shut my eyes and softly muttered, maybe to God in my silent lack of understanding.

“She’s dead, isn’t she?” There was no answer. There never was.

The darkness turned to light and the day went on like all the days before. I stayed in the darkness, however. Each foot went through the motions carrying me to where I was expected — but not my thoughts: they were left in the somewhere of a sensation of drowning. They needed rescuing. But how? To whom could I turn? Who would believe me now, or understand? The prescribed pills had deadened reality for a time, as would a vacation, but I always came back. And none the better for it. I needed something else. One can’t stay on vacation all the time. The clergy that I went to hadn’t helped — they denied that I had a problem. They claimed that they weren’t in the ministry to deal with questions or dreams. My questions or dreams, anyway. Whatever I was going through was someone else’s fault, or it was just plain made up in my head because of those religious people who said so. But, wasn’t it the clergy who sent me to the pill man anyway?

Ah, another day gone. Did I do my job today? I couldn’t say, for I was there and not there, at the same time. Light was turning back to the darkness where I

(continued on page 2)

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*“Be you steadfast, unmovable, always
abounding in the work of the Lord . . .
You know your labor is not in vain
in the Lord” I Corinthians 15:58*

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