

## The Puzzles of Job

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### Chapter Four

#### WHAT IS JUSTIFICATION?

It is little short of amazing the progress that man has made in these last years. For example, for thousands of years the fastest any person could travel was the speed of a good horse. Now we can fly from one place to another at speeds in excess of 500 miles an hour. In nearly any field of endeavor we can point with pride to our achievements. Nevertheless, if we are willing to face things as they really are, there are two areas in which we have made no advance whatsoever. These are our relationships with each other and our relationship with GOD. Men still fight with men and men still rebel against GOD. Our problem is a heart problem and all our scientific progress has not changed that.

One reason we are not able to cope with this problem is that we start at the wrong end. We try to get right with our neighbor before we are right with GOD. Many of us are guilty of teaching our children how to be good neighbors without ever teaching them how they can be right with GOD and have their hearts changed so that we can make good progress in both realms. We soon discover for ourselves and our children that as long as our hearts are filled with pride and selfish desires and self-will that we do not even get along with our families.

The LORD JESUS CHRIST put these matters in their proper order when in condensing the Law into two main categories He said, "**Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind... And... thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself**" (Matt. 22:37, 39). To have right relationship with GOD is first. This is essential for all of life, be it social, economic, political or spiritual. When a man's physical heart is bad there are some things that he cannot do, for his heart will not stand the strain. When his spiritual heart, that is, the very center of his being, is bad, it is impossible for him to do the right thing. His heart will not let him. It is imperative then, that our hearts be made right with GOD first.

When Job asked the question, "**How should man be just with God?**" he asked that which is fundamental to living right in this world. If we can find how we can be just with GOD, there is hope for us. If not, we will be left to muddle along as we have been in our mixed-up condition of madness and misery.

Let us first discover what it is we are seeking when we want to be just with GOD. What is justification? What do we mean when we speak of being just with GOD? To be justified means to be declared righteous; to be declared upright; to be declared legally right. So then, to be just with GOD means that even though we have sinned and are guilty, yet a verdict is rendered in our favor, declaring us righteous before GOD. Job's question is this, "How can this be?" Before we can be just in GOD's sight some way must be found whereby GOD can pardon our past because we are guilty, forgive our sins because we are sinners, and still be just.

A judge may feel sorry for a criminal standing before him in court and may want to pardon him, but the judge must find some grounds upon which the lawbreaker can be legally pardoned. If not, then the judge must sentence him to pay the penalty demanded by the law. In the case of GOD's law the penalty of sin is death. This is what GOD has stipulated and this law cannot be broken if GOD is to remain just.

GOD must remain faithful to that law, for He has established Himself as being just. Isaiah made this plain when he said to the LORD's people Israel: "**Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye that are escaped of the nations: they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god that cannot save. Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together; who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me**" (Isaiah 45:20,21).

Daniel prayed, "**O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee**" (Daniel 9:7). Since GOD is just, He must either find a way to pardon man and to declare him righteous, or He must carry out on the man the sentence of death for sin. Moses said of GOD, "**He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he**" (Deuteronomy 32:4).

The factor we so often overlook is that the sentence of death is already passed upon all men because all have sinned. This penalty could be carried out on every person and GOD would be perfectly just in exacting it. Not one particle of censure could be brought against Him. So then, it is not justice we must plead, but mercy. It is mercy, and mercy alone, that caused GOD to seek and to find a way that would make it possible for man to stand before GOD in righteousness and peace.

How could this be done? How did GOD provide for us in order that we may be just before Him? How can GOD let the guilty go free and still remain just? Or to put it another way, How can GOD declare sinners righteous? The answer lies in what we call the Gospel - the good news, for good news indeed it is!

The plan GOD has used through the ages and uses today, is simplicity itself. Do not think that because it is simple, it is worthless. Some of us are inclined to think that unless something is complex and difficult it is not good. This plan is all GOD requires and is, therefore, all that you and I should ask for, even though it is simple.

GOD came into the world in the person of His SON, JESUS CHRIST, to be man's Redeemer. The four Gospels, the first four books of the New Testament, tells the story of His coming. They

record the account of His life and of His death and of His resurrection. In Him was no sin. This was testified of by the FATHER and by CHRIST's disciples. Since He was sinless, there never was a sentence of death upon Him. The sentence of death came upon mankind because of sin, but the SON, being perfect, offered Himself as the divine Substitute to die in the place of guilty man. Therefore, in His death, the law is satisfied, since it demanded the death of man. And the man who was sentenced to death; that is, you and I, can go free. The penalty assessed against us has been fully paid.

There are conditions to be met for each person who will be justified before GOD. This is not a gift given to the human race automatically even though GOD has provided it for all. The condition GOD demands is our confession that we have sinned. This is an admission of our guilt. This is to be followed with repentance, which is a turning away from sin to GOD and includes a willingness to make CHRIST LORD of all. This is what makes Him your SAVIOUR or my SAVIOUR. This is what is meant by "believing" on the LORD. To believe means a personal turning from our sin and a personal acknowledging of CHRIST as LORD because of His death for us on the Cross. He now lives to be our LORD. This is what Paul said, **"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."** It is not enough that we recognize Him as being "a" Saviour. We must come to the place where we can say of Him, "He is MY SAVIOUR."

This is not all that takes place in this process. The righteousness of CHRIST is set to the account of the one who believes and receives CHRIST as LORD. Our record says, "Guilty and deserving death." CHRIST's record says, "Not guilty," and therefore, He sets all of His righteousness to our account. This is vividly illustrated in the life of Abraham, according to Romans 4. Here is what Paul wrote: **"What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness"** (Romans 4:1-3).

The apostle goes on to tell us that Abraham **"He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification"** (Romans 4:20-25)

GOD raised CHRIST from the dead as proof to all thinking creatures in the universe that CHRIST's sacrifice was accepted before GOD. Because of this the Scriptures declare: **"What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us"** (Romans 8:31-34).

This is not the end of these matters. The grace of GOD is "abundant grace." GOD did more than justify us on the grounds of CHRIST's death for us. He did more than set to our account the

righteousness of CHRIST on our confession of faith in that work for us. He also sent the HOLY SPIRIT to dwell in the heart of every believer, that we may have help, comfort and strength to act as GOD wants us to act.

## REGENERATION

We have seen that in justification the guilty sinner, through trusting in CHRIST, is declared righteous before GOD. Though this gives the believer a position before GOD, justification does not make the believer's conduct righteous in his everyday life among men. Another work of the SPIRIT of GOD does that. We call it regeneration. The SPIRIT of GOD creates in the human heart a divine nature. This produces in the believer the desire to do the things of GOD as Peter says in his second letter: "**According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust**" (II Peter 1:3,4).

In order to give us power to do that which the new nature within us desires, GOD has given us the HOLY SPIRIT to indwell us. Concerning this Paul wrote to the Corinthian believers: "**What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's**" (II Corinthians 6:19,20).

Ye may well ask, "But how can we glorify GOD in our bodies? The old habits still hold us. It is so easy for us to lose our tempers, for example. Remember, GOD's commands are His enablings; what He asks of us He provides power for us to do. The promise is, "**For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure**" (Philippians 2:13). This calls on us for full surrender to the LORD. When we accept all CHRIST is by faith, GOD can work out His purposes in us and through us.

Because of the strength of the LORD within us, Paul can admonish us to "**Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain**" (Philippians 2:14-16).

That which we call Christian graces are actually the fruit of the SPIRIT which are developed in us as the result of our surrender to our LORD. Galatians 5:22,23 bears this out: "**But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another**" (Galatians 5:22-26).

Both regeneration and justification are brought together in Paul's letter to Titus. The apostle wrote: "**But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by**

**the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:4-7).**

So then, justification gives us a right standing before GOD. It places to our account the righteousness of JESUS CHRIST, the righteous One. Then, GOD gives us a divine nature through the work of the HOLY SPIRIT. He also gives us the HOLY SPIRIT to live in us so that we may do the things that please Him.

These, then, are some of the things that are involved in being a Christian.

### **My Hiding Place**

Hail, sovereign love, which first began;  
The scheme to rescue fallen man!  
Hail, matchless, free, eternal grace,  
Which gave my soul a hiding place.

Against the GOD that built the sky  
I fought with hands uplifted high,  
Despised the mention of His grace,  
Too proud to seek a hiding place.

Enwrapt in thick Egyptian night,  
And fond of darkness more than light,  
Madly I ran the sinful race,  
Secure - without a hiding place!

But thus the eternal counsel ran;  
Almighty love, arrest that man!  
I felt the arrows of distress,  
And found I had no hiding place.

Indignant justice stood in view;  
To Sinai's fiery mount I flew;  
But justice cried with frowning face,  
This mountain is no hiding place!

Ere long a heavenly voice I heard,  
And mercy's angel soon appeared:  
He led me with a beaming face,  
To JESUS as a hiding place.

On Him almighty vengeance fell,  
Which must have sunk a world to hell!  
He bore it for a sinful race,  
And thus became their Hiding Place.

Should sevenfold storms of thunder roll,  
And shake this globe from pole to pole,  
No thunderbolt shall daunt my face,  
For JESUS is my Hiding Place.

- Major John Andre

~ end of chapter 4 ~

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