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Can Man Be Justified Before God?

“So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men” (Romans 5:18).

Satan inspired evil in the first man and incited him to sin against God. Before man sinned, he was justified (in the right) to be in the Holy presence of God, for he did not know sin. Man had communion with God. But after sinning against God, he was no longer in the right before Him and could no longer be in God’s presence. Sin causes separation from God, which results in death: *“The wages of sin is death”* (Rom. 6:23a). Thus, *“through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned”* (Rom. 5:12). Man came into *“bondage under the elemental things [elemental spirits] of the world”* (Gal. 4:3), enslaved to *“ignorance”* (Acts 17:30).

It was God’s desire that even in this fallen state man *“would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and exist”* (Acts 17:27-28a). According to His plan, God chose the Israelites to reveal through them to all mankind the principle of evil in man that prevents him from being justified. This revelation was through God’s Law, which showed what man had to do to be justified before God. If man could obey the whole Law, he would be justified. But rather than justifying man, God’s Law revealed that *“all have sinned”* (Rom. 3:23a), because no one could keep the Law, for whoever *“stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all”* (James 2:12). Thus, *“by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of*

sin” (Rom. 3:20). It is through God’s Law that *“I find then the principle that evil is present in me”* (Rom. 7:21a)—for example, the Law says, *“Thou shall not covet”* (Ex. 20:17), so I know what I must do to be righteous, yet I still covet, therefore it proves I am unrighteous. The Law reveals the principle of evil in man—the ungodly sin that keeps us from being righteous and justified before God. It proved that even when man knows what God expects of him, he cannot justify himself—he cannot save himself from sin. Man is in a hopeless state.

In His grace, God sent His sinless Son, Jesus Christ, to save man. He *“was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification”* (Rom. 4:25), *“for since by a man came death, by a man [Jesus] also came the resurrection of the dead”* (1 Cor. 15:21) and eternal life. *“Now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known...This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus”* (Rom. 3:21-24 NIV).

Jesus was justified before His Father, yet He willingly suffered the death due the unjustified, so that He would have the right to save anyone from their unjustified state who accepts His substitution of Himself in their place. Through Jesus, God no more sees our naked unjustified state, but sees His Son’s justification clothing us. Jesus is the only way for man to be justified before God! Having *“been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him”* (Rom. 5:9), for *“having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”* (Rom. 5:1). *“So that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life”* (Titus 3:7). Even so, Amen.

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