

The Ordo Salutis

The Order of Salvation

Step 9- Justification

As of 02/13/22

“Justification is the main hinge on which Salvation turns.”

- John Calvin

“God does not justify us because we are worthy, but by justifying us He makes us worthy.”

- Thomas Watson

“If you do not put a difference between Justification wrought by the Man Christ without, and Sanctification wrought by the Spirit of Christ within, you are not able to divide the Word aright; but contrariwise, you corrupt the Word of God.”

- John Bunyan

“Whom God legally saves, He experimentally saves; whom He justifies, them He also sanctifies. Where the Righteousness of Christ is imputed to an individual, a Principle of Holiness is imparted to him; the former can only be ascertained by the latter. It is impossible to obtain a Scriptural knowledge that the Merits of Christ's finished Work are reckoned to my account, except by proving that the efficacy of the Holy Spirit's Work is evident in my soul.”

- A. W. Pink

“To be justified means more than to be declared ‘not guilty.’ It actually means to be declared righteous before God. It means God has imputed or charged the guilt of our sin to His Son, Jesus Christ, and has imputed or credited Christ's Righteousness to us.

- Jerry Bridges

“Saving faith is an immediate relation to Christ, accepting, receiving, resting upon Him alone, for Justification, Sanctification, and Eternal Life by virtue of God's Grace.

Those who have been justified are now being sanctified; those who have no experience of present Sanctification have no reason to suppose they have been justified.”

- F.F. Bruce

“Any church which puts in the place of ‘Justification by Faith in Christ’ another Method of Salvation is a harlot church.”

- Charles Spurgeon

The truth is that, though we were justified by faith alone, the faith that justifies is never alone (it always produces fruit, "good works,"...a transformed life).

- J.I. Packer

“True Faith will inevitably manifest itself in the performance of Works of Obedience... The performance of Works are the result of Faith and the Fruit of Justification.”

- R. C. Sproul

“Night and day I pondered until I saw the connection between the Justice of God and the statement that 'the just shall live by his faith.' Then I grasped that the Justice of God is that Righteousness by which through Grace and sheer Mercy God justifies us through Faith. Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into Paradise.”

- Martin Luther

Definition of Justification

Justification: The sovereign Act of God whereby He graciously pardons all Sin and “declares” the guilty sinner to be “Just” or “Righteous”- even though he isn’t. This Act is appropriated to the individual sinner by Belief and Trust in Jesus and in the finished Work of Jesus alone; and a “turning away” (Repentance) of the individual’s Sin; and is entirely separate from all godly Works that the individual does.

Justification is what most people are talking about when they say they were “saved” on a certain date. In actuality- they were “justified”- which is merely a *part* or a *step* of the overall Truth about “Salvation”. But what we must understand is that this Justification *always* follows *after* “Regeneration” (being born again); and *always* includes both Faith and Repentance. So, the Formula goes like this:

Regeneration *precedes* Justification

... or being born again comes *before* being forgiven and made Righteous.

Now why is this true? Because in order to be Justified (made Righteous)- an already born- again person must do two things:

1. Repent
2. Believe

... yet he can do neither one until he is given “new spiritual Life”- which is what being Regenerated or being born again gives to the elected sinner.

We must remember that a lost person CAN’T believe nor can he repent unless the Spirit of God gives him both the Power (Ability) and the Desire (Will) to do so. So, God must “grant” Repentance- or else nobody would ever turn from their Sins.

2Timothy 2:24-26

24 The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged,

25 with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth,

26 and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

And we also need for God to give us the Gift of “Saving Faith” in order that we might believe.

Ephesians 2:8&9

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that *[faith is]* not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;

9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

But why does God have to sovereignly and graciously “give” to us or “grant” to us both Faith and Repentance? Because Adam lost both of those things in the Fall- and we inherited his fallen Nature at the moment of Conception. The Step of “Regeneration” or being born again; or the receiving of new spiritual Life (Step 7) *restores* both of those necessary Qualities or Abilities to the believer.

And by individually utilizing the Gift of Saving Faith and believing; and by utilizing the Gift of Repentance and turning away from Sin- the believer enters into the 9th Step of Salvation and is forever justified! And it is in Justification where all of God’s Wrath against the individual is turned away from that individual- forever!

So, based on this definition, we can see here that Justification involves two things:

1. Forgiveness
2. Righteousness

Forgiveness

We need to have all of our Sins (that we have already committed) forgiven or we have no Hope of Eternal Life. But we also need to have all of the Sins that we are committing now; as well as those Sins we haven’t even committed yet- forgiven as well. Justification does that.

But how shall such a righteous God ever set His Affection on sinners like us, who have, repeatedly scorned His Perfections? The Wonder of the biblical Gospel is that in God’s Divine Righteousness lies also the very Foundation of our Salvation.

You see, the infinite Regard that the Father has for the Son makes it possible for me, a wicked sinner, to be loved and accepted in the Son, because in Jesus’ Death He vindicated the Worth and Glory of His Father!

So, because of Jesus and His finished Work- we can now pray with new understanding the Prayer of the Psalmist found in **Psalm 25:11:**

For Your name's sake, O Lord, Pardon my iniquity, for it is great.

This Understanding that we receive in the New Birth is that, because of Jesus and His finished Work, instead of only praying, “*For Your Name’s sake, pardon my Guilt,*” we may now pray, “*For Jesus’s Name’s sake, O God, pardon my Guilt.*”

The Apostle John wrote this in **1John 2:12:**

I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven you for His name's sake.

... referring to Jesus.

The Lord Christ has now atoned for Sin and vindicated the Father's Honor so that all our **"sins are forgiven for his name's sake."** And that includes the Sins we committed *before* we were justified; the Sins we are committing right now; and the Sins we will commit in the future.

But we always MUST maintain that God is perfectly Righteous. And that means that He does not and CANNOT merely sweep Sin under the rug. If a sinner goes free, someone has to die to vindicate the infinite Worth of God's Glory that the sinner defamed with his Sin. And that is *exactly* what Jesus did. Therefore, the Old Testament phrase, "*For Your Name's sake, O Lord*" and the New Testament Truth, "*For Jesus's Name's sake*" are the same. And that is why we pray with Confidence for Forgiveness.

Righteousness

But even though our Sins have been forgiven- we still have not become Righteous. Righteousness has to do with Obedience- NOT Forgiveness. So, in order to enter into Heaven- we also need to have Righteousness added to our own *personal accomplishments*- or we would still not be able to stand in God's Presence- **even though we have been forgiven!**

In knowing what is Right, God does not consult any Authority that is higher than Himself. God's Own Value or Worth is the ultimate Value in the Universe. Therefore, for God to do what is Right means acting in a way that accords with this ultimate Value.

The Righteousness of God is the infinite Zeal and Joy and Pleasure that He has in what is supremely valuable- namely, His Own Perfections and Worth. And if God were ever to act contrary to this eternal Passion for His Own Perfections, God would be Unrighteous- He would be an Idolater.

But Righteousness has to do with God taking us to the next Step- and giving us something; or adding something to our lives that we haven't earned, namely spotless Righteousness.

Our Need for Justification

So, the *main* Need for Justification is that we are all sinful. And *part* of what it means to be "Sinful"- is that we are also "Unrighteous". And the end Result of a person being both sinful and unrighteous- is Eternal Damnation. And that means that wicked rebels becoming Righteous- or Obedient to the Commands of God- is one of the main Goals in biblical Salvation. You see, God Himself is Righteous. And in order for us to live in the Presence of God forever- a guilty sinner MUST become "just as Righteous as God Himself". So, not only do we need to be forgiven- we also need to be "made Righteous". And this is why the modern church's mantra of "*Accept Jesus into your heart*" is so misleading and destructive. It completely leaves out both Repentance and Righteousness (Obedience).

But how do guilty, wicked, and evil people become Righteous? Well, the Law of God promises Righteousness to everyone who obeys it. But the kicker is that people have to obey God's Law- *perfectly* and *continuously*. Okay, so, why don't we all just obey the Law perfectly and continuously and thereby become Righteous?

First of all, the Bible teaches that there is absolutely nothing wrong with God's Law.

Romans 7:12

So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good

So, why don't we all just obey the Law and become Righteous? Because we CAN'T. The problem with the Law is not that there is anything wrong with the Law itself. But the Problem with the Law of God- is us! As human beings, we simply CAN'T keep all of God's Law- perfectly and continuously. So, the Failure is NOT due to a lack of Desire to be perfectly Holy. The Failure is due to the Weakness of our Flesh. So, obeying God's Law- perfectly and continuously- is not hard or difficult. No, complete and ongoing Obedience to God's Law is *impossible!*

But doesn't God realize that we simply *can't* obey His Law- perfectly? Yes, He does. And will He not then give us credit if we are, at least, *trying* to "do Good"? No, He won't. If we fail to keep ALL of God's Laws- perfectly and continuously- we remain nothing but guilty sinners. And guilty sinners *deserve* nothing but Eternal Damnation. The half- brother of Jesus wrote in his Epistle this in **James 2:10:**

For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.

This puts us in the worst of all possible positions. The very thing we are *commanded* to be- is the very thing we *cannot* accomplish. We are *commanded* to be "just as Righteous as God Himself" yet it is *impossible* for any human to obey God's Law- perfectly and continuously. But the frightening aspect of this is that God has promised horrific Punishment to those who are not Righteous- not merely Unforgiven.

The Punishment Must Fit the Crime

Here is an example of how serious our situation really is. Suppose that a person is keeping all of God's Law- perfectly and continuously (which no one can do) and yet- for just five seconds- he has a covetous Thought. Now keep in mind- this fictitious person didn't actually "do" anything. He simply had a sinful thought. For God to cast this person into the flames of hell seems to be a gross *over-reaction* on God's part. Doesn't God give him credit for at least *trying* to be Righteous?

No, and here's why. Remember how God has set Salvation up:

Ephesians 2:8&9

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that *[faith is]* not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;

9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

God has established Salvation- in such a way- that no human can earn it or deserve it or be entitled to it- based on ANYTHING he does for himself. Salvation is wholly "BY" the Grace of God; and it is appropriated to each person wholly "THROUGH" the Gift of "Saving Faith". And then Paul went on to say that the Faith that Salvation is "THROUGH" is NOT inherent in the individual. From where does this Faith come? Paul said,

... it is the gift of God

And just in case people, who would read Paul's Epistle later on might not understand this completely- he went on to say that this Salvation was:

... not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

And the way this was written originally in the Greek- we can say that Paul meant that Salvation was not the result of ANY humanly engineered Works. None. Not even Good, religious Works (like partaking of the Sacraments).

So, Salvation is entirely “BY” the Grace of God- ALONE and it is appropriated to each individual “THROUGH” the gift of Saving Faith- ALONE.

No why did God set it up this way? Why exclude ALL human effort- even very sincere effort to earn Salvation? The next phrase tells us:

... so that no one may boast.

Now *why* is this an Issue with God? *Why* does God go to great lengths to eliminate ALL humanly engineered Works to earn Salvation? Doesn't the Bible COMMAND us to do good Works? Yes, it does. In fact, the very next verse does just that. There, Paul wrote:

Ephesians 2:10

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

Here, the Apostle was “moved” by God the Holy Spirit to say that we were created in Jesus- FOR GOOD WORKS. So, verse 9 *condemns* ALL Good Works and verse 10 *commands* them. So, how do we solve this Mystery?

Verse 9 is talking about how sinners are saved in the first place; while verse 10 is talking about what saved people should be doing *after* they have already been saved. But why is it so wrong to try to do enough Good Works to earn Salvation? Isn't God pleased with us doing Good Works? Yes, but only AFTER we have already been saved. *Why?* Because us trying to earn Salvation by what we do for ourselves- engenders our boasting- which robs God of the Glory only He is entitled to.

If we do something- *anything*- that causes us to earn Salvation- then, by rights, we are *entitled* to that much of the Glory. So, if God did 99% and we only did 1%- then we are entitled to 1% of the Glory. And if we are entitled to that much of the Glory- we have earned the right to boast about it! And if we are entitled to 1% of the Glory of Salvation- then God would be a thief to want the Glory that we were entitled to receive.

We must understand that God does NOT get the Glory merely because we *choose* to give it to Him. God is not glorified because we simply say, “*I give You all the Glory!*” No, God gets the Glory because God did the Work and is *entitled* to that Glory. All we are- is a *recipient* of the Grace and the Gift of Faith that God chose to bless us with. We neither worked for it nor did we earn it. And since God did ALL the Work- He is entitled to ALL the Glory. And our boasting is an attempt that we make to rob God of the Glory only He is entitled to- and is Sin. Any effort by anyone- for any reason- to boast in anything we supposedly did to earn Salvation is blatant Rebellion and celestial High Treason.

God loves to be glorified by His Creation and that isn't some mental defect on God's part. It is correct and proper that the Deity Who did all the Work should receive all the Glory. And so, God does not take it too kindly when a creature of the dust tries to usurp Authority over

Him and steal some of the Glory. So, all who are saved are saved the same way: By Grace and Through Faith- to the sole Glory of the Lord Christ.

But not only does that kind of blatant Rebellion wage war against God- ALL of our Sins do the same thing. Sin draws attention to itself and says, *“I am more glorious and important than God. I bring more Joy and more satisfaction to people than God. I am wiser and more beautiful than God. And that is why humans chose to engage in me and embrace me!”*

So, in our fictitious example of the man, who somehow did obey all of God’s Law and yet slipped up just once- and had a covetous thought for five seconds. What about him? Well, he embraced a Sin that dishonored God. He engaged in a Sin that usurped Authority over God. He enjoyed a Sin that robbed God of the Glory that only God is entitled to. So, what is the Punishment? How should God respond to someone who stole His Glory? How should God respond to a Sin that robbed God of His rightful Place? How should God respond to someone, who delighted in God being diminished or ignored?

There is only one correct Response: Eternal Damnation. Because if God did not damn that attempt at pushing God off His Throne- He would be agreeing with us- that He really isn’t that big of a deal. By letting this Sin “go” and not damning it- God would be agreeing with satan that God and His Glory is really NOT the ultimate Delight of the Universe!

And yet, unless this person is saved at some point down the road- he will scream in the flames of Hell Fire throughout all of Eternity. And curious minds would ask, *“Why?”*. Why does God’s Punishment for Sin seem so harsh? And why is God so angry about Sin?

Now keep in mind that the reason people think this way is NOT because God is mean or cruel or that He over-reacts. They think this way because they either do not know what the Bible teaches about Sin and the Glory of God; or they don’t believe it.

And this lack of understanding of how radical and “total” the Fall of Man really was- is truly the embarrassment of our Age. After the Church has been on the earth now for 2,000 years- Statements are made all the time- by the people of the Church, concerning Salvation- that shows an *amazing* lack of Understanding of what all happened when Adam fell.¹

God Loves Himself and His Glory

One glaring lack that exists in far too many churches in our time is the Truth that God loves God- *perfectly; continuously; and totally*. And the Bible goes on to teach that there is nothing that God loves more than Himself. Now that would be weird and maybe even sinful- if we were talking about Man. If Man loved himself as much as or even to the same degree that He loved God- that person would be in Idolatry. But we aren’t talking about Man. We are talking about God- Who alone is the single most important, valuable, glorious, and lovable Being in the Universe. So, it is Correct; it is Right for us to love God the way God moved on Moses to say in **Deuteronomy 6:4-9:**

4 "Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one!

5 "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

6 "These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart.

¹ There are many Resources available on the Church website that will bring Understanding to the worthy seeker about this subject.

7 "You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.

8 "You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead.

9 "You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

... yet because of our fallen flesh- all we can offer God is shallow and temporary love that rises to the surface on occasion and by times.

So, the bottom line is that no human obeys God perfectly and continuously- meaning no human loves God with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength. And therefore, no human is Righteous. So, another way we could say this is to say that the lack of Love for God is the same thing as being Unrighteous.

So, what will cause us to Obey God and become Righteous- is to love God like this. And fallen, lost human beings simply do NOT have the capacity to love God like this. The Apostle John understood this when he said this in **1John 4:19**:

We love [God and other believers], because He first loved us.

John says here that the reason we, who are saved love God and each other- is because God has FIRST loved us. So, the Cause or the Catalyst; or the Origination of our Love for God- is God's Love for us. So, we might say,

Our Love for God- is a Gift from God

We don't rub the two sticks of our willpower and our human strength together to produce this kind of Love. No, we merely respond to God's Love (that He showers on us first) by loving God.

And this creates another Truth in our minds and hearts. Because our biggest lack as lost sinners- is that we don't love God. In fact, we CAN'T love God as lost sinners. Yet lost people DO love. In **John 3:19**, Jesus said this to Nicodemus,

This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.

Notice that Jesus didn't say that lost people "Do" the Darkness- but that they "Love" the Darkness. And they love the Darkness RATHER THAN- or in the place of- the Light- Who is Jesus.

So, let me try to tie all this together. It is fine to say, "*God saved me because He loves me.*" And that is a true Statement. God DOES love us- and we should rejoice in that every day. But that Statement is horribly incomplete. And if we are not careful- that Statement gives us the wrong idea- that, somehow, Man is at the Center of all that God does. So, when we complete the Statement- it clarifies the correct idea:

God saved me because He loves me- so that by saving me- I will love Him

... which means that Salvation is the vehicle that allows a sinner to love God and to see Jesus as the Treasure of the Universe. In other words, Salvation gives us the privilege of loving God and

giving Him the Glory for all things. And this is what Jesus had in mind when He taught us how to pray. We are to ask God,

Hallowed be Your Name...

In other words, *“Please Lord, help me to hallow Your Name; help me to reverence You; and fear You; and strive to Obey You; and love You; and to see You as being more important than my own life. And help me to seek to glorify You in all things- regardless of what that might do to me.”*

... so, that means that Salvation is the *restoring* of our Love for God (that we lost in the Fall); and the giving of the Power and Desire to glorify God in all things.

But Sin stops that from happening. And the Apostle Paul understood this and so, he wrote this in **Romans 3:9-18**

⁹ What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin;

¹⁰ as it is written,

“THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE;

¹¹ THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS,

THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD;

¹² ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS;

THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD,

THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE.”

¹³ “THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE,

WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING,”

“THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS”;

¹⁴ “WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS”;

¹⁵ “THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD,

¹⁶ DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS,

¹⁷ AND THE PATH OF PEACE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN.”

¹⁸ “THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES.”

So, the net result is that all of Humanity are sinful and headed for certain Damnation- unless God graciously and mercifully does something for them that they *cannot* do for themselves. And God did that in, by, and through Jesus, the Christ in, by, and through His sinless Life; His vicarious (substitutionary) Death; and in His bodily Resurrection.

The Glory of God

But because of very shallow Teaching, there is great Confusion about several Attributes of God such as:

- The *Holiness* of God
- The *Glory* of God

... so, let's end that Confusion.

What is the “Holiness” of God?

The Holiness of God is God's “otherness”. So, when we say that God is “Holy” we are saying that God is *unique; set apart; and different* from all that He has made. So, to say, “*God is Holy*” is to say that He is a “*one-of-a-kind*” Being. About 600 years before Jesus was born, God the Holy Spirit “moved” on the Prophet to say this in **Isaiah 46:9-11**:

**For I am God, and there is no other;
I am God, and there is no one like Me,
¹⁰ Declaring the end from the beginning,
And from ancient times things which have not been done,
Saying, ‘My purpose will be established,
And I will accomplish all My good pleasure’;
¹¹ Calling a bird of prey from the east,
The man of My purpose from a far country.
Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass.
I have planned *it*, *surely* I will do it.**

Here Isaiah saw God's *Holiness*. So, when you combine all of God's Attributes and Characteristics together- (Omniscience; Immutability; Sovereignty, etc.) you have God's *Holiness*. So, *Holiness* is the *summation* or the *totality* of all that God is. And that means that it is God's *Holiness* that makes God to be God.

But as we understand God to be *different* from everything that He made- it is also important for us to know that God is *better than* what has been made. So, God's uniqueness makes God to be *superior to* or *better than* all of Creation. And that is why we worship God. God's unique and “one-of-a-kind” Nature makes God to be *worthy; entitled; and deserving* of our Worship. And that also means that it is a Sin NOT to worship this Holy God.

What is the “Glory” of God?

But God's *Glory* is much different from His *Holiness*. One way to define God's *Glory* would be to say that it is the Radiance; or the Value; or the Beauty; or the Importance of each one of God's Attributes- when they are seen; displayed; or revealed to us. For example, when God created Salvation- **Ephesians 1:5&6a** tells us why:

In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace...

Here Paul teaches that God's Grace has a Glory to it. And Paul goes on to teach that God created Salvation so that the Glory of God's Grace or the Importance or the Value of God's Grace would be exalted and magnified. And that means that this is the main Reason why God created Salvation in the first place.

There are three main phrases that describes God's Glory in the Bible:

1. For My Glory!
2. For My Name's Sake
3. So, they will know there is no one like Me

... which are basically saying the same thing. The Purpose for which that thing was done was "For the Glory of God". For example, in **Isaiah 43:6&7**, God Himself said,

**6 "I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' And to the south, 'Do not hold them back.' Bring My sons from afar And My daughters from the ends of the earth,
7 Everyone who is called by My name, And whom I have created for My glory, Whom I have formed, even whom I have made."**

... so, those who have been called by God to Salvation have been created, "*For God's Glory*". So, the only reason those people exist; the only reason they breathe air; the only reason their hearts beat- is so they may live their lives to the Glory of God.

Or we could look at **1John 2:12**, that says:

I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven you for His name's sake.

... and we see that the primary reason that our Sins are forgiven is NOT because we asked God to forgive us (even though we are told to do that); and it is NOT because we NEED our Sins to be forgiven (even though we do). But our Sins are forgiven primarily because it exalts the great "Name" of Jesus.

What's in a Name?

Biblically speaking, our "Name" is who we are. It is our Reputation. Our "Name" is the sum total of all of our Qualities; and all of our Actions; and all of our Desires wrapped up in a single word. So, for John to say here that our Sins have been forgiven "*for the Sake of Jesus' Name*"- we are saying that ALL that Jesus is- is displayed and glorified when He forgives wicked sinners (based on what He alone does for them).

Or we could look at **Ezekiel 12:15** that says:

So, they will know that I am the Lord when I scatter them among the nations and spread them among the countries.

... which is the same thing as God saying He would do that thing "*for His Glory*" or "*For the Sake of His Name*".

To suggest that the main Reason God created Salvation was so that sinful humans would be able to go to Heaven- makes Man to be the center of why God does what He does. And the Bible teaches that isn't true. For example, look how God spoke to the Prophet in **Ezekiel 36:22-28**:

22 "Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord God, "It is not for your sake,

O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went.

23 "I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord," declares the Lord God, "when I prove Myself holy among you in their sight.

24 "For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land.

25 "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.

26 "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

27 "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

28 "You will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God.

Notice that God begins in verse 28 by telling the Prophet that it was NOT for their sake that He is about to act. So, what did God say was the Reason He was going to act?

... but for My holy name ...

Again, the word, “Name” as used like this has to do with God’s Holiness; or His Character; or His Nature; or His Reputation. Now look at verse 29 again:

I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Lord God, when I prove Myself holy among you in their sight.

God said here that His Name; or His Holiness had been “profaned”; or “discredited” or “shamed”; or “belittled” to the pagan world. How? By the people of God that He had chosen **“above all the people of the world” (Psalm 99:2)**- for them to “go a whoring after other gods”; and for them to blatantly *disobey* His Commandments. So, as the unsaved pagan world looked on- as the only people God had chosen disregarded God’s Holiness and willfully and blatantly disobeyed God’s Will and Word- they thought to themselves, *“Wow! Even God’s Own people don’t think enough of God to obey Him! And, if the only people God has chosen willfully dishonor Him- why should I obey Him? There must not be very much to this God!”*

So, in **Ephesians 1:6**- the Apostle said that the praising of the Glory of God’s Grace would occur *after* that Glory has been displayed or revealed (through the saving of unworthy sinners); and after this Glory has been seen by the world (through the transformed life of that saved individual) and appreciated.

All that existed before Creation was God

Now keep in mind that before He created the Universe- all that existed was God- in His three Persons of God the Father; God the Son; and God the Holy Spirit. And when nothing else

existed except God- there was perfect Harmony; perfect Love; perfect Wisdom; perfect Power and perfect Beauty- radiating between the three Persons of the Trinity- in absolute Perfection.

And God the Father looked at His Own Perfections being radiated back to Him in the Face of His Son- and He loved what He saw. And now that Jesus has come and died and risen again and ascended to the Right Hand of the Majesty on High- the “Glory of God” is the “going public” of God’s infinite Worth or Value- “in the Name of” or “for the Benefit of”- Jesus. So, Glory exists when some or all of God’s Holiness is demonstrated or displayed. Another way of understanding this is to say that the Holiness of God is the infinite Value of God or the infinite intrinsic Worth of God while the Glory of God- is that Value- when it is seen and adored.

So, for example, King David was “moved” by God the Holy Spirit to write in **Psalm 19:1** that when that Worth or Value of God (His Holiness) goes public in Creation...

the heavens are telling the glory of God

So, as the Majesty and Beauty of at least two parts of God’s Holiness (His Power and Wisdom) are displayed or revealed throughout the Heavens- what do the Heaven “tell”? NOT those parts of God’s Holiness. No, the Bible says they “tell” of God’s Glory!

Another example is us. As saved human beings, we are manifesting God’s Glory, because we were created in His Image. And as Christians, we are trusting in His Promises. And by doing that- we make Jesus look gloriously Trustworthy.

Another way of understanding God’s Glory is to say that it is the public Display of the infinite Beauty and Worth of God Himself. And that Truth comes from **Isaiah 6**, where the seraphim cry out,

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty. The whole earth is full of His ..."

... and you would expect them to say "*Holiness*" here. But instead, they say, "*Glory*." Why? Because when God’s Holiness goes public in the earth and fills it; and when people (or angels) see that portion of God’s Character or Nature- you call that Holiness, "*Glory*."

And that means God’s Glory is the visible *radiance* of His Holiness; or the visible radiance of God’s Own manifold, infinitely worthy and valuable Perfections that are displayed and seen and praised.

So, before God created the Universe; and nothing existed except God- almost all of God’s Attributes were being *continually* shown or displayed among the three Persons of the Godhead. And so, there was a *continual* display of God’s Glory (something we have never seen). Because, in order to have that “Glory”- one or more parts of the Attributes of God’s Own Character and Nature (God’s Holiness)- MUST be demonstrated or displayed or seen.

But there was a phenomenon that occurred when nothing existed except God: There were at least two Attributes of God; two different parts of God’s Holiness that He could NOT display:

1. The Glory of God’s *Grace*
2. The Glory of God’s *Justice*

These two parts of God’s Holiness were NOT displayed when all that existed was

God. Why? Because God the Father; God the Son; and God the Holy Spirit do not need Grace or Justice. Remember, God is perfectly sinless- so He has no Need for Grace to forgive Him of any Sin. And God will certainly NOT be damned- so God has no need for Justice to be displayed. We need to remember that Grace is displayed ONLY on guilty sinners, who have been chosen for Salvation. And Justice is shown ONLY on guilty sinners who refuse to repent and find the fullness of their own Joy in God.

And that means that for either God's Grace or Justice to be displayed or shown or revealed (and seen and then praised)- required that there MUST be wicked sinners on whom those Attributes can be displayed on. And *that* is why God created the Universe.

So, rather than think that Man is some insignificant "side issue" in the vast Universe- we need to think that the Universe exists to house the planets and stars and suns- so that our Solar System can exist- in great Order and great Detail- without chaos. And our Solar System exists so that earth can contain oxygen and water and have gravity and heat and light in just the right amounts to sustain Life. And earth exists so that human beings- made in the Image of God can live. And human beings exist- so that either God's Grace or His Justice can be displayed on them. Remember what Jesus said in **Luke 15:7**:

I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

Now the context of this verse, of course, is that Jesus is condemning the self-righteous Pharisees (represented by the "99 righteous ones") and saying that one broken and humble person, who genuinely repents and is saved- brings God more Glory than 99 people, who sit smugly in their own Man-made righteousness. That is the context of this verse.

But the Question still remains, "*Why does all Heaven rejoice at the saving of a soul?*" And most people would answer: "*Well, because the sinner, who was lost is now found. And he is so loved by God- that all Heaven rejoices at his Conversion.*" Now there is no doubt that God does indeed love us. And we should praise God for His amazing Love that He demonstrates multiple times every day. But is God's Love for lost sinners the main Reason why Heaven rejoices?

I would suggest to you that there is a higher Love that eclipses the Love that God has for us. And what causes Heaven to rejoice- is those who dwell in Heaven have seen a portion of God's Holiness (in this case, God's Grace) displayed on a unworthy sinner. And that public display of a portion of God's Holiness- is God's Glory. And as those in Heaven see the Glory of God's Grace- they rejoice and praise God. And this was taught by the Apostle Paul in **Ephesians 1:5&6a** that says,

He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace ...

So, what causes the Rejoicing in Heaven is NOT primarily that we are saved- but that God Himself has shown or displayed a portion of His Own splendid Holiness. And that portion of God's Holiness has been seen and valued- which makes it God's Glory. And that is why the seraphim cry out continually,

Isaiah 6:3

Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory.

So, the Glory of God's Grace is displayed and seen and praised as unworthy sinners are saved (by what God alone does for them) and as they live godly lives. And most people would agree that saving lost souls does, in fact, glorify God. But where many of them "miss the mark" is in understanding WHY God is glorified through their Salvation.

How is God Glorified through the Damnation of People?

But if the Seraphim praise God 24/7 "for His Glory" and if all Heaven rejoices to praise the Glory of God's Grace when it is displayed on wicked rebels in Salvation- then the opposite must also be true.

If there is MUCH praise and MUCH celebration when God's Glory is seen- then when God's Glory is rejected or insulted or diminished- then there MUST be MUCH Anger and MUCH Vengeance on God's part. You simply can't have it only one way. If seeing and beholding the Glory of God- results in Celebration and Salvation- then ignoring or belittling of that same Glory results in Anger and Damnation.

Now we have seen that the *main* Reason God created Salvation was NOT simply so that lost people could be saved- but so that He would demonstrate the Attribute of His Grace (by saving wicked rebels). And as the whole world would see the Beauty and Worth and Importance or the Glory of the Attribute of Grace being demonstrated on that person- they would then praise God for that Attribute!

This is what separates God from all that He made. And the thing that demonstrates or shows God's Holiness the *best*- is the Glory of God that is manifested through Jesus Christ. And the Apostle Paul agreed with this when he wrote this in **2Corinthians 4:1-6**:

**1 Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart,
2 but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.
3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,
4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.
5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake.
6 For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.**

And so, God loves the Glory of God better than anything else- because His Glory is His Holiness displayed and seen and praised. So, it is for the sake of His Own Glory that God does all that He does. The Glory of God is what brings to God the Worship and Admiration and the Delight and the Fear that He is entitled to have. And that means that nothing is more important to God- than that He alone is glorified. So, the Glory of God is THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO GOD! Nothing else comes close. God does all that He does- For My Glory!

But Sin robs God of the Worship and Admiration and Delight and Fear that He should get from us- His creatures. But how does Sin do all that? Sin *belittles* God's Glory. Sin *insults* God and His Glory. Sin makes God's Glory (the thing that God is MOST concerned about) look *less* than it really is.

For example, when a person voluntarily chooses to sin against God- he is testifying that the Sin he is about to engage in is more Important and more Valuable to him than God and His Glory. That person is saying loudly that Sin makes him happier than God- even though God is the Fountain of living Waters. And nothing infuriates God more than when His Holiness or His Glory (Holiness that is seen) is marginalized; belittled; rejected; or made to look less than it really is. And that is why the Apostle said this in **Romans 3:12:**

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

Now this is not in the Bible so we could memorize it; and quote it; and make a bumper sticker out of it- but then NOT know what it actually means. Look closely at it. Why did the Apostle say that Sin makes us fall short of the "*Glory*" of God? Why didn't he say the "Righteousness" of God; or the "Purity" of God; or the "Holiness" of God? Why did he say, "Glory" here? And what does the phrase, "fall short" actually mean?

First, to "fall short" of something is NOT to reach for a high Goal but then come just slightly lower than the Goal. No, it means: *to trample something under foot with disgust*. Well, what does Sin do to the Glory of God? It tramples God's Glory under foot with disgust. Now keep in mind that this is not talking about things like Murder or Child Molestation. This is talking about Sin- ALL Sin- EVERY Sin.

So, every single Sin takes the Glory of God; and it tramples it under foot- with disgust! Now if the Glory of God is THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO GOD- then what should be God's Response to that affront? Should God just ignore it? Should God tolerate that Insult?

No, if God doesn't adjudicate the Insult to His Glory- with an appropriate Response- then He would be agreeing with the sinner- that His Glory is not worth defending. 88

Sin is bad and wrong- not *primarily* because it negatively affects us- (even though it does). Sin is bad and wrong *primarily*- because Sin insults and degrades and belittles and offends God and His Glory- which are the things that God values the most. And once God and His Glory have been offended or belittled- that Offense MUST be adjudicated.

You see, Sin cannot merely be swept under the rug. It has to be "paid for". And the Punishment for Sin- *any* Sin- is Death. But not just any Death- rather *Eternal* Death- which is everlasting Damnation!

So, because we have sinned *willingly* and continuously all our lives- God is white hot in His Anger toward us. And unless we find a Substitute who will die in our place- we will spend all of Eternity in a devil's hell.

Hebrews 10:28-31

28 Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.

29 How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?

30 For we know Him who said, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY." And again, "THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE."

31 It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Jude 5-7

5 Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe.

6 And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day,

7 just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.

The Damnation of wicked rebels, who refuse to repent; and who take pleasure in their wickedness glorifies God- NOT because God is happy about damning them. Nobody should be happy about those who burn in Hell. Hell should terrify us and we should never want anyone to go to Hell. But the Damnation of unrepentant sinners glorifies God because His Justice has vindicated the great insult that has been committed against His holy Character and Nature (our Sin).

In What Sense Are We Righteous?

Justification makes the guilty sinner Righteous in the eyes of God. So, God declares wicked rebels to be "perfectly Righteous" so they may enter into Heaven. But we have to realize that the Righteousness that allow us entrance into God's Presence- is NOT our own intrinsic, personal Righteousness. It is a "legal" Righteousness; a "forensic" Righteousness; a "foreign" Righteousness; or an "alien" Righteousness that has been *imputed* to us- through the Agency of Faith alone.

Now over the last 50 years or so, the visible church has done a real good job of teaching and preaching about Grace; and the Cross; and Jesus. But this emphasis has caused many to be ignorant of or even devalue what happened between the Birth of Jesus and His Crucifixion.

We need to remember that it is NOT as though Jesus Christ was born on Friday morning; was crucified on Friday afternoon; rose from the dead on Sunday morning; and then ascended into Heaven. No, Jesus lived on earth for 33-1/2 years. And the Question is: *"If all that matters is the Death and Resurrection of Jesus- why did Jesus live on earth for over 3 decades before He was Crucified?"*

And the Answer, of course, is that Jesus' Life was important too. Look what the writer says about this from **Hebrews 4:15**:

For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.

Why was it important that Jesus be tempted in all things as we are- yet remain perfectly sinless? And what was the Reason He lived over 30 years before He was crucified? The Lord was accomplishing at least four things:

1. Proving Who He Was
2. Giving Perfect Teaching
3. Fulfilling Old Testament Prophecies
4. Fulfilling the Law

1. Proving Who He Was

All of the Miracles; the Signs and Wonders; the physical Healings; the casting out of demons; and His Authority over the earth and all that is in it that Jesus performed in public; and in view of tens of thousands of witnesses; was to prove beyond any doubt that He was God incarnate; Immanuel; the Son of God; the Son of David; the Son of Man; and the true Messiah.

2. Giving Perfect Teaching

What Jesus taught to the people was perfect in every aspect. This tells us that Jesus was *always* in accord with Scripture- because He had written Scripture! At different points during His Ministry- Jesus said:

John 14:10

Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works.

John 6:63

It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

John 17:7-8

**7 "Now they have come to know that everything You have given Me is from You;
8 for the words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received them and truly understood that I came forth from You, and they believed that You sent Me.**

3. Fulfilling Old Testament Prophecies

All throughout the Gospel Records, the writer would say something like, "This was done to fulfill what (fill in the Prophet's name here) said"... and then the writer would get the Old Testament Passage and include it in with what he was writing. And the point here is that Jesus- in His Person and by what He said or did- fulfilled what an Old Testament Prophet said that the Messiah or even God Himself would do.

And this was done to give the reader confidence that Jesus is the Messiah and He is God Almighty in human flesh.

4. Fulfilling the Law

Now as far as this Study goes- this Accomplishment is the key one. And it brings forth a Question: "*Why was it important in regards our Salvation- for Jesus to fulfill the Law?*"

And to answer this Question- we must first understand what the Law was and why fulfilling it was so important. So, what exactly was the "Law". When the Bible speaks about the "Law" what is it referring to?

The “Law” is the “Law of Moses”. And the Law of Moses is found in the 1st five Books of the Bible. And these Books, collectively, are called, the “Torah”, which in Hebrew means: *Instruction; Teaching; or Law*. And before the New Testament Epistles were given and written down- the Torah was the “Teaching Books of the Bible”.

However, after they were given and received and written down- the 21 New Testament Epistles became the “Teaching Books” (*didactic*) of the Bible- because they were based on *infinitely* superior Promises; brought about through an *infinitely* superior Sacrifice; that stood on an *infinitely* superior Covenant.

But the Promise contained in the Law was that whoever obeyed the Words of the Law *without any fault*- would *earn* his own Righteousness; or “become” Righteous; or be in “right standing” with God. In other words, whoever obeyed God- in ALL that God had revealed in the Old Testament Scriptures- would develop his own, personal, intrinsic “Righteousness”; and thereby earn Favor with God. So, it was this “earned Righteousness” that *guaranteed* God’s Favor. In other words, perfect Obedience to the Law *guaranteed* a Relationship with God- that was based in Righteousness. So, in the dominant Old Testament mindset- perfect Obedience to the Law equaled Salvation. So, the Formula looked like this:

Perfect Obedience = perfect Righteousness and perfect Righteousness = Salvation

Now there are several things wrong with this Formula. The most glaring is the fact that no human can actually obey the Law- without fault. And the proof of this is in the fact that no one in the Old Testament actually accomplished this lofty Goal. No one. Moses himself, to whom God gave the Law- didn’t fulfill it either.

So, the problem with the Law is NOT found in the Law itself. No, the Apostle Paul said this about the Law in **Romans 7:12**:

So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

The problem with the Law was best illustrated by the Apostle Paul in **Romans 8:3&4**:

3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,

4 so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

When Paul wrote, “... **what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh ...**” he was illustrating that the Righteousness promised by the Law- *assumed* perfect Obedience to the Law- a feat that no mere human, who lives after the Fall, can accomplish. That’s what made the holy, righteous, and good Law of God to be “weak”. It was weak ONLY in the sense that the Righteousness earned from the Law *required* people to obey the Law- *flawlessly*. And their fallen flesh simply would not allow for that.

But the problem went further than people merely failing to live up to the perfect Standard of Righteousness established by the Law. The failure to obey the Law perfectly actually *condemned* the individual- precisely because he didn’t (couldn’t) keep all of its tenets- without fault. And that means that, because the Righteousness that the Law promised was never actually

realized (because the individual could not keep the Law without fault)- ALL that the Law actually did- was prove how sinful the individual was and how deserving of God's Wrath he was. The net effect was that the Law offered NO Hope to anyone striving to earn Righteousness through his Obedience to it and it left them doomed.

So, what do we do? How is this Problem fixed? The Answer was NOT to go get another Law- but to possess a different Righteousness- a Righteousness that was NOT based on the individual arriving at perfect Obedience- but a Righteousness based on the individual putting all their Hope and Trust in Someone, Who DID obey the Law perfectly. And that Someone- was Jesus. Paul went on to say,

For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did...

Here Paul teaches that what the Law could NOT accomplish (because it was dependent on human behavior)- God sovereignly DID accomplish. How?

sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh

So, God took on human flesh (Incarnation) and lived on this earth for 33-1/2 years. And during His Life on earth- Jesus NEVER sinned! He was *perfectly* submissive to God the Father; *perfectly* led by God the Holy Spirit as He *perfectly* obeyed every tenant of the Law (in thought, word, and deed)- with perfect Joy! And in doing that- Jesus earned the Righteousness that the Law promised to those who obeyed.

So, it is true to say that Jesus was saved by Works! His Own perfect Works of faultless Obedience. Okay, but to what end?

so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Now the "requirement of the Law" that Paul speaks of here- is that perfect Obedience to all that God commanded in the Law of Moses. But notice that Paul said that this perfect Obedience, "**might be fulfilled in us**". But how is the Requirement to perfectly obey God's Law fulfilled in us? We have already said that no mere human is able to obey God's Law perfectly. So, how is the Requirement of perfect Obedience fulfilled in us? Paul said, "**who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.**" Now this is merely another way of speaking about putting all of our Hope and Trust (Faith) in Jesus *personally* and in His finished Work.

And as we do that- God takes the spotless Righteousness of Jesus (that He earned by obeying God's Law perfectly) and God "imputes" or "credits" that Righteousness to us! So, as we trust in Jesus- God makes us to be Righteous! This is what Justification is all about- God declaring us to be perfectly Righteous- which makes us "fit" to go to Heaven. And this is a "Righteousness" that Scripture calls, the "Righteousness of Faith".

Romans 3:24-28

24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;

25 whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed;

26 for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

27 Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith.

28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.

Romans 4:1-16

1 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found?

2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.

3 For what does the Scripture say? **"ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS."**

4 Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due.

5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness,

6 just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

7 **"BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN, AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED.**

8 **"BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN THE LORD WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT."**

9 Is this blessing then on the circumcised, or on the uncircumcised also? For we say, **"FAITH WAS CREDITED TO ABRAHAM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS."**

10 How then was it credited? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised;

11 and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them,

12 and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised.

13 For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith.

14 For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified;

15 for the Law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, there also is no violation.

16 For this reason it is by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,

And this tells us that there are at least 3 different kinds of "Righteousness" that the Bible speaks about:

1. The Righteousness of Jesus Christ

2. *Righteousness earned through perfect Obedience*
3. *Righteousness imputed by Faith alone*

Now in the case of Jesus- No.'s 1&2 are the SAME. The Righteousness of Jesus IS the Righteousness that Jesus earned by perfectly obeying the Law of God. But as it pertains to humans born after the Fall- No. 2 is a Myth. We CANNOT earn Righteousness through our perfect Obedience- precisely because we cannot offer perfect Obedience. Our Obedience is, at best, haphazard and filled with flaws and can NEVER be perfect.

So, this means that the entire effort by the Pharisees and by ALL those today, who seek to earn Righteousness through their Obedience to God- is actually fighting AGAINST the Grace of God and is the enemy of the Gospel! Why is that? Because God has forbidden all boasting in what we have done for ourselves in trying to make ourselves acceptable to God. And this is what Paul meant when he said,

Romans 3:27&28

27 Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith.

28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.

So, for genuine believers (those who have already experienced the Miracle of the New Birth)- there remains only No. 3: the Righteousness of Jesus Christ that is imputed to us.

Justification by Faith ALONE

So far, we have established eight Truths:

1. Justification involves two parts: Forgiveness and Righteousness
2. The end Goal of Salvation is Righteousness
3. We MUST be just as Righteous as God in order to go to Heaven
4. The path to Righteousness flows through Obedience to God's Law
5. Our Obedience MUST be without fault
6. Human beings born after the Fall CANNOT obey God's Law without fault.
7. Jesus earned His Own spotless Righteousness by living in perfect Obedience (sinless)
8. If we are to become Righteous- God must graciously impute the spotless Righteousness of Jesus to us

But now we must answer several more Questions:

- HOW is the Righteousness of Jesus "imputed" or "credited" to us?
- Do we earn this Righteousness over time as we strive to obey?
- Does God credit Righteousness to us through our participation of the Sacraments?
- Is this Righteousness ours?
- Does it belong to us?

The Bible teaches that God imputes this Righteousness to us through the Agency of Faith alone.

Romans 3:28

For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.

Romans 4:1-16

1 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found?

2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.

3 For what does the Scripture say? "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS."

4 Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due.

5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness,

6 just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

7 "BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN, AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED.

8 "BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN THE LORD WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT."

9 Is this blessing then on the circumcised, or on the uncircumcised also? For we say, "FAITH WAS CREDITED TO ABRAHAM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS."

10 How then was it credited? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised;

11 and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them,

12 and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised.

13 For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith.

14 For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified;

15 for the Law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, there also is no violation.

16 For this reason it is by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,

As we experience the Miracle of the New Birth- God gives us the "Gift of Saving Faith"- which is illustrated by the soft heart that is able and willing to believe.

Ezekiel 36:24-27

24 "For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land.

25 "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.

26 "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

27 "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

Jeremiah 31:31-34

31 "Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,

32 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the Lord.

33 "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the Lord, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

34 "They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the Lord, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

So, as the New Birth allows us to see ourselves as God sees us- we begin to hate the sinner we are. We then “deny” that there is anything Good in us; and we mourn and weep and grieve over the realization that we have offended God with our wickedness. This godly Sorrow leads us to true Repentance.

2Corinthians 7:8-11

8 For though I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it — for I see that that letter caused you sorrow, though only for a while —

9 I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us.

10 For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death.

11 For behold what earnestness this very thing, this godly sorrow, has produced in you: what vindication of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what avenging of wrong! In everything you demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in the matter.

And as we respond to the new spiritual Life that God has given us in the New Birth- we repent. And we then look to Jesus to be for us- what we CANNOT be for ourselves- Righteousness.

Jeremiah 23:6

In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell securely; And this is His name by which He will be called, 'The Lord our righteousness.'

So, we trust and hope and believe in Jesus personally; and in His finished Work. And so, by Faith alone- we are imputed/credited with the very spotless Righteousness of Jesus.

But that means that the Righteousness that allows us entrance into Heaven is NOT ours. It is Jesus' Own personal Righteousness. And that means that it is an *external* Righteousness; a *foreign* Righteousness; and an *alien* Righteousness. It is NOT our own personal intrinsic Righteousness. It is never our own Righteousness. It *always* belongs to Jesus. So even as Salvation belongs to God- Righteousness also belongs to God as well. Even the vehicle by which Righteousness is credited to us (Faith) does NOT belong to us either.

So, even though these things are real; and they are given to us; and we are blessed *by* them; and *through* them- they NEVER belong to us. They belong ONLY to the Lord.

The Heart of the Gospel

Now beginning in the early 14th Century- God began to use men who, through great personal cost, made the Scriptures available to everyone by translating the Bible out of Latin and Greek and into language of the “common man”.² This was a watershed moment as many of the foundational Doctrines of the Roman religious system were exposed as being entirely Man-made- *including* the Doctrine of Justification.

And as the Truth that “the spotless Righteousness of Jesus is imputed to unworthy sinners by the Agency of Faith alone and NOT through participation of the Sacraments” was made clear to the people- the entire Roman religious system was challenged in the 16th Century by the Reformers. And although there were many important Issues discussed- there were two Issues that were the main ones:

- Who (or what) has the ability to “bind the conscience” of the believer; bring conviction to the saved; and determine “Right” from “Wrong”- the Pope in his capacity as the “vicar of Christ” or the Scriptures alone (rightly interpreted)? (*Sola Scriptura*)
- How are sinners forgiven and made Righteous- by participation in the Sacraments or by Faith alone? (*Sola Fide*)

And if you answered the first Question with, “*the Pope*” you were a part of the pagan religious system of Rome. But if you answered, “*Scripture alone- (rightly interpreted)*”, you were a part of the true Church; and you were with those who were “protesting” against the abuses and fabrications of Rome; and were a “Protestant”.

And if you answered the 2nd Question with, “*by participation in the Sacraments*”, you were deceived and a part of the Man-made religious system of Rome. But if you answered with, “*by Faith alone*”- you were a Christian.

The first Question, concerning “Ultimate Authority” became known as the “*Formal Cause*” of the Protestant Reformation. While the 2nd Question, concerning how sinners are made Righteous before God- was called, the “*Material Cause*” of the Reformation.

So, it is clear that the Division between Rome and Christ's true Church that was illustrated by the Protestant Reformation through both *Sola Scriptura* and *Sola Fide* was NOT meaningless. It wasn't about personalities or Issues that don't matter. Even today- Rome

² John Wycliffe (1320-1384); Jan Hus (1372-1415); and William Tyndale (1494-1536)

and the true Church of God don't agree on "who has 'final Authority'" and "how sinners are made Righteous", which I would suggest are very heady Issues.

And the very Core or the Heart of the biblical Gospel is the "*Doctrine of Sola Fide*"- or "*The Doctrine of Justification by Faith ALONE*". So, without the Gospel being preached and understood and believed- nobody is saved. But unless you have and understand that Justification is by Faith alone and is NOT the result of participation of the Sacraments- you DON'T have the Gospel. So, by necessity, *Sola Fide* is the very Heart of the Biblical Gospel. And that is why we MUST understand this glorious Truth and believe it.