

Pastor Jose F. Maldonado

Hillburn Drive Grace Baptist Church

Feb.21, 2010

Numbers 23:19-24

This morning we return to our subject of Justification. As we said last week this might sound strange coming out of the Old Testament, but it is both a New Testament and Old Testament doctrine. The difference is that we are given more light in the New Testament, that is, we can understand justification in the New Testament easier because of the finish work of Christ upon the cross.

We also said last week that these words before us were spoken by a false prophet, Balaam. He was a prophet for hire and in 2010 there are many false prophets for hire. He was hired to curse Israel, but God caused him to bless Israel in saying these wonderful words, "*He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel...*" These words clearly convey the true definition of justification. Again, justification is set forth both in the Old and New Testaments.

Justification is a very crucial and essential doctrine in the Bible. It is one of the most important doctrines in the Bible, so much so, that without the doctrine of justification no one can be saved! We set forth 5 things before last week:

- I. **The Meaning of Justification.**
- II. **The Must (necessity) of Justification.**
- III. **The Method of Justification.**
- IV. **The Moment (effects) of Justification.**
- V. **The Motive of Justification.**

Last week we spoke on the first two points. We saw first of all, **The Meaning of Justification**. We defined the doctrine of regeneration first to better understand justification. Regeneration means to be born again, that has to do with the change of the believer's nature. It is the work of the Holy Spirit imparting life to a dead sinner. God takes out the old heart and putting in a new heart. Ezek.36:26 & 27. "*A new heart*

also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.” Regeneration is subjective whereas justification is objective. Regeneration has to do with man’s state before God. Justification has to do with the change of a sinner’s standing before God. It is twofold:

1. It has to do with forgiveness. (acquittal)
2. It has to do with imputed righteousness. (acceptance)

Justification then is the judicial act of God whereby those who repent of their sins and put faith in Christ alone are declared righteous in the eyes of God and are totally free from guilt and condemnation. Those who have been justified have been acquitted and accepted by God. We can also say that justification is the opposite of condemnation. To justify means God declares us righteous because of the imputed righteousness of Christ Jesus. When God saves a sinner He takes away our sins and gives us His righteousness. 2 Cor.5:21 says, *“For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”* To justify means to be declared righteous in order to put a person in a right relationship with God. In justification we are set forth as righteous, i.e. to be declared righteous in the legal sense so that we can be put in a right relationship with God. Therefore justification deals with the issue of relationship, that is, to have a right standing with God, because of what Christ accomplished upon the cross. Justification basically consists of two importance elements: The forgiveness of sin and the removal of its guilt and condemnation. The acceptance of sinners based solely upon the merits of what Christ accomplished upon the cross, thus, freely imputing to us, the righteousness of Christ. Acquittal and Acceptance by God is seen in Eph.1:6 & 7, *“To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. 7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.”*

Secondly, we also saw the must or necessity of justification or why must we be justified. We saw that Job asked the question, how can man be justified before God. In Job 25, verses 3-5, *“How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman? 5 Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in his sight. 6 How much less man, that is a worm? and the son of man, which is a worm?”* We saw that Job put all of us in the same place or position before God of being, sinful, guilty and condemned, thus, the need of being justified before God.

Let us pick up at our third point: **III. The Method of Justification.**

By the method of justification we also mean the nature of justification. First of all let us look at this from the negative aspect: In Romans 3:28 Paul comes to a conclusion regarding what he has been saying about the law, *“Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.”* In verse 20 he said, *“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”* Then in Galatians when dealing with those were legalists regarding the law and were seeking to be saved by the law says in Gal.2:16, *“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.”* Thus, we see negatively that no one will be saved by keeping the law. Paul says conclusively, by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified or by the works of the law no man will be justified, hence, man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. No one will ever be counted righteous in God’s sight because of their obedience to the law. Seeking to establish a right relation with God by keeping the law or good works is totally insufficient because there is no salvation by morality, there is no salvation by character. As a matter of fact what man needs is salvation from character or salvation from morality, or if you wish salvation from self-righteousness! It is not only bad people that go to hell; good people also go to hell. Yes, there are good moral people in hell. No one will be justified by good works, good deeds or in the keeping of the law of God, salvation is by grace through faith. Eph.2:8 & 9, *“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.”* Salvation is by faith without the aid or help of any works, this is where most people get tripped, because they want to do something to be accepted by God, but God will only accept a person through Jesus Christ without the works of the law or any other type of works. The law cannot remove sin, but as we saw last week it can open our eyes to the knowledge of sin. Romans 8:3 & 4, *“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: 4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us...”* The law was not given to remove sin, but to expose sin and to intensify it. The law gives knowledge of sin and intensifies sin, so that, it becomes exceedingly sinful, but it cannot remove or forgive sin. Gal.3:10 & 11, *“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. 11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.”* Again, the law makes no provision for imperfect obedience and therefore justification cannot take place by keeping the law. As one writer puts it so succinctly, *“It is a question of Moses or Christ, words or faith, law or promise, doing or believing, wages or free gift.”* Thus, no one can be saved by the keeping of the law.

Secondly, let us look at the method of justification positively. Justification is by God's free and sovereign grace! Let us go back to Romans chapter 3 and we have already established what is said in verse 20 and verse 28, but notice the blessing in between these verses in verses 21 to 25. In verses 24 and 25 we have the capstone of our salvation. It says that we are justified "**FREELY!**" Our salvation is merited solely by GRACE! We are saved by grace through faith! Freely denotes that God bestows salvation without anything done on our part to deserve it, earn it or to merit it, that is, without a cause, it's free, its mercy, its grace! This is the good news of the gospel, salvation is not in a denomination, a religious rite or ceremony and it is based solely in the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the true method of justification. Romans 5:9, "*Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.*" Heb.9:22 is very clear in setting forth that, "...without shedding of blood is no remission."

We said last week that in justification there are two important aspects, acquittal and acceptance and both of these are done freely for us by our Lord Jesus Christ.

1. It has to do with forgiveness. (Acquittal) (Expiation) (Covering of sin)
2. It has to do with imputed righteousness. (Acceptance) (Propitiation) (Wrath removed)
3. Ps.32:1 & 2, "*Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.*" (Quoted in Romans 4:1-8.)

Justification then is the judicial act of God whereby those who repent of their sins and put faith in Christ alone are declared righteous in the eyes of God and are totally free from guilt and condemnation. We have been acquitted and accepted by God. To justify means God declares us righteous because of the imputed righteousness of Christ Jesus. Justification has to do with the penal action of God regarding our sins, like a court room judge who hits with his gavel and says, not guilty regarding the person being charge. The law of God proclaims to the sinner, GUILTY, but those whom God saves and justifies, He declares NOT GUILTY! Col.2:13-15, "*And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; 14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; 15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.*" Can we do anything to help or aid in justification? No, because it is God that justifieth! Romans 8:33, "*Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? **It is God that justifieth.***" Paul clearly sets this forth in Romans 3:26, "*To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that **he might be just, and the justifier of him** which believeth in Jesus.*" Therefore justification deals with the issue

of relationship, that is, to have a right standing with God, because of what Christ accomplished upon the cross. Justification again consists of being acquitted by the forgiveness of sin and the removal of its guilt and condemnation and being accepted by God based solely upon the merits of what Christ accomplished upon the cross, thus, freely imputing to us, the righteousness of Christ.

This then is the meaning of those words in Numbers 23:21, "*He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the LORD his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them.*" Because of Jesus Christ, when God looks upon Joe Maldonado, God beholds no iniquity or sin in me nor does He see any perverseness in me. Thanks be unto God, praise His Holy name, what a joy, what a blessing to be without guilt and condemnation before God, to stand before God, JUSTIFIED!

I have often said in my sermons that the best definition of justification is found in Numbers 23:21. This is perhaps one of the most blessed, wonderful and glorious aspects of the gospel that is found from Genesis to Revelation. As we mentioned already it came from the mouth of a false prophet, but it fell from his mouth by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Talk about the good news of the gospel, here it is. God, yea the Living and True, the Holy and Sovereign God of the universe would declare that He does not behold iniquity in His people. Numbers 23:21, "*He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the LORD his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them.*" Can you imagine this glorious truth; God has not beheld iniquity in Jacob! Forget the shout of a king; listen to the shout of this pastor! My mind and my heart are blown away; all I can do is bow my knee and truly confess, **WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT!** If I knew how to do a halleluiah dance I would do it right now, David was leaping and dancing before God, that's what I want to do. Or like that lame man at the gate of the temple, when God healed him, he was walking, leaping and praising God. When I consider that my God does not behold iniquity in me, yes, I want to be leaping and praising God with all my might and with all my heart. Please stand, let's sing that in Acts 3: 6 & 8. Please be seated I'm still preaching it's not over! I want to do what David says in Ps.2:12 "**Kiss the Son**, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him." SOS 1:2 & 4, "*Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine...4 **Draw me, we will run after thee**: the king hath brought me into his chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine: the upright love thee.*" My beloved is mine and I am His, this is a relationship, not religion, but a relationship with God. Why? My sins, my sins are all blotted out, my sins my sins are removed like the clouds and as far as the East from the West they are all removed! This is glorious, this reminds me of that blessed Psalm 45:1 & 2, "My

heart is inditing a good matter: (My heart is bubbling over, my heart is hot it is overflowing) I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer. 2 Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.” I don’t think we can thank God enough for washing us from all our sins, for cleansing us from all our sins, from forgiving us all our sins. To borrow a phrase from one of our hymns, “What language shall I borrow to thank thee dearest friend.” Yes, what has God wrought? He has wrought a good work! He has wrought a great work! He has wrought a glorious work! Eph.1:17-20, “*That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: 18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, 20 **Which he wrought in Christ**, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.”*

The prophet Micah knew something of this joy and excitement for he declares some glorious and precious words at the end of his book, Micah 7:18-20, “*Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. 19 He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. 20 Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.”*

This, then my dear brethren, is the method or nature of justification; that God declares us righteous before His sight, because of what Christ has done for us on the cross. We have been forgiven, thus acquitted and we have been accepted by God in Jesus Christ. He now then declares us righteous and He does not in any form or manner behold iniquity in all those whom He has saved!

Now, before we get a wrong understanding or interpretation of what is said here in Numbers 23:21, let us qualify this verse. Now, this scripture does not mean to say that there was no sin or perverseness in Israel. There was sin in Jacob and there was perverseness in Israel, but the difference is that God did not mark the sins of His people against them, or if you wish, He does not impute sin to His chosen people. God did not look upon them with the eye of justice, but hid His face from their sins and forgave them. He declared them righteous in His sight and this is what He does for all the True Israel of God. In the Old Testament there was the Israel of God within Israel and in the New Testament He has the Israel of God and to the Israel of God He imputes not their sins, this is but the elect of God. God has blotted out our sins and cast them behind His back and does not behold them, nor does He remember them.

No question that there is much sin in us and much sin committed by us and every true believer will admit and confess this, 1 John 1:8-10 clearly teaches that, but God sees no sin in His people. This is the hope and good news of the gospel; that forgiveness of sins by the grace of God can be a reality to poor lost sinners and oh to God that everyone in this auditorium would experience this blessedness of the complete and full forgiveness of sins through the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Oh that you would walk out this morning different than you came in and say in your soul, God does not behold iniquity in me because He has saved me this morning. That you would cry out to God for salvation, that you would repent from your sins and lay hold of Christ by faith, trusting Him to forgive and save you from your sins.

Before I'm done, I want to make sure you understand what is being said here in Numbers 23:21, "*He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the LORD his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them.*" This passage does not in any way teach or suggest the false doctrine of sinless perfection, because the truth is that God's saved people in this world are sinners still. Again, 1 John 1:8-10, "*But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. (8) If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. (9) If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (10) If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*" There is in every believer a continual battle in the heart between the flesh and the spirit. Gal.5:17, "*For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.*" What shall we say about Romans 7? There is in every saved person a battle between the flesh and the spirit, there is in every saved person two opposing natures. We are told to put off the old man and it takes work to do this. This is part of our mortification of sin. Sin dwells in us not as an idle resident but as an active and defiling nature. Call it old man, call it flesh, call it sin, it is a battle, but it does not rule. Romans 6:12. "*Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.*" One writer says, "*Sin dwells in us, like an enemy who has entered the very heart of the city of Mansoul and seeks to rapidly destroy everything. Though this horrid enemy does not rule the believer's life, he does at times bring us into captivity. Though he cannot destroy us, he constantly disturbs us.*" We must understand that as believers as born again Christians that as long as we are in this present world, we will never stop sinning. Even when we do good; it is stained with sin. The best of saints in this world are but yet sinners. Also, just because God sees no sin in His people, it does not mean that God does not take notice of our sins or that He is displeased when we sin. He will chastise us for sin, but He will never punish us for our sins. So, when Numbers 23:21 says that God sees no sin in His people, it does not mean that there is not sin in us, but that God does not mark the sins of His people against them, or if you wish, He does not impute sin to His chosen people. God did not look upon them with the eye of justice, but hid His face from their sins and forgave them. He declared them righteous in His sight and this is what He does for all the elect of God. God declares us righteous as though we had never sinned. All this is based on

what Christ accomplished upon the cross of Calvary. When God looks at His saved people He looks upon them through Christ, God sees us in Christ. This is why He declares us righteous, this is why He does not behold iniquity in us, because He looks at us through Christ. Romans 5:17-21, *“For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. 18 Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. 19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. 20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: 21 That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”* God's eye of justice does not see any sin in His people because His hand of justice has blotted out our sins, because justice was fully satisfied by the blood of Christ. Isa.53:10-12, *“Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. 11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. 12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”* The Son of God has satisfied the law, wrath and justice of God for our sins, therefore God is free to justify us, thus, *“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 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; 26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”* Romans 3:24 – 26.

Oh to God that everyone in this auditorium would get hold of this blessed doctrine, that you would lay hold of Christ by faith and repent of yours sins before God before you walk out so that it can be said of you, *“He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel.”* Oh that you would walk out of here in the blessed comfort and assurance that God does not behold iniquity on you! What joy to think that God has forgiven me my sins, He has put away my sins, all of them, past, present and future. To know in your heart by true assurance that your sins are imputed to Christ and that He took your punishment. Oh my dear friends, look to Christ, I implore you, come in repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. That this would be said of you, Jer.50:20, *“In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve.”* Let's Pray: Sing Hymn: