

SERMON

Justification: The Chosen

GOOD Morning OIC,

JUSTIFICATION is the declaration by God that we are no longer guilty but we are made righteous on the basis of Jesus' death on The Cross to buy OUR eternal forgiveness. OUR JUSTIFICATION is according to God's Plan: Before Time Began - In Time - After Time is No More, as revealed in the Bible. I will attempt in today's message to tell you how we can be confident that before time began, we Christians are "The Chosen."

We see in the Holy Bible that Jesus calls Himself the TRUTH in (John 14.6) "*I am **the way, the truth, and the life.***" Yet He actually would sometimes say something like He did in (John 3.3): *Jesus replied, "I tell you **the truth**, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God."* Jesus IS the TRUTH. Of course, every word He spoke was TRUTH. I believe that He was really saying this for emphasis. That would be like saying in a more direct culture, not an oriental culture, as Israel was, "I love you but **you are often not paying attention to Me.** Listen closely, my Beloved Children."

Now, the Apostle Paul, following in His Master's large footprints, similarly expresses his deepest heart regarding his home nation family, Israel.

(Romans 9.1-3) *With Christ as my witness, I speak with utter truthfulness. My conscience and the Holy Spirit confirm it. 2 My heart is filled with bitter sorrow and unending grief 3 for my people, my Jewish brothers and sisters. I would be willing to be forever cursed—cut off from Christ!—if that would save them.*

Paul is completely committed to *preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified* regardless of the price he must pay for doing so. He has a close walk with the Saviour, yet he proclaims in (Romans 9.1) "Christ as my witness" and his "conscience and the Holy Spirit" as well to strongly confirm his next statements. As when Jesus spoke to alert His listeners, Paul is about to make in writing a very emotional and controversial statement in (Romans 9.3).

A word on *conscience*, and its importance, to a Believer:

In the Greek New Testament, the word (*syneidēsis*), conscience, means: a present idea, **persisting notion**, impression of reality, as an inward moral impression of one's actions and principles. A

“persisting notion” is what God chose to use to correct my thinking. Christians, especially newly born again, are now set free from being under the Law. However, they should prayerfully ask Jesus for Holy Spirit to teach them their true conscience. Amazingly, at Re-Birth, God does not eliminate the “human conscience,” which varies from person to person. Hard to believe, but a “sinner” may be more aware of his conscience, while totally unaware of the Lord Jesus, than a Christian. Honestly, I, Pastor Bruce, speak in truthfulness, that I struggled greatly with this. “If Jesus and the Ten Commandments didn't call it sin, I am free! Free to do anything not *called* a sin.” But I was WRONG! A Christian teacher who I respected shared in a book that the American Indians, pagans but truly in a very religious society, had a good description of “conscience” for Christians. Fighting against your conscience was like “turning a square peg inside a round hole!” God repeats and reminds you of this **“persisting notion”** to get you to ask Jesus about it. The Spirit of Jesus took this and began new lessons for me. I realized before I knew what my conscience ought to be, that Satan tried to act like he was my conscience; and also, my desires of “getting what I want” often went against my own conscience. Again, Dear OIC, I will tease you to hold on until we get to (Romans 14) for more Biblical teaching on the “conscience.” The importance of conscience is thus placed by Paul in juxtaposition to, or directly next to, Holy Spirit in (v.1).

Then he says in (v. 2-3) *My heart is filled with bitter sorrow and unending grief 3 for my people, my Jewish brothers and sisters. I would be willing to be forever cursed—cut off from Christ!—if that would save them.* It is amazing that this Apostle could live in the power of the “Joy of the Lord” while having this burden for Israel, *bitter sorrow and unending grief* in his heart. Paul was letting his emotions go free here, for he often received on earth tastes of glory, trusting that even the greater glory would be his when he would see Jesus “again.” It seems clear to me that fulfilling the “sufferings for Christ” here on earth, as an imperfect saint, means learning to let Jesus carry our burdens for us. He did it for Paul, He can do it for you!

I would be willing to be forever cursed—cut off from Christ!—if that would save them. Paul had just written about the “security” of a Justified Christian in (Romans 8). Paul is identifying with Jesus, who died on the Cross for Israel and for the whole world. Paul's emotional burden was beyond his reason, saying he would throw his salvation away, for Israel.

Now Paul, was not a Christian who forgot his responsibility to “keep the Faith.” He knew that the Gift of Salvation is the most humanly unbelievable, yet true gift from God, that goes beyond this life on Earth. It is a gift that moves the receiver of it to Love, and to do Acts of Love, in Thanksgiving to God for Salvation. This is not Payback, but Love back and Love out to others! There is a big difference. Paul lived his life that way. Really trusting God to keep him as we learned in (Romans 8.30/NASB 1995) “...and these whom He justified, He also Glorified.” At

the same time....well his attitude is so well shown in (1 Corinthians 9.26-27) *So I run with purpose in every step. I am not just shadowboxing. 27 I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified.* That being made clear, Paul added the correct “theological” or true fact about God in the close on his emotional outburst, “*if that would save them.*” Paul knew, it would not! Only belief in Jesus' death as their Passover Lamb could ever save them.

TAKEAWAY#1

God may give some of His servants, like the Apostle Paul, burdens that are impossible for humans to handle. Christians must never say “I am only human” as an excuse to murmur and complain. They are already *Children of God* and they are becoming *Sons of God*. The Spirit of God within them keeps renewing their confidence to reach the Goal, being welcomed by Jesus in Glory. The burden may not disappear, but as Paul had his burden for Israel, we Christians can bear part of our burden. Because the Spirit of Christ within us causes, beyond human understanding, what Jesus promised to happen: (Matthew 11.30) *For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.*”

(Romans 9.4-5) *They are the people of Israel, chosen to be God's adopted children. God revealed his glory to them. He made covenants with them and gave them his law. He gave them the privilege of worshiping him and receiving his wonderful promises. 5 Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are their ancestors, and Christ himself was an Israelite as far as his human nature is concerned. And He is God, the one who rules over everything and is worthy of eternal praise! Amen.*

As an Israelite, Paul's home nation did not promote patriotism in a political sense. But he grew up with the Hope of Israel, a nation with God as its King, similar to the reign of King David more than a thousand years earlier. Paul, desiring such a King, knowing the Scriptures, for God had said in (Acts 13:22) *'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will fulfill My entire will.'* (from 1 Samuel 13.14)

Now Paul lists the many advantages of Israel receiving God's favor. They had been chosen by God, really a nation created by God from one man, Abraham. He made legal covenants with them, in particular with Abraham, their father. This was the truly First Older Testament, or Covenant of Faith. (Genesis 15:5-6) *5 Then the LORD took Abram outside and said to him, “Look up into the sky and count the stars if you can. That's how many descendants you will have!”*

6 And Abram believed the LORD, and the LORD counted him as righteous because of his faith.

Paul explained this is how Christians are justified by faith in Christ's taking our deserved punishment on Himself; not by works. Abraham was counted righteous. We see in **(Romans 4.3)**. *For the Scriptures tell us, "Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith."* In (Genesis 17.3-5) *At this, Abram fell face down on the ground. Then God said to him, 4 "This is my covenant with you: I will make you the father of a multitude of nations! 5 What's more, I am changing your name. It will no longer be Abram. Instead, you will be called Abraham, for you will be the father of many nations.* Paul also mentions the other two patriarchs or leaders who followed in Abraham's life of faith: Abraham, Issac, and Jacob. He showed them His glorious wonders in delivering them from the hand of the Egyptian Pharaoh. The LORD also filled the Temple built by David's son, King Solomon, with His glory on the day it was dedicated to God. God gave them the Law through His close relationship with Moses. Even after they rebelled against Him and murdered His prophets, He kept a remnant from being destroyed to keep the nation intact to receive His promises. Then, Paul's heart must have felt some thoughts of "how it could have been if only Israel had accepted Jesus their Messiah!" He lists the descendants of the faithful in Israel including ***Christ himself was an Israelite as far as his human nature is concerned.*** Paul, better than any man alive, knew how Israel rejected and Crucified the King that they were waiting for. Paul's next statement makes it clear that Jesus is more than an Israelite. ***And He is God, the one who rules over everything and is worthy of eternal praise! Amen.***

(Romans 9.6-8) *Well then, has God failed to fulfill his promise to Israel? No, for not all who are born into the nation of Israel are truly members of God's people! 7 Being descendants of Abraham doesn't make them truly Abraham's children. For the Scriptures say, "Isaac is the son through whom your descendants will be counted," though Abraham had other children, too.8 This means that Abraham's physical descendants are not necessarily children of God.*

(Romans 9.6) *Well then, has God failed to fulfill his promise to Israel? No, ...* God was faithful to reveal His promise to Israel. To Paul's personal regret for love of his own people, Israel stubbornly held on to their physical bloodlines, not faith in Messiah Yeshua {Jesus}, for their salvation. We see in (Luke 3.8) Jesus confronted some Jews: *Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God. Don't just say to each other, 'We're safe, for we are descendants of Abraham.' That means nothing, for I tell you, God can create children of Abraham from these very stones.*

(Romans 9.8) *This means that Abraham's physical descendants are not necessarily children of God.* Paul now is referring back to his teaching in (Romans 2.28-29) that the true spiritual Israel,

the only Israel on Earth acceptable to God, is now the Christians. Christians, both Jews and Gentiles, are God's only children through their faith in Jesus. Jesus had said regarding the sacrifice of His physical body as the Bread of Life (John 6.50-51) *Anyone who eats the bread from heaven, however, will never die. 51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live forever; and this bread, which I will offer so the world may live, is my flesh.*” Then, He challenged his disciples to look beyond even His physical body, a true sacrifice, but the benefits of His Sacrifice only affected by the Spirit of God who would give the gift of faith to all who would believe in Him. In **(John 6.61-64)** *Jesus was aware that his disciples were complaining, so he said to them, “Does this offend you? 62 Then what will you think if you see the Son of Man ascend to heaven again? 63 The Spirit alone gives eternal life. Human effort accomplishes nothing. And the very words I have spoken to you are spirit and life. 64 But some of you do not believe me.”* (For Jesus knew from the beginning which ones didn't believe, and he knew who would betray him.) Paul is thus, actually restating what Jesus said, that the lineage from Abraham to the everlasting Kingdom no longer belonged to “physical” Israel, but only to people who had the Spirit of Christ within them.

(Romans 9.9) *For God had promised, “I will return about this time next year, and Sarah will have a son.”* I want to show how wonderful our God is to us, His chosen, who put our little faith sincerely in Him. In the book of Genesis, chapter 17, we find that as the LORD has just promised Abraham a son, his reaction seems less than you might expect from the Father of Faith. **16** *And I will bless her and give you a son from her! Yes, I will bless her richly, and she will become the mother of many nations. Kings of nations will be among her descendants.” 17 Then Abraham bowed down to the ground, but he laughed to himself in disbelief. “How could I become a father at the age of 100?” he thought. “And how can Sarah have a baby when she is ninety years old? Bowing to your LORD and laughing in disbelief. Well, we can never really do anything “just to ourselves” when we are in a close relationship with God who knows all things, and is even above time. Then, the LORD, who always gets the last word in, so to speak, says in (Genesis 17.19) *But God replied, “No—Sarah, your wife, will give birth to a son for you. You will name him Isaac, and I will confirm my covenant with him and his descendants as an everlasting covenant.* But, Abraham's wife was not going to do any better than her husband, for in (Genesis 18.1) *The LORD appeared again to Abraham near the oak grove belonging to Mamre. These were three men, who Abraham recognized as The LORD. In (Genesis 18.10-15) Then one of them {I think three angels, but Abraham sensed that the Name of the Lord was on them} said, “I will return to you about this time next year, and your wife, Sarah, will have a son!” Sarah was listening to this conversation from the tent. 11 Abraham and Sarah were both very old by this time, and Sarah was long past the age of having children. 12 So she laughed silently to herself**

and said, "How could a worn-out woman like me enjoy such pleasure, especially when my master—my husband—is also so old?" **13** Then the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh? Why did she say, 'Can an old woman like me have a baby?'" **14** Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return about this time next year, and Sarah will have a son." **15** Sarah was afraid, so she denied it, saying, "I didn't laugh." But the LORD said, "No, you did laugh."

These are details, more than Paul wrote, but any Jew knew all these facts. My point is that the Father and Mother of our faith laughed at the LORD when He promised the supernatural birth of the descendants in the lineage planned by God. God knows how little faith we have for His supernatural acts of Love, for God is Love. We, like the prophet Jeremiah, under great duress being persecuted by the King in Israel, can see in our God's faithfulness to Abraham and Sarah – Lamentations 3-21-23:

*This I recall to my mind,
therefore have I hope.*

***22** It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed,
because his compassions fail not.*

***23** They are new every morning:
great is thy faithfulness.*

(Romans 9.10-13) *This son was our ancestor Isaac. When he married Rebekah, she gave birth to twins. **11** But before they were born, before they had done anything good or bad, she received a message from God. (This message shows that God chooses people according to his own purposes; **12** he calls people, but not according to their good or bad works.) She was told, "Your older son will serve your younger son." **13** In the words of the Scriptures, {Malachi 1.2-3} "I loved Jacob, but I rejected Esau.*

The apostle Paul is here proclaiming that the God who loved us and sacrificed His Son for us, is the Sovereign Ruler and Chooser over all. Paul is giving specific examples from the History of Israel of **(Romans 8. 28-30/DARBY)** *But we *do* know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. **29** **Because** whom he has **foreknown**, he has also **predestinated** [to be] conformed to the image of his Son, so that he should be [the] firstborn among many brethren. **30** But whom he has predestinated, these also he has **called**; and whom he has called, these also he has **justified**; but whom he has justified, these also he has **glorified**.* The simple reading is clear that Paul wants all to know that God has chosen and called his Jewish ancestors in Israel before they were born.

TAKEAWAY #2

On first reading, (Romans 9) appears to stand alone as a history of Israel. But, it is actually the Apostle Paul explaining how God caused (Romans 8.28-30) to happen in His chosen nation, Israel. God's causing all things to work together for good, to accomplish His Sovereign Plan for the Justification of Mankind through His Son's Sacrifice. His Almighty power caused this result in the *chosen Israelites, those whom He foreknew, predestined, called, justified, and glorified, both already and not yet.*

(Romans 9.13 & quoting Malachi 1.2-3) “I loved Jacob, but I rejected Esau.” There is much Bible discussion that God's Words here in (Romans 9) have caused among in Christians. Was it God's foreknowledge that Esau would sell his birthright, the lineage leading to the Christ, for a bowl of lentil (red) soup, that moved God to reject him? Of course, Jacob's being a trickster to get Esau to make that eventful “red soup deal” might lead us to ask not why God hated Esau, but how could he love Jacob? The Bible records the infamous “soup deal” in (Genesis 25.32-34) *“Look, I’m dying of starvation!” said Esau. “What good is my birthright to me now?” 33 But Jacob said, “First you must swear that your birthright is mine.” So Esau swore an oath, thereby selling all his rights as the firstborn to his brother, Jacob. 34 Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and lentil stew. Esau ate the meal, then got up and left. He showed contempt for his rights as the firstborn.*

I gleaned some helpful explanations on this “hate-love” question for these two twin brothers in the *Expositors' Bible Commentary* (EBC). I do take note that the EBC somehow did not consider God's foreknowledge, which I have put into discussion here in my exegesis, or bringing out meaning, of these verses. As I mentioned above: Was it God's foreknowledge that Esau would sell his birthright, the lineage leading to the Christ, for a bowl of lentil (red) soup, that moved God to reject him? We might never know the answer to that question. But this chapter in (Romans 9) tells us much of our Sovereign God who chooses His people to complete His plan of Salvation, Justification.

Many Bible translations quote God's Words regarding these two brothers as *“I loved Jacob, but Esau I have hated.”* *The EBC says this: “By quoting (Malachi 1.2-3) here, Paul lifts the discussion from what might appear to be a purely personal one to the plane of corporate, national {Israel} life.”* (EBC) This analysis is expressed better in the Bible translations that replace “hate” with “rejected.” (Romans 9.13) I believe God knew Esau's wanton heart would not treasure the great value of the birthright, being a direct descendant in the line of Father Abraham, the Father of the Faith in Israel. But, regarding God's foreknowledge, Pauls' comment in **(Romans 9.11-12)** *But before they were born, before they had done anything good or bad, she received a*

message from God. (This message shows that God chooses people according to his own purposes; 12 he calls people, but not according to their good or bad works.) Therefore, the overriding principle for God's choices is not peoples' works, good or bad, in their life. It is also important to see how God blessed Esau, who was called "Edom" (red) because he was born with red hair all over his body. In (Genesis 36.18) *The descendants of Esau and his wife Oholibamah became the leaders of the clans of Jeush, Jalam, and Korah. These are the clan leaders who descended from Esau's wife Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah.* So God made him a father of leaders. Not something God would do to someone He "hated," it seems. His name became "Edom" for red, and a whole nation was named after him (the Edomites). I quote (EBC) here: **"The "hatred" is simply a way of saying that Esau was not the object of God's electing purpose. The value of using two brothers is to make clear that in election {electing the "Chosen"} God does not wait until individuals or nations are developed and then makes a choice on the basis of character or achievement."** (EBC)

(Romans 9.14-15) *Are we saying, then, that God was unfair? Of course not! 15For God said to Moses, "I will show mercy to anyone I choose, and I will show compassion to anyone I choose."*

God unfair? God forbid that I ever would ask God to be fair to me, or to you either, my brothers and sisters at OIC. If God were *fair*, He would have destroyed the whole human race as we see in (Genesis 6.5-8) *The LORD observed the extent of human wickedness on the earth, and he saw that everything they thought or imagined was consistently and totally evil. 6 So the LORD was sorry he had ever made them and put them on the earth. It broke his heart. 7 And the LORD said, "I will wipe this human race I have created from the face of the earth. Yes, and I will destroy every living thing—all the people, the large animals, the small animals that scurry along the ground, and even the birds of the sky. I am sorry I ever made them." 8 But Noah found favor with the LORD.* If God had destroyed Mankind, the product of His work in Creation, He would still be Holy and Good.

Instead, He put in motion His Master plan before the world began, to send Mankind a Saviour.

On the night of Jesus' birth, God's Angels gave a glorious musical performance to the lowly shepherds outside Bethlehem. We read in (Luke 2.13-15/CSB) *Suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying:*

*14 Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and peace on earth to people he favors!*

15When the angels had left them and returned to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go straight to Bethlehem and see what has happened, which the Lord has made known to us."

We Christians have peace on earth because God favored us and has **made known to us** the Gospel of Jesus. Thank God that He is not *fair*, *He is merciful*.

(Romans 9.15) *For God said to Moses, “I will show mercy to anyone I choose, and I will show compassion to anyone I choose.”* Paul has here quoted God's conversation with Moses from (Exodus 33.15-20) *Then Moses said, “If you don't personally go with us, don't make us leave this place. 16 How will anyone **know that you look favorably on me**—on me and on your people—if you don't go with us? For your presence among us sets your people and me apart from all other people on the earth.” 17 The LORD replied to Moses, “I will indeed do what you have asked, for **I look favorably on you, and I know you by name.**” 18 Moses responded, “Then show me your glorious presence.” 19 The LORD replied, “I will make all my goodness pass before you, and I will call out my name, Yahweh {I AM}, before you. **For I will show mercy to anyone I choose, and I will show compassion to anyone I choose.*** I wanted us all to see how the Word of God connects **the chosen** with those who God looks **favorably on**, such as Moses, the Shepherds, and all both Jew and Gentile Christians.

TAKEAWAY #1

God may give some of His servants, like the Apostle Paul, burdens that are impossible for humans to handle. Christians must never say “I am only human” as an excuse to murmur and complain. They are already *Children of God* and are becoming *Sons of God*. The Spirit of God within them keeps renewing their confidence to reach the Goal, being welcomed by Jesus in Glory. The burden may not disappear, but as Paul had his burden for Israel, we Christians can bear part of our burden. Because the Spirit of Christ within us causes, beyond human understanding, what Jesus promised to happen: (Matthew 11.30) *For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.*”

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We have all been chosen by God before the foundation of the Universe and given a share or an interest in the Saviour's Blood. **How can it be?** Rejoice, that it is so!!!

We, the Church, are now “The Chosen.” Chosen to believe in Jesus' sacrifice, God's Love giving us Justification. Our sin problem has been solved at the Cross by Christ. Let us go forth and tell the whole world of the wonderful Mercy and Undeserved Favor of God found only through His Son, Jesus.

Our duty of love is not to choose but to proclaim the Gospel of Christ to all the Nations. God wants those whom He has chosen to know it to the bottom of their hearts and souls. It is our job and duty of Love, to go out and find them and tell them the Gospel, so that if they believe, they will KNOW that they, too, are “**The Chosen.**”

Let Us Pray,

REFERENCES

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DARBY -Darby Translation , Public Domain

EBC - Expositor's Bible Commentary (Abridged Edition): New Testament

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