

LESSON 9

GOD'S PLAN OF REDEMPTION I

I. INTRODUCTION (PG. 34)

So far we've looked at God – who He is, His attributes, His triune nature. We've also looked at man and the doctrine surrounding his creation and the sinful and separated state that he now finds himself in before God.

In recent weeks, we have examined the major players in redemptive history – the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Now, we will begin a two-lesson survey of how God worked from eternity past and is working to eternity future to reconcile a chosen people to Himself through the atoning work of Christ on the cross.

II. ORDER OF SALVATION (PG. 34)

In earlier classes we talked about the fact that we all have sinned and deserve eternal punishment from God. Yet, in obedience to dying on the cross, Christ accomplished the redemption of his people, earning salvation for them. Now we will look at the way God applies that salvation to individual lives. Throughout the next two lessons we will see that “salvation is of the Lord,” not only at the point of accomplishment on the cross but also at the point of application, where the benefits of the cross are applied to individuals.

The Bible speaks of salvation not as a “simple and indivisible act” but as comprising a “series of acts and processes.” Scripture speaks of salvation in the past, present, and future. Christians have been saved, are being saved, and will be completely saved someday from the consequences of sin.

Given that the application of redemption is not a simultaneous action – a “got saved” experience – but rather a series of acts and processes, we should not be surprised to find it following a certain distinct order with an arrangement of various steps. However, no single verse of Scripture mentions every act or process in this “order of salvation.” Instead, a careful comparison of several New Testament passages yields a framework of ordered application.

Ephesians 2:8, “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.” 1 Corinthians 1:18, “For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” Romans 13:11, “Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed.”

Take Romans 8:29-30 for example, “**For those [God] foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.**” So we see that predestination precedes calling, which precedes justification, which in turn precedes glorification. This makes sense doesn't it? God could not, for example, glorify a sinner that had not been justified, could he? There is a logical order of application that emerges from similar treatment of other passages.

Well, the Order of Salvation that we will be considering for the next two classes is as follows:

(students will need to record this list)

- 1) Election *(God's choice of people to be saved)*
- 2) The Gospel Call *(proclaiming/hearing the message of the Gospel)*
- 3) Regeneration *(being born again)*
- 4) Conversion *(faith and repentance)*
- 5) Justification *(right legal standing; righteousness of Christ imputed)*
- 6) Adoption *(membership in God's family)*
- 7) Sanctification *(growth in obedience and knowledge; increased conformity to Christ)*
- 8) Perseverance *(continuing in the faith; abiding in Christ)*
- 9) Death *(going to be with the Lord)*
- 10) Glorification *(receiving a resurrection body)*

We should note that some of the aspects of the order are entirely divine acts while others entail human activity working both in response to and in conjunction with divinely initiated activity. Also, realize that this order of salvation does not always reflect chronological occurrences. For example, the moment the sinner truly repents and places his confidence in Christ's saving work, God justifies and adopts him and starts the sanctification process. So the sequence is primarily one of logical ordering, although there is an ordering based on time in some instances – we are obviously regenerated before we are glorified.

For lesson 9, we'll attempt to cover the initial process of salvation through the doctrines of election, calling, regeneration, conversion, and justification, while covering the remaining 5 in lesson 10.

III. ELECTION/PREDESTINATION (PG. 35)

We believe that Election is the eternal purpose of God, according to which He graciously regenerates, sanctifies, and saves sinners; that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, it comprehends all the means in connection with the end; that it is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy and unchangeable; that it utterly excludes boasting, and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God, and active imitation of his free mercy; that it encourages the use of means in the highest degree; that it may be ascertained by its effects in all who truly believe the Gospel; that it is the foundation of Christian assurance; and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence.

The first section that we must begin with is God's election. As we said before, salvation begins with God. Election may be defined as **“an act of God before creation in which he chooses some people to be saved, not on account of any foreseen merit in them, but only because of His sovereign good pleasure.”**

In other words, God chose a specific and definite number of people to save, He guaranteed their salvation through the cross, and granted the benefits of Christ's atonement to their lives.

If left to himself, man would remain forever in his sin, because as it's written, **“There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God”** (Rom. 3:10). Nothing but a mighty supernatural act on the part of God can rescue sinners in this condition. If they're to be rescued, God must take the initiative, and this is precisely what God does. He sovereignly picks a man up out of the kingdom of Satan and places him in the kingdom of Christ. Such are the elect that are referred to some 25 times in the New Testament.

This doctrine of election, or predestination, as it is sometimes called by the Apostles, is clearly laid out in Scripture.

In reference to Paul and Barnabas preaching to the Gentiles in Antioch, Luke writes that when the Gentiles heard the message, **“they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed”** (Acts 13:48). Here we see that the elect of God are the ones who believe the gospel.

Ephesians 1:4-5 says, **“For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will.”**

Paul writing in I Thessalonians 1:4-5 says, **“For we know, brothers loved by God, that He has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit, and with deep conviction.”** Paul knows that these Thessalonian Christians are God’s elect because they have faith; they received the message. The implication of course is that God’s electing love must be directed toward an individual before a response of saving faith is possible. Writing to that same church Paul later writes, **“But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved”** (2 Thess. 2:13).

God’s choice of giving certain individuals salvation rests solely on His sovereign will. It’s an unconditional election. His choice to save particular sinners was not based on any foreseen response or obedience on their part, such as faith and repentance. On the contrary, God gives faith and repentance to each individual whom He chose in Christ. These acts (faith and repentance) are the result, and not the cause of God’s choice.

Election therefore was not determined by or conditioned upon any virtuous quality or act foreseen in man. You will never find Scripture saying our faith was the reason God chose us. Salvation is all of grace. Thus, God’s choice of the sinner – not the sinner’s choice of Christ – is the ultimate cause of salvation.

In Deuteronomy 7, the reason why God sovereignly elected Israel to be his chosen people was given. It says that, **“The LORD did not set his affection on you [Israel] because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. But it was because the LORD loved you. . . .”** God’s purpose in election was not based on Israel but on God.

In the New Testament we see this explained nowhere more clearly than in Romans 9:10-16, **“And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, ¹¹ though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God’s purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls— ¹² she was told, “The older will serve the younger.” ¹³ As it is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.” ¹⁴ What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God’s part? By no means! ¹⁵ For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” ¹⁶ So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy.”**

“Esau I hated?” That’s harsh! It sounds unfair. But when we ask the question that Paul asks, “Is that unjust of God?” we must say, “Not at all!” God could have rightly said, “I hate both Esau and Jacob.” If you look at Jacob’s life in Genesis, especially the early years, you’ll see that his behavior is detestable – he’s a treacherous, lying schemer. The difficult question is not how can God hate Esau, but how can he justly love Jacob, a sinner? The real mystery isn’t why would God only save some, but why He would save any of us at all. We all deserve eternal damnation, yet in God’s love and mercy he ordained to save some.

Notice in this passage that God's purpose in election is being worked out even before Jacob or Esau are born – before they have done anything good or bad. God's election was not conditioned on their actions, but on God's sovereign will. God will receive the glory for His salvation!

One objection to the doctrine of election that is often voiced is that election means that unbelievers never really have a chance to believe. But the Bible does not support this objection. When people reject Jesus, he always put the blame on their willful choice to reject him, not on anything decreed by God. In John 5:40 Jesus says, "**You refuse to come to me that you may have life.**" This is the consistent pattern in Scripture: people who remain in unbelief do so because they are unwilling to come to God, and the blame for such unbelief always lies with the unbelievers themselves, never with God.

Questions or Comments?

How are we then to apply the doctrine of election to our lives? What does it mean for us practically that God elects some to salvation? (***It is a comfort** – Romans 8 shows that God always acts for the good of those whom he called to himself; **It gives us humility and a thankful heart** – Salvation is not found in us; **It makes evangelism hopeful** - In Acts 18, Paul is told by the Lord in a vision to stay in Corinth and continue preaching because: "I have many people in this city."*)

IV. REPROBATION (PG. 35)

If God sovereignly elects some unto salvation, then that necessarily means that not all are elected to salvation. Some necessarily will perish. This is the doctrine of reprobation.

Reprobation may be defined as "**the sovereign decision of God before creation to pass over some persons, deciding not to save them, and to punish them for their sins, and thereby to manifest His justice.**"

So does hearing this make you angry? Do you want to object? Do you think that this doctrine simply cannot be true of a loving God? If you answer yes, then you're not alone. This is something that many people struggle with.

The love that God gives us for our fellow human beings and the love that he commands us to have toward our neighbor cause us to recoil against this doctrine, and it is right that we feel dread in contemplating it. It is something that we would not want to believe, and would not believe, unless Scripture clearly taught it. Scripture does teach it, though, so we have a responsibility to believe it, to know it and recognize that somehow, in God's wisdom, the fact that some will be eternally condemned shows God's justice and results in his glory being displayed to the objects of His grace.

Unless you think that there are no grounds for this doctrine, listen to these verses in Scripture:

- Jude 4 says, "**For certain men who were marked out for condemnation long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men who...deny Jesus Christ.**"
- In I Peter 2:8, Peter says that those who reject the gospel, "**stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for.**"
- Proverbs 16:4 says, "**The LORD works out everything for his own ends – even the wicked for a day of disaster.**"

Paul also alludes to this idea of reprobation in Romans 9:18-23 where he appeals to his audience that it's entirely just for God to "**make out of the same lump of clay some [people] for noble purposes and some for common use**" and that it's entirely just for God to "show his wrath and make his power known" in dealing with those who are "objects of his wrath" that were prepared for destruction.

Romans 9:18-23, "**So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.** ¹⁹ You will say to me then, "**Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?**" ²⁰ But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "**Why have you made me like this?**" ²¹ Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use? ²² What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, ²³ in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory"

A great study to do is to look not just at the existence of the doctrine of election in scripture, but of how it's perceived by the biblical authors. The authors of Scripture rejoiced in this doctrine as a sign of God's love and mercy and grace and sovereignty. This is why we must talk about God's electing love. If he elected us, then he will be faithful to be not only the author of our faith but also the finisher. We know that He will be working for the good of those of us who love Him, who are called according to His saving purpose!

So if God has elected some to salvation, then why do we need to evangelize and tell others the gospel? (*Telling the gospel is the means that God uses to bring the elect to himself. Again, election does not make evangelism pointless, but hopeful. God commands us to tell others the gospel, which brings us to our next topic....*)

V. THE GOSPEL INVITATION (PG. 35)

INVITE STUDENTS TO TURN PAGE TO FIND THIS: *We believe that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the gospel; that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by a cordial, penitent, and obedient faith; and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth, but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the gospel; which rejection involves him in an aggravated condemnation.*

We've established the fact that our salvation begins with God. Now we must seek to understand how this salvation is worked out, and so we come to what is known as the gospel invitation.

Without the gospel invitation, or gospel call, no one would be saved. "**How can [men] believe in the one of whom they have not heard?**" (Rom. 10:14) Paul tells the Thessalonians that God called them to salvation *through the gospel* (II Thes. 2:14). However, it's important to note that the gospel call is one calling with two different aspects.

While a general, external gospel call goes out to all men of which some reject, a stronger, more effective internal call is given by our sovereign God, who summons people to himself in such a way that they always respond in saving faith through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:29 says that those whom God predestined, he also called. As we can see, this calling is an effective calling and is an act of God that guarantees a response because, as Paul goes on to say, those who were called were also justified and glorified. God calls men "**out of darkness into his wonderful light**" (I Peter 2:9).

We are to call everyone to repent of their sins and trust in Christ. But we're also to be aware that not everyone will respond to the gospel. As Jesus said, "**many are called, but few are chosen.**"

Only God can effectually call us to himself. In John 6:44, Jesus says, "**No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.**" In verse 65 of that same chapter, he repeats this teaching: "**No one can come to me unless the Father has enabled Him.**" Those of us who are Christians have been called to be such. We have been given ears to hear and eyes to see the light of the gospel.

We know that we've been chosen and called by God if we have believed God, repented of our sins, and trusted the Lord Jesus Christ. This is what Peter means when he tells God's elect to "**be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure**" (II Pet. 1:10). We do this by examining our lives and seeing if they reflect the biblical teaching of a faithful response to the gospel.

VI. REGENERATION (PG. 36)

We believe that, in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born again; that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind; that it is effected in a manner above our comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit, in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel; and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, and faith, and newness of life.

So when is man considered to be regenerated? Before he hears the gospel or after it? Well, we know from Scripture that regeneration comes before we can respond to the gospel with saving faith. Yet, it's difficult to determine the exact moment in time that a person hears the proclamation of the gospel and is regenerated. We must say, however, that the preaching of the gospel generally coincides with man becoming regenerated. At least this is what happened to the household of Cornelius in Acts 10. While Peter was still speaking the gospel, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message.

Regeneration is an instantaneous event in which the Holy Spirit working in us enables us to have faith and to follow Christ. It is then followed by conversion and justification, which we will come to next.

Regeneration is a total work of God. Man is passive in his own regeneration. He cannot give himself physical life, nor can he give himself spiritual life. It's the work of the Holy Spirit. It is this step of regeneration in the salvific process that is rightly referred to as "being born again."

In Ezekiel 36:26-27, when God is making promises about what He will do for His people, He says, "**I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.**" Notice that it's God who is acting. "*I will*" do these things He says.

John 1:13 says that Christians are "**born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or of a husband's will, but born of God.**" It's God who must take that first step in order to give us the ability to then repent and believe.

Ephesians 2:4-5, "**But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved.**"

This is very important for us to understand. We need to be regenerated first before we can produce saving faith. Many evangelicals today say that if you believe in Christ as your Savior, then you will be born again – after you believe. But Scripture does not say this. For example, in Acts 16:14, Luke says of

Lydia, “**The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul’s message.**” First, God opened her heart, then she was able to respond in faith. It may be for only the smallest fraction of a second, but regeneration does precede faith. We cannot have a soft heart and ears to hear until God give us them.

Finally, it’s important to note that genuine regeneration always produces fruit. True regeneration will be followed by a changed life. Fruit of that regeneration must manifest itself.

God never starts the process of salvation in anyone and then fails to finish it. All that we’re talking about today – regeneration, conversion, justification, all the way to our glorification – is a package deal. Our redemption is authored by God and perfectly completed by Him. Regeneration creates in us a state of heart and spirit that causes us to turn from our sin and commit ourselves to Christ in faith. “**No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God’s seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God**” (1 John 3:9).

Questions or Comments?

VII. CONVERSION (FAITH & REPENTANCE) (PG. 36)

We believe that Repentance and Faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God; whereby being deeply convinced of our guilt, danger and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession, and supplication for mercy; at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our Prophet, Priest and King, and relying on Him alone as the only and all sufficient Savior.

This then brings us to the next section, which is conversion.

Conversion is “our willing response to the gospel call, in which we sincerely repent of sins and place our trust in Christ for our personal salvation.” It’s this step that regeneration gives us the ability to perform by renewing our mind and will.

Biblically, we can talk about conversion as having two elements – faith and repentance. Faith is what we will consider first.

(fill in the blanks) Saving faith in Christ involves three things – knowledge, approval, & personal trust.

Saving faith must include knowledge. This is kind of a no-brainer. ☺ Under the new covenant, we must have some knowledge of who the man Jesus is, what He says about Himself, and the role He claims to play in our lives before we can believe and trust Him. In other words, we must have some basic knowledge and understanding about the facts surrounding Jesus Christ. Again, “**how can a person believe in one whom they have not heard**” (Rom. 10:14)?

Saving faith must also include approval. This second element is also very straightforward. We must assent, or approve, of those facts that we know about Jesus, as revealed to us in Scripture. We must believe that they’re true and that those truths are good and of God.

Jesus says in John 14:11, “**Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves.**”

Saving faith must also include personal trust. This third element is the tough one. Knowledge and belief are not enough. James 2:19 says, “**You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe – and shudder.**” Demons are not saved for their knowledge and belief and neither are we, if we leave

our belief to mere approval without trusting in Christ. To have a biblical faith in Christ, we must adopt the truths about Him into our own lives. We each must personally trust in Christ as our Lord and Savior for the forgiveness of our personal sins.

The second element of conversion is repentance. Repentance may be defined as “a heartfelt sorrow for sin, a renouncing of it, and a sincere commitment to forsake it and walk in obedience to Christ.”

Faith and repentance must go together. Some within evangelicalism claim that presenting a gospel that speaks to repentance is preaching a salvation by works. They say that saving faith only involves trusting in Christ as Savior and that a person can be saved without submitting to Christ as Lord.

Well, this is a watered-down version of the gospel. The grounds of justification are based solely on Christ’s work and not on any merit of our own. The question comes down to what constitutes saving faith? There cannot be true saving faith without genuine repentance. We cannot turn to God without turning from sin. If we are only told to believe without being told to repent, then we have not been told the whole gospel. James tells us that faith without deeds is dead faith (James 2:17).

Paul summarizes the gospel he preached to the Jews and Gentiles as one “**that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus**” (Acts 20:21). Jesus declares in Mark 1:15, “**Repent and believe the good news!**”

It’s also important to note that repentance is not mere sorrow or remorse for one’s actions. It can only be genuine repentance when it’s accompanied by a decision to forsake sin and live in obedience to God. In II Corinthians 7:9-10 Paul says, “**I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance...Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorry brings death.**”

True faith and repentance begin to occur at one point in our lives, but they’re not only for that one point. Faith and repentance will mark the true Christian throughout their lives, as God carries his work to completion.

VIII. JUSTIFICATION (PG. 37)

We believe that the great Gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in Him is Justification; that Justification includes the pardon of sin, and the promise of eternal life on principles of righteousness; that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood; by virtue of which faith His perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us of God; that it brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God, and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity.

The next step in the logical order of salvation is that of justification.

Justification is “an instantaneous legal act of God in which He 1) thinks of our sins as forgiven and of Christ’s righteousness as belonging to us, and 2) declares us to be righteous in His sight.” This is the step that happens simultaneously with our conversion. It’s the step that changes our legal position, or standing, before God immediately and forever.

Unlike the steps of regeneration and conversion that are done internally and spiritually, justification is an external, legal work. If we think of regeneration as comparable to the work of a surgeon creating a new heart, justification would then be comparable to the work of a judge. It is an external, legal declaration by God of our position before God – namely that we are now righteous, or clean, or “not guilty” before Him.

So how does this work? Well, the process by which we are justified before God following conversion is called imputation. Imputation is “the process whereby God ‘credits Christ’s righteousness to our account,’ just as He ‘credited our sins to Christ’s account’ on the cross.”

It’s instantaneous upon our true confession of faith in Christ. It’s based on that faith alone, not on any works of merit, and it’s a final determination of our position before God. In other words, God thinks of Christ’s righteousness as belonging to us, and He thinks of our sin as belonging to Christ. “Christ does not simply merit for us grace so that we can then produce good works and earn our way to heaven,” as is the position of Roman Catholicism. Scripture is clear on this point. The Roman Catholic view of justification is based on infused righteousness rather than imputed righteousness. By being infused, God actually puts righteousness into us, which changes us internally and morally. Then based on the measure of righteousness God has infused into us, we are given varying measures of justification and not total justification. In this sense, we are justified by God’s grace plus some merit of our own, as we make ourselves fit to receive the grace of justification as we grow in it through good works.

In Galatians 2:16 Paul writes “**that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.**”

It’s very important that we remember the reason for the occurrence of this process and declaration. Our faith in Christ is the “trigger” for justification. Faith is itself a gift of God that we have no ability to obtain or exercise on our own. Left alone we simply cannot produce saving faith, and we cannot earn faith or salvation by any act or merit on our part. Therefore, we must conclude that we are justified by God’s grace alone through faith alone.

Have you ever wondered why faith is the means that God uses to justify the sinner? Why didn’t God use love or humility or kindness? Well, God uses faith because it goes exactly contrary to dependence on ourselves. Trusting in God for our righteousness is in direct conflict with man’s desire to depend on his own good works for salvation. It is God who will receive the praise and glory in salvation and not man. It is Christ’s righteousness that makes us not guilty.

This doctrinal point of “justification by faith alone”, rather than by works or faith and works, is the cornerstone of protestant theology and – more importantly, the gospel.

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast” (Eph. 2:8-9). Romans 5:1 states, “Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Romans 5:4-6, “and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵ and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. ⁶ For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.”

Questions or Comments?

Does election make us robots that do not have real choices? Our choices are voluntary because they are what we want and decide to do. We also have real responsibility for our choices. A supervisor often directs the actions of his employees without violating their freedom or responsibility so too does God but in a greater and more perfect sense. I Peter 2:8 says of the wicked, “**They stumble because they disobey the message – which is also what they were destined for.**” For the righteous we can say “that God causes us to choose Christ voluntarily.” (*Other examples are Pharaoh, Joseph and his brothers, etc.*)

Question: What does the doctrine of justification mean for us by way of application? It means that 1) we are free from fruitless efforts to try to save ourselves by our own goodness; 2) we are free to regard others the way God regards his children and to love and forgive them in their own shortcomings; 3) the gospel is applicable for missions to everyone all over the world because all men from every race are in Adam and his sin; 4) by relying on Christ's righteousness keeps us from despair in our standing with God; and 5) Christ must be exalted and honored in our lives as the one who provided perfect righteousness for us.

Question: Scripture says that Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness. Does this mean that our faith is what God reckons as righteous? No. The righteousness that is received is the righteousness of Christ (an external righteousness) secured in his obedience to death on the cross. We obtain this righteousness through trusting in Him and not depending on ourselves and own works. II Corinthians 5:21 says, "**God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.**" In Romans 5:12-19, Paul clearly shows that through Jesus men receive righteousness just as in Adam men received judgment.