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The Herald of His Grace

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Volume XVI
Issue 396

The Justification of Sin

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

Previously, in an article entitled *The Ultimate Freedom from Sin: Justification!*¹ I dealt with the doctrine of justification. In this article we will probe even deeper into this amazing theme.

FORGIVENESS AND JUSTIFICATION CONTRASTED

In dealing with the justification of the sinner, we noted the contrast between forgiveness and justification. Justification is by far superior to forgiveness. The deficiency of forgiveness is that it is rooted in guilt, and can actually be rescinded – as seen in the message given to Israel by our Lord Jesus Christ in His “Kingdom of Heaven” teachings (Matthew 18:23-35).

Forgiveness is at the core of religious teaching and activity, and at the root of forgiveness is guilt. Religious followers seek to obtain forgiveness through some means such as confessions, prayers, penance, resolutions, etc. They must keep their daily sin-slate “clean,” as it were.

As a result, many people labor under a heavy weight of guilt and shame. Thankfully, through the teaching of our Apostle, Paul, we learn of something far greater than forgiveness. That something is justification.

In our previous installment we looked at *our* justification – the justification of *sinners*. Now we will consider the justification of *sin itself*.

THE DEFINITION OF JUSTIFICATION

In our former study we recognized the true meaning of justification: to be declared or constituted righteous. It is not merely that we have been *given* righteousness;



we have been *made* righteous – and not just any righteousness either: it’s the righteousness of God (II Corinthians 5:21).

THE DEFINITION OF SIN

With the meaning of justification firmly in place, we will now consider the definition of “*sin*.”

From a young child I heard the word sin defined as “missing the mark.” I never really knew why that was so, until much later in life. Judges 20:16 provides us with the ability to see clearly this sense.

*Among all this people there were seven hundred chosen men left-handed; every one could sling stones at an hair-breadth,² and **not miss** (Judges 20:16).*

Here we have sling-shot sharp shooters. They could hit the bull’s eye and “*not miss*.” The Hebrew word for “miss” here is *châtâ* (*khaw-taw*), and is also rendered as our English word “*sin*.” Thus to “sin” means to “miss.” These words are identical.

TO SIN IS TO MISS

To “sin” is to aim for a target and “miss.” We miss constantly. Throughout the day there is a steady flow of missing taking place in our lives.

2. The width of a hair.

(see *JUSTIFICATION*, page 3567)

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1. Bible Student's Notebook #296.



Bible Student's Notebook™

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This free weekly electronic publication (52 times a year) is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation of God's purpose to save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11);
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the church, the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Romans 11:13);
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15);
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13);
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with:
 - total freedom from sins (Colossians 1:14);
 - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6);
 - adult sonship position (Galatians 4).

This publication is a joint effort of a few members of the body of Christ. It is a product of our individual lives and ministries together. We do not claim infallibility for its contents. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

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PO Box 265, Windber, PA 15963

Office: (800) 784-6010

Local: (814) 701-0063

Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr. – Editor

(clyde@studyshef.com)

André Sneider – Managing Editor

Rick Lemons – Associate Editor

Department Managers and Assistant Editors

Windber, PA: Clyde L. Pilkington, III, Nathan H. Pilkington, Janet L. Maher, Aaron Locker

Treasure Lake, PA: Steven Hill

Amherst, VA: Nadine Sneider

Canada: Don Bast

Netherlands: Wim Janse

Foreign Representatives:

Australia:

Robert Tangchue
12 Weeroona St
Chermside Brisbane
Queensland 4032
rtangchue@optusnet.com.au

Canada:

Rick & Donna Longva
5211 Morrison Place
Peachland BC V0H 1X2
www.GodisGod.ca
rick@godisgod.ca

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JUSTIFICATION (continued from front page)

After awaking, I get into the shower and forget to bring my towel with me, soaking the floor in my path to obtain one. I missed.

When finished with breakfast I put the milk in the cabinet instead of the refrigerator, which spoiled and had to be thrown away. I missed.

At my desk I print a document from my computer, without changing the previous setting of 10 copies. I threw away 9 five-page papers. I missed.

Heading to the bank to make a deposit, and desiring to be as efficient as possible, I arranged other stops for my outing: the grocery store, the Post Office, and to gas up the car. I return home having completed all of my errands with the exception of the very one that I actually went out for initially – making my deposit. I missed again.

Working on some shelving I cut a board too short for my project and had to return to the hardware store for a repurchase. I missed.

Someone very dear was in need of some very encouraging words. I desperately desired to help. I misspoke and did the exact opposite of my heart's intent. I missed.

Headed for an important appointment I passed my on-ramp for the freeway, making me late. I missed.

Tired, exasperated from a long weary day, encountering a situation outside of my control, I speak sharply to a loved one. I missed, yet again.

I AM A MISS-ER

No matter how hard I try, and how many times I actually come close to a target, and even occasionally hit it (or at least think I do), the fact remains that I am a miss-er. A *big* miss-er. God created me so. It is a hard lot in life.

The truth is, I am not alone: we're all miss-ers. God's only expectation for us is to miss, for this is how He made us. We have been subject to sin's vanity.

As with all of God's other plans, there is a divine purpose in His designing us to miss. Sin is the cir-

cumstance of our being drawn to God, the training ground of our growth and maturity, and the backdrop that contrasts the righteousness of God.

**HIT OR MISS
RIGHT OR WRONG
GOOD OR BAD**

Under certain conditions any specific act may be a bull's-eye. Under other circumstances the same act may be a miss. Any single act can be right *or* wrong.

Take the eating of fruit for example. It could be healthy or deadly. An old saying states "An apple a day keeps the doctor away." Perhaps there is some over-inflated merit to this adage.

However, though the eating of a piece of fruit may be seen as good, rather than bad, change the circumstances and what is "good" or "healthy" can become "bad" or "deadly." Take the circumstances in Eden's garden. There the eating of fruit was seriously deadly.

**HIT AND MISS
RIGHT AND WRONG
GOOD AND BAD**

It may be easy to see how any act can be hit or miss, good or bad; but the fact of the matter is that any act may be both good *and* bad. This is an important key to divine revelation. Any single act actually can be both right *and* wrong at the same time. At first thought, this may seem really odd to us – even incomprehensible.

When seen in the light of Divine purpose, though, acts of wrong are justified. When mistakes, trials and tragedies strike, if we could only know God's purpose, we would be able to see that they are actually for our ultimate benefit.

All troubles, misses and evil are only preparation for the counter-balanced glory that awaits us in the future.

THE DIVINE SIDE OF SIN

If only we could see beyond the mere current circumstances surrounding sin, we could understand that missing *always* has a divine side. We have for too long looked *only* at the human side of sin. Very ►



Where do the Scriptures teach God is a “gentleman” who will not impose His will on anyone? Nowhere. It’s fabricated out of thin air. few know anything about the divine side which, of course, is the real truth concerning it.

God never misses (or sins). When Adam sinned in the garden this did not take God by surprise. God’s plans for Adam did not miss. God did not need to abandon His plan “A” and generate a plan “B.” God’s target was perfectly hit. For Adam it was a miss. For God it was a bull’s-eye. So it is with *all* of God’s work.

In due time, when the veil of circumstances are fully removed, all sin will be justified – constituted right.

God has given us, in the pages of Scripture, examples for which we can see a glimpse beyond the veil of circumstances.

THE GREATEST EXAMPLE

The greatest example of an act being both right *and* wrong is the event at Calvary (Acts 2:23).

[Christ] *being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.*

Who can question the fact that the event of Calvary was both good *and* evil? This verse clearly exhibits this great example.

We see two distinct things in these words of Peter.

– The Divine Side:

[Christ] *being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God*

Look at how other versions have translated the words “*determinate counsel.*”

before-determined purpose (Green)

settled purpose (Weymouth)

marked out counsel (Rotherham)

predestined course (Moffatt)

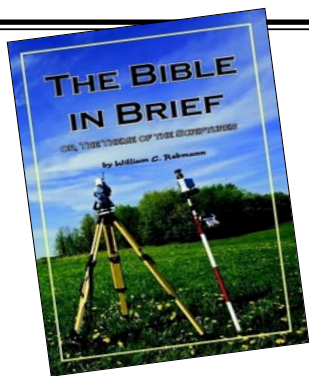
fixed purpose (Diaglott)

Can there be any doubt that the death of Christ was the *good* hand of God for benefit?

– The Human Side:

You have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.

Can it not equally be seen that the “assassination” (CV) of Christ was the *evil* hand of man for wrong?



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In the events of Calvary we see good *and* evil, right *and* wrong, hit *and* miss, righteousness *and* sin, Divine *and* human – *both* sides in need of the other.

ANOTHER GREAT EXAMPLE

Probably the greatest example of good and evil residing in the same acts, outside of the death of Christ, is to be found in the life of Joseph. Why wouldn't it be this way, since Joseph is perhaps the greatest type of Christ in Hebrew Scriptures?

In Genesis 37 we see the evil against Joseph unfold. His brothers:

hated him (:4);

hated him yet the more (:5);

hated him yet the more (:8);

envied him (:11);

conspired to slay him (:18);

cast him into a pit (:24);

sold him (:28).

Years later, when Joseph finally revealed himself to his brothers, he clearly presented the human side of the equation.

I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt (45:4).

You sold me (:5).

Joseph was also quick, however, to reveal the divine side of the equation as well.

God did send me before you to preserve life (:5).

God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance (:7).

So now it was not you that sent me here, but God (:8).

But as for you, you thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive (50:20).

EVIL PRODUCES A FAR GREATER GOOD

If Joseph had not been sold into slavery many would have died of starvation. God used evil to produce a far greater good. This is God's method and way that,

Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding weight of glory lasting for the ages (II Corinthians 4:17).

Moffatt translates this verse,

The slight trouble of the passing hour results in a solid glory past all comparison.

Only the eye of faith can apprehend this startling truth. For example, there could be no resurrection of immortality without the cold, dark stillness of death.

THE DIVINE SCALE OF JUSTICE

God not only brings vast good from the ruins of evil, but He does so *abundantly*. The divine scale of justice over-compensates evil with good.

10 ounces of lightweight affliction is compensated in the divine scale of justice with a 10-ton weight of glory – and that which lasted but a moment, in comparison will endure for the ages.

Little wonder that Paul wrote,

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us (Romans 8:18).

SHOULD WE DO EVIL SO THAT GOOD CAN RESULT?

Some may suppose that what we are saying is that we should devise to do evil so that good may come as its result. This is certainly *not* the case, for we can't bring good out of evil – only God can do that. This is not a human ability, but a divine one. ►

Those of us who love God, who are the called according to His purpose, have

... an awareness that He is working all together for good (Romans 8:28).

For He is the God Who declares,

I form light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil. I, the Lord, do all these things (Isaiah 45:7).

Teach this truth, ever so plain, and someone will slander you regarding it. Such was the case with Paul. Listen to his words:

We are slanderously reported, and some affirm that we say, "Let us do evil, that good may come" (Romans 3:8).

SIN IS NOT ETERNAL

One day God will justify sin and evil and will bring them to a permanent end. By making sin eternal, Christendom has painted a picture of an eternally marred universe. According to them, sin will be an eternal blight on God's creation. Thankfully, such is not the case.

Both sin and evil are God's servants. Their tenure is temporary. When they have accomplished their in-

The Cost

The word "lost" itself has a force in it in favor of the doctrine of universal grace and salvation. Men could not be lost if they did not belong to God. It would be impossible to lose a man who belonged nowhere. When, therefore, God speaks of sinners as being "lost," it shows they belong to Him. All men are lost while in a state of sin.

— Thomas Whittemore (1800-1861)
Voices of the Faith, 1887

tended purpose, they will be forever removed from God's universe.

WRITE ALL WRONGS OR RIGHT ALL WRONGS

God will eventually right all wrongs and eliminate all evil. Thus, of designed necessity, He will clear all charges of wrongdoing.

Some envision that the end result – for all eternity – is that of God will "Write all Wrongs" and torture His creation endlessly. Instead, He will "Right all Wrongs" and restore all of His creation to Himself.

Will it be just for God to "right" instead of "write" all wrongs? What about all of the crimes and injustices committed by His creatures?

In righting all wrongs, all will be compensated. God will eternally make it worth evil's mere transit appearance on the scene of this life.

When God has made all things right, we will also fully know His great wisdom in ordaining all that, from the human viewpoint, was merely sin and evil. The veil of earthly circumstances will be lifted permanently, and we shall behold the only thing that is left – the Divine.

It is then that we will clearly behold how every trouble and torment of evil, operating in the hand of God its Sovereign, produced multifaceted, superfluous benefit for every life that it afflicted. The overabundant compensation flowing from Calvary's hill will cause every "miss" (or mistake) to vanish away in the overbearing light of contrasting glory.

Well did A.E. Knoch write in his classic work, *The Problem of Evil*,³

The great doctrine of justification consists in *surrounding* our sins with a divine environment in which they are not merely covered, or condoned, but actually transmuted into just [righteous] deeds which will be vindicated before the bar of universal justice. ■


3. For further reading and study on this marvelous theme read pages 140-149 of *The Problem of Evil* by A.E. Knoch



I just got my last order of books from [Study Shelf](#). Thanks for the quick service and I might add when I get a box of books from you all I am like a child getting a birthday gift: I rip open the package to see what's in it even though I know it is going to be books. The next thing is that I will look at each one and open them to read the introduction and the contents of each book then decide which to read first. Once again thank you and God bless you and all who are working to get the word out to others that they may not only learn the Word of God Rightly divided but properly translated. – **IL**

Getting used to the fact that God is the Creator of both good and evil is a BIG step in seeing the importance of suffering. I suppose folks being receptive to suffering as a gift from God is a matter of timing with Father. Suffering for Christ's Sake is a huge honor and one that requires much prayer, courage and patience. Some days I'm just not up to the challenge – other days are better. Maybe this is one lesson that we never stop growing in. Maybe this lesson is the hardest of all! Anyway, I'll always be thankful that you led me in this great truth. Still loving you and your ministry. – **LA**

I am but a toddler in Christ but I have learned one hard truth; Lord Jesus advised His disciples (Matthew 7:14) that “... *narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.*” Even though He spoke this in a Circumcision context, I feel almost certain that Paul would agree that this statement applies just as well to the Evangel of Grace – maybe even more so. Grace is free, but it ain't cheap and it sure ain't easy. In fact it is downright greasy; a lot like driving a double-wide tractor trailer along a curvy icy half-lane. Either you risk sliding over the right shoulder and getting mixed up with Law and duty with healthy helpings of guilt and shame



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 by —Martin Zender
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 Think your sins are ruining God's plan for your life?
 Think again.

for failing both, or you slide over the left shoulder into New Age or Emergent Church philosophies that make the Lord Jesus into one of a long line of holy men/avatars who are going to lead all mankind to Nirvana/Heaven regardless of beliefs, and why? Because we're all basically members-in-good-standing of the Family of Man doing the best we can.

In light of all this I'm not surprised in the least that “*all who are in Asia have turned away from me*” (1 Timothy 1:15). It is perilously easy for anyone to commit apostasy, especially as we near the end of this present wicked eon.

I myself have almost slid off the path twice in the past two years; once into the arms of my local SDA church via their famed Prophecy Seminars, and then most recently was caught up into the Mayan Calendar December 21 2012 craze. – **OR**

I just wanted to say thank you for your faithfulness to getting out the true message. My brother exposed me to the true evangel almost two years ago through the writings of Martin Zender, and I fought mightily against that message for nearly a year trying to dispute this incredible message of hope and grace. When the Lord saw fit to open my mind to the truth, I was floored and I remain completely awed! Through the very act of trying to do everything I could to dispute the evangel, the Lord used my fighting to reveal the truth. I'm so thankful to your ministry as well as that of so many others that I'm blessed to have been exposed to. I've read a couple of your books and am currently reading [The Church in Ruins](#). Wow! I think that says it all. – **WI**

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