

The Order of Salvation: Justification

Introduction: Courtroom drama

1. The Cast

- The Holy God

God the Father - "The LORD our God is holy," Ps 99:9

God the Son - "The Holy One of God," Mark 1:24, Luke 4:34, John 6:69

God the Spirit - The Holy Spirit - 91 times

- Humanity

*The fool says in his heart, "There is no God."
They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds;
there is none who does good.*

*The Lord looks down from heaven on the children of man,
to see if there are any who understand,
who seek after God.*

*They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt;
there is none who does good,
not even one.*

- Psalm 14:1-3

Implication: Understand the issue - Isaiah 6:1-5

2. The Crime: Sin's gravity and guilt

Boso: "Surely, one act of repentance should be sufficient to atone for sin?"

Anselm: "You have not sufficiently considered the gravity of sin."¹

Sin as a power (cf Gen 4:7; Zech 13:1; Gal 3:22; Heb 3:13; James 1:15)

Sin as a corporate reality (cf Ex 34:9; Is 1:4-17; Dan 9:1-19; Eph 2:1-3)

Sins as individual and culpable thoughts and actions against God

Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.
Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin!
For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.
Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight.

- Psalm 51:1-3

Sin as that which incurs God's wrath (cf Deut 28; Mt 5:29-30; Rom 1:18)

"[It is] impossible to close one's eyes to the words of the wrath of God in Scripture. To interpret it on allegorical lines or as a metonymy, and to regard wrath as a synonym for punishment, is to misread the authentic meaning of the word and to misrepresent biblical thought."²

Implication: Every mouth stopped, every person accountable

¹ Anselm of Canterbury, *Cur Deus Homo?* l.xxi

² Abraham Heschel, *The Prophets* (New York: Harper and Row, 1955), p.359, cited in Oliver D. Crisp & Fred Sanders, *Locating Atonement: Explorations in Constructive Dogmatics* (Los Angeles Theology Conference) (Zondervan, Kindle Edition) loc. 3331

3. The Christ

– Put forward by God... (cf Galatians 4:4; 1 John 4:10)

– As a propitiation...

And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. - Ephesians 5:2

“How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.” - Hebrews 9:14

“My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” - 1 John 2:1

– Such that through faith in him...

We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified. - Gal 2:15-16

Saving faith... “is the outgoing act of the heart whereby one, in surrendering to Christ and receiving him, entrust body and soul to him in order that he would save him.”

–Wilhelmus à Brakel, *The Christian’s Reasonable Service*³

– All who believe are justified.

3 Vol. II (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2015) p.278

A. The sin and penalty of the believer imputed to Jesus Christ

"For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God." - 1 Peter 3:18a

"For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." - 2 Corinthians 5:21

"Wrath is not beneficence; it is justice. It would be frightful to imagine wrath acting in the freeness of free beneficence, and not in the stringency of stringent justice. The universe were one vast hell of suspense and horror, if God's wrath could alight elsewhere than where it is deserved."

- Hugh Martin, *The Atonement*⁴

B. The righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed to the believer

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them." - Matthew 5:17

"And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption..." - 1 Corinthians 1:30

"For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous."

- Romans 5:17-19

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C. The guilt of sin is dealt with definitively

"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us."

- Romans 8:1-4

⁴ *The Atonement – in its Relations to the Covenant, the Priesthood, the Intercession of our Lord* (Kindle Edition) p.146

Implications:

Worship Jesus Christ

And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain...And they sang a new song, saying,

*“Worthy are you to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God
from every tribe and language and people and nation,
and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God,
and they shall reign on the earth.”*

- Revelation 5:6-9

Have confidence in Jesus Christ and not yourself

“...as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

- 1 Cor 1:31

Be assured in Jesus Christ

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. 10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

- Romans 5:6-11

Rejoice