

## Eschatological Impact of Justification in Taking Us Beyond Judgment

"Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life. John 5:24

From the above biblical text one thing is certain, that is, as justified Christians our deeds on earth are not the basis of our salvation or attaining eternal life. Hence, for us Christians the coming of Christ will be an occasion of jubilation and celebration as there will be no condemnation. How then do we understand Romans 14:10 and 2 Corinthians 5:10 (*For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ (Romans 14:10) / For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10)*). This judgment cannot be confused with either of the other judgments because the Holy Spirit used a Greek word to describe the Judgment Seat of Christ that is peculiar and different from the Greek words used in connection with other judgments. Here the word used is bema. It appears in classical Greek to identify the judge's seat in the arena of the Olympic games. The bema was the seat whereon the judge sat, not to punish contestants, but to present awards to the victors. When Christians stand before the bema of Christ, it will be for the express purpose of being rewarded according to their works. There is no idea of inflicting punishment.<sup>37</sup>

Hence, we note that believers will also be judged, but at a different judgment location called the "judgment seat of Christ" (Romans 14:10). The special preference accorded is due to the fact that Christ's righteousness has been imputed to us and we have our names written in the Book of Life. Here the judgment is about rewarding those with having a right standing with Christ (justification) and not punishment for the good things left undone or the bad things done.

Only in Christ the Savior is a man freed from the liability of guilt, sin, and shame. Our right standing before our Judge is established on one thing only: the finished work of Christ crucified who shed His blood so we could live (John 19:30). We are released from our sins by His blood (Revelation 1:5). He has reconciled us in His earthly body through His death (Colossians 1:22). Jesus bore our sins in His own Body on the cross so that by His wounds we are healed (1 Peter 2:24). We are made holy through the offering up of Jesus' body as a sacrifice once for all (Hebrews 10:10). Christ appeared once for all to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (Hebrews 9:26). God sent His Son to remove the wrath that we ourselves deserved (1 John 4:10). The penalty of sin that is rightly ours is absolved by grace through faith, not by any righteous deeds of our own (Ephesians 2:8-9).<sup>38</sup>

**CONCLUSION** As we have noted, to be justified is a declaration that we are considered righteous or made right with God. It is God's declaration, based on Christ's righteousness being imputed to those chosen by God to be His children. The Reformers did cautiously underline the theological notion that justification does not make one righteous, but

rather pronounces one as righteous. Therefore because of justification believers could have peace with God and the assurance of salvation and need not fear judgment and eternal condemnation.

1. **There is a wonderful immunity.** "Shall not come into judgment." Much of the blessings of redemption consist, not in what we shall enjoy, but in what we shall evade; and this will be a great evasion. "Shall not come," etc. And why? Because it is passed. Eternal life and judgment are opposed to each other, and are respectively the results of faith and no faith in Christ. Judgment is in the region of death, but the believer has come out of that. There can be no real judgment for the possessor of life. "Who can lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" in this case the final examination is in the preliminary. Pass this, and you pass all.