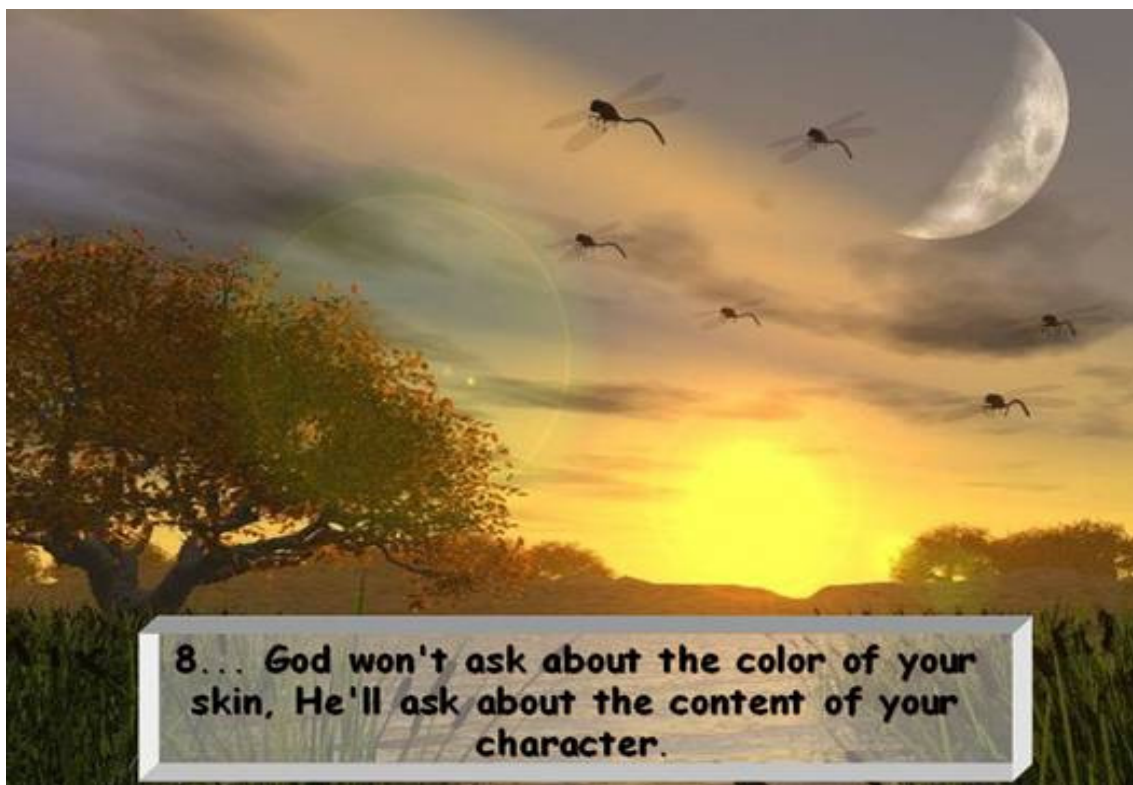


Christ Our Righteousness



Graham F. Watts, Sr.

VISION: To hear the midnight cry, “The bridegroom comes, go out to meet Him” (Matthew 25:6) and become like Him when I see Him as He is (1 John 3:2).

MISSION: Purify myself even as Christ is pure (1 John 3:3) to be glad, to rejoice, give honor to Christ and be ready for the marriage of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7).

VALUES: Follow the Lamb wherever He goes (Revelation 14:4), be without fault before God (Revelation 14:5), be perfect even as my Father in heaven is perfect (Matthew 5:48), wear the Lamb’s fine, clean and white linen (Revelation 19:8) do righteously (1 John 3:10) and walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8).

OVERALL AIM: Studies presented here unveil Bible knowledge to inquiring minds to prompt the following inquiries: “Are our feet on the rock of ages? Are we one with Christ as He is one with the Father” (John 10:30 in Evangelism, {Ev} 199.1)? Am I crucified with Christ (Galatians 2:20)?

23 PURPOSE/REASON FOR/WHY

24

25 The purpose of this study is to teach about being justified by faith (Romans 5:1).

26

27 OBJECTIVE/WHAT WE WANT TO ACCOMPLISH

28

29 This study instructs participants how to live justification or righteousness by faith.

30

31 SIGNIFICANCE - SO WHAT

32

33 Although Isaiah reminds us that "...all our righteousness is as filthy rags..." (Isaiah 64:6), John describes
34 a Laodicean people with an overconfident, self-dependent attitude (Revelation 3:17). What a mess!

35 **"We must have knowledge of ourselves, a knowledge that will result in contrition [i.e., repentance];
36 otherwise the arrows of God will fail to penetrate the soul encased in a self-righteous armor].**

37 **...We must know our real condition or we shall NOT feel our need of [help from Christ]. We must
38 understand our danger, or we shall NOT flee to the refuge. We must feel the pain of our wounds**

39 **or we should NOT desire healing"** (Christ's Object Lessons, {COL} 158.1). These statements prompt
40 reflection on God's judicial act of justification and His declaration of a state of righteousness.

41

42 BACKGROUND CONTEXT

43

44 Jesus mediates for us at the right hand of the Father (Acts 2:33; 7:55-56, Colossians 3:1, Hebrews 12:2,
45 1 Peter 3:22, Revelation 5:1-7, Daniel 7:13). We can come boldly to the throne of grace (Hebrews 4:16)
46 while Jesus, our "...merciful and faithful high priest... makes reconciliation for the sins of [His] people"
47 (Hebrews 2:17). When mediation ceases, "[Christ will say], 'It is done.' 'He that is unjust, let him be
48 unjust still: and he who is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still:
49 and he that is holy, let him be holy still'" (Revelation 22:11 in Fundamentals of Christian Education,
50 {FE} 363.1). *Which righteous would you and I possess when Christ leaves the Most Holy place?* As in
51 the days of Ezra, it can be said, "O Lord God of Israel, ...[You are] righteous, ...[but] we are before
52 [You] in our trespasses [and] we cannot stand before [You] because of this" (Ezra 9:15). It is no
53 surprise that Paul says, "All have sinned and **come short of the glory of God**" (Romans 3:23), "...there
54 is non-righteousness, not one" (Romans 3:10). **"No [person] can ...understand his/her errors. 'The
55 heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it' (Jeremiah 17:9). The lips
56 express a poverty of soul that the heart does not acknowledge. While speaking to God of poverty of
57 spirit, the heart may be swelling with the conceit of its own superior humility and exalted righteousness"**
58 (Christ's Object Lessons, {COL} 159.1). These charges provided the impetus for the study questions.

59

60 **STUDY QUESTIONS**

61

62 What is justification? What does it mean to be justified? What is the human role in justification?

63

64

65 **ANSWER SOURCE: HOLY BIBLE**

66

67 Items one and two answer the first question; items three and four answer the second question.

68

69 1. "...We have believed in Jesus Christ that we might be justified by the faith of Christ..." (Galatians
70 2:16). So what is justification? Easton's Bible dictionary says, when God justifies, He "...**pardon**
71 **all the sins** of those who believe in Christ and **treats them as** righteous in the eyes of the law, i.e.,
72 as **conformed to all the law's demands**. **The law** is not relaxed or set aside, but is **declared**
73 **...fulfilled...** and **the justified person is declared entitled to all advantages and rewards from**
74 **perfect obedience to the law**" (<http://www.biblegateway.com>). Indeed, "**The righteousness of**
75 **God**, [which is] by faith [in] Jesus Christ, **[comes] upon all them that believes**" (Romans 3:22).
76 "...All things are possible to [them] that believe" (Matthew 9:23). Like faithful Abraham, who
77 believed God's promise and his belief earned credit on his account as righteousness (Romans 4:3,
78 Galatians 3:6 & James 2:23), you and I become righteous because we believe in the Lamb that God
79 provided for Himself (Genesis 22:8) and this Lamb, Jesus Christ (John 1:29), God's sin offering
80 (Isaiah 53:7 & 10, 2 Corinthians 5:21) is "...our sufficiency..." (2 Corinthians 3:5). **God's judicial**
81 **act, justification, declares the living righteous.**

82

83 2. **God's judicial act also covers those who die in the Lord.** Truly, "...blessed are the dead who die
84 in the Lord..." (Revelation 14:13). Under the fifth seal, John saw "under the altar the souls of them
85 that were slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held" (Revelation 6:9). "They
86 cried with a loud voice, saying, 'How long, O Lord, holy and true, [will] thou not judge and avenge
87 our blood on them that dwell on the earth?'" (Revelation 6:10). "**White robes** were given unto...
88 them and it was said unto them that they should rest for a little season until their fellow servants and
89 brethren should be killed as they were..." (Revelation 6:11). The white robes given to the deceased
90 who have died in the Lord also cover the great multitude that came out of great tribulation
91 (Revelation 7:9, 13-14). This white robe, a.k.a., fine linen, clean and white is the righteousness of

92 saints (Revelation 19:8), which they received from believing in Jesus Christ (Galatians 2:16). We
 93 have defined justification! Let us turn attention to what it means to be justified.

- 94
- 95 3. **Justified people have a new identity.** “As many of [us] as have been baptized into Christ have **put**
 96 **on Christ**” (Galatians 3:27). “...In Christ, [we have] all [been] **made alive**” (1 Corinthians 15:22)
 97 and designated “a **peculiar people... called out of darkness...**” (1 Peter 2:9) that have “...**cast off**
 98 **the works of darkness**” (Romans 13:12 & Galatians 5:19-21). By faith in Christ Jesus, we become
 99 **children of God** (Galatians 3:26), and as **new creatures**; old things [have] passed away...” (2
 100 Corinthians 5:17) [because God] “...made [Christ] to be sin for us... that we might be made the
 101 righteousness of God in [Christ]” (2 Corinthians 5:21). “...Jesus... is [our]...wisdom, righteousness,
 102 sanctification and redemption” (1 Corinthians 1:30) [and through Him we have] “...**citizenship with**
 103 **saints and [members of God’s] household**” (Ephesians 2:19, Galatians 6:10). Members of the
 104 heavenly community search for “...a city [that has] foundations...” (Hebrews 11:10), **pray the**
 105 **Psalms prayer: “Lead me in thy righteousness...”** (Psalms 5:8; 23:3) and are **not frightened by**
 106 **trials** for they recognize that neither “...tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril
 107 nor sword [shall separate us from the love of Christ]” (Romans 8:35). There is more to justification.
 108
- 109 4. **Justified people experience joy in the Lord.** “**We also [have] joy in God, through our Lord**
 110 **Jesus Christ**, by whom **we have received the [at-one-ment]**” [i.e., oneness or reconciliation with
 111 God]—Easton’s 1897 Bible Dictionary]” (Romans 5:11 & 1 John 4:10, NIV). Because we have joy
 112 in God, our souls boast all day long (Psalms 34: 2 & 44:8). Not surprisingly, Paul says, “Rejoice in
 113 the Lord always...” (Philippians 4:4). No temporal, circumstances preclude rejoicing in God because
 114 we are perfect and complete in all the will of God in Christ (Colossians 2:10 & 4:12). Are we
 115 rejoicing? Is our rejoicing in the Lord? We should rejoice in God because **Christ not only**
 116 **reconciles us to God but also gives us the garment of praise for the Spirit of heaviness so that**
 117 **we become trees of righteousness...** (Isaiah 61:3). “...**The joy of the Lord is our strength**”
 118 (Nehemiah 8:10). Is the emphasis on joy too much or misplaced? **Examine Isaiah 61:10: “...My**
 119 **soul shall be joyful in my God! He has clothed me with the... robe of righteousness.”**

120 SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS – God justifies and treats as righteous all who have faith in Christ
 121 (Galatians 3:8). God credits the account of every repentant sinner with the perfection of Christ’s
 122 character and provides membership in the family of God. God also gives unspeakable joy to whomever
 123 He justifies, so be comforted in the fierce battles with self because “...no condemnation [comes upon]
 124 them who are in Christ...” (Romans 8:1).

126 ANSWER SOURCE: SACRED WRITINGS

127
 128 Humans have a role in justification. Christ told the people that His followers must deny self and bear a
 129 cross (Mark 8:34). A description of self-denial follows.

130
 131 When we SUBMIT ourselves to Christ,

- 132
- 133 1. The **heart** is united with His heart,
- 134 2. The **will** is merged in His will,
- 135 3. The **mind** becomes one with His mind,
- 136 4. The **thoughts** are brought into captivity to Him;
- 137 5. **WE LIVE HIS LIFE IS WHAT IT MEANS TO BE CLOTHED WITH THE**
 138 **GARMENT OF HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS** (The Faith I Live By, {FLB} 113.4).

139
 140 WHOSE LIFE ARE WE LIVING? Am I, are you crucified with Christ? Can we say that Christ lives
 141 in us and the life we now live in the flesh, we live by the faith of the Son of God (Galatians 2:20)?
 142 “[There are] those who... waver between hope and fear, longing to be saved from their sins and
 143 receive the pardoning love of Christ, yet held in doubt and bondage by timidity and fear of failure.
 144 ...Surrender... to God and venture upon His mercy without delay” (Christian Experience and
 145 Teachings {CET} 17.3). **All the divine indicators point to surrender. Observe the following texts:**
 146 “[...we] belong to Christ...” (Mark 9:41), “[we were] bought with a price” (1 Corinthians 6:20 & 7:23);
 147 “[...we are ambassadors for Christ...” (2 Corinthians 5:20) and “[we] are ...children of light...” (1
 148 Thessalonians 5:5).

149
 150 “The Lord Jesus Christ requires ENTIRE submission” (The Adventist Home, {AH} 116.1). “..**The**
 151 **believer ...[can be] like Christ:** [i.e.,] **obedient to all the principles of the law.** [However, we are]
 152 ...unable to reach this condition. **The holiness that God's word declares [we] must have before [we]**

153 **can be saved, is the result of the working of divine grace as [we] bow in submission to the discipline**
 154 **and restraining influences of the spirit of truth**” (The Acts of the Apostles, {AA} 532.1). **“So utterly**
 155 **was Christ emptied of self that He made no plans for Himself. He accepted God's plans for Him**
 156 **and [daily] the Father unfolded His plans. So should we depend upon God that our lives may be**
 157 **the simple outworking of His will**” (The Desire of Ages, {DA} 208.2). Christ rose a great while
 158 before day and departed to a solitary place to pray (Mark 1:35). “...O my Father, if it [is] possible, let
 159 this cup pass from me, nevertheless, not as I will but as thou wilt” (Matthew 26:39); “...Thy will be done
 160 in earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10 & Luke 11:2). “I have glorified thee on the earth; I have
 161 finished the work [you] gave me to do” (John 17:4). Our role is to submit to the disciplining and
 162 restraining influences of the Spirit because God corrects those He loves (Proverbs 3:12; Hebrews 12:6).

163
 164 **SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS** – We live the justified life by faith in Christ through complete
 165 surrender to God, which God makes possible by providing opportunities for us to bow in submission to
 166 the disciplining and restraining influences of the Spirit of truth, who orders our steps in God’s Word
 167 (Psalms 119:133).

168
 169 **CONCLUSION: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?**
 170

171 “Our churches are dying for the want of teaching on the subject of righteousness by faith in Christ and
 172 on kindred truths” (Gospel Workers, {GW} 301.1). “By neglecting to submit ...to the impressions of the
 173 Holy Spirit, by not living in obedience to ALL God's requirements, spiritual efficiency becomes weak”
 174 (Conflict and Courage, {CC} 83.5). “A curse is coming upon our churches from a lack of practicing the
 175 words of Christ” (The Voice in Speech and Song, {VSS}, 303.1). The church will be sickly and ready
 176 to die unless conversion occurs among the ministers (Evangelism, {Ev} 643.3). Brethren, “...earnestly
 177 contend for the faith ...once delivered to the saints (Jude 1:3). **“Our only safety is preservation [of] the**
 178 **ancient landmarks.** [We are to stand at the crossroads and ...**ask for the ancient paths, ask where the**
 179 **good way is and walk in it**” (Jeremiah 6:16)]. And when you ask about the good way, measure the
 180 response by Isaiah 8:20—“To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is
 181 because there is no light in them” (Counsels on Health, {CH} 459.2).

182
 183 The knowledge of truth that God caused to shine upon our hearts expressly declares that **“the white**
 184 **raiment [or the robes of Revelation 6:11] is the righteousness of Christ..”** (SDA Bible Commentary,
 185 Vol. 7, {7BC} 965.3). All who are ...counted as **members of the family of God in heaven** will... **wash**

186 **their robes of character**—attributes, traits—in His blood to find acceptance with the Father... if they
 187 would be in the ...assembly of the saints, clothed in **white robes of righteousness**” (see Matthew 22:11-
 188 13 in Selected Messages Book 1, {1SM} 259.1).

189
 190 **“Men [and women] who have lived nearest to God**, ...who would sacrifice life itself rather than
 191 knowingly commit a wrong act, ...whom God had honored with divine light and power, **have confessed**
 192 **the sinfulness of their own nature. They [placed] no confidence in the flesh, have claimed no**
 193 **righteousness of their own, but have trusted wholly in the righteousness of Christ. SO WILL IT**
 194 **BE WITH ALL WHO BEHOLD CHRIST”** (COL 160.2). We obtain a true knowledge of self by
 195 beholding Christ (John 1:36). “It is ignorance of [Christ] that makes men so uplifted in their own
 196 righteousness. **When we contemplate His purity and excellence**, we shall see our own weakness,
 197 poverty and defects..., see **ourselves lost and hopeless, clad in garments of self-righteousness**, [and]
 198 **that if we are ever saved, it will NOT be through our own goodness but God's grace** (COL 159.1).
 199 **“Those who rely upon Him in faith receive the comforting assurance: Behold, I HAVE CAUSED**
 200 **[YOUR] INIQUITY TO PASS FROM THEE, AND I WILL CLOTHE THEE WITH CHANGE**
 201 **OF RAIMENT**. All that have put on the robe of Christ's righteousness will stand before Him as
 202 chosen, faithful and true. Satan has no power to pluck them out of the hand of Christ. ...Angels of God
 203 will walk on either side of them, even in this world, and they will stand at last among the angels that
 204 surround the throne of God” (Testimonies for the Church, Volume Five, {5T} 470.2).

205
 206 **CALL TO ACTION: WHAT SHALL WE DO?**

207
 208 To be clothed in the garments of Christ’s righteousness, “there needs to be a **CONTINUAL**
 209 **REACHING OUT OF THE HEART AFTER GOD**, a continual, **EARNEST, HEARTBREAKING**
 210 **CONFESSION OF SIN AND HUMBLING OF THE SOUL BEFORE [GOD]**. Only by
 211 **CONSTANT RENUNCIATION OF SELF and DEPENDENCE ON CHRIST** can we walk safely”
 212 (COL 159.4). By **CONSTANTLY RELYING UPON CHRIST** as our personal Savior, [who is also
 213 our head], we shall grow up into Him in ALL things... (COL 66.1). In the words of the apostle Paul,
 214 “...die daily” (1 Corinthians 15:31). “The Lord ...longs to see gratitude welling up in our hearts because
 215 our names are written in the Lamb's book of life, because we may cast all our care upon Him who cares
 216 for us. **He bids us rejoice** because we are the heritage of the Lord, because the righteousness of Christ is
 217 the white robe of His saints, because we have the blessed hope of the soon coming of our Savior” {COL
 218 299.2}.

219
220 “...**Turn away from human imperfections [and] behold Jesus** [so that] a divine transformation [can]
221 take place in [your] character. **The Spirit of Christ working upon the heart [will] conform it to His**
222 **image** (COL 250.3). “...**Except [our] righteousness ...exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and**
223 **Pharisees, [we] shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven**” (Matthew 5:20). “The religion of
224 the Pharisee does not touch the soul. He is not **seeking Godlikeness of character**, a heart filled with
225 love and mercy. He is satisfied with a religion that has to do only with outward life. His righteousness is
226 his own—the fruit of his own works—and judged by a human standard” (COL 151.1). Brethren, pursue
227 daily transfusions and infusions of Bible religion, which “...is not a garment [that] can be put on and
228 taken off at pleasure. It is an all-pervading influence, which leads us to be patient, self-denying
229 followers of Christ, doing as He did, walking as He walked” (God’s Amazing Grace, {AG} 248.2).
230 Avoid being like “...those who are pure in their own eyes and yet are not cleansed of their filth”
231 (Proverbs 30:12, NIV). Shun the pretense of wealth and not being in need (Revelation 3:17). Instead,
232 choose to be clothed in the garments of Christ’s righteousness; live His life in complete submission to
233 the disciplining and restraining influences of the Spirit of truth.
234