

**HEALING STREAM MINISTRIES presents...**

**THE UNDILUTED, FULL STRENGTH, THREE ANGELS' MESSAGES  
with enough power to...**

- **cleansing from all sin**
- **set us free from all bondage**
- **break all the power of the enemy over us**
- **restore us to total spiritual health**
- **develop immunity to all last-day deceptions**

## **#18 – Justifying Sinners Without Justifying Sin**

What is the primary focus of the third angel's message? Looking at the surface of the text you would no doubt correctly reply that it is a warning about the historical beast power of Revelation 13 and its resurgence in the last days. But is it possible that there is more to the third angel's message than this? "*Justification by faith*," wrote Ellen White, "*is the third angel's message in verity*" (*Review & Herald*, April 1, 1890). Would it surprise you to discover that she was right? As you engage in an in-depth study of Revelation 14:6-12, and as you decode its symbols by letting the Bible be its own interpreter, you will everywhere discover hidden gems of grace all having to do with concepts of *justice, judgment, justification, and self-justification*. In these seven verses you will find, in condensed form, critical information about God's offer of salvation [the everlasting gospel] made possible through His judgments. In heaven's cartoons [Babylon and the beast] you will discover the hidden strategies of the enemy. These are all about self-justification, which is the justification of sin. Take with me a quick journey through these three messages to discover some intensely practical applications to your own life now.

### **THE JUDGMENTS OF GOD – THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL:**

**THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL** is the good news about Jesus' death for our sins (1 Corinthians 15:1-3) and how God declares us righteous on basis of faith in Christ's substitutionary atonement (Romans 3:23-26). At Calvary's cross God carried out four judgments, each one indispensable to secure for us a perfect salvation.

1. **At the cross God judged sin** as alien, intolerable, and utterly unacceptable to His rule of love and justice. Wherever sin is found, whether in the human heart or in the universe, it cannot co-exist with God's holiness. In taking upon Himself the penalty of sin we deserved, God in Christ judged sin as totally non-justifiable and inexcusable. Do you agree with God's assessment [judgment] on sin as shown at the cross?
2. **At the cross God judged Satan** (John 16:11; 12:31). There He unmasked his true character. So successful is Christ's victory that we can join with the heavenly beings in declaring - "*Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren...is cast down*" (Revelation 12:10). And until the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming we join with Christ in His warfare against the works of the Satan: "*And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly*" (Romans 16:20).
3. **At the cross God judged us**. As Christ bore the judgment of sin and its penalty of death that we rightfully deserved, God was able to declare us justified, acquitted, and to treat us as though we had never sinned. (Romans 3:25). At the cross He justly changed our legal status from "condemned" to a verdict of "acquitted." This is

not some kind of legal fiction. So secure is this verdict that the witnesses in heaven's open courtroom declared, "*Worthy is the Lamb who was slain...*" (Revelation 5:12). (Do you believe they are telling the truth?) Through this saving judgment God has opened wide the gates of heaven for every repentant sinner who abandons all self-justification and places His faith in the spilt blood of the Lamb of God. The gospel us about how God through His judgments on Calvary's cross justly justified us without justifying sin.

4. **At the cross God judged Himself.** When He gave us His judicial verdict of "justified" He did it in such a legally incontrovertible way that "*He might be just and the Justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus*" (Romans 3:26). So complete is the salvation through the atoning blood of the Lamb that all of Satan's accusations before God are now unwarranted. His accusations in our hearts are likewise baseless. (1. John 3:20,21).

The doctrine of justification open up to the believer all the other benefits of Christ's atonement. These benefits start flowing into our lives when we by faith receive Christ. To fear God, to give glory to Him, to worship Him. This is how **JUSTIFIED PEOPLE JUSTIFY GOD.**

- **FEAR GOD.** To fear God justifies Him because we believe that without a Savior and without an Advocate "*it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*" (Hebrews 10:30,31). When we fear God, we readily confess the justness of the justice of God, that the wages of sin are death (Romans 6:23). The "fear of God" securely anchors us in His love so that there is no need for us to fear the judgment (1 John 4:17,18) because we have an Advocate with God (John 2:1,2). When we "fear God" we will fear nothing else. When we do not fear God we will fear everything else. The healthy "fear of God" takes away all fear of punishment, fear of condemnation, fear of the judgment, and fear of failure and rejection. The fear of God is not to be feared.
- **GIVE GLORY TO HIM FOR THE HOUR OF HIS JUDGMENT HAS COME.** There is no better way of giving Him glory than to engage the services of His Son, Jesus Christ, to serve as our personal Advocate in the end-time judgment. If we do not believe in the truthfulness of His legal verdict – "Acquitted!" for ourselves, we dishonor God by our lack of faith. Accept justification by faith alone, and we will justify God. The justification [just-as-if-we-had-never-sinned] of sinners is only for those who abandon all their own alibis of self-justification. Through self-justification we slander God's name and declare the sacrifice of Christ for sin as inconsequential and of no value. God is most glorified when we are most satisfied with His gift of salvation.
- **WORSHIP HIM.** When we as believers here on earth worship, we are at the same time joining with the witnesses in heaven's courtroom in their worship of the Lamb. "*Worthy is the Lamb who was slain*" (Revelation 5:11). To worship is to serve God with our praises and to trust Him to supply all our needs according to His sufficiency. Every covenant blessing (the benefits of Christ's last will and testament) flows to us from the cross. "*He that spared not His only Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things*" (Romans 8:31). The joy and enthusiasm with which we worship is about how we rate God. What rating do we give Him for having given us an advance rating of "justified" in the final judgment? To worship is to justify the One who has justified us. "*Redeemed, how I love to proclaim it!*"

In heaven's inspired cartoons of Babylon and the beast, God depicts **OUR GREATEST SIN as SELF-JUSTIFICATION**. The enemy's lies of self-justification suggest that you can do a better job of saving yourself than Jesus has done. As you take a closer look at these cartoons, look in them for experiential applications to your own life [and not just applications to false religious movements].

- "BABYLON IS FALLEN" is God's judicial sentence on the lifestyle of Babylon – spiritual harlotry, looking for love in all the wrong places rather than accepting the covenant love of Jesus Christ realized in the atonement (Romans 5:1-11). An angel, in a pun, calls Babylon a city when in reality she is an adulterous and foolhardy woman riding a dangerous beast. Her appearance is designed to seduce others away from the security of God's love to drink from a cup that will never satisfy. Instead of accepting God's judgment on her as "fallen," Babylon in rebellion continues her self-justifying lifestyle - "*I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow*" (Revelation 18:7). The self-justifying traits of Babylon are pride, unbelief, self-exaltation, rebellion and unfaithfulness to God.
- "DO NOT WORSHIP THE BEAST" is God's warning about His judgments, which will fall on all who worship substitute and make-believe saviors – antichrists. All such saviors will be judged, and so will those who worship them. The beast cartoon is God's depiction of the dangers of self-justification. Just look at the multiple, heads, horns, crowns *et cetera* of the beast. It is all about self-sufficiency. The beast not only proclaims a gospel of self-salvation, but it engages in the abuse of power toward anyone who stands in the ways of its programs.  
Questions for reflection: Have you ever worked for God like the devil? Have you ever used the methods of the beast to do the work of the Lamb? Have you ever looked with disdain on those who believe differently or sin differently than you do? This is salvation by comparison. To worship the beast is to base one's life on the shaky foundation of self-justification through one's own good works. Heaven's estimate of such self-righteousness compares it to filthy rags and garbage (Isaiah 59:1,2; Philippians 3:8).

## **OUR GREATEST PRIVILEGE: LIVING TO JUSTIFY GOD**

- To practice THE PATIENCE OF THE SAINTS is to justify God by trusting in His sovereignty and providences. To take matters into our own hands is the self-justification of our personal courses of action rather than depending on the wisdom of His timing when dealing with difficult situations and people.
- THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD. Throughout the Scriptures the "commandments of God" are often equated with the "the judgment of God" (Deuteronomy 5:31; 6:1). When we keep the commandments we justify God by agreeing with His assessment (His judgments) on the seriousness of sin. It is deadly. When we keep His commandments, we justify God by giving Him by giving Him our total allegiance and love. To keep His commandments is to magnify Him for both His love and His justice.
- THE FAITH OF JESUS (as used in this passage) is not about the quality of our faith, nor is it about the purity of the doctrinal content of our beliefs, but it is about basing our lives on the covenant faithfulness of Jesus. When we trust Him and His saving work, we receive His justification as a free gift, and thus we will at the same time jus-

tify Him. Unbelief is the refusal to let go of our strategies of self-justification by trusting in our own good works for salvation. Through unbelief we slander His name and work as untrustworthy and imperil our own salvation.

## **JOIN THE SINGING TO CELEBRATE HIS JUDGMENTS.**

Notice how the victorious people of God, in the song of Moses and the song of Lamb, make no references to their own experiences, their own works, or their own accomplishments. Their focus is entirely on God's judgments, ways, and works as a cause of worship, adoration, and praise. Because Jesus has redeemed, justified and loved you, you can start your singing lessons now!

*Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty!  
Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints!  
Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name?  
For You alone are holy. For all nation shall come and  
worship before You, for Your judgments have been manifested  
(Revelation 15:3,4).*

---

© 2005, Ervin K. Thomsen, D.Min.,  
Healing Stream Ministries -  
<http://www.streamofhealing.org>  
The Undiluted Three Angels Messages –  
God's Medicine for Your Life Today

These e-mail devotionals are a service of *Healing Stream Ministries*.  
You may copy, forward, and distribute these devotionals for non-profit  
purposes as long as you copy them in their entirety. To subscribe  
please write to [info@streamofhealing.org](mailto:info@streamofhealing.org)