JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION

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This is a messianic Bible study about justification and sanctification, which are two major facets of the believer's salvation.

I. JUSTIFICATION

What does the Bible teach about justification and what exactly is justification? Justification is an extremely important theological concept in the Scriptures. It is a major facet of the believer's salvation that should not be missed. The subject of justification will be studied in eight distinct parts.

A. The Meaning of Justification

1. A Declarative Statement

The basic meaning of justification in any of its usages is simply “to declare righteous.” Justification does not mean, “to be righteous” nor does it mean, “to make righteous,” it simply means “to declare righteous.” It is a declarative statement. In its theological meaning, justification is the act of God by which He declares the sinner righteous on the basis of the perfect righteousness of Yeshua (Jesus) the Messiah. So justification is the judicial act of God by which He declares that all claims of the Law are satisfied with respect to the sinner on the basis of the righteousness of Yeshua the Messiah.

2. A Declarative Act

Therefore, justification has a judicial meaning and a judicial standing. Again, it does not mean “to be made righteous,” but merely “to be declared righteous.” In this sense, justification is contrasted with condemnation (Deut. 25:1; Prov. 17:15; Rom. 8:33-34). If someone is on trial, he is either justified or he is condemned, these are the contrasts. If one is not condemned, if one is not to be declared guilty, then one is to be declared righteous. So the very act of justification

\[\text{And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave-offering; seven sabbaths shall there be complete.} \]

\[\text{Leviticus 23:15} \]
carries the concept of giving judgment. To declare righteous is to give judgment (Rom. 8:33). Thus, justification is a declarative act; it is something that one declares someone else to be.

3. A Constitutive Act
Justification is also a constitutive act. It is a constitutive act because of the imputation of the obedience and righteousness of Jesus the Messiah. There are three great imputations: the imputation of Adam’s sin to the descendants of Adam; the imputation of humanity's sin to Yeshua the Messiah; and the imputation of the Messiah's righteousness to the believer. It is a constitutive act because it is only on the basis of the imputation of the righteousness of the Messiah to the believer that the believer can be declared righteous.

B. The Greek Words Conveying the Concept of Justification
There is one main Greek root from which the concept of justification is derived. From this Greek root, there are five different Greek words, which carry the meaning of righteousness and justification.

The first word is *dikaios*, which means “righteous” (Rom. 5:19).

The second Greek word is *dikaisunei*, which means “righteousness” (Rom. 5:21; 9:30-32).

The third Greek word is *dikaioo*, which means, “to justify” (Mat. 12:37; Acts 13:39; Rom. 2:13; 3:4).

The fourth Greek word is *dikaiomata*, which means “righteous acts” or “righteous actions” (Lk. 1:6; Rom. 2:26; 5:16, 18; Heb. 9:1, 10; Rev. 15:4; 19:8).

The fifth Greek word from the same root is *dikaiosis*, which means “the act of justifying” (Rom. 4:25; 5:18).

All five of these Greek words come from the same Greek root. From these five Greek derivations of that root comes the biblical doctrine of justification.

C. The Foundation of Justification
What is the foundation of justification? There are two aspects to the foundation of justification, one positive and one negative.

1. The Positive Aspect
Positively, the foundation of justification is threefold. First, justification is founded upon God's grace as manifested in the perfect life of Jesus the Messiah in His obedience and sacrificial death. Secondly, justification is by His blood (Rom. 5:9). Thirdly, the righteous acts, the righteousness of Yeshua, is imputed to the believer (I Cor. 1:30; II Cor. 5:21). So positively, the foundation of justification is God's grace.
through Jesus the Messiah, by His blood, when the righteousness of Yeshua is imputed to the believer.

2. The Negative Aspect
The negative foundation of justification is that justification is not on the basis of human works. No one will ever be justified on the basis of his works. This is taught many times in Scripture. When a person is justified, he is never justified on the basis of works; good works are never the foundation of biblical justification (Rom. 3:28, 4:5-6; Gal. 2:16).

D. The Means of Justification
There are five things to point out concerning the means of justification.

First, the means of justification is always faith (Rom. 3:21-22). A distinction must be clearly made here. Faith is always the means of justification; it is never the grounds of justification. The Bible never states that justification is on account of faith; faith is never the grounds of justification. The Greek construction, which is always used, clearly shows that justification is always through faith or by faith. Hence, faith is the means of justification (Acts 13:38-40; Rom. 3:26-30; 5:1; 10:10; Gal. 2:16; 3:8, 24).

The second thing concerning the means of justification is that justification is always on a just basis. There is a claim of God's Law against the sinner, and this claim must be satisfied for justification to occur. The way that God's Law is justified is that the righteousness of Jesus the Messiah is imputed to the believer so that the sinner is acquitted; therefore, justification is always on a just basis.

The third thing to point out concerning the means of justification is that justification is never by man's righteousness or performance; it is never on the basis of works (Rom. 3:20; 4:2; 10:3-4; Gal. 2:16; 3:10 11, 24; 5:4; Phil. 3:9).

The fourth thing about the means of justification is that justification is by grace (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 3:24-26; 5:18-21; Titus 3:5-7).

The fifth thing about the means of justification is that a judge must justify the righteous and condemn the wicked; that is the responsibility of a true, impartial judge. Yet we are told by Scripture that God justifies the ungodly (Rom. 3:21-25; 4:5). How is it possible that a judge must justify the righteous and condemn the wicked, yet the Bible teaches that God justifies the ungodly? Furthermore, the Bible also teaches that God is just when He justifies the ungodly (Rom. 3:26). It is possible because of the means, the imputed righteousness of the Messiah (Rom. 5:17-19). When the believer has the righteousness of the Messiah imputed to him, he has been made
righteous, and having been made righteous by imputation, the believer can then be declared righteous by justification. In this way, God is not inconsistent when He justifies the ungodly.

**E. The Facets of Justification**

The Bible mentions seven facets of justification.

First, the believer is justified by God. This is the source of justification; this is righteousness planned (Rom. 3:26).

The second facet of justification is that the believer is justified by blood. This is the grounds of justification; this is righteousness provided (Rom. 3:24-25; 5:9).

The third facet of justification is that the believer is justified by faith. This is the means of justification; this is justification procured (Rom. 3:28; 4:5; 5:1).

The fourth facet of justification is that the believer is justified by grace. This is justification's principle of operation. Justification operates on the basis of grace; this is the essence of justification (Rom. 3:24).

The fifth facet of justification is that the believer is justified by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the agent of justification; this is justification's power (I Cor. 6:11).

The sixth facet of justification is justification by works. This is the evidence of justification; this is justification proved (Jas. 2:21, 24-25). The believer is not justified by works as a means of justification; rather, the believer is justified by works in that his works are the evidence that he has been justified.

The seventh facet of justification is justification in the Messiah. This is the position of being justified; this is justification possessed (II Cor. 5:21).

**F. The Elements of Justification**

There are five specific elements of justification that are stated by the Word of God.

The first element is the remission of the penalty for sin; by justification penalty for sin is remitted (Is. 53:5-8; Acts 13:38-39; Rom. 4:7; 8:1, 33-34; II Cor. 5:21; Eph. 1:7; I Pet. 2:24).

The second element of justification is the restoration to favor; the believer is restored to God's favor (Gal. 2:16; 3:26).

The third element of the believer's justification is the imputation of righteousness; the believer has the righteousness of the Messiah
imputed to him (I Cor. 1:30; II Cor. 5:21).

The fourth element of justification is the forgiveness of sins past, present, and future; the believer has been forgiven of all his sins (Ps. 103:12; Is. 44:22; Heb. 10:14).

The fifth element of justification is that it is also part of the process of predestination (Rom. 8:28-32).

G. The Results of Justification
The Bible speaks of seven results of justification.

First, the believer has peace with God (Rom. 5:1). The reason that the believer has peace with God is that his sins have been forgiven because of justification.

The second result is God's favor; the believer is now standing in the grace of God (Rom. 4:6).

The third result is given by Paul in Romans 8:1: There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.

The fourth result is heirship; the believer becomes an heir of God (Titus 3:7).

The fifth result of justification is the imputation of the Messiah's righteousness; the believer has been declared righteous by virtue of this imputation (Rom. 4:5). God now sees the believer as righteous because he has the righteousness of the Messiah.

The sixth result of justification is that the believer is saved from the wrath of God. The Bible speaks of two different types of wrath. First is God's general wrath that is revealed against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men (Rom. 1:17-18). The believer is delivered from God's general wrath against sin (Rom. 5:9). Another type of God's wrath is the wrath of the Great Tribulation; the believer has also been saved from God's wrath of the Tribulation (I Thes. 1:10). This is one of several reasons why believers will not go through the Tribulation.

The seventh result of justification is the guarantee of glory. The glory of the believer has been guaranteed by virtue of his justification, because they who are justified will also be glorified (Rom. 8:30; Gal. 5:5).

H. The Characteristics of Justification
There are four characteristics of justification.

First, justification is in Jesus the Messiah; the believer is justified in Him positionally (Acts 13:39; Rom. 8:1; I Cor. 6:11; Gal. 2:17).
The second characteristic of justification is that justification is part of His redemptive work; it was always part of the plan of redemption that the believer was to be justified (Rom. 3:24; 5:9; 8:33-34).

The third characteristic of justification is that justification is by the righteousness of God. In other words, it is a God righteousness (Rom. 1:17; 3:21-22; 10:3; Phil. 3:9).

The fourth characteristic of justification is that the righteousness of justification is the righteousness and obedience of the Messiah (Rom. 5:17-19).

II. SANCTIFICATION

Sanctification is the second major facet of the believer's salvation and this subject will be studied in eight major categories.

A. The Meaning of Sanctification

The basic meaning of sanctification is “to be set apart.” To sanctify something simply means, “to set it apart.” It does not necessarily carry the concept of holiness. In relation to its being a fact of the believer's salvation, sanctification has been defined as: “The work of God's free grace whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God and are enabled more and more to die to sin and live unto righteousness.”

So sanctification itself can be defined as: “That gracious and continuous operation of the Holy Spirit by which He purifies the sinner, renews his whole nature in the image of God, and enables him to perform good works.”

This is biblical sanctification as to its meaning and definition.

B. The Greek Words Conveying the Concept of Sanctification

There is one key Greek root from which the concept of sanctification is derived. From this one Greek root, there are nine different forms of the word that, in some way, carry the concept of sanctification.

The first Greek word is *hagiasmos*, which means “sanctification.” It is used a total of ten times in the New Testament: in Romans 6:19, 22; I Corinthians 1:30; I Thessalonians 4:3, 4, 7; II Thessalonians 2:13; I Timothy 2:15; Hebrews 12:14; and in I Peter 1:2.

The second Greek word is *hagiosunei*, which means “holiness.” It is used only once in the New Testament: in Romans 1:4.

The third Greek word is *hagiotes*, which means, “to sanctify.” It is only used twice: in II Corinthians 1:12 and in Hebrews 12:10.
The fourth form of the word is *hagiazō*, which means “to render hallow,” “to separate for God,” “to purify or sanctify.” It is used a total of twenty-eight times in the New Testament, some of which are: Matthew 6:9; 23:17, 19; Luke 11:2; John 17:19; Ephesians 5:26; I Thessalonians 5:23; II Timothy 2:21; Hebrews 2:11; 9:13; 13:12; and I Peter 3:15.

The fifth Greek word is *hagios*. This word is an adjective, which means “holy.” It is used a total of 235 times. Of these, it is used with the word “spirit,” emphasizing the Holy Spirit, ninety-four times. Sixty-one times it is used in connection with believers as a facet of the believer’s salvation.

The sixth form of the word is also *hagios*, but it is a slightly different type of an adjective that is used eight times, and it means “pure,” “holy” or “pious.”

The seventh form of the word is also *hagios*, but in this case, it is an adverb used only once: in I Thessalonians 2:10.

The eighth form of the term is *hagiotes*, which is spelled the same way as the third word, but this one is a noun. It is used in Luke 1:75 and Ephesians 4:24.

The ninth form of the word is *hiegos*, which means “sacred,” and it is used in I Corinthians 9:13; and II Timothy 3:15.

It is from these nine forms of the same Greek root, used in various ways throughout the New Testament, that the doctrine of sanctification is derived. Sanctification basically means, “to be set apart.” In a spiritual sense, it is “to be set apart for God” so that He can make us more and more holy, more and more conformed to the image of the Son of God. These nine Greek forms from which we get the concept of sanctification simply give us the various facets of the meanings of the term.

**C. The Usage of the Greek Words**

There are eight things one should know about the usage of the various Greek words for sanctification in the New Testament.

First, one must be aware of the various translations. The same Greek root is translated several different ways in the English Bible, but there are three main ways that it is translated. The first main way it is translated is by the term “sanctify.” This is found 106 times in the Old Testament and thirty-one times in the New Testament. A second main translation is the word “holy.” It is translated “holy” four hundred times in the Old Testament, but only twelve times in the New Testament. A third main way of translating these terms is by the term “saints.” In fact, “saints” is the second most common term for
believers and is used sixty-two times. The most common term for believers is “brethren,” used one hundred eighty-four times. The term “Christians,” is used three times. So the three main ways that the Greek root is translated are “sanctify,” “holy” or “saints.”

The second usage of sanctification refers to God who is sanctified, because God sets Himself apart (Lev. 21:8). Even the Messiah can sanctify Himself in the sense that He sets Himself apart (Jn. 17:19).

The third use of sanctification is that God sanctifies persons. For example, the Father sanctifies the Son (Jn. 10:36); God sanctifies the priests and He sanctifies Israel (Ex. 29:44; 31:13); and God also sanctifies believers (I Thes. 4:3).

The fourth usage of sanctification is that God sanctifies places and things (Gen. 2:3; Ex. 29:43).

The fifth usage is that man may sanctify God. This is a good example to show that “to sanctify” does not necessarily mean “to make holy.” No man can make God holy. This is impossible, for God is absolutely holy already. To sanctify simply means, “to be set apart.” Believers can set God apart in their lives and, in that way, the believer may sanctify God (Mat. 6:9). The believer can sanctify the Messiah in this way (I Pet. 3:15).

The sixth usage of sanctification is that man can even sanctify himself (Rom. 12:1; II Cor. 7:1; II Tim. 2:21). Man has the capacity to set himself aside for the Lord's use.

The seventh use is that man may sanctify persons and things; he could set things apart (Ex. 19:14; II Chr. 29:17; I Cor. 7:14).

The eighth usage is that one thing may sanctify another thing. Holy things can sanctify other things (Mat. 23:17, 19).

D. The Facets of Sanctification

There are five facets of sanctification.

First, the believer is sanctified in the Messiah (I Cor. 1:2, 30). This is the sphere of sanctification; this is the believer's position.

The second facet of sanctification is that the believer is sanctified by the Word of God (Jn. 17:17). This is the channel of sanctification in that the believer is set apart and cleansed by the Word of God.

The third facet is sanctification by blood (Heb. 13:12). This is the basis of sanctification; the believer is set apart for holy use on the basis of the blood of the Messiah.

The fourth facet is that the believer is sanctified by the body on the
This is the place of sanctification; the believer is positionally sanctified through the cross. It was the death of Messiah on the cross that has attained positional sanctification.

The fifth facet is that the believer is sanctified by faith (Acts 26:18). This is the means of sanctification; the believer is saved by faith, he is justified by faith, and he is sanctified by faith as well.

**E. The Causes of Sanctification**

There are three different causes of sanctification.

1. **The Efficient Cause**
   
The first cause is the efficient, efficacious cause. The efficient cause of sanctification is the Triune God. Every member of the Trinity is an efficient cause of sanctification.

   The Father's role in sanctification is spoken of in John 17:18-19; I Corinthians 1:30; I Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 13:20-21; I Peter 1:15-16; and 5:10.

   The Second Person of the Trinity, the Son, is also an efficient cause in sanctification. The role of the Son in sanctification is spoken of in Ephesians 5:25-26; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 2:11; 9:14; and 13:12.

   The Third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, is also an efficient cause. The Spirit's role is spoken of in Romans 15:16; II Corinthians 3:17-18; II Thessalonians 2:13; and I Peter 1:2.

   So the efficient cause of sanctification is the whole Triune God, with the Father, the Son, and the Spirit each playing a role.

2. **The Moving Cause**
   
The second cause is the moving cause. The moving cause is the good will of God (I Thes. 4:3). The believer is moved to sanctification by the will of God.

3. **The Instrumental Cause**
   
The third cause of sanctification is the instrumental cause which is the Word of God (Jn. 17:17). It is by means of the Word of God that the believer is sanctified. The believer is cleansed by the washing of the water of the Word of God.

**F. The Need for Sanctification**

Why is sanctification even necessary? What is the need for sanctification?

First, every sin in the believer is a contradiction of God's holiness. Every time a believer sins, he is contradicting God's holiness. Sanctification aims at conforming the believer to God's righteousness.
Secondly, wherever there is the presence of sin, there is conflict. A good example of this conflict is Romans 7:15-25. Sanctification aims to give the believer victory in this conflict.

Thirdly, there must be a constant and increasing appreciation that though the sin remains, it does not have mastery. It is one thing for sin to live in the believer, but it is quite another for the believer to live in sin. The purpose of sanctification is to keep the believer from living in sin, though the believer will always have sin living in him until he is in Heaven.

G. The Types of Sanctification

The Bible speaks of four types of sanctification.

1. Preparatory Sanctification

The first type of sanctification is called “preparatory sanctification,” spoken of in II Thessalonians 2:13. It deals with the setting apart before salvation. At this point, the elect person is simply set apart by God before he is saved to make sure that he hears the gospel at some time. Preparatory sanctification assures one of hearing and accepting the gospel.

2. Positional Sanctification

The second type of sanctification is called “positional sanctification.” Positional sanctification means that there is salvation from the penalty of sin. This is the kind of sanctification in which God sees the believer by virtue of the believer's being in the Messiah. From the divine viewpoint, the believer is already viewed as being perfect because of the believer's position of being in the Messiah. Hence, it is called “positional sanctification.” Positional sanctification is always true regardless of the degree of unholiness a believer might have in this life. So once a believer is saved, he is automatically in a state of positional sanctification where he is viewed by God as having been completely sanctified (Acts 20:32; Rom. 6:1-10; I Cor. 1:2; 6:11; Heb. 10:10, 14).

The Corinthians passages are especially unique because, as one reads through the Book of Corinthians, one finds that the Corinthian church was absolutely the worst church in the New Testament record. There were divisions among them, they were spiritually immature, believers were taking each other into court, some were even living in a state of immorality, they were getting drunk at the Lord’s Supper, and yet Paul said to them that in spite of the degree of unholiness and immorality, they were sanctified. They were completely sanctified because positional sanctification is something that is always true, not because of something that the believer is himself, but because of what the believer is in the Messiah.

3. Progressive Sanctification

The third type of sanctification is called “progressive” or “experiential
sanctification.” Ten things should be noted of this type of sanctification.

First, progressive sanctification is salvation from the power of sin. Progressive sanctification means that the believer can be free from the power of sin (Rom. 6:1-14).

Secondly, the purpose of progressive sanctification is to bring the believer's experience into conformity with his position. Positionally, the believer is thoroughly sanctified.

Thirdly, progressive sanctification is to counteract worldliness (Rom. 6:22; 12:1).

Fourthly, progressive sanctification is to promote spiritual growth (II Cor. 3:18; II Pet. 3:18).

The fifth thing is that progressive sanctification means that the believer is being conformed to the image of the Son of God, to be more and more like the Messiah (Phil. 1:9-11; II Pet. 1:5-8).

The sixth thing about progressive sanctification concerns the two means of sanctification: First, the believer must present his members as instruments of righteousness, which means a dedication of the physical body for God's use (Rom. 6:13). A second means is by the washing of the Word of God (Eph. 5:26).

The seventh thing about progressive sanctification is that it is still God's work (Eph. 2:10; II Tim. 3:17; Titus 2:14).

Eighth, progressive sanctification will not bring perfection in this life. The believer will become more and more righteous, more and more conformed to the image of the Son of God, but he will never reach perfection in this life.

Ninth, on the basis of positional sanctification, the Scriptures encourage believers to live holy lives. In Scripture, progressive sanctification is the reason for admonitions to holiness (I Thes. 4:3; I Pet. 1:15-16).

The tenth thing about progressive sanctification is that it consists of two processes. First there is the gradual removal of pollution and corruption of the believer's human nature (Rom. 6:6; Gal. 5:14). And secondly, there is a gradual development of the new life consecrated to God (Rom. 6:4-5; Gal. 2:19; Col. 2:12; 3:1-2).

4. Ultimate Sanctification
The fourth type of sanctification is known as “ultimate sanctification.” Ultimate sanctification is salvation from the presence of sin, and this
will occur only when Yeshua returns. When Jesus comes back, the believer will then receive the ultimate sanctification: salvation from the presence of all sin (Eph. 5:27; I Thes. 3:13; 5:22-23; Heb. 9:28; 10:14; I Jn. 3:2; Jude 23, 25).

H. The Doctrine of Perfectionism

Some people teach that the believer can reach perfection in this life. Two areas of this doctrine will be discussed.

1. The Basis of the Doctrine

What is the basis for teaching perfectionism? Perfectionism is taught on the basis of certain Scriptures. There are eleven main passages that those who teach perfectionism use to back up their teachings.

First, Genesis 6:9, which talks about Noah being perfect in his generations.

Secondly, I Kings 15:14, which speaks of the heart of Asa being perfect with Jehovah all his days.

Thirdly, Matthew 5:48, where Yeshua said: Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Fourthly, II Corinthians 5:17, where the believer is a new creature.

The fifth passage is Ephesians 5:27, where the believer is to be made “without spot or wrinkle, holy without blemish.”

The sixth passage is Philippians 3:15, which states: Let us therefore, as many as are perfect.

Seventh, Philippians 4:13, which reads: I can do all things in him.

Eighth, Colossians 2:10, which states: ye are made full.

Ninth, James 1:4, which admonishes: ye may be perfect.

Tenth, I Peter 1:16, which commands: be holy.

And eleventh, I John 3:6, 8-9, which says “the one who is a child of God does not sin.”

The issue for perfectionism are the commands in the Bible for the believer to be perfect, and they point out that perfection is ascribed to believers: Genesis 6:9 speaks of Noah's being perfect in his generations; Job 1:1 speaks of Job as a perfect man; I Kings 15:14 states that the heart of Asa was perfect with Jehovah all his days; and throughout the letter of I John, the emphasis is on being holy and perfect. Therefore, based upon these Scriptures and these commands, perfectionists teach that the believer can reach perfection in this life.
2. The Refutation of the Doctrine
There are six things that can be stated against these teachings.

First, the fact that the believer must strive for perfection does not prove that the believer is already perfect. Striving for perfection implies that the believer does not have perfection yet, and the Bible pictures the believer as striving for perfection all of his life.

Secondly, in the Bible the word perfect does not mean “freedom from sin.” While Noah was called perfect in Genesis 6:9, he sinned by getting drunk in Genesis 9:20-24. Job 1:1 calls Job perfect, yet one can read of Job's sins in Job 42:6. So the word perfect does not mean “freedom from sin.”

Thirdly, concerning the letter of I John, the apostle teaches that it is the new man that does not sin, but the old man does still sin. In I John 3:8-9, he uses the present tense in Greek, so he is speaking of habitual sin, but does not rule out periodic acts of sin. A true believer will not be guilty of habitual sin, but he might be guilty of periodic acts of sin.

Fourthly, the Bible also teaches that there is no one who does not sin, believers or unbelievers (I Kg. 8:46; Prov. 20:9; I Jn. 1:8).

Fifth, as long as the believer lives, there will be spiritual warfare, and this would not be necessary if one could reach perfection in this life (Rom. 7:15-25; Gal. 5:16-17).

Sixth, the very fact that I John 1:9 orders the believer to confess his sins rules out any possibility of perfection in this life.

Sanctification is a biblical doctrine. Perfectionism in this life is not.

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