

## **Catechism Sec. 8: The Benefits Of Salvation In This Life**

by B. S. Poh

**Q31. What benefits do they who are effectually called, partake of in this life?**

**A31. They who are effectually called, do in this life partake of justification<sup>1</sup>, adoption<sup>2</sup>, sanctification, and the various benefits which in this life do either accompany, or flow from them<sup>3</sup>.**

- 1. Rom. 8:30, Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.*
- 2. Eph. 1:5, Having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.*
- 3. 1 Cor. 1:30, But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.*

**Comments:**

1. The benefits enjoyed by believers in this life may be divided into two categories: (i) those that definitely accompany salvation; and (ii) those that arise from the definite benefits and, therefore, might not be experienced immediately and in full measure.

**Q32. What is justification?**

**A32. Justification is an act of God's free grace whereby those effectually called are pardoned of all their sins<sup>1, 2</sup>, and accepted as righteous in His sight<sup>3</sup> because of the righteousness of Christ imputed to them<sup>4</sup>, and received by faith alone<sup>5, 6</sup>.**

**Notes:** The expression, “those effectually called” has been added, and the rest of the sentence adjusted accordingly to the form of the answer to the next question.

- 1. Rom. 3:24, Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*
- 2. Eph. 1:7, In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.*
- 3. 2 Cor. 5:21, For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*
- 4. Rom. 5:19, For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.*
- 5. Gal. 2:16, Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.*

6. *Phil. 3:9, And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith.*

**Comments:**

1. Justification is a declaration or pronouncement by God that a particular person is not guilty in His sight and, therefore, not under condemnation. The person is treated as righteous, i.e. not guilty of wrong doing, although he is not yet holy in his person. This is due to the perfect righteousness of Christ imputed to him, i.e. counted as his, while the person's sin is imputed to Jesus Christ when He died on the cross (2 Cor. 5:21). Imputation is not to be confused with infusion. Christ's righteousness is never infused into the believer, i.e. it never seeps into the believer and becomes part of him. Rather, it is counted as, treated as, his. By the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the believer will begin to show righteous living, but his personal righteousness is never good enough to contribute to his own salvation. Justification is a once for all act. It is not a process, and unrepeatable. It is *received* by faith, and not *produced* by faith.
2. The Roman Catholic Church teaches that justification is by faith *plus* works of attending mass, confessing sins, baptism, etc. The Reformation of the 16th century recovered the doctrine of "justification by faith alone", which Martin Luther called "the article of a standing or falling church". An old error among Protestants is the idea of "eternal justification" in which is claimed that the elect are justified from eternity, or at least from the moment Christ finished His work on the cross. This contradicts the teaching of the Bible that while justification was planned by God from eternity (Ps. 25:6; 103:17), it actually takes place at the point when the person believes (Col. 1:21-22; Gal. 2:16; Rom. 8:29-30). A wrong teaching called the New Perspectives on Paul (NPP) claims that justification is a declaration by God that the person is already among His covenant people, and that it is an ongoing process dependent on the righteousness of the person, and will be completed on judgement day.

**Q33. What is adoption?**

**A33. Adoption is an act of God's free grace<sup>1</sup>, whereby those justified are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God, by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit<sup>2,3</sup>.**

**Notes:** The expression, "by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit" has been added to counter the wrong teaching of the charismatic movement.

1. *1 John 3:1, Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.*
2. *John 1:12, But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.*
3. *Rom. 8:14-17, For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.*

**Comments:**

1. Adoption follows justification logically, but not chronologically. In the experience of a believer, he is justified and adopted as soon as he repents and believes. Many today believe in "the universal brotherhood of man", claiming that we are all the children of God and, therefore,

brothers and sisters. That is true only from the point of creation (Acts 17:26), but not from the point of theology. Spiritually speaking, all unbelievers are the children of the devil (John 8:44). We become the children of God only through conversion (Eph. 2:12-13).

2. Our sonship is by adoption, while Christ's sonship is from eternity. Our adoption does not make us divine in any way, while it makes us joint heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17). Like justification, adoption is a once for all act of God. It is not a process, and is unrepeatable. It comes about by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, at the point of conversion (Gal. 3:2). Some people in the charismatic movement teach, based on Acts 19:1-7, the need of receiving the Holy Spirit after conversion, shown in tongue-speaking and prophecy.

#### **Q34. What is sanctification?**

**A34. Sanctification is the work of God's Spirit<sup>1</sup>, whereby the elect are renewed in the whole man after the image of God<sup>2</sup>, and are enabled more and more to die to sin, and live to righteousness<sup>3</sup>.**

**Notes:** Following Spurgeon, we have changed "the work of God's free grace" to "the work of God's Spirit". Also, "the elect" replaces "we".

1. *2 Thess. 2:13, But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.*
2. *Eph. 4:24, And that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.*
3. *Rom. 6:11, Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

#### **Comments:**

1. Unlike justification and adoption, sanctification is not a once for all act of God but it is a process carried out by the Holy Spirit in conjunction with the effort of man. It does not mean that man's work is equal to that of God, but rather that God works in such a way as to involve the work of man (Phil. 2:12-13 cf. Col. 1:29). Two objections often encountered with "justification by faith alone" are cleared up by the correct view of sanctification. The first objection is that the believer can continue to live in sin. However, when a person is truly converted, he is transformed by the Holy Spirit to have holy desires and enabled to live in obedience to God (Rom. 8:12-14; Gal. 5:19-24). The second objection is that the believer needs to show good works, without which his faith is dead (James 2:17, 24, 26). However, Scripture cannot contradict itself (cf. Eph. 2:8-10; Rom. 3:24). The correct understanding is that "we are justified by faith alone, but the faith that justifies is never alone". In other words, true faith will show itself by good works. Good works are the fruit of faith.
2. A wrong view of sanctification, called the "victorious life" or "higher life" view, is that the believer needs to seek a second experience of the Holy Spirit after conversion to lift him up to "entire sanctification", in which he sins less and less, or even become sinless. The believer is encouraged to "let go, and let God take over", contradicting the correct biblical teaching (Rom. 7:7-25; 2 Tim. 2:22). This view was linked to the early Methodist movement in America and the Keswick convention in Britain. Higher life teachers make the mistake of using Bible passages that deal with justification to teach sanctification.

**Q35. What are the benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification?**

**A35. The benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification, are assurance of God's love, peace of conscience,<sup>1</sup> joy in the Holy Spirit<sup>2</sup>, increase of grace<sup>3</sup>, and perseverance in it to the end<sup>4</sup>.**

- 1. Rom. 5:1-2, 5, Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*
- 2. Rom. 14:17, For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*
- 3. Prov. 4:18, But the path of the just is like the shining sun, that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.*
- 4. 1 Pet. 1:5, Who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

**Comments:**

1. These benefits do not come automatically to the believer, but must be sought by attending to the means of grace, i.e. hearing God's word, being in fellowship with other believers, engaging in corporate prayer, being active in serving God, etc. (2 Tim. 2:22; 2 Pet. 1:10). Every believer, however, will find them in due time, and to varying degrees (Rom. 8:31-39; 1 Cor. 15:57).

~ ~ ~ ~ ~