

Job 9.1-3—The Impossibility of a Self-Righteousness

No man can justify himself before God...

Because no man can render what the Law requires

- I. Man is blithely ignorant of what the law of God actually requires
 - A. It requires perfect and perpetual obedience, Gal 5.3-4. And while some men think they've rendered that (Mk 10.17-20), Christ shows in Mt 5-7 that no man ever has or can.
 - B. And all it takes is one single failure and the Law denounces its irrevocable curse upon us, Gal 3.10-11
- II. How foolish, then, for a man to think he can be justified by his own works! It's an impossible situation because the law demands an obedience no man can accomplish, Gal 2.16; Rom 3.20

Because every man's already condemned by the Law

- I. When God created Adam, He dealt with him both covenantally and publicly
 - A. Covenantally, God made a covenant of works with Adam, promising life upon a single act of obedience and threatening death upon a single act of disobedience, Gen 2.15-17
 1. When Adam disobeyed death immediately ensued: spiritual death in Gen 3.7-8 and temporal death in Gen 5.5 (Adam was spared eternal death by God's redeeming grace).
 - B. God also dealt with Adam publicly, creating him as the public representative of the entire human race, such that his choice in the covenant of works would have direct, irrevocable, and eternal consequences for all his posterity, cf. Ps 58.3; Rom 5.10; Gal 2.16; Gen 5 ("...and he died.").
- II. The inescapable conclusion: all of Adam's posterity are born in the covenant of works and under its just condemnation.
 - A. All men come into this world as condemned breakers of the covenant of works, Rom 3.10-18; Eph 2.1-3
 - B. And the only way that's possible is if we all stood before God in and with Adam in Gen 3, which is exactly what the Bible teaches, Rom 5.12 (death comes to all because all sinned in Adam).
 - C. It's *impossible*, then, for any man to be *justified* before God by his own obedience to the Law of God because his person is already under the cursed *condemnation* of that Law, Prov 15.8, 9, 26

- III. Do you see what a hopeless, helpless, and miserable condition every child of Adam is in!? Short of a divine and gracious intervention, he'll live justly under the rigor and demands of the covenant of works and die justly under its curse and condemnation, Gen 2.17
 - A. The law can't justify because man can't obey.

Because justification before God is only by faith

- I. Look how Paul's clear statements of the *impossibility* of a self-righteousness before God pave the way for him to boldly and happily declare the good news that justification is instead by faith in Christ! Gal 2.16; 3.11; Rom 3.20-26; Phil 3.9; Rom 9.30-10.4; Gal 3.22-24
- II. The reality confronting the human race is this: a man's works can neither save him nor justify him before God, because justification is by faith instead of works. But God... (Jn 3.16; Eph 2.4-10).

Reflections for Application

- I. If you're trying to save yourself you're on a fool's errand that'll only prove your condemnation, cf. Job 1.8 (with 9.2-3); Phil 3.7-9; Mk 10.17-22, 26-27; Isa 64.6; Gen 6.5
- II. Can see why it's so necessary for every child of Adam to fly into the arms of Jesus Christ? It's only in Jesus that God's made a new covenant—a covenant of grace and mercy *for sinners*, Rom 3.26; Eph 2.5-10; Rom 8.31-39
 - A. *This* is the answer to Job's question. How can a man be in the right before God? Only through faith in Jesus as Saviour, Rom 3.23-25
 - B. Christ is the covenantal and public Adam of all who believe on Him for salvation and are content, by faith, to rest on Him for righteousness, Rom 10.4.
 - C. This, then, is every man's pressing need: to fly to Jesus for rescue.
- III. If justification were dependent on your works, you could never be saved. But God stands ready to justify all men freely, by His grace, through the redemption that is in His Son, Rom 3.23; Isa 55.6-7
 - A. Will you go to Him *today*. There's no other way, Jn 6.67-69; 14.6
 - B. And if you know Him already, then praise Him afresh for the free gift of His acceptable and impeccable righteousness, Rom 5.1