

Intro:

Last week we began a look at three advantages — “certain advantages”¹ — of justification by faith alone. The first benefit is this: *Boasting is Excluded*.

Justification by faith **levels the playing field** for **individuals** because **no one** individual can stand up and say that he is justified by **any merit of his own** – no one is justified (declared righteous) by any act they have done.

- Not his prayers
- Not his performance of religious ritual
- Nothing

This week we are going to look at the second advantage in Rm 3.29-30.

To introduce our topic, I’d like you to turn in our hymnal to number 595. This begins a section of songs we *never* sing here. (Notice the word ‘songs’.)

595: My Country Tis of Thee

596: The Star-Spangled Banner

597 (& 598): The Battle Hymn of the Republic

599 (& 660): America the Beautiful

601: God of Our Fathers [well, we *might* sing this one]

Notice that these songs have a heading at the top of the page, “Patriotism”.

How many of you have a problem with our not singing these songs? Why not?

Because they are *American* songs? [Shock! Horror!]

Have you ever wondered why these kinds of songs are in the hymnal at all?

(Our hymnal is produced by Americans, so it is natural that American songs would be in it. Canadian hymnals often have Canadian patriotic songs in them.)

“I asked the head of the Church History department at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary how these songs got into the hymnal in the first place. He answered that they were certainly not put there for use in worship services. Rather, since Baptists have always understood the ‘church’ to be the body of believers and not the ‘meeting house,’ they freely let their buildings be used for secular meetings. It was as a service to these organizations that the patriotic songs were included in the hymnals, initially comprising the back pages. Sadly, we have forgotten this and have now ‘baptized’ these songs and made them ‘Christian.’”²

¹ Herman A. Hoyt, *The First Christian Theology*, p. 65.

² Herb Drake, “Nationalism Is Not ‘Christian’”, American Baptist Evangelicals Connect, <http://abeonline.org> (Accessed 10/7/99).

I was listening again to a message by David Martyn Lloyd-Jones this week. He made a strong point that the Christian message is not “an appeal to PAT-riotism”, as he would put it.

The idea we are talking about could also be called ‘nationalism’. In fact, this is exactly one of the advantages of the gospel.

Boasting Excluded – no individual enters on the merits of his own works

All Nations Included – no individual enters on the merits of his race

That is the title of our message:

All Nations Included

Read Rm 3.27-31, text 29-30

Proposition: The One God who opens the One Way to God proclaims One Message to All People – you may only be justified by faith in Jesus Christ alone.

I. The argument of the passage

A. The underlying theme of justification by faith alone

1. The central idea of the ‘without-law’ righteousness from God (1.21-22)
2. The closing idea of the righteousness of God in offering this ‘without-law’ kind of righteousness (1.26)

B. The certain advantages of this justification established by a series of rhetorical questions (1.27-31)

1. Where is boasting then? Boasting excluded by faith in Christ (27-28)
2. Is God the God of the Jews only? God justifies both Jew and Gentile by faith, so the one God is the God of all (29-30)
3. Do we set aside the Law (Mosaic Law) by faith? No, we establish the Law (31)

What Paul is saying is that there are three immediate and certain advantages in this now fully manifested doctrine: righteousness without-law obtained by faith...

1. Level playing field – all come one way, not on personal merit, but on the merits of Christ

2. Equal access – all come to the same God through the same way
3. Solid foundation – God’s Law is not set aside, but established in this now fully manifested doctrine

C. The specific rationale of equal access (1.29-30)

1. Jewish prejudice answered (29)

a. The verse begins with an “or” – not translated in the KJV

“^א [or] presents, but only to dismiss, an alternative hypothesis on the assumption of which the Jew might still have had something to boast of.”³

b. The long-standing Jewish attitude developed from a misunderstanding of their own history

- 1) Clearly Abraham singled out by God to be the father of the people of God
- 2) Unique deliverance of Israel from Egypt signaled God’s particular blessing on this people
- 3) Ongoing revelation from God (Law and Prophets) singled this nation out for particular blessing (no other nation like this)
- 4) Restoration of Judah from exile, subsequent Maccadean history, bolstered Jewish sense of singularity, especially in new and strict faithfulness to law-keeping

But in all this, they missed the point of their singular history: Abraham was blessed *to be* a blessing to all nations.

^{NAU} **Genesis 22:18** “In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.”

³ William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, p. 96.

- c. The essential mistake reduces God to be little more than a tribal deity
- 1) Ancient nations thought of their gods as their special protectors and regents, in competition with the gods of other nations

Sennacherib's letter to the Jews when besieging Hezekiah:

^{NAU} **2 Chronicles 32:14** 'Who *was there* among all the gods of those nations which my fathers utterly destroyed who could deliver his people out of my hand, that your God should be able to deliver you from my hand? ¹⁵ Now therefore, do not let Hezekiah deceive you or mislead you like this, and do not believe him, for no god of any nation or kingdom was able to deliver his people from my hand or from the hand of my fathers. How much less will your God deliver you from my hand?'

- 2) The Jewish notion made them feel superior to other nations, but missed the meaning of the supremacy of God
 - a) God wasn't making them superior to other nations
 - b) God won't be reduced to the status of God among gods, he is the One God over all nations

Nations who have been blessed by adopting a biblical world view (the Christian West) have fallen prey to the same misguided notion.

- Since God has blessed us, we must be special
- God blessed us because God is special

- d. The prejudice contradicted: God is the God of the Gentiles also
2. The Contradiction proved: proved by God who justifies Jew and Gentile the same way, by faith (30)
- a. No advantage for the Jew because of his Jewishness: he must come to God 'out of' faith
 - b. No difference for the Gentile because of his Gentileness: he must come to God 'through' faith

There is a difference in the pronouns here, but no one has come up with a satisfactory explanation of the difference – they are essentially saying the same thing.

- c. The One Way is consistent with the One God – there are no other gods, there is no other way

II. The applications of the passage

A. Acceptance of our place among the nations

- 1. There are no ‘national gods’ – there is only the One True God and false gods
 - a. That means there is no ‘white man’s God’

^{NAU} **Deuteronomy 6:4** “Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! ⁵ “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.”

- 1) The obligations of God’s Oneness were revealed to Israel
 - 2) But the obligations of God’s Oneness extend to all people because God is God
- b. That means all nations, ethnic groups, peoples, tribes, classes stand before God on equal footing
 - 1) Without God all are condemned equally
 - 2) With God (by faith) any may be justified freely

^{NAU} **1 Timothy 2:5** For there is one God, *and* one mediator also between God and men, *the* man Christ Jesus,

- c. That means that any lifting up of any nation is done for God’s purposes in administering human affairs and not because of the merits of any particular nation
 - 1) The current ‘credit crisis’ and heavy indebtedness of Western nations to China could be just such a reversal of ascendancies by the hand of God for his purposes
 - 2) There is no ‘divine right’ of Western nations to stand at the head of world affairs

3) The abandonment of God by Western nations (generally speaking) cannot escape God's notice

Do you think there will be no consequences for the decadence of the West?

The Arabs are right in condemning Western decadence; it is just their solutions that are wicked and wrong.

B. Proclamation of the One message to all men

1. The gods of the nations cannot save them from their sins

^{NAU} **Jeremiah 10:10** But the LORD is the true God; He is the living God and the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth quakes, And the nations cannot endure His indignation.¹¹ Thus you shall say to them, "The gods that did not make the heavens and the earth will perish from the earth and from under the heavens."¹² *It is He* who made the earth by His power, Who established the world by His wisdom; And by His understanding He has stretched out the heavens.

2. The command of the One True God is to proclaim His truth to ALL nations, to make Disciples for his Name

^{NAU} **Matthew 28:19** "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

^{NAU} **Mark 16:15** And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation."

^{NAU} **John 17:2** even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life.³ This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

- a. All nations
- b. All creation
- c. All flesh

There is no hope in the gods of the nations, whether they are gods of wood, stone, or gold, or the philosophical gods of materialism or epicurean hedonism.

- The only hope for the nations is the gospel of justification by faith in Jesus Christ alone.
- The only hope of the peoples is the gospel of justification by faith in Jesus Christ alone.
- The only hope, my friends, of the people of our city, whether ‘new Canadians’, ‘old Canadians’, ‘native Canadians’, or ‘Martian Canadians’ is the gospel of justification by faith in Jesus Christ alone.
- The only hope for the people on your street is the gospel of justification by faith in Jesus Christ alone.

Conclusion:

The implications of this benefit go far beyond appropriating it for ourselves.

- Self-sacrifice of our pride, comfort, and security to find ways to tell others

You must be occupied in *knowing Him* and *proclaiming Him* – “Seeing *it is one God*, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.” (Rm 3.30)