

Converting Condemnation into Justification; Translation: Rom 3:21-4:5; The Royal Law & the Sophisticated Spiritual Life; Personal Sense of Destiny; Confidence

- 14) The Bible's exclusive position regarding the eternal future of an outsider is clearly stated by Jesus Christ in:
- John 3:36** - "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."
- 15) Righteousness demands righteousness and justice demands justice. What righteousness approves, justice must bless. What righteousness rejects, justice must condemn. These are two very exclusive positions: (1) "He who believes in the Son has eternal life," because righteousness approves faith in Christ and justice responds with justification. (2) "He who does not obey the Son will not see eternal life but the wrath of God abides on him," because righteousness rejects one's failure to believe in Christ and justice responds with continued condemnation.
- 16) The process that leads from condemnation to justification begins with (1) the imputation of Adam's original sin at selection, or physical birth, which results in (2) condemnation and incarceration inside (3) the slave market of sin.
- 17) Our manumission is also a three-fold process beginning with (1) the work of Jesus Christ on the cross which results in redemption: the purchase of the human race out from the slave market with a view toward setting each person free. When an individual is (2) saved by means of (3) faith alone in Christ alone then he steps out of the slave market into the freedom of grace.
- 18) The mechanics of salvation include (1) the imputation of divine righteousness to the person which results in (2) the justice of God justifying that person before the Supreme Court of Heaven and (3) vindicating him from all guilt.
- 19) This is an accounting procedure that imputes God's righteousness to the person who believes that his certificate of debt was transferred to Christ on the cross and there judged.
- 20) This process involves the two judicial imputations: (1) the imputation of our sins to Christ and (2) the imputation of divine righteousness to the believer.
- 21) Here is the corrected translation of our Romans passage:
- Romans 3:21** - Now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been disclosed—
- v. 22** - namely, the righteousness of God through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction,
- v. 23** - for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

v. 24 - But they are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

v. 25 - God publicly displayed Him at His death as the mercy seat accessible through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because God in His forbearance had passed over the sins previously committed.

v. 26 - This was also to demonstrate His righteousness in the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

v. 27 - Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded! By what principle? Of works? No, but by the principle of faith!

v. 28 - For we consider that a person is declared righteous by faith apart from the works of the law.

v. 29 - Or is God the God of the Jews only? Is he not the God of the Gentiles, too? Yes, of the Gentiles, too!

v. 30 - Since God is one, He will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.

v. 31 - Do we then nullify the law through faith? Absolutely not! Instead we uphold the law.

Romans 4:1 - What then are we to conclude that Abraham our forefather has actually discovered?

v. 2 - For assuming that Abraham has been justified by means of works, then he has a basis for boasting, but not before God.

Romans 4:3 - For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham had believed God, and it was credited to his account for righteousness.

v. 4 - Now to him who works for salvation, his compensation is not credited to grace but to debt.

v. 5 - But to him who does not work for salvation but believes on him who justifies the unbeliever his faith receives credit to his account for the imputation of divine righteousness resulting in justification.

- 22) It becomes obvious that salvation is by means of grace through faith in Christ. Where we were unable to appropriate our own salvation by means of works, through His substitutionary sacrifice we are offered salvation by means of grace.
- 23) This grace provision is made possible by the Lord's use of the royal law on the cross.

V. The Royal Law and the Sophisticated Spiritual Life, or Do You Know what You Are Doing?

1. When a believer acquires a personal sense of destiny, he enjoys a disposition of soul by which he lives his life in the light of eternity and enters into the sophisticated spiritual life.

2. The believer's destiny is linked with the destiny of the resurrected Christ. Because of the baptism of the Holy Spirit every believer is in union with Christ and shares everything Christ is and has: **(1)** divine righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21), **(2)** eternal life (1 John 5:11-12), **(3)** adoption or sonship (John 1:12; Galatians 3:26), **(4)** Heirship (Romans 8:16-17; 1 Peter 1:4), **(5)** royalty (Colossians 1:13; 2 Timothy 2:11-12), **(6)** priesthood (1 Peter 2:5, 9), **(7)** election (Ephesians 1:3-4), **(8)** destiny (Ephesians 1:5), and **(9)** sanctification (1 Corinthians 1:2, 30).
3. The believer's relationship with others is summed up by the royal law and expressed by the application of problem-solving device #8: unconditional love toward all mankind.
4. The link between one's personal sense of destiny and the ability to love one's fellowman unconditionally is problem-solving device #7: personal love for God.
5. The first stage of the sophisticated spiritual life is the development of spiritual self-esteem which is expressed by personal love for God and unconditional love for all mankind.
6. Entry into the sophisticated spiritual life occurs when the believer develops a personal sense of destiny: a clear vision of one's eternal future.
7. Definition of the word *destiny* is important to understand:

The Oxford English Dictionary:

Destinate: To set apart for a particular purpose. To predetermine in the way of a divine decree; to be divinely appointed.

Destine: To appoint or fix beforehand, to predetermine by an unalterable decree or ordinance.

Destiny: The power or agency by which, according to various systems of belief, all events, or certain particular events, are unalterably predetermined.

Destinee: The person for whom something is destined.¹

Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary:

Destiny: Invincible necessity; a necessity or fixed order of things established, as by a divine decree, or by an indissoluble connection of causes and effects.²

8. When a person believes in Christ he has a fixed destiny. However, the reality of this certainty comes more and more into focus and its details revealed through spiritual growth.
9. The advance to the sophisticated spiritual life convinces beyond doubt that what the Bible reveals about our future with Christ in heaven is of more certainty than the realities we face in this life.

¹ *The Oxford English Dictionary*, compact ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 1:702.

² *Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary*, 2d ed. s.v. "Destiny."

Romans 8:24 - For in absolute confidence we have been saved. Now when confident expectation is seen it is not true confidence. So who has confident expectation about what he sees?

v. 25 - Now if we have confident expectation for what we do not see, with perseverance in undeserved suffering we stand fast in eager anticipation.

10. The development of “confident expectation” is the result of consistent study of the Word of God:

Romans 15:4 - For as many as have been written before for our instruction, they were written in order that through perseverance and encouragement from the Scriptures we might have confident expectation.

v. 5 - Now may the God of perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind in the presence of one another according to Christ Jesus,

v. 6 - so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

11. The believer’s advance from spiritual childhood to spiritual adulthood is encapsulated in one verse:

1 Corinthians 13:13 - But now keep on remaining in faith [πίστις, *pistis*: the faith-rest technique of spiritual childhood], hope [ἐλπίς, *elpis*: the absolute confidence of one’s destiny: the transition from spiritual adolescence to spiritual adulthood], and love [ἀγάπη, *agapē*: the virtuous relationship with God—personal love, and man—unconditional love, in spiritual adulthood], but the greatest of these is virtue love.

12. The ability of a believer to make this advance is based on spiritual growth. The end result is spiritual sophistication: the ability to think on a level that shames the wise:

1 Corinthians 1:24 - But unto them, the elected ones, whether Jews or goyim, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

v. 25 - Because the foolish act of God [the view of unbelievers regarding the cross] is wiser than men and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

1 Corinthians 1:26 - Take a look at your election, fellow believers, how not many wise [philosophers], not many mighty [with human talent and ability], not many who rule [positions of human power and authority] are among the elect.

v. 27 - But God has chosen the foolish things of the world that the wise might be put to shame, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame [καταισχύνω, *kataischunō*: to confound, to put to shame, to disgrace] the things which are mighty.

v. 28 - And the base things of the world [those with no pedigree], and things which are despised [those society disrespects, e.g., Rahab the prostitute or Matthew the tax collector] God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He might bring to nothing the things that are.

v. 29 - so that no flesh should be glorified or boast in His presence [salvation is not by means of works but a gift of God by means of grace].

v. 30 - But from the source of Him, you keep on being in Christ Jesus [baptism of the Holy Spirit], who became what He was not before [true humanity] unto us: wisdom from God, righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.

v. 31 - so that, according as it is written [Jeremiah 9:24], “Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

13. The imputation of free will to every individual believer gives him the opportunity to advance to a level of wisdom that confounds and shames the wise of the world. Even the lowliest in the strata of a society can advance to the level of the sophisticated spiritual life.
14. It is only with wisdom acquired from Bible study that enables the believer to become a spiritual sophisticate. It is the thinking of God distilled into the pages of Scripture and inculcated into the soul of an individual that foments radical change in one’s behavior patterns, character traits, and lifestyle.