

"JUSTIFICATION IN PAUL & JAMES"

Introduction

1. THE SUBJECT: not random:
It is the most important theme in all Christian theology in many ways:
 - i. How can I be saved / pardoned / get peace of conscience
 - ii. Luther: "article of a standing or falling church"
2. SURVEY: There are/ever can be but 2 views:
 - i. Catholic: Human works are a part of it
 - ii. Lutheran/Protestant: Justification without works
3. LUTHER WAS RIGHT, AUGUSTINE WRONG
Greek was weak: Confused by the Latin

1. JUSTIFICATION IN PAUL

- 1) PAUL FREQUENTLY REFERS TO SUBJECT OF JUSTIFICATION OF A SINNER BEFORE GOD:
Romans = whole treatise /
Galatians: defence of the doctrine of Justification /
Philippians 3: he shows the complete change in his own thinking on the subject = critically important.
- 2) REPRESENTATIVE STATEMENTS IN PAUL:
 - (i) 3:28 : "Therefore we conclude (*)...law"
The message must be "sola fide"
 - (ii) 4:5 : "To him that worketh not, but believes on him that justifieth the ungodly...righteousness
The implication must be – no place for works in the justification of a sinner
 - (iii) 5:1 : "Therefore being...Lord Jesus Christ"
 - (iv) 11:6 : "And if by grace – work"
Grace and works are antithetical, opposites
 - (v) Phil. 3:9-10 : "Not having...know him"
He contrasts rabbinic doctrine with Gospel
 - (vi) 2 Tim. 1:9 : "Not according to our works but...began"

(vii) Titus 3:5 : "Not by works of righteousness...Holy Ghost"
SUM: Paul's doctrine is in the Westminster Shorter Catechism

- 3) ALL OF THIS TEACHING BECOMES CRITICALLY IMPORTANT FOR US WHEN WE RECALL PAUL'S ANATHEMAS
- cursed by God / excluded from heaven!
ILLUSTRATION: The law-court / forensic situation

2. JUSTIFICATION IN JAMES

- 1) JAMES (2:14-16) comes as a shock and a surprise after reading Paul:
v.14 : "Can faith save him?"
v.17 : "Faith if it hath not works is dead"
v.20 : "faith without works is dead"
v.21/5 : "Abraham justified by works" (Cp. Romans 4)
v.24 : "by works a man is justified"
v.26 : "faith without works is dead also"
OBSERVE: At least 7 times James appears to contradict Paul re. how we are justified
- 2) You may know Luther's attitude to this Epistle of James: "Epistle of straw". He was wrong, but it is easy to see why:
 - (i) Luther had been an R.C. monk with Augustine's view of Justification
 - (ii) Then he had had a great conversion – "Tower experience" – probably in 1518 – light on a doctrine of Justification – Romans 1:17 "therein is the righteousness of God" (Explain)
OBSERVE: Luther could not reconcile Paul's teaching with James' teaching = FAITH ONLY v. FAITH + WORKS
- 3) But there could not possibly be conflict
 - (i) both inspired men/apostolic men
 - (ii) there was no Council held to clarify the issue (Cp. Acts 15)

3. THE EXPLANATION – OR SOLUTION

1) ILLUSTRATION: Two candidates for church membership (Legalist v. Antinomian)

2) PUT ANOTHER WAY:

- (i) Paul's reference to the justification of sinner
- (ii) James's reference to the justification of a justified person (i.e. in the eye of others, e.g. Abraham, Rahab)

DOCTRINE: "by faith alone" needs to be supplemented:
"the faith that justifies is never a dead faith but a faith rich in good works". There is also "the faith of devils" (2:19)

3) SUMMARY OF THE WHOLE POINT:

Justification

- (i) meritoriously – "by the blood of Christ"
- (ii) instrumentally - "by faith alone"
- (iii) declaratively – "by works"

CONCLUSION

God pronounces a sinner "Not Guilty" and imputes to him the whole righteousness of Christ.

PSALM

84: 4 – 12

32: 1 – 5

112: 4 – 8