

I'm going through the book of Romans and have noticed that there is a clear progression presented from chapter one to chapter eight.

First Paul concludes the whole of the gentile nations in need of a savior. In Romans 1:17 he presents the idea that if any are to be justified before God it must be done by trusting in His provision: "the just shall live by faith".

He then shows that the Jews needed this provision as much as did the gentiles.

The law was insufficient for the task!

Next in chapters six through eight Paul moves from justification to the believer's sanctification, or his life after justification, and that this life that we now lead is a result of His own provision--by the Spirit.

Finally he moves from justification and sanctification to the idea of full redemption or the manifestation of the sons of God. In this third stage it seems that the whole of creation will participate in our adoption as sons of God. He takes us from justification, to sanctification, to glorification.

Obviously the works of the believer do not play a part (at least not a direct part) in either the justification, which is by faith (that He gives!), and the sanctification, which is also by faith--coming from the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, leaving the final part of the process, glorification, as a future hope.

My question is this: If justification and sanctification are both the result of His work, how is it that we sometimes conclude that the final stage is going to be a result of our own works? Is it fair to say that the completion of the process is now going to be dependent on the work of the flesh?

Gal 3:2-3 This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

How about those who have heard and believed the gospel (those who are justified), and those who are trusting in Him for their righteousness (sanctification); are they eligible for that wonderful glorification, that we all are looking to experience-- even if they haven't partaken of the deeper truths we have heard?

Does this glorification come only to those who have already achieved a level of sanctification brought about by being privileged to hear a deeper word or is it possible that the Holy Spirit might be working to bring about this adoption in all of those who cry Abba, Father?

It is hard to grasp the notion that the first may be last and the last first!

Thoughts?

Blessings,
William