

How God Justified Me by Grace Alone Through Faith Alone in Christ Alone To the Glory of God Alone!

By Jason Snider

I must begin by saying, I knew a god before I knew the God. Let me explain. The God of the Bible and the god of my life were different. See, many times I thought God was like this or that, but His word says something totally different. How one practices his or her faith, or lack thereof, usually reveals what they believe. For example, some of the leaders of the church I attended with my family, acted differently at church than at their homes. The preacher would tell us to be patient, but the men I saw were hardly ever patient. This greatly confused me. I knew well the struggle of sin myself. I, too, could not stop sinning. In fact, I loved my sin.

To further explain my previous statement, “I knew a god before I knew the God” I must say that the facts I learned about God were few. I thought God was *only* personal. However, God is also something far different than we are—holy. I was told over and over again to say this prayer and then I would go to heaven. I was told that if I did not say this prayer I would go to hell. I understood that God wanted to forgive me, but I did not understand *why*. I understood that God would punish me for not doing what He said, but I did not understand *why*.

I disobeyed a lot. I was a rebel. However, I could also *act* like I was “good.” At church, I was the nice boy they all wanted to see. Outside of church I was god of my own life. I worshipped myself. I used curse words with God’s name. I went to church on Sunday just because my parents wanted me to. I disobeyed my parents. I hated them at times. I was involved in sexual immorality. I stole things from the store—for fun. I lied to my parents about where I was going. I wanted all the girls and all the money and the best truck in town. And like I said earlier, I loved to do these things, but when I went to church I felt confused, dirty, and all alone.

Through God’s word and the preaching of it, the Word kept telling me to believe. I related this to one of the many times I prayed the “sinner’s prayer.” I did not believe anything *before* I prayed. I expected the prayer to change me—you know, help me understand, make me clean, and help me feel loved. I did not know, but I acted like the “sinner’s prayer” was a magic trick—say it and poof I will be saved.

By now, I had come to the conclusion there was no hope for me. The truth is God is holy, therefore He is just and He must punish sin. I tried to stop sinning, but I just could not achieve the righteousness I thought God wanted. Then, one day, five and a half years ago, I understood. I gave up. I stopped trying to *achieve* righteousness, but instead I *received* righteousness. Jesus Christ is our righteousness. I did not know this about Him. Not only that, He took the wrath for my sins upon Himself. God chose to punish my sins on His son—if I would treasure His Son. I then saw Jesus as my treasure and immediately turned from my sins to follow him. I no longer love my sin, but I love my Savior. The new birth transformed me and continues to transform me everyday. I am now joined to the Living Christ—not a list. The Holy Spirit comforted me. I was freed from the bondage of sin that I might bring His name much glory.

Now, how did He do it? By the wisdom of God, He sent His Son into the world. His Son, Jesus Christ died for our sins and was raised from the dead, which he freely did and not for anything in us. His death and resurrection was according to Scripture. Historically, these events really happened. He now sits at the Father’s right-hand as our Mediator. The apostles preached this message to others who were personally saved by Christ. Now, I preach this message to you. Will you treasure God’s Son Jesus Christ, for there is no other name given under heaven by which we must be saved? In Him there is hope for eternal life. Without Him there is no hope.