


1326 BA

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bncdoc.author	Gibbs, Eddie
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<1326/c>	<p>to salvation and service in Christ. As an initial act it is a once-for-all, unrepeatable experience. It is a turning from darkness to light, from the domain of Satan to the Kingdom of God, from slavery to sin to freedom, service and worship of Christ as Lord (Matt. 18:3; Acts 3:19; 4:15; 26:18; 1 Thess. 1:9). However, conversion does not refer exclusively to the initial act of reorientation. For as we mature in the Christian life so we come to recognise that there are still unconverted areas in our life which need to be repented of and handed over to God. As Keith Miller has pointed out, 'all a man does when he commits his 'whole life' is to commit that of which he is conscious So the totally committed Christian life is a life of continually committing one's self and problems day by day as they are slowly revealed to his own consciousness' (Miller 1965:60). Conversion, which emphasises the human response, would be impossible without the accompanying initiative-taking and power-enabling act of God. There are five key theological terms: Reconciliation, Redemption, Justification, Regeneration and Adoption, which express God's involvement in the total process. 'Reconciliation' means the ending of a quarrel by which former enemies become friends (Rom. 5:10ff; 2 Cor. 5:18ff; Eph. 2:13; Col. 1:20). The New Testament clearly teaches that humankind in its natural fallen state is opposed to God (Rom. 5:10; Col. 1:21; Jas 4:4). The seriousness of this condition should not be minimised. Until people are unequivocally taught this unpalatable truth there can be no preaching of good news. If they are left unaware of impending judgment they will not appreciate the significance of salvation. So Paul calls upon all people everywhere to be reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:20). Our acceptance is not represented as a reward for good conduct. No probationary period was required before the prodigal son was received by the waiting father. He ran towards him as soon as he came in sight, and he was still a long way from home when the father first spotted him (Luke 15:20). It was while we were yet sinners that Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8). Furthermore, we are not left in any doubt as to whether we are fully accepted. Reconciliation is not an event in the future to be anticipated but to be received now, because it is offered now (Rom. 5:11). 'Redemption' expresses the means by which reconciliation is made possible. It describes how deliverance from evil is achieved through the payment of a price. Thus</p>
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prisoners of war

may be released or slaves freed on the payment of an agreed sum being received. In the New Testament those who do not enjoy salvation in Christ are regarded as slaves of sin (John 8:34; Rom. 7:14). Christ's atoning death on the cross is described as the price paid to release the slaves and free the condemned (Eph. 1:7; Rom. 3:24; Heb. 9:15; 1 Cor. 6:19ff; 7:22ff). The cost to God of his redemptive act is underlined by the fact that it was only achieved through the death of his Son. In other words it was on the basis of substitution. The innocent one stood in place of the guilty (Gal. 3:13; Mark 10:45). While the concept of substitution is not the only way in which the atonement may be understood, it is an essential feature as represented in Scripture.

	<p>‘Justification’ is a legal term meaning to ‘acquit’ or declare righteous. God, in Scripture, is represented as judge of all the earth. And because he is at the same time King, he is also responsible for the executive as well as the judicial aspect. He not only passes the verdict, but also implements the sentence. In the New Testament it is Paul who develops the concept of salvation in terms of justification. Justification means to Paul God’s act of remitting the sins of guilty men, and accounting them righteous, freely, by His grace, through faith in Christ, on the ground, not of their own works, but of the representative law-keeping and redemptive blood-shedding of the Lord Jesus Christ on their behalf. (Lilley 1962:683) (Rom. 3:23-26; 4:5-8; 5:18ff) Thus having passed the appropriate sentence, he then, through the atoning work of Christ, stands in the sinner’s place and stead. The sinner is thereby declared righteous, not because he or she was innocent of the charges brought against them, but because of the righteousness which belongs to Christ and is bestowed on them. Technically this is known as ‘imputed righteousness’. (See also Gal. 2:15-21; 2 Cor. 5:16-21; Phil. 3:4-11). The grounds of the sinner’s justification is by faith, exercised by placing confidence in Christ for salvation. Justification is on the basis of God’s grace not human merit. ‘Regeneration’ describes the new beginning and permanent change brought about by the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the person who has responded by faith to Christ. Indeed that very initial act was only made possible through the Spirit who bestowed the gift of faith (Eph. 2:8). The new birth (John 3:3-8;</p>
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