

Until the Accuser is Cast Down

(Justification and Mediation: Two Complementary Functions)

A Thought Paper

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10/8/09

The day that Adam sinned, he came under the condemnation of the law. The penalty for sin is eternal death. (Romans 6:23) Therefore, Adam *should* have died that day in the garden, some six thousand years ago.¹ And since the human race was “in him”, when he sinned condemnation unto death came upon all mankind. (Romans 5:18a) By virtue of our inherent natural connection to Adam, he was our representative. Just as surely as the nation of Israel was present in Jacob in the womb of Rebecca and the nation of Edom was present in Esau in the womb of Rebecca, (see Gen. 25:23) we were all present there in the loins of Adam in the Garden of Eden. Thus whatever happened to Adam of necessity happened to us.

It was Satan who had planned the downfall of Adam. He had worked strategically through the snake and through Eve to bring about the demise of the human family. And when Adam failed the test, Satan’s argument came to be expressed along these lines. Mankind has sinned and therefore he belongs with me. We should have a shared destiny. If I am to be destroyed because of my sin, then they should be destroyed with me because of their sin. If they

¹ Adam listened to the words of the tempter, and yielding to his insinuations, fell into sin. Why was not the death penalty at once enforced in his case?--Because a ransom was found. God's only begotten Son volunteered to take the sin of man upon Himself, and to make an atonement for the fallen race. There could have been no pardon for sin had this atonement not been made. Had God pardoned Adam's sin without an atonement, sin would have been immortalized, and would have been perpetuated with a boldness that would have been without restraint. (E. G. White, *Review and Herald*, April 23, 1901)

receive mercy, Satan reasoned that he should also receive mercy. We are all now in the same boat. God, you must save us both or destroy both. (See *Early Writings*, pg. 127.)

This was Satan's ploy, his stratagem, which was designed to save himself from destruction. He fully expected God to have mercy on Adam and Eve. At the same time He knew that God claimed to be just. Now he thought he had devised a conundrum that God Himself could not resolve. He thought he had God caught in a "catch twenty-two". When Adam fell into sin and took the whole human race with him, Satan thought it was "checkmate!" He could see no way of escape for the Godhead. He thought his case was "air tight".

But God's actions on that fateful day seemed to announce to the watching universe "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." (Romans 9:15) In other words God made it clear that He was not obliged to limit Himself to the two options which Satan had anticipated.

Initially Satan must have been outraged! This is unjust and illegal, he cries. Your own law says "The soul that sinneth it shall die." (Ezekiel 18:4, 1 Cor. 15:56) The human race has sinned and eternal death *must* be the inevitable result. They stand condemned by your own holy law. You cannot show them mercy unless you set aside the claims of your law. To do otherwise would be a complete denial of justice. Mercy *and* justice cannot abide together. It must be one or the other.

Thus Satan reasoned against his Maker and argued against infinite wisdom. But this crisis had not taken God by surprise. Before God created mankind and gave to the human race gifts and abilities that He had never given any other order of creation², He prepared a plan that would meet the emergency caused by sin and address all of the ramifications involved in human

² "All heaven took a deep and joyful interest in the creation of the world and of man. Human beings were a new and distinct order. They were made "in the image of God," and it was the Creator's design that they should populate the earth." Review and Harold, Feb. 11, 1902

failure, should it become necessary. God had a plan. Comprehensive in its range, infinite in its wisdom and detailed beyond the scope of the imagination of the strongest created intellect, God's plan could never have been anticipated by the enemy.

As the plan began to be unveiled Satan must have been at least temporarily awestruck by the humility and infinite goodness of God. It seemed unfathomable that God would give His only begotten Son to become a man, the new corporate representative of the human race. He would become a man such as Adam had become not one such as Adam had been at creation. He would bear man's fallen nature. As man's substitute and surety, the Son of God would be brought "to the level of man's feeble faculties".³ In the weakness of fallen human nature He would live the life of faith that is required of man. Bear the test that mankind had failed to bear. Overcome on every point that man could ever be called endure. Assume the guilt of all mankind. Pay the full penalty incurred by all human sin as demanded by the law. And thus the entire human race would be justified unto life. Their life, even their temporal earthly existence, would not be occasioned by a legal aberration, a judicial slight of hand or compromise of justice. It would be in perfect harmony and full accordance with absolute justice.

Because of this plan, which is based in God's eternal legal framework and not some sort of circumvention of law, mankind would not be annihilated. They would have another trial, "a second probation".⁴ And they would have an opportunity to live with God forever as special members of His heavenly family.

³ "He who was one with the Father stepped down from the glorious throne in heaven, laid aside his royal robe and crown, and clothed his divinity with humanity, thus bringing himself to the level of man's feeble faculties." RH12/1188

⁴ "Christ proposed to become man's surety and substitute, that man, through matchless grace, should have another trial--a second probation--having the experience of Adam and Eve as a warning not to transgress God's law as they did." FW21

It was imperative that God directly confront the problem of condemnation which came upon the human race in Adam because of the violation of the law, lest He give an iota of credence to the devil's objection. He could not ignore the law's demand. It is the foundation of His government.⁵ Therefore He could not set it aside except at the peril of His whole kingdom, the entire universe. Since it is the tangible expression of His own nature which does not change, it also could not be modified or adjusted not even "to meet man in his fallen condition".⁶ If the law were in any sense compromised, the adversary would have case. If it were not implicitly upheld and sustained, Satan's argument against the government of heaven would have gained credibility. The kingdom of God would then have lacked legitimacy and sin would be justified. The integrity and authority of God's government is contingent upon God's own integrity His own adherence to justice, which is His very nature and character. "He cannot deny Himself." (2 Tim. 2:13) Therefore, in His infinite wisdom He devised a plan of redemption in which the legality of mercy was to be fully addressed. God's love required that He show mercy to deceived and fallen humanity, so long as there was any chance that they might be won back.⁷ Yet it was also imperative that mercy should have a foundation in justice. Therefore, God decreed that He Himself in Christ would bear the full legal penalty for every sin of every human soul and thereby render every moment of probationary human life a legally upright and circumspect transaction.

⁵ "Many who are willfully trampling upon the law of Jehovah claim holiness of heart and sanctification of life. But they have not a saving knowledge of God or of His law. They are standing in the ranks of the great rebel. He is at war with the law of God, which is the foundation of the divine government in heaven and in the earth." (E. G. White, *Faith and Works*, pg. 29)

⁶ "The law reveals the attributes of God's character, and not a jot or tittle of it could be changed to meet man in his fallen condition." (E. G. White, *Desire of Ages*, p. 762)

⁷ "Understanding the character of God, knowing His goodness, Satan chose to follow his own selfish, independent will. This choice was final. There was no more that God could do to save him. But man was deceived; his mind was darkened by Satan's sophistry. The height and depth of the love of God he did not know. For him there was hope in a knowledge of God's love. By beholding His character he might be drawn back to God." (E. G. White, *Desire of Ages*, p. 762)

The inescapable demands of the aforementioned forensic imperative gave birth to the reality of the Lamb that was slain “from the foundation of the world.” (Rev. 13:8) In God’s order not a moment of probationary human life could transpire, without a full accounting for the penalty of the sins which would be occasioned by that life. The grave implications of this inevitable reality must never be overlooked. Every sin of every soul on earth has its corresponding consequences and every consequence of every sin is borne by our Redeemer.⁸ God’s integrity cannot allow of compromise. Therefore, God could not allow life on earth to continue without addressing the legal liabilities of that life. Yes! He would extend mercy to sinners. But He would not for a moment lend legitimacy to the claim of Satan that He could not be both just and merciful at the same time. Absolute justice would be maintained from the moment of the birth of mercy to the last moment of its necessity. The probationary life that mankind would be given would be rendered fully compatible with justice through the suffering endured by the Substitute. Therefore, every human soul would be justified unto life by the blood of the Lamb.

Our Lord has said, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. . . . For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed." John 6:53-55. This is true of our physical nature. To the death of Christ we owe even this earthly life. The bread we eat is the purchase of His broken body. The water we drink is bought by His spilled blood. Never one, saint or sinner, eats his daily food, but he is nourished by the body and the blood of Christ. The cross of Calvary is stamped on every loaf. It is reflected in every water spring. (E. G. White, *Desire of Ages*, p. 660)

This is why John wrote concerning Christ “*That* was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” (John 1:9) What does John mean by the expression “lighteth

⁸ “During every moment of Christ’s life in our world, God was repeating His gift. Christ, the sinless One, was making an infinite sacrifice for sinners, that they might be saved. He came as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and those for whom He came looked upon Him as stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. The cup of suffering was placed in His hand, as if He were the guilty one, and he drained it to the dregs. He bore the sin of the world to the bitter end. And yet men continue to sin, and Christ continues to feel the consequences of their sin as if he Himself were the guilty one.” (E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 13, pg. 369-370)

every man". A few verses earlier John defined the term "light". "In him was life; and the life was the light of men." (John 1:4) Light = life. Therefore, what John was saying in verse nine is Jesus gives life to every man that comes into the world. It matters not whether they believe in Christ or not, they would not have life had not Christ reversed the condemnation unto death which came in Adam, and given them "justification unto life" in its place.

A Question Arises

Now that Satan's legal objection has been addressed, and mankind has been given probationary life, without compromising the integrity of the law, another question arises. Does the concept of corporate justification undermine or make redundant the mediation of Christ? Does it some how render His heavenly intercessory work superfluous? If the whole of mankind already stands justified what need have we of a heavenly high priest to mediate on our behalf? What is involved in Christ's mediation and how does it relate to the concept of corporate justification?

While it is true that one of Satan's initial stratagems has been defeated by the corporate justification accomplished by the sacrifice of Christ, this does not mean every argument has been silenced.

Satan saw that his disguise was torn away. His administration was laid open before the unfallen angels and before the heavenly universe. He had revealed himself as a murderer. By shedding the blood of the Son of God, he had uprooted himself from the sympathies of the heavenly beings. Henceforth his work was restricted. Whatever attitude he might assume, he could no longer await the angels as they came from the heavenly courts, and before them accuse Christ's brethren of being clothed with the garments of blackness and the defilement of sin. The last link of sympathy between Satan and the heavenly world was broken.

Yet Satan was not then destroyed. The angels did not even then understand all that was involved in the great controversy. The principles at stake were to be more fully revealed. And for the sake of man, Satan's existence must be

continued. Man as well as angels must see the contrast between the Prince of light and the prince of darkness. He must choose whom he will serve.⁹

Despite the uncloaking of his motives at Calvary and the restrictions placed upon his movements, the enemy of righteousness has not even now given up the fight. He still has claims against God's government and arguments against God's conduct of the universe which must be fully revealed, understood and addressed. He still hopes to defeat God by demonstrating that there is a flaw in His integrity.

In order to properly understand the present phase of the mediation of Christ we must remain cognizant of the parameters of the conflict between Christ and Satan. Satan's claim is not primarily against Christ. The focus of His complaint is God the Father. This is why God the Father cannot be the judge. John 5:22 tells us He has committed all judgment to the Son. Because God the Father is accused as the primary "suspect" in the great controversy, He cannot be the judge. He is the primary focus of Satan's accusation. One cannot legitimately act as judge in His own trial. "The hour of His judgment is come." (Rev. 14:6) That is the hour when God is to be judged.

Satan has brought charges against "The Most High". It would appear that this initial discontent was precipitated by the counsel meetings in heaven which he was not allowed to attend. Christ could enter into the divine counsels of the Godhead, but Lucifer was left out.¹⁰ Thus he grew jealous of Christ because from His perspective God had unjustifiably favored Him. When considering these events one cannot help but remember the story of Joseph and his

⁹ E. G. White, *Desire of Ages*, p. 761

¹⁰ "Lucifer was envious and jealous of Jesus Christ. Yet when all the angels bowed to Jesus to acknowledge His supremacy and high authority and rightful rule, he bowed with them; but his heart was filled with envy and hatred. Christ had been taken into the special counsel of God in regard to His plans, while Lucifer was unacquainted with them. He did not understand, neither was he permitted to know, the purposes of God. But Christ was acknowledged sovereign of heaven, His power and authority to be the same as that of God Himself." (E. G. White, *The Story of Redemption*, p. 14)

brother's reaction when Jacob showed him special favor. Joseph is a type of Christ and the story is enlightening concerning heavenly things.

God was accused of injustice in heaven because of His treatment of Christ. "'Why,' questioned this mighty angel, 'should Christ have the supremacy? Why is He honored above Lucifer?'"¹¹ Later the accusations were modified to more effectively win the support of the angels.

"He began to insinuate doubts concerning the laws that governed heavenly beings, intimating that though laws might be necessary for the inhabitants of the worlds, angels, being more exalted, needed no such restraint, for their own wisdom was a sufficient guide."¹²

Later the accusation morphed again. Fallen man cannot keep the law, therefore God is unjust. He has imposed a law that cannot be kept.¹³ Over and over again Satan has attacked the character and integrity of God. In each case Satan's fundamental charge is that God is unjust. Thus questions concerning the justice and fairness of God's conduct are fundamental to the great controversy. In this light is it any wonder that God must uphold the law continually and without the slightest suggestion of compromise? His every act must be in full harmony with the law.

But mankind has broken the law. And because of this past failure mankind can never be justified by observing the law.¹⁴ How then does the law fit into the current struggle between

¹¹ E. G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 36

¹² E. G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 37

¹³ "Satan declared that it was impossible for the sons and daughters of Adam to keep the law of God, and thus charged upon God a lack of wisdom and love. If they could not keep the law, then there was fault with the Lawgiver. . . . Jesus humbled himself, clothing his divinity with humanity, in order that he might stand as the head and representative of the human family, and by both precept and example condemn sin in the flesh, and give the lie to Satan's charges. He was subjected to the fiercest temptations that human nature can know, yet he sinned not; for sin is the transgression of the law. By faith he laid hold upon divinity, even as humanity may lay hold upon infinite power through him. Although tempted upon all points even as men are tempted, he sinned not. He did not surrender his allegiance to God, as did Adam." ST 1/16/96

¹⁴ "Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Romans 3:20

Christ and Satan? What does the mediation of Christ have to do with our predicament as pawns in the warfare of Satan against the government of God?

The term mediator only appears eight times in NKJV. The scriptures reveal that the patriarch Job in the midst of his great suffering longed for a court of appeal and a “mediator” who might lay his hands on both parties in the struggle.

I am afraid of all my sufferings; I know that You will not hold me innocent. *If* I am condemned, Why then do I labor in vain? If I wash myself with snow water, And cleanse my hands with soap, Yet You will plunge me into the pit, And my own clothes will abhor me. "For *He* is not a man, as I *am*, *That* I may answer Him, *And that* we should go to court together. Nor is there any mediator between us, *Who* may lay his hand on us both. (Job 9:28-33)

Job seemed to sense the need of someone whom he could regard as a peer, but who at the same time would stand as a peer of God. As a mere man he acknowledged that he lacked the standing and authority required in one who would evaluate God’s conduct. He sensed that there was something amiss in his case because of the overbearing burden that he was called upon to bear. And he lacked the wisdom required to suggest a better course of action to the Almighty. As a sinner, he sensed his need of mercy, and yet lacked the wherewithal to effectively request it.

The second appearance of the term mediator occurs in Galatians. It tells us that the law was “ordained . . . in the hand of a mediator.” (Gal. 3:19) This book also alludes to the fact that a mediator is not required if there is only one party to be addressed. (Gal. 3:20) Paul’s first letter to Timothy informs us that there is “One God and one mediator between God and men, *the* man Christ Jesus.” (1 Tim. 2:5) Hebrews adds that “He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.” (Heb. 8:6) And “He is the Mediator of the new covenant.” (Heb. 9:15, Heb. 12:24) Those brief references are all that we find in scripture with reference to the term “Mediator”.

However, it should be noted that the terms “mediator” and “intercessor” are synonyms. Yet, this does not significantly improve on the quantity of direct references in the scriptures. The term “intercessor” only appears once in the KJV and the NKJV. Yet this reference is very significant in that it inform us of how God regards the importance of an intercessor or mediator. Speaking of God the text says:

He [God] saw that *there was* no man, And wondered that *there was* no intercessor; Therefore His own arm brought salvation for Him; And His own righteousness, it sustained Him. (Isaiah 59:16)

We are taken aback as we grasp the meaning of this statement. In it we are explicitly told that God “wondered”. Can there be a more startling verse in all the scriptures? What can cause the omniscient One to “wonder”? The term “wonder” is “shamem” in the original. It means to be appalled, to be stunned, show horror or be astounded. Can any thing, person, event or circumstance cause such a reaction from God?!?

The New American Bible says “He saw that there was no one, and was appalled that there was none to intervene”. The New American Standard reads: “And He saw that there was no man, And was astonished that there was no one to intercede”. The New Living Translations says: “He was amazed to see that no one intervened to help the oppressed. So he himself stepped in to save them with his mighty power and justice.” (all emphasis supplied)

The context of the statement under consideration graphically describes the utter sinfulness of man. It describes how “oppression”, “revolt”, “lying” and “iniquity” run rampant and there is none to deliver, none to intercede. There is nothing to pacify the wretched plight of all mankind or mitigate the miserable conditions of his circumstances. And then we are told that God steps into this midnight of hopeless helplessness and He Himself takes on the role of

Intercessor, Savior, Deliverer and Judge. This is what mediation means to God. Himself the Judge, Himself the Advocate, He Himself is the only one who can save.

Although there is only one reference to the term intercessor found in the Authorized Version and the New King James Version, fortunately there are a number of references to “intercession” which is translated from the same root word. These references provide us a glimpse into the function of the Mediator. The first reference is found in Isaiah.

All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment, And who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken. And they made His grave with the wicked -- But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor *was any* deceit in His mouth. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put *Him* to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see *His* seed, He shall prolong *His* days, And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. He shall see the labor of His soul, *and* be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong, Because He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors. (Isa. 53:6-12)

This is an informative picture of the role of Christ as Intercessor. He does not merely stand and plead for mercy on behalf of those for whom He intercedes. In the legal framework in which God is constrained to operate that would be pointless apart from fulfilling the other functions of an intercessor described in this passage. As Intercessor He takes our place as if He were the guilty one. He bears our iniquity as if it were His own. He suffers the punishment which is due us in His own body. And “By dying in man's stead, Christ exhausted the penalty and provided a pardon.”¹⁵ This is the foundation of corporate justification, which it should be noted is the first phase of the process of justification. And thus it is through His continuing

¹⁵ E. G. White, *God's Amazing Grace*, p. 139

intercession in heaven above that He completes the process of justification. His work includes all three phases of justification: 1) Corporate justification by His faith; 2) Justification by the response of our faith; 3) Final justification through enduring faith. All of this is involved in and dependant upon His mediatorial intercession.

Therefore, we should see that corporate justification and mediation, far from being antithetical, are in fact complimentary and interdependent functions. The value of intercession is rooted in its ability to accomplish justification. And justification can never occur apart from effective intercession. Unless by His intercession He effectively addresses the legal conditions of those whom He represents His intercession is impotent. And at the same time without intercession justification is without legal legitimacy. None of the phases of justification can occur without mediation and mediation is superfluous if it does not accomplish justification. God's mercy and justice must always stand side by side.¹⁶

The reason some perceive an imaginary conflict between these two concepts is because of what has been referred to as a "point distortion".¹⁷ Justification is not a point; it is a process with three phases. The first phase is corporate justification. This is the removal of the condemnation unto death which was a consequence of sin.¹⁸ "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law being made a curse for us." (Gal. 3:13) This resulted in probationary life for the whole human race. But this is not the whole of the process called justification. The fact that

¹⁶ "You must remember that Justice has a twin sister, Mercy." (E. G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 363) "While you seek to administer justice, remember that she has a twin sister, which is mercy. The two stand side by side, and should not be separated." (E. G. White, *Review and Herald*, August 30, 1881)

¹⁷ "Point distortion" is a term coined by Dr. Fred Bischoff to refer to the tendency to see a part of a process as the whole.

¹⁸ "Suppose a man were condemned to death, but before the sentence was executed, a noble who was able to free him, had compassion upon him, and said, 'I will die in his stead,' and the fetters were removed, the prisoner went free, while the noble died. What gratitude would awaken in the doomed man's heart! He would never forget his deliverer. The deed of the noble would be heralded to all parts of the world. This is what Jesus, the Prince of heaven, has done for us. When we were under the condemnation of death, he came to rescue us, to set us free from the bondage of Satan, and to deliver us from everlasting death." (E. G. White, *Review and Herald*, September 16, 1890)

there is more to come after the event called corporate justification is evident in such passages as Romans chapter five.

For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.
(Romans 5:7-9)

Note that the first phase of justification occurred at the cross when Jesus shed His blood. The cross is the place of unmitigated “justice”. There Christ experienced the wrath of God unmixed with mercy. Nevertheless, the cross is also the place of “mercy” because Christ was not there suffering on His own account. He was there as Intercessor. He was there as Mediator. He was there to take the punishment on behalf of the human race and reveal the foundation of the reality of “justification unto life” which had come through the Lamb that was “slain from the foundation of the world”. This being accomplished there is still more to the process. The text continues “We shall be saved from wrath through Him”. His mediation in the heavenly sanctuary is just as essential as His mediation at the cross.¹⁹ It is essential to salvation from “wrath” that is still to come even though the first phase of justification has been completed on behalf of all. This aspect of mediation/intercession is also an essential aspect of the process.

For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. (Romans 5:10)

Here we see that we were reconciled to God at the cross, yet “we shall be saved by His life”. “He ever liveth to make intercession” for us. (Heb. 7:25) Again we find that His work as Saviour was not completed when corporate justification was accomplished at Calvary. “Having

¹⁹ “The intercession of Christ in man's behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross. By His death He began that work which after His resurrection He ascended to complete in heaven.” (E. G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 489)

now been justified by His blood”, His mediation in the sanctuary above is still required to affect the next stage of the process.

We should see that there are three dimensions of justification.

- 1) Corporate justification which was accomplished when Jesus shed His blood.
- 2) Justification by faith which occurs when the sinner comes to believe in what Christ has done for him or her at Calvary.
- 3) Justification with respect to nature which occurs when we are changed “in a moment in the twinkling of an eye” and given a new body.

Until we are fully justified, that is justified with respect to the negative requirements of the law (i.e. “the sentence of death”²⁰), justified by faith which involves heart reconciliation to God and His holy law, and justified by having our corrupt natures which are condemned by the law replaced with “incorruption”²¹ which is in harmony with the law, we cannot see God face to face. And since “at-one-ment” (i.e. the restoration of face to face communion with God) is the objective of the process of Atonement which began at Calvary, all three phases of the process are essential to the plan of redemption.

In light of the description of justification described in the preceding paragraph, one begins to get a sense that all three phases of justification involve the process of making right in relation to the law and therefore all three phases are legal processes. “Justification” as it is used in the Bible is a legal term. It always relates to the law or to justice. Therefore, the expression “legal justification” is somewhat redundant. Justification is always legal.²² Hence the term corporate justification may be a more appropriate term to describe the first phase of justification.

²⁰ “Man was a criminal under the sentence of death for transgression of the law of God, as a traitor, a rebel; hence a substitute for man must die as a malefactor, because he stood in the place of the traitors, with all their treasured sins upon his divine soul.” (E. G. White, *Review and Herald*, September 4, 1900)

²¹ 1 Corinthians 15:53

²² I am indebted to Dr. Fred Bischoff, for this insight.

All three phases of justification require the mediation of Christ. It was His intercession and mediation at Calvary which fulfilled the just demands of the law on our behalf and changed our standing from condemnation to death to “justification unto life”.²³ It is His mediation in the heavenly sanctuary which ministers to us the experience of justification by faith in His cross thus changing us from rebels to loyal subjects of God’s kingdom. And it is Christ’s mediation which will someday conclude with the announcement “He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous [dikaioo in the original] still; he who is holy, let him be holy still.” (Rev. 22:11) This declaration will initiate the third phase of justification during which our corrupt natures will be replaced with incorruption, thus we will be made righteous by nature, so that we can stand in His presence. In all three phases mediation is essential to the process of justification and mediation is superfluous unless its objective is justification.

The More Significant Objective

Finally we must consider the more significant issue which the plan of redemption is to address. This would also be the more significant issue which Christ’s intercession/mediation is to address. We cannot be saved apart from God’s initiative in the plan of redemption.

But the plan of redemption had a yet broader and deeper purpose than the salvation of man. It was not for this alone that Christ came to the earth; it was not merely that the inhabitants of this little world might regard the law of God as it should be regarded; but it was to vindicate the character of God before the universe. To this result of His great sacrifice--its influence upon the intelligences of other worlds, as well as upon man--the Saviour looked forward when just before His crucifixion He said: "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto Me." John 12:31, 32. The act of Christ in dying for the salvation of man would not only make heaven accessible to men, but before all the universe it would justify God and His Son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan. It

²³ He took in His grasp the world over which Satan claimed to preside as his lawful territory, and by His wonderful work in giving His life, He restored the whole race of men to favor with God. (E. G. White, *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7A, p. 485)

would establish the perpetuity of the law of God and would reveal the nature and the results of sin. (E. G. White, *Patriarch and Prophets*, p. 68)

“The hour of His judgment is come.” (Rev. 14:6) Too often some are tempted to fear and tremble at the thought of the hour of judgment because it is understood as the hour when God is to judge us. While this is true, we should not get so self-absorbed that we fail to consider the broader implication of Revelation 14:6. It is fully valid to interpret this text as announcing the hour when God is to judge the earth, “because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained.” (Acts 17:31) Yet, it is equally valid to interpret this text as announcing the hour when God Himself is to be judged. (See for example Romans 3:4) This is the greater significance of the judgment hour message and the greater significance of the mediation of Christ. As Mediator Christ stands between Satan and the human race. But it is equally true that Christ also stands between Satan and God the Father. Jesus bled and died to justify the human race and yet it is no less true that Jesus bled and died to “justify God”.²⁴ As Mediator Christ must vindicate the saints. (See Dan. 7:22) And yet more significantly as Mediator Christ *must* vindicate the Father, for “the hour of His judgment is come”.

If there is a trial in process and there are two individuals on trial, you and God, which is the more significant case to be tried? It is sometimes easy to forget that if God does not win His case everybody loses. Our destiny can never be more secure than His. On His case rests the peace and security of the whole universe. In fact the situation is even more dire than that. For on His case rests the very existence of the universe. This is because God has staked His very existence on the outcome of the process.

²⁴ “The act of Christ in dying for the salvation of man would not only make heaven accessible to men, but before all the universe it would justify God and His Son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan.” (E. G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 68)

For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, "Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you." And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute. Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed *it* by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it *is* impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before *us*. (Hebrews 6:13-18)

Commenting on this passage E. J. Waggoner makes the following observations:

Think of it; God swore by Himself! That is, He pledged Himself, and His own existence, to our salvation in Jesus Christ. He put Himself in pawn. His life for ours, if we are lost while trusting Him. His honour is at stake. It is not a question of whether or not you are insignificant and of little or no worth. . . . The only question is, Can God afford to break or forget His oath? And the answer is that we have "two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie." (Heb. 6:18)

Think of what would be involved in the breaking of that promise and that oath. . . . It is the word of God in Christ that upholds the universe, and keeps the innumerable stars in their places. "In Him all things consist." (Col. 1:17) If He should fail, the universe would collapse. But God is no more sure than His word, for His word is backed by His oath. He has pledged His own existence to the performance of His word. If His word should be broken to the humblest soul in the world, He Himself would be disgraced, dishonored, and dethroned. The universe would go to chaos and annihilation.

Thus the entire universe is in the balance to ensure the salvation of every soul that seeks it in Christ. (E. J. Waggoner, *Everlasting Covenant*, 1900, pg. 112-113)

This intriguing and astonishing aspect of the great controversy was foreshadowed in experience of Joseph and his brothers. After Joseph's older brothers had sold him into slavery there was a famine throughout the then known world. The record states "So all countries came to Joseph in Egypt to buy *grain*, because the famine was severe in all lands."²⁵ (Gen. 41:57)²⁵ Joseph's brothers were among those who went to Egypt to buy grain.

Recognizing his brother's there must have immediately sprang up in Joseph's heart a fresh yearning for reunion with his family. He knew that the famine would last several more

²⁵ This make Joseph a "Savior of the world". Not merely the savior of Egypt.

years. And so he desired to bring the whole family to Egypt to live with him. But first he must test these men to determine of what sort they are. Formerly they had dealt treacherously with him and with their aging father. And seeing them without Benjamin must have made him wonder if they had also dealt treacherously with his younger sibling. Before Joseph would bring them to Egypt he must know if they have been converted.

So Joseph tested his brothers with various tests to see what sort of men they had become. He systematically pressed the tests closer and closer to fully reveal what was in their characters. Finally to orchestrate the last test after seeing his younger brother Benjamin before sending them on their way home, he had his own silver cup hidden in Benjamin's sack.

Jacob had not wanted to send Benjamin to Egypt after Simeon had been detained. But pressured by the famine and the needs of his family, at last Judah had persuaded him to send the lad with him. Judah had pledged himself to his father as surety for the lad and promised that he would bring him home again. Now Joseph, who seems to have changed roles from savior to adversary, will test Judah's commitment to the pledge that he has made to his father.

No sooner than the brothers had left the city than Joseph sent his steward after them to accuse them concerning the theft of his silver cup. The brother's were assured that Joseph was only interested in the one who stole the cup. Thus only he was required to return to the city, but they passed this test. They stuck together. When the cup was found in Benjamin's sack they all chose to return to the city with Benjamin. Then Joseph pressed his case still closer to find out if the brother's had been fully converted. What would they do when he offered them their freedom but determined to keep Benjamin as a slave?

"The man in whose hand the cup was found, he shall be my slave. And as for you, go up in peace to your father." (Gen. 44:17) Nobody made a move to leave. They all stood there

together in corporate solidarity with Benjamin. And then it was that Judah pleaded with Joseph on behalf of Benjamin. First he reviewed the history of their case for Joseph. He reminded him how he had demanded that the youngest be brought down to him or they would see his face no more. He explained their father's deep reluctance in sending the last child of his favorite wife. And he told Joseph how their father had warned them that it would break his heart should anything befall the lad. Thus Judah made his heart warming final appeal:

"Now therefore, when I come to your servant my father, and the lad is not with us, since his life is bound up in the lad's life, "it will happen, when he sees that the lad is not *with us*, that he will die. So your servants will bring down the gray hair of your servant our father with sorrow to the grave. "For your servant became surety for the lad to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him *back* to you, then I shall bear the blame before my father forever.' "Now therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the lad as a slave to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers. "For how shall I go up to my father if the lad is not with me, lest perhaps I see the evil that would come upon my father?" (Gen. 44:30-34)

For all practical intents and purposes Judah willingly offered his life in exchange for the life of "the lad". In this we can see one of the motives that prompted Christ to surrender His life on behalf of the human race. Benjamin, "the lad", represents the human race. Judah represents Christ, the Surety, as He struggled to save the human race. His final motivation in making that decision is clearly revealed in the words of Judah when he asked, "how shall I go up to my father if the lad is not with me . . .".

Recall that initially in the Garden of Gethsemane Christ had asked to be relieved of the responsibility of dying for mankind. "Let this cup pass from me" he prayed. But as we examine the case of Judah as a type of Christ we begin to understand how Christ, in the midst of His struggle in the Garden, *must* have pondered the heart of His Father. He must have begun to think about the profound heartbreak which God had experienced when He lost that first son, Lucifer. And He is overcome with dread at the thought of looking into the Father's eyes if He should

loose another son called Adam. Considering the Father's plight, His life being bound up in the life of the "lad", Jesus made His decision. "How shall I go up to my Father if the lad is not with me?"

This is an awe inspiring glimpse into the mind of Christ but there is more here than a revelation of the mind of Christ. Here we also find a glimpse of the most profound parameters of the great controversy. Remember Judah's concern was if he should return without the lad when his father "sees that the lad is not with us he will die". The father's life is at stake. It depends upon the outcome of the plan to redeem "the lad". This is what we should perceive to be at stake in the mediation of Christ. The plan concerns more than the salvation of man, it concerns the destiny of the entire universe.

He stood as the substitute for man, who was under sentence as a traitor, a rebel. Hence Christ died as a malefactor, in the place of the traitors, with all their treasured sins upon His divine soul. "He was numbered with the transgressors."

All this He deemed of small account in view of the results that He was working out, in behalf, not only of the inhabitants of this speck of a world, but of the whole universe--every world that God had created.²⁶

The Pledge Revealed to Abram

On Christ's intercession for the human race rests the destiny of the universe because both He and the Father have pledged their existence in the covenant to save mankind. This pledge had been revealed to Abram when he inquired concerning the land of promise "how shall I know that I shall inherit it?" (Gen. 15:8)

Then Abram was instructed to bring "a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon. Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not

²⁶ E. G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 17, pg. 340

cut the birds in two.” (Gen. 15:9-10) And after he had laid out the animals as he had been instructed to do we are told:

“And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces. On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: ‘To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates –’” (Gen. 15:17-18)

The manner of the covenant ratification in which God Himself passed between the slain animals indicates that He pledged His own existence as the Surety of the covenant. It is interesting to note that there were two symbols of God’s presence that passed between the pieces, “a smoking oven and a burning torch”. Could it be that both the Father and the Son passed between those pieces? Prior to this both had “clasped Their hands in a solemn pledge” to redeem mankind.²⁷ Now it appears that perhaps both had come to reveal the certainty of that pledge to Abram.

The recognition of these awe inspiring parameters of the great controversy requires us to look at the judgment and the mediation of Christ from a very different perspective. We need to understand it primarily in relation to God’s case and not merely our own. What do the judgment and the mediation of Christ mean to the outcome of the case against God? And how are these two cases related?

It is our preconceived ideas about judgment that tend to prevent us from clearly understanding the significance of the intercession of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. Too often we think of the judgment as being comparable to the American judicial system. But the American judicial system is not modeled after the heavenly court. Fortunately God has given us an earthly model which is modeled after the heavenly court, the Hebrew legal system. In the

²⁷ E. G. White, *Desire of Ages*, pg. 832

Hebrew legal system there were no defense attorneys. The judge was always the attorney for the accused. His responsibility was to do everything legally possible to clear the accused.

In that process, as in our own legal system, the outcome of the case was decided based upon the testimony of the witnesses. And therefore, the judge would call witnesses and rule based upon the testimony of the witnesses. Similarly Christ as judge in the heavenly court must call witnesses. He says of His people on earth, “You are my witnesses.” (Isa. 43:10) As witnesses in the cosmic trial our responsibility is to respond to the message of the first angel. “Fear God and give glory to Him for the hour of His judgment is come.” (Rev. 14:6)

What does it mean to “fear God”? Psalm 130:4 says “There is forgiveness with You that You may be feared”. In other words the witnesses fear God because of what He did when He forgave their sins at Calvary. When we understand that God loves us and that He gave His life to pay for our sins and thus provide forgiveness (i.e. corporate justification), we are struck with awe and wonder at His amazing love. We then begin to love Him “because He first loved us”²⁸ and “demonstrates His love in that while we were yet sinners”²⁹ He died for us.

How do we then demonstrate our love for Him? We give glory to Him in the hour of His judgment. Jesus said “Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 5:16)³⁰ As the witnesses glorify God, He is vindicated in the judgment. The verdict rendered on the basis of their testimony shows that God was just in extending mercy to sinners. God was just in giving them His law for He has not given a law that cannot be kept. And thus finally the accusations of the accuser are silenced and

²⁸ 1 John 4:19

²⁹ Romans 5:8

³⁰ “He came to reveal to the heavenly universe, to the worlds unfallen, and to sinful men, that every provision has been made by God in behalf of humanity, and that through the imputed righteousness of Christ, all who receive Him by faith can show their loyalty by keeping the law.” (E. G. White, *Signs of the Times*, April 7, 1898 par. 8)

Christ can cease His work of intercession. But that can never happen *until the accuser is cast down*.

Conclusion

Therefore, we conclude that the concept of corporate universal justification is not antithetical to mediation. Unless one fails to recognize the three phases of justification and the integral part that mediation plays in all three phases there is no false perception of logical inconsistency between the two concepts. Mediation is essential to justification. It did not and will not, indeed it cannot occur without it.

Furthermore, intercession is necessary as long as Satan can genuinely cast doubt upon the legitimacy of God's government because His people have not vindicated His dealings with mankind by demonstrating the power of the gospel. When the full power made available in the gospel is appropriated by His people, it will then be said "Here is the patience of the saints, here are they that keep the commandments of God." [not that they try but they can not seem to do it] (Rev. 14:12) Then the announcement will be made, "He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still." (Rev. 22:11)

As long as Satan can point to the "witnesses" and find fault with their testimony, intercession must continue. Christ must continue to defend them against Satan's charges. They dare not be left to face Him alone. But when the second phase of the process of justification has done its work, they will finally be victorious. Then the test that befell Job will be repeated. To date, 1 Cor. 10:13 has been in effect. "God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you

may be able to bear *it*.” Satan has never been happy with this arrangement. He has always been able to accuse God of unfairness because of it. But some day his mouth must be stopped.

When justification by faith has finally done its work in the characters of the remnant, God will be able to stand back as He did in the case of Job. “Behold He is in your hands, but spare his life.” (Job 2:6) Then God’s people will be severely tested and will pray like Jesus in the midst of His great trial “My God my God why hast thou forsaken me?”³¹ Yet even through that terrible test, by faith they will remain victorious. They will keep the faith of Jesus. Satan will be allowed to try them to the uttermost but finally the triumphant announcement will be heard “Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.” (Rev. 12:10)

But for now, while God’s people are struggling to restore the simplicity and power of the gospel, while they are learning to walk by faith and be justified by it, while they are washing their robes in the blood of the lamb, the work of the Intercessor is essential, and shall remain so, until the accuser *is* cast down.

³¹ “The remnant in the time of trouble will cry, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” (E. G. White, *Spalding Magan Collection*, pg. 2-3)