

THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION

- I. Preliminary considerations:
 - A. Definition: the act of showing or making something or someone to be just, right or guiltless. Leg – to show a satisfactory reason for something done.
 - B. The Word of God is our only standard by which to measure Absolute Righteousness (+R), the measure of our justification, both Ph1 and Ph2.
2Ti 3:16 “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness”
 - C. God is +R, and demands +R to have an eternal relationship with Him, Isa 6:3
“Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts”; 1Jn 1:5 *“...God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.”*
 - D. Man is only relatively righteous (-r), due to position in Adam and the commission of personal sins. Rom 3:23 *“for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.”* cp Ec 7:20
 - E. Unregenerate man, knowing he cannot be +R, seeks to justify himself before other men, and thereby achieve +R based on his “being better than others”.
Lk 16:15 “And He said to them, ‘You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God.’”
 - F. The greatest thing God can bestow on man is eternal life, but since man is –r, God cannot impute EL and be consistent with His perfect +R. Ps 89:14
“Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne”
 - G. So God found a way to grant +R to believing man without compromising His own +R. Rm 3:26 *“for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”*
 - H. Human works of righteousness cannot earn man the +R he needs to merit EL.
Ti 3:5 “He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit”
 - I. By imputing mankind’s sins to the sinless, +R humanity of Jesus Christ, God secured a grace way to impute +R and EL to all who believe in Christ for salvation. 2Co 5:21 *“He (God the Father) made Him (Christ) who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him”* (positional sanctification).
 - J. In the justification of the one who believes, God gives +R for faith in the Son of God, resulting in the removal of the ‘guilty’ verdict against all men. Ro 4:5
“But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned (CREDITED/IMPUTED) as righteousness (+R)”
 - K. Before God can bestow any blessing (Ph1 , Ph2, or Ph3) of the Christian Life, He must first remove sin and declare us +R. Ti 3:7 *“so that being justified (APP “HAVING FIRST BEEN JUSTIFIED”) by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”*

- L. As Christ was delivered up in exchange for our sins, His resurrection is the sign and guarantee that we have been justified, our sins removed. Rm 4:25 *“He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.”*
- II. Greek vocabulary:
- A. δικαιωω dikaiōo – ‘to justify or make innocent’ 39x Lk 16:15
- B. δικαίος dikaios – ‘conforming to the character of God; righteousness’ 79x Mt 23:28
- C. δικαιομα dikaiōma – ‘righteous deed; ordinance’ 10x Rm 1:32
- D. δικαιοσυνη dikaiosune – ‘righteousness; justification’ 92x Rm 4:22
- III. Abraham is the pattern for justification. Rm 4
- A. His justification was not on the basis of works. Rm 4:2 *“For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about; but not before God”*
- B. He received it while uncircumcised. Rm 4:10 *“...not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised;”*
- C. He became a believer while still in Ur of the Chaldees. Gen 12:1-3
- D. His faith made him justified before God, and his Ph 2 justification occurred through faith as well. Gal 3:9 *“so then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.”* ; Rm 4:22 *“therefore also it was reckoned to him as righteousness.”*
- E. It is also true for all who follow his example. Rm 4:11 *“and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be reckoned to them”*
- IV. Justification is totally apart from human works or Law. Gal 2:16 *“for by the works of law no flesh shall be justified”*
- A. To be so justified would require absolute perfection on the part of man. Rm 2:13 *“for not the hearers of the Law are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified”*
- B. Because of the indwelling sin nature, no man except Jesus can attain +R, therefore we are all under the curse of the Law. Gal 3:10 *“Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all the things written in the book of the law, to perform them”* quoting Dt 27:26
- C. Overt righteousness cannot be the basis for achieving +R, since mental attitude sins are equally as repugnant to God. Mt 5:20 *“For I say to you (DISCIPLES) that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.”* Mt 23:28 *“So you, too, (PHARISEES) outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.”*
- D. Mankind will often impugn God in an effort to make himself seem innocent. Job 40:8 *“Will you really annul My judgment? Will you condemn Me that you may be justified?”*
- E. Christ, by bearing the penalty for our sins on the cross, redeems us from that curse. Gal 3:13 *“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us - for it is written, ‘CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE’”* quoting Dt 21:23

- F. If any system of works had been given that was intended to merit EL, justification would have been based on that law; the Mosaic Law was never intended to do so. Gal 3:21 *“For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law.”*
 - G. Before saving faith, we were all incarcerated in the prison of sin due to a lack of +R. Gal 3:22 *“But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed.”*
 - H. The Mosaic Covenant, representing a perfect system of works, was a tutor to condition us for our freedom through faith. Gal 3:24-25 *“Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.”*
- V. David, who lived under the Mosaic Law, was justified by faith. Rm 4:6-8 *“just as David also speaks of the blessing upon the man to whom God reckons righteousness apart from works: ‘BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN, AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED. BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN THE LORD WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT’”* (quoting Ps 32:1)
- VI. Some principles related to Ph 1 justification:
- A. It is according to grace – Rm 3:24 *“being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus*
 - B. It occurs at the point of faith in Christ – Gal 3:24 (SEE ABOVE – IV. H.)
 - C. It is the basis for reconciliation – Rm 5:12 *“therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,”*
 - D. It is granted based on a person’s humility before God, not self-righteousness. Lk 18:14 *“I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted.”*
 - E. It is made possible by the work of Christ toward sins – Rom 5:8-9 *“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him”*
 - F. Its validity is based on Christ’s resurrection – Rm 4:25 *“Who was delivered up because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification”*
 - G. Its mechanics are the direct imputation of +R in exchange for faith – Rm 4:5 *“But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness.”*
 - H. It cannot be attained via human works – Rm 9:30-32 *“...Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith; but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness did not arrive at that law. Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works.”*
 - I. It completely excludes human boasting – Rm 3:27-28 *“Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of*

the Law. (note: in the Greek there is no d.a. with 'law' and therefore includes any system of law, not only the Mosaic Law)

- J. It follows foreknowledge, predestination, and calling, and precedes glorification (Ph3 resurrection) – Rm 8:29-30 *“For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son... and whom He predestined, these He also called, and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.”*
- K. It is the basis for Gentile participation and blessing under the Abrahamic Covenant – Gal 3:8-9 *“And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying ‘All the nations shall be blessed in you.’ So then those who are faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.”*
- L. It cannot be lost, since it is God Himself that justifies us – Rm 8:33 *Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies;”*
- M. Believers who revert to justification by works put their Ph 2 in extreme jeopardy – Gal 5:4 *“You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law, you have fallen from grace”*
- N. Legal restrictions are not meant to be a guide to attaining or maintaining +R, but are a system whereby sinful activities can be identified and avoided.
1Ti 1:9 *“realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners...”*
- VI. There is a Ph 2 justification, which involves faith plus works, but it is not to be confused with Ph 1 justification; it involves faith toward the content of BD, and is manifested, or vindicated, by the application thereof.
 - A. All the activities of man (verbal, overt, and mental) will be used as material witness to determine if he is justified before God. Mt 12:36-37 *“And I say to you, that every careless word that men shall speak, they shall render account for it in the day of judgment. For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned.”*
 - 1. For the unbeliever, his works will be brought forth to show that he did not earn or merit +R. Rev 20:12
 - 2. For the believer, any “careless words” will be brought forth; if he confessed them as sins they will be shown to be covered and forgiven; if he did not confess they will be shown as evidence he did not fulfill God’s will for his life.
 - B. It is based on our willingness to follow God and seek His +R that we receive blessings in time and eternity. Mt 6:33 *“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”*
 - C. Even though it is made manifest by our works (DGP), it is not due to those works, but it is a result of our mental attitude. Rm 14:17 *“for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit”*
 - D. It is developed in the Book of James, which was addressed to those who were already believers. Js 1:2 *“Consider it all joy, my brethren...”*
 - 1. James’ main point is that faith, or belief in and application of BD taught, apart from works is dead/useless – 2:20

2. There are believers who take in and agree with BD, but do not apply it in their lives. – 1:22
 3. These people have no effective Ph 2, since they have no Divine Good Production, and do not seek God’s will in their lives. – 2:17
- E. James uses the concept of justification in the sense of vindication. Mt 11:19
1. Abraham’s willingness to obey God and sacrifice Isaac was proof that he was a man of faith (positive volition), going back to the time of his Ph 1 faith – 2:21-22
 2. Vs 23 is designed to show that his works, in obedience to God’s directive, are proof/evidence of his +R standing before God.
 3. The absence of works does not, however, mean necessarily there is no salvation, though some teach this. Lk 16:20; 1Co 3:15
- F. Gen 15:6, quoted in vs 2:23, deals with Abraham’s Ph 1 justification, proven by his Ph 2 justification.
1. In the context of its original citation it serves to demonstrate that Abraham was still a man of faith, as he believed the promise of innumerable descendants, not having as yet an heir.
 - a. the Hiphil Perfect of the verb “believed” (אָמַן - aman) is used retrospectively for his faith, including his first application of faith toward salvation, and the faith he applied toward the promise now
 - b. just as Abraham had manifested his faith in the promises of God by leaving Ur (Gen 12:4), so his faith was proven by his willingness to sacrifice Isaac on the altar, even though he was his only son, and the promise was that Isaac would be his heir – Gen 17:19
 - c. Abraham had so much faith that God would keep his word that he knew, if necessary, that He would raise Isaac from the dead – Heb 11:17-19
- G. The next example James uses of Ph 2 justification/vindication is that of Rahab the prostitute, when she acted on her faith and gave the spies sanctuary. 2:25 cp Jos 2:1f
1. Unlike Abraham, she was not a mature believer.
 2. Being positive, she recognized that God was blessing the Israelites, and her own people in Jericho were doomed.
 3. At great personal risk to herself, she protected the spies.
 4. Her faith that Yhwh alone was the God, and her trust in Him to protect her, enabled her to make an application to the spies – Heb 11:31 *“by faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace”*
 5. Application: anyone can apply faith, no matter their level of maturity
 6. Her Ph 2 reward was to find her Right Man, who happened to be a direct descendent of David and Messiah. – Mt 1:5
- H. A third example of Ph 2 justification by works (where the believer is specifically so mentioned) is Phinehas the priest. Num 25:1-9; cp Ps 106:30
1. His righteous indignation and the action that arose from it turned God’s wrath away from Israel

2. His reward was that the line of high priesthood of Aaron, his grandfather, would remain in his family. Num 25:10-13
 3. He believed Yahweh's command to avoid contact with the pagans, and so his application came from the BD in his soul.
- I. Ph 2 justification is for believers who remain true to BD in the face of difficult and untoward circumstances.
 1. Difficult applications will present themselves, but by calling upon the Doctrine in your soul, and making the appropriate applications based on that Doctrine, you will be vindicated – both in time and eternity.
 2. Without that application, your “faith” alone will not deliver you from the loss of reward at the BEMA seat. Js 2:14
 - J. But our applications seeking Ph2 justification must be directed towards God, who desires our applications to be from faith, not overt acts. Mt 6:1 *“Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.”*
 - K. It is because of the faith that we have toward God and His Word that we are able to live in a manner that is pleasing to Him. Rm 1:17 *“For in it (the gospel) the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.’”*
 - L. Because we have received this +R by the grace of God, we are to live up to the standard He has set for us as much as possible. Rm 6:13 *“and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.”*
 - M. It is because of our Ph2 justification that God grants us the “desires of our hearts” and answers our prayers. Js 5:16 *“Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.”* (this verse does not equate illness with sin in the life)
 - N. For those who follow this pattern, God will also grant the additional blessing of increased opportunity to apply. 2Co 9:10 *“Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness”*

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Jun ,2001