



Justification

The Barrier

A barrier exists between the character of man in relative righteousness (-R) and God's absolute righteousness (+R). Our iniquities have separated us from God. Isaiah 59:2.

"But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear." (Isaiah 59:2, NASB)

God's viewpoint of man is expressed in Romans 3:10-12.

"as it is written, "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE; THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD; ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE." (Romans 3:10-12, NASB)

God's viewpoint of the best that man can produce in his own power, intellect, and abilities is expressed in Isaiah 64:6.

"For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; And all of us wither like a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away." (Isaiah 64:6, NASB)

The Work of Christ: Justification

Justification is defined as the remission of sin and absolution from guilt and punishment. An act of grace by which God pardons the sinner and accepts Him as righteous because of the unlimited atonement of Christ on the Cross. Because God the Father was satisfied (Propitiation), we are freely justified (Justification). Rom. 3:24; Rom. 5:1.

"being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;" (Romans 3:24, NASB)

"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," (Romans 5:1, NASB)

Justification occurs for every believer at the instant of salvation. Justification is another way of describing our salvation relationship with God. It occurs in three logical steps. Once the Gospel is understood and believed through personal faith alone in Christ alone, the justice of God gives or imputes His very own perfect righteousness (+R) to us forever. This is for all who believe in Christ - no exceptions. Because we have His own perfect righteousness, God judicially pronounces us justified and officially righteous. God is then free to give each believer eternal life at the same instant that justification was declared.

After salvation, your outward divine good production as a believer vindicates or justifies you and your stand for Christ in the eyes of the unbeliever. The Book of James is the view of the believer as seen from the eyes of the unbeliever.

The Work of Christ: Imputation

Imputation is defined as the charging to the account of one, something which properly belonged to another. God the Father imputes His very own perfect righteousness (+R) to the believer at salvation.



We share the perfect righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ when the Holy Spirit places us into union with Him at salvation. This is the believer's double perfect righteousness – all via God's grace.

Man with relative righteousness meets God with perfect absolute righteousness at the Cross and God imputes to man his very own perfect absolute righteousness. Rom. 3:22; 2 Cor. 5:21.

"even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;" (Romans 3:22, NASB)

"He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Corinthians 5:21, NASB)

Because absolute righteousness (+R) is imputed, God calls us justified. Imputation of +R on the basis of faith alone in Jesus Christ alone = justification. Until God imputes or conveys His perfect righteousness, there can be no justification. We can never be justified until we first receive perfect righteousness. All human categories of righteousness are unacceptable per Isaiah 64:6. This verse makes it very clear that God doesn't think much of your best efforts to do "good" things to earn the right to have an eternal relationship with Him. There is nothing we can do to earn it! Justification cannot occur by being good or obeying the Mosaic law. Gal. 2:16; Rom. 3:28.

"For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; And all of us wither like a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away." (Isaiah 64:6, NASB)

"nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified." (Galatians 2:16, NASB)

"For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law." (Romans 3:28, NASB)

Justification is based solely on the grace of God. The only thing we can do is have faith alone in Christ alone for salvation. Perfect righteousness is the only thing we have that counts with God. Justification resolves mankind's problem of being able to achieve only a relative righteousness through works which will never result in eternal life with God. Eph. 2:8-9.

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9, NASB)

God is justified in conveying His perfect righteousness to each believer at the point of faith belief in the substitutionary work of Jesus Christ on the Cross. The result is that God declares the believer righteous. Rom. 3:26-28.

"for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. 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 works of the Law." (Romans 3:26-28, NASB)

Justification By Faith Alone, Not Works

For justification to occur, it requires something from man and something from God. Faith belief is required on the part of each person to be saved which is purely a non-meritorious function. There is no merit or credit for anything on the part of the one believing. They just have to believe. Nothing more! Adding anything to this simple faith belief cancels the faith and salvation will not occur for that person.



Justification also involves God the Father judging all of our sins on the Cross resulting in the substitutionary spiritual death of Christ on the Cross. When we believe, God must also impute or convey His perfect righteousness to each of us, so that by recognizing His perfect righteousness in us, He justifies us. Rom. 3:20.

"because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin." (Romans 3:20, NASB)

Romans 4:4-5 tells us that the person who works for salvation receives nothing from God because the justice of God is not free to give him anything. Instead their works are credited to them as debt. This is because God's perfect righteousness cannot ever be imputed to anyone apart of faith alone in Christ alone for salvation. Imputed perfect righteousness comes through grace, not human merit. This principle is also illustrated in Romans 9:30-32, Romans 3:24, and Titus 3:7.

"Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness," (Romans 4:4-5, NASB)

"What shall we say then? That 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. They stumbled over the stumbling stone," (Romans 9:30-32, NASB)

"being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;" (Romans 3:24, NASB)

"so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." (Titus 3:7, NASB)

There is a true brotherhood among believers only. However, the brotherhood of man might be better termed the brotherhood of sinners. Rom. 3:21-23.

"But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," (Romans 3:21-23, NASB)

By using the ceiling as an illustration, let's use that as God's standard of glory. So, I stretch and stretch to the top of the ceiling, but I'm too short. I don't measure up! Even so, man comes short of the glory of God. If God's standard of glory were the width of the Mississippi River at St. Louis, jumping across cannot be accomplished by anyone. All people living in St. Louis could try to jump it. Some would jump farther than others, but they all come far short of the opposite shore. A third illustration could be Pike's Peak where I may be closer to heaven when I stand on Pike's Peak compared to standing on the shore of the Pacific, but I still am far short of touching heaven with my fingertips.

What is the difference between the righteousness of Adolf Eichmann and Mary Jones? Just a matter of relative righteousness. Both came short of His glory. Glory is the outshining of His attributes. Man in desperation grabs for the Law like it was a life raft. Instead of this, it proves to be a rock, pulling him under. To grab the Law as a savior, is like grabbing a sack of cement instead of a parachute when you are jumping out of a doomed aircraft. The Law was actually given to point out sin! Actually all heresy or apostasy has its source in wrong or feeble conceptions of sin. Rom. 3:28.



"For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law." (Romans 3:28, NASB)

Unitarianism calls sin a misfortune. Socialists call sin wrong environment. Christian Scientists say sin does not exist. Spiritualists admit there is sin, but do not believe in the punishment of sin. But the vast majority of people in Christendom simply ignore sin. Remember, it is one thing to recognize your sin. It is quite another thing to deal with it biblically.

What place does the Law have then? Are we to throw it out? No, it is good. We are to establish it, to fulfill it. This is done by realizing we are sinners as the Law points out and accepting Christ as Savior. Then, as we are controlled by the filling of the Holy Spirit, we fulfill the Law as Christ did. Rom. 3:31.

"Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law." (Romans 3:31, NASB)

The Justice of God Involvement in Justification

The function of the justice of God in justification is to prevent any compromise of God's perfect righteousness. The justice of God does this by judging all sin. God the Father prepared a plan in eternity past to deal with mankind's sins through the saving work of Jesus Christ on the Cross. Romans 4:25 and Romans 5:1 tell us that the love of God is never free to bless mankind if there will be any compromise of God's perfect essence. By judging all sins on the Cross (Unlimited Atonement), the justice of God is now free to bless each person at the point of salvation faith belief.

"He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification." (Romans 4:25, NASB)

"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," (Romans 5:1, NASB)

The word "salvation" in the Bible means justification because it reveals the source of the work as well as the mechanics involved. God did all the work through His grace by imputing His perfect righteousness to each of us at salvation. Christ was raised from the dead because of our justification. There was no resurrection of the humanity of Jesus Christ until God had done everything necessary to provide justification.

Romans 5:8-9 states that Jesus Christ died spiritually for each of us. When we die physically, we only die for ourselves. When Jesus Christ died spiritually on the Cross, He did so for every member of the human race of His own volition and based on His unconditional love for us. His substitutionary spiritual death was His salvation payment in full by being the object of judgment of God the Father toward all of our sins.

"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." (Romans 5:8-9, NASB)

In Romans 5:8-9, the word "blood" emphasizes the total work of Christ. Justification is the work of the integrity of God in providing a relationship between man and God. "Blood" refers to redemption, propitiation, and reconciliation as essential parts of our so great salvation. The justice of God is never free to bless unless justice can keep the entire essence of God from compromise. The justice of God had to judge our sins on the Cross before the love of God would be free to bless us with salvation.

God the Father has always loved God the Son. He continues to also love the perfect and sinless humanity of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the unique God-man with His perfect and absolute divine



attributes completely separate from His humanity - called the Hypostatic Union of Jesus Christ. Even though God the Father's love for the Son was absolute and perfect, once the humanity of Jesus Christ agreed to accept the imputation of all of the sins of the human race, God the Father had to judge those sins. This was the perfect payment for all sin for all time. Jesus Christ died spiritually (His humanity was separated from God the Father) when this payment time occurred. He was our substitute. God the Father did the judging. The humanity of Jesus Christ received the judgment. Now, God the Holy Spirit reveals the judgment to mankind. Rom. 8:32.

"He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:32, NASB)

Justification is Related to Our Eternity With Jesus Christ

The justice of God had to first judge all of man's sins "at the proper time" by judging them all on the Cross through Christ's redemptive work. This had to be done before the love of God would be free to send grace blessing to mankind. God's work of justification was accomplished through man's faith alone in the work of Christ alone on the Cross - either looking to the future for Old Testament believers or looking to the past for Church Age believers. Christ has been resurrected from the dead. This fact now links justification with the strategic victory of Christ in the Angelic Conflict. 1 Tim. 2:5-6.

"For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time." (1 Timothy 2:5-6, NASB)

The saving work of Jesus Christ on the Cross is our Lord's humanity being judged by the justice of God for our sins. During our Lord's incarnation here on earth, Satan did everything in his power to destroy the humanity of Christ through temptation, attempted assassination, and to keep Him from reaching the Cross. All of Satan's attempts failed completely. The work of Christ on the Cross destroyed the works of the devil. 1 John 3:8.

"the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil." (1 John 3:8, NASB)

The resurrection of Jesus Christ became the link between the love of God being able to bless us through grace and His victory in the Angelic Conflict on the Cross. The love or integrity of God saves us and carries us all the way to glory. God's perfect righteousness is a down payment. It is God's integrity that guarantees you a resurrection body. Rom. 4:25; Rom. 8:29-30.

"He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification." (Romans 4:25, NASB)

"For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified." (Romans 8:29-30, NASB)

God guarantees each believer a resurrection body in eternity that is exactly like His own. In addition, special blessings will be conveyed to those who reach spiritual maturity and maximum glorification of God. These blessings are above and beyond all that we could ever ask or dream of. 1 Cor. 15:51-57, Phil. 3:21, 1 John 3:1-3.

"Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised



imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory. "O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians 15:51-57, NASB)

"who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself." (Philippians 3:21, NASB)

"See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure." (1 John 3:1-3, NASB)

Justification Illustrated

Remember that Romans 4:1 was written to Gentiles. In what sense could Abraham be a father to them? There is the natural seed of Abraham - the Jews. In Romans 4:2, there is the spiritual seed of Abraham where any Jew who has believed in Christ by faith as Abraham did is saved. Also, any Gentile who has believed in Christ as Abraham did is saved.

"What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found?" (Romans 4:1, NASB)

"For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God." (Romans 4:2, NASB)

Did Abraham try to justify himself by works? Yes, after salvation, Abraham used works in the flesh. He fled to Egypt, taking Lot with him and lied about his wife. Lot got a taste of city life in Egypt and wasted his life in Sodom. Works in the flesh caused Ishmael to be born. This caused only shame and confusion. In Romans 4:3, Abraham simply believed God! Abraham's faith was not an act of works, it was an attitude. Repentance is the mental attitude involved in accepting Jesus Christ as Savior.

"For what does the Scripture say? "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS."" (Romans 4:3, NASB)

One who works is entitled to wages. Abraham, according to Genesis 15:6, had believed (hiphil perfect, causative in the Hebrew) in Ur of the Chaldees. He received salvation on the basis of grace as well as the promises of land, seed, and blessing. Rom. 4:4.

"Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness." (Genesis 15:6, NASB)

"Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due." (Romans 4:4, NASB)

If a man does not work for something, then the only other method of receiving it is by what? Yes, a gift! Salvation is a free gift. Rom. 4:5.

"But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness," (Romans 4:5, NASB)

The illustration of David is found in Romans 4:6-8. This is quoted from Psalms 32:1-2.



"just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits 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."" (Romans 4:6-8, NASB)

"A Psalm of David. A Maskil. How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered! How blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit!" (Psalms 32:1-2, NASB)

David was a great sinner and when he sinned with Bathsheba, Nathan said in 2 Samuel 12:5-6 that David deserved to die. The Law said David should die. There is chastisement or divine discipline under grace. David had four of his children die. The child of Bathsheba, Ammon, Absalom and Adonijah.

"Then David's anger burned greatly against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the LORD lives, surely the man who has done this deserves to die. "He must make restitution for the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing and had no compassion."" (2 Samuel 12:5-6, NASB)

Abraham was justified by faith, apart from any ritual or ordinance. Suffice it to say here that circumcision didn't save, baptism didn't save, church membership didn't save, taking communion didn't save and it doesn't now. Abraham was justified before the Law was given and before he was circumcised. There was a time in Abraham's life when by uncircumcision he represented the Gentiles, as later after his circumcision he became the representative of Israel. Rom. 4:9-12.

"Is this blessing then on the circumcised, or on the uncircumcised also? For we say, "FAITH WAS CREDITED TO ABRAHAM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS." How then was it credited? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised; and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them, and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised." (Romans 4:9-12, NASB)

Romans 4:13-16 shows the difference between sin and transgression. It may be wrong to drive 45 miles an hour through a certain residential section, but it is not breaking the law until a 25 miles per hour speed limit sign is installed. The Law makes what was sin, a transgression.

"For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified; for the Law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, there also is no violation. For this reason it is by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all," (Romans 4:13-16, NASB)

Those out of all nations and tongues who exercise the same living faith of Abraham are his heavenly seed. Rom. 4:17; Rom. 4:18-21; Rom. 4:22-24.

"(as it is written, "A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU") in the presence of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist." (Romans 4:17, NASB)

"In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, "SO SHALL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE." Without becoming weak in faith he



contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb; yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform." (Romans 4:18-21, NASB)

"Therefore IT WAS ALSO CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS. Now not for his sake only was it written that it was credited to him, but for our sake also, to whom it will be credited, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead," (Romans 4:22-24, NASB)

Justification Benefits

Justification is defined as the judicial act of God whereby He declares righteous the one who believed in Christ. The definition is not just as if one had never sinned. We are justified because we have sinned. The peace in Romans 5:1 is true peace. There is a false peace talked of by almost everyone. Only Christ is the source of true peace. The peace here comes from the knowledge of sins forgiven.

"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," (Romans 5:1, NASB)

Access is provided in Romans 5:2. This is free admission. Christ paid the price of admission. Faith is the ticket or passport to get us in. Very few have access to the president of the U.S.A., but God has no partiality in His access. "Hope of the glory of God" refers to the Rapture of the Church. Very few talk about this in Christian circles today. Titus 2:13.

"through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God." (Romans 5:2, NASB)

"looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus," (Titus 2:13, NASB)

Romans 5:3-4 says we triumph in troubles. Trouble and trial are often the sandpaper to polish the spiritual life.

"And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope;" (Romans 5:3-4, NASB)

Romans 5:5 talks about the love of God. The fruit of the Spirit is produced in our lives via the enabling power of the Holy Spirit. This is the greatest exposition of love in the Bible.

"and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us." (Romans 5:5, NASB)

Romans 5:9 says the believer is delivered from all judgment of sin in the sense that they do not have to appear at the Great White Throne or even go through the Tribulation. Believers are saved from God's wrath and judgment through faith in Jesus Christ.

"Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him." (Romans 5:9, NASB)

Romans 5:10 presents our reconciliation that means that a change takes place on the part of man at salvation. We were enemies and now we are friends. Christ removed the barrier between God and man.

"For if while 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, NASB)