

DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION

September 19, 1993

I. Definition: Justification represents that aspect of salvation whereby God qualifies man to have eternal life based on the imputation of +R (God's absolute righteousness) based on faith in Jesus Christ.

II. Preliminary Considerations.

- A. God is +R, and +R 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.*"
- B. Man is 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.*"
- C. The single greatest thing that God can bestow upon man is eternal life (immortality), but since man is R, God cannot impute EL and be consistent with His perfect righteousness.
- D. Human works of righteousness cannot earn man the +R he needs to merit eternal life (EL), Isa.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*"; 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.*"
- E. By imputing mankind's sins to the perfect, sinless (+R) humanity of Jesus Christ, God secured a grace way to impute +R and EL to all who believe in Christ for eternal salvation, 2Cor.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 (+R) of God in Him (positional sanctification).*"
- F. In the justification of the one who believes, God gives +R for faith in the Son of God, Rom.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).*"

III. Greek vocabulary:

- A. The verb δικαίωω (*dikaioo*) means to justify and occurs 39X in the NT
- B. The adjective δικαίος (*dikaios*) means conforming to the character of God; righteousness; just; fair; innocent; it occurs 79X.
- C. The noun δικαιοσύνη (*dikaionoma*) means regulation; righteous deed; acquittal; it occurs 10X.
- D. The noun δικαιοσύνη (*dikaionome*) means righteousness; justification; it occurs 92X in the NT

IV. Abraham is the pattern for justification, Rom.4:12.

- A. It was not by works, Rom.4:1,2.
- B. It was not in a condition of circumcision, but rather uncircumcision, Rom.4:10,11.
- C. It was when he first believed in the gospel in Ur, Gal.3:8.
- D. It is also true for all who follow his example, Rom.3:22; 4:11-13,16,23,24; Gal.3:7-9.
- E. It is recorded in Gen.15:6 and quoted in Rom.4:9,22 and Gal.3:6.

V. Justification is totally apart from human works/Law, Rom.3:20,28; Gal.2:16; 3:11.

- A. To be so justified would require absolute perfection on the part of men, Rom.2:12,13; Gal.3:12.
- B. Since no one can attain +R (a sinless life on earth), all are born under the curse of the Law, which demands +R or else, Gal.3:10.
- C. Christ, by bearing the penalty for our sins on the Cross, redeems us from that curse, Gal.3:13.
- D. Had there been a reasonably possible way to justify men by works, salvation would have been according to merit, Gal.3:21b.
- E. Before saving faith came, we were all incarcerated in the prison of sin due to lack of +R, Gal.3:22,23.
- F. The Mosaic Covenant/Law, representing a perfect system of righteous works that could theoretically (but not practically) justify man, was a tutor to condition us for our freedom through faith, Gal.3:24,25; 4:15.

VI. David, who lived under the Law, was justified by faith and not Law, Rom.4:6.

VII. Some principles related to Ph1 justification.

- A. It is according to grace, Rom.3:24; 5:21.
- B. It occurs at the point of faith in Christ, Rom.3:25-30.
- C. It is the basis for reconciliation, Rom.5:1.
- D. It is made possible by the work of Christ toward sins, Rom.5:8,9.
- E. Its validity/proof is based on Christ's resurrection, Rom.4:25.
- F. Its mechanics are the direct imputation of +R in exchange for faith, Rom.4:5.
- G. It cannot be attained via works, Rom.9:30-33.
- H. It totally excludes human boasting, Rom.3:27; 4:2.
 - I. It follows foreknowledge, predestination and calling, and precedes glorification, Rom.8:29,30.
 - J. It is the basis for Gentile participation and blessing under the Abrahamic Covenant, Gal.3:8,9.
 - K. It cannot be lost (cf. Rom.8:33), since good deeds played no part in its attainment; but believers who revert to justification by works put their Ph2 in extreme jeopardy, Gal.5:4.

VIII. Ph2 justification involves faith plus works (the doctrine is developed by James, Jam.2:14-26).

- A. The faith under consideration is not Ph1 or saving faith, but rather it is Ph2 faith in the content of BD, and the works are the various applications of doctrine we are called upon to make.
 - 1. James' main point is that faith (belief in doctrine taught) apart from works is dead/useless, vss.17,19,20,26.
 - 2. This counters the contention of someone who might say "*I have faith, you have works*", vs.18a.
 - 3. The correct position is that faith (or positive volition) is proven by works, vs.18b.
- B. James uses the concept of justification in the sense of vindication.
 - 1. Abraham's willingness to obey God and sacrifice Isaac was proof positive that he was a man of faith (positive volition), going all the way back to the time of his Ph1 faith, vss.21-23.
 - 2. Vs.23 of Jam.2 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 *ipso facto* the absence of salvation (many teach that this is so; see footnote on vs.24 in Ryrie Study Bible).
- C. Gen.15:6, quoted in vs.23, deals with Abraham's Ph1 justification.
 - 1. In the context of its original citation it serves to demonstrate that Abraham was still a man of faith, as he believed in the promise of innumerable descendants, not having as yet a son/heir.
 - a. The Hiphil Perfect of the verb "*believed*" (*aman*) is used retrospectively for his initial faith in the promise going back to Gen.12.
 - b. On the occasion of God's reiteration of the promise in Gen.15, Abraham believed (Ph2, apart from works, as none were required).
- D. The second example James uses of Ph2 justification/vindication is that of Rahab the prostitute, when she gave the spies sanctuary, vs.25.
 - 1. Unlike Abraham, she was not a mature believer.
 - 2. Being positive, she recognized that God was for the advancing Israelites, and her own people in Jericho were doomed.
 - 3. At great personal risk to herself, she protected the spies.
 - 4. Her temporal reward was to find her Right Man who happened to be a direct descendent of David and Christ, cf. Mt.1:5.
- E. The third example of Ph2 justification (i.e., where the believer is expressly so mentioned) is Phinehas the priest, Ps.106:30,31; cp. Num.25:19.
 - 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 (he was a grandson of Aaron, and son of Aaron's son, Eleazar) would remain in his family, Num.25:10-13.

F. Ph2 justification is for believers who remain true to doctrine in the face of difficult and untoward circumstances, or even assisting another believer in living grace straights/difficulties, Jam.2:15-17.

1. The absence of the required "works" cannot deliver/save from loss at the Bema, vs.14
"What use is it my brethren, if a man says he has faith ("I am positive"), but he has no works? Can that faith save him?"

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

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