

# Justification

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## Justification

Greek *dikaiosis* Justification is the act of God in which He declares us to be free from the guilt of sin and righteous in His sight. As a result of this righteousness we are acceptable to God and able to fellowship with Him. Justification is based on a legal situation where a Judge sets free the righteous, but condemns the wicked.

Justification results in us being declared to be righteous in God's sight but does not make us righteous in our actions and behaviours. That is the process of sanctification.

## Why we need to be justified

- God is holy. This means that He is totally sinless and can have nothing to do with sin. 1 John 1:5
- God created people in His own image ie. sinless. Genesis 1:27 He did this so He could have fellowship with us. *And for thy pleasure we are and were created.* Revelation 4:11
- God gave people a free will so they could willingly choose to love and fellowship with Him. Adam and Eve used this free will to rebel against God and sin entered the human race. Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden - out of God's presence. Genesis 3, Romans 5:12-21
- As a result all people are sinners: by nature, and in their actions. Romans 3:10, 20, 23
- All people are therefore guilty and condemned before God. Romans 5:18
- All who sin must die so that God's holiness is maintained. *The wages of sin is death.* Romans 6:23

God created people for fellowship but, as a result of the fall, He couldn't fellowship with us because we are sinners. In fact, everyone must die to preserve God's unique holiness!

So God instituted the Old Testament Law (ie. the 10 commandments and a multitude of other laws) to overcome this situation. If people could keep the Law they could be righteous and have fellowship with God. Unfortunately no-one could keep the Law. In fact all the Law did was to show we were sinners because no matter how hard we tried we couldn't be fully righteous. Romans 3:20

God also instituted the Old Testament sacrificial system. Sinful people were able to offer an animal as a sacrifice. The animal took the punishment the sinner deserved ie. death. The animal's blood had to be shed because the life of the flesh is in the blood. Leviticus 17:11, Hebrews 9: 22. But animals were an imperfect sacrifice and people continued to sin, so there had to be ongoing sacrifices. Hebrews 10:1-4

- The only way people can fellowship with God is by being righteous. We have no righteousness of our own. Isaiah 64:6 Nothing we can do will make us acceptable to God: not keeping the Law; not making sacrifices; not (in New Testament times) following the dictates of the Church; not by trying to be righteous. ie. not by works. Ephesians 2:4-10

Our only hope is for God to declare us to be righteous in His sight! ie. **justification**. God can do this because one perfect sacrifice has been made for the sin of all! We all deserved death but Jesus, God's Son, died on the cross in our place! One died for all and this totally satisfied God's righteous anger toward sin. Jesus took our sin upon Himself and He *became* sin for us. 2 Cor 5:21 The punishment that our sin deserved was poured upon Him. Jesus' blood was shed. Sacrifice for sins was made: once for all.

On this basis God could declare us to be righteous in His sight: **righteous in Christ**.

## Propitiation (atonement)

Romans 3:25  
Greek *hilasterion* - to appease, remove anger by the offering of a gift; to show mercy by covering over and forgiving sin.

**Justification is free - by grace - received by faith Rom 3:21-28**

God declares us to be righteous when we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and receive Him by faith. v22,26. There is nothing we can do to earn God's salvation! It is given to us freely, by His grace, because He loves us. This grace (**God's Riches at Christ's Expense**) is received by faith as a free gift. v24. Apart from Jesus we have no righteousness and therefore cannot know or have fellowship with God. Christ alone is our righteousness. Only *in Christ* can we stand before God and be accepted. Eph 2:13  
 Justification by faith, not by works, was the central doctrine of the Reformation in the 1500s. Unfortunately Christians still try to gain God's favour by their works! But justification is by faith alone, through God's grace!

The Book of Romans describes in detail how we can be saved and have fellowship with God.

*I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith". 1:16,17*

Here is an outline of the argument that Paul puts forward in Romans:

Chapter 1	Paul greets the Romans and states his desire to visit them. He then introduces his major theme: <i>In the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith.</i> v17. God's wrath comes on all who sin. If people reject God's truth it leads to wrong thinking, deception, sin and depravity.
Chapter 2	This applies to everyone, Jews (under the law) and Gentiles.
Chapter 3	No-one is righteous: neither Jews nor Gentiles. Righteousness only comes from God, by faith.
Chapter 4	For example: Abraham believed God and was declared righteous.
Chapter 5	Being declared righteous (justified) by faith means -we have peace with God -we are saved -we have access to God -we are reconciled to God
Chapter 6	At the cross we died, were buried and rose with Christ. Believe this (know it, count it to your credit and yield yourself to God) and sin will not reign over you. You'll be free from sin and have eternal life.
Chapter 7	So, you're dead to the law. If you try to be righteous by keeping the law you'll have a great struggle, and you won't win!
Chapter 8	But in Christ you are free from the law of sin and death. So live like it; controlled by the Holy Spirit; alive to God; righteous!
Chapter 9	Israel had every chance to obtain righteousness by faith. They missed out because they tried to obtain righteousness by following the law. (This doesn't mean God's word failed. God is sovereign and can do what He likes with His people).
Chapter 10	So everyone can be saved (including Israel) if, on hearing the Word, they believe and confess Jesus as Lord.
Chapter 11	God has not rejected Israel. A remnant has been saved and the Gentiles have been grafted into the root stock begun with Israel. One day all Israel will be saved.
Chapter 12 - 15:13	Therefore, submit yourself to God and live how He wants you to live. Living God's way includes humility, ministry, love, good works, submission, clean living and being an encourager. It means accepting others and glorifying God in all you do.
Chapter 15:13 - 16:27	Paul's commission is to share this gospel with the Gentiles. He sends his greetings to the Roman Christians and finishes with a benediction, glorifying God for all He has done.

For a more detailed study see <http://rosscallaghan.yolasite.com> and open up 'Romans' under 'Bible Studies'.

**The benefits of justification Rom 5:1-11**

Justification means that when God sees you, He sees you **in Christ**. He sees that the blood of Jesus has been shed; punishment for sin has been made and you are righteous in His sight.

*Therefore, since we have been justified by faith:*

- We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ie. we are in right relationship with God.
- We have access by faith into God’s grace: His bountiful love towards us.
- We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God: God’s light shines into our lives!
- We can rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that they produce perseverance, character and hope.
- We are saved from God’s wrath.
- We are reconciled to God and are saved.
- We rejoice in our relationship with God.
- We have eternal life! 5:21

All this has been made possible because God loves us and sent His Son Jesus to die in our place - even though we were sinners and deserved to die. *But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* 5:8

So justification results in God’s righteousness being conferred upon us. God sees us as righteous **in Christ** and we can then have a relationship with Him. Hallelujah!

**So, what does it mean to be “In Christ”?**

Paul uses the terms *“In Christ”, “In Him”, “In the beloved”* etc.164 times! It is his ‘magnificent obsession’!

Read Ephesians Chapters 1-3 and underline each time that “In Christ” occurs. Then see what amazing truths have been described about your standing in Christ! Compare your standing in Christ (righteous) with your state in the world (a sinner who is - hopefully - engaged in the process of sanctification so you are becoming more like Jesus).

**Standing ‘In Christ’**

**State in the world**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- your legal position before God</li> <li>- how God sees you</li> <li>- based on the finished work of Christ on the Cross</li> <li>- because you have been justified it is “just as if you had never sinned”</li> <li>- you are righteous in Christ and thus able to have unhindered fellowship with God</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- your real position as you live in the world</li> <li>- how you see yourself, and how others see you</li> <li>- based on the way you are living now</li> <li>- a sinner who is (hopefully) open to the work of the Holy Spirit allowing Him to deal with your sin and make you more and more like Jesus; more and more righteous - more and more like you are in Christ!</li> </ul>
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		<b>Standing in Christ</b>	<b>State in the world</b>
<b>Salvation</b>	Eph 1:7, 11,13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- redeemed, God’s possession</li> <li>- saved by God’s grace</li> <li>- sealed by the Holy Spirit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Christians</li> <li>- saved by God’s grace</li> <li>- indwelt by and need to be filled with the Holy Spirit</li> </ul>
<b>Righteousness</b>	2 Cor 5:21 Col:1:22 Eph 1:4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- righteous</li> <li>- holy and blameless in God’s sight</li> <li>- free from any accusation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- mixture of sin and righteousness</li> </ul>
<b>Sin</b>	Eph 2: 5 Rom 6:18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- alive</li> <li>- forgiven</li> <li>- free from sin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- mixture of sin and righteousness</li> <li>- need to repent and ask for forgiveness</li> </ul>
<b>Position</b>	Eph 2:6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- seated with Christ in the heavenlies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- on earth</li> </ul>

<b>Access to God</b>	Eph 3:12	- can approach God with confidence	- mixture of faith and unbelief
<b>Power</b>	Eph 1:3, 18-20	- have every spiritual blessing - powerful	- mixture of weakness, strength, humanity and God's power
<b>Victory</b>	2 Cor 2:14	- always in triumph and victory	- mixture of defeat, victory, ups and downs
<b>Needs</b>	Phil 4:19	- all needs met	- mixture of needy and needs met
<b>Relationship with God</b>	Eph 1:5	- children of God - saved by God's grace - have eternal life	- children of God - saved and live by God's grace - have eternal life

### Major scriptures about being 'In Christ':

Philippians 4:13, Colossians 2: 9-15, 3:1-3, Galatians 3: 26-29, 6:14, Ephesians Chapters 1-3, 2 Corinthians 5:14-21, Romans Chapters 3-8

**The Holy Spirit is continually at work in our lives to make our state in the world more like our standing in Christ! As a result of justification we are righteous in Christ. The Holy Spirit then works in our lives in a process of sanctification to make us more and more like Jesus; more and more righteous in our nature and actions.**

### Christians and the Old Testament Law and sacrificial system

See Romans 7. When someone dies the law no longer has any power over them. eg. marriage laws are dissolved when one partner dies. Similarly we have died with Christ so we are dead to the Law, and thus free from all obligations to keep it. Rather than living under the Law we are to live in the Spirit (See Romans Chapter 8) and this will enable us to be really fruitful for God. Jesus has fulfilled the Law so it no longer has any relevance for Christians (including the 10 commandments!!). Jesus' 'new commandment' is to love the Lord, our neighbours and ourselves, and obey what God says for us to do. Romans 13: 8-10; Mark 12:29-31; John 13:34,35; John 14:15-27; Matthew 5:17-20, 22:37-39; Galatians Chapters 2:11- 5:26; Ephesians 2:14-18, Colossians 2:6-23; Hebrews 10:1-18; James 2:8-13; 1 John 3 etc. The Church Council in Acts 15 ratified this by not laying any burden on believers to follow the Law.

Similarly Jesus death on the Cross has put an end to the Old Testament sacrificial system. It was imperfect and has now been replaced by Jesus' one perfect sacrifice. 2 Corinthians 5:14-21; Colossians 1:15-23; Hebrews 1:10-18; 7:23-10:18. (Note that the new covenant makes the old obsolete). 1 Peter 1:13-25.

A famous Judge once found himself in a very awkward situation. He had a son whom he loved dearly, but who had gone off the rails and had committed many crimes. One day the son was brought to trial; was found guilty; and was brought before his father for sentencing and punishment. The father wanted to teach his son a lesson, and to show him how much he loved him and how much he wanted him to live rightly.

Everyone thought that the Judge would be lenient towards his son but when the Judge delivered his sentence he said: "You have been found guilty of your crimes and you deserve to be punished to the full extent of the law. In this case the maximum sentence will be applied".

The Judge then said to his son. "You are free to go. There will be no conviction recorded against your name. Your record will show you are innocent of your crimes".

The young man was stood down and was set free. There was an uproar in the court but then the Judge explained. "I want my son to know how much I love him. I will be taking the punishment that he deserves. In the sight of the law he will be righteous, because the punishment he deserves will be paid in full - by me!"

The Judge was led off to serve his sentence in jail. And the son learnt his lesson and never came before the courts again.