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## JUSTIFICATION

"Justification may be defined as that judicial act of God by which, on account of Christ, to whom the sinner is united by faith, He declares that sinner to be no longer exposed to the penalty of the law but restored to divine favor." (Pardington, Rev. George P. Ph.D.; "OUTLINE STUDIES IN CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE"; Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, 1926, pp 316-317)

Pardington continues in a note, "In the New Testament, the word "justify" means not to make righteous, but to declare righteous. And justification is the state of one who is thus declared righteous"

Let's look at the terms used in the New Testament.

## NOUNS

"dikaiosis" "denote the act of pronouncing righteous, justification, acquittal; its precise meaning is determined by that of the verb "dikaioo", to justify" (Vine, W. E.; "AN EXPOSITORY DICTIONARY OF NEW TESTAMENT WORDS"; Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co.) Rom. 4:25 "Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification." (Scofield mentions "for" in both cases can be translated "on account of.") Rom. 5:18 "...by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life."

"dikaioma" "has three distinct meanings, and seems best described comprehensively as "a concrete expression of righteousness;" it is a declaration that a person or thing is righteous, and hence, broadly speaking, it represents the expression and effect of "dikaiosis" (Vine) This word is translated ordinances, judgment, righteousness and justification.

## VERBS

"dikaioo" "primarily, to deem to be right" (Vine)

These terms are very closely related to the terms translated righteousness.

Now that we have seen the terms, we need to draw some conclusions from their usage in the Scriptures.

**JUSTIFICATION IS DEPENDENT ON THE RESURRECTION:** Rom. 4:25, "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." It would seem that the resurrection was a prerequisite for our justification. This would relate to the fact that if there were no resurrection, Christ could not enter the heavenly tabernacle to offer His blood. Without the offering of His blood there could be no justification.

**JUSTIFICATION IS A FREE GIFT FROM CHRIST:** Rom. 5:18, "Therefore as by the offence of one [judgment came] upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one [the free gift came] upon all men unto justification of life." Christ provided, in His death, the justification of all that come to Him for salvation.

**JUSTIFICATION IS DEPENDANT ON BELIEF:** Acts 13:39, "And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." (See also, Rom. 3:26)

**JUSTIFICATION IS NOT BASED ON WORKS:** Rom. 3:20, "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law [is] the knowledge of sin." (See also Rom. 3:28; Gal. 2:16) There is nothing that we can do to secure justification. We cannot gain it by keeping the law, we cannot gain it by keeping a list of do's and don'ts, and we can't gain it by giving up material items.

We might just insert a brief commentary on the thought of legalism. Legalism in the Bible is the attempt to keep the law to gain salvation. There are those today that relate legalism to many other thoughts. **BIBLICALLY**, legalism is keeping the law for salvation.

Some charge that anyone that keeps a list of do's and don'ts is a legalist. NOT SO! God keeps a list of do's and don'ts in the Word, and He is not a legalist. Lists are not wrong! If a person is attempting to gain salvation by keeping those lists, then they are legalistic.

Don't allow someone to condemn you because God has burdened your heart to not do something. It is between you and God, and it is not legalism. If your convictions are based on the Word, then you are responsible before God to follow them. Do it.

**JUSTIFICATION CORRECTS THE PROBLEMS OF THE FLESH:** Rom. 3:20; Gal. 2:16. The natural position of man is one which will result in the lake of fire. That position is changed by the work of justification. Justification corrects all that Adam brought upon mankind.

**JUSTIFICATION IS RELATED TO REDEMPTION:** We cannot be justified, until we are redeemed. Yes, the two occur in an instant, yet justification cannot occur until we are redeemed. Romans 3:24

**JUSTIFICATION COMES VIA THE GRACE OF GOD:** Rom. 3:24, "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:" (Also Titus 3:7) We fell with Adam, and God was not responsible. He had no obligation to do anything, yet because He was gracious, He extended salvation as a remedy to our problem.

**JUSTIFICATION BRINGS SONSHIP:** "That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." Titus 3:7 Again, we see the sequence of the salvation event. We are justified, and then we have sonship available. Sonship then is dependent upon justification. This is only logical. God is not going to share His Son's kingdom with children of Satan.

**JUSTIFICATION IS BY FAITH:** Justification cannot be worked for, bought, or stolen. It is dependent on the faith of the individual that comes to Christ for salvation. (Rom. 3:28, 30; 5:1; Gal. 3:24)

**JUSTIFICATION IS PROVIDED BY GOD:** "Seeing [it is] one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith." Romans 3:30 (It comes by belief; Rom. 4:5. It frees us from all charges; Rom. 8:33.)

**JUSTIFICATION IS ACCOMPLISHED BY CHRIST'S BLOOD:** "Much more then, being now

justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." Romans 5:9 His blood being offered in the heavenly tabernacle opened the way for justification to become a reality. With no blood, there would be no justification. We were fully dependent upon Christ and His provision.

**JUSTIFICATION IS A RESULT OF PREDESTINATION:** "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." (Romans 8:30) Again, we see the sequence aspect of salvation. In this text justification is preceded by our calling, and followed by glorification.

**JUSTIFICATION IS CARRIED OUT BY THE HOLY SPIRIT:** "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Corinthians 6:11) As in most of the great doctrines of salvation, God the Father enacted the program, God the Son made provision for the program, and God the Holy Spirit brings the program to pass in the individuals life.

**JUSTIFICATION IS FOR ALL PEOPLES:** "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, [saying], In thee shall all nations be blessed." (Galatians 3:8) God provided salvation to all peoples in the beginning, but in Abraham narrowed His focus for a time. This is not to say that only Jews could be saved, but that the Jews were the messengers. In Abraham, all nations were to be blessed.

**JUSTIFICATION SHOULD RESULT IN A CHANGED WALK:** "the just shall live by faith." Our walk should be based completely on faith in God. Our lives should be planned by faith, our years should be planned by faith, and our every minute should be planned by faith.

This is not a request, but a command. God expects us to live by faith, no matter what situation we find ourselves in. It has always interested me to notice that our Christian colleges and seminaries attempt to teach their students to live by faith. They expect their faculty to live by faith. Yet, the organization is somehow magically exempt from this concept. The School must survive, so the students WILL have money for school before they arrive. Many students have been turned away at registration because they do not have a specific amount of money.

If the student is to walk by faith, and the faculty is to walk by faith, then how can they learn this concept if the institution is not operating by faith? Seems somewhat illogical to me.

I would like to list some quotations which will further define the thought of justification.

Chafer mentions, "Imputed righteousness is the ground of justification. According to the New Testament usage, the words "righteousness" and "justify" are from the same root. God declares the one justified forever whom He sees in Christ. It is an equitable decree since the justified one is clothed in the righteousness of God. Justification is not a fiction or a state of feeling; it is rather an immutable reckoning in the mind of God. Like imputed righteousness, justification is by faith (Rom. 5:1), through grace (Titus 3:4-7), and made possible through the death and resurrection of Christ (Rom. 3:24; 4:25). It is abiding and unchangeable since it rests only on the merit of the eternal son of God.

"Justification is more than forgiveness, since forgiveness is the cancellation of sin while justification is the imputing of righteousness. Forgiveness is negative (the removal of condemnation), while justification is positive (the bestowing of the merit and standing of Christ)." (Chafer, Lewis Sperry/Revised by Walvoord, John F.; "MAJOR BIBLE THEMES"; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974, p 200)

Chafer in his systematic theology: "Theologically considered, the term justification means to be declared righteous. It is true that, being in Christ, the believer is righteous; but justification is the divine acknowledgment and declaration that the one who is in Christ is righteous. That which God thus publishes He defends. Justification is immutable." (Chafer, Lewis Sperry; "SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY"; Dallas, TX: Dallas Seminary Press, 1947, Vol. III, p 128)

The Westminster Shorter Catechism states, "Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein He pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in His sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone."

The opposite of justification seems to be condemnation. We were condemned to the lake of fire, and now we are justified.

## CONCLUSION

I would like to share some thoughts from Best Sermon Pictures by Lawson; Moody Press. They were quoting The Sunday School Times. "An instrument used for weighing gold in the assay office is balanced so delicately that, when two pieces of paper, of exactly the same size and weight, are placed on the balances, it still retains the same poise. But if a name be written on one of the papers, it will turn the scale. The name of Jesus on the heart turns the scale into peace and presence of God. It is the possession of His name thus written that spells "saved." It is the lack of it that spells "lost."

Justification has been defined as "just as if I had never sinned." Indeed, it is more than that. It is as if I were Christ, in which there is no sin. I have the same standing before God that Christ has. Ponder that point for awhile.

# Did Paul Teach Law Court Justification?

by Robert Brow (web site - [www.brow.on.ca](http://www.brow.on.ca))

(Notes for discussion, revised in November 1996)

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In the western church it is generally assumed that the key to Paul's Epistle to the Romans is the word "justification." The English verb "justify" comes straight from the Latin *justificio* which is a verb that belonged to the Roman law courts. The noun *justificatio* from which we transliterated the English word "justification" means that an accused person is pronounced free of condemnation and punishment. It was an essential part of the Roman Catholic doctrine of the atonement, and justification by faith alone became the rallying crying of the Reformation.

This has saddled Paul with a forensic model of God's dealings with us which is quite foreign to his other epistles and totally absent from the Gospels. A possible counter example is the word "ransom" in **Mark 10:45**. But this can only be done by focussing on the amount paid for ransoming instead of the resulting new life of freedom. "He has ransomed and redeemed his people" cannot be forced into a forensic model.

The heart of the Epistle to the Romans in **7:14-8:17** is Paul's sense that God by the Spirit has freed him (ransoming in the right sense) from the miserable inability of his flesh to attain what he longed be.

Having assumed that Paul's Epistle to the Romans was set in a law court theologians then developed a model of the Trinity in which the Father is a forensic judge of original sin, the Son is primarily the one who satisfies that justice, and the Holy Spirit is only accessible to humans after that satisfaction is completed and appropriated by humans. This denied the fact that from the beginning all three persons of the Trinity were concerned to bring children to glory from all nations, and all three persons were approachable by humans everywhere (argued for example in Paul's sermon in **Acts 17:26-28**).

It is time to question whether the word "justification" is helpful in interpreting Paul, and even whether it has any place in translating any part of the New Testament. The noun only occurs three times in the King James and later English versions of the Bibles. All three occurrences are in the Epistle to the Romans.

In the King James translation the adjective *dikaios* and the noun *dikaiosune* are correctly translated "righteous" and "righteousness" thirty-four times in the Epistle to the Romans. The forensic virus was introduced when the King James Version [and most other English translations including the RV, RSV, NIV, NEB, NRSV] in thirteen cases translated the related Greek verbs by the typically Roman law court verbs "to justify" and the passive "to be justified." In each case the forensic term "justify" was used to translate the Greek verb *dikaioo* which need mean nothing more than "to make righteous."

Those who use the Latin root words "justification," "justify," and "be justified" have already assumed a judicial paradigm, and by doing so they set Paul's argument in a mold which is alien to his thinking in other epistles. The translators have therefore taken for granted what should be very questionable. The literal translation of the Greek by terms such as "make righteous or upright or just," "be made righteous," "righteousness," etc. would have left open the question of what model Paul had in mind. That does not prove that the forensic model is wrong, only that another model fits the Bible just as well, and avoids the moral problem inherent in Latin law court theology.

The words in the original Greek might allow, but they never require a judicial interpretation. Since the time of Chrysostom it has been pointed out in the Greek Church that *dikaioo* could equally well be translated "make upright or righteous" [See David Weaver's three articles on "The Exegesis of Romans 5:12" in the *St. Vladimir Theological Quarterly*, Volume 27.3, 1983, p. 133 ff., volume 27.4, 1983, p. 187 ff. and Volume 28.1, 1984, p.231 ff].

If this Greek Orthodox reading of the Epistle is correct then it would seem that it was the legal minds of the first Latin translators and Jerome's Vulgate which introduced the forensic virus into the western church. Augustine did not know Greek, and he set the Roman law court model in stone. Anselm and Calvin clarified that logic with ruthless perfection.

The result is that the Roman law court term *justificatio* has dominated the theology of the western Church since Augustine and it was the battleground for the long bloody split between Protestants and Roman Catholics. It also twisted the doctrine of the Trinity and caused the obsession with guaranteeing places in heaven which made concern for genuine liberation impossible.

What for example would be neutral translations for the three occurrences in the Bible of the term "justification"? The first is "Who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification." [Romans 4:25] Here the Greek word is *dikaiosis* which in the lexicon is given the meanings "justification, vindication or acquittal." These all assume the Forensic model. But the context of the passage is the faith of Abraham which is going to be a blessing to all nations. And there is no way to set Abraham's life of faith in a Roman lawcourt.

Paul tells us that Abraham was counted righteous or upright because in his sense of great bodily weakness he had faith in the promises of God. [Romans 4:18-25] In the same way we are counted righteous or upright when in our great weakness we believe through Jesus Christ in the God of Abraham [5:1-6, so 7:14-8:2] So instead of using the law court term *justificatio* we could translate "He was delivered over to death because of (*dia*) our sins, and raised for us to be counted righteous or upright." The meaning would be that like Abraham we feel our inability to perform, but as we look in faith to the God who raised Jesus from the dead we are counted as upright and we have Abraham's kind of righteousness. [Compare 4:18-25, 5:1-6, 7:14-8:2]

A second text is "The free gift is not like the effect of one man's sin. For the judgment following many trespasses brings justification" (Romans 5:16). Here the Greek word is *dikaionoma* which can mean "regulation, requirement, commandment." Since it is applied to Christ two verses later it cannot mean "justification" in a forensic sense. The context suggests that Paul is contrasting two ways of living, in Adam or in Christ, in death or in life, under the sense of condemnation or in the assurance of being accepted as upright before God [Romans 5:12-21. See Anders Nygren on "The Two Aeons," *Romarbrevet*, Stockholm, 1944, First American Edition, 1949; *Commentary on Romans*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972, pp.16-26]. So a more neutral translation would be "the gift that followed many transgressions now results in us meeting God's requirement." That avoids importing the Roman judicial model and leaves the interpretation open. So a more neutral translation would be "the gift that followed many transgressions now results in us meeting God's requirement."

Justification is again used wrongly as a translation of *dikaiosis* later in the same context. "Just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all." [Romans 5:18] This translation adds the word "act" which is not in the Greek, and by using the Latin word "justification" it insists that the Greek word *dikaiosis* is set in a law court. The New English Bible correctly abandons "justification" but immediately slips back into the judicial paradigm with "a verdict of acquittal."



In this case the context is Paul's contrast between the two humanities in Adam or in Christ. A radical but neutral paraphrase would be "In contrast to human (Adamic) transgression which condemns us all, the rightness that comes from God (Christ's *dikaioma*) effects our righteousness (*dikaiosis*)." That allows the idea of a genuine work of righteousness in the heart by the Holy Spirit, which seems to be the thrust of the whole Epistle. The Epistle to the Romans then becomes the good news of God's plan as a loving parent to perfect us. In such a model God never was interested in condemning anyone to hell, or transferring righteousness by a merely legal transaction.

It therefore seems that the term "justification" is misleading and never needed, even in the Epistle to the Romans. The passive of the verb *dikaioo* was translated by the forensic term "justified" seven times in the King James version of the Gospels, but in no case has the context anything to do with a law court. And it would have been impossible to derive a forensic model from a reading of the Gospels alone.

It is therefore time translators had the courage to discard "justify," "justified," and "justification" from our Bible and use the ordinary meaning of the Greek words instead. Wherever the adjective *dikaios*, the verb *dikaioo*, and the noun *dikaiosune* occur the translation should use "righteous," "make righteous," and "righteousness." The meaning of those words should be derived from the Hebrew idea of a righteous person (*tzaddiq*) which never has a forensic connotation in the Old Testament. What Paul clarified in Romans is that no one can overcome his or unruly flesh by legalism. The good news is that the three Persons of the Trinity can perfect us in love, and so make us righteous in the Old Testament sense.

As the Greek Orthodox church has always explained, God's original purpose from Genesis 1 was to bring many children to glory (*theiosis*), and the three Persons of the Trinity have from the beginning undertaken our perfecting. **Romans 1:18** chronicles the disastrous failure of the Greek attempt to attain perfection by wisdom, and the consequent result of their atheism in the collapse of their civilisation since the golden age. He then shows how Jewish civilization has also failed in its attempt to attain perfection by legalism. Paul's point in Romans is that for Abraham and for all of us the good news is that the whole work of perfecting is done by God, and our part is to accept it by faith alone. That was the experience that moved Luther. Unfortunately he then explained his theology in the forensic model he had learned from Augustine. Wesley delighted in the Greek Fathers, and tried to teach God's perfecting by faith alone, but still found it hard to free himself from the Latin word "justification" in the Vulgate and English translations.

It seems that history would have been very different, and the western church would have been saved much pain and vast theological confusion if the Roman law terms had never been used. The confusion did not arise in the Orthodox churches of eastern Europe where the Greek New Testament was read in the original, and the Latin paradigm of Roman justice was not usually in mind. What is sorely needed in our generation is a modern commentary on the Epistle to the Romans which offers another model.

## An Additional Note About Substitution

If we move the locus of the language game that Paul was using from a law court to a family setting, what does that do for our use of the term "substitution"? One cannot remove the idea of substitution from texts like **John 11:50** and **1 Peter 3:18**, or from the fact that Christ died on the cross for us.

One answer might be that the substitutions of love belong to a quite different model from the substitutions of a Roman law court. If we assume that loving parents long for the perfecting (with God the term is *theiosis*) of their child in love, that process inevitably involves many substitutions: sleepless nights, changing diapers, going hungry so the child can eat, listening to baby talk, defending, saving, taking the blame for, and even posting bail in a law court.



There are also substitutions in any love relationship, in serving the needy, in fighting for a nation's freedom, etc. The Father has to substitute for the prodigal son by identifying himself with the boy's degradation and giving him the ring and the honour of a barbecue. The good Samaritan substitutes for the wounded man by taking his blood and danger upon himself, and vouching for him at the inn. Sacrifice is inevitably a substitution. Any child knew in the ancient world that "This animal is being *zebakhed* so we can eat."

That means we cannot do without the idea of substitution in trying to fathom the costly love of God. What we can do is try to set it in an appropriate context.

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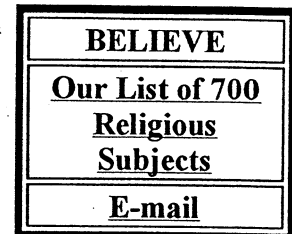
# Justification by Faith

## General Information

In Christianity, salvation is variously conceived. One prominent conception emphasizes justification--the process through which the individual, alienated from God by sin, is reconciled to God and reckoned just or righteous through faith in Christ.

**Second only to belief in the Bible as a mark of Protestantism is the conviction that humans are not saved by their merits or good works, as the 16th-century reformers heard Catholics claiming, but only "by grace, through faith."**

According to Protestants, God took the initiative in saving the world from sin through his activity in Jesus Christ, and **even the faith that led people to believe in this activity was a gift, not an achievement.** Nonetheless, however consistent Protestant teaching on this subject may be, Protestant cultures have often produced earnest strivers after God--sober and hard-working people who try to prove that they are God's elect (Predestination) and preachers or other leaders who seem as legalistic in their approach to church life as the 16th-century Catholics were.




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## Justification

### General Information

Justification is a forensic term, opposed to condemnation. As regards its nature, it is the judicial act of God, by which **He pardons all the sins of those who believe in Christ, and accounts, accepts, and treats them as righteous in the eye of the law, i.e., as conformed to all its demands.** In addition to the pardon (q.v.) of sin, justification declares that all the claims of the law are satisfied in respect of the justified. It is the act of a judge and not of a sovereign. **The law is not relaxed or set aside, but is declared to be fulfilled in the strictest sense; and so the person justified is declared to be entitled to all the advantages and rewards arising from perfect obedience to the law** (Rom. 5:1-10). It proceeds on the imputing or crediting to the believer by God himself of the perfect righteousness, active and passive, of his Representative and Surety, Jesus Christ (Rom. 10:3-9).

**Justification is not the forgiveness of a man without righteousness, but a declaration that he possesses a righteousness which perfectly and for ever satisfies the law, namely, Christ's righteousness** (2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 4:6-8). The sole condition on which this righteousness is imputed or credited to the believer is **faith in or on the Lord Jesus Christ.** Faith is called a "condition," not because it possesses any merit, but only because it is the instrument, the only instrument by which the soul appropriates or apprehends Christ and his righteousness (Rom. 1:17; 3:25, 26; 4:20, 22; Phil. 3: 8-11; Gal. 2:16). **The act of faith which thus secures our justification secures also at the same time our sanctification** (q.v.); and thus the doctrine of justification by faith does not lead to licentiousness (Rom. 6:2-7). **Good works, while not the ground, are the certain consequence of justification** (6:14; 7:6).

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## Justification

### Advanced Information

The basic fact of biblical religion is that God pardons and accepts believing sinners (see Pss. 32:1 - 5; 130; Luke 7:47ff.; 18:9 - 14; Acts 10:43; 1 John 1:7 - 2:2). **Paul's doctrine of justification by faith is an analytical exposition of this fact in its full theological connections.** As stated by Paul (most fully in Romans and Galatians, though see also 2 Cor. 5:14ff.; Eph. 2:1ff.; Phil. 3:4ff.), the doctrine of justification determines the whole character of Christianity as a religion of grace and faith. **It defines the saving significance of Christ's life and death by relating both to God's law** (Rom. 3:24ff.; 5:16ff.).

It displays God's justice in condemning and punishing sin, his mercy in pardoning and accepting sinners, and his wisdom in exercising both attributes harmoniously together through Christ (Rom. 3:23ff.). It makes clear what faith is, belief in Christ's atoning death and justifying resurrection (Rom. 4:23ff.; 10:8ff.), and trust in him alone for righteousness (Phil. 3:8 - 9). It makes clear what Christian morality is law - keeping out of gratitude to the Savior whose gift of righteousness made law - keeping needless for acceptance (Rom. 7:1 - 6; 12:1 - 2). It explains all hints, prophecies, and instances of salvation in the OT (Rom. 1:17; 3:21; 4:1ff.). It overthrows Jewish exclusivism (Gal. 2:15ff.) and provides the basis on which Christianity becomes a religion for the world (Rom. 1:16; 3:29 - 30). It is the heart of the gospel. Luther justly termed it *articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiae*; a church that lapses from it can scarcely be called Christian.

### The Meaning of Justification

The biblical meaning of "justify" (Hebrew, *sadeq*; Greek, LXX and NT, *dikaioo*) is to pronounce, accept, and treat as just, i.e., as, on the one hand, not penally liable, and, on the other, entitled to all the privileges due to those who have kept the law. It is thus a forensic term, denoting a judicial act of administering the law in this case, by declaring a verdict of acquittal, and so excluding all possibility of condemnation. Justification thus settles the legal status of the person justified. (See Deut. 25:1; Prov. 17:15; Rom. 8:33 - 34. In Isa. 43:9, 26, "be justified" means "get the verdict.") The justifying action of the Creator, who is the royal Judge of this world, has both a sentential and an executive, or declarative, aspect: God justifies, first, by reaching his verdict and then by sovereign action makes his verdict known and secures to the person justified the rights which are now his due. What is envisaged in Isa. 45:25 and 50:8, for instance, is specifically a series of events which will publicly vindicate those whom God holds to be in the right.

The word is also used in a transferred sense for ascriptions of righteousness in nonforensic contexts. Thus, men are said to justify God when they confess him just (Luke 7:29; Rom. 3:4 = Ps. 51:4), and themselves when they claim to be just (Job 32:2; Luke 10:29; 16:15). The passive can be used generally of being vindicated by events against suspicion, criticism, and mistrust (Matt. 11:19; Luke 7:35; I Tim. 3:16).

In James 2:21, 24 - 25 its reference is to the proof of a man's acceptance with God that is given when his actions show that he has the kind of living, working faith to which God imputes righteousness. James's statement that Christians, like Abraham, are justified by works (vs. 24) is thus not contrary to Paul's insistence that Christians, like Abraham, are justified by faith (Rom. 3:28; 4:1 - 5), but is complementary to it. James himself quotes Gen. 15:6 for exactly the same purpose as Paul does to show that it was faith which secured Abraham's acceptance as righteous (vs. 23; cf. Rom. 4:3ff.; Gal. 3:6ff.).

The justification which concerns James is not the believer's original acceptance by God, but the subsequent vindication of his profession of faith by his life. It is in terminology, not thought, that James differs from Paul.

There is no lexical ground for the view of Chrysostom, Augustine, and the medieval and Roman theologians that "justify" means, or connotes as part of its meaning, "make righteous" (by subjective spiritual renewal). The Tridentine definition of justification as "not only the remission of sins, but also the sanctification and renewal of the inward man" (Sess. VI, ch. vii) is erroneous.

### **Paul's Doctrine of Justification**

The background of Paul's doctrine was the Jewish conviction, universal in his time, that a day of judgment was coming, in which God would condemn and punish all who had broken his laws. That day would terminate the present world order and usher in a golden age for those whom God judged worthy. This conviction, derived from prophetic expectations of "the day of the Lord" (Amos 5:19ff.; Isa. 2:10 - 22; 13:6 - 11; Jer. 46:10; Obad. 15; Zeph. 1:14 - 2:3, etc.) and developed during the intertestamental period under the influence of apocalyptic, had been emphatically confirmed by Christ (Matt. 11:22ff.; 12:36 - 37; etc.). Paul affirmed that Christ himself was the appointed representative through whom God would "judge the world in righteousness" in "the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God" (Acts 17:31; Rom. 2:16). This, indeed, had been Christ's own claim (John 5:27ff.)

Paul sets out his doctrine of the judgment day in Rom. 2:5 - 16. The principle of judgment will be exact retribution ("to every man according to his works," vs. 6). The standard will be God's law. The evidence will be "the secrets of men" (vs. 16); the Judge is a searcher of hearts. Being himself just, he cannot be expected to justify any but the righteous, those who have kept his law (Rom. 2:12 - 13; cf. Exod. 23:7; 1 Kings 8:32). But the class of righteous men has no members. None is righteous; all have sinned (Rom. 3:9ff.). The prospect, therefore, is one of universal condemnation, for Jew as well as Gentile; for the Jew who breaks the law is no more acceptable to God than anyone else (Rom. 2:17 - 27). All men, it seems, are under God's wrath (Rom. 1:18) and doomed.

Against this black background, comprehensively expounded in Rom. 1:18 - 3:20, Paul proclaims the present justification of sinners by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, apart from all works and despite all demerit (Rom. 3:21ff.). This justification, though individually located at the point of time at which a man believes (Rom. 4:2; 5:1), is an eschatological once - for - all divine act, the final judgment brought into the present. The justifying sentence, once passed, is irrevocable. "The wrath" will not touch the justified (Rom. 5:9). Those accepted now are secure forever. Inquisition before Christ's judgment seat (Rom. 14:10 - 12; 2 Cor. 5:10) may deprive them of certain rewards (1 Cor. 3:15), but never of their justified status. Christ will not call in question God's justifying verdict, only declare, endorse, and implement it.

### **Justification has two sides**

On the one hand, it means the pardon, remission, and nonimputation of all sins, reconciliation to God, and the end of his enmity and wrath (Acts 13:39; Rom. 4:6 - 7; 2 Cor. 5:19; Rom. 5:9ff.). On the other hand, it means the bestowal of a righteous man's status and a title to all the blessings promised to the just: a thought which Paul amplifies by linking justification with the adoption of believers as God's sons and heirs (Rom. 8:14ff.; Gal. 4:4ff.). Part of their inheritance they receive at once: through the gift of the Holy Spirit, whereby God "seals" them as his when they believe (Eph. 1:13), they taste that quality of fellowship with God which belongs to the age to come and is called "eternal life." Here is another eschatological reality brought into the present: having in a real sense passed through the last judgment,

the justified enter heaven on earth.

Here and now, therefore, justification brings "life" (Rom. 5:18), though this is merely a foretaste of the fullness of life and glory which constitutes the "hope of righteousness" (Gal. 5:5) promised to the just (Rom. 2:7, 10), to which God's justified children may look forward (Rom. 8:18ff.). Both aspects of justification appear in Rom. 5:1 - 2, where Paul says that justification brings, on the one hand, peace with God (because sin is pardoned) and, on the other, hope of the glory of God (because the believer is accepted as righteous). Justification thus means permanent reinstatement to favor and privilege, as well as complete forgiveness of all sins.

## The Ground of Justification

Paul's deliberately paradoxical reference to God as "justifying the ungodly" (Rom. 4:5), the same Greek phrase as is used by the LXX in Exod. 23:7; Isa. 5:23, of the corrupt judgment that God will not tolerate, reflects his awareness that this is a startling doctrine. Indeed, it seems flatly at variance with the OT presentation of God's essential righteousness, as revealed in his actions as Legislator and Judge, a presentation which Paul himself assumes in Rom. 1:18 - 3:20.

The OT insists that God is "righteous in all his ways" (Ps. 145:17), "a God. . . without iniquity" (Deut. 32:4; cf. Zeph. 3:5). The law of right and wrong, in conformity to which righteousness consists, has its being and fulfillment in him. His revealed law, "holy, just and good" as it is (Rom. 7:12; cf. Deut. 4:8; Ps. 19:7 - 9), mirrors his character, for he "loves" the righteousness prescribed (Ps. 11:7; 33:5) and "hates" the unrighteousness forbidden (Ps. 5:4 - 6; Isa. 61:8; Zech. 8:17). As Judge, he declares his righteousness by "visiting" in retributive judgment idolatry, irreligion, immorality, and inhuman conduct throughout the world (Jer. 9:24; Ps. 9:5ff., 15ff.; Amos 1:3 - 3:2, etc.). "God is a righteous judge, yea, a God that hath indignation every day" (Ps. 7:11, E R V). No evildoer goes unnoticed (Ps. 94:7 - 9); all receive their precise desert (Prov. 24:12).

God hates sin, and is impelled by the demands of his own nature to pour out "wrath" and "fury" on those who complacently espouse it (cf. the language of Isa. 1:24; Jer. 6:11; 30:23 - 24; Ezek. 5:13ff.; Deut. 28:63). It is a glorious revelation of his righteousness (cf. Isa. 5:16; 10:22) when he does so; it would be a reflection on his righteousness if he failed to do so. It seems unthinkable that a God who thus reveals just and inflexible wrath against all human ungodliness (Rom. 1:18) should justify the ungodly. Paul, however, takes the bull by the horns and affirms, not merely that God does it, but that he does it in a manner designed "to shew his righteousness, because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God; for the shewing, I say, of his righteousness at this present season: that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus" (Rom. 3:25 - 26,). The statement is emphatic, for the point is crucial.

Paul is saying that the gospel which proclaims God's apparent violation of his justice is really a revelation of his justice. So far from raising a problem of theodicy, it actually solves one; for it makes explicit, as the OT never did, the just ground on which God pardoned and accepted believers before the time of Christ, as well as since.

Some question this exegesis of Rom. 3:25 - 26 and construe "righteousness" here as meaning "saving action," on the ground that in Isa. 40 - 55 "righteousness" and "salvation" are repeatedly used as equivalents (Isa. 45:8, 19 - 25; 46:13; 51:3 - 6, etc.). This eliminates the theodicy; all that Paul is saying, on this view, is that God now shows that he saves sinners. The words "just, and" in vs. 26, so far from making the crucial point that God justifies sinners justly, would then add nothing to his meaning and could be deleted without loss.

However, quite apart from the specific exegetical embarrassments which it creates (for which see V. Taylor, *ExpT* 50:295ff.), this hypothesis seems groundless, for (1) OT references to God's righteousness normally denote his retributive justice (the usage adduced from Isaiah is not typical), and (2) these verses are the continuation of a discussion that has been concerned throughout (from 1:18 onward) with God's display of righteousness in judging and punishing sin. These considerations decisively fix the forensic reference here. "The main question with which St. Paul is concerned is how God can be recognized as himself righteous and at the same time as one who declares righteous believers in Christ" (Taylor, p. 299). Paul has not (as is suggested) left the forensic sphere behind. The sinner's relation to God as just Lawgiver and Judge is still his subject. What he is saying in this paragraph (Rom. 3:21 - 26) is that the gospel reveals a way in which sinners can be justified without affront to the divine justice which, as shown (1:18 - 3:20), condemns all sin.

Paul's thesis is that God justifies sinners on a just ground, namely, that the claims of God's law upon them have been fully satisfied. The law has not been altered, or suspended, or flouted for their justification, but fulfilled, by Jesus Christ, acting in their name. By perfectly serving God, Christ perfectly kept the law (cf. Matt. 3:15).

His obedience culminated in death (Phil. 2:8); he bore the penalty of the law in men's place (Gal. 3:13), to make propitiation for their sins (Rom. 3:25). On the ground of Christ's obedience, God does not impute sin, but imputes righteousness, to sinners who believe (Rom. 4:2 - 8; 5:19). "The righteousness of God" (i.e., righteousness from God: see Phil. 3:9) is bestowed on them as a free gift (Rom. 1:17; 3:21 - 22; 5:17, cf. 9:30; 10:3 - 10): that is to say, they receive the right to be treated and the promise that they shall be treated, no longer as sinners, but as righteous, by the divine Judge. Thus they become "the righteousness of God" in and through him who "knew no sin" personally, but was representatively "made sin" (treated as a sinner and punished) in their stead (2 Cor. 5:21).

This is the thought expressed in classical Protestant theology by the phrase "the imputation of Christ's righteousness," namely, that believers are righteous (Rom. 5:19) and have righteousness (Phil. 3:9) before God for no other reason than that Christ their Head was righteous before God, and they are one with him, sharers of his status and acceptance. God justifies them by passing on them, for Christ's sake, the verdict which Christ's obedience merited. God declares them to be righteous, because he reckons them to be righteous; and he reckons righteousness to them, not because he accounts them to have kept his law personally (which would be a false judgment), but because he accounts them to be united to the one who kept it representatively (and that is a true judgment).

For Paul union with Christ is not fancy but fact, the basic fact, indeed, in Christianity; and the doctrine of imputed righteousness is simply Paul's exposition of the forensic aspect of it (see Rom. 5:12ff.). Covenantal solidarity between Christ and his people is thus the objective basis on which sinners are reckoned righteous and justly justified through the righteousness of their Savior. Such is Paul's theodicy regarding the ground of justification.

## **Faith and Justification**

Paul says that believers are justified *dia pisteos* (Rom. 3:25), *pistei* (Rom. 3:28), and *ek pisteos* (Rom. 3:30). The dative and the preposition *dia* represent faith as the instrumental means whereby Christ and his righteousness are appropriated; the preposition *ek* shows that faith occasions, and logically precedes, our personal justification. That believers are justified *dia pistin*, on account of faith, Paul never says, and would deny. Were faith the ground of justification, faith would be in effect a meritorious work, and the gospel message would, after all, be merely another version of justification by works, a doctrine which Paul opposes in all forms as irreconcilable with grace and spiritually ruinous (cf. Rom. 4:4; 11:6; Gal.

penal law; hence interest in the sinner's justification by the divine Judge was replaced by the thought of the prodigal's forgiveness and rehabilitation by his divine Father. The validity of forensic categories for expressing man's saving relationship to God has been widely denied. Many neo orthodox thinkers seem surer that there is a sense of guilt in man than that there is a penal law in God, and tend to echo this denial, claiming that legal categories obscure the personal quality of this relationship. Consequently, Paul's doctrine of justification has received little stress outside evangelical circles, though a new emphasis is apparent in recent lexical work, the newer Lutheran writers, and the Dogmatics of Karl Barth.

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## **Justification**

### **Advanced Information**

Justification (noun), denotes "the act of pronouncing righteous, justification, acquittal"; its precise meaning is determined by that of the verb *dikaioo*, "to justify" (see B); it is used twice in the Ep. to the Romans, and there alone in the NT, signifying the establishment of a person as just by acquittal from guilt. In Rom. 4:25 the phrase "for our justification," is, lit., "because of our justification" (parallel to the preceding clause "for our trespasses," i.e., because of trespasses committed), and means, not with a view to our "justification," but because all that was necessary on God's part for our "justification" had been effected in the death of Christ. On this account He was raised from the dead.

The propitiation being perfect and complete, His resurrection was the confirmatory counterpart. In 5:18, "justification of life" means "justification which results in life" (cf. v. 21). That God "justifies" the believing sinner on the ground of Christ's death, involves His free gift of life. On the distinction between *dikaiosis* and *dikaionoma*, see below.

In the Sept., Lev. 24:22.

## **Justification**

### **Advanced Information**



4:21 - 5:12).

Paul regards faith, not as itself our justifying righteousness, but rather as the outstretched empty hand which receives righteousness by receiving Christ. In Hab. 2:4 (cited Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11) Paul finds, implicit in the promise that the godly man ("the just") would enjoy God's continued favor ("live") through his trustful loyalty to God (which is Habakkuk's point in the context), the more fundamental assertion that only through faith does any man ever come to be viewed by God as just, and hence as entitled to life, at all. The apostle also uses Gen. 15:6 ("Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness," ERV) to prove the same point (see Gal. 3:6; Rom. 4:3ff.).

It is clear that when Paul paraphrases this verse as teaching that Abraham's faith was reckoned for righteousness (Rom. 4:5, 9, 22), all he intends us to understand is that faith, decisive, wholehearted reliance on God's gracious promise (vss. 18ff.), was the occasion and means of righteousness being imputed to him. There is no suggestion here that faith is the ground of justification. Paul is not discussing the ground of justification in this context at all, only the method of securing it. Paul's conviction is that no child of Adam ever becomes righteous before God save on account of the righteousness of the last Adam, the second representative man (Rom. 5:12 - 19); and this righteousness is imputed to men when they believe.

Theologians on the rationalistic and moralistic wing of Protestantism, Socinians, Arminians, and some modern liberals, have taken Paul to teach that God regards man's faith as righteousness (either because it fulfills a supposed new law or because, as the seed of all Christian virtue, it contains the germ and potency of an eventual fulfillment of God's original law, or else because it is simply God's sovereign pleasure to treat faith as righteousness, though it is not righteousness; and that God pardons and accepts sinners on the ground of their faith). In consequence, these theologians deny the imputation of Christ's righteousness to believers in the sense explained, and reject the whole covenantal conception of Christ's mediatorial work.

The most they can say is that Christ's righteousness was the indirect cause of the acceptance of man's faith as righteousness, in that it created a situation in which this acceptance became possible. (Thinkers in the Socinian tradition, believing that such a situation always existed and that Christ's work had no Godward reference, will not say even this.) Theologically, the fundamental defect of all such views is that they do not make the satisfaction of the law the basis of acceptance. They regard justification, not as a judicial act of executing the law, but as the sovereign act of a God who stands above the law and is free to dispense with it, or change it, at his discretion. The suggestion is that God is not bound by his own law: its preceptive and penal enactments do not express immutable and necessary demands of his own nature, but he may out of benevolence relax and amend them without ceasing to be what he is. This, however, seems a wholly unscriptural conception.

## The Doctrine in History

Interest in justification varies according to the weight given to the scriptural insistence that man's relation to God is determined by law and sinners necessarily stand under his wrath and condemnation. The late medieval theologians took this more seriously than any since apostolic times; they, however, sought acceptance through penances and meritorious good works. The Reformers proclaimed justification by grace alone through faith alone on the ground of Christ's righteousness alone, and embodied Paul's doctrine in full confessional statements.

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were the doctrine's classical period. Liberalism spread the notion that God's attitude to all men is one of paternal affection, not conditioned by the demands of

rendered "Justifier" is the present participle of the verb, lit., "justifying"; similarly in 8:33 (where the article is used), "God that justifieth," is, more lit., "God is the (One) justifying," with stress upon the word "God." "Justification" is primarily and gratuitously by faith, subsequently and evidentially by works.

In regard to "justification" by works, the so-called contradiction between James and the apostle Paul is only apparent. There is harmony in the different views of the subject. Paul has in mind Abraham's attitude toward God, his acceptance of God's word. This was a matter known only to God. The Romans epistle is occupied with the effect of this Godward attitude, not upon Abraham's character or actions, but upon the contrast between faith and the lack of it, namely, unbelief, cf. Rom. 11:20. James (2:21-26) is occupied with the contrast between faith that is real and faith that is false, a faith barren and dead, which is not faith at all.

Again, the two writers have before them different epochs in Abraham's life, Paul, the event recorded in Gen. 15, James, that in Gen. 22. Contrast the words "believed" in Gen. 15:6 and "obeyed" in 22:18. Further, the two writers use the words "faith" and "works" in somewhat different senses. With Paul, faith is acceptance of God's word; with James, it is acceptance of the truth of certain statements about God, (v. 19), which may fail to affect one's conduct.

Faith, as dealt with by Paul, results in acceptance with God., i.e., "justification," and is bound to manifest itself. If not, as James says "Can that faith save him?" (v. 14). With Paul, works are dead works; with James they are life works. The works of which Paul speaks could be quite independent of faith: those referred to by James can be wrought only where faith is real, and they will attest its reality. So with righteousness, or "justification": Paul is occupied with a right relationship with God, James, with right conduct. Paul testifies that the ungodly can be "justified" by faith, James that only the right-doer is "justified."

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Also, see:

[Sanctification](#)

[Conversion](#)

[Confession](#)

[Salvation](#)

[Various Attitudes](#)

[Supralapsarianism](#)

[Infralapsarianism](#)

[Amyraldianism](#)

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Justification (noun), has three distinct meanings, and seems best described comprehensively as "a concrete expression of righteousness"; it is a declaration that a person or thing is righteous, and hence, broadly speaking, it represents the expression and effect of dikaiosis (No. 1).

It signifies (a) "an ordinance," Luke 1:6; Rom. 1:32, RV, "ordinance," i.e., what God has declared to be right, referring to His decree of retribution (KJV, "judgment"); Rom. 2:26, RV, "ordinances of the Law" (i.e., righteous requirements enjoined by the Law); so 8:4, "ordinance of the Law," i.e., collectively, the precepts of the Law, all that it demands as right; in Heb. 9:1, 10, ordinances connected with the tabernacle ritual; (b) "a sentence of acquittal," by which God acquits men of their guilt, on the conditions (1) of His grace in Christ, through His expiatory sacrifice, (2) the acceptance of Christ by faith, Rom. 5:16; (c) "a righteous act," Rom. 5:18, "(through one) act of righteousness," RV, not the act of "justification," nor the righteous character of Christ (as suggested by the KJV: dikaioma does not signify character, as does dikaiosune, righteousness), but the death of Christ, as an act accomplished consistently with God's character and counsels; this is clear as being in antithesis to the "one trespass" in the preceding statement.

Some take the word here as meaning a decree of righteousness, as in v. 16; the death of Christ could indeed be regarded as fulfilling such a decree, but as the apostle's argument proceeds, the word, as is frequently the case, passes from one shade of meaning to another, and here stands not for a decree, but an act; so in Rev. 15:4, RV, "righteous acts" (KJV, "judgments"), and 19:8, "righteous acts (of the saints)" (KJV, "righteousness").\ Note: For dikaiosune, always translated "righteousness," Righteousness.

## Justify

### Advanced Information

Justify (verb), primarily, "to deem to be right," signifies, in the NT, (a) "to show to be right or righteous"; in the passive voice, to be justified, Matt. 11:19; Luke 7:35; Rom. 3:4; 1 Tim. 3:16; (b) "to declare to be righteous, to pronounce righteous," (1) by man, concerning God, Luke 7:29 (see Rom. 3:4, above); concerning himself, Luke 10:29; 16:15; (2) by God concerning men, who are declared to be righteous before Him on certain conditions laid down by Him. Ideally the complete fulfillment of the law of God would provide a basis of "justification" in His sight, Rom. 2:13. But no such case has occurred in mere human experience, and therefore no one can be "justified" on this ground, Rom. 3:9-20; Gal. 2:16; 3:10, 11; 5:4.

From this negative presentation in Rom. 3, the apostle proceeds to show that, consistently with God's own righteous character, and with a view to its manifestation, He is, through Christ, as "a propitiation... by (en, "instrumental") His blood," 3:25, RV, "the Justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus" (v. 26), "justification" being the legal and formal acquittal from guilt by God as Judge, the pronouncement of the sinner as righteous, who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ. In v. 24, "being justified" is in the present continuous tense, indicating the constant process of "justification" in the succession of those who believe and are "justified."

In 5:1, "being justified" is in the aorist, or point, tense, indicating the definite time at which each person, upon the exercise of faith, was justified. In 8:1, "justification" is presented as "no condemnation." That "justification" is in view here is confirmed by the preceding chapters and by verse 34. In 3:26, the word

ROMANS 3

God's Way Of Making People Right

21 But now the righteousness<sup>1343</sup> of God without the law is manifested<sup>1344</sup> being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith<sup>1342</sup> of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe<sup>1340</sup> for there is no difference:

23 For all have sinned<sup>1341</sup> and come short of the glory<sup>1341</sup> of God;

24 Being justified freely<sup>1342</sup> by his grace<sup>1345</sup> through the redemption<sup>1343</sup> that is in Christ Jesus:

1344

δικαίω, -ω; fut. δικαιώσω; 1 aor. ἐδικαίωσα; Pass., [pres. δικαιούμαι]; pl. δεδικαίωμα; 1 aor. ἐδικαίωθην; fut. δικαιώσομαι; (δικαίος); Sept. for קָדַשׁ and קָדַשְׁתִּי; 1. prop. (acc. to the analogy of other verbs ending in ω, as τυφλώω, δουλώω) to shake dikaios; to render righteous or such as he ought to be; (Vulg. justifico); but this meaning is extremely rare, if not altogether doubtful; δικαίωσα τὴν καρδίαν μου stands for קָדַשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל in Ps. lxxii. (lxxiii.) 13 (unless I have shown my heart to be upright be preferred as the rendering of the Greek there). 2. τιμᾶ, to show, exhibit, evince, one to be righteous, such as he is and wishes himself to be considered (Ezek. xvi. 51 sq.; τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ, Jer. iii. 11, and, probably, δεκαίω δίκαιον, Is. liii. 11): ἡ σοφία ἐδικαίωθη ἀπὸ τῶν τέκνων αὐτῆς, the wisdom taught and exemplified by John the Baptist, and by Jesus, gained from its disciples (i. e. from their life, character, and deeds) the benefit of being shown to be righteous, i. e. true and divine [cf. B. 322 (277)]; al. interpret, was acknowledged to be righteous on the part of (nearly i. q. by) her children; cf. B. 325 (280); see ἀνά, II. 2 d. bb., Lk. vii. 35; Mt. xi. 19 [here T Tr txt. WH read ἔργων i. e. by her works]; Pass., of Christ: ἐδικαίωθη ἐν πνεύματι, evinced to be righteous as his spiritual (divine [(?) cf. e. g. Ellie. ad loc., or Mey. on Ro. i. 4]) nature, 1 Tim. iii. 16; of God: ὁπως δικαιοσύνη ἐν τοῖς λόγοις σου, Ro. iii. 4 fr. Pa. l. (li.) 6, (κύριος μένος δικαιοσύνης, Sir. xviii. 2); pass. used reflexively, to show one's self righteous: of men, Rev. xxii. 11 Rec.; (ὅτι δικαιοσύνη; Gen. xlv. 16). 3. τιμᾶ, to declare, pronounce, one to be just, righteous, or such as he ought to be, (cf. ὁμοίω to declare to be like, liken i. e. compare; δοῦναι, Sap. vi. 11; ἀξίω, which never means to make worthy, but to judge worthy, to declare worthy, to treat as worthy; see also κούω, 2 b.); a. with the negative idea predominant, to declare guiltless one accused or who may be accused, acquit of a charge or reproach, (Deut. xxv. 1; Sir. xiii. 22 (21), etc.; an unjust judge is said δικαιοῦν τὸν ἀδελφόν in Ex. xxiii. 7; Is. v. 23): ἑαυτὸν, Lk. x. 29; pass. οὐ δεδικαίωμα, sc. with God, 1 Co. iv. 4; pregnantly with ἀπὸ τῶν ἀμαρτιῶν added, to be declared innocent and therefore to be absolved from the charge of sins [cf. B. 322 (277)], Acts xiii. 38 (39) (so ἀπὸ ἀμαρτίας, Sir. xxvi. 29; simply, to be absolved, sc. from the payment of a vow, Sir. xviii. 22 (21)); hence figuratively, by a usage not met with elsewhere, to be freed, ἀπὸ τῆς ἀμαρτίας, from its dominion, Ro. vi. 7, where cf. Fritzsche or [(less fully) Meyer]. b. with the positive idea predominant, to judge, declare, pronounce, righteous and therefore acceptable, (God is said δικαιοῦν δίκαιον, 1 K. viii. 52): ἑαυτὸν, Lk. xvi. 15; ἐδικαίωσαν τὸν θεόν declared God to be righteous, i. e. by receiving the baptism declared that it had been prescribed by God rightly, Lk. vii. 29; pass. by God, Ro. ii. 13; ἐξ ἔργων ἐδικαίωθη, got his reputation for righteousness (sc. with his countrymen [but see Mey. (ed. Weiss) ad loc.]) by works, Ro. iv. 2; ἐκ τῶν λόγων, by thy words, in contrast with κενωθῆναι, sc. by God, Mt. xii. 37. Especially is it so used, in the technical phraseology of Paul, respecting God who judges and declares such men as put faith in Christ to be righteous and acceptable to him, and accordingly fit to receive the pardon of their sins and eternal life (see δικαιοσύνη, 1 c.): thus absolutely, δικαιοῦν τινα, Ro. iii. 26; iv. 5; viii. 30, 33 (sc. ἡμᾶς, opp. to ἐγκαλεῖν); with the addition of ἐκ (in consequence of) πίστεις, Ro. iii. 30; Gal. iii. 8; of διὰ τῆς πίστεως, Ro. iii. 30; men are said δικαιοῦσθαι, δικαιοῦσθαι, τῇ χάριτι τοῦ θεοῦ, Tit. iii. 7; δωρεὰν τῇ χάριτι τοῦ θεοῦ, Ro. iii. 24; πίστει, Ro. iii. 28; ἐκ πίστεως, by means of faith, Ro. v. 1; Gal. ii. 16; iii. 24; ἐν τῷ αἵματι τοῦ Χριστοῦ (as the meritorious cause of their acceptance, as the old theologians say, faith being the apprehending or subjective cause), Ro. v. 9; ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ καὶ ἐν τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν, by confessing the name of the Lord (which implies faith in him, Ro. x. 10, cf. 2 Co. iv. 13), and by the Spirit of God (which has awakened faith in the soul), 1 Co. vi. 11; ἐν Χριστῷ through Christ, Gal. ii. 17; Acts xiii. 39; it is vehemently denied by Paul, that a man δικαιοῦται ἐξ ἔργων νόμου, Gal. ii. 16, — with the addition ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ, i. e. of God, Ro. iii. 20, cf. vs. 28; iv. 2, (see δικαιοσύνη, 1 c. sub fin.); — a statement which is affirmed by James in ii. 21, 24 sq. (though he says simply ἐξ ἔργων δικαιοῦται, significantly omitting νόμου); to the same purport Paul denies that a man δικαιοῦται ἐν νόμῳ, in obeying the law, or

B. Verb.

dikaioō (δικαιοῶ, 1344) primarily, "to deen to be right," signifies in the NT, (a) "to show to be right or righteous"; in the passive voice

to be justified, Matt. 11:19; Luke 7:35; Rom 3:4; 1 Tim. 3:16; (b) "to declare to be righteous to pronounce righteous," (1) by man, concerning God, Luke 7:29 (see Rom. 3:4, above); concerning himself, Luke 10:29; 16:15; (2) by God concerning men, who are declared to be righteous before Him on certain conditions laid down by Him.

Ideally the complete fulfillment of the law of God would provide a basis of "justification" in His sight, Rom. 2:13. But no such case has occurred in mere human experience, and therefore no one can be "justified" on this ground, Rom. 3:9-20; Gal. 2:16; 3:10, 11; 5:4. From this negative presentation in Rom. 3, the apostle proceeds to show that, consistently with God's own righteous character, and with a view to its manifestation, He is, through Christ, as "a propitiation... by (en, "instrumental") His blood," 3:25, RV, "the Justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus" (v. 26), "justification" being the legal and formal acquittal from guilt by God as Judge, the pronouncement of the sinner as righteous, who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ. In v. 24, "being justified" is in the present continuous tense, indicating the constant process of "justification" in the succession of those who believe and are "justified." In 5:1, "being justified" is in the aorist, or point, tense, indicating the definite time at which each person, upon the exercise of faith, was justified. In 8:1, "justification" is presented as "no condemnation." That "justification" is in view here is confirmed by the preceding chapters and by verse 34. In 3:26, the word rendered "Justifier" is the present participle of the verb, lit., "justifying"; similarly in 8:33 (where the article is used), "God that justifieth," is, more lit., "God is the (One) justifying," with stress upon the word "God."

"Justification" is primarily and gratuitously by faith, subsequently and evidentially by works. In regard to "justification" by works, the so-called contradiction between James and the apostle Paul is only apparent. There is harmony in the different views of the subject. Paul has in mind Abraham's attitude toward God, his acceptance of God's word. This was a matter known only to God. The Romans epistle is occupied with the effect of this Godward attitude, not upon Abraham's character or actions, but upon the contrast between faith and the lack of it, namely, unbelief, cf. Rom. 11:20 James (2:21-26) is occupied with the contrast between faith that is real and faith that is false a faith barren and dead, which is not faith at all.

Again, the two writers have before them different epochs in Abraham's life—Paul, the event recorded in Gen. 15, James, that in Gen. 22. Contrast the words "believed" in Gen. 15:6 and "obeyed" in 22:18.

Further, the two writers use the words "faith" and "works" in somewhat different senses. With Paul, faith is acceptance of God's word; with James, it is acceptance of the truth of certain statements about God, (v. 19), which may fail to affect one's conduct. Faith, as dealt with by Paul, results in acceptance with God; i. e., "justification," and is bound to manifest itself. If

Justification

STRONG'S

- 1342. δικαίος dikalōs, dik'-ah-yos; from 1349; equitable (in character or act); by impl. innocent, holy (absol. or rel.):—just, meet, right (-eous).
- 1343. δικαιοσύνη dikaiōsunē, dik'-ah-yos-oo'-nay; from 1342; equity (of character or act); spec. (Chr.) justification:—righteousness.
- 1344. δικαιοῶ dikaiōō, dik'-ah-yo'-o; from 1342; to render (i. e. show or regard as) just or innocent:—free, justify (-ier), be righteous.
- 1345. δικαίωμα dikaiōma, dik'-ah-yo-mah; from 1344; an equitable deed; by impl. a statute or decision:—judgment, justification, ordinance, righteousness.
- 1346. δικαίως dikaiōs, dik'-ah'-yoce; adv. from 1342; equitably:—justify, (to) righteously (-ness).
- 1347. δικαιοῦσις dikaiōsis, dik'-ah-yo-sis; from 1344; acquittal (for Christ's sake):—justification.
- 1348. δικαστής dikastēs, dik'-as-tace; from a der. of 1349; a judge:—judge.
- 1349. δίκη dikē, dee'-kay; prob. from 1166; right (as self-evident), i. e. justice (the principle, a decision, or its execution):—judgment, punish, vengeance.

**acquit** (ə kwit'), *v.t.*, -quit-*ted*, -quit-*ting*.  
 1. to declare (a person) not guilty (of an offense): *The jury acquitted the innocent man of the crime.* 2. to pay off or settle (a debt or claim). 3. *Archaic.* to set free or release (from a duty or obligation).  
**acquit oneself**, to do one's part; behave oneself; conduct oneself: *The soldiers acquitted themselves well in battle.*  
 [*< Old French acquiter < a- to + quite free, learned borrowing from Medieval Latin quietus, alteration of Latin quietus quiet*]  
 -*acquit'ter, n.*  
 -*Syn.* 1. clear, exonerate, exculpate.  
 -*Ant.* 1. convict, condemn.

**declare** (di klār'), *v.*, -*clared*, -*clar-ing*.  
 -*v.t.* 1. to announce publicly or formally; make known; proclaim: *Congress has the power to declare war. The company has just declared a dividend on its stock. Peace was declared at last.* 2. to say openly or strongly: *The boy declared that he would never go back to school.* 3. to reveal; show: *The heavens declare the glory of God.* (Psalms 19:1) 4. to make a statement of (goods, etc.) for taxation or customs: *Travelers returning to the United States must declare the things which they bought abroad.* 5. a. (in bridge) to announce (what suit will be played as trumps). b. (in bezique and other card games) to announce (the score) during play. 6. *Cricket.* to call close of (an innings) before the usual number of wickets have fallen. -*v.i.* to make a declaration; proclaim oneself: *The twins declared against cheating.* [*< Latin declarare make evident or clear < de- (intensive) + clarare make clear < clarus clear*]  
 -*Syn.* *v.t.* 1. See announce. 2. Declare, assert mean to say positively. Declare means to state openly, strongly, and confidently, sometimes in spite of possible contradictions: *The weather bureau declares that the rain will stop by morning.* Assert means to state positively, usually without proof and sometimes in spite of proof that one is wrong, but often because one believes he is right: *He asserts that he was not there, but ten people saw him.*

**absolve** (ab solv', -zolv'), *v.t.*, -*solved*, -*solv-ing*. 1. a. to declare (a person) free from guilt or blame or from the penalties or consequences of crime, etc. b. to grant absolution or forgiveness of sins to. 2. to set free (from a promise, duty, or obligation) [*< Latin absolere < ab- from + solvere loosen. Doublet of ASSOLVE.*] -*ab-solv'er, n.*  
 -*Syn.* 1. a. exonerate, acquit. 2. release, exempt. -*Ant.* 1. condemn. 2. bind.

**exonerate** (eg zon'ə rāt), *v.t.*, -*at-ed*, -*ing*. 1. to free from blame; prove or declare innocent; exculpate: *Witnesses of an accident completely exonerated the driver of the truck.* 2. to relieve from a duty, task, obligation, etc. 3. *Obsolete.* to remove burden from. [*< Latin exonerare (with English -ate) < ex- off + onus, -eris burden*]  
 -*Syn.* 1. vindicate.

**JUSTIFIER, n.** One who justifies; who vindicates, supports or defends. He who pardons and absolves from guilt and punishment.

That he might be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus. *Rom. iii.*  
**JUSTIFY, v.t.** [*Fr. justifier; Sp. justificar; It. giustificare; L. justus, just, and facio, to make.*]

To prove or show to be just, or conformable to law, right, justice, propriety or duty; to defend or maintain; to vindicate as right. We cannot justify disobedience or ingratitude to our Maker. We cannot justify insult or incivility to our fellow men. Intemperance, lewdness, prophaneness and dueling are in no case to be justified.

In theology, to pardon and clear from guilt; to absolve or acquit from guilt and merited punishment, and to accept as righteous on account of the merits of the sinner, or by the application of Christ's atonement to the offender. *St. Paul.*  
 To cause another to appear comparatively righteous, or less guilty than one's self. *Zek. xvi.*

To judge rightly of. Wisdom is justified by her children. *Matt. ii.*  
 To accept as just and treat with favor. *Amos ii.*

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus;

25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law of works? Nay; but by the law of faith.

28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

4 What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?

2 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.

3 For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

4 Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

5 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

8 But God commandeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

8 31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

7 Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.

8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

23 But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

I CORINTHIANS 6

9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

GALATIANS 2

16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

TITUS 3

7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

**vin-dic-ate** (vin'də kāt), *v.t.*, -*cat-ed*, -*cat-ing*. 1. to clear from suspicion, dishonor, or hint or charge of wrongdoing; *The verdict of "not guilty" vindicated him.* 2. to defend successfully against opposition; uphold; justify: *The heir vindicated his claim to the fortune.* 3. (in Roman and civil law) to claim for oneself as one's rightful property; recover possession of. 4. *Obsolete.* to avenge, punish, or retaliate. 5. *Obsolete.* to make or set free; deliver or rescue (from). [*< Latin vindicare (with English -ate) to set free; avenge, claim, probably < vim, accusative of vis force + dicere to say*] -*Syn.* 1. exculpate.