



MULTIPLYING THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Study Notes by Thomas Hale

This document is a compilation of personal thoughts and selected quotations from biblical and theological books, dictionaries, commentaries, and articles. Its goal is to accelerate and enrich the personal studies of others through a structured guide.

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“RIGHTEOUS, RIGHTEOUSNESS, JUSTIFICATION”

9 Therefore, since we are now justified (^bacquitted, made righteous, and brought into right relationship with God) by Christ’s blood, how much more [certain is it that] we shall be saved by Him from the indignation and wrath of God.

10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, it is much more [certain], now that we are reconciled, that we shall be saved (daily delivered from sin’s dominion) through His [^cresurrection] life.

^b G. Abbott-Smith, *Manual Greek Lexicon*. ^c G. Abbott-Smith, *Manual Greek Lexicon*.

The Amplified Bible. The Lockman Foundation, 1987, p. Ro 5:9–10.

21 For our sake He made Christ [virtually] to be sin Who knew no sin, so that in and through Him we might become [^uendued with, viewed as being in, and examples of] the **righteousness** of God [what we ought to be, approved and acceptable and in right relationship with Him, by His goodness].

^u Henry Alford, *The Greek New Testament, with Notes*.

The Amplified Bible. The Lockman Foundation, 1987, p. 2 Co 5:21.

Perhaps the best way to understand the first section of the verse, particularly the second use of “sin” (GK 281), is to recognize that Christ, treated as if he were a sinner, became the object of God’s wrath and bore the penalty and guilt of sin. So complete was the identification of the sinless Christ with the sin of the sinner, including its dire guilt and its dread consequence of separation from God, that Paul could say profoundly, “God made him ... to be sin for us.”

Barker, Kenneth L. Expositor’s Bible Commentary (Abridged Edition: New Testament). Zondervan Publishing House, 1994, p. 679.

HUNGERING AND THIRSTING AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS

6 Blessed and fortunate and happy and ^rspiritually prosperous (in that state in which the born-again child of God ^senjoys His favor and salvation) are those who hunger and thirst for **righteousness** (uprightness and right standing with God), for they shall be ^tcompletely satisfied! [Isa. 55:1, 2.] ^rMarvin Vincent, *Word Studies*. ^sHermann Cremer, *Biblico-Theological Lexicon*. ^tMarvin Vincent, *Word Studies*.

The Amplified Bible. The Lockman Foundation, 1987, p. Matthew 5:6.

What is this **righteousness** of God that the hungry and thirsty seek after? The Greek word is *dikaio*sune. Remember, *sune* on the end of a Greek word means "the state of." So we might rightfully say that to be *dikaio*sune is to be in the state of being righteous.

*Dikaio*sune comes from the word *dikaioo*. An *oo* (ow, pronounced ah-owe) verb is important in Greek. It has three characteristics, two things it is not and one thing it is. First, *dikaioo* does not mean that God proves me right. Even God cannot prove that you are innocent because you are not innocent, and neither am I.

Justification and **righteousness** are the same word in the New Testament. When I travel and speak in churches, I sometimes ask the question, "How many of you know that you are justified?" Most raise their hands. They know that God has declared them to be justified- "just-as-if-I'd never sinned." Then I ask, "How many of you know that you are righteous?" Not too many raise their hands. The reason: We define **justification** as something that God does and **righteousness** as something that we do. This is a theological mistake! Both are the same Greek word. Both are God's work, not ours. Our **righteousness** is like a filthy rag (Isaiah 54:6). This is a picture word of a woman's stained menstrual garment. It is God who declares us righteous. We are all guilty of sin. God does not prove us right or innocent of our sins; He declares us freed from both our sins and their consequences.

Second, *dikaioo* does not mean that God makes me right. I'm not righteous in and of myself. I still get it wrong. I still falter. I still stumble. However, I am not "just a poor sinner saved by grace that sometimes gets it right." No! I am the **righteousness** of God in Christ who sometimes gets it wrong. The key, of course, is I am the **righteousness** of God, not myself. It is His **righteousness** in me that saves, not my own.

Third, *dikaioo* does mean that God accepts, treats, and declares me to be in a right relationship with Him. We are complete and total in Him now! Every demonic spirit knows this about us. The angels know this about us. When we truly know who we are, then we can walk in the authority and power of that understanding. Leon Morris said that **righteousness** to the Hebrew mind is not so much a moral quality as it is a legal standing. We are legally righteous before God.

Dr. Ronald E. Cottle, The Beatitudes of Jesus

THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Imputation is an act of God whereby He credits Christ's **righteousness** to sinners who believe and accept His gift. They are then pronounced by God as righteous.

This is not to say God considers believers merely as if they had never sinned. This would only indicate they were innocent. **Justification** goes beyond this understanding. Christ has paid the penalty for sin and guilt and has fulfilled the just requirements of the law. God the Father applied Christ's perfect work to the believer's life in such a way that he or she is restored to a right standing with God. In this way God declares a person righteous.

The basis for a believer's **justification** is the death of Jesus Christ. People are not able to justify themselves by performing good works (Rom. 3:28; Gal. 2:16). Christ was "made sin" (2 Cor. 5:21) in the place of sinners, dying as their substitute. God's justice was demonstrated by punishing sin through the death of Christ (Rom. 3:21–26). In Christ's death God justified Himself (by punishing sin), as well as justifying believing sinners (by crediting Christ's **righteousness** to them).

The way a person receives God's **justification** is through faith. Faith is an absolute reliance in Jesus Christ and His work for salvation. Faith should not be considered a good work (Rom. 3:28), for it rests on grace (Rom. 4:16) and excludes works (Eph. 2:8–9). Faith is a condition that has no merit in itself; rather, it rests upon the merit of the person and work of Jesus Christ. **Justification** is something that is completely undeserved. It is not an attainment but the gracious gift of God. Not every sinner is justified, only those who believe in Jesus Christ.

Norman, Robert Stan. "Justification by Faith." Holman Concise Bible Commentary, edited by David S. Dockery, Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998, p. 547.

JUSTIFICATION

The definition of **justification**—It is the judicial act of declaring righteous or the resultant state of having been declared righteous. To justify means to declare righteous (to impute **righteousness** to).

Justification is not an executive act of mercy (pardoning) nor an efficient act of power (sanctifying or making righteous), but is a judicial act of grace (declaring righteous). To pardon means to mercifully remit punishment without removing the grounds for condemnation. To sanctify means to make holy and good, to change moral character. To justify means to declare righteous (or just), to impute **righteousness** to, to proclaim that one is in right relationship to God's holy law, to announce that the demands of justice have been satisfied, to declare that there are no grounds for condemnation and that punishment cannot be justly imposed.

