

**LESSON**  
**7** Justification

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Pedro was an active boy who gave his teacher much trouble in his classroom. He scribbled on some of the clean pages of his workbook, making it difficult for her to correct his work. Then the time came for “Open House,” when the teacher displayed all of the students’ work for their parents to see. On the evening of “Open House,” Pedro went with his parents on a tour of the school. When they came to his classroom, he was almost afraid to go in. His parents went ahead, and he listened anxiously as the teacher talked to them. Finally, when he could stand it no longer, he went into the room and looked at the displays.

What a mess he had made of his workbook! He had horrible feelings of guilt and shame. But when he looked at his book, he found that it contained only good pages. All the messy ones had been removed. As his parents moved away, he asked the teacher, a godly Christian, what had happened. She answered, “Because I love you and want to help you, I cut the bad pages out. I want to think of you as if you had never made a mistake or done wrong.”

The boy was greatly moved by this teacher’s loving spirit. Her act of love completely changed his life. This story gives us a beautiful picture of God’s love in forgiving people and treating them as if they had never sinned. It is this aspect of salvation—justification—that we will study in this lesson.

## ***lesson outline***

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Nature and Meaning of Justification

Source of Justification

Experience of Justification

## ***lesson objectives***

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When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

1. Discuss the nature and meaning of justification.
2. Differentiate the purposes of justification and the Law.
3. Describe the biblical source of justification.
4. Relate the two biblical illustrations of justification given by Paul in Romans 4.
5. Explain the extent of justification.

## ***learning activities***

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1. Read Romans 3, 4, and 5 and Galatians 3. These chapters will give you helpful background information for this lesson.
2. Learn the meanings of any key words that are new to you.

## ***key words***

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appropriate  
appropriation  
cancellation  
conviction  
credit  
fate

impute  
imputing  
justification  
meritorious  
offenders  
pilgrimages

rites  
ritual  
unreconciled  
uprightness  
verdict

## *lesson development*

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### **NATURE AND MEANING OF JUSTIFICATION**

We continue our examination of the activity of God in salvation with the study of justification. This demonstration of the grace and mercy of God has to do with our standing before Him. In the chain of the salvation experience, regeneration and justification must be studied together because they take place at the same time. When God by His Spirit regenerates a person, He also justifies the person, declaring him or her righteous and free from the penalty for sin. Moreover, He treats the person as if he or she had never sinned. This is a superb picture of love and grace that should cause each of us to respond in loving devotion to God.

#### **Its Nature**

**Objective 1.** *Discuss the nature and meaning of justification.*

Job's question, "But how can a mortal be righteous before God?" (Job 9:2), and the Philippian jailer's question, "Men, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30) raise one of life's greatest questions: How can a sinner get right with God and be assured of His approval? We find the answer to this question in the New Testament, particularly in the Epistle to the Romans, which presents the plan of salvation. The theme of Romans is found in chapter 1, verses 16 and 17. It may be summed up as follows: The *gospel* is God's power for people's salvation because it explains how sinners can be changed in position and condition so that they will be right with God.

The Scriptures also teach that God's righteousness does two things: it judges and it saves (1 John 1:9; Romans 3:24–26). His righteousness demands judgment for sin. And yet He provides a way for guilty sinners to be declared "Not guilty!" and no longer subject to judgment. This provision is made by the work of propitiation that we studied in Lesson 1.

## Application

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**1** Do you remember what the word *propitiation* means? Turn to Lesson 1 and review briefly. Then fill in the blank spaces with the appropriate words to complete the definition.

*Propitiation* meets the need that arises from the  
 ..... of God. *To propitiate* means to .....  
 ..... *Propitiation* refers to the work of .....,  
 the sinner's atoning substitute, by which sins are .....  
 ....., the divine anger is .....  
 and the punishment due to sin is not placed on the.....  
 .....

**2** Read Romans 3:21–26 and state what is the main idea of this passage.

.....  
 .....

**3** In 1 John 1:9 we read: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." How is this verse related to our discussion of God's righteousness and the problem of people's sin?

.....  
 .....



These Scriptures in Romans and 1 John teach that God does not set aside His own moral standard of uprightness when He justifies people. His righteousness is maintained. For a long time it appeared that God was overlooking sin (Romans 3:25). But the work of Christ on Calvary showed that He was not overlooking sin. In patience He had simply withheld His righteous judgment, for He knew from eternity what His love had provided. Then, at the right time, Christ came to demonstrate that through the cross

God’s righteousness is maintained even as the guilty sinner is declared “Not guilty!” For in Christ the repentant sinner receives the righteousness of Christ and because of this he or she is declared to be righteous (Romans 3:26).

### ***Application***

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- 4** Select the statement below which correctly describes the nature of justification.
- a)** Justification refers to judgment and speaks of the act by which God *declares* that those who are in Christ are righteous.
  - b)** By nature justification is the act by which God *makes* one righteous.
  - c)** Justification refers to the judgment of sinners as they stand before the throne of God.
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### **Its Meaning**

The primary meaning of the word *justification* refers to a *declaration* of righteousness. It is an objective work that takes place outside of us. It does not deal with our spiritual state (whether it is one of maturity or immaturity); rather, it deals with our *standing* before God. Justification means, then, that because Christ is righteous, God declares us to be righteous when by faith we experience salvation through the atoning work of Christ on the cross. Because of Christ, we can stand before God as righteous.

In the Old Testament, when a person was justified it meant that person was “lined up” with God’s law. In the New Testament, however, the righteousness of Jesus Christ is credited to us.

## Application

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**5** There is a difference between the types of justification in the Old and New Testaments. Read Exodus 23:7, Deuteronomy 25:1, and Proverbs 17:15. Now read Romans 4:1–8 and 5:1–11 and state the difference. Write the answer in your notebook.

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Remember that because of sin humanity lost true relationship to God. And as a result, people suffered from guilt, condemnation, and separation (Genesis 3:1–24). Justification restores people to our true relationship to God. In Romans 8 we see what this restoration includes:

1. It provides for the removal of guilt by crediting humankind with Christ's righteousness: "Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies!" (8:33).
2. It provides for the removal of condemnation because of the forgiveness of sins: "Who is he that condemns?" (8:34).
3. It provides for the removal of separation: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" (8:35).

In justification, then, God's attitude toward the sinner is reversed because of the sinner's relationship to Christ. But justification includes *more* than pardon for sins, removal of condemnation, and restoration to God: it also places guilty offenders in the position of righteous people. The following comparison illustrates this concept. A ruler pardons a certain criminal. He even restores the criminal's rights as a citizen, rights that were lost in his conviction. However, he cannot return the criminal to his former position in society as one who has not broken the law. As a result, the criminal is a *marked* person. This person's greatest need is to be restored to favor and fellowship with society as if he had never been convicted of a crime. For only in this way can he be accepted in his society.

By contrast, when God justifies a sinner, He blots out the sinner's past with its sins and offenses. Moreover, He treats the

person *just as if he or she had never sinned*, and, in addition, He declares the person righteous in His sight. We must notice, however, that justification is more than just a *declaration*; it is also a position that the justified person receives on the basis of Christ’s sacrifice. Christ’s righteousness is actually applied or credited to the redeemed person, and he is considered as righteous. What a glorious thought! Only in this way can a just God justify the ungodly. Since Christ has become righteousness for the sinner (1 Corinthians 1:30), he, the redeemed sinner, is placed in the position of a righteous person. And this has been made possible because Jesus took the offenses of the sinner upon Himself at Calvary, and these sins were transferred to Him (2 Corinthians 5:21). Someone has said, “Justification is first subtraction—the cancellation of sins; second, it is addition—the imputing of righteousness.”

### **Application**

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**6** Complete the sentences by matching each phrase (left) with the words that relate to it (right).

- |              |                                |                                                                                                                                       |
|--------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ... <b>a</b> | The law demands                | 1) we are restored to favor and fellowship with God.                                                                                  |
| ... <b>b</b> | The wages of sin               | 2) faith alone.                                                                                                                       |
| ... <b>c</b> | The sacrifice of Christ        | 3) paid the penalty and satisfied the Law’s demands.                                                                                  |
| ... <b>d</b> | The one who believes on Christ | 4) receives forgiveness of sins.                                                                                                      |
| ... <b>e</b> | Justification is an act        | 5) of God’s free grace by which He pardons sin and declares the repentant sinner is righteous on the basis of Christ’s righteousness. |
| ... <b>f</b> | Justification is received by   | 6) that a penalty be paid for its violation.                                                                                          |
| ... <b>g</b> | On the basis of justification  | 7) demand death for the offender.                                                                                                     |



Read Paul's short letter to Philemon in the New Testament and see if you can locate an illustration of justification. Notice in verse 18 Paul says that if Onesimus owes Philemon anything, Philemon should charge it to Paul's account. Onesimus would then be set free from any obligation to Philemon. Paul's right and warm relationship with his friend Philemon would be credited to Onesimus.

## Application

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- 7** Circle the letters of the TRUE statements.
- a)** Justification is a subjective work which takes place in us and deals with our state of spiritual maturity.
  - b)** Justification is an objective work which takes place outside of us and refers to a declaration of righteousness.
  - c)** In justification people's guilt is removed by crediting them with the righteousness of Christ.
  - d)** When God pardons sinners, He blots out their past and treats them just as if they had never sinned.
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## Justification and the Law

**Objective 2.** *Differentiate the purposes of justification and the Law.*

Paul says that no one is put right in God's sight (justified) by doing what the Law requires (Romans 3:20). This is no reflection on the Law, for it is holy, right, and good (Romans 7:12). It means that the Law was not given for the purpose of making people righteous, but to provide a standard of righteousness. God gave the Law to Moses so that the nation of Israel would have a clear understanding of right and wrong (Exodus 20). The Old Testament records the history of the Jewish nation and its repeated disobedience to the Law.

Consider three reasons why the Law cannot justify a person. First, the Law cannot justify us because *it has no power to change* weak and sinful human nature. The Law can detect sin and diagnose our sinful condition, but it cannot provide a solution



that will remove the cause of sin. The Law is like a ruler that will *measure* the length of some material, but will not *increase* its length: “Through the law we become conscious of sin” (Romans 3:20). Like a mirror, the Law can reveal our corruption and wickedness, but it cannot cleanse us from our uncleanness. We can look intently into a mirror all day, but no amount of looking will cleanse a dirty face. The Law shows us what God’s standard of righteousness is. It also shows us our inabilities and shortcomings and how we fail to line up with God’s law. But it cannot change us. Just as the priest and the Levite left to his fate the man attacked by robbers, the Law leaves us hopeless and helpless (Luke 10:30–37). It has no power to recover us from our awful fate. Only Christ, the Good Samaritan, can do this!

Second, the Law cannot justify because *it cannot be changed*. It measures out just punishment to the one who breaks the Law, but it knows no mercy. To be justified by the Law, a person would have to keep the Law without ever making a single mistake (Galatians 3:10; James 2:10). Our corrupt human nature cannot do such a thing.

Third, *the Law cannot change the past* or cleanse the inner corruption of Adam’s descendants. A person might suddenly decide to begin keeping the Law perfectly. His life from this point on might be acceptable to God, but the record of his past would not be. It is the whole life that must be straightened out before God. Only the blood of Jesus can wash away sins of the past *and* create a new nature.

For these reasons, Paul says that the Law can never justify anyone (Galatians 2:21). It should be plain to us that the Law was not given to *relieve* sin but to *reveal* it.

## Application

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- 8** Choose the correct completion. The Law cannot justify anyone because it
- a)** cannot deal with a person's sinful nature, which is the root of the problem.
  - b)** is unable to show a person his or her weakness and need.
  - c)** deals primarily with a person's past and does not address itself to matters of moral behavior.
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The Law was thus necessary to provide a standard of righteousness. It was given to reveal people's sin, their sinful nature, and their helplessness, so that they could be guided to grace. Although the Law cannot bring a person to salvation, it can bring him or her to the Savior: "So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith" (Galatians 3:24).

The Law was given to take Israel to a specific destination, and that destination was belief and trust in God's saving grace. But when the Redeemer came, the people of Israel were so spiritually blind that they did not recognize Him. And many of the Jews refused to leave the old covenant (the Law) in spite of the fact that the New Testament declares that "Christ is the end of the law" (Romans 10:4).

In Galatians 3:24–25 Paul explains the relationship between keeping the Law and justification. He illustrates the relationship by using the figure of a tutor who teaches, trains, and disciplines his pupil until that child reaches the legal age of inheriting. So the Law was the means God used to show His people their hopeless state, the standard of God's righteousness, and their inability to fulfill the Law's requirements. But now, since Calvary, God has revealed that people can be put right with Him by faith in Christ, for He has met the standard of righteousness. He has paid the penalty for sin and His righteousness has been credited to us. Christ has now fulfilled the Law and we are

justified freely on the basis of His grace and righteousness (Romans 3:24).

### **Application**

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**9** Match each description (left) with the concept it defines (right).

- |                                                                |                  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| ... <b>a</b> Makes us right in God's sight                     | 1) The Law       |
| ... <b>b</b> Reveals to us God's standard for righteousness    | 2) Justification |
| ... <b>c</b> Cleanses us from past sins and changes our nature |                  |
| ... <b>d</b> Has no power to change our human nature           |                  |
| ... <b>e</b> Provides a solution to remove the cause of sin    |                  |
| ... <b>f</b> Makes us conscious of sin                         |                  |
| ... <b>g</b> Does not include mercy                            |                  |



### **Its Contrast With Regeneration**

Some characteristics of justification and regeneration take place *in us*; others take place *outside us*. For example, justification takes place outside us before the throne of God, where He declares us righteous. Justification is God's decision concerning our standing. It is that which Christ does for us. Justification changes our relationship to God.

As we noted earlier, justification and regeneration take place at the same time. They are simply different aspects of one work. However, regeneration is God's work done *within* us. It deals with our state and the changing of our nature. Both regeneration and justification are instantaneous works.

## Application

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**10** Which are characteristic of justification, regeneration, or of both? Write the identifying number in front of each characteristic in the left column.

- |              |                                               |                  |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------|------------------|
| ... <b>a</b> | A work outside us                             | 1) Justification |
| ... <b>b</b> | A work inside us                              | 2) Regeneration  |
| ... <b>c</b> | An instantaneous work                         | 3) Both          |
| ... <b>d</b> | An effect produced on our standing before God |                  |
| ... <b>e</b> | An effect produced on our inner condition     |                  |

**11** When we say that justification is an objective work we mean that

.....  
 .....

**12** In what order do justification and regeneration occur?

.....  
 .....



## SOURCE OF JUSTIFICATION

**Objective 3.** *Describe the biblical source of justification.*

Deep within the human nature is the idea that a person must do something to become worthy of salvation. In the early church some Jewish Christian teachers claimed that sinners were saved by faith *plus* the observance of the Law. And since that time this mistaken idea has grown in some areas of the Christian church. It has taken the form of self-punishment, the making of sacred pilgrimages, the performance of religious rites, and the payment of money to receive pardon for sins. In heathen religions, too,

people seek to please their gods by the works of their hands. The reason they give for these efforts to become worthy is that “God is not gracious and people are not righteous; therefore, people must become righteous so that God will be gracious.”

Martin Luther was troubled with this mistaken idea; therefore, he tried by self-denial to work out his own salvation. His cry, *Oh, Luther, when will you become pious enough so that you will find God gracious?* represents the heart cry of millions. Then, at last, he found the truth that is the basis of the gospel. God *is* gracious and therefore *He wills* to make people righteous. Justification, therefore, does not come by the works of the Law or by any other human works: “He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy” (Titus 3:5).

Scriptures not only say that we are not justified by works but also they condemn the attempt to be justified in this way. This is the clear teaching of the apostle Paul in his letter to the Galatians.

## ***Application***

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**13** Read the following Scriptures in Galatians and after each write the condemnation that results from attempting to be justified by works of the Law. The first one has been done for you.

- a) 1:8–9      *He who preaches another gospel is condemned to hell.*
- b) 2:21
- c) 3:1–3
- d) 3:10
- e) 5:4

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Clearly Paul teaches against justification by works, but some will ask, “Doesn’t James teach that justification comes by works and not by faith alone?” To help resolve this question, read carefully James 2:18–26.

Notice that James does not condemn *saving* faith. It is an inactive and purely intellectual faith that he speaks against. James declares that inactive faith cannot justify; therefore, he insists on active faith—that is, faith that issues forth in works.

Paul insists that good works do not justify us (Titus 3:5). He asserts that it is saving faith, apart from works, which justifies (Romans 3:21–22). Someone has said, “We are not saved by faith and works; rather, *we are saved by faith that works.*”

Perhaps we can understand better the difference of approach between James and Paul if we consider what each one was contending with. Paul was clearly fighting against the notion that a person was justified by faith *plus* keeping the Law. James, on the other hand, was fighting against those who claimed that since believers are justified by grace alone, they are not obligated to keep the moral requirements of the Law or to pay the penalties for breaking it. This view encouraged loose morals and ungodly living.

Thus, James and Paul do not contradict each other; rather, they are like two soldiers who are fighting back to back against an enemy who is attacking on two sides. Paul fights against those who depend on the Law for salvation, while James is fighting those who think salvation permits them to ignore the Law.

## **Application**

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- 14** Read the following Scriptures and answer each question.
- a)** Genesis 15:1–6 and 16:15–16. How old was Abraham when God promised him a son and his trust in the Lord caused him to be accepted by God?  
.....
  - b)** Genesis 17:1. How old was Abraham when the promise was renewed?  
.....
  - c)** Genesis 17:17, 21:1. How old was Abraham when Isaac was born?  
.....
  - d)** Genesis 22:1–18. How old was Isaac when God asked Abraham to offer him as a sacrifice?  
.....
  - e)** How many years (approximately) were there between Abraham’s *justification* (15:6) and the works of offering up Isaac?  
.....
  - f)** Read James 2:21–24 once again. How does this exercise help us to see that James and Paul do not contradict each other?  
.....  
.....



Paul commends the kind of faith that trusts God alone, while James condemns inactive faith that is merely intellectual assent. Paul rejects works without faith, while James commends actions that show faith is real. The justification that Paul preaches refers to the beginning of the Christian life. James, on the other hand, speaks of justification as referring to obedience and holiness that is the outward evidence a person has been saved.

Scripture teaches that the source of justification is the free grace of God. Scripture also teaches that the basis of our justification is the atoning work of Christ, for we “are justified *freely* by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus” (Romans 3:24). God’s grace and the cross of Christ are the source and basis for our justification.

The word *freely* in Romans 3:24 has the extended meaning of “without reason or cause.” This shows that the grace of God is given not as a result of anything we have done to deserve it, but as a gift, an undeserved favor that cannot be paid for or earned. Good works or commendable Christian services do not pay for God’s grace. They are, however, practical and normal expressions of our devotion and love to God.

You should be aware of misunderstanding that exists concerning grace. Perhaps the following illustration will help you to understand more clearly the meaning of grace. A certain man and a judge were good friends. One day, the man was charged with a crime and was brought to trial in the court where his friend was the presiding judge. After hearing the evidence the judge sternly handed down the verdict: “Guilty as charged! The fine is \$400.00.” The man was shaken because his friend had not bent the law to clear him of the charge and instead had given him a heavy penalty. However, as the judge walked out of the courtroom, he handed his own personal check to the clerk as full payment for the penalty. To keep the integrity of the law, the judge pronounced the verdict. Yet, in mercy he provided a way for his friend’s penalty to be paid.

Grace does not mean that God is so loving that He overlooks sin and avoids righteous judgment. As the holy and just ruler of the universe, God cannot treat sin lightly, for this would detract from His holiness and justice. But God’s grace is revealed in the fact that He himself, through the atonement of Christ, paid the full penalty of sin; therefore, He can justly pardon the sinner. His pardon of sin rests upon strict justice: “He is faithful and just”



(1 John 1:9). God’s grace is demonstrated in His provision of the atonement by which He justifies the ungodly but repentant and at the same time upholds His holy, unchangeable law.

## ***Application***

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**15** Circle the letter in front of each TRUE statement that describes the biblical source of justification.

- a)** Since works are evidence of living faith, they are the basis of justification.
  - b)** Justification has as its source the grace of God.
  - c)** The atonement of Christ provides payment for the penalty of God’s broken law, and because of this God can justly pardon the ungodly.
  - d)** When a person believes on Christ, his or her merit in believing forms the basis for justification.
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## **EXPERIENCE OF JUSTIFICATION**

### **Illustrations of Justification**

**Objective 4.** *Relate the two biblical illustrations of justification given by Paul in Romans 4.*

In Romans 4 the apostle Paul discusses the experience of two men who are outstanding examples of justification. Read this chapter and notice especially verses 6–8.

David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: ‘Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him.’ (Romans 4:6–8)

In this illustration we do not see faith *without* works, but rather faith *apart from* works. In this setting (vv. 1–9) *works* do not come first, but faith alone. “However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness” (Romans 4:5).

This kind of faith, however, has accompanying works as evidence of its vitality. Paul describes the *root* of justification, which is faith apart from works. And, as we have seen, James writes of the *fruit* of faith, which is good works. The fruit bears witness to the kind of root that produces it. In this analogy faith is the root that produces good works; good works, which are fruit, *do not* produce the root that is faith.

In this masterful treatment of justification, Paul uses Abraham as a second example to illustrate justification by faith *apart from ritual*. Paul points out that Abraham was justified by faith (Genesis 15:6) before he was circumcised (Genesis 17:10–14). In addition, he shows that Abraham was not justified by keeping the Law: “It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith” (Romans 4:13).


From these illustrations we see what God’s pattern for justification is: we are to come as we are and receive what He offers.

## ***Application***

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**16** How do the two biblical illustrations used by Paul in Romans 4 show that faith is the root and works are the fruit of justification? Use your notebook for this response.

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## **Extent of Justification**

**Objective 5.** *Explain the extent of justification.*

In Lesson 1 we evaluated the Scriptures that dealt with the extent of the atonement and concluded that it was unlimited. But when we speak of the extent of justification, we find that there is a difference. Justification is limited to those who receive Christ. Each person must *appropriate* the work of Christ (Revelation 3:20). We can, however, say that the *provision* of justification is unlimited, but the *appropriation* of it is limited to those who will take advantage of that provision.

A young man was convicted of a serious crime and condemned to die. His mother pleaded with the governor of the state to intervene and grant her son a pardon. After considering the case carefully, the governor responded by granting a pardon. The warden of the prison received the pardon and quickly went to the cell block to inform the young man. However, the rebellious prisoner refused to see anyone, including the warden, even though the warden tried repeatedly. And so the young man was scheduled for execution. On the way to the death chamber he was informed that the warden had tried to see him to offer the governor's pardon. Only then, when it was too late, did he realize the awfulness of his situation; he would die even though he might have been free had he accepted the pardon. So in justification all who will appropriate or accept the offer by believing in what Christ has done for them may be freely justified.

### ***Application***

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**17** Which one of the statements below correctly explains the extent of justification?

- a)** The extent of justification applies to the degree of justification; that is, some are more justified than others.
  - b)** Justification, like the atonement, is universal in extent without any conditions as to its acceptance or appropriation.
  - c)** God has provided justification for all, but only those who appropriate it by receiving Christ are justified.
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### **The Means of Justification**

As we have seen, neither the Law nor good works justify a person; therefore, what people need is the righteousness of God. The righteousness of God is a gift that is freely offered (Romans 3:24). But this gift must be accepted. To the questions—How is the gift of righteousness accepted? and What is the means of justification?—we respond with a sound, biblical answer:

1. "A man is justified by faith apart from observing the law" (Romans 3:28).
2. "Righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe" (Romans 3:22).
3. "Therefore . . . we have been justified through faith" (Romans 5:1).
4. "Noah . . . became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith" (Hebrews 11:7).
5. ". . . that I may gain Christ and be completely united with him . . . I now have . . . the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith" (Philippians 3:8–9 TEV).

Faith, then, is the hand that reaches out to take what God offers. It is not the *basis* for justification but it is the *condition*. Someone has noted that there is no more merit in this kind of faith than there is in a beggar who holds out a hand for a gift. Faith is never presented as the price of justification, but faith is the means of appropriating it.

Since the means of justification is faith, several errors may be cleared away. First, the pride of self-righteousness and self-effort is removed since fallen people are incapable of either sufficient goodness or justice. Titus 3:5 says, "he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy." Second, the fear that we are too weak and too sinful to see our salvation experience through to successful completion is also removed. Faith is both important and powerful for it unites a person to Christ. In union with Christ a person has the motive and the power to live a life of righteousness: "For all of you who were baptized into Christ have been clothed with Christ" (Galatians 3:27). "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified their sinful nature with its passions and desires" (Galatians 5:24). Paul expresses his gratitude for the vitality of the faith of believers at Philippi: "Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6).

### **Application**

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**18** Circle the letter of each TRUE statement.

- a) We receive justification by grace through faith—faith provided by Christ’s sacrificial work.
  - b) Faith is the basis, not the condition, for justification.
  - c) The fact that we are justified freely by faith removes all cause for human boasting and trust in human righteousness.
  - d) Faith links a person to Christ in such a way that he or she is clothed with the life of Christ.
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Faith, which is the means of justification, is awakened in a person by the influence of the Holy Spirit, usually as the Word of God is proclaimed. The Scriptures tell us that “faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17). Faith lays hold of God’s promise and appropriates salvation. It leads a person to rest on Jesus as Savior and the acceptable sacrifice for sins. This trust in the Lord Jesus gives peace to our conscience as well as the hope of eternal life. Since faith is living and spiritual, it fills a person with gratitude towards Christ, and it overflows with good works.

### **Application**

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**19** When we say that faith is the means of justification we mean that

.....

**20** How do we get faith?

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## The Results of Justification

The results of justification are many. One of the many results is that, with the problem of sin settled, a person enters the company of the blessed and partakes of immediate benefits: “Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered” (Psalm 32:1). We shall see that there are many other wonderful benefits as well.

### *Application*

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**21** Read each of the following Scriptures and list the results that are linked with justification. Use your notebook for your answers.

- a)** Acts 13:39
  - b)** Romans 5:1
  - c)** Romans 5:9
  - d)** Romans 5:10–11
  - e)** Romans 8:30
  - f)** Romans 8:33–34
  - g)** Titus 3:7
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Salvation, God’s greatest gift, makes us new creatures in Christ. Paul declares in 2 Corinthians 5:18–21 that:

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

## **self-test**

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MULTIPLE CHOICE. Choose the one best answer for each question.

**1** In justification the righteousness of God is upheld even as the sinner is declared “not guilty” because

- a)** God overlooks the sins of people on the basis of His great love.
- b)** in love God provided a just way through the Cross for the sins of people to be transferred to Christ and also for Christ’s righteousness to be transferred to them.
- c)** God provided an alternate way for people to be justified by permitting them to pay the penalty for their sins by doing good works that atone for sin.

**2** In justification a sinner is

- a)** actually not righteous even though God declares him or her righteous.
- b)** said to be righteous if he or she performs good works.
- c)** declared righteous because Christ’s righteousness is credited to him or her.

**3** Justification not only brings pardon for sins but also

- a)** restores a person to fellowship and places that person in a position of righteousness with God.
- b)** peace with God and freedom from condemnation.
- c)** brings the benefits of both a) and b).

**4** The clear teaching of Scripture is that a person is justified by

- a)** faith alone apart from works or the keeping of the Law.
- b)** keeping the Law perfectly and faith in Christ.
- c)** sincerity of belief, good intentions, and abundant good works.

**5** Justification rests on the

- a)** love of God alone.
- b)** grace of God and the cross of Christ.
- c)** desire of people to be put right with God.

**6** In our last lesson we saw that while faith is the source of justification it is

- a)** not any more effective than good works.
- b)** no more of our merit than is the beggar's act of reaching out to receive a gift.
- c)** limited by the worthiness of the person who believes on Christ.

**7** As guilty sinners stand condemned before a holy God, they need

- a)** perfect justice.
- b)** an abundance of good works accredited to their accounts.
- c)** mercy.

**8** Many sincere non-Christian people, according to your lesson, believe that the source of justification is the

- a)** righteousness of people which results from good deeds.
- b)** mercy and grace of God apart from works.
- c)** arbitrary will of God which justifies only elect people.

**9** The meaning of justification, simply put, is

- a)** "Just because I've never sinned."
- b)** "Just because He overlooks sin."
- c)** "Just as if I'd never sinned."

**10** The extent of justification

- a)** is unlimited, like the extent of the atonement.
- b)** is limited to those who appropriate it by accepting God's provision.
- c)** is limited to those who hear the gospel.



## ***answers to study questions***

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- 11** it takes place outside of us when we are declared righteous before the throne of God.
- 1** anger, appease (or satisfy), Christ, covered, appeased (or satisfied), sinner.
- 12** They occur at the same time.
- 2** Christ's sacrifice shows that God is righteous and at the same time declares that people who put their faith in Christ are righteous.
- 13b)** If a person is saved by works, then Christ died for nothing.
- c)** It is foolish to attempt to be justified by works of the Law.
- d)** Those who attempt to be justified by keeping the Law live under a curse.
- e)** The person who thinks he or she can be put right with God simply by obeying the Law is alienated from Christ.
- 3** God is just and right when He forgives our sins.
- 14a)** We can't say specifically, but he may not have been older than 86.
- b)** He was 99.
- c)** He was 100.
- d)** We can't say for sure, but he could have been approximately 15. He was old enough to carry wood up the mountain (v. 6). Abraham would have then been 115.
- e)** We do not know exactly, but it could have been as much as 30 years.
- f)** James knew well the chronology of Abraham's life. He knew that Abraham was justified from the beginning (Genesis 15:6) and he commended the living works that showed faith was real. Abraham was justified because he *believed God*; his belief in God was seen in his actions.

- 4 a)** Justification refers to judgment and speaks of the act . . .
- 15 b)** and c) are true.
- 5** In the Old Testament only the innocent person is declared “not guilty”; whereas in the New Testament it is helpless and wicked sinners who are declared to be righteous.
- 16** Your answer. I’ve noted that in his illustrations, Paul shows that David speaks of justification *apart from works*. He speaks of the blessedness the guilty one has in receiving the verdict of “not guilty” on the basis of faith alone. Abraham represents the beauty of justification by faith *apart from ritual*, for he was credited with righteousness before God by his faith. This happened before he performed the rite of circumcision. These illustrations show that faith is the *root* and works the *fruit* of justification.
- 6 a** 6) that a penalty be paid for its violation.
- b** 7) demand death for the offender.
- c** 3) paid the penalty and satisfied the Law’s demands.
- d** 4) receives forgiveness of sins.
- e** 5) of God’s free grace by which He pardons sin and declares the repentant sinner is righteous on the basis of Christ’s righteousness.
- f** 2) faith alone.
- g** 1) we are restored to favor and fellowship with God.
- 17 c)** God has provided justification for all . . .
- 7** All but a) are true.
- 18** Only b) is false.
- 8 a)** cannot deal with a person’s sinful nature . . .
- 19** we must have active faith in order to be justified.

**9 a** 2) Justification.

**b** 1) The Law.

**c** 2) Justification.

**d** 1) The Law.

**e** 2) Justification.

**f** 1) The Law.

**g** 1) The Law.

**20** We get faith through reading and hearing the Word of God.

**10 a** 1) Justification.

**b** 2) Regeneration.

**c** 3) Both.

**d** 1) Justification.

**e** 2) Regeneration.

**21 a)** A person is set free from all the sins from which the Law could not free him or her.

**b)** We have peace with God.

**c)** We are saved from God's anger.

**d)** We who were formerly enemies of God have been reconciled to God.

**e)** Because we have been justified, we have the assurance of glorification.

**f)** We are free from accusation and condemnation.

**g)** We become heirs, having the hope of eternal life.

