



**The End of an Era
The Era of Justification by Faith in Christ
Part 1
Romans 3:21-31**

Scripture quotations are taken from the following translations:

ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

**Scripture quotations taken from the New American Standard Bible® (NASB),
Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973,
1975, 1977, 1995, 2020 by The Lockman Foundation
Used by permission. www.Lockman.org**

Scripture quoted by permission. Quotations designated (NET) are from the NET Bible® copyright ©1996, 2019 by Biblical Studies Press, L.L.C. <http://netbible.com> All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked (NLT) are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

The Good News Translation Bible (GNB) text used in this product is being used by permission. Copyright © American Bible Society, 1966, 1971, 1976, 1992

Scripture taken from the Holy Bible: International Standard Version® Release 2.0. (ISV) Copyright © 1996–2011 by the ISV Foundation. Used by permission of Davidson Press, LLC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED INTERNATIONALLY

Scripture quotations contained herein are from the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition Bible (NRSVue), Copyright © 2021, National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide

**Scripture taken from the New King James Version (NKJV).
Copyright 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.**

**Scripture taken from The Holy Bible: The Contemporary English Version (CEV).
©1995 by The American Bible Society, Thomas Nelson, Nashville TN.**

Scripture quotations marked (CSB) have been taken from the Christian Standard Bible®, Copyright © 2017 by Holman Bible Publishers. Used by permission. Christian Standard Bible® and CSB® are federally registered trademarks of Holman Bible Publishers.

Taken from the Complete Jewish Bible (CJB) by David H. Stern. Copyright © 1998. All rights reserved. Used by permission of Messianic Jewish Publishers, 6120 Day Long Lane, Clarksville, MD 21029. www.messianicjewish.net

In our study of the Bible, every now and then we come across a verse or a group of verses that hit us right in the heart. After having made it very clear to us that all of mankind is under sin, to include the various charges for the indictment before the court, we arrive at what Henry Morris calls “possibly the most important single paragraph ever written, Paul brings out something of the grandeur of Christ’s saving work. He speaks of the righteousness of God, the sin of man, and the salvation of Christ. He views



this salvation in three ways: as justification (imagery from the law court), as redemption (imagery from the slave market), and as propitiation (imagery from the averting of wrath)." (Morris 1988, 173)

What we learn here is that there is a righteousness available to all of us who are under the indictment, who are under sin.

Let's look at our text for today.

Romans 3:21–31

"But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, but it is the **righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith.** This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in God's merciful restraint He let the sins previously committed go unpunished; for the demonstration, that is, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Where then is boasting? It has been excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. **For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.** Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one. Do we then nullify the Law through faith? Far from it! On the contrary, we establish the Law." (NASB 2020)

Let me also, before we get to deep into this, make a correction in the translation.

We read in verses 21 and 22 about "the" righteousness of God. The article "the" is in italics in my translation because it is not in the Greek text. Literally, what the Greek text says is as follows.

Romans 3:21–22

"But now apart from the Law "a" righteousness of God has been revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, but it is "a" righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction," (NASB 2020)

Once we see that, it becomes much clearer to us that this "righteousness" "is not an attribute of God—He says that He will not share His glory with another—nor is it the righteousness of man. God has already said that "... our righteousnesses are as filthy rags ..." (Isa. 64:6), and God is not taking in dirty laundry. Then what righteousness is Paul speaking of? It is the righteousness which God provides. Christ has become our righteousness." (McGee 1997, 665)

How?

2 Corinthians 5:20–21

"Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. **He made Him who knew no sin to be sin in our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**" (NASB 2020)

That's how. This is a righteousness that we, on our own, can never provide. We have also learned that the Law could not provide it either. Why? Because none of us can keep the law perfectly. God accepts only one standard and that is perfection. Only one man has ever met that standard, the God-man Jesus Christ has done so.

The really cool thing though is the first two words of this verse, "but now."



Romans 3:21

“But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,” (NASB 2020)

What has been the argument so far in Paul’s letter to the church in Rome? He has been very clear the the natural man, Greek or Jew, religious or pagan, we all stand before God under sin. All of us. The indictment leading to this had at least 16 separate counts and without some outside intervention of some kind, we are rather hopelessly lost.

The cool thing, “but now” God has intervened. He stepped into our helpless hopeless situation and has made available a righteousness of God, revealed to us. It is a righteousness of God because of the work of Jesus Christ done on the cross on our behalf.

Because of that fact, the condition Paul has outlined that we are all in, the outstanding charges against us, the entire predicament we find ourselves in as a result, it has now all dramatically changed. The era of sin’s domination, the era of the Law, has ended and now there is a new era of salvation. Dr. Moo explains this.

This contrast between two eras in salvation history is one of Paul’s most basic theological conceptions, providing the framework for many of his key ideas. **Rom. 1:18–3:20 has sketched the spiritual state of those who belong to the old era: justly condemned, helpless in the power of sin, powerless to escape God’s wrath. “But now” God has intervened to inaugurate a new era, and all who respond in faith—not only after the cross, but, as Rom. 4 will show, before it also—will be transferred into it from the old era.** (Moo 1996, 221)

Romans 1:18 showed us the wrath of God dominating the discussion earlier under the Law, now the discussion has changed to being about a righteousness of God. What God has done through Jesus Christ to justify all who believe.

The Law did not cut it. The Law justified no one. Paul has just explained that. In other words, religion will not save anyone.

Here in verse 21 Paul tells us that apart from the Law, or rather apart from doing the law, a righteousness of God is available without having to add in any of the trappings of the Law. Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness (Genesis 15:6). David reiterated that the works of the law did not save.

Psalms 51:16–17

“For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.” (ESV)

Even in the OT, in other words, justification was by faith and not by works. What is now new is the manner in which it is manifested. Dr. Moo again.

“In the new era inaugurated by Christ’s death God has acted to deliver and vindicate his people “apart from” the law. It is not primarily the law as something for humans to do, but the law as a system, as a stage in God’s unfolding plan, that is in view here. “Law” (nomos), then, refers to the “Mosaic covenant,” that (temporary) administration set up between God and his people to regulate their lives and reveal their sin until the establishment of the promise in Christ. One aspect of this covenant, of course, is those Jewish “identity markers,” such as circumcision, the Sabbath, and food laws; Paul is certainly affirming, then, that the righteousness of God is now being manifested “outside the national and religious parameters set by the law.” But Paul’s point cannot be confined to this. The reason these “identity



markers” are no longer required is that the covenant of which they were a part has been made “obsolete” (cf. Heb. 8:7–13). It is this basic shift in salvation history that Paul alludes to here, and much of his discussion of the law in the rest of this letter (cf. 3:27–31; 4:15; 5:13, 20; 6:14; and especially chap. 7) is an attempt to explain this “apart from the law,” while at the same time justifying his assertion that faith “establishes” the law (cf. 3:31; 8:4).” (Moo 1996, 223)

Only God can counteract the wrath of God and He has done this with a new covenant.

Hebrews 9:11–15

“So Christ has now become the High Priest over all the good things that have come. He has entered that greater, more perfect Tabernacle in heaven, which was not made by human hands and is not part of this created world. With his own blood—not the blood of goats and calves—he entered the Most Holy Place once for all time and secured our redemption forever. Under the old system, the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer could cleanse people’s bodies from ceremonial impurity. Just think how much more the blood of Christ will purify our consciences from sinful deeds so that we can worship the living God. For by the power of the eternal Spirit, Christ offered himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for our sins. That is why he is the one who mediates a new covenant between God and people, so that all who are called can receive the eternal inheritance God has promised them. For Christ died to set them free from the penalty of the sins they had committed under that first covenant.” (NLT)

A right relationship with God is no longer predicated on obedience to the law. The only way a right relationship with God can now be established in this new environment, post crucifixion and resurrection, is by faith in the completed work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

Acts 13:38–39

“Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and by him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses.” (ESV)

Now before I go any further, I want to see what I can do to answer the questions you may have about this old versus new covenant stuff. TO do that, I am going to warn you up front, steak is about to be served. Here at Calvary Chapel, we believe that God has dealt with humans throughout history in different ways at different points in history.

We would be referred to, by those who are into terms, as premillennial dispensationalists. I told you steak. Let me explain.

What do I mean by dispensation? “A dispensation is a period of time during which man is tested in respect of obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God. Seven such dispensations are distinguished in Scripture.” (Scofield 1917, 5)

As dispensationalists, we interpret scripture literally. We believe that a literal interpretation of scripture is a Biblical interpretation of scripture. Prophecies are literal, the fulfillments are literal as well.

We note that there are, “beginning with Gen. 3:15, the Old Testament Scriptures, with increasing frequency and clarity, prophesy the coming of Christ, the Messiah-Savior-King. Around 340 Old Testament Scriptures prophesy Christ’s First Coming, while far more than 340 Scriptures prophesy His Second Coming.” (Gingrich 2000, 22)

These prophecies of His first coming were fulfilled, literally. Yes, there is the issue of the whole story being distributed across the entirety of the Old Testament. But there, in the text are prophecies of the first and second coming of Jesus Christ. Again, the prophecies of His first coming were all fulfilled, literally. This



argues very strongly for a literal fulfillment of all currently unfulfilled prophecy as well to include those about the rapture and the second coming.

Fulfilled literally, not allegorically.

To understand what is meant by Old versus New covenant. Let's examine dispensations.

Dispensations

1. Innocence – Creation to Genesis 3 and the fall.
 - a. Man's Responsibility – do not eat from the tree.
 - b. Failure – Went ahead and ate from the tree anyhow.
 - c. Judgment - Expulsion (Genesis 3:24), spiritual separation from God, earth cursed. Death.
 - d. God' grace – Killed an animal for the first time to "cover" Adam and Eve. This symbolised that God would make a way for them to become righteous again, and that this would happen by God providing a willing sacrifice that would take the punishment for their sins. God would punish the sin without punishing the sinner. This is the first picture of Christ being the substitute lamb sacrificed in our place. This was their hope of redemption, the promise of a coming Saviour.
2. Conscience – Genesis 3 the fall to Genesis 7 and the flood.
 - a. Man's responsibility – Choose to do what is right, because they had the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 4:7).
 - b. Man's failure – Disobeyed God and rebelled to include fallen divine being assistance. (Genesis 6)
 - c. God's judgment – Destruction via the flood.
 - d. God's grace – Out of the total global population, eight are saved in the ark along with the animals. Eight is the number of new beginning and the ark is a sign of God's salvation from His wrath (1 Peter 3:20)
3. Human government - From Genesis 8 and the flood to Babel and Nimrod. After the flood God delegated authority to man in the form of government. The most important function per God, to protect human life through this new structured relationship between men (Genesis 9:5-6).
 - a. Man's responsibility – Have lots of babies and cover the earth with them. Genesis 9:1
 - b. Man's failure – No. Let's all hang together, build a tower, and invite those fallen guys to come back again (Genesis 11:4).
 - c. God's judgment – Not happening today. New languages and scattering (Genesis 11:9).
 - d. God's grace: The rainbow to let us know that God will never again destroy the planet with water (Genesis 9:11-17) but fire is indeed on the future schedule.
4. Promise – This comes from the unconditional promises made by God to Abraham. Promises included a great name, he would be the father of a great nation, land (Canaan) as a forever possession. Also, the size of the land was pointed out as well. IT has never been completely fulfilled due to sin. But it will be fulfilled and we are seeing that beginning to take place today and will be fulfilled in the final dispensation, the Millennial Kingdom.
 - a. Man's responsibility – Leave Ur and go where I show you in Canaan (Genesis 12:1).



- b. Man's failure – Abraham and Isaac both went to Egypt not trusting God to take care of them in hard times. Joseph was sold as a slave to Egypt and Jacob and his boys went there after the fact.
- c. God's judgment – They all became slaves in Egypt
- d. God's grace – God delivered them demonstrating His power in the plagues as well as Passover and the Passover lamb, a picture of Jesus Christ and what He would do for us.

Next, we come to the Law, also known as the Old Covenant.

5. Law – This begins there on Mount Sinai when God gives His law to Moses and the people. The Law promised blessing if the people were obedient, and curses if they were not and exile if they persisted in disobedience to the Law (Exodus 19:5-6). The Law did not replace the promises made to Abraham.

Galatians 3:19 “Why, then, was the law given? **It was given alongside the promise to show people their sins. But the law was designed to last only until the coming of the child who was promised.** God gave his law through angels to Moses, who was the mediator between God and the people.” (NLT)

Habakkuk 2:4

“Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but **the righteous shall live by his faith.**” (ESV)

The Law was only until Messiah. When Jesus Christ came, He fulfilled the Law.

Matthew 5:17 “**Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.**” (ESV)

The Law does not save either. Peter made that point when there was a discussion about all of the Gentiles getting saved outside of the Law.

Acts 15:10–11

“Now, therefore, **why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will.**” (ESV)

- a. Man's responsibility – Keep all parts of the written Law perfectly at all times (Exodus 24:7).
- b. Man's failure – NO one could keep the Law. The nation broke it even while Moses was on Mount Sinai
- c. getting all of the detail of it (Exodus 32).
- d. God's judgment – All of the curses in the Law fell on Israel. They were defeated by their enemies and exiled out of the land.
- e. God's grace – There was always a remnant of those who believed. Pointing to the New Covenant.

2 Corinthians 3:13–18

“We are not like Moses, who put a veil over his face so the people of Israel would not see the glory, even though it was destined to fade away. But **the people's minds were hardened, and to this day whenever the old covenant is being read, the same veil covers their minds so they cannot understand the truth. And this veil can be removed only by believing in Christ. Yes, even today when they read Moses' writings, their hearts are covered with that veil, and they do not**



understand. But whenever someone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.” (NLT)

6. The Age of Grace – Also known as the New Covenant and the Church Age. It begins in Acts 2 on the Day of Pentecost. It ends suddenly without any notice with the pretribulational rapture of the Church. Followed by judgments, 7 years of Tribulation and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. The really unique thing here is the inclusion of both the Jews as well as the rest of mankind in this and those who are saved become part of the Church, the body of Christ.

This all began on the Day of Pentecost. Dr. Ryrie tells us “The distinctiveness of the character of the church as the body of Christ is twofold. It is distinct because of who are included within that body (i.e., Jews and Gentiles as fellow heirs), and it is distinct because of the new relationships of being in Christ and of Christ’s indwelling the members of that body. Both of these distinctives are unique with the church and were not known or experienced by God’s people in Old Testament times or even during the earthly lifetime of our Lord.” (Ryrie 1995, 144)

Jesus Himself began the transition during His final briefing to His disciples. Doctor Fruchtenbaum tells us “The Upper Room Discourse is significant is because it marks the beginning of a transition from the Dispensation of Law to the Dispensation of Grace. Technically, the Dispensation of Law ended with the death of the Messiah. The Dispensation of Grace technically began with the birth of the Church and the coming of the Holy Spirit’s ministry of Spirit baptism in Acts 2.

Between the two dispensations there is a transitional period; the Dispensation of Law should be pictured as slowly fading out and the Dispensation of Grace as beginning to fade in. By the time of Acts 2:1–4, the Dispensation of Law had totally faded away and the Dispensation of Grace totally faded in.” (Fruchtenbaum 1983, 5)

John 14:20

“In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.” (ESV)

- a. Man’s Responsibility – “...be reconciled to God.” (2 Corinthians 5:20) and once that takes place: “**Go** therefore and **make disciples** of all nations, **baptizing them** in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **teaching them** to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, **I am with you always**, to the end of the age.”” (Matthew 28:19–20, ESV)
- b. Man’s failure – People refuse to be saved. “Whoever believes in him is not condemned, **but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.** And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.” (John 3:18–19, ESV)
- c. God’s Judgment – Those who die in their sins, will be judged at the Great White Throne. Those who are alive when the Age of Grace ends, and who have not believed, will experience the wrath of God in the Tribulation
- d. God’s Grace – even after the Age of Grace has ended, God’s grace continues with the gospel being preached by 144,000 Jewish evangelists (Revelation 7) as well as two prophets (Revelation 11) who show up in Jerusalem at the Temple and minister for 3 ½ years. When Jesus Christ and all of the hosts of heaven with Him at the end of the Tribulation, there is a multiday transition and then the final dispensation begins.



7. The Millennial Kingdom – Also known as the Kingdom or the thousand Year Rule and Reign of Jesus Christ on Earth. Jesus Christ will be King of the earth and will rule and reign from Jerusalem (Revelation 20:6). Who will be part of this? There are three groups.
 - a. The Church – all those who were believers after in Christ and died prior to the rapture of the church are resurrected and those of us who remain are translated into the same glorified bodies they have (1 Corinthians 15:51-57, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).
 - b. The Tribulation saints who were killed during the Tribulation (Revelation 7:9-17).
 - c. The Old Testament Saints – All who believed and died prior to the resurrection (Isaiah 26:19, Daniel 12:2, Hosea 13:14).

My favorite part is right here at the beginning of this dispensation.

Revelation 20:1–3

“Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. **And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended.** After that he must be released for a little while.” (ESV)

- a. Man’s Responsibility – Respond to Jesus gift of eternal life.
- b. Man’s Failure – Not all of those born at this time will choose to follow Jesus (Isaiah 65:20, Zechariah 14:18-19).
- c. God’s Judgment – At the end of the Kingdom, there are those who do not believe and once Satan is also released, will prove for all to see where the heart of man is, in rebellion. It does not end well for them as fire comes from heaven and destroys them (Revelation 20:7-10).
- d. God’s Grace – Those who are born during this time and who believe will live on in the eternal state.

Right now, we are in the Age of Grace, the Church Age and as Paul writes here in Romans, that is also the same experience for him.

It is clear to Paul and hopefully now to us as well, God’s righteousness is available only through faith in Jesus Christ.

Romans 3:21–23

“But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, but it is the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; **for there is no distinction, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,**” (NASB 2020)

This great grace gift of God, righteousness provided by and through Jesus Christ, has been provided to us with no distinction of who we are, where we have been born, our station in life, it doesn’t matter. If you are human, the provision has been made because all of us, without exception at we all have sinned.

Here in verse 23, the word translated “have sinned” does not mean it is a past event that we are being held guilty of, not at all, it is a current and ongoing situation that we are involved in. Literally, all are sinning, have sinned, will sin because that is who we are, it is our nature to sin. And of course, in that state, we all fall short of the glory of God.

Religion will not buy you an entrée into the presence of God, there is that ongoing nature problem. Religion, the sacraments of the church, gurus, making a pilgrimage, none of it does a thing to bring you into the presence of God because, we are indeed sinners. But there is good news.



Romans 3:23–24

“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, **being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus,**” (NASB 2020)

God has made a way for us and there is indeed only one way. We can indeed be justified, made right with God, declared righteous but only through the gift provided by His grace and only through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. There is no other way.

I love how Charles Spurgeon puts it.

Remember, therefore, it is not thy hold of Christ that saves thee—it is Christ; it is not thy joy in Christ that saves thee—it is Christ; it is not even faith in Christ, though that be the instrument—it is Christ’s blood and merits; therefore, look not so much to thy hand with which thou art grasping Christ, as to Christ; look not to thy hope, but to Jesus, the source of thy hope; look not to thy faith, but to Jesus, the author and finisher of thy faith. We shall never find happiness by looking at our prayers, our doings, or our feelings; it is what Jesus is, not what we are, that gives rest to the soul. (Spurgeon 1896, June 28 Morning)

In verse 24 when we justified as a gift, that is the Greek word δωρεάν (dorean) which means “freely, without cause, without reason, undeservedly.” (Gilbrant 1991)

Why did God do this? No reason. He didn’t look at you and me and say those are some good folks, I think I will do something for them. The reality here in this word is that we have been offered the opportunity to be justified for no reason other than the fact that we are sinners and in deep need of redemption and salvation.

God didn’t look down and say, “you’re my favorite, I’ll do this for you.” Nope, “there is nothing in us that would call out the grace of God, other than our great need. We are justified without a cause. It is by His grace, which means that there is no merit on our part. Grace is unmerited favor; it is love in action.” (McGee 1997, 666)

So, this is a grace gift being provided to us by God. This grace gift is because we are sinners and do indeed fall short of His glory, so He, in His grace, has made provision for us through “the redemption which is in Jesus Christ.”

On the cross, Jesus Christ paid the price of redemption for us. His last word was the Greek word tetelestai, paid in full. With that, He had paid the price for us to be justified. What is justification, Douglas Harink explains.

“Justification is God’s action.

- Justification is God’s invasion and rectification of the enslaved cosmos through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the creation of the ekklēsia.
- Justification is God’s mercy to the Gentile peoples, God’s deliverance of them from their bondage to idols, principalities, powers, and cosmic principles.
- Justification is God’s rectifying action whereby he reconciles the Jewish and Gentile peoples to one another and creates one people from the two.
- Justification, as God’s rectifying justice for all things, is accomplished through the faithfulness of the Just One, Jesus Christ. Justification by faith is justification by Jesus Christ’s loyalty and faithfulness toward the God of Israel, which culminates in his death by crucifixion, at the hands of the powers.
- Justification, as God’s rectifying justice for all things, is accomplished through God’s own faithfulness, demonstrated in the vindication of Jesus’ faithfulness by raising him from the dead. (Harink 2013, 256-257)



Because of Jesus, justification is not something we hear about accompanied with the verdict guilty, because on our own we fail. Not at all, for all of us who have trusted in the work of Jesus on the cross, we have been justified through faith in Christ.

We now have a right relationship with the God of the universe through His Son Jesus Christ. And because of our faith, He has also provided the Holy Spirit to us who lives in us as a down payment of what has been promised and what is still in our future, glorification and eternal life with our Lord. And again, this is all because of His grace.

What is it that God's grace has achieved for us? We are now His family.

John 1:12

"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name," (NASB 2020)

No matter what we have been like or what wrong we have done, if we will place our faith in Christ, we will be pardoned for all our sins. Even beyond this almost incomprehensible blessing, God also receives us as His sons. (Smith 2018, 30)

Romans 3:23–25

"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in God's merciful restraint He let the sins previously committed go unpunished;" (NASB 2020)

In order to forgive you, God must have a just basis of forgiveness. That basis of forgiveness is the substitution of Christ for you, the sinner. Jesus took your sins and bore your guilt. God had declared, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:20a). Jesus died in your place and bore the judgment of your guilt. Thus, He can offer the forgiveness of your sins and the cleansing of your past. He can justify you before God of any wrong you have ever done. (Smith, The Gospel According to Grace: A Clear Commentary On the Book of Romans 1981, 23)

If you are like me, I am still wondering about the word propitiation.

And when I looked it up, I get this leaving me wondering about how helpful that really is.

Propitiation is the means by which another is rendered propitious or favorable to one's cause or willing to listen to one's plea. (Oden 1992, 392)

I read that and said, "really Thomas?" So, I read further and finally, "Propitiation means that which brings God near or makes God propitious or approachable." (Oden 1992, 393)

Let's go with this, when we see the word here in the text, let me rewrite.

Romans 3:23–25

"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being made right with God as a gift by His undeserved favor through the payment of the price required to remove us from the slave market of sin which is in Christ Jesus, whom God displayed publicly as the only way to approach God being in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in God's merciful restraint He let the sins previously committed go unpunished;" (NASB 2020/KB)



And reading Oden on this was no help at all because he then added that the expiation of our sin by Jesus provided us propitiation.

To expiate is to make satisfaction. Christ is said to be the living expiation or "the atoning sacrifice for our sins" (1 John 2:2), enabling God and humanity to draw nearer or be made propitious or favorable. (Oden 1992, 393)

Here is the thing to remember, Jesus Christ voluntarily came to this planet, lived a perfect life and then paid for our sin by taking our place on the cross so that satisfaction, payment for our sins has been made allowing you and me to draw near to God as a result of what we have placed our faith in, what He did for us on the cross.

We are justified as a result, declared right with God. It has been done for us as a legal act done on our behalf by Jesus Christ. Justification is both, thanks to Jesus, our acquittal of all charges while at the same time providing us with acceptance. It is exclusively provided to those who believe. If you do not believe, you do not have it at all.

John 14:6

"Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me." (NASB 2020)

And not only is it exclusive, the only way, but when we agree to the terms, it is so extensive in what happens to us that all of our sins are dealt with. Past, present and future.

When we agree with the Holy Spirit and His explaining all of this to us and come to Christ, when we say yes, the transaction is instantaneous and the really good news, irreversible. God doesn't sit there a week from now and have buyers' remorse. There are no take backs. De-justification does not exist anywhere in the Bible.

Romans 3:24–25

"being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood **through faith**. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in God's merciful restraint He let the sins previously committed go unpunished;" (NASB 2020)

We obtain this by believing, by faith.

Contrary to popular opinion, even though it appears that folks were able to get away with sin since the flood until Christ went to the cross. It was God, in His mercy, restraining from judgment to be able to demonstrate exactly what it was that Jesus Christ was going to achieve in the cross.

Romans 3:24–26

"being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. **This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in God's merciful restraint He let the sins previously committed go unpunished; for the demonstration, that is, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.**" (NASB 2020)

When God set forth Jesus as a propitiatory sacrifice on the cross he was, as it were, answering his critics. The death of Christ was not only a substitutionary sacrifice for sinners; it was also the public vindication of the justice and righteousness of God himself. God is just; God is righteous; the wages of sin is death; the undeniable public proof of which is the propitiatory suffering of Jesus. (Storms 2016, Ro 3:25-26)



I am going to stop here. You have heard what Jesus has done and the great lengths God has gone to to provide salvation. If you have never made a decision on this, now is the time.

Romans 10:9–13

“If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.” Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”” (NLT)

ABC's of Salvation

- A. Acknowledge that you are a sinner, tell Him that.
- B. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sin and that He rose from the dead.
- C. Confess that Jesus is Lord. Tell someone about what you have done.

Works Cited

- Fruchtenbaum, Arnold G. 1983. *The Messianic Bible Study Collection*. Vol. 60. Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries.
- Gilbrant, Thoralf. 1991. "Δωρεάν." In *The New Testament Greek-English Dictionary, The complete Biblical Library*. WORDsearch.
- Gingrich, Roy E. 2000. *The Earthly Life of Christ*. Vol. 1. Memphis, TN: Riverside Printing.
- Harink, Douglas. 2013. *Paul among the Postliberals: Pauline Theology beyond Christendom and Modernity*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock.
- McGee, J. Vernon. 1997. *Thru the Bible Commentary*. Electronic Edition. Vol. 4. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.
- Moo, Douglas J. 1996. *The Epistle to the Romans, The New International Commentary on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
- Morris, Leon. 1988. *The Epistle to the Romans, The Pillar New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans.
- Oden, Thomas C. 1992. *The Word of Life: Systematic Theology*. Vol. II. San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco.
- Ryrie, Charles Caldwell. 1995. *Dispensationalism*. Revised and Expanded. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.
- Scofield, C. I., ed. 1917. *The Scofield Reference Bible: The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Smith, Chuck. 1981. *The Gospel According to Grace: A Clear Commentary On the Book of Romans*. Kindle Edition. Costa Mesa, CA: The Word for Today.
- . 2018. *Why Grace Changes Everything*. Kindle Edition. Costa Mesa, CA: The Word for Today.
- Spurgeon, C. H. 1896. *Morning and Evening: Daily Readings*. London: Passmore & Alabaster.
- Storms, Sam. 2016. *Biblical Studies: Romans*. Edmond, OK: Sam Storms.