

## Justification by Faith Alone

*Romans, Part XVIII*

Romans 3:21-31

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### I. Creation, Fall, Redemption, Restoration

A \_\_\_\_\_ is a way of seeing reality; it is like a set of glasses that enables us to see the world around more or less clearly. The better our worldview, the clearer we can see.

- CREATION –
  - Under Privilege –
  
- FALL –
  - Under Sin –
  - Under Wrath –
  
- REDEMPTION - Paul writes, *“For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation in His blood...”* (Rom 3:22b-25).
  - *Redemption* –
  - *Propitiation* –

### II. The End of Boasting in Justification by Faith Alone

<sup>27</sup>Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. <sup>28</sup>Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. <sup>29</sup>Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, <sup>30</sup>since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. <sup>31</sup>Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.

- A. Boasting is excluded (27)
  
- B. Justification is by faith alone (28)
  
- C. There is but one God (28-30)
  
- D. The law is established (31)

#### An Outline of Romans

- I. Introduction
  - A. Opening Greeting (1:1-7)
  - B. Travel Plans (1:8-15)
  - C. Theme (1:16-17)
- II. Credenda: “The Righteous by Faith” Shall Live
  - A. God’s Wrath vs. Unrighteousness (1:18-3:20)
  - B. The Revelation of God’s Righteousness (3:21-4:25)
  - C. The Triumph of God’s Righteousness (5-8)
  - D. The Universality of God’s Righteousness (9-11)
- III. Agenda: The Righteous “Shall Live by Faith”
  - A. Transformed not Conformed (12-13)
  - B. Patient not Proud (14-15:13)
- IV. Conclusion
  - A. Paul, Minister to the Gentiles (15:14-21)
  - B. Travel Plans (15:22-33)
  - C. Closing Greetings and Benediction (16)

### III. Justification by Faith Alone

#### A. The Meaning of Justification

Justification addresses the question, “*How can we be set right with God?*”

<sup>19</sup>Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are in the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. <sup>20</sup>Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

The picture that Paul’s language evokes is one of a court room. God is a Just Judge (Ps 7:11). So what verdict does God issue regarding us? We are all, by nature, “*under sin*” and, therefore, “*guilty*.” As a Just Judge who judges *according to truth* (2:2), God must pronounce us *guilty*. God’s verdict does not *make us guilty* – it *declares us guilty*. Similarly, *justification* means to \_\_\_\_\_ *someone righteous* not to \_\_\_\_\_ *them righteous*:

- Lk 7:29 – “*And when all the people heard [Jesus], even the tax collectors justified God, having been baptized with the baptism of John.*”
- Dt 25:1 – The duty of judges is to “*justify the righteous and condemn the wicked...*”
- Pr 17:15 – “*He who justifies the wicked, and he who condemns the just, Both of them alike are an abomination to the Lord.*”

#### B. The Means of Justification

The dilemma of God’s salvation is how can God be just and justify the ungodly? How can He *declare* that those who are in fact *guilty* are *righteous* without being unjust? Only through faith in Jesus Christ. The means of justification is faith in Jesus. By faith in Jesus we can be declared righteous in the sight of God.

- 22 – *the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe.*
- 24-25 – *being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation in His blood, through faith...*
- 26 – *that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*
- 28 – *a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.*
- 30 – *[God] will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith...*

God justly proclaims that those who believe in Jesus are righteous – not because we are in fact righteous but because we are clothed in Jesus’ righteousness. As Paul writes, “*For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him*” (2 Cor 5:21). The Westminster Shorter Catechism declares:

Q. 33. *What is Justification? Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardons all our sins, and accepts us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.*

#### C. The Significance of Justification (3:27 cf. Lk 18:9-14)

<sup>9</sup>Also [Jesus] spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: <sup>10</sup>“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. <sup>11</sup>The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. <sup>12</sup>I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’ <sup>13</sup>And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’ <sup>14</sup>I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” (Lk 18:9-14)

### IV. Conclusion