

# What is Justification?

Justification is neither forensic nor a judicial act of God, for which He forgives, exempts or treats man, who is not just, as if he were just. Now, if God treated an unjust as if he were just, he would actually be committing injustice. If God declared a sinner to be righteous, we would have a fictitious, imaginary statement, because God would be declaring something untrue about man.

---

## What is Justification?

“For he who is dead is justified from sin” (Rom. 6: 7)

## Theological definitions

It is common for theology to treat the doctrine of justification as a matter of forensic order, hence the expressions ‘God’s judicial act’, ‘divine recognition act’, ‘announce justice’, etc., in the definitions about the justification theme.

For Scofield, although justified, the believer is still a sinner. God recognizes and treats the believer as being righteous, however, this does not mean that God makes someone righteous.

“The believing sinner is justified, that is, treated as righteous (...) Justification is an act of divine recognition and does not mean making a person righteous ...” Scofield Bible with References, Rom. 3:28.

For Charles C. Ryrie to justify means:

“Declare that someone is fair. Both the Hebrew (sadaq) and Greek (dikaioō) words mean ‘announce’ or ‘pronounce’ a favorable verdict, declaring someone fair. This concept does not imply making someone just, but just announcing justice” Ryrie, Charles Caldwell, Basic Theology – Available to everyone, translated by Jarbas Aragão – São Paulo: Christian World, 2004, p. 345.

George Eldon Ladd understands justification from the Greek term dikaioō, as:

“‘ Declare fair ’, not making it fair’. As we will see, the main idea, in justification, is the declaration of God, the just judge, that the man who believes in Christ, although he may be a sinner, is just – he is seen as being just, because, in Christ, he arrived to a just relationship with God” Ladd, George Eldon, New Testament Theology, translated by Darci Dusilek and Jussara M. Pinto, 1. Ed – São Paulo: Exodus, 97, p. 409.

Justification is neither forensic nor a judicial act by God for which He forgives, exempts and treats the man who is not just as if he were just. Now, if God treated an unjust as if he were just, he would actually be committing injustice. If God declared a sinner to be righteous, we would have a fictitious, imaginary statement, because God would be declaring something untrue about man.

The essence of the doctrine of justification is that God creates a new man in true justice and holiness and declares him to be just because that new man is actually just. God does not work with a fictitious, imaginary justice, to the point of treating as just the one who is not really just.

For reform theologians, justification is a judicial act of God without any change in their life, that is, God does not change the condition of man. There lies the deception, for God only justifies those who are born again (John 3: 3). Now, if man is

again begotten according to God, this means that God changed the condition of man (1 Peter 1: 3 and 23).

The condition of the believer is completely different from when he did not believe in Christ. Before believing, man is subject to the power of darkness and, after believing, he is transported to the kingdom of the Son of his love "Who brought us out of the power of darkness, and transported us to the kingdom of the Son of his love" (Cl 1 : 13). When in the power of darkness man was alive to sin, therefore, he will never be declared righteous, but the dead to sin are justified from sin.

Now, the legal systems that we find in the courts deal with issues and relationships that have materiality among the living, whereas the doctrine of justification does not involve forensic principles, because only those who are dead to sin are justified from sin!

The Bible demonstrates that both Jews and Gentiles are saved by the grace of God revealed in Christ Jesus. To be saved by the grace of God is the same as to be saved through faith, for Jesus is the manifest faith (Gal 3:23). Jesus is the firm foundation on which man has complete trust in God and is justified (Heb 11: 1; 2 Cor 3: 4; Col 1:22).

Daniel B. Pecota stated that:

*"Faith is never the foundation of justification. The New Testament never claims that justification is dia pistin ("in exchange for faith"), but always pisteos dia, ("through faith") ".*

Now, if we understand that Christ is the faith that was to be manifested, it follows that Christ (faith) was, is and always will be the foundation of justification. The confusion between 'dia pistin' (trust in the truth) and 'dia pisteos' (the truth itself) is due to a poor reading of the biblical passages, since Christ is the firm foundation on which men who believe

become pleasing to God , because justification is through Christ (pisteos day).

The biggest problem with the reformers' doctrine of justification is in trying to dissociate the doctrine of justification from the doctrine of regeneration. Without regeneration, there is no justification and there is no justification apart from regeneration. When man is made according to flesh and blood, there is God's verdict: guilty, because this is the condition of man-made according to flesh (John 1:12). However, when man is generated again (regenerated), the verdict that God gives is justified, because the person is actually just.

## Condemnation in Adam

The first step in understanding the doctrine of justification is to understand that all men have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). This means that, because of Adam's offense, all men together, when on Adam's 'thigh', became unclean and dead to God (Ps 53: 3; Ps 14: 3). After Adam's offense, all of his descendants began to live for sin and were dead (alienated, separated) to God.

In speaking of this condition inherited from Adam, the apostle Paul said that all men (Jews and Gentiles) were by nature children of wrath (Eph. 2: 3). Why children of wrath? Because they were children of Adam's disobedience "Let no one deceive you with empty words; because of these things the wrath of God comes on the children of disobedience"(Eph. 5: 6).

Because of Adam's offense sin entered the world, and because of his disobedience all men are sinners "Therefore, as sin entered the world through sin, and death through sin, so death passed on to all that is why all have sinned "(Rom. 5:12).

All men born according to the flesh are sinners because Adam's condemnation (death) passed to all his descendants.

Many are unaware that men are sinners because of the condemnation inherited from Adam, and consider that men are sinners because of behavioral issues arising from the knowledge of good and evil.

It is necessary to see Adam's offense well from the knowledge acquired from the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil. While the knowledge of good and evil was not what separated man from God (sin), because God knows good and evil (Gen. 3:22), disobedience brought sin (division, separation, alienation) by cause of the law that said: you will surely die (Gen. 2:17).

Sin proved to be excessively evil because through holy, just and good law sin dominated and killed man (Rom. 7:13). Without the penalty of the law: 'you will surely die', sin would have no power to dominate man, but through the power of the law (you will certainly die) sin found occasion and killed man (Rom. 7:11). The law given in Eden was holy, just and good because it warned man of the consequences of disobedience (you will not eat of it, for the day you eat of it, you will surely die).

Because of offense, men are formed in iniquity and conceived in sin: (Ps 51: 5). From the mother (from the beginning) men turn away from God (Ps 58: 3), the best of men is comparable to a thorn, and the straightest to a fence made of thorns (Mk 7: 4). It is because of Adam's offense that the verdict was hearing: guilty! (Rom 3:23)

Hence Job's question: "Who can bring the pure out of the unclean? No one"(Job 14: 4). However, what is impossible with men is possible with God, because He has the power to make everything new: "Jesus, however, looking at them, said: For men it is impossible, but not for God, because for God all

things are possible" (Mark 10:27).

Justification is God's answer to the most important of all human questions: How can a person become acceptable before God? The answer is clear in the New Testament, especially in the following order of Jesus Christ: "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who is not born again cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3: 3). It is necessary to be born of water and the Spirit, for what is born of the flesh is carnal, but those born of the Spirit are spiritual (Rom. 8: 1).

The problem of the separation between God and men (sin) stems from natural birth (1Co 15:22), and not from the behavior of men. Sin was related to man's fallen nature, and not to his behavior in society.

The solution to the condemnation that man achieves in justification in Christ comes from the power of God, and not from a judicial act. First, because it was enough for man to disobey the Creator for the judgment of condemnation to be established: the death (separation) of all men (Rom. 5:18). Second, because when Jesus calls men to take up his own cross, he makes it clear that in order to be reconciled between God and men it is necessary to suffer the penalty imposed: death. In death with Christ justice is satisfied, because the penalty is nothing more than the person of the transgressor is (Mt 10:38; 1Co 15:36; 2Co 4:14).

When a paraplegic man was placed in front of Jesus, He said: "Now that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins (he said to the paralytic), I say to you, Arise, take your bed, and go to your house" (Mk 2:10 -11). This line from Jesus demonstrates that the classic passage from Romans 3, verses 21 to 25 on justification does not involve forensic concepts.

Forgiving sins is not a legal demand; it is a question of power! Only those who have power over clay can forgive sins to

make vessels of honor out of the same mass (Rom 9:21). That is why the apostle Paul was not ashamed of the gospel, for the gospel is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes (Rom. 1:16).

In talking about this issue with Job, God makes it clear that, for man to be able to declare himself righteous, it would be necessary to have arms like God's and to thunder like the Most High. It would be necessary to dress up in glory and splendor and to dress in honor and majesty. He should be able to pour out his wrath by crushing the wicked in his place. Only by meeting all the requirements listed above would it be possible for man to save himself, (Job 40: 8-14).

However, since man does not have this power described by God, he will never be able to declare himself righteous or save himself.

The Son of man, Jesus Christ, on the other hand, can declare man righteous, because He Himself clothed himself with glory and majesty by returning to glory with the Father "And now, Father, glorify me with yourself, with that glory that I had with you before the world existed " (John 17: 5); "Gird your sword to your thigh, O mighty one, with your glory and your majesty" (Ps 45: 3).

## **Fair judge**

The second step in understanding the doctrine of justification is to understand that there is no way for God to declare those who are condemned free from guilt. Just God cannot let the penalty imposed on wrongdoers be applied to them.

God never declares (justifies) righteous the one who is wicked "You will turn away from false words, and you will not kill the innocent and the righteous; for I will not justify the

wicked “(Ex 23: 7).

God never treats the wicked as if he were just “Far be it from you to do such a thing, to kill the righteous with the wicked; let the righteous be like the wicked, far from you. Would not the Judge of all the earth do justice? ” (Gen. 18:25).

God will never make sure that the penalty imposed on the offender is giving to another, as it reads, “The soul that sins, it will die; the son will not take the father’s iniquity, nor the father will take the son’s iniquity. The righteousness of the righteous will rest on him and the wickedness of the wicked will fall on him” (Eze 18:20).

When Jesus told Nicodemus that it is necessary for man to be born again, all the above questions were considering, as Jesus well knew that God never declares those born according to the flesh of Adam free from guilt.

When natural birth, man was madding a sinner, a vessel to be discouraged, therefore, a child of wrath and disobedience. To declare man free from sin, he must first die, because if he does not die he will never be able to live for God “Because he who is dead is justified Of sin” (Rom. 6: 7); “Foolish! What you sow is not quickened unless you die first” (1Co 15:36).

Christ died for sinners – the just for the unjust – but whoever does not eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ will not have life in himself, that is, it is essential for man to be a participant in the death of Christ

“Because Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, to lead us to God; mortified, indeed, in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (1Pe 3:18);

“Jesus therefore said to them, Verily, verily, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you will have no life in yourself” (John 6:53).



Eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ is the same as believing in Him (John 6:35, 47). Believing in Christ is the same as being crucifying with Him.

Anyone who believes is buried with Him and stops living for sin and starts living for God

“I am already crucified with Christ; and I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me; and the life that I now live in the flesh, I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me” (Gal 2:20; Rom. 6: 4).

The man who believes in Christ admits that he is guilty of death because of Adam's offense. It implicitly admits that God is just when he speaks and is pure when he judges Adam's descendants as guilty (Ps 51: 4). He admits that only Christ has the power to create a new man by resurrecting from the dead, so that the one who is buried with Him resurrects a new creature.

## New man in Christ

The last step in understanding justification is to understand that from the new birth comes a new creature created in true justice and holiness “So, if anyone is in Christ, a new creature is; old things are gone; behold, everything has become new” (2Co 5:17; Eph 4:24). This new creature is declared righteous because effectively God created it again just and blameless before Him.

The man who believes in Christ is created a new partaker of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1: 4), for the old man was crucified and the body that belonged to sin undone. After being buried with Christ in the likeness of his death, man resurrects a new creature “Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, so that the body of sin may be undone, so

that we no longer serve sin" (Rom 6: 6).

Through the gospel, God not only declares man righteous, but also creates the new essentially righteous man. Unlike what Dr. Scofield claims, that God only declares the sinner righteous, but does not make him righteous.

The Bible states that God creates the new man in true justice and holiness (Eph 4:24), therefore, Justification comes from a creative act of God, whereby the new man is created a participant in the divine nature. Biblical justification refers to the condition of those who are generating a new through the truth of the gospel (faith): free from guilt or condemnation.

Don't condemnation for those who are in Christ.

Why is there no condemnation?

The answer lies in the fact that staff 'is in Christ', because those who are in Christ are new creatures. "THEREFORE, now there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (Rom 8: 1), "So, if anyone is in Christ, a new creature is; old things are gone; behold, everything has become new "(2Co 5:17).

The justification stems from the new condition of those who are in Christ, because to be in Christ is to be a new creature "And if Christ is in you, the body is actually dead because of sin, but the spirit lives because of justice. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit who dwells in you "(Rom. 8:10-11).

Give the question of the apostle Paul: "For if we, who seek to be justified in Christ, we too are found to be sinners, is Christ the minister of sin? Not at all"(Gal 2:17). Now Christ is a minister of righteousness, and in no way a minister of

sin, therefore, he who is justified by Christ is not found to be a sinner, for he is dead to sin "For he who is dead is justified from sin" (Rom. 6: 7).

When the apostle Paul says: God justifies them! "Who will bring an accusation against God's chosen ones? It is God who justifies them "(Rom. 8:33), he was quite sure that it was not a forensic issue, because in a court he only declares what it is, since they do not have the power to change the condition of those who appear before the judges.

When he say that God who justifies. the apostle Paul affirms the power of God that creates a new man.

God declares man righteous because there is no condemnation for those who are new creatures. God did not transfer the condition of the old man to Christ, but the old man was crucified and undone, so that from the dead new creatures arose who are seated with Christ for the glory of God the Father, and no condemnation weighs on them.

Christians are declared righteous because they have been madding righteous (dikaioō) by the power that is in the gospel, by which man is a participant in the body of Christ, because he died and rose again with Christ as a holy, blameless and blameless "In the body of his flesh, by death, to present you holy and blameless and blameless "before him" (Col 1:22; Eph 2: 6; Col 3: 1).

When Paul says: "Because you are already dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God" (Col 3: 3), it means that the Christian is justified from sin, that is, dead to sin (Rom. 6: 1 – 11), and I live for God "So we were buried with him by baptism in death; so that, as Christ was raised from the dead, by the glory of the Father, so may we also walk in newness of life "(Rom. 6: 4).

Jesus was delivering by God to die because of the sin of humanity, because it is necessary for men to die to sin in

order to live for God. That is why Christ Jesus rose, so that those who rise with Him may be declared righteous. Without dying there is no resurrection, without resurrection there is no justification "Who was delivered for our sins, and rose for our justification" (Rom. 4:25).