

Bible Training Institute

To proactively accelerate the spiritual growth of Grace Bible Church for the purpose of knowing God more intimately and becoming more effective servants of God in the world

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Soteriology Part 6

The Doctrine of Justification

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Importance of Justification

- Pivotal doctrine in Soteriology
- Addresses how Holy God can count as righteous unholy sinners
- In Reformation tradition, this is the doctrine on which the Gospel stands or falls
- Key point of disagreement between Protestants and Catholics

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History of Justification

- Pre-Augustine—not the top issue in the church
- Augustine (354-430)—massive influence on soteriology—first major theologian to seriously address justification
- Medieval Period—no distinction between justification and sanctification
- Reformation Period—(1530-1730)—forensic (legal) declaration of righteousness—#1 Theologian = John Calvin
- Modern Period—hostility toward original sin and depravity of mankind

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Definitions

1. God pardons all of our sins and receives us as declared righteous by virtue of our unity with Christ. (Swartz)
2. “We define justification as God’s gracious, legal verdict in respect of those who believe in Christ, forgiving their sins and declaring them righteous through the imputation of Christ’s righteousness” (Demarest, 367).

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Justification is *Not* ...

- An infusing of righteousness.
- God announcing that sinners are something they are not.
- A process.
- Something that can be lost
- Able to increase or decrease
- The same thing as sanctification.

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Justification in the OT

- Key verses: Job 25:4; Gen 15:6; Ps 32:1-2
- Gen 15:6—NT quotes/cites five times (Rom 4:3, 9, 22; Gal 3:6; James 2:23)
 - “Reckoned” (NAS) “Counted” (ESV) = “impute” or “credit”
 - “Righteousness” = conformity to the nature and will of God
- Ps 32:1-2—Paul mentions this text in Romans 4:6-8
- SUMMARY: OT concept of righteousness appears often in a forensic/legal context. A righteous person is one who has been declared free from guilt.

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Justification in the NT

- Greek verb corresponding to the Hebrew = “acquit” “declare righteous” “justify”
- Luke 18:9-14
- Justification in Paul—Rom 3:20-28; 4:5-8; 8:33-34; 2 Cor 5:19-21; Gal 2:16; 3:11.

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Implications of Justification

- Results in forgiveness—Acts 13:38-39
- Restoration of Divine Favor—Rom 5:18
- Peace with God—Rom 5:1
- Faith is the Means of Justification—Rom 1:17; 3:28, 30; 5:1; 10:6; Gal 2:16; 3:11, 24; Phil 3:9; Heb 11:7

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Roman Catholic Council of Trent

CANON XII: "If any one shall say that justifying faith is nothing else than confidence in the divine mercy pardoning sins for Christ's sake, or that it is that confidence alone by which we are justified ... let him be accursed."

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Basis of Justification

- Death of Christ—Rom 3:24-26; 5:9; 18-19; 2 Cor 5:21
- Resurrection of Christ—Rom 4:25

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