
IMAGES OF THE ATONEMENT – JUSTIFICATION

Introduction
Reconciliation - relational - family reunion
Redemption - financial - market place
Propitiation - religious - temple
Adoption - familial - home

Justification - legal - courtroom
↓
Judges - verdicts - courts

Romans 3:19-28 ESV

¹⁹ Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. ²⁰ For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

²¹ But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— ²² the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. ²⁶ It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

²⁷ Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. ²⁸ For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.

Justification Defined

Simple definition:

- Justification means “just-as-if” I had never sinned = incomplete
- Justification means “just-as-if” I had never sinned AND “just-as-if” I had always obeyed

Theological definition:

Justification is an instantaneous legal act of God in which he: 1) reckons our sins as forgiven and 2) reckons Christ’s righteousness as belonging to us and therefore 3) declares us to be righteous in his sight

Packer definition: *→ this is a deep, at times complex doctrine*

Justification is God's act of remitting the sins of, and reckoning righteousness to, ungodly sinners freely, by his grace, through faith in Christ, on the ground, not of their own works, but of the representative righteousness and redemptive, propitiatory, substitutionary blood-shedding of Jesus Christ on their behalf.

Justification = God’s declaration that the believer is righteous

Defining what justification doesn’t mean:

- God is not saying that believers, in and of themselves, are righteous
- God does not make them righteous

John Stott: “When God justifies sinners, he is not declaring bad people to be good, or saying that they are not sinners after all; he is **pronouncing them legally righteous**, free from any liability to the broken law, because he himself and his son has born the penalty of their lawbreaking.”

March 18, 2018 -- Romans 3:19-28

Difference between a surgeon and a judge: A surgeon removes cancer or mends a broken bone thereby truly and actually changing us with in. This is not what a judge does. A judge makes a verdict conferring a legal status. According to the law, he pronounces one guilty or not guilty; there is no internal change.

3 QUESTIONS - Who is our justifier? Why is our justification possible?
How is our justification realized?

Who is our justifier?

²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.

Nobody can declare himself righteous: **Romans 3:9-10 ESV** ⁹ What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, ¹⁰ as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one ..."

²⁶ It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

God is the judge:

Isaiah 33:22 ESV For the Lord is our judge; the Lord is our lawgiver; the Lord is our king; he will save us.

Hebrews 12:22-24 ESV ²² But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, ²³ and to the assembly^[a] of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, ²⁴ and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

Pardon of federal crimes in the United States:

- In the United States, the pardon power for federal crimes is granted to the President of the United States under Article II, Section 2 of the United States Constitution which states that the President "shall have power to grant reprieves and pardons for offenses against the United States, except in cases of impeachment".
- Only the president can make this legal declaration

Only God can make declare someone righteous in the courtroom of his justice

Why is our justification possible?

From sermon on substitution:

“Satisfaction, as it pertains to the atonement, is the doctrine that God must be himself and act in accordance with his perfect nature in regards to sin. His nature—his holiness, justice, and righteousness—necessitate his action in regards to sin. The holy, just, and righteous response to sin is wrath and judgment. Therefore, to say God requires satisfaction in regards to sin means that in order to be true to who he is, God is wrathful towards sin and must judge it. That is the only appropriate and necessary response of God towards sin.”

How can God possibly declare sinners righteous and remain true to who he is? *How can he justify sinners and also be "satisfied?"* ⇒ He can't sweep our *guiltiness* under the *rug!*
He does this through atonement and imputation: God removes our sins from us—
Christ made atonement for our sins—and God imputes Christ's righteousness to us.
(substitution)

Atonement

The atonement—Christ’s substitutionary sacrifice—was “to show God’s righteousness, because in his divine forbearance **he had passed over former sins**”

Those sins would be passed over no longer; God dealt with them at the cross

Ephesians 1:7 ESV In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,

That's why Paul can say...

Romans 5:9 ESV Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

Romans 8:1, 33 ESV There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ... Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.

The atoning of sins gets us to neutral. But neutral is not righteous because righteousness includes perfect obedience to God’s commands. Therefore, imputation describes how God recognizes us not just as free from sin and its penalty, but positively righteous.

Imputation

What does it mean that Christ’s righteousness is imputed to us? God considers Christ’s righteousness as belonging to us; God reckons the righteous life of Christ, lived in perfect obedience to God, as our life.

The Baker Compact Dictionary of Theological Terms: Imputation is the divine work of crediting the righteousness of Christ to people who believe in him.

TITHING in someone else's name

Three instances of imputation:

1. When Adam sinned, his guilt was imputed to us.
2. When Christ suffered and died for our sins, our sin was imputed to Christ
3. Christ's righteousness is imputed to us

Philippians 3:8-9 ESV ⁸ Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, **not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—**

Romans 5:15-17 ESV ¹⁵ But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. ¹⁶ And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, **but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification.** ¹⁷ For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and **the free gift of righteousness** reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

²⁶ It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be **just and the justifier** of the one who has faith in Jesus.

*God IS just
God DOES justify*

How is our justification realized?

²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified **by his grace** as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, **to be received by faith**. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. —————> *By grace through faith*

Grace is God's unmerited favour:

Romans 5:15 ESV ¹⁵ But the **free gift** is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the **grace of God** and the **free gift by the grace** of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many.

Our justification is realized by grace! It is a gift we do not deserve.

Justification comes to those who put their faith in Christ:

²⁸ For we hold that one is justified **by faith** apart from works of the law.

Faith is believing in the message of the gospel, believing in the one whom the gospel speaks about. But it is more than just mental assent to those truths.

Thomas Schreiner, *Faith Alone*: "So, faith is never less than mental assent. At the same time, saving faith is more than **mental assent**. Saving faith **embraces, leans on, and trusts** in all that God has done for us in Jesus Christ. Justification is by faith alone because it relies on and rests on Christ alone for deliverance from God's wrath. Justification is by faith alone, for faith finds its joy in Christ alone, seeing him as the pearl of great price, the one who is more desirable than anything or anyone else. Faith **rests** in the Beloved, realizing that there is no salvation or peace or joy anywhere else."

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God graciously justifies us by accepting the substitutionary, atoning sacrifice of Christ on behalf of, and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to, all those who put their faith in Jesus.

Application

Romans 5:1-2 ESV ¹Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ²Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

- 1) Receive your justification by putting your faith in Christ
- 2) Recognize that you have peace with God and demolish any contrary thoughts
- 3) Rejoice in hope