

Titus 3:7 — “Justification: God’s Declaration that You are Forgiven & Counted as Righteous in Christ”

It’s the basic question of the entire Bible: *How Can God Forgive You?*

“The loss of the doctrine of justification involves the loss of ALL Christian doctrine” (Martin Luther)

- A few summarizing points on justification
 1. Justification is **FORENSIC** (a legal declaration)
 2. Justification is **FREE** (unmerited)
 3. Justification is **INSTANTANEOUS** (in a moment)
 4. Justification is **POSITIVE** (reckons ALL Christ’s work to you)
 5. Justification is **COMFORTING** (gives indomitable joy)

THESIS — I want to provide for you crystal clarity on justification so that you’ll (1) understand it; (2) delight with assurance in it; and (3) defend it; and (4) be die for this if necessary.

I. THE TIMING OF YOUR JUSTIFICATION (6-7)

II. THE MEANING OF YOUR JUSTIFICATION (7)

JUSTIFICATION defined – it is the instantaneous act of God whereby, as a gift of his grace, he imputes to a believing sinner the full and perfect righteousness of Christ through faith alone and legally declares him perfectly righteous in His sight; forgiving the sinner of all unrighteousness and delivering him from all condemnation (Richard Mayhue & John MacArthur).

Justification is an act of God’s free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of God imputed to us, and received by faith alone (Westminster Shorter Catechism).

“Justification means something more than just the forgiveness of sins. Imputation is the act of God whereby he makes an effectual grant and donation of a true, real, perfect righteousness, even that of Christ Himself, unto all that do

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believe; and accounting it as theirs, on his own gracious act, both absolves them from and grants them right and title unto eternal life.” (John Calvin)

“Imputation, then, includes not only that Christ’s righteousness — both active and passive — is imputed to believers, but also that the sins of believers are imputed to and punished upon Jesus Christ” (John Owen).

III. THE ACCOMPLISHER OF YOUR JUSTIFICATION (7)**IV. THE OBTAINING OF YOUR JUSTIFICATION (7)**

Faith is important but it is not the *ground* of our righteousness, but only the *means* (the instrument, the way of obtaining it). Our faith is not the basis of our righteousness. We don’t go to heaven because of our faith. You go to heaven because of Christ’s righteousness that God has reckoned to your account. You are saved *on the grounds of* (because of) Christ’s active obedience to the Law and passive obedience in atoning for your sins. His righteousness is imputed to you and your sin is imputed to Him. Christ alone saves you. Your faith simply is the means of appropriating and holding on to Christ.

V. THE RESULTS OF YOUR JUSTIFICATION (7-8)

No one is justified by his good works; but all who are justified will live in good works.

1. Peace with God (Rom 5.1)
2. No condemnation (Rom 8)
3. Righteous before God (Rom 4;5-6; 2 Cor 5.21)
4. Cleansed of all sin (1 Cor 6.11)
5. Go home everlastingly changed (Luke 18.14--δεδικαιωμένος)
6. Spared from divine wrath (Rom 5.9)
7. Guarantee of glory (Rom 8.30)

How does this doctrine demand your devotion?

1. Let your justification **ignite PRAISE!**
2. Let your justification **prompt THANKSGIVING!**
3. Let your justification **propel EVANGELISM!**
4. Let your justification **instill HUMILITY!**
5. Let your justification **solidify ASSURANCE!**

“...Every minister must diligently teach and preach the justification of man to come only by faith in Jesus Christ, and not by the merit of any man’s good works, albeit that good works do necessarily follow justification, the which before justification are of no value or estimation before God.” (John Hooper, martyred by Bloody Mary in 1555)

**JUSTIFICATION
SALVATION IS BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH**

by J.I. Packer [from his Concise Theology]

Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, “The righteous will live by faith.” GALATIANS 3:11

The doctrine of justification, the storm center of the Reformation, was a major concern of the apostle Paul. For him it was the heart of the gospel (Rom. 1:17; 3:21-5:21; Gal. 2:15-5:1) shaping both his message (Acts 13:38-39) and his devotion and spiritual life (2 Cor. 5:13-21; Phil. 3:4-14). Though other New Testament writers affirm the same doctrine in substance, the terms in which Protestants have affirmed and defended it for almost five centuries are drawn primarily from Paul.

Justification is a judicial act of God pardoning sinners (wicked and ungodly persons, Rom. 4:5; 3:9-24), accepting them as just, and so putting permanently right their previously estranged relationship with himself. This justifying sentence is God’s gift of righteousness (Rom. 5:15-17), his bestowal of a status of acceptance for Jesus’ sake (2 Cor. 5:21).

God’s justifying judgment seems strange, for pronouncing sinners righteous may appear to be precisely the unjust action on the judge’s part that God’s own law forbade (Deut. 25:1; Prov. 17:15). Yet it is in fact a just judgment, for its basis is the righteousness of Jesus Christ who as “the last

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Adam" (1 Cor. 15:45), our representative head acting on our behalf, obeyed the law that bound us and endured the retribution for lawlessness that was our due and so (to use a medieval technical term) "merited" our justification. So we are justified justly, on the basis of justice done (Rom. 3:25-26) and Christ's righteousness reckoned to our account (Rom. 5:18-19).

God's justifying decision is the judgment of the Last Day, declaring where we shall spend eternity, brought forward into the present and pronounced here and now. It is the last judgment that will ever be passed on our destiny; God will never go back on it, however much Satan may appeal against God's verdict (Zech. 3:1; Rev. 12:10; Rom. 8:33-34). To be justified is to be eternally secure (Rom. 5:1-5; 8:30).

The necessary means, or instrumental cause, of justification is personal faith in Jesus Christ as crucified Savior and risen Lord (Rom. 4:23-25; 10:8-13). This is because the meritorious ground of our justification is entirely in Christ. As we give ourselves in faith to Jesus, Jesus gives us his gift of righteousness, so that in the very act of "closing with Christ," as older Reformed teachers put it, we receive divine pardon and acceptance which we could not otherwise have (Gal. 2:15-16; 3:24).

Official Roman Catholic theology includes sanctification in the definition of justification, which it sees as a process rather than a single decisive event, and affirms that while faith contributes to our acceptance with God, our works of satisfaction and merit contribute too. Rome sees baptism, viewed as a channel of sanctifying grace, as the primary instrumental cause of justification, and the sacrament of penance, whereby congruous merit is achieved through works of satisfaction, as the supplementary restorative cause whenever the grace of God's initial acceptance is lost through mortal sin. Congruous, as distinct from condign, merit means merit that it is fitting, though not absolutely necessary, for God to reward by a fresh flow of sanctifying grace. On the Roman Catholic view, therefore, believers save themselves with the help of the grace that flows from Christ through the church's sacramental system, and in this life no sense of confidence in God's grace can ordinarily be had. Such teaching is a far cry from that of Paul.

JESUS THY BLOOD AND RIGHTEOUSNESS

Jesus, thy blood and righteousness
my beauty are, my glorious dress;
'midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,
with joy shall I lift up my head.

When from the dust of death I rise
to claim my mansion in the skies,
e'en then this shall be all my plea,
Jesus hath lived, hath died, for me.

Bold shall I stand in thy great day;
for who aught to my charge shall lay?
Fully absolved through these I am
from sin and fear, from guilt and shame.

HIS ROBES FOR MINE

His robes for mine: O wonderful exchange!
Clothed in my sin, Christ suffered 'neath God's rage.
Draped in His righteousness, I'm justified.
In Christ I live, for in my place He died.

**I cling to Christ, and marvel at the cost:
Jesus forsaken, God estranged from God.
Bought by such love, my life is not my own.
My praise—my all—shall be for Christ alone.**

His robes for mine: what cause have I for dread?
God's daunting Law Christ mastered in my stead.

Faultless I stand with righteous works not mine,
Saved by my Lord's vicarious death and life.

His robes for mine: God's justice is appeased.
Jesus is crushed, and thus the Father's pleased.
Christ drank God's wrath on sin, then cried, "'Tis done!"
Sin's wage is paid; propitiation won.

His robes for mine: such anguish none can know.
Christ, God's beloved, condemned as though His foe.
He, as though I, accursed and left alone;
I, as though He, embraced and welcomed home!