

JUSTIFICATION DEFINED.

"Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." – Rom. 5:1.

The word justification has two meanings which are closely related; one is to prove that a thing is right, the other to make a thing right which is wrong.

Webster defines the word justify thus: 1. "To prove or show to be just or conformable to law, right, justice or duty – to vindicate as right." 2. "To pronounce free from guilt – to absolve."

These terms are used in these two senses in Scripture. As illustrating the first definition, viz: proving or showing to be just and right, notice that our Heavenly Father is said to be justified and Jesus also. When John preached repentance for sins, the people who believed justified God; i.e., they acknowledged that God had been just in condemning and punishing them as sinners – his dealings were vindicated as being right. Jesus as a man was tried or tested in all points (the world, flesh and devil) as we are, "yet without sin" – "In him was no sin." He was "holy, harmless, separate from sinners." Jehovah was his judge, and he justified, i.e., declared him to have been proved right and just. He was vindicated as being right, or, as we read, he was "justified in spirit and received into glory." (1 Tim. 3:16.)

His unspotted humanity he gave up to death, to pay for us the penalty of Adamic sin – death. Thus his death was not for his own sins but for ours. "He bore our sins in His own body on the tree." "Jehovah (in harmony with his own desire) laid on him the iniquity of us all." The man Christ Jesus gave himself (his manhood) a ransom for all. And one of the best evidences that in God's sight he was free from all sin, is found in the fact that though he gave his

humanity as a ransom, yet God, while accepting the human sacrifice for our sins, raised Jesus to life on a plane far above the human. Had he been a sinner, this would have been impossible, for God's law condemns every sinner to death.

Now notice the second meaning of justification – the making right of something which is wrong. This is the sense in which the term is applicable to us, who by nature are wrong and sinful.

God cannot say arbitrarily, you are wrong and sinful as a violator of my just laws, but I will declare you to be right. No, he must be just – justice is the foundation of his throne; everything rests upon it. If you are imperfect and sinful he cannot say that you are righteous. If you were righteous he could not declare you a sinner, nor treat you as such.

Do you remind us that there is none of the Adamic race righteous – no, not one – and urge that, therefore, God cannot justify any of us? We reply that he cannot justify us in the first sense of the word, as seen above, but there is a way which God's love and wisdom have **[R441 : page 3]** devised by which he can be just and the justifier of those sinners who believe in or accept Jesus. (Rom. 3:26). Thus our justification is in the second sense explained above; that is, we who are wrong, sinful, and condemned before God, are made right by having our sins and shortcomings settled by another – by having the perfections of another set to our account. Thus, we who were sinners were justified by God's favor, by the acceptance of the merits of Jesus as an offset to our demerit.

But some one may raise the question as to what is the cause or basis of justification. One claims that it is by Jehovah's grace, and not because our ransom has been paid, and quote Titus 3:7, "Being justified by his grace." Another claims that we are justified, not by grace, nor by a ransom, but by faith, and quote Rom. 5:1, "Being justified by faith," Another claims the ransom as the basis of all

justification, and refers to Rom. 5:9, "Being now justified by his blood" (death). Are there three ways to be justified? No, answers Jesus, I am the way....No man cometh to the Father but by me.

What can there be about believing in Jesus? Why not believe in Peter or Moses or Sampson or Isaiah or Jeremiah? Why could not God justify those who believe in these as well as those "who believe in Jesus?" There must be something special and peculiar about Jesus, something different from all other teachers and prophets that we may be justified through faith in him, and not by faith in them.

Again, what is it to believe in Jesus? Is it merely to recognize the fact that such a person once lived in Judea and died on a cross? Surely not; many prophets perished in Judea; many persons died on crosses.

In explanation, we suggest that if the context be studied these texts will be found harmonious. It is by Jehovah's grace or favor that we are justified, for

"Grace first contrived the plan
To save rebellious man."

We are justified by faith, too; that is, we must by faith grasp the agency of God's grace – the ransom – before we can realize its full blessing. But down under all is the ransom – Jesus' death – the basis of all justifying faith – the channel of God's grace. These three things: the value of the ransom as the power of justification, the grace which provided it, and the faith which appropriates it are all beautifully joined by Paul (Rom. 3:24,25). "Justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood."

The secret is, that Jesus died for our sins. But, does some one suggest, that as sin is the cause of all death, therefore Isaiah, Jeremiah, Peter and others died because of sin as well as Jesus. We

answer, yes; they all died because of sin: all but Jesus died because of their share in the sin, because they were descendants of the condemned Adam, whose life was forfeited by sin. (Rom. 5:18) Thus all but Jesus die because of the inherited taint. Jesus died because of sin, too, but not because of inherited taint or personal guilt. His life came direct from God and was unforfeited; but he died for our sins. "Jehovah laid upon him the iniquity of us all." "Him who knew no sin (either personal or inherited) He made a sin offering (treated as a sinner) on our behalf, that we might become God's righteousness in him." (2 Cor. 5:21, Diaglott.)

Ah, now we see why God justifies believers through Jesus and not through themselves, nor through apostles or prophets. Now we see why there is no other name given under heaven or among men whereby we can be saved from the penalty of the fall – death. It is because he gave his sinless, perfect humanity a RANSOM – substitute for ours.

Did God unjustly lay upon the willing substitute the iniquity of us all? Ah, no; for the joy set before him he endured the cross, despising the shame. Therefore his present exaltation and glory. Wondrous wisdom of the infinite Jehovah! Who can find a flaw in his glorious plan or charge him with injustice?

Now we see what it is to believe in Jesus. Not merely believing that such a man lived and died, but that he lived and died free from all condemnation and sin – attested and approved of God – and that his death was for our sins. And thus we see how God can justly justify those who believe in and accept of that sacrificial offering of the humanity of Christ Jesus. Now we can see that the sins and frailties of the Adamic family were cancelled by the ransom price which the second Adam gave. The first Adam's sins were imputed to the second, and the second Adam's human purity is imputed to the first and his children – when they believe.

It is blessed to realize, too, that the spotless one who bought us with his humanity is now highly exalted to the spiritual condition and power, and thus as a new creature – partaker of the divine nature – he will continue to carry forward the Father's plan. Soon he will bring from the prison-house of death those whom he bought, that they all might be (thus) saved (from the penalty of Adam's sin) and come to a knowledge of the truth, viz.: that they, by faith in Christ, are justified freely from all things and may come to perfection and harmony with God as Adam before sin.

How Paul brings out this doctrine of justification in Rom. 5:18,19, showing the condemnation to death on all through Adam, and the justification out of death to life through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom be glory throughout all ages. Amen.

Justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation (satisfaction) through faith in his blood; to declare his righteousness (right doing) in the remission of sins that are past....To declare, I say, at this time his (God's) righteousness: that he might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. (Rom. 3:24,25.) [Those who will study the chart in "Food," **page 105**, will be helped in the understanding of this subject.]
