

Simply Christ

Gospel Newsletter

Sharing the simplicity that is in Christ

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Terms of Justification

When God sent an angel to Gideon and called him a *“mighty man of valor,”* it was true. Gideon did not know it yet, but it was still true. When God, who *“...calleth those things which be not as though they were”* Romans 4:17, told Abraham, who had no children, *“a father of many nations have I made thee.”* Genesis 17:5, it was true. He had already made Abraham to be something that others simply were not yet aware of. It was not long, however, that whole world would see the many nations of which Abraham is the father.

Much of the church views *“justification”* as God declaring a person to be something different than what they actually are. We are told he declares the guilty to be innocent, the sinful to be righteous, and the ungodly to be perfect. Such teachings are absolutely false. In fact, such teachings make God out to be a liar. If God says a person is righteous, you can know they are in fact righteous.

There are four ways justification is described in the gospel. These terms may intertwine and overlap each other, but they are also separate in definition and effect. Let’s briefly look at each of these to see their role in our great salvation. First consider the following definitions.

Just (righteous) = equitable (right) in character or action

Justify = to render (show to be, or cause to be) just (righteous)

Justified by faith: This term is used by the apostles to show that God considers the act of believing God to be greater than religious works. The Apostle Paul used the fact that Abraham *"...believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness"* Genesis 15:6, as spiritual precedent to show a person can be received by God without coming through the Law. Others approached with sacrifices, commandment keeping, ritualism, and various religious works, but were rejected by God. Paul lets us know that when a person believes God, *"...his faith is counted for righteousness."* Romans 4:6. Abraham's faith was the "act of righteousness" God was looking for. Yet as great as it was, it is important to remember that Abraham's *"justification by faith"* is not the equivalent of the salvation we receive through faith in Jesus Christ.

Justified by His blood: As Abraham did, we also come to God by faith, but the Apostle Paul tells us there is a great difference between us and Abraham. He says we are *"...now justified by His blood..."* Romans 5:9. Although Abraham was *"justified by faith,"* he died in faith without receiving the redemption God provided for us through Christ Jesus. Hebrews 11:13, 39-40. Our greater justification required the death of God's own Son. The blood of Christ was shed to change the essence of who and what we were. It is the agent of our deliverance from Sin, Satan, and the Law, and the cause of our sanctification. All of this is part of the redemption Christ provided so we could be delivered from sin and be *"made*

righteous.” Romans 5:19. Through the power of Jesus’ blood, we who were once sinners are now delivered, transformed, and made to be *“the righteousness of God in Him.”* II Corinthians 5:21. We have been justified by His blood!

Justified by His grace: The Apostle Paul first describes salvation as *“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”* Romans 3:24. Because this is *“through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,”* it is separated from the justification that Abraham knew. This describes the full work of Christ which makes us to be new creatures and restores us back to God. Paul even tells us that *“...the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour”* Titus 3:5-6 is actually part of being *“justified by His grace!”* Titus 3:7. Justification by grace describes the full and complete work of our salvation!

Justified by the faith of Christ: Paul wrote that, *“... a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ...”* Galatians 2:16. *“The faith of Christ”* is synonymous to *“the gospel of Christ.”* It embodies who Christ is, what Christ was sent to do, and how Christ accomplished it all upon the cross. Only through believing the gospel of Christ do we receive this glorious salvation. This is summed up in Jesus’ words, *“You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.”* John 8:32. Our freedom from sin and our sanctification Romans 6:22, as well as receiving a new heart, a new mind, and a new spirit, are all a part of what it means to be ***“justified by the faith of Christ”!***