

BY GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED – GOD JUSTIFIES US (I)!

*Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called;
whom He called, these He also justified;
and whom He justified, these He also glorified.*

Romans 8: 30

WHAT IS JUSTIFICATION?

Let us restrict ourselves to the Bible (God's Word), to gain a understanding of the meaning of the word 'justify':

- [1] **Deuteronomy 25:1-2** ~ *If there is a dispute between men, and they come to court, that the judges may judge them, and they justify the righteous and condemn the wicked, then it shall be, if the wicked man deserves to be beaten, that the judge will cause him to lie down and be beaten in his presence, according to his guilt, with a certain number of blows.*

The duty of the judge is to *justify* the righteous, and *condemn* the wicked. What this means is that the judge is to examine all the evidences, and then pass a sentence by pronouncement. If that person is in the right, the judge will declare that he is in the right. The judge will justify him. If that person is in the wrong, the judge will declare that he is in the wrong. The judge will condemn him. The judge does not have the ability to *make* a person righteous or wicked. His duty is simply to declare who is the righteous and who is the wicked.

- [2] **Proverbs 17:15** ~ *He who justifies the wicked, and he who condemns the just, both of them alike are an abomination to the LORD.*

Here, we are told that God hates the person who justifies the wicked and condemns the just. If "*justify*" means to make someone righteous, then "*to justify*" the wicked means to make that wicked person into a righteous person! Such an act cannot be an abomination to God since God desires that the wicked turn from their sins and be saved. What God is against, as stated in this passage, is the perversion of justice, whereby the wicked

is allowed to go scot-free, probably because of a bribe, while the just is being punished. In other words, if you pronounce the wicked man to be just, and the just man to be wicked, which is a perversion of justice, it is an abomination to God. The God who loves justice hates this!!

- [3] **Luke 7:29** ~ *And when all the people heard Him, even the tax collectors justified God, having been baptized with the baptism of John.*

Here, we are told that the tax collectors *justified* God. If *justification* means to *make* someone righteous, then the meaning of this text is that the tax-collectors *made* God righteous, which is impossible, for God is always righteous. Rather, the text actually means that the tax collectors *declare* that God is righteous, which is not wrong, since God is righteous from everlasting to everlasting.

- [4] **Romans 8:33-34** ~ *Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.*

Justification is here put in contrast to *condemnation*. *Justification* is the opposite of *condemnation*. To condemn someone is not make that someone wicked, but simply to pronounce that he is wicked, for that is what he is. Therefore, *justification* is a *declaration* that someone is not guilty, that he is righteous.

In *justification*, the person is pronounced to be righteous. It is not something done to you, but something said of you. The picture is that of a courtroom, of a judge making a pronouncement. This is the basic meaning of *justification* - to declare righteous.



Two Questions To Ponder:

How can a holy God declare unrighteous sinners to be righteous?

Does God stop at declaring sinners righteous or will He proceed to also make them righteous?