

King James Bible Study Correspondence Course

An Outreach of Highway Evangelistic Ministries
5311 Windridge lane ~ Lockhart, Florida 32810 ~ USA

JUSTIFICATION

Lesson 4

return pages 8 & 9

1. What is the meaning of Justification?

Justification deals primarily with man's relation or Standing with God. The first three lessons of this course: Repentance, Faith, and Regeneration, have dealt primarily with a human element in salvation, but Justification is primarily a divine act and is best understood from man's relation or standing with God. Before sin entered into the world, that relation was one of intimate personal fellowship and happy communion, but through man's own disobedience and sin, that relationship was broken, and man was forced to flee from God's presence. Justification has to do with the restoration of man to that original position of fellowship and communion and may be defined as a change from guilt and condemnation to acquittal and acceptance. Although the term "acquittal" is used here, it must be emphasized that justification is much more than simply acquittal. When a person is acquitted by a court of law, it means that he has been tried for a crime and found to be absolutely without guilt. The court then judicially declares him to be free from guilt and punishment. He cannot be tried again for the same crime without the introduction of new and valid evidence against him. However, there is no question concerning man's guilt before God, for *"all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"* Romans 3:23. In the court of God's justice he stands condemned, but Jesus Christ, Who has been proven to be absolutely without guilt, takes the sinner's place and pays his penalty, satisfying the demands of the law. The guilty one is then judged in Christ and is acquitted wholly on the basis of Christ's substitutionary payment of the penalty. Being judged in Christ, he cannot be found guilty; therefore, God judicially, as the judge, declares Romans 8:1, because the sinner is "accepted in the beloved (Christ)" Ephesians 1:6.

- **The meaning of Justification as shown in the Old Testament**

Here the term "to justify" is used in such a way as to mean "to judicially declare or cause to appear innocent or righteous." This is very clearly stated in Exodus and Deuteronomy; *"If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them; then they shall.....Deuteronomy 25:1. "Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked". Exodus 23:7.. See also Proverbs 17:15 and Isaiah 5:23.* The use of the term is, therefore, legal, meaning to declare righteous rather than to make righteous in a moral sense. This interpretation of the term is further shown:

By the terms condemnation used in contrast to justification *"He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD."* Proverbs 17:15.

From expressions that are sometimes used to mean the same thing. *"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile."*

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Psalm 32:1,2. *"And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness."* Genesis 15:6.

- **In the New Testament**

Here the term "to justify" carries with it the full weight of the meaning as found in the Old Testament with an even more firm assertion that it is a legal declaration rather than a moral change. Acts 13:39, *"not be justified by the law of Moses,"* Romans 4:2-8 *"For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."* Romans 5:1,9 *"Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ....."* *"Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."* One thing is clear from all of these verses, and that is, that to justify does not mean to make one righteous but to set forth **as** righteous; to declare righteous in a legal sense; or to put a person in a right relation. Therefore, justification does not deal directly with man's conduct or his basic character. It must always be remembered that this righteousness is primarily in relation to God, but it will naturally also find expression in relationships with other men. When the sinner is brought into a right relation with God it naturally produces righteousness in daily conduct.

The person who is truly justified will never seek to display any righteousness of his own, as Paul speaks under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit saying he desired to *"win Christ, and be found in him, not having his own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith"* Philippians 3:9.

In the parable of the Pharisee and the publican (Luke 18:9-14), the Pharisee sought to justify himself, saying, *"God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess."* But the record says that *"the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner."* Christ said, *"I tell you, this man (the publican) went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."*

Jesus, speaking to the Pharisees in Luke 16:15, said, *"Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God."* No man can justify himself before God but only before men; for *"it is God that justifieth"* Romans 8:33.

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Therefore, from the scriptural use of the term, we may say that **Justification is the judicial or legal act of God by which those who put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ are declared to be righteous and free from guilt and punishment.**

- **The Elements of Justification**

Justification consists of two elements, one negative and one positive, and one is not complete without the other. They cannot be separated.

- The negative element is the forgiveness of sin and the removal of its guilt.

We seldom give much thought as to what it means to God, from His standpoint, to forgive sin. Forgiveness to us seems easy, because we take such light, indifferent attitudes toward sin. But God is infinitely holy and has a divine hatred for sin; nevertheless, He freely forgives. The person who regards his sin as simply an offense against himself or against another will not be likely to either understand or properly appreciate the scope of God's forgiveness. We must first see sin as it really is, in all of its awful blackness. Sin, no matter how great or small, is an offense against God and must be treated as such, "*for sin is the transgression of the law*" (God's law) (I John 3:4), and when God forgives that transgression, it is forgiveness for transgression against His own holiness.

Even men with their light attitudes toward sin sometimes find it hard to forgive when wronged. The prophet Micah had evidently seen, in a measure at least, the extent of God's forgiveness in contrast to the forgiveness of men when he said, "*Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.*" Micah 7:18, 19. The psalmist cried out to the Lord as the awful guilt of his sin gripped his conscience, "*If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.*" Psalm 130:3,4.

Such is the forgiveness that is the basis of justification, but justification is more than simply forgiveness. Forgiveness is primarily from the standpoint of the one who forgives, but justification also brings home to the one forgiven a joyous consciousness of that forgiveness and the removal of sin's guilt from his conscience so that there is no longer any fear of its punishment. The justified sinner is made to realize that God no longer sees him as a guilty sinner deserving of death but as one who has never sinned.

The Apostle Paul, in his great sermon on justification by faith, said to the church at Antioch, "*Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.*"

Acts 13:38,39.

God also spoke through the writer of the book of Hebrews, saying, "*And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.*" Hebrews 10:17, and as David said, "*As far*

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as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us."

Psalm 103:12. How great and complete is the forgiveness of God!

Therefore, we may say that when God justifies the sinner, He forgives all sin, cleanses the conscience of all of sin's guilt, and takes away all fear of ever being punished for its offenses.

- The positive element of justification is the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the sinner and his restoration to God's favor.

One of the most blessed truths found in this doctrine is that sin with its guilt and punishment is not only removed, but the sinner also receives the perfect righteousness of Christ and is restored to God's favor in the very person of His own Son. The Bible says in the book of Romans *"Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:"* Romans 3:22, and that as "by the offence of one (Adam) judgment came upon all men to condemnation;

"Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. Romans 5:18

"And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God."

James 2:23. This means that Christ's righteousness is credited to Abraham's account; whereas, he was once at war with God, he has through faith become a friend of God. Also see Romans 5:1.

Perhaps you will be better able to understand imputation as it is illustrated in the book of Philemon. Onesimus, Philemon's slave, had run away with some of his master's possessions. He fled to Rome, where he met Paul, one of Philemon's close friends. Paul led Onesimus to a saving knowledge of Christ and sent him back to Philemon with this message:

"If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself. If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account;" Philemon 17,18. This is imputation and is exactly what Christ has also done for us. See Isaiah 53:5. The Bible says: *"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."* II Corinthians 5:21. Christ suffered in our place, and we are accepted in Him on the basis of His merits alone.

"To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." Ephesians 1:6.

- **The method of Justification**

Justification is not accomplished by the works of the law.

No truth is more clearly and definitely taught in the Scripture than this, that *"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin."* Romans 3:20. Before the judgment bar of God no man can establish his own righteousness through obedience to the law. The law is absolutely without effect to produce right relations with God, for *"Is the law then*

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against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. "

Galatians 3:21-24.

Justification cannot be by the law, *"for by the law is the knowledge of sin."* The law brings sin to the light but cannot remove it; in fact, it was never intended that the law should do more than uncover sin. The law clearly defines sin and shows the extent of its power, but the law can never bring liberty and freedom from sin.

The Bible says: *"For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith."* Galatians 3:10,11. Since no man is capable of continual perfect obedience to the law, justification on this basis is entirely beyond question. The only purpose of the law is, as the scripture says, *"Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."* Romans 3:19. See also Galatians 2: 16.

"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." Romans 3:28.

It becomes a matter, therefore, of choosing between opposites. Only one can be true, without any mixture of the other. It is either...

MOSES OR CHRIST WORKS OR FAITH
LAW OR PROMISE DOING OR BELIEVING
WAGES OR A FREE GIFT

- **Justification is made possible by God's free grace**

Grace is defined as the unmerited favor of God, or our receiving that which we in no way deserve. Therefore, since justification is a judicial act of God that none but God Himself has the right to exercise, and since none are deserving of His favor, justification must be wholly of GRACE.

This concept of justification is evidently the basis of the Bible's declaration that we are *"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:"* Romans 3:24. "Freely" indicates that it is granted without our doing anything whatsoever to deserve it. If it is to be the free gift of God, it must of necessity originate with Him. Man can have no part in it except to receive it, nor can he do anything to justify himself. However, God does not act as an absolute sovereign to set aside the law but as a righteous judge. Recognizing and acknowledging Christ's full payment of the penalty in our behalf, He can be both just, and the justifier Romans 3:26 at the same time.

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In Titus, we read, *"For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."* Titus 3:3-7.

God has said, *"And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."* II Corinthians 6:16. Thus, we see that God freely forgives and receives the sinner even as His own son. How marvelous is His matchless grace!

- **Justification is wholly on the basis of Christ's righteousness and his shed blood.**

The ground of our justification is found in the blood of Jesus Christ through which we receive forgiveness of sins and in His perfect righteousness which is imputed to the sinner. In Romans 3:24, 25, The Bible declares *"Being 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, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;"* see also Romans 5:9 & 2 Corinthians 5:21.

Christ's death on the cross and the shedding of His blood are here very intimately connected with our justifications; in fact, it is impossible to separate the two ideas. This, then, throws new light upon the Old Testament sacrifices, which can no longer be viewed as meaningless butchery, for *"without shedding of blood is no remission"* (Hebrews 9:22). God planned our justification in the courts of heaven even before the foundations of the world, and all of the Old Testament sacrifices were but types and pictures that were designed to point to that one great sacrifice by which we are *"sanctified through the once for all"* (Hebrews 10:10). Under the Old Testament pattern, the priests ministered daily and offered *"And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified"*. Hebrews 10:11, 12, 14. Thus, the death of Christ on the cross became the basis of our justification, for we are *"justified by his blood"* (Romans 5:9).

d. Justification is received or appropriated through faith in JESUS CHRIST

If justification is solely a work of God's free grace, how can man be justified? The Scripture says we are justified through faith and by faith. Faith must, therefore, be the instrument by which we receive or appropriate Christ and His perfect righteousness. The Bible says that God has set Jesus Christ forth *"To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which*

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believeth in Jesus. " Romans 3:26 and that *"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."* (Romans 3 :28). Again, the Bible says: *"Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith."* Romans 3:30, and *" therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:"* Romans 5:1.

The Scripture, however, never says that we are justified on account of faith or because of our faith, so that faith is never represented as the ground of our justification nor an end in itself. If this were the case, faith would have to be regarded as a work by which man becomes deserving of justification. In Romans 4:5 the Bible says: *" But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."* this strikes a fatal blow to self-righteousness. When a man's "faith is counted for righteousness" he is pictured as giving up all trust in his own works and committing himself wholly to the mercy of God for his justification. The Scripture, stating it very simply, says, *" And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."* Acts 13:39.

The blood of Jesus Christ is sufficient to save every sinner, but only those who believe in Him are justified. The very best of men need to be saved by simple faith in Jesus Christ, and the worst need nothing more than that. There is no difference in the need or in the method by which that need is met. All sinners meet on common ground, and the basis of their justification and conditions upon which it is received never change.

The first step to justification, then, is to realize that it is *"not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy"* Titus 3:5, and the second, to believe on Him that justifieth the ungodly *"that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe"* Galatians 3:22. From the use of the words "faith" and "believe" in relation to justification, it is clear that faith in Jesus Christ is the instrument by which we receive Christ and His righteousness.

We should emphasize here again, as in the lesson on faith, that there is no conflict in the Bible between James and other books ie. Romans, Galatians, etc. on this matter of faith and works. The Bible simply looks at faith from God's standpoint; whereas, the book of James considers it from man's viewpoint. However, we must not slight good works, for they have their place. They are the result of justification rather than the means by which we are justified. Works do not merit any special favor, but they do have their reward in the life of the justified, In conclusion, we may briefly say that men are justified by the judicial act of God, Romans 8:33, on the basis of Christ's righteousness, which the sinner receives by simple faith Romans 5:1 and manifests through good works James 2:14,18-24.

Notes

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Simple Justification**Lesson 4**

Name _____

1. What is the doctrine of Justification?
2. Who or what brings about justification?
3. When does justification take place?
4. What does "to justify," mean as used in the Scripture?
5. Upon what is justification based?
6. What does "imputation," mean when used in connection with the doctrine of Justification?
7. What person in the New Testament most clearly illustrates imputation?
8. How is Justification accomplished?
9. What does the Bible say is the purpose of the law?
10. How does God, by His grace, justify man?
11. How is forgiveness of sin, as a basis of justification, made possible?
12. Basically, what relationship is affected when we are justified?
13. Where does justification take place?
14. Where can the doctrine of justification be found?
15. What was the meaning of Old Testament sacrifices?
16. With what does justification deal?
17. What is the definition of justification?
18. Why is there no question concerning man's guilt before God?
(Quote at least one verse of Scripture as evidence)
19. What is the Old Testament meaning of justification?

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20. What is the New Testament meaning of justification?
 21. What are the two elements of justification?
 22. Define the negative element of justification.
 23. Define the positive element of justification.
 24. When a sinner is justified by Christ, what does he receive?
 25. How is justification accomplished?
 26. What is the ground or basis for our justification?
 27. How are we justified?
- Man's original fellowship and happy communion with God was broken by sin.
 - Justification is nothing more than simply acquittal.
 - The term "To justify" means to change one's character.
 - "Justification" and "condemnation" mean the same thing.
 - Justification deals with our standing before God it does not change our character.
 - Because God does not consider sin very serious, it is easy for Him to forgive.
 - Sin is primarily an offense against our fellowman.
 - Justification deals primarily with our relation to God and has no power to cleanse the sinner.' s conscience.
 - Grace is a very important element in justification.
 - God could not be "just and the justifier" at the same time if Christ had not fully paid the penalty.



Scripture Memorization, write these verses out on the back of this page, Romans 3:20; Romans 3:24, 25; Titus 3:3-7. They must be in KJV.

any questions?