

Of Justification, Part 1 (Romans 3:24)

Baptist Confession of Faith (1689) Chapter 11, Paragraph 1

Doctrine

Defining Justification

- Justification, in regards to salvation, means to declare **righteous**.
- Justification is a **legal**, or forensic, term describing God's righteous act of pardoning and dealing with sinners.
- In Scripture, the verb 'to save' is used in three **tenses**: 'have been saved' (Eph. 2:8), referring to justification; 'are being saved' (1 Cor. 1:18), referring to sanctification; and 'shall be saved' (Rom. 5:9), referring to glorification.
- To be **justified** is to be declared (once and irrevocably) righteous by God because of the imputed righteousness of His Son, given according to His grace, received through faith.
- **Justification** is punctiliar; Sanctification is progressive.

The Recipients, Grounds, and Means of Justification (c.f. Romans 5:17-19)

- [Only] those whom God effectually calls, he also **freely** justifies.
- God is the justifier; the elect are **receivers** of justification.
- We are not justified by the infusion of righteousness (either extrinsic or intrinsic), but the **imputation** (meaning attributing) of (extrinsic) righteousness.
- In justification our sins are **pardoned** by God, and we are accounted/accepted as righteous.
- Our sins, though pardoned, are not **unpunished**, so that justice is not upheld.
- We are justified for, or on the account of, Christ's sake alone, meaning because He has **atoned** for our sins.

- God does not impute to us **faith** itself, the act of believing or any other obedience, as our righteousness; rather, the very righteousness of Christ alone is imputed to the believer.
- The assurance of salvation granted to believers is not subjective (resting in our faith), but **objective** (resting on Christ alone).
- The righteousness of Christ is described in **two** particular categories.
- The **active** obedience of Christ is His perfect obedience to the whole law of God with His whole life.
- The **passive** obedience of Christ is the perfect substitutionary work of Christ in His death by taking upon Himself the sin of the elect and wrath of God for their sins.
- This is the whole and sole righteousness and **hope** of the believer.
- Believers receive and rest on **Christ** and His righteousness by faith.
- This faith, though, is not of ourselves, but is the **gift** of God.

Other Cross-References:

Romans 4:5-8, 8:30; 1 Corinthians 1:30-31, Ephesians 1:7, 2:8-10; Philippians 3:8-9

Application:

- 1) Increasing **Confession**: Growing recognition and admission of our estate before the holy God, of who He is, and what He has done
- 2) Maturing **Faith**: Deepening trust in the finished and final work of the Lord Christ Jesus
- 3) Evangelical **Obedience**: Persevering in faith and repentance, being conformed more each day to be like our Saviour