

**I. Introduction and Review. v. 21**

- A. How can a person be just in God's sight? Job 9:2 Acts 16:30 Mt. 19:16
- B. Paul has proven that all of us are sinful and justly condemned. 1:18-3:20
- C. *But now!* God's total answer to man's total failure. 3:21-5:20 Ga. 4:4 II Ti. 1:10

**II. The sole source of justification is God. v. 21-23**

- A. You cannot make yourself righteous by law works. v. 21a, 20 Ga. 2:16
- B. You need the righteousness which is from God. v. 21b
- C. This way of salvation is revealed in the Old Testament. v. 21c Mt. 5:17-18 Lu. 24:10f
  - 1. Salvation by grace through faith in Christ's redeeming work is foretold in the Law and the Prophets. v. 22 Gen. 3:15 15:6 Hab. 2:4 Heb. 9:22 Jer. 31:31-34
  - 2. The gospel is not contrary to the Old Testament law, rather it fulfills the law.
- D. Every person needs this righteousness from God because of sin. v. 22b-23
  - 1. All have sinned: in Adam our representative, and personally. 5:12 1:18-3:20
  - 2. All fall short of the glory of God. 1:21-23. I Co. 11:7
- E. The sole source of our righteousness is God's free and sovereign grace. v. 24b  
Grace is God's favor to us apart from merit (and in spite of demerit). 8:3 II Ti. 1:9

**III. The nature of justification is forensic. v. 24a**

- A. Justification is the legal sentence issued by God in which He pronounces you free from guilt and acceptable in His sight.
  - 1. You are no longer liable to punishment.
  - 2. You are entitled to all the privileges due those who have kept the law.
  - 3. Justification is the opposite of condemnation, which is a declaration that one is guilty and worthy of punishment. 5:18-19
- B. Justification is a change of legal status. Gen. 15:6
  - 1. Justification is *not* to make righteous by effecting a change in character.
    - a. Righteousness is imputed, not infused. 5:1,18-19
    - b. Justification occurs instantaneously at the moment of faith. 5:1
  - 2. Justification is *not* merely a pardon. You aren't merely forgiven. You are also pronounced righteous. Phil. 3:9
  - 3. Many lack assurance because they misunderstand the nature of justification.
- C. Justification comes only to those who have faith in Jesus. v. 22,25,26

**IV. The only ground of justification is the work of Christ. v. 24b-25a**

- A. God justifies us through the redemption accomplished by Christ. v. 24b
  - 1. Redemption is deliverance by means of the payment of a ransom. v. 24b Lev. 25:47f
  - 2. The price of our redemption is the death of Christ. Mark 10:45 I Pe. 1:18-19 Heb. 9:11-12,15 Eph. 1:7 Rev. 5:9 Acts 20:28 He paid the full price.
  - 3. To whom was the ransom paid?
  - 4. The costliness of the gracious gift magnifies the generosity of the Giver.

- B. Redemption was accomplished through Christ's propitiatory sacrifice. v. 25a**
1. Propitiation is the turning away of wrath by means of sacrifice. v. 25a
  2. God's wrath is turned away by the shed blood of Christ. I Jo. 4:10 2:2 Rev. 5:9 Eph. 1:7 Acts 20:28 Heb. 9:11-14,22 10:19 I Jo. 1:7 Lev. 17:11
    - a. God had taught His people that there is no salvation apart from the shedding of blood. Heb. 9:11-14,22 John 1:29
    - b. *Blood* stands for the substitutionary atoning death of Christ. Ga. 6:14
  3. Some object to the concept of propitiation.
    - a. Many are offended at the very concept of God's wrath.
    - b. They believe that it makes God like the capricious vindictive pagan deities.
  4. Other possible interpretations have been put forward.
    - a. Expiation (cleansing without reference to placating wrath).
    - b. Mercy seat. Heb. 9:5 Ex. 25:17
  5. God's holy wrath makes the atonement necessary. 1:18 2:5,8 3:5
  6. In contrast to the propitiation of pagan deities:
    - a. God's wrath is holy and just.
    - b. God takes initiative and does the propitiating. 5:8 8:3 IJo. 4:10 II Co. 5:18-21

- C. For whom did Christ make redemption and propitiate the wrath of God?  
Jesus accomplished redemption and made propitiation only for those who would believe and be saved, that is the elect. 8:32 John 10:11 Eph. 5:25**

**V. The object of justification is the demonstration of God's righteousness. v. 25b-26**

- A. How can God declare the wicked to be righteous without compromising His Own Holy Character? 4:5 Ps. 17:15 Deut. 25:1 Ex. 23:7**
- B. Christ's work publicly displays how God saves justly.**
1. The cross vindicates God's righteousness in overlooking past sins. v. 25b
  2. The cross vindicates God's righteousness in presently forgiving sins. v. 26a
  3. The cross makes God both just and the justifier of the ungodly. Ps. 85:10
  4. The cross is the only ground on which God has ever pardoned sin. Heb. 10:1-4
- C. God will fully vindicate His justice. Acts 14:16 17:30**

**VI. The means by which justification is applied is faith alone. v. 22,25,26**

- A. We are justified by faith in Christ Who has redeemed us and propitiated God's wrath against our sin by His blood.**
1. We are justified by faith alone. All idea of earning is excluded. Eph. 2:8-9
  2. Nor will just any faith do.
  3. Faith involves knowledge, assent (agreement), and trust (commitment).
- B. Faith is *not* the grounds of our justification.**
1. Some look upon faith as the one good work one does to earn God's favor.
  2. Faith is the channel by which we receive the benefits of the meritorious work of Christ and are justified.
  3. Even your faith is a gift from God..
- C. This method of salvation is for all without distinction. v. 22b Acts 4:12 John 14:6**

**VII. Concluding applications. 10:13 I Co. 6:20 1:30-31**

### **Discussion Questions for Family Worship**

- 1. Why can't man make himself righteous? v. 21a**
- 2. In what way is the gospel proclaimed in the Old Testament? v. 21b**
- 3. What is the sole source of our salvation?**
- 4. What is the nature of justification? v. 24**
- 5. On what ground does God declare us righteous?**
- 6. What is redemption? v. 26**
- 7. Define propitiation. v. 25a**
- 8. How does God's method of justification display His righteousness? v. 25b-26**
- 9. What is wrong with each of these statements?**
  - A. God gives us right standing with Himself by making us innocent and virtuous.**
  - B. God declares us righteous on the merits of our faith.**
  - C. When God saw that mankind could not keep the law, He decided to send His Son into the world.**
  - D. Justification is simply a pardon from God.**