



Justification is the act of God whereby He declares the believing sinner righteous in Christ on the basis of the finished work of Christ on the cross. Each part of this definition is important, so we must consider it carefully.

To begin with, justification is an *act*, not a process. There are no degrees of justification; each believer has the same right standing before God. Also, justification is something *God* does, not man. No sinner can justify himself before God. Most important, justification does not mean that God *makes* us righteous, but that He *declares* us righteous. Justification is a legal matter. God puts the righteousness of Christ on our record in the place of our own sinfulness. And nobody can change this record except the individual who whom the record speaks.

Do not confuse justification and sanctification. Sanctification is the process whereby God makes the believer more and more like Christ. Sanctification may change from day to day. Justification never changes. When the sinner trusts and obeys Christ, God declares him righteous, and that declaration will never be repealed unless we choose to have it repealed. God looks on us and deals with us as though we had never sinned at all!

But, how can the holy God declare sinners righteous? Is justification merely a “fictional idea” that has no real foundation? In this section of Romans, Paul answered these questions in two ways. First, he explained justification by faith (Rom. 3:21–31); then he illustrated justification by faith from the life of Abraham (Rom. 4:1–25).

## Justification Explained! 3:21-31

Characteristics of the righteousness that has been revealed:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ from law 3:21
2. Through \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ Jesus 3:22a
3. For \_\_\_\_\_ men 3:22b-23
4. By \_\_\_\_\_ 3:24
5. At great \_\_\_\_\_ to God 3:24b-25
6. In \_\_\_\_\_ justice 3:25a-26
7. To \_\_\_\_\_ the Law 3:27-31

## Justification Illustrated! 4:1-25

Three facts about Abraham’s salvation that prove his experience and that of a Christian are alike:

1. He was justified by \_\_\_\_\_ not \_\_\_\_\_ 4:1-8
2. He was justified by \_\_\_\_\_ not \_\_\_\_\_ 4:9-17
3. He was justified by \_\_\_\_\_ power not \_\_\_\_\_ effort 4:18-25