

**Rom. 4:25; He who was delivered up because of our transgression, and was raised because of our justification.**

This study came about from my study on forgiveness. It seemed that as I was studying the word “forgiveness” the word “justification,” in some form wanted to appear with it as if it was a word that was a twin to “forgiveness.” It is kind of like “grace and mercy.” For some time I had the misunderstanding that when Christ died for my sin on the cross and I was forgiven of my sin, Jesus Christ had accomplished the Father’s end for me. What I now know is that His death on the cross that provided my forgiveness was only a part of the work; it is a very necessary part, it is a part that is very deep into the process and an integral part, but it is not the completion of the process. His death removed our condemnation but we still have to come before the Father with Christ to be declared righteous, thus justified. Since we are all sinners and will always be a sinner as long as we take a breath on this earth, forgiveness is something that we will need continually, but justification is a one time, completed, action. If Jesus Christ had died for our sin and remained in the grave, our forgiveness would have also remained in the grave. Since Christ was raised from the dead to be with the Father and took His rightful place at His right hand side, it assures our resurrection also. Upon our resurrection He can and does present us as being righteous and the Father declares us justified to take our rightful place also.

Although this is a process, we should not think of it as being a time consuming process, we are declared righteous by our spiritual position immediately when we believe in our Lord Jesus Christ and have faith in Him and His completed work. The resurrection of Jesus Christ must not be thought of simply as evidence of His death. The stress here is that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is necessary for justification, not merely because of the difference it makes to us as certifying the atoning efficacy of His death and thus evoking our faith in Him, but also because of the difference it makes for Christ Himself. It marks the point at which His sovereign power as Lord is made effective. Our justification, the basis of which has been laid in the death of Christ, becomes an accomplished fact and effective reality only through Christ’s rising again from the dead and being resurrected into heaven to be with the Father who is in heaven. Christ dwelt in His rightful place in heaven from all eternity past until His incarnation and upon His death and resurrection returned to His rightful place in heaven. **John 1:1-2; In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the word was God. He was in the beginning with God.**

God’s forgiveness is more than what the ordinary person means when he talks about forgiveness. It is more than merely the removal of hostility or the ignoring of wrongdoing. When God forgives the sinner, He also “justifies” him, bringing him into a right relationship with

God the Father, Himself, **Rom. 5:6-11**; *for while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more than, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For, if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.* Let's unpack these verses by looking at the original Greek meaning and intent of these words: *Because while we were yet in a continual state of sin and wretchedness, at a set time Christ died on account of our continual sin, i.e., He made atonement and satisfied all that God demanded for those practicing immoral and impious behavior to be saved. Since it would be impossible to find anyone who is human that would die on account of the sin of another person to make such atonement or to satisfy the law for a man that has conditioned his life by the standard which is God's; although probably for a man who we would consider as a person that is a good influence on others by worldly standards, then maybe someone would have the courage to die. But God practices His own love for us, in this way, in that while we were still erring from the divine law, while we stood against everything that God stood for, Christ made atonement and satisfaction for our errors of practicing immoral and impious behavior. But much more than that even, since we now have at this time been declared righteous and regarded as pious, not by means of the law, but by means of His giving up His life by the shedding of His blood as an atonement for our sins, we shall be saved from eternal death, sin, and the punishment and misery consequent to our sin. Because if during the time that we were continually His adversary, we were redeemed by God Himself by His taking upon Himself our sin and becoming an atonement, much more, having been redeemed, we shall be saved from the punishment and misery consequent to our sin by His life. And not only that, but we also glory in God by means of our Lord Jesus Christ, by the means of whom we now have received a change of heart by going from being in a state of God's adversary to one of friendship with Him.* In these verses Paul argues from the lesser to the greater. His logic is that if God's love went out to us while we were ungodly enemies, will He not "much more" preserve us now that we belong to Him? This brings us to one of the **benefits of justification**; we are eternally secure in Jesus Christ. The way Paul points this out to us is by the phrase "much more." "Much more" preserved in deliverance (v-9); "much more" preserved in our preservation by His resurrection life (v-10). In verses 6, 7, and 8 Paul emphasizes what we were (without strength, ungodly sinners) when Christ died for us; unable and un-desiring to do anything about our sin and spiritual death. In verses 9 and 10 he emphasizes what we are now (justified by Christ's blood, reconciled by His death) and the resulting certainty of what the Savior will do for us (deliver us from wrath, preserve us by His life).

First we are reminded that we were weak, helpless, without strength, and unable to save ourselves. But at the pre-determined time the Lord Jesus Christ visited us (became incarnate), and died for sinful men. And He did not die for good men, as some might suppose, but for the ungodly. There was no virtue, no excellence in us to command us to God, in other words, none of us were perfectly good enough to measure up to what God requires as His measure of righteousness. We were utterly unworthy, but Christ died for us anyway. This act of divine love was unique and unparalleled by anything in human experience. The average man's life is precious to him, and he would not think of throwing it away for an unworthy person. For example he would not die for a murderer, an adulterer, or a mobster. In fact, he would be reluctant to die even for a righteous man, one who is honest and dependable, but not especially warm hearted. It is possible, in an extreme case that he would die for a good man, meaning one who is kind, friendly, lovable, and loving; but rarely are we able to find a man that would give up his life for another, outside of his family.

The love of God is completely supernatural and otherworldly. He demonstrated His marvelous love toward us by sending His beloved Son to die for us while we were still sinners. If we ask Him why He did it, we must look for the answer in the sovereign will of God Himself. There was no good in us to call forth such love. Now, in our faith in Him, a new set of conditions exists. We are no longer considered guilty sinners. At the enormous cost of the Savior's blood, shed for us at Calvary, we have been counted as righteous by God. Since He went to such tremendous cost to justify us while we were sinners, will He not "much more" save us from wrath through Jesus Christ? If He has already paid the greatest price to bring us into His favor, is it likely that He would allow us to perish in the end? We are saved from wrath in this time and in eternity.

Going back to what we were and what we are now, think of it this way. It was when we were enemies that we were reconciled to God through the death and resurrection of His Son. We were hostile toward the Lord and quite content to have it so. Left to ourselves, we felt no need of being reconciled to Him. Think of it—enemies of God! God did not share our attitude in the matter, that is, who we were did not repulse Him to the point that he stopped loving us. He intervened in a display of pure grace. The substitutable death of Christ, death being the penalty for our sin, removed the cause of our hostility toward God—namely, our sins. ***Rom. 1:32 those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give a hearty approval to those who practice them.*** (It should be noted that "death" as it is being used means "separation from God and the effectiveness of His presence). By faith in Christ we have been reconciled to God. If God purchased our reconciliation at so dearly a price, will He ever let us go? If we were reconciled through the death of His Son, which is a symbol of our utter weakness, shall we not be preserved to the end by the present life of Christ at the right

hand of God? If His death has such power to save us, how “much more” will His life have power to keep us?

We now have the benefit of rejoicing in God Himself. Before we were saved we found our happiness elsewhere, that is, we were dependent on outside circumstances to provide our happiness. Now we can exult in joy whenever we remember Him, and are sad only when we forget Him. What has produced this marvelous change, so that now we can be glad in God? It is the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Like all of our other blessings, this joy comes to us through Him. Another benefit we can enjoy by being justified is found in the words of verse 11. “We now receive reconciliation.” Reconciliation refers to the establishment of harmony between God and man through the sacrificial work of the Savior. The entrance of sin had brought estrangement, alienation, and enmity between God and man. By putting away sin, which had caused the alienation, the Lord Jesus restored those who believe in Him to a state of harmony with God. We should note here that God did not need to be reconciled; it was man who needed it, because he was at enmity with God.

The reconciliation that we can experience, through Jesus Christ, is defined in the Bible as to set up as relationship of peace that was nonexistent before, or to restore a relationship of peace which has been disturbed, ***Eph. 2:14-16; for He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one (the circumcised and the uncircumcised), and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death enmity. Col. 1:19-21; For it was the Father’s good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.*** It is very obvious in these verses that this type of reconciliation is the gathering together of two into one or under one head, which, in these verses, refers to the doctrinal bringing together of Jews and Gentiles under one church or head, that is, Jesus Christ.

This reconciliation also includes the changing of one’s own feelings towards God or anyone else. ***Matt. 5:23-24; if therefore you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.*** If a person offends another, whether by anger or any other cause, there is no use in his bringing a gift to God, because while we are maintaining and entertaining that anger it is an offense to God. The Lord will not be pleased with it or us. The offender should first go and make a wrong right. In this case even if you are not angry with a person but you know

that they are angry with you, this understanding still applies to you, whether the quarrel is one-sided or two sided, and only then will your gift be acceptable to God.

This word “reconcile” also means to be “propitious” (favorably inclined, gracious, or advantageous), when applied to God; it means “kind, gentle, and gracious when applied to mankind. **Heb. 2:17; therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation ( a favorable sacrifice) for the sins of the people.** In this verse Christ is spoken about as the High Priest who in the fashion of the OT sacrifices, gave Himself to make reconciliation for the sins of the people, to cause God to be propitious or merciful toward sinful man. What Christ did in sacrificing Himself for our sins showed Him to be merciful and faithful. His sacrifices as God-Man satisfied God’s justice so that, instead of God rightly demonstrating His wrath toward sinful man, He demonstrated His mercy, **Rom. 1:18; For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.** Christ is the High Priest who offers Himself, becoming at once both victim and priest, thus satisfying the justice of God and at the same time procuring forgiveness of sins whereby reconciled man is offered access to and communion with God. Therefore, the Lord Jesus as the High Priest is said not to appease God in any way, but to make possible the taking away of sins of the people without violating God’s holiness. It is not the nature of God that has changed from one of hatred to one of love toward man, but it is the nature of man that is changed. **Rom. 5:9; Much more than, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.** In this verse man is presented as having been justified by the means of the blood of Christ, (the sacrificial death), and through Him escaping God’s wrath. Man is proclaimed as not guilty and is portrayed as reconciled to God through the death of His Son.

The word “reconciliation” involves a change which is brought about through the death of Christ. The blood of Christ satisfied God’s justice and, through faith, this death of Christ changes man making him a friend with whom God can now have fellowship without any compromise.

The corresponding Hebrew word that refers to reconciliation was closely connected with the three Levitical offerings mentioned in **Ezek. 45:15; for a grain offering, for a burnt offering, and for a peace offering, to make atonement for them, declares the Lord God.** These offerings were intended to reconcile God and sinning people. These offerings were closely connected to propitiation: the burnt offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering, each of which was geared toward reconciliation. The burnt offering required the offerer to put his hand upon the offering’s head, **Lev. 1:4; and he shall lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, that it may be accepted for him to make atonement on his behalf.** This indicated the

identification between the offerer and the offering. The latter died as a substitute for the guilty offerer and accomplished an atonement. The sin offering applied to those who sinned inadvertently, **Lev. 4:2-3; *Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, "If a person sins unintentionally in any of the things which the Lord has commanded not to be done, and commits any of them, if the anointed priest sins so as to bring guilt on the people, then let him offer to the Lord a bull without defect as a sin offering for the sin he has committed."*** As with the burnt offering, the offerer placed his hand upon the head of the sacrifice. The blood of the sacrifice played an important part in the offering, **Lev. 4:6, 17, 25, 30; *and the priest shall dip his finger in the blood, and sprinkle some of the blood seven times before the Lord, in front of the veil of the sanctuary. And the priest shall dip his finger in the blood, and sprinkle it seven times before the Lord, in front of the veil. Then the priest is to take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger, and put it on the horns of the altar of the burnt offering; and the rest of its blood he shall pour out of the base of the altar of burnt offering. And the priest shall take some of its blood with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering; and the rest of the blood he shall pour out at the base of the altar.*** The trespass offering differed from the sin offering in that it stressed the harm done by the offerer. It required restitution plus an additional 20% to be given. It differed from the other two offerings in that no mention is made of the offerer placing his hand upon the head of the offering.

The propitiation offered by Christ is capable of dealing with every kind of sin barrier between God and man, not with sins of ignorance and infirmity alone. The key to the discussion is that Christ is a "better sacrifice;" **Heb. 9:22-24; *according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. Therefore it was necessary for the copies of things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.*** This perfects the imperfect, abolishes the typical, and lifts the whole significance of propitiation from the circle of legal and ceremonial ideas into the realm of abiding ethical and spiritual realities. Therefore, Jesus, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish unto God, **Heb. 9:14; *how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*** Thus Christ becomes the author of eternal salvation—a salvation whose characteristic is finality, i.e., through His own blood (i.e., on the basis of His sacrificial death), He entered once for all, into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us, **Heb. 9:12; *and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.***

There is another instance of the word “reconciliation” being used as a sinner is being dealt with mercy, not taking into account the consequences of his sin, **Luke 18:13, 14; but the tax-gatherer, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast saying, “God, be merciful to me, the sinner!” I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted.** While in **Hebrews 2:17; therefore He had to be made like His brethren in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.** This word for “propitiation” means to pay the necessary price for the “expiation” (pay the penalty for) and removal of the sins of the people. This is parallel to what the high priest did, but His was a perfect and a far better sacrifice in that it was permanent and unrestricted. The high priests of the OT had to repeat this sacrifice once a year, but in the case of Christ, His sacrifice was perfect and it did not require a re-doing. In Hebrews 9:5 we read about the “mercy seat;” this was a lid or covering over the Ark of the Covenant on which the high priest sprinkled the blood of an expiatory victim. This is symbolic in that the blood of the sacrifice came between God’s covenant and sinful man; the lid, with the blood on it, temporarily came between man’s sin and the covenant so that his sin was covered by the blood of the sacrifice. The blood was representative of man’s forgiveness thus bringing to him a *temporary* reconciliation. But as we know, it wouldn’t be long before man sinned again and another sacrifice would be required; thus the annual sacrifice was needed.

The use of all of these words and phrases, (e.g. reconciliation, justification, blood sacrifice, etc.), must be connected with the blood of Christ shed on the cross. The cross was the place of expiation (the mercy seat) and Christ was the sacrifice whose blood (His sacrificial death) was sprinkled on it.

**Heb. 8:12; for I will be merciful to their iniquities and I will remember their sins no more.** The Lord Jesus is declaring in this verse, that He, through the sacrifice of Himself, will become the means of the removal of the sins of His people and of their status of unrighteousness or enmity with God.

The word “propitiation,” itself, is only found in two verses by John, **1 John 2:2; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world. 1 John 4:10; In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.** And Paul used it once, **Rom. 3:25; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed.** It is the means of putting away sin and establishing righteousness. God is never presented as changing His mind toward the sinner or the sin that estranged the sinner from

Him. Man is never said to be able to appease God with any of His offerings, as in the heathen religions where man offered gifts in an attempt to accomplish this.

In the NT, we find man incapable of offering anything to pacify God because He is a righteous God and man is depraved and so everything he does has an issue of depravity attached to it. Therefore there is nothing that man can do about his sin and separation from God; it would take a perfect God to do what was required for reconciliation. For Him to accept sinful man it was necessary for God, not man, to do something to deliver man from his sin, **1 John 2:1; therefore you are without excuse, every man of you who passes judgment, for in that you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.** This is the reason why we find Jesus Christ presented as the righteous One. God demands that payment for sin be made once and for all, but man has nothing with which to make sufficient payment. It is Christ Himself, therefore, who becomes the propitiation, the means which is acceptable to God to satisfy His righteousness or justice. This does not merely appease God but provides the means for the redemption of man. Christ is the propitiation which supplies the method of deliverance from our sin and, being reconciled to God, we are acceptable for fellowship with God. Christ became the vicarious (substitute) and expiatory (one who pays the penalty) sacrifice for our sins, He is the only who could. John adds that this sacrifice of Christ was a historical event. Jesus Christ does not need to shed His blood and die again for any new believers because it is all-encompassing. His sacrifice covered all the sins of past believers, present believers, and future believers. Nobody's sins have ever been permanently removed in any other way except by means of the Lord Jesus Christ and His death on Calvary's cross. OT sacrifices pointed toward Christ's sacrifice, which is an objective (being the aim or goal) accomplishment, a finished work for the whole world as a basis from which individual forgiveness and cleansing from sin proceeds.

The virtue (righteousness) of the propitiation extends beyond the subjective experience (individual bias and limitations) of those who actually are made partakers of grace. 1 John 2:2 told us that Christ's propitiation was vividly personal; *"He is our propitiation."* The life of Christ as well as His death are involved, His person as well as His work. The use of the word "propitiation" by John refers not only to the process of atonement, but also to its final achievement as fact: *"He is the propitiation," 1 John 1:7; but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. "His blood is cleansing us from all sin!"* It is more than a completed act. The propitiation abides as a living, present energy residing in the personality of Christ Himself. According to John, therefore, the propitiation is the cleansing from sin rather than merely the work of justification before God or the acceptance of the sinner as if he had never sinned.



Paul associates Christ's propitiation as more closely connected with the righteousness of the Law. In John, love and propitiation become interchangeable realities necessary to one another, with the one explaining the other, even lost in one another. John defines love by propitiation, and propitiation by love; **1 John 3:16; we know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 1 John 4:10; In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.** When John speaks of God as love, he refers to Him as the means of reconciliation of man to God.

The death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ brought with it a change or a reconciliation, restoration, or exchange. A change or reconciliation from a state of enmity between persons to one of friendship and between God and man as a result of redemption, the divine act of salvation or the ceasing of God's wrath. In the NT reconciliation means a restoration to divine favor brought about by a change in man, or a conversion; it is the means of reconciling the world to God; **Rom. 5:11; And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we now have received the reconciliation. Rom. 11:15; for if their (Jews) rejection be the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead.**

The word reconcile is also used of the divine work of redemption denoting that act of redemption in so far as God Himself is concerned by taking upon Himself our sin and becoming an atonement. Thus a relationship of peace with mankind is established which was hitherto prevented by the demands of His justice.

God not only removes condemnation, He also gives righteousness, **Rom. 4:6-8, David also speaks of the blessing upon the man to whom God reckons righteousness apart from works: "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven, and whose sins have been covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account." Rom. 4:22; Therefore it (faith in God) was also reckoned to him as righteousness. 2 Cor. 5:19; God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.** Let's go to the original Greek words of verse Rom. 4:22 to get a clearer picture of the intent of this verse: *Additionally, therefore, Abraham's actions of his character and faith in God was in God's mind regarded as evidence of His heart being right towards God and thus acceptable to God.* God was pleased to find a man who took Him at His word. He always is pleased to find a man in this condition of heart. He says it and you trust in it. And, so, because of His faith in God, He credited righteousness to Abraham's account. Where once there had been a balance of sin and guilt, now there was nothing but a righteous standing before God. Abraham had been delivered from condemnation and was justified by a holy God through faith.

Forgiveness is something the believer continues to be in need of because he is still likely to sin, **Matt. 6:12; and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.** In the Greek this verse would sound like this: *And additionally, pardon us from our offenses that require reparation, as we have pardoned those who have failed in their duty to us.* This does not refer to judicial forgiveness, that is, debts that a court may require of us, from the penalty of sin which is death or the separation from God and the effectiveness of His attributes, (hell). Rather this refers to the parental forgiveness that is necessary if fellowship with our Father is to be maintained. If believers are unwilling to forgive those who have wronged them, how can they expect to be in fellowship with their Father who has freely forgiven them for their wrongdoings? Justification is a once for all elected act, a declaration by God to the believer that He is declared righteous in His Son.

The forgiveness that a believer needs day by day is concerned not with the basic work of justification, but with the believer's daily enjoyment of fellowship with God. Although the penalty of sin has been paid in full, the evil effects of sin are still in the world and the believer cannot escape them. His failures may disappoint himself and God, but as he confesses them he is assured of God's forgiveness, **1 John 1:7; but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. 1 John 1:9; If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.** The declaration of these verses is very important for the believer to trust in, so let's take a look at 1 John 1:9, after we have defined these words from the Greek: *Whosoever shall admit to his missing the true end and scope of his life, which is eternal existence with God, (for God is faithful and dependable to His promises and He is One who acts conformably to justice and right without any deficiencies or failures to let go of the obligation that comes as a result of us missing the true end and scope of our lives), God will purify him from the pollution and guilt of his sin.* His justification, however, is never in question of being trustworthy; He *always* does the right thing.

If we were to look up the Biblical definition of "justification" this is the meaning we would find, according to the "The Complete Word Study Dictionary." In the Greek; it means *an act which declares a right or just person as such;* and in the Hebrew: *to declare right, to prove one innocent.*

As I ponder these definitions the thought that automatically comes to mind is that this is the requirement that God has commanded for us to enter into God's rest. Obviously rebellion towards God (or sin) cannot co-exist with God in harmony; so as depraved sinners, and Webster defines depraved as *morally bad, corrupt, and perverted* and this is how the Bible describes us, how do we get from being depraved sinners to becoming justified, or as the definition puts it declared right or proved innocent, **(Rom. 1:28); And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge**

***God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper. (1 Tim. 6:4,5); he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction between men of depraved minds and deprived of the truth who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. (2 Tim. 3:8); And just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men of depraved minds, rejected as regards the faith. (Hosea 5:2); and the revolters have gone deep in depravity, but I will chastise all of them. (Hosea 9:9); They have gone deep into depravity as in the days of Gibeah; He will remember their iniquity, He will punish their sins;*** Let's unpack Rom. 1:28 and see if we can shed some light on how we are in our natural state; that is, depraved: *Also, in as much as they did not judge it in their heart to be fit and proper to be personally involved in the knowledge of God any longer, God promised to give them the desires of their reprobate (damning) abominable (disgusting, vile, loathsome) mind that is not approved by God or by man, to live a pathway of life doing and practicing actions that are not becoming of a moral person.* Sometimes if we are looking at ourselves in an honest way it can be hard to admit or to see ourselves as we honestly are in our sin, but the important thing is to be able to see ourselves as God sees us. If the definition "sinful" doesn't fit, then we shouldn't apply it to ourselves, however, if it does we should not despair, but allow the Holy Spirit to change our heart, which will change us, that is, who we are in our sin. Being honest with God is not letting God in on our own little secret, God knows us better than we know ourselves. We are not telling God something that He doesn't already know; we need only to initiate an action that will allow a change to occur. He has already done His part, in the justifying work on the cross and resurrection.

We, in our sense of who we are, do not like to hear that we are depraved in our minds, but the Bible clearly states that we, at the very least, were at one time and we eventually have to come to grips with the fact that without the guidance of the Holy Spirit we still are of a depraved mind. The only thing that keeps us from acting on it is the conviction of the Holy Spirit. So let's take a look at the Biblical definition of "depraved" to get a better understanding of what the Bible is telling us about our state of mind. In the Greek one definition comes from two words, "without" and "acceptable." It has the meaning of unapproved, unworthy, spurious, (illegitimate, artificial, counterfeit), or worthless. It has the sense of being disapproved, rejected, or casted away, ***1 Cor. 9:27; but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified. 2 Cor. 13:5-7; test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test. But I trust that you will realize that we ourselves are not approved. Now we pray to God that you do no wrong; not that we ourselves may appear approved, but that you may do what is right, even though we should not appear unapproved. Heb. 6:8; but if it yields thorns and thistles, it is worthless and***

**close to being cursed and it ends up being burned. Titus 1:16; they profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient, and worthless for any good deed.** These definitions describe a person, who in God's eyes, are of a reprobate abominable mind, a mind to be abhorred by God and man. Metaphorically and in a moral sense it means to corrupt wholly or pervert as we read in 1 Tim. 6:5, representing men of perverse minds. Like it or not this represents who we are in our natural fallen state.

As for the English words for "justification" and "righteousness" they are different parts of the same word in the original languages of the Bible. This applies to the Hebrew of the OT and the Greek of the NT.

Most commonly the Bible uses the word "justify" in what might be called a legal sense. The picture is that of a courtroom where the righteous person is the one whom the judge declares to be right. The person is justified. In other words, to justify means to declare righteous, to declare to be right, to vindicate. It is the opposite of to condemn, which means to declare guilty, to declare to be in the wrong; **(Deut. 25:1, 2); If there is a dispute between men and they go to court, and the judge decides their case, and they justify the righteous and condemn the wicked, then it shall be if the wicked man deserves to be beaten, the judge shall then make him lie down and be beaten in his presence with the number of stripes according to his guilt. (Job 13:18); Behold now, I have prepared my case; I know that I will be vindicated. (Isa. 50:7-8); For the Lord God helps Me, therefore I am not disgraced; Therefore I have set My face like flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. He who vindicates Me is near; who will contend with Me? Let us stand up to each other; who has a case against Me? Let him draw near to Me. (Matt. 12:37); "For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned. (Luke 18:14); "I tell you this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted. (Rom. 8:33); He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?** Let's unpack Matt. 12:37, to see if this verse can be enlightening for us a little more: *Because, in accordance with your conversations you have brought out the fact and it can be recognized by all that you have been set forth as righteous; and equally so, in accordance with your conversations you give evidence of your condemnation.* Not only our works and actions, but words of all sorts, will come into account in the Day of Judgment. And from these words, actions, and deeds, it will be evidence for or against a man to acquit (i.e., count him as righteous or justified) him or to condemn him. Because these words (since we are talking about words, but not exclusively) will appear to be evidences for or against man's being in state of grace and righteousness. For instance, if a man has spoken of Christ, and has freely confessed that all of his hope for justification before God, and acceptance, is based solely upon the account of the righteousness of Christ imputed (i.e.,

that Christ is the source) to us; this man will be declared as a justified man according to the tenor of his own words.

On the other hand, a man that has spoken harsh words against Christ and His righteousness; declaring that he has no dependence on it, and expects no justification by it; he will be convicted by these ungodly sayings and out of his mouth will be condemned. Some of us have been misled to believe that little or no account would be taken of a man's words in the Day of Judgment, provided his life and actions were good, and regular. But the truth is that out of a man's mouth comes the heart of a man; ***(Matt. 15:18), But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile a man. (Mark 7:21-23), For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All of these things proceed from within and defile the man.*** Translated from Greek to English this means the verse in Matt. 15:18 says this; *Also, whatever words that are uttered and proceeds out of the mouth of a man originate from his thoughts, his values, affections, and passions; and these pollute his mind and eventually the mouth of every one of mankind.*

In this courtroom scene, God is the judge and sinful man is on trial, ***(Rom. 2:2, 5-6); And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls (or, is according to truth) upon those who practice such things. But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God who will render to every man according to his deeds. (Rom. 3:23); for all have sinned (or all sinned) and fall short of the glory of God.*** What does it mean to fall short of the glory of God? Let's unpack verse Rom. 3:23 to get a better understanding: *because everyone of us has erred in our actions in respect to God's law of morality, we have continually missed the mark in our relationship with God and have failed to obtain His divine favor and in doing so we have come up short of the true recognition, honor, or reputation that God deserves because we are not what God intended us to be. We lack His moral image and character.* Some of us may think that because we consider ourselves to be "a pretty good person morally" that we are not sinners in need of God's forgiveness, when the real issue may be that we have lied to ourselves about our sin and we have excused our sin so often that we have become diluted in our mind enough to think that we are not a sinner, contrary to the verse in Rom. 3:23. Everybody sinned in Adam; when he sinned he acted as the representative for all of his descendants. But men are not only sinners by nature; they are also sinners by practice. They fall short, in themselves, of the glory of God. Sin is any thought, word, or deed that falls short of God's standard of holiness and perfection. It is missing the mark, coming up short of the target. Sin is lawlessness, the rebellion of the creature's will against the will of God. Sin is not only doing what is wrong but the failure to do what one knows to be right. Whatever is not of faith is sin. This means that it is wrong for a man to do anything about which he has a reasonable doubt. If he does not have a clear

conscience about it, and yet goes ahead and does it anyway; he is sinning. The thought of foolishness is sin. Sin begins in the mind. When encouraged and entertained, it breaks forth into an act, and the act leads on to spiritual death. Sin is often attractive when it is first presented to us in the form of a temptation, contemplated, but hideous in retrospect. Sometimes Paul distinguishes between sins and sin. Sins refer to wrong things that we have done. Sin refers to our depraved nature—that is, to what we are. What we are is a lot worse than anything we have ever done. But Christ died for our evil nature as well as our evil deeds.

There is a difference between sin and transgression. Transgression is a violation of a known law. Stealing is basically sinful; it is wrong in itself. But stealing is also a transgression when there is a law that forbids it. ***“where there is not law there is not violation,” (Rom. 4:15).*** God loves man and wants to forgive him ***(1 John 4:16); And we have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God and God abides in him. ( 2 Pet. 3:9); The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance,*** We can understand, pretty closely, what the Lord is teaching us through the reading of 2 Peter 3:9, but let’s take a longer look at it through the Greek: *Our Master will not procrastinate in fulfilling His promises that He has given to us, compared to the way that some persons regard procrastination, instead He endures who we are patiently, not being pleased about any of us having to be deprived of eternal life, on the contrary, it would please Him to have all of us to yield to having a change of mind from evil to good or from good to better.* God has promised to end the history of ungodly men with judgment. If there seems to be some delay, it is not because God is unfaithful to His promise. It is because He is patient. He does not want any of us to perish. His desire is that all should come to repentance. He purposely extends the time of grace so that men might have every opportunity to be saved.

In ***Isaiah 61:2*** we read of the year of the Lord’s favor and the day of His vengeance, ***(He has sent me) To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God.*** This suggests that He delights in showing mercy and that judgment is His strange work, ***Isa. 28:21; For the Lord will rise up as at Mount Perazim, He will be stirred up as in the valley of Gibeon; To do His task, His unusual task, and to work His work, His extraordinary work.*** He waited patiently for years before He sent the flood. Now He has waited several years before His final judgment. But God’s love requires that He act justly (i.e., righteously). Any judge who has acquitted a guilty person simply because he liked that person would be called unjust. He might claim to be a loving person, but his love would be no more than an irrational emotion divorced from justice and righteousness. True love, by contrast, is so zealous for the other person’s well-being that it reacts against all that is wrong ***(Heb. 12:6); For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines. Because those whom the Lord delights in He corrects by the influencing of his conscious, will and actions.***

God is love and wants to forgive the sinner, but because He is a God of love He cannot ignore sin or treat it as though it doesn't matter. His act of forgiveness, if it is based on love, will involve His dealing with sin.

Being a God of love, God must punish sin, but at the same time (being a God of love) He provides a way in which sinners need not suffer the punishment themselves. He has done this by becoming a man Himself, living in man's world, and then taking the punishment of man's sin through Jesus Christ's death on the cross. **2 Cor. 5:18; Now all of these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.** Let's unpack this verse to get its full content, even though it seems pretty plain what the verse is teaching us: *Everything that we are as new creatures in Christ comes from God, who restores us to His divine favor through the change that He has caused in us, the change of one of enmity to one of friendship, by means of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, and He also gave to us, of His own accord and good will, the office of ministering in restoration to divine favor by bringing about a change in men through teaching and other divine offices.* Everything that is good comes from God. He is the source and author of them all. There are no grounds for human boasting.

God is both the judge and the one against whom, man has sinned, yet at the same time He is the one who bears the penalty of sin. He forgives the sinner only at a great cost to Himself. **John 3:16; For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. 2 Cor. 8:9; For you know the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.** We have heard John 3:16 spoken many times. So many times that we may not realize what it says, at least from John's standpoint, so let's look at the Greek interpretation: *For the triune God, that is, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, were so delighted in mankind, that the Father gave up His unique, one of a kind, Son. A son so unique that He is in a class of His kind alone, on account of having two natures, a fully divine human nature while at the same time having a fully human nature that never intermingled. The Father so ordered this so that whoever has faith in and trusts in His Son should not have to be deprived of a perpetual existence and constant abiding in the bliss and glory of the kingdom of God that has been set aside for all true disciples; as opposed to experiencing the sentence of eternal pain and suffering of eternal spiritual death which is the separation from God and the affects of His presence.* This is one of the best known verses in the Bible, doubtless because it states the gospel so clearly and simply. It summarizes what the Lord Jesus had been teaching Nicodemus concerning the manner in which the new birth is received. We read that God so loved the world, or all mankind. He didn't love the sin of man or the world's wicked systems but He loves the person and is not willing that any should perish. The extent of that love is shown by the fact that He gave up His only begotten Son to take the punishment that was handed down to us for *our* sin.

God has no other Son like the Lord Jesus. It is an expression of His infinite love that He would be willing to give us His unique Son to pardon a race of rebel sinners.

This does not mean that everyone is automatically saved. A person must receive what Christ has done for him before God will give him eternal life. Therefore the words are added, ***“that whosoever shall believe in Him should not perish.”*** There is no need for anyone to perish. A way has been provided by which every human being whoever was, is, or is going to be, can be saved, but a person must acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal Savior. When he does this, he has eternal life as a present possession. Jesus died in the place of, or as the substitute for, guilty sinners. Whereas Adam’s sin brought death, Christ’s brings life. Being fully man, Jesus could substitute Himself for His fellow man, but only because He was sinless and completely obedient. Because of the Father’s holiness and the holiness of the environment that He resides in, nothing but a perfect, blemish free, sacrifice could be acceptable to the Father. Jesus Christ is the only one that could fulfill these perfect requirements. He fulfilled all of God’s righteous requirements under the law, ***Matt. 3:15; But Jesus answering said to him, “Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he permitted Him. Phil 2:8; And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 1 Pet. 2:22; Who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth. 1 John 3:5; And you know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin.*** Let’s take a look at Phil. 2:8 and let us see if we can enhance our understanding of what Paul is teaching us: *And so having been fashioned in a whole outward appearance as a man His body bore no difference to that of other men, He took on servant-hood as a mode of existence and His humanity was the receptacle into which He poured Himself, by submitting Himself to God’s will even to the point of shedding His blood for our sins which included a violent death on a cross.* Jesus Christ not only had the appearance of a man, but He really was a man. We can see in the translation of the Greek to English that He not only bore a resemblance to the thing (man) but was the thing (man). Because He was seen and looked upon as a mere man, He was charged with blasphemy when He asserted Himself to be the Son of God. He was more than a man and yet found and known by men in common to be no more than a man. Everything about Him was man except the point of His conception. He was conceived in an extraordinary manner by the power of the Holy Spirit, even as a man He laid in His mother’s womb for nine months. He was born as children are; as an infant and grew in stature by degrees as men do. The shape and size of His body was like that of any other man and He was subject to the same infirmities, as hunger, thirst, weariness, pain, grief, sorrow, and death itself. He humbled Himself by various outward actions, as subjecting Himself to His parents, working at the trade of a carpenter, conversing with the meanest of men, washing His disciple’s feet, etc. And through all of it He remained obedient to His Father’s will, although He was disagreeable to His fleshly wants and desires.



In His teaching us to love our enemies and having patience with His disciples He showed Himself to be meek and humble in spirit. He was obedient all through His life not only to God the Father but on a human level also, obedient to the laws of His religion, His parents, and even to the Father's will that He must die on a cross for all mankind. Death on a cross was considered a curse, reserved for those who were servants and it was called a servile punishment (like that of a slave). In doing so He carried His humility all the way to the cross and taught His disciples to be equally humble, not only the disciples of His time on earth, but thereafter also. One who broke God's law would be under condemnation himself and could not take the place of another. ***Gal. 3:10; For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the Law, to perform them.*** Let's unpack this verse to get a better understanding of Paul's teaching: *Because all who adhere to the Mosaic code, the law that they live by does not originate from faith, and these persons are subject to the rejection and curse from God, the destruction resulting from judgment without mercy; because it has been written in the Scriptures of Deut. 27:26: Doomed to punishment is everyone who does not persevere to continually do all of the things written in the Bible.* Paul shows us from the OT writings that, far from conferring a blessing, the law can only curse. This verse does not say "As many as have broken the law," but: "As many as are of the works of the law," that is, all who seek to obtain favor with God on the basis of obeying laws. They are under the curse, that is, condemned to death. For it is written in Duet. 27:26, "***Cursed is everyone who does not continue...***" It is not enough to keep the law for a day, or a month, or a year. One must *continue* to keep it. Obedience must be complete. It is not enough to keep just 10 Commandments. All six hundred and some laws must be obeyed. It is obvious that no one can keep all of these laws consistently throughout their life, so we must put our faith and trust in Jesus Christ as we strive to keep His moral laws.

Jesus, however, kept God's laws perfectly. He was absolutely righteous in the fullest moral sense of the word, and so was able to bear the law's punishment on behalf of those who had broken it, ***Gal. 3:11-13; Now that no one is justified by (or in) the Law (or Law) before God is evident; for, the righteous man shall live by faith. However, (or And) the Law is not of faith (or based on faith); on the contrary, He who practices them shall live by them. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree". Gal. 4:4-5; But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, (or Law), that we might receive the adoption of sons.*** Let's look deeper into Gal. 4:4-5 by getting a better interpretation of the Greek wording: *Because when the full period of a measured succession of events was completed God sent forth, from His abode, His Son, born of a human woman, born under the authority and conditions of the Law, in order that He might redeem us from the curse and the yoke of the Law, so that we might receive*

*in full what is due to us as having the same rights as a son of a birth father.* The fullness of time refers to the time appointed by Our Heavenly Father as being an appropriate time. I see this as a time, in my opinion that humanity was getting so morally corrupt that it could no longer exist without His intervention. In this verse we have, in a few words, a marvelous statement as to the deity and humanity of the Savior. He is the eternal Son of God; yet he was born of a woman. If Jesus had been only man, it would be meaningless to say that He was born of a woman. How else could a mere man be born? The expression, “born of a woman,” in Our Lord’s case, witnesses to His unique mode of His birth. Born into the world as an Israelite, He was therefore born under the law. As a Son of God, the Lord Jesus would never have been under the Law; He was the One who gave the Law. But in humble grace, He put Himself under the Law that He made, in order that He might magnify it in His life, and bear the curse for it in His death. The Law demanded a price from those who failed to keep it—the price of death. Before God could bring man into a wonderful position of son-ship, this price had to be paid. So the Lord Jesus coming into the world as a member of the human race and of the Jewish nation paid the price which the Law demanded. Because He is God, His death was of infinite value, that is, it was sufficient to pay for any number of sinners. Because He was man, He could die as a substitute for man. Christ, by His nature is the Son of God, became the Son of man, so that we, in our human nature who are sons of man, might become sons of God. Spiritually speaking as long as men were slaves they could not be sons. Christ delivered us from the bondage of the Law in order that we might be adopted as sons. Notice here the distinction between becoming a *child of God* and a *son of God*. The believer is born into the family of God as a child. The emphasis here is on the fact of divine birth, not on the privileges and responsibilities of son-ship. The believer is adopted into the family as a son. Every Christian is a son immediately and is brought into an inheritance of which he is an heir. Thus the instructions to Christians in the NT assume no infancy among saints. All are treated a mature sons.

When He died, sinless Jesus suffered the punishment that man’s sin deserved. He bore our sins, as we read previously in **1 Pet. 2:24**. Because of the death of Christ, God is now able to forgive the repentant sinner and accept him as righteous before Him. The believer is now in a righteous relationship with God, as we read in **2 Cor. 5:21**. God’s justice and mercy operate in harmony, because both are out-workings of His love. His justice is satisfied in seeing sin punished, and His mercy flows out in seeing sin forgiven. In His love God justifies the guilty but repentant sinner, yet He does so justly and righteously; **Rom. 3:26; for the demonstration I say, of His righteousness at the present time, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. (Rom. 4:4, 5), Now to the one who works, his wage is not reckoned as a favor, but as what is due. But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness.** Let’s take deeper look at Rom. 3:26: *for the purpose of pointing out this to you, I say, of His character and conduct, that He is as one being just as one should be, One who is what God approves, requires, and bestows at this present*

season, that He might be one who conforms to the rules of God, and the One who declares another to be righteous and good, that is the one who has saving faith in Jesus. In a further explanation we can say the death of Christ declares God's righteousness. God is just because He has required the full payment of the penalty of sin. And can justify the ungodly without condoning their sin or compromising His own righteousness because a perfect substitute has died and risen again.

A person who tries to show that he is in the right is said to be trying to justify himself. He is trying to declare himself righteous (**Job 32:2**); **But the anger of Elihu the son of Barachai the Buzite, of the family of Ram burned; against Job his anger burned, because he justified himself before God. (Luke 10:28-29); And He said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live". But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" (Luke 16:14-15); Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things, and they were scoffing at Him. And he said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men (or before men), but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God (or before God)." In the previous verse Jesus is telling them that they cannot love money and God also, for no one can serve two masters and we can easily make money a master over us. Let's break this verse down from the Greek and get more insight in the plight of the Pharisees: *Now the Pharisees, that is Jews who considered themselves holier than the common Jew and separated themselves as much as possible in their clothing, living quarters, eating establishments, etc.; were greedy for riches, and they were listening to everything that Jesus was saying about money, and during the course of His speaking they were intensely mocking what He was saying. And He authoritatively said this to them, "You are of those who constantly bring out yourself as being self-righteousness in your conversations before men, but God is aware of who you are in your heart and soul; but believe this; that which is regarded with pride among men is turned away in disgust by God."* The Pharisees were not only proud and hypocritical; they were greedy as well. They thought that godliness was a way of gain. They chose religion as one would choose a lucrative profession. Their service was not geared to glorify God and to help their neighbors, but rather to enrich themselves. As they heard the Lord Jesus teach that they should forego their wealth in this world and lay up their treasures in heaven, they derided Him. To them, money was more real than the promises of God, and we have to be careful that we don't get caught up in the same attitude, that is, that nothing is more important than accumulating money. Nothing would hinder them from hoarding wealth. Outwardly the Pharisees appeared to be pious and spiritual. They reckoned themselves to be righteous in the sight of men. But beneath this deceptive exterior, God saw the greed of their hearts. He was not deceived by their pretension. The type of life which they displayed, and which others approved of, was an abomination to God. They esteemed themselves successful because they combined a religious profession with financial affluence. But as far as God was concerned, they were spiritual**

adulterers. They professed love for Jehovah, but actually money was their God. One who is trying to justify himself may even go to the extent of condemning God in order to justify himself, declaring God to be wrong and himself to be right. **(Job 40:8); “Will you really annul My judgment? Will you condemn Me that you may be justified?”** Sometimes the true meaning of the Hebrew can be lost if we try to understand it literally, so let’s define these words in a paraphrase: *“will you really try to frustrate My plan of justice and righteousness? Will you condemn Me as being immoral and unethical so that you may be declared right? The decrees and purposes of God, concerning His dealings with men, particularly the afflictions of men, which come about from a source of the highest of wisdom and reason, and according to the strictest sense of justice, can never be frustrated or made void. The sentence, which comes out of the mouth of God, cannot be altered. Nor can the execution of that sentence be hindered. It respects the wisdom of God in how He deals with the world. To do anything else is to allow man to set up his own judgment against God or how God deals with the world, which would not be the same, thus not truly just. Men would do or say whatever they pleased and then justify their actions. God is a God of judgment and His judgment is according to truth, truth that is not polluted by sin. It is truth in its purist form. Once God has declared His judgment there is no means of vindication without claiming that God is unrighteous and has altered His integrity. It is in this sense of declaring a person to be right or wrong that the Bible may speak of God as being justified. People acknowledge that He is in the right and that His judgments are correct; **(Psalm 51:4); Against Thee, Thee only, I have sinned; So that Thou art justified when Thou dost speak, and blameless when Thou dost judge. (Luke 7:29); And when all of the people and the tax-gatherers heard this, they acknowledged God’s justice, having been baptized with the baptism of John. (Rom. 3:4); May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man be found a liar, as it is written, that Thou mightest be justified in thy words, and mightest prevail when Thou art judged. (Rev. 16:5), And I heard an angel of the waters saying; “Righteous art Thou who art and wast, O Holy One because Thou didst judge these things.”** Romans 3:4, is a verse that follows the statement made by Paul when he asks the rhetorical question; If someone does not believe in Jesus Christ, will that affect His faithfulness to that person? His answer in the short version is that our behavior or who we are as a person will never affect who God is in His character or His behavior. This should also apply to us as well as mature Christians. This is His reply as translated from the Greek: *God forbid that this should ever happen! But on the contrary, let God be found to be loving truth, sincere and veracious in everything that He has spoken, though everyone of mankind is as one who at some time in his life is like a person speaking falsely, as it is written in the OT; That Our Lord will be found to be the person that He says He is in His words to us; and that He will be victorious when He is being judged.* Paul tells us in this verse that if we threw in the whole world of mankind since creation, all of whom are liars, it would not affect in the least God’s truth about His being true. The imagery is that of a court in which God is put on trial. This is a strange thought indeed! The*

greatest Judge of the universe is allowing all of His angels and all of mankind from creation onward, to judge Him according to everything that He has ever said and everything that He has ever done to see if he has ever been unfaithful??? He allows this only to allow us to see His righteousness.

Some may argue that to justify means to *make righteous (Rom. 5:19), For as through one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many were made righteous*, but if such is the case it is important to understand what is meant by being "made" righteous. A person is not made righteous in the sense that a piece of metal placed in a fire is "made" hot. He is made righteous only in the sense of being declared righteous. He is put in a right relationship with God. Let's unpack the Greek in this verse and see if it sheds some light, *Because just as through the fault of the one man's inattentive hearing the voice of God he actively disobeyed, so all of us because of Adam, were caused to be exposed to the punishment of sin, in like manner by the ministry of the faith that obeys God's will in a special sense, of relationship and subjection to that which, in the sphere of the divine power and revelation is right, by Jesus Christ, all of us will have the means to be righteous through faith in Christ and he is justified through faith*. The word has to do with legal pronouncement, not with changing a person from one thing to another by placing some new moral power within him, *(Rom. 4:1-3); What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about; but not before God. For what does Scripture say? And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.(Rom. 5:17-19); For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through the act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many were made righteous. (Phil. 3:9), not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith*. Paul is telling us here that the righteousness he has or any claim to righteousness does not come from anything that he has done, but only comes through having faith, that is trusting in Jesus Christ to be who He says He is and He doing what He has promised to do for us. Let's unpack this verse in Philippians to see if we can gain more insight in what Paul is teaching us: *I cannot have the character and the conduct of the one that I should be, that is, a person of goodness, uprightness, and morality, in my actions, and duties that are right and proper by merely observing the external precepts which is righteousness of my own proceeding from my observance of the Mosaic rules of life, but only by the means of which is appropriated by what God in Christ has for man, resulting in the transformation of man's character and way of life and as a means of justification found in Christ's death*. Paul was in a situation that we can

find ourselves in, or have found ourselves. He is looking back to the tremendous decision which faced him before he was saved. Was he willing to abandon his own efforts to earn salvation, and simply trust in Christ? He had made his choice. He had abandoned all else in order to be found in Christ. The moment that he believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, he stood in a new position before God. No longer was he seen as a child of sinful Adam, but now he was seen in Christ, enjoying all the favor which the Lord Jesus enjoys before God the Father. Likewise he had renounced the filthy rags of his own self-righteousness, which he had sought to win by keeping the law, and had chosen the righteousness of God which is bestowed on everyone who receives the Savior. ***Isaiah 64:6; for all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all of our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; and all of us wither like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.*** Righteousness here is spoken of as a garment or covering. Man needs righteousness in order to stand before God in favor. But man cannot produce it. And so, in grace, God gives us His own righteousness, to those who receive His Son as Lord and Savior. ***(2 Cor. 5:21) "He (God) made Him (Christ) who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."*** It is important to emphasize that in verses 8 and 9 that Paul is not suggesting that he had not yet received the righteousness of God. On the contrary, this became his possession when he was regenerated on the road to Damascus. But the tense of the verse simply indicates the results of that important event that continued up to the present and that Paul still considered Christ to be worth far more than anything he had given up, which eventually would include his life.

Just as "condemn" does not mean "to make wicked," so "justify" does not mean to "make good." Nevertheless, one result of the believer's justification is that his life is changed so that righteousness (in the sense of right behavior), not sin, becomes its chief characteristic. ***(James 2:17-23); Even so faith, by itself, if it has no works is dead, being by itself. But someone may well say, "You have faith, and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe and shudder. But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless? Was not Abraham, our father, justified by works, when he offered up Isaac, his son, on the altar? You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected; and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness, and he was called a friend of God. (1 Peter 2:24); He Himself bore, (or carried up to the cross) our sin in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds (or welts) you were healed. (1 John 3:7); Little children let no one deceive you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.*** These are all good verses for us to contemplate and to exercise our gratitude for all that the Lord has done for us. So let's take verse 1 Pet. 2:24 and unpack it to get its full meaning: *Jesus Christ, Himself, carried up to the cross our consequences of sin and the guilt and punishment of our sin in the body of His*

*incarnate flesh on the cross, so that we would take no part in sins and spend our existence devoted to God, to live comfortably to the will, purpose, precepts and example of God, unto a holy life that is in contrast to our sinful life; because by His welts that came from the whip, the punishment that He took for us, we were healed from the consequences of sin.* What Christ bore were all sorts of sin, original and actual, and every act of sin by His people. All that is in sin, all that belongs to sin, all that arises from sin, and all that is a consequence of it, He bore, all the filth, punishment, and guilt. All of the iniquity of His elect, and it was a huge load and weight and there was nothing more nauseous and disagreeable to Him who loves righteousness and hates iniquity. Yet none of the sins He bore were His own, nor the sins of the angels, but of men; not all men, but many sins of all the men that have been ordained to eternal life.

If we could see the man Jesus Christ after His torture and punishment, not as an artist portrays it, but as it actually was, it would be so ugly and gruesome that it would make us turn our head away and cause us to be nauseated, yet to look upon our sin, as God does, could not compare to the ugliness of His torture and would cause us to be reviled even more. Christ did this for us, giving His life as a ransom for those whom He justified to enter into eternal glory. He is the surety and the substitute of punishment deserving to be taken for His people; our sins are laid upon Him by His Father. They were reckoned as His and placed in His account. Christ voluntarily took them upon Himself as one might take the debt of another and make Himself answerable for it. This debt was completely satisfied by Him and put out of the sight of God and His vindictive justice. He removed them as far as the East is from the West. This is the consequence of His actions, that we, being dead to sin, to our sin, as all of the elect are through His bearing of our sin and suffering death for them so that that sin shall not be imputed to His elect. Our sin no longer has its damning power or influence, we are entirely discharged from our sin and we can never come into condemnation for it again.

The fullest explanation of justification is in the writings of Paul. There the teaching centers on God's great act of salvation by which he declares the repentant sinner righteous before him. Instead of having the status of one who is guilty and condemned, the sinner now has the status of one who is right with God. God brings him into a right relationship with Himself, giving him a right standing before Him ***(Rom. 5:1-2); Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into His grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. (Rom. 8:33); Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the One who justifies.*** Let's unpack verse 5:1-2 to shed more light on Paul's teaching to us: *Consequently, having been declared to be righteous, virtuous and good as a consequence of our faith in Christ's death, and as the grounds of justification before God, we have peace of mind, and tranquility, arising out of our reconciliation with God through our profession of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we thus have continual possession of the right to approach, by*

*means of our faith in Christ's death, as grounds of justification before God, the absolutely free expression of the loving kindness of God to men finding its only motive in the bounty and benevolence of God in which we are confirmed; and we exult in the confidence of our salvation through Christ, eternal life and blessedness which God will bestow.* The first great **benefit of justification** enjoyed by those of us who have been justified by faith is peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. The war is over. Hostilities have ceased. Through the work of Christ all causes of enmity between our souls and God has been removed. We have been changed from foes of God to friends by the miracle of His grace. We also enjoy access into an indescribable position of favor with God. We are accepted in the Beloved One; therefore we are near and dear to God as His own beloved Son. The Father extends the golden scepter to us and welcomes us as sons, not strangers. This grace, or standing in favor, embraces every aspect of our position before God, a position that is as perfect and permanent as Christ's because we are in Him.

This is entirely an act of God's grace, for it is impossible for a person to have any right standing before God on the basis of his own deeds. Even his best efforts to keep the law will not help. Since man is a sinner and under God's condemnation, there is nothing he can do to gain acceptance with God (*Ps. 143:2*); ***Do not enter into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy sight no man is righteous. (Rom. 3:28); For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law. (Rom. 9:31-32); But Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone. (Gal. 2:16); knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh (or mortal man) be justified.*** In Romans verse 9:31-32 there are some phrases that we may not be familiar with, so let's define these words and enhance what Paul is trying to tell us about justification: *On the contrary the descendants of Israel, who pursued righteousness with earnestness and diligence in order to obtain the rule, norm and/or standard of judging or acting according to the righteousness of God, did not come to that norm and/or standard of judging or acting according to the righteousness of God. Why? Because they did not pursue it out of faith in what God in Christ has for man, on the contrary they pursued it as though it could be accomplished out of their performance. The Israelites spiritually stumbled over the stumbling stone of Christ and fell to damnation.* Israel, who sought justification on the basis of law keeping never found a law by which they might obtain God's justification. This not only applies to the Jews of Biblical times but also to those of us today who pursue righteousness through man-made laws of a religion. The reason is clear. They refuse to believe that justification is by faith in Christ, but they instead went on stubbornly trying to work out their own righteousness by personal merit. They stumbled over what was right in front of them, that is, they completely overlooked what Christ was trying to give to them as a gift. God



accepts man not because of anything that man has done, but solely because of His own mercy, ***(Isa. 55:7); Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and He will have compassion on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. (Micah 7:18); Who is a God like Thee, who pardons iniquity and passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in unchanging love. (Rom. 3:24); (all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God) being justified as a gift by His grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. (Eph. 2:8); for by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God.*** Since this is a study of “justification” and Rom. 3:24 uses the word “justified,” let’s take a deeper look at Romans 3:24 by checking the definitions, but we need to start with a part of verse 3:23: ***(Rom 3:23); all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God) having been acknowledged and declared to be virtuous and good as a free gift by His forgiveness of our sin and the reconciliation to a holy God by means of the recalling of the captives (sinners) from captivity (sin) and the deliverance from the power and consequences of sin through the payment of a ransom for those who believe, that is, trust in, rely on, and have faith in Christ’s death.*** Thanks be to God that He meets our hopeless condition of verse twenty-three. He has the means and ways to enter His kingdom rather than to be obedient to the Law. And a most blessed way it is! God has the means and the way of declaring us righteous despite the universal sinfulness of man; we are not hopelessly lost under the guilty verdict. But we should notice that this redemption does not apply to all sinners. We must go back to verse 22 to keep this verse in context to see who this verse applies, which states that *all who believe*. God’s justifying act sets in while men are still sinners, but the fact that they are still sinners does not make it impossible for God to render a verdict of righteous. *While “all,”* as far as they are concerned, have lost any and every favorable acknowledgment from God; there exists another way of being declared “righteous.” One that is holy and gratuitous, entirely by the grace of God, mediated through the ransom connected with Christ Jesus. This declaration of “righteous” is pronounced only upon believers and unbelievers exclude themselves. But we should never stray too far from the fact in this case that being a sinner does not exclude anybody, the exclusion comes from not believing in the salvation of man through a true Biblically defined belief in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Just because all are sinners and because there are not any exceptions, God’s verdict is pronounced gratuitously, by way of a gift. For the whole entire of creation, from the beginning to the end, there is not one cent worth of merit that exists, the gratuity is absolute.

No personal justification takes place except through faith. This is not only a gift, it is one that is wholly undeserved. Sinners deserve the verdict of guilty, the verdict of acquitted is possible only as one that is wholly undeserved. The fact that this verdict comes to us through “grace” connotes that we are guilty and deserving of the consequence of sin and guilt. But, how can a just Judge of heaven and earth, without becoming unjust and destroying all justice, follow

grace and declare righteous any sinner whose sin cries out to heaven for just punishment? Only by one means, the only one that perfectly satisfies God's justice and opens the way for grace: ***"through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus;"*** an act that secures release for paying a ransom. Only the ransom payment in full releases a sinner from God's court. Verse 25 goes on to tell us that His blood was the price of the ransom through which God acquits all sinners. Just as "being declared righteous" makes God the agent of the act, so "gratuitously" makes Him the giver of the gratuity, and "by His grace" makes Him the bestower of that grace, and "through the ransoming" makes Him the user of this medium.

However, this gracious work of justification takes place only in those who trust in God. It is through faith that people are justified; more specifically, through faith in Jesus Christ that He truly did die for our sin and was resurrected and ascended into heaven. Christ has done the work and the sinner accepts the benefits of that work by faith, ***(Rom. 1:17); for in it the righteousness of God revealed from faith (or by faith) to faith; as it is written, "But the righteous man shall live by faith." (Rom. 3:22, 23); even the righteousness of God (has been manifested) through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (Gal. 3:11); Now that no one is justified by the Law (or in the Law) before God is evident; for, "The righteous man shall live by faith," (or, but he who is righteous by faith shall live.)*** In verse Rom. 1:17 the "it" is "the gospel" and "the power of God for salvation." With this understanding let's take a deeper look at this verse: *Because it is by the gospel and the power of God for salvation is that which is considered just and is the righteousness that God approves, requires and bestows and is made manifest (which was before hidden), as a consequence of faith in Christ for the purpose of living our faith in Christ; for these words have been committed to writing, "But the righteous man shall live by faith."* When we look at the word "righteous" we can consider all of the different meanings that this word has. First, it is used to describe that characteristic of God by which He always does what is right, just, and proper, and He is consistent with all of His other attributes. When we say that God is righteous, we mean that there is no wrong, dishonesty, or unfairness in Him. Secondly, the righteousness of God can refer to His method of justifying ungodly sinners. He can do this and still be righteous because Jesus as the sinless substitute has satisfied all of the claims of divine justice. Finally, the righteousness of God refers to the perfect standing which God provides for those who believe in His Son ***(2 Cor. 5:21), He made Him sin who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*** Those who are not in themselves righteous are treated as if they are righteous because God only sees them in all of the perfection of Christ. Righteousness is imputed to their account. So which one of these definitions fits the verse? While it could be any of the three, the righteousness of God seems to refer especially to His way of justifying sinners by faith. The righteousness of God is as revealed in the gospel. First the gospel tells us that God's righteousness demands that sins be punished, and the penalty is eternal death; death being defined as separation from God and all

of the effectiveness of His attributes. But then we hear that God's love provided what His righteousness demanded. This love is evidenced in the fact that He sent His Son to die as a substitute for sinners, paying the penalty in full. Now since His righteous claims have been fully satisfied, God can righteously save all of those who avail themselves of the work of Christ. God's righteousness is revealed from faith to faith, that is, from the faith of God to the faith of men; from the faith of preachers to the faith of the hearers; from the faith of the OT to the faith of the NT saints. Or from one degree of faith to another, for faith as it grows and increases, has a clearer sight of the righteousness in the gospel. God's righteousness is not imputed on the basis of works or is not made available to those who seek to earn or deserve it. It is revealed on the principle of faith alone. This is in perfect agreement with the divine decree of **Habakkuk 2:4, the just shall live by faith**, which may be understood to mean "the justified-by-faith are the ones that shall live," or not be separated from God and the effectiveness of all of His attributes, forever.

The basis of God's merciful act of justification is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (**Rom. 4:23-25**); **Now not for his sake (Abraham's) was it written, that it was reckoned to him, but for our sake also, to whom it will be reckoned, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, He who was delivered up because of our transgressions and was raised because of our justification.(Rom. 5:9); Much more then, having been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.(Gal. 2:21); I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly.** Let's see if we can shed more light on verses Rom. 4:23-25 by defining the Greek meanings of the words: *Now, to continue this thought, it was not written in the Scriptures for Abraham only, that these words were put into his reasoning; so that he would be declared justified, but for us also, to whom it shall be put into our reasoning, if we have faith in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, He who was delivered into the hands of those in earthly authority which was necessary for our acquittal from our past offenses and the ability to exercise our right as a child toward God as one's legitimate Father, that is our justification.* The historical narrative written in Gen. 15:6 of Abraham's justification by faith was not written for his sake only. There was a sense, of course, in which it was written for his sake—a permanent record of his acquittal and his now-perfect standing before God. But it was written also for us. Our faith is likewise reckoned for righteousness when we believe in God, who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.

The only difference is this: Abraham believed that God *would* give life to the dead (that is to his weak body and Sarah's barren womb). We believe that God *has* given life to the dead by raising our Lord Jesus Christ. Abraham was called to believe in a promise, whereas we are privileged to believe in an accomplished fact of the promise. He was called to look forward to something which was to be done; we look back on something that is done, even an

accomplished redemption, attested by the fact of a risen and glorified Savior, at the right hand of the Majesty of the heavens. The Lord Jesus was delivered up not only because of our offenses, but in order to put them away. And He was raised for our justification in order to demonstrate God's complete satisfaction with the work of Christ by which we are justified.

In the first instance our offenses were something that needed to be dealt with. In the second instance our justification is the result that is assured by Christ's resurrection. If Christ had remained in the tomb, there would've been no justification. But the fact that He arose tells us that His work is finished, the price has been paid, and God is infinitely satisfied with the sin—atonement work of the Savior. God now sees the believer as "in Christ" and therefore He declares the believer righteous. And the person whom God declares righteous *is righteous*—not in the sense that he is a perfect person who cannot sin anymore, but in the sense that God gives Him righteousness that is not his own, He gives to him the righteousness of Christ. God accepts the believing sinner because of what Christ has done. Jesus Christ becomes, as it were, his righteousness, **(1 Cor. 1:30); But by His doing (or, of Him) you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification (or, both righteousness and sanctification) and redemption. (2 Pet. 1:1); Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith of the same kind (or, value) as ours, by (or, in) the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.** Let's unpack 1 Cor. 1:30 and see if we can get a clearer picture of what Paul is teaching us in this verse: (first we need to start with v-29, **no man should boast before God**) *But on the contrary, through what He has done for us we are in intimate union, oneness of heart, mind, and purpose, with Christ Jesus, who began to be divine wisdom, infinite skill, insight, knowledge and purity from God to us and also both the author and source of the righteousness that God requires and approves of, and the holiness or separation unto God and His purposes for our life, additionally we receive the deliverance from the power and consequences of sin which Christ procured by laying down His life as a ransom for us as sinners.* Verse 30 emphasizes even further that all we are and have comes from Him—not from philosophy, and that there is therefore no room for human glory. First of all, Christ became for us wisdom. He is the wisdom of God (v-24), the One whom God's wisdom chose as a way of salvation. When we have Him we have a positional wisdom that guarantees our full salvation. Secondly, He is our righteousness. Through faith in Him we are considered righteous by a holy God. Thirdly, He is our sanctification. In ourselves we have nothing in the way of personal holiness, but in Him we are in a position of being sanctified, and by His power we are transformed from one degree of sanctification to another. Finally, He is our redemption, and this doubtless speaks of redemption in its final aspect when the Lord will come and take us home to be with Himself, and when we shall be redeemed—spirit, soul, and body.

Christ's death deals with sin's penalty for all believers, whether they belong to generations past, present, or future. In like manner it deals with the penalty for all sins of each

individual believer, whether those sins be past, present, or future, **Heb. 9:15; And for this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, in order that since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.** This verse, by itself, can be a little difficult to understand by itself, so let's see if we can shed some light on it by defining each word as the Greek would've intended it to be understood: *Also, since this is so, He is to be the One to restore peace and friendship between man and God with the New Testament of grace which is the old covenant ratified and better than the Old Testament of Law, in order that since the death of Jesus Christ on the cross has taken place for the ransom that was paid and the deliverance from the power and consequences of our wrong-doings that were committed by those under the Old Testament, could be included with those who were invited to the kingdom of God, and can also receive the graciously given gift of the perpetual inheritance.* The previous verses, which should be read to keep this verse in context (vs-11-14), stressed the superiority of the blood of the New Covenant to the blood of the Old Covenant. This leads to the conclusion of verse 15—"that Christ is the Mediator of the New Covenant." Now those who are called, that is, the *true* believers, may receive the promised eternal inheritance. Through Christ's work saints of the OT as well as the New enjoy eternal salvation and eternal redemption. The fact that qualifies believers of the pre-Christian era for the inheritance is that a death has occurred, that is, the death of Christ. His death redeems them from transgressions under the law. We can kind of look at it as Christ having saved the OT faithful "on credit." They were justified by faith, just as we are. But Christ had not died yet. Then how could God save them? The answer is that He saved them on the basis of what He knew Christ would accomplish in them. They knew little or nothing of what Christ would do at Calvary. But, God did know, and He reckoned the value of Christ's work to "their account" when they believed in whatever revelation He gave to them, concerning Himself as their One and only God and all that this revelation implies. In a sense a great debt of transgression had accumulated under the OT. By His death, Christ redeemed believers of the former OT Law from these transgressions.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ must not be thought of simply as evidence of His death. What should be stressed here is that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is necessary to justification, not merely because of the difference it makes to us as certifying the efficacy of His death and thus evoking our faith in Him, but also because of the difference it makes for Christ Himself. It marks the point at which His sovereign power as Lord is made effective. Our justification, the basis of which has been laid in the death, becomes an accomplished fact and effective reality only through Christ's rising again. The very reason for His becoming incarnate has been fulfilled.

By faith we are united to a living Christ whose death was essential for our redemption. That which redeems is not Christ's atoning death apart from His living person into whose union we are brought by faith. We cannot separate the propitiatory (regain the good will of) work of Christ from Christ Himself. We are saved, not by believing the fact that Christ died for our sins, but by union with the crucified *and risen*, exalted Savior. Only union with a living Savior who has in Him the virtue of His atoning death do justification forgiveness, and all of the blessings of redemption become ours: ***Eph. 1:7, In whom we have redemption through His blood; Col. 1:13, 14, For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*** We are accepted, ***Eph. 1:6; in the Beloved. Rom. 8:1, there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Jesus Christ.***

Justification is ours as we are "in Christ" in such living union with Him that His life becomes identified with ours and ours with His. Because of this identification or incorporation, Christ's acts are repeated in us so that in His death we die to sin, ***we are crucified with Christ (Gal. 2:20)***, and in His life we live to righteousness. But it is only by His risen life that Christ can come into such living union with men as thus to effect their redemption. The apostolic thought, that is, in the teachings of the Apostles, accordingly is this: ***Rom. 4:25; He was delivered up (to death) on account of our trespasses (to make atonement for them); and He was raised on account of our justification (that it might become an accomplished fact)***". His rising again was the necessary antecedent, that is, the morally correct thing to do, before His applying to His elect the virtue of the atonement which His death wrought for all men. He died to purchase what He arose again to apply. So it is that in a sense the resurrection of Christ is referred to as the cause of justification.

It is doubtlessly true that Paul did not make an abstract separation between Christ's death and His resurrection, as if the death and resurrection either had different motives or served ends separable from each other. Christ's work is one and its end is one. He both died and was raised for our justification, but the end effect was only through the resurrection, ***Rom. 8:34; "Who is the One that condemns? It is Christ who died, yes, rather who was raised; Rom 5:10; "saved by His life;" 1 Cor. 15:17; "and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless, you are still in your sins."***

In Hebrews, the same truth is presented from the point of view of the priesthood of Christ. In OT ritual, only when the high priest took the blood within the veil and sprinkled it upon the Mercy Seat was the offering for sin completed and the covenant—fellowship with God established. In the same way, Christ's offering for sin was not completed until, in the heavenly sanctuary, He presented Himself ***"through His own blood;" Heb. 9:12***, i.e., with the virtue of His atoning death in Him. Only then is the new covenant (i.e., fellowship between God

and sinners) established. It is in Him as the living, prevailing High Priest, and not merely through something which He did in the past, that we have peace with God. He is now always at the right hand of God interceding for us, **Rom. 8:34, who is the One that condemns? Jesus Christ is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God who also intercedes for us.** We should define these words of this very important verse to conclude our study of justification: *Who is the One who pronounces a sentence against us? Christ Jesus is He who died on account of our sin, i.e., who made atonement and satisfaction for our sins, yes, or rather, who was raised from the dead, who ascended into heaven and is the person of high rank who positions us on His right with the symbolic meaning of giving us equal honor with Himself and recognizes us as having equal dignity with Him, who additionally, makes intercession for us to the Father.*

The second verse in which justification occurs, which has to do with the life He gives us through His resurrection and the sharing of His life with us is in; **Rom. 5:18; so then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.** If Paul were addressing us with this verse, which he is, he might use these English words: *Therefore then, just as also by the manner which the willful transgression of the known rules of life that involve the guilt of one person there was the end result of condemnatory judgment for all mankind; so also in the same manner the One through whose actions resulted in being justified by God, there was a move, by mankind toward identifying himself with Christ's life that was effective for everyone of mankind.* The offense of Adam brought condemnation to all men, but the righteous act of Christ brought justification and eternal life to all. The righteous act was not the Savior's gift of life by His keeping of the law, but rather His substitutionary death on Calvary and His ascension. This is what brought justification and with it the gift of life; life—that is, the justification that results in life—and He brought it to all men. We now have reached the summation. The first clause of this verse is simple: through the channel of one man's fall all men have the verdict of condemnation. We have two terms expressing a result, the second being the exact counterpart to the first, the first being a disadvantage; "all men are condemned," the other being an advantage, "all men are declared righteous" and justified. Christ's righteousness and justification is the essence of Christ Himself, and of what the Father intended mankind to be in His creation; this acquittal is a permanent result. Through the medium of His acquittal for man, which He achieved in His human nature, was not for His benefit, but for the benefit of all mankind. The result of Adam's fall ended in condemnation for all mankind, Christ's end result, like Adam's, was for all mankind, but His righteousness brought justification for all mankind and it was permanent, a finished result. We now have a nature that is acceptable to the Father and is appropriate for His kingdom. This justifying action provided the way for us to receive the gift of righteousness by faith, all through Christ who won it for all men.

In conclusion I would like to make this summary of this study of justification with these 13 points:

1. Justification is an act of God. In the OT and the NT, God is the initiator of the Covenant concerning man's salvation. It is a once-for-all act which has been accomplished in Christ.
2. Justification is a part of the character of God. God declares the sinner righteous in His sight.
3. Justification is based upon the atonement of Christ. God justifies a sinner for Christ's sake. Without the substitutionary atonement of Christ God could not forgive the sinner all his sins without being unjust.
4. Justification is objective or universal. In the "Good News" we learn that God offers the forgiveness of sins by Christ to the whole world.
5. Justification is the result of the forgiveness of sins. God does not count man's sins against him, but forgives him and sets him free from the slavery of sin.
6. Justification is the remission of punishment. The justified believer is declared free from the demands of the law and *all* condemnation resulting in sin against the law. It is more than pardon of sin, but a declaration by God. The sinner is relieved of the consequences of his guilt and sin.
7. Justification is reconciliation of the sinner to God. Justification by faith restores the sinner to a personal relationship with God. Justification implies that God looks upon a sinner as if he had not sinned since he is again His child.
8. Justification is the imputation of God's righteousness. Since the sinner has no righteousness of his own by which to be justified in God's spiritual court, the salvation which Christ wrought through His life and works is imputed to the believer as his own righteousness.
9. Justification excludes salvation by works. Scripture not only teaches that man is justified without works, but also denounces any introduction of works into God's justification.
10. Justification presupposes God's universal grace. By His grace God justified man and not because of the influence of man on God. God loves all men impartially and therefore justifies all men equally.
11. Justification is by faith. The fact that justification is by faith alone does not exclude God's grace or Christ's work.
12. Justification and faith brings about good works and not vice-a-versa. Although the presence of good works from the heart of a sinner is not the condition to receive justification it is the evidence of justification.
13. Justification is central to all Christian teaching. Justification by faith is a term that describes the entire action of God for man's salvation.





# **THE BENEFITS OF JUSTIFICATION**