

Justification by Faith

The importance of the topic of justification by faith can hardly be overstated. J. I. Packer writes appropriately,

The basic fact of biblical religion is that God pardons and accepts believing sinners (see Pss. 32:1-5; 130; Luke 7:47ff.; 18:9-14; Acts 10:43; 1 John 1:7-2:2). Paul's doctrine of justification by faith is an analytical exposition of this fact in its full theological connections. As stated by Paul (most fully in Romans and Galatians, though see also 2 Cor. 5:14ff.; Eph. 2:1ff.; Phil. 3:4ff.), the doctrine of justification determines the whole character of Christianity as a religion of grace and faith. It defines the saving significance of Christ's life and death by relating both to God's law (Rom. 3:24ff.; 5:16ff.). It displays God's justice in condemning and punishing sin, his mercy in pardoning and accepting sinners, and his wisdom in exercising both attributes harmoniously together through Christ (Rom. 3:23ff.). It makes clear what faith is – belief in Christ's atoning death and justifying resurrection (Rom. 4:23ff.; 10:8ff.), and trust in him alone for righteousness (Phil. 3:8-9). It makes clear what Christian morality is – law-keeping out of gratitude to the Savior whose gift of righteousness made law-keeping needless for acceptance (Rom. 7:1-6; 12:1-2). It explains all hints, prophecies, and instances of salvation in the OT (Rom. 1:17; 3:21; 4:1ff.). It overthrows Jewish exclusivism (Gal. 2:15ff.) and provides the basis on which Christianity becomes a religion for the world (Rom. 1:16; 3:29-30). It is the heart of the gospel. Luther justly termed it *articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiae*; a church that lapses from it can scarcely be called Christian.¹

The Basic Concept: A Declaration of Righteousness

In the Hebrew Old Testament, the word group generally translated by "justify" or "justification" is based on the term $q\dot{d} < x$, (sedeq), "righteousness." As a verb this word can take several different forms, but the most important for our purposes is the Hiphil, which means "to declare righteous."²

It is important to note that this declaration of righteousness can be used in two different ways. One of the more common is properly described as "vindication." To vindicate an individual is to demonstrate that that person was right all along. We see this in Isaiah 50:8; Job 27:5; and Deuteronomy 25:1. In the Deuteronomy passage, the setting is a court of law, where the judge is responsible for condemning the wicked and "justifying" (declaring righteous) those who were in the right.

The other way in which the declaration of righteousness may be used is regarded in the OT as a corruption of justice. By declaring a person to be righteous when in fact that individual has not been righteous, the sins of the individual are excused or even rewarded. In Proverbs 17:15 and Isaiah 5:23, men are condemned for declaring the wicked to be righteous, and God says

¹*Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984], s.v. "Justification," by J. I. Packer, 593.

²BDB, s.v. "qdx," 842-43.

this is something He will not do (Exod. 23:7). A judge cannot simply pass over someone's transgressions without himself being unjust.

This basic understanding of justification as a declaration of righteousness is continued in the New Testament. Here the primary word is *δικαίω* ("right" or "righteous") and the verb is *δικαιοῦν* ("to declare righteous").³ In 1 Timothy 3:16, a passage that most likely refers to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, Paul cites a common confessional formula saying that Jesus was "justified by the Spirit." In His resurrection, Jesus Christ was vindicated – it was made known to all that He was indeed a righteous servant of God in spite of the fact that He had been crucified like a common criminal.⁴

By far the most common NT application of this word group, however, is in the justification of sinners. It seems at first glance that this is the very sort of corruption of justice which God condemned in the Old Testament passages cited above. However, Romans 3:21-26 demonstrates that God remains righteous in spite of His justification of sinners because He justifies on the basis of the propitiatory death of Jesus Christ. How could God remain just while justifying the wicked? Only by taking the penalty upon Himself in the person of His Son.

So then, the basic concept of justification is that it consists of a declaration of righteousness. This declaration is occasionally used of vindication, but more frequently in the New Testament it is applied to sinners by means of the blood of Christ.

Justification: Critical Passages

Romans 3:21-30

In the preceding chapters, Paul has just described the sinful state of all mankind, demonstrating systematically the universal need for salvation. He has argued that there are no righteous people, no persons truly doing good, and he concludes in 3:20 that no one can be declared righteous by means of the law, because the law only reveals the depths of our sinfulness.

It is in response to this fact that Paul begins verse 21 with one of the most significant words in soteriology – "But. " In spite of the helpless circumstances in which we find ourselves, there is a way out. There is hope.

The hope is that the righteousness of God has been manifested, that righteousness which comes through faith to all who believe (v. 22). Here the righteousness of God is evidently the "status of righteousness before God which is God's gift."⁵ This is similar to Paul's statement in Philippians 3:9, where he desired that he might be found in Christ, "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."

This righteous standing has been manifested "apart from the law" (v. 21). That certainly does not mean that it is contrary to the Law, which itself is good (7:12). Paul's point is that since the Law is unable to produce righteousness (v. 20), God has enabled mankind to stand before Him in righteousness through another means.

³BAGD, s.v. "*δικαίω*" and *δικαιοῦν*, 195-98.

⁴Cf. Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, 538.

⁵Cranfield, *Romans* 1:202.

That this righteous status is not contrary to the Law is underscored by the fact that it has actually been anticipated by "the Law and the prophets" (v. 21). Paul regards his teaching to be completely compatible with the Old Testament expectation, and he demonstrates this with many Scripture quotations throughout his letter to the Romans.

The righteousness that comes from God is available to all who believe, for it comes through faith in Jesus Christ (v. 22). This provides a clear contrast to verse 20—*through the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified, but *through faith in Christ* all may be.*

It is important to note that Paul regards all mankind to be subject to the same conditions for salvation. He has demonstrated that there is a universal need for righteous standing before God, and he has demonstrated that nobody (neither Jew nor Greek) can obtain that status by means of self-effort. He reminds the readers of that point in verse 23, where he states that all are subject to (and have failed) the same standards. "All have sinned and lack the glory of God." In light of this universal need, Paul speaks of a universal gospel message (1:16). All of mankind (with no distinction between Jew and Gentile) is offered the same solution: faith in Jesus Christ.

In verse 24, Paul begins to describe the rationale for his argument in greater detail. Continuing to explain the idea of "no distinction" between Jew and Greek, Paul maintains that all are declared righteous freely by the grace of God through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. In spite of the fact that verse 24 begins with a participle that is technically tied in to verse 23, we should not see a "universal" justification here. As in verse 22, the righteousness of God that comes through justification is extended to all who believe. What *is* universal is the means by which justification may be obtained. It could not be obtained by the Law (v. 20), but it is now available as a gift, by the grace of God.

While justification is available to the believer at no cost to himself, it has been made available by means of a price. In verse 24 Paul states that righteous standing before God is offered to the believer freely, "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." The nature of this redemption is described more clearly in verse 25. God has determined that Christ act as a propitiatory sacrifice, satisfying the righteous justice of God and paying the price necessary for our deliverance (see the class notes on redemption and propitiation).

We saw above that a judge who simply excused the guilty would himself be regarded as unjust (Prov. 17:15). A judge could not be righteous while letting the guilty go unpunished. God has demanded justice in response to mankind's sin, and that righteous demand has been satisfied in the death of Jesus Christ. That's what prevents God from being seen as an unrighteous judge, and that's why Paul says that the death of Christ serves as a demonstration of the righteousness of God (vv. 25, 26). In the "tolerance" of God (v. 26), He "overlooked the sins committed beforehand" (v. 25), postponing His judgment until the cross. When Christ was punished on our behalf, the righteousness of God was manifested in judgment.

Note that Paul has spoken of "the righteousness of God" in two ways in this passage. In verses 21 and 22, the righteousness of God is the righteousness that comes from God, the justification of believers. In verses 25 and 26, the righteousness of God is the righteousness that He Himself possesses as the righteous judge. That's why Paul summarizes the paragraph by saying that God has become "both just and justifier" (v. 26). He is Himself just, or righteous, because His justice has been satisfied and He has not simply excused the guilty. He is also the justifier, the one declaring believers to be righteous on the basis of the death of Christ. He remains righteous (*divkaion*) as a Judge, for He demanded that the penalty be paid. At the same time, He declares righteous (*dikaiou 'nta*) those who have faith in Jesus.

Paul's conclusion in the following paragraph is very straightforward. There is no room for boasting, because each individual is justified by faith apart from works of the Law (v. 28). Our righteous standing before God comes freely on the basis of the death of Christ, not through anything that we ourselves have achieved. He continues this theme into chapter four, where he speaks of Abraham as an example and a forefather to all who are justified by faith. Among many clear statements of the point, Romans 4:4,5 stands out as a particularly explicit expression of justification by faith: "Now to him who works, the wage is not reckoned as a favor but as that which is due; but to him who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness." The important point here is that God declares righteous the ungodly. He is not asking how good you have become or how good you might be. He is only asking you to believe in Him. This is justification by faith.

Galatians 3:1-14

This passage is important for several reasons. Not only does Paul once again clearly articulate his position, but he also utilizes some vital Old Testament passages in his exposition. By working through this passage, we will gain some insight into his understanding of justification, his use of the Old Testament, and his perception of the Judaizers who were confusing the Galatian believers.

Paul's subject in Galatians is well known. Certain individuals had apparently taught the Galatian believers that they were obligated to obey the Old Testament law, and Paul, both angry and amazed that they had accepted this teaching, defends the gospel that he had preached to them, namely, justification by faith.

In chapters 1 and 2, Paul argues that the message he had preached to the Galatians was from God, and that any contrary teaching (such as that of the Judaizers) was not from God. Following his conversion, he did not learn from others, but learned from the revelation of God (1:11-24). His ministry to the Gentiles was encouraged by the other apostles (2:1-10), and his message of freedom in the gospel was authoritative even over Peter (2:11-21). In 3:1-5, Paul expresses his amazement at the way the Galatians have apparently abandoned his message and placed themselves under the law. Not only is this foolish move contrary to their own experience, it is contrary to the testimony of the Old Testament itself, as Paul goes on to demonstrate in 3:6-29.

In verse 2, Paul reminds his readers of their conversion, when they received the Holy Spirit (cf. Rom. 8:9). He writes, "This one thing I desire to learn from you: Did you receive the Holy Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith?" In verse 3 he refers to this as "having begun by the Spirit." The Galatian believers were not regenerated by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit as a result of their own works. This came as a consequence of "hearing with faith."⁶

As an example of one who, like the Galatian believers, responded to God in faith, Paul points them to Abraham, the father of the Jews. His point is that the Galatians will be true sons of Abraham by responding to God in faith, not by attempting to maintain the Law.

Paul writes in verse 6, "Just as Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness." This crucial text from Genesis 15 is quoted several times in Romans 4, here, and

⁶For additional comments on the "order" of events here, see the notes to follow on the order of salvation.

in James 2:23. In each case it is treated as an authoritative pattern for the justification of the New Testament believer. In order to understand how Paul is using the passage, it is important that we begin in the context of Genesis 15.

Having already responded to God in faith by leaving his country in obedience to the divine command and with expectation in the divine promise (Gen. 12, Heb. 11:8-10), and having already given tithes to Melchizedek in fulfillment of a personal vow before the Lord (Gen. 14:22), Abraham was no stranger to God prior to the events of Genesis 15. In this chapter, Abraham responds to God's reassurances by lamenting the fact that he does not have an heir. God then promises him that he will not only have an heir, but that his descendants will be like the sand on the seashore and the stars in the sky (v. 5). This was a reassertion of the original promise made in Genesis 12:2, and Abraham's continuing faith in that promise was evident not only in his obedience but also in the statement of 15:6: Abraham believed in God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.

Several important points need to be noted here. First, Abraham's introduction to the gracious promises of God did not take place here in chapter 15, but in what may have been his initial experience with Yahweh, in chapter 12. He clearly believed in the promises at that time and was obedient to the divine commandment (Gen. 12:4; Heb. 11:8). As Paul writes, Abraham "did not waver in unbelief" in spite of his age, but actually grew stronger in faith, being convinced that God was able to fulfill His promises (Rom. 4:19-21). The faith which God acknowledges in Genesis 15:6 was not new to Abraham, but it seems reasonable to say that it was reinforced by God's assurances at the beginning of that chapter.

In response to the faith displayed by Abraham, God "counted it" to him as righteousness. Paul clearly interprets this as a declaration of righteousness on God's part (synonymous with justification), and with good reason (Rom. 4:3-5). To "count" here (Heb. *bvj*, Gr. *logivzomai*) means to "regard," or "esteem"⁷ and God evidently regarded Abraham as righteous here on account of his faith. It would be a mistake for us to automatically equate this declaration of righteousness with a conversion experience or a moment of salvation.⁸ It is justification in the simplest sense of the term—God regards Abraham as righteous. As we will see, both Paul and James make use of this affirmation in perfectly legitimate means.

In both Romans 4 and Galatians 3, Paul's point is simply that God's declaration of Abraham's righteousness comes about as a consequence of Abraham's expression of faith. It precedes the Law, circumcision, and any of the promises that are made more specifically to the nation Israel. Paul finds legitimate support here for justification by faith and for the inclusion of Gentiles in the Abrahamic blessing, both vital points in his case against the Judaizers.

In Galatians 3 Paul moves from his quotation of Genesis 15 directly into the assertion that it is those who are of faith who are the true children of Abraham (v. 7). As in Romans 4, Abraham is called upon as the ultimate rhetorical example in Paul's argument. He uses this model to say, essentially, that his teaching is more Jewish than that of the Judaizers!

Paul clearly intends that we understand "those who are of faith" as a contrast to those who are attempting to either win or maintain righteous standing before God on the basis of the

⁷BDB 363; cf. Job 13:24; 19:11; Ps. 32:2.

⁸Allen Ross argues that Genesis 15:6 is not intended to describe Abraham's response to God's promises in 15:1-5, but that it describes faith as a characteristic of Abraham ("The Biblical Method of Salvation: Discontinuity," in *Continuity and Discontinuity*, edited by John Feinberg, 168-69.)

Law. This is particularly evident in his inclusion of Gentiles as he continues to talk about justification by faith in verse 8. "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, 'all the nations shall be blessed in you.'"

Paul's quotation does not follow the LXX precisely here, appearing instead to combine elements of Genesis 12:3 and 18:18. There is considerable discussion among commentators as to how Genesis 12:3 should be interpreted. At the focus of the attention is the verb *wkrbn*, a Niphal form which some have argued must be understood in the reflexive sense ("they will bless themselves").⁹ However, the Niphal can be either passive or reflexive (GKC 51f), and the real issue turns on the meaning of the Hithpael of the same verb in the parallel passages of Genesis 22:18 and 26:4. Since several examples demonstrate that the Hithpael is not as overwhelmingly reflexive as Speiser and others maintain (cf. Jer. 4:2; Ps. 72:17), the passive rendering is certainly a legitimate option. Both Jewish and Greek commentators read it in the passive sense, and the rabbis frequently understood this passage to refer to the Gentiles receiving some sort of blessing through the merit of Abraham. In particular, some saw the promise bringing grace to a world which would otherwise receive strong judgment.¹⁰

All of this is to say that Genesis 12:3 teaches that *the nations would receive blessing through the agency of another*, namely Abraham. It is important to note that the promise was extended to Abraham's seed (Gen. 22:18; 26:4; 28:14), a point that will become very important to Paul's later argument in Galatians 3.

Paul uses Genesis 12:3 as support for the idea that the justification of Gentiles by faith was an Old Testament idea. This appears to be a legitimate point based on the passage. In Genesis 12, the nations do not merit a blessing but receive it through the merit of another. In Galatians, Paul extends that principle to the gospel proclamation. Those who do not merit a declaration of righteousness may receive that through the agency of another, namely Jesus Christ.¹¹

Having already concluded that Abraham was justified by faith (v. 6), and concluding here in verse 8 that the nations are justified by faith, Paul summarizes in verse 9 by saying that those who are "of faith" are blessed together with believing Abraham. In other words, those who believe God like Abraham did will be blessed as he was blessed, with the primary focus being on the declaration of righteousness in justification.

In contrast to those who are "of faith" and receive the blessing of justification, those who are "of the works of the Law" are "under a curse" (v. 10). Paul supports this point by quoting Deuteronomy 27:26: "Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the Law, to perform them." This verse does not fit neatly into Paul's argument, but he appears to depend on the unstated premise that nobody can keep the Law perfectly. If that is the case, then all who attempt to be justified under the Law will by their failings come under its curse instead.¹²

⁹Speiser, *Genesis*, The Anchor Bible, 86; Scharbert, *TDOT* 2:297.

¹⁰Strack and Billerbeck, 3:538-541.

¹¹Ridderbos, *Galatians* [NICNT], 120-21.

¹²Cf. Daniel Fuller, "Paul and the 'Works of the Law.'" *Westminster Theological Journal* 38 [Fall, 1975]: 28-42; Richard B. Hays, "The Faith of Jesus Christ: An Investigation of the Narrative Substructure of Paul's Theology in Galatians 3:1-4:11," Ph.D. Dissertation, Emory University, 1981; F. F. Bruce, *Galatians*, 160.

What Paul is arguing is that all legalists are under a curse, for they cannot adequately keep the Law, which brings a curse against all who violate it.

At this point, Paul has argued that the promise of blessing through Abraham demonstrates that justification comes through faith and that the curse on those who break the Law demonstrates that even the Judaizers themselves are in need of justification by faith. In verse 11, he restates the point using yet another Old Testament text, Habakkuk 2:4.

In chapter 1 of Habakkuk, the prophet had complained to God that there was great injustice and iniquity in the land of Judah. The Lord's response was that this problem would be dealt with, not through deliverance within, but through judgment from without. The Chaldeans would be raised up to come against Judah. Habakkuk was appalled that the Lord would do this, and he questioned the prophecy and the Lord's justice.

In chapter 2, the Lord replies to Habakkuk, assuring him first that the vision "will certainly come," that is, the Chaldeans would indeed be coming (2:2,3). However, He also assures the prophet of His justice, pronouncing woes upon the Chaldeans (2:4-19) and finally ending the argument altogether by simply declaring His sovereignty (2:20).

In this context, Habakkuk 2:4 acts as a contrast between the "proud one," the Chaldean, and the "righteous." While the former is never satisfied and brings judgment upon himself with his actions, the latter "will live by his faith." The argument is not that the one who is righteous by faith will live, but that the one who is righteous will live by faith.

The word rendered "faith" here is the Hebrew *ḥn : Wma* , (*'emunah*). It designates steadfastness, stability, and reliability (2 Kings 12:15; 22:7; 2 Chr. 31:12,15,18; Ps. 33:4; 36:5; 40:10; 89:1,2,5,8,24,33,49; 92:2; etc.). Evidently the belief of the righteous one is not in view as much as his character.

With regard to the "life" spoken of here, it is difficult to say whether Habakkuk is contrasting the lifestyles of the righteous and the proud (one lives in stability, the other in pursuit of his appetites) or is speaking of their end (one shall live, the other shall be judged). A case could be made for either option, but with the threat of being wiped out at the hands of the Chaldeans, "life" to Habakkuk would most likely have some reference to continuing physical life. What Habakkuk appears to be saying is that the righteous will be delivered through the agency of his trustworthiness before God.

In Habakkuk, the argument is not that the one who is righteous by faith will live, but that the one who is righteous will live by faith. It has been argued that Paul, who uses this text in Romans 1:17 and here in Galatians 3:11 to argue that no one is justified by means of the Law, alters the original meaning and makes it say just the opposite, that the one who is righteous by faith will live.¹³ However, when Galatians 3:12 is brought into the argument it appears as though Paul's use of the phrase is consistent with that of Habakkuk.

In Galatians 3:12 Paul states that the law is not "by faith." Since the one who is obeying the Law is seeking to live by the Law, Paul concludes that the one obeying the Law is not living by faith. The point may be laid out in the following way:

1. The Law is not "by faith" (12a).
2. The one obeying the Law seeks to live by the Law (12b).

¹³Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:102; Bruce, *Galatians*, 161; Dockery, "The Use of Hab. 2:4 in Rom. 1:17," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 22 (1987): 25.

3. Therefore, the one obeying the Law does not live by faith.

Putting this together with verse 11, Paul's argument may be summarized in the following way:

1. All who are justified will live by faith (11b).
2. The one obeying the Law does not live by faith (12).
3. Therefore, the one obeying the Law is not thereby justified (11a).

In other words, the statement made in the first part of verse 11 is supported by the second part of verse 11 and all of verse 12. Nobody can be justified by means of the Law, because legalists are not living by faith, and the just shall live by faith.

It is apparent that Paul is remaining quite close to the original meaning of Habakkuk 2:4, but he is understanding "faith" in a slightly different sense. In the original context the reference was more to "reliability" or "faithfulness" than it was to "trust in God." However, faith in God and reliability or faithfulness before God are related in that "one who trusts in the Lord is one who relies on Him and is faithful to Him."¹⁴ Perhaps the two ideas may be brought together with the concept of "loyalty" to another. Bultmann calls it "man's absolute committal to God."¹⁵ Therefore, though Paul has emphasized a different aspect of faith, he has not strayed too far from the original idea.

A similar point may be made with regard to the "life" spoken of in the two contexts. In Habakkuk it appears to be the preservation of physical life, while in Galatians 3 (and in Romans 1) Paul seems to be referring to the broader concept of eternal life with all of its eschatological consequences.¹⁶ This is illustrative of the greater understanding enjoyed through progressive revelation by NT writers with regard to the nature of life in relationship with God, and Paul's understanding seems to be completely legitimate.

So then, in order to support the point that no one is justified by the Law, Paul uses Habakkuk 2 to demonstrate that the one who is justified will live by faith. He goes on to quote Leviticus 18:5 in order to show the inconsistency maintained by those who are attempting to live under the law. They are not living by faith, and since all who are justified will live by faith, these legalists are excluded.

In Leviticus 18:5, the Lord precedes a list of commandments which Moses is to relay to the people with a summary and a promise: "You shall keep My statutes and My judgments, by which a man may live if he does them; I am the Lord." The life described here is life in the promised land under the blessing and rule of God, and it is contingent upon obedience to His commands. R. K. Harrison writes appropriately,

As long as the chosen people kept the prescribed statutes and ordinances, they could expect to *live*. The kind of life which the Law brought would be one of divine blessing and material prosperity, consonant with the covenantal promises, but contingent always upon implicit obedience to the will of God.¹⁷

¹⁴Ron Blue, *BKC*, 1:1513.

¹⁵*TDNT* 6:219.

¹⁶Cf. Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:101.

¹⁷*Leviticus*, TOTC, 185.

In the same way, Wenham writes, "What is envisaged is a life in which man enjoys God's bounty of health, children, friends, and prosperity. Keeping the law is the path to divine blessing, to a happy and fulfilled life in the present."¹⁸

It is not difficult to see what Leviticus 18:5 means in its original context. What is difficult is determining how exactly it is being used by the apostle Paul in Galatians 3:12. Fuller suggests that this was something of a motto for the legalists of Paul's day, that they were using this verse to support their cause and that Paul was quoting it here to demonstrate their disagreement.¹⁹ This is speculative, but very possible. Properly understood, there need have been no conflict between faith and law. Paul himself goes on to argue that there was to have been some coordination of the two in preparing the way for Christ (3:17-24). However, as it was understood in his day, there was a great conflict between law and faith, and this passage does emphasize the difference of opinion between him and the Judaizers.

As in Romans 3, Paul does not address the concept of justification by faith without considering the sacrificial death of Christ which made our justification possible. In Galatians 3:13, Paul states that Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law by becoming a curse for us. He supports this point with yet another Old Testament passage, Deuteronomy 21:23.²⁰ Paul maintains that Christ was publicly recognized on the cross as one who, like every executed criminal, bore the curse of God. Relating that curse to that which comes upon all who do not obey the Law, Paul maintains that Christ bore the curse which would have rightly fallen upon us.

The fact that Christ has taken our curse upon Himself means that we are redeemed from its demands. We are no longer regarded as unrighteous, but as believers have been declared righteous through the intervention of Christ. This is the "blessing of Abraham," which Paul goes on to relate to the gift of the Holy Spirit. Isaiah 44:3 utilizes the language of the Abrahamic covenant in promising the future gift of the Spirit, and that may have provided the strong link between the blessing of Abraham and the promise of regeneration in the Spirit (cf. Ezek. 36:25-27; Joel 2:28). In any case, it is clear that this blessing comes by grace through faith, not as a consequence of works.

Paul will go on to develop additional ideas relating Christ to the Abrahamic promise, but verse 14 closes out a fairly tight argument in favor of justification by faith. Lest the basic point be lost in the detailed commentary provided above, Paul's point is simply this: **Paul is reminding the Galatian believers that they have been declared righteous by faith. The justification that they have experienced by faith was not only typified by Abraham's example, it was also promised in the Old Testament as an aspect of the Abrahamic blessing. Since they are following the example of Abraham, those who respond to God in faith are truly his offspring, the heirs of God's promised blessing and the recipients of the Spirit. By contrast, those who are attempting to be justified by the Law are only subjecting themselves to its curse — a curse which Christ Himself bore on our behalf, making possible our justification.**

¹⁸*The Book of Leviticus*, NICOT, 253

¹⁹Fuller, "Paul and the 'Works of the Law,'" 41.

²⁰This passage is not as critical as the others for our purposes, so it will not be necessary to develop it in detail. However, two important articles are suggested here for your consideration if you desire to dig a little deeper into the specific issues of this passage: Fitzmyer, "Crucifixion in Ancient Palestine," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 40 (Oct. 1978): 493-513; and Wilcox, "Upon the Tree," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 96 (March 1977): 85-99.

James 2: 14-26

James writes,

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 the friend of God. You see that a man is justified by works, and not by faith alone. (James 2:21-24)

Since this passage has been regarded by many to be in contradiction to Paul's doctrine of justification by faith, it has been the focus of considerable attention for centuries. However, the central problem in the debate may be handled fairly simply.

It has been argued above that justification consists of a declaration of righteousness. With regard to Genesis 15:6, it was argued that God was acknowledging the righteousness that Abraham evidenced by his faith. Paul's point was not that Abraham was a sinner saved by grace, true though that may be. His point was that God's declaration of righteousness came as a consequence of faith apart from the Law.

James also points to Genesis 15 as a crucial text, but his argument is based more on Genesis 22, where Abraham's faith was tested and found to be mature. He was not "saved" as a consequence of that event any more than he was "saved" as a consequence of faith in Genesis 15. In both cases this man was acknowledged by God to be righteous and in that sense was "justified."

What James is arguing is that believers are expected to demonstrate their faith through a changed lifestyle. He is not arguing that one must be saved by works, but that salvation is to lead to works (v. 18). He points to the example of Abraham in order to say that our lifestyle reveals our allegiances and that we are in that sense regarded as righteous or unrighteous as a result of our actions.

"Justification" has a carefully defined meaning that has relatively broad application to different events in the life of the believer. When we talk about "justification by faith" our emphasis is clearly on conversion, and that follows the Pauline usage fairly closely. However, we must not read the Pauline emphasis into James or into Genesis, for they are not using the term with reference to a conversion event, but with reference to the ongoing experience of the believer.

Justification by Faith: A Summary

Biblical "justification" consists of a declaration of righteousness. As Paul says in Romans 5:19, through the one man, Jesus Christ, believers are "constituted righteous." That does not mean that we have been given the ability to do righteous deeds, though believers are certainly intended to do good works (Eph. 2:10). It means that God declares us righteous in Christ in spite of our ungodliness. In other words, our salvation cost Jesus Christ His life, but from our perspective, it is FREE.

It should be noted that faith is not itself a meritorious work. In Romans 4:4,5, Paul distinguishes between faith and works, saying that "one who does not work" need only to

"believe." Belief in Jesus Christ is not regarded as a work.²¹ It is also important to note here the result of justification. According to Romans 5, those who have been justified by faith now have peace with God (v. 1), an introduction into a state of grace before Him (v. 2). We have a secure hope for eternal deliverance from God's wrath now that we have been reconciled to Him (v. 10), and we should naturally rejoice in this salvation (v. 11)!!

²¹Taken out of context, John 6:29 might seem to maintain just the opposite, but as a response to the multitude's question in verse 28, it reinforces the point that God calls on mankind only to believe.

Justification in Historical Development: A Brief Survey

We rarely find the biblical writers consistently using expressions in such a way as to accommodate our theological categories. While biblical theology may be complicated by that fact, keep in mind that it is a complication which we have imposed on the text. When allowed to speak for itself, the text is generally considerably clearer than our theology books!

From the discussion above, it should be fairly apparent that "justification" as a biblical term may be applied to more than just the forgiveness that takes place at conversion. It may also apply to the later recognition of continuing righteous behavior on the part of the believer. In any case, it refers to a declaration of righteousness that is the fundamental sign of divine approval.

Following Augustine, the official position of the Roman Catholic church has regarded justification as more than just an event whereby one is declared to be righteous. They have also viewed it as the continuation of the Christian life in which one is made progressively more righteous. For Augustine, and for the Roman Catholic church after him, justification was both an event and a process.

The idea that justification (indeed, salvation) would take place as a process relates to the place of the sacraments in Catholic theology. With increased discussion on the nature of the atonement in the later medieval era (see previous lesson on the cross), Catholic theologians attempted to understand how the work of Christ could be received by an individual believer. Augustine had been a part of a broad tradition maintaining that grace was communicated to individuals through the sacraments, an argument that raised some additional questions. First, did the recipient obtain the grace automatically, or was faith required? When it was concluded that faith and repentance must be present to receive the grace communicated through the sacrament, participation in penance came to be regarded as a demonstration of genuine faith and repentance (especially when it was difficult or time-consuming). Over time penance grew increasingly mechanical, especially when substitutes such as the payment of money took the place of actions designed to reform one's behavior.²² Such practices also contributed to the corruption of the clergy, underscoring an additional issue surfaced by traditional sacramentalism. Recognizing that the efficacy of the sacrament depended on the faith and repentance of the recipient, did it also depend upon the faithfulness of the celebrant (the priest)? No, the church concluded, the sacraments were efficacious *ex opere operato* ("by the fact of the action's being performed"). As the 1994 Catholic catechism states, "From the moment that a sacrament is celebrated in accordance with the intention of the Church, the power of Christ and his Spirit acts in and through it, independently of the personal holiness of the minister. Nevertheless, the fruits of the sacraments also depend on the disposition of the one who receives them."²³

The Church's emphasis on the sacraments reinforces the notion of progressive justification. Grace continues to be given over the course of one's lifetime, sustaining, strengthening, and expressing the faith of the recipient.²⁴ For example, while justifying grace is supplied at baptism (forgiving all sin, enabling the individual to believe in God and lead an obedient life, growing in virtue),²⁵ it is increased and strengthened through confirmation, which

²²Cf. D. Clair Davis, "How Did the Church in Rome Become Roman Catholicism?" in *Roman Catholicism*, edited by John Armstrong (Chicago: Moody Press, 1995), 49-50.

²³*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §1128.

²⁴*Ibid.*, §1129-33.

²⁵*Ibid.*, §1263, 1266.

"unites us more firmly to Christ" and "renders our bond with the Church more perfect."²⁶ In the same way, "Holy Communion augments our union with Christ" and "preserves, increases, and renews the life of grace received at Baptism."²⁷ Justification thus "entails the sanctification of [one's] whole being"²⁸ progressively, primarily through the sacraments.

Purification must also take place through the temporal punishment of sins already forgiven, either in this life (in penance) or in the next (in Purgatory). It is possible for one to be delivered from such temporal punishment through indulgences, which are dispensed by the Church from the "treasury of merits of Christ and the saints" for various acts of devotion, penance, or charity.²⁹

Even with the Church's formal acknowledgment of faith, it's easy to see why this system's stress on sacraments, indulgences, and progressive justification would make it difficult for most Catholics to avoid the idea that salvation was to be obtained by clearly defined works. The presence of priestly intermediaries between God and the people reinforced that erroneous conclusion as the people depended on the church hierarchy for direction and assurance. Also the concept of "merit," though formally regarded as the merit of Christ,³⁰ has at a popular level often been understood as a measure of personal righteousness.

The Reformation was concerned with more than soteriology, but soteriological issues were among the most prominent of those debated.³¹ Luther's 95 theses were directed primarily against the doctrine of indulgences, and he later went on to speak out against the Church's sacramentalism and the authority of its leaders. He agreed that "justification" could be progressive,³² but he emphasized the idea that a believer was at the same time both "righteous and a sinner." Though still in need of growth and still struggling with sin, believers are justified through the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, which is intrinsically foreign to them. Calvin made a more formal distinction between justification (the imputation of Christ's righteousness) and sanctification (the process of growth in personal righteousness). McGrath writes,

Calvin understands justification to be a forensic term: 'God justifies us by pardoning us, and thus . . . justification is opposed to accusation, this antithesis clearly showing that this way of speaking is derived from forensic use.' Justification is an act of judgement on the part of God, by which he recognizes that sinners have communion with the one righteous man, Jesus Christ: not that act of judgement by which he recognizes that sinners have become righteous through the infusion of a habit of justice. There is no basis within man for any such verdict of pardon, so the righteousness necessary for such a verdict must come from outside man. God can therefore only acquit man by attributing to him the righteousness of Christ. 'We are righteous in Christ alone.' This insistence upon the distinction between the forensic pronouncement of justification and the process of regeneration or sanctification can be illustrated from every major writer from the

²⁶Ibid., §1303.

²⁷Ibid., §1391-92.

²⁸Ibid., §1995.

²⁹Ibid., §1478.

³⁰Ibid., §2008-11.

³¹Cf. W. Robert Godfrey, "What Really Caused the Great Divide?" in *Roman Catholicism*, edited by John Armstrong, 65-82.

³²Norman L. Geisler and Ralph E. MacKenzie, *Roman Catholics and Evangelicals* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 223.

Reformed and Lutheran schools during the period known as Orthodoxy. Indeed, the distinction is so characteristic of Lutheran and Reformed Orthodoxy that it can be regarded as the cardinal feature of Protestant doctrines of justification. For the Roman Catholic, justification marks not only the beginning of the Christian life, but also its continuation and perfection.

For the Protestant, justification marks the beginning of the Christian life – and no more. . . The fundamental difference between Roman Catholic and Protestant doctrines of justification must be considered to be the concept of righteousness involved. For the Catholic, justifying righteousness is the inherent righteousness infused by the action of the Holy Spirit; for the Protestant, justifying righteousness is the alien righteousness of Christ, imputed to the believer, which is never his own.³³

The Council of Trent considered this concept carefully before rejecting it in favor of an "inherent righteousness" produced by God within the believer. They argued that righteousness was infused, not imputed. McGrath summarizes,

Although stressing that this righteousness was provided by God, Trent equally insisted that it was located within the believer as a part of his person. The Reformers found this idea inconsistent: if God's verdict of justification was not to be a legal fiction, it would have to be based on a perfect righteousness, and if this righteousness was inherent to believers, how could Trent speak of believers *growing* in righteousness when they already possessed a perfect righteousness? It seemed to the Reformers that any inherent righteousness was, by its very nature, imperfect and in need of supplementation – and the imputation of the alien righteousness of Christ dealt with this difficulty.³⁴

Trent's rejection of the Reformers' view and its affirmation of infused righteousness is explicit:

If anyone says that men are justified either by the sole imputation of the justice of Christ or by the sole remission of sins, to the exclusion of the grace and the charity which is poured forth in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, and remains in them, or also that the grace by which we are justified is only the good will of God, let him be anathema. (Canon 11)

The 1994 *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reaffirms Trent, quoting portions of this article in its discussion of justification. One such quotation reads, "Justification is not only the remission of sins, but also the sanctification and renewal of the interior man."³⁵ "It conforms us to the righteousness of God, who makes us inwardly just by the power of his mercy"³⁶ and it "entails the sanctification of [one's] whole being."³⁷

The difference between Protestants and Roman Catholics on this issue leads to a very practical concern – the possibility of assurance. Again, McGrath summarizes the issue well:

³³Alister McGrath, "Justification – 'Making Just' or 'Declaring Just': A Neglected Aspect of the Ecumenical Discussion on Justification." *Churchman* 96 [1982]: 47-48.

³⁴Alister McGrath, "What Shall We Make of Ecumenism?" in *Roman Catholicism*, edited by John Armstrong, 205.

³⁵*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §1989.

³⁶*Ibid.*, §1992.

³⁷*Ibid.*, §1995.

For the Reformers, it was necessary to know that one was a Christian, that the Christian life had indeed begun, that one had been forgiven and accepted by God, and, on the basis of this conviction, the living of the Christian life . . . could proceed. Being justified on the basis of the external righteousness of Christ meant that all that needed to be done for an individual's justification had been done by God. So the believer could rest assured that he *had* been accepted and forgiven. The Reformers could not see how Trent ensured that individual believers were accepted, despite being sinners. For if believers possessed the perfect righteousness that ensured their justification, they could no longer be sinners – yet experience (as well as the penitential system of the Catholic Church!) suggested that believers continually sinned. For the Reformers, the Tridentine doctrine of justification was profoundly inadequate in that it could not account for the fact that believers were really accepted before God while still remaining sinners. The Reformers were convinced that Trent taught a profoundly inadequate doctrine of sin, with an equally inadequate doctrine of justification as a result. The famous phrase, due to Luther, sums up this precious insight with brilliance and verbal economy: *simul iustus et peccator* – "righteous and a sinner at one and the same time." Luther is one of the few theologians ever to have grasped and articulated the simple fact that God loves and accepts us just as we are – not as we *might* be, or *will* be, but as he finds us.³⁸

The 1994 *Catechism* does not address the issue of assurance, but Trent did, underscoring the validity of McGrath's summary by denying the possibility of "infallible" confidence that one was elect and would persevere (Canon 16). At a more popular level, contemporary Roman Catholics' insecurity is usually profound enough that one might even drop the "infallible" qualifier. If my salvation depends upon a change in me rather than a change in the way God views me, assurance will be hard to come by.

How should we resolve this issue? Is righteousness imputed or infused? Is it foreign or inherent in the believer? It was argued above that Romans 3:21 speaks of the "righteousness of God" as a righteousness that comes from Him to the believer, and that would suggest that it is foreign. Galatians 2:20 might be used to support the same point (particularly when it is followed by a clear reference to justification in verse 21) as would Philippians 3:9. An imputed righteousness makes genuine assurance possible, because our security does not depend upon our own goodness.

Along with this issue, it should be noted that Trent regarded the Protestant position to be too antinomian (anti-law). They thought it would lead to licentious behavior. This can be seen in several of the council's canons in the section on justification:

If anyone says that nothing besides faith is commanded in the Gospel, that other things are indifferent, neither commanded nor forbidden, but free; or that the ten commandments in no way pertain to Christians, let him be anathema. (Canon 19)

If anyone says that a man who is justified and however perfect is not bound to observe the commandments of God and the Church, but only to believe, as if the Gospel were a bare and absolute promise of eternal life without the condition of observing the commandments, let him be anathema. (Canon 20)

If anyone says that Christ Jesus was given by God to men as a redeemer in whom to trust, and not also as a legislator whom to obey, let him be anathema. (Canon 21)

³⁸McGrath, "What Shall We Make of Ecumenism?" 205.

This seems to be a misunderstanding, for the Reformers had no intention of abandoning God's commandments. Though they distinguished between justification and sanctification, they regarded them to be distinct but inseparable.³⁹ In other words, those who were justified would inevitably be sanctified. However, Trent ruled out even this perspective.

If anyone says that the justice received is not preserved and also not increased before God through good works, but that those works are merely the fruits and signs of justification obtained, but not the cause of its increase, let him be anathema. (Canon 24)

This last statement returns us again to the Roman Catholic concept of progressive justification and the relationship between that concept and the sacraments as the means of grace. Along with the nature of justifying righteousness (inherent/infused or foreign/imputed?) and the possibility of assurance, the prominence of the sacraments, the possibility of indulgences, and the concept of Purgatory all remain as obstacles to continuing dialogue between Roman Catholics and Protestants. However, that dialogue has produced a flurry of controversial documents and writings in recent years, the most discussed of which has been the "Evangelicals and Catholics Together" statement drafted by Charles Colson, Richard John Neuhaus, and others (see handouts).

In the modern period, many theologians have regarded justification by faith as an outdated concept. For example, John Macquarrie speaks of the doctrine as "'vastly exaggerated' in the importance paid to it, with 'archaic' terminology, and liable to involve us in confusing, misleading, and untenable theories of the atonement."⁴⁰ He reinterprets the doctrine in existential terms with emphasis on feelings of guilt and alienation. Quite clearly, this interpretation is unacceptably anthropocentric. The work of Christ is irrelevant and the objective reality of guilt is ignored.

Can the doctrine be "updated" without doing damage to its content? If by "updated" one means that the exclusivity of the gospel is to be removed and the stumbling block of the cross thrown aside, then the answer must be a resounding, "NO!" That would likely yield "another gospel," deserving of divine *anathema*.

At the same time, if one desires to address today's culture in such a way that they might better understand the nature of redemption in Christ, it may be necessary to speak in terms of "felt needs" as a way to bridge into the issue. In any case, the centrality of this doctrine demands its accurate and relevant proclamation. McGrath's description here is appropriate:

The Christian faith stands or falls with the fundamental declaration that God has in Christ established a new relationship between himself and sinners, and the life of faith stands or falls with the knowledge of this decisive action on the part of God. If this belief is false, the Christian faith must be recognized as a delusion—a deeply satisfying delusion, to be sure, but a delusion none the less. But if it is true, it is of central and decisive importance to the Christian understanding of the meaning of life, human nature and destiny, and the nature and purposes of God. The doctrine of justification by faith touches human existence at its heart, at the point of its relation to God. It defines the preaching of the Christian church, the establishment and development of the life of faith, the basis of human security and our perspective for the future. So important was the doctrine for Martin Luther that he stated it to be "the master and ruler, lord, governor

³⁹Cf. Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, III. XI. 14, 23; III. XVI. 1.

⁴⁰Sedgwick, 9-10.

and judge over all other doctrines, which preserves and governs every Christian doctrine and upholds our conscience before God." Once grasped, the importance of the doctrine for every aspect of Christian life – theology, spirituality, and ethics – must be explored and acted on.⁴¹

The concept of justification by faith is the heart of the gospel message. Its importance cannot be overstated, and its universal relevance must not be ignored.

For Further Reading

- Agnew, Francis H. "Paul's Theological Adversary in the Doctrine of Justification by Faith: A Contribution to Jewish-Christian Dialogue." *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 25 (Fall 1988): 538-54.
Argues that Paul argues against a fictional adversary in Galatians, a straw man that he creates in order to emphasize his point. Unpersuasive.
- Allen, Kenneth W. "Justification by Faith." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 135 (April-June 1978): 109-116.
General exposition of the doctrine of justification by faith.
- Armstrong, John (ed.). *Roman Catholicism: Evangelical Protestants Analyze What Divides and Unites Us*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1995.
This volume includes many excellent essays and can be very helpful in attempting to understand Roman Catholicism from an evangelical perspective.
- Carson, D.A.(ed.) *Right With God: Justification in the Bible and the World*. Grand Rapids: Baker (on behalf of the World Evangelical Fellowship), 1992.
Excellent resource on biblical and contemporary issues. Highly recommended.
- Catechism of the Catholic Church*. New York: Doubleday, 1994.
The best source for clear statements of Catholic teaching. Very accessible, thoroughly documented and indexed.
- Clifford, Alan C. "The Gospel and Justification." *The Evangelical Quarterly* 57 (July 1985): 247-67.
Very unusual discussion of justification in which the author argues that it is equivalent to pardon by faith, but that it must involve personal obedience and must be repeated throughout one's life for subsequent sins to be forgiven!
- Cosgrove, Charles H. "Justification in Paul: A Linguistic and Theological Reflection." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 106 (1987): 653-70.
- Dockery, David S. "The Use of Hab. 2:4 in Rom. 1:17: Some Hermeneutical and Theological Considerations." *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 22 (Fall 1987): 24-36.
- Dunn, James D. G. "The New Perspective on Paul." *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library* 65 (Spring 1983): 95-122.
This is Dunn's response to Sanders and others with regard to the Jewish beliefs about the law during the apostolic era. Dunn maintains that the error of the Jews was in seeing the covenant

⁴¹McGrath, *Justification by Faith*, 147-48.

and the law as Israel's special prerogative. In his view, Paul responded by saying that covenantal membership did not come through physical descent nor through works of the law. As is typical with Dunn's work, this is creative, with some good critiques of others, but it remains unclear on some vital points.

- Geisler, Norman L., and Ralph E. MacKenzie. *Roman Catholics and Evangelicals: Agreements and Differences*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995.
Relatively helpful assessment of agreements and differences from the perspective of two evangelicals. Unfortunately, the chapter on justification is perhaps the weakest in the book.
- Hays, Richard B. "Have We Found Abraham to Be Our Forefather According to the Flesh?: A Reconsideration of Rom 4:1." *Novum Testamentum* 27 (1985): 76-98.
Interesting study of Romans 4, arguing that from the outset the passage is primarily concerned with the proper application of the Abrahamic promise to Gentiles.
- _____. "Jesus' Faith and Ours: A Re-reading of Galatians 3." *TSF Bulletin* (Sep.-Oct. 1983): 2-6.
- Hummel, Horace D. "Justification in the Old Testament." *Concordia Journal* (January 1983): 9-17.
Survey of expressions in the OT used to describe the concept of justification. Deals briefly with sacrifices and with concept of God's righteousness.
- Karlberg, Mark W. "Justification in Redemptive History." *The Westminster Theological Journal* 43 (Spring 1981): 213-46.
Argues that blessings in the OT were based on obedience to the law, so he speaks of the "justification of the godly" in the OT. He emphasizes the forensic nature of justification in the NT, but also uses the term more broadly to at times speak of the believer's continuation in good works.
- Küng, Hans. *Justification: The Doctrine of Karl Barth and a Catholic Reflection*. New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1964.
Very controversial doctoral dissertation by a man who went on to become a leading twentieth century theologian. Küng argues that Catholics and Protestants are really much closer together on the doctrine of justification than any of them believed. Widely critiqued by both Catholics and Protestants.
- Ladd, George Eldon. "Righteousness in Romans." *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 19 (Fall, 1976): 6-17.
- Lambrecht, J. "Why is Boasting Excluded? A Note on Rom 3, 27 and 4, 2." *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 61 (Dec. 1985): 365-69.
- Lodge, John G. "Jesus and Paul at Cross Purposes? James 2, 22." *Biblica* 62 (1981): 195-213.
- McGrath, Alister. *Justification By Faith*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan (Academie), 1988.
Highly recommended. Examines historical controversies over justification, then attempts to address a more contemporary audience by restating the doctrine in existential, relational, and ethical language.
- _____. "Justification – 'Making Just' or 'Declaring Just?': A Neglected Aspect of the Ecumenical Discussion on Justification." *Churchman* 96 (1982): 44-52.

This is McGrath's response to the ecumenical discussions of justification by faith. He demonstrates that the question raised by his title constitutes the major distinction between Roman Catholics and Protestants, and he argues that future ecumenical dialogue should not circumvent this vital issue.

Mueller, Theodore. "Justification: Basic Linguistic Aspects and the Art of Communicating It." *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 46 (Jan. 1982): 21-38.

Fairly good exposition of the doctrine with appropriate emphasis on critical issues, but not very well documented.

Packer, J. I. (and others). *Here We Stand: Justification By Faith Today*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1986.

Collection of essays on the topic, most of which focus on historical theology.

Plevnik, Joseph. "Recent Developments in the Discussion Concerning Justification by Faith." *Toronto Journal of Theology* 2 (Spring 1986): 47-62.

Plevnik is a Jesuit scholar who seems to specialize in summarizing recent studies in Pauline thought. This article brings the reader relatively up to date on Pauline debates concerning justification.

Räisänen, Heikki. "Galatians 2.16 and Paul's Break With Judaism." *New Testament Studies* 31 (1985): 543-53.

A defense of Sanders in response to Dunn's article (see above).

Robertson, O. Palmer. "Genesis 15:6: New Covenant Expositions of an Old Covenant Text." *Westminster Theological Journal* 42 (Spring 1980): 259-89.

Root, Michael. "Alister McGrath on Cross and Justification." *Thomist* 54:4 (1990): 705-25.

A critique of McGrath. Relatively technical, but helpful.

Rhyne, C. Thomas. "Nomos Dikaiosynes and the Meaning of Romans 10:4." *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 47 (1985): 486-99.

Sanders, E. P. *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion*. London: SCM Press, 1977.

A controversial book in Pauline studies. Sanders argues that Paul's Jewish opponents were not teaching justification by works, but that they saw obedience to the law as a means by which to maintain one's status in the covenant. Interesting, but not completely persuasive.

Scaer, David P. "The Two Sides of Justification." *Christianity Today* 15 (June 26, 1981): 44.

Discussion of the distinction between objective and subjective justification, arguing that the former is a helpful theological construct that needs to be retained.

Schrotenboer, Paul G., ed. *Roman Catholicism: A Contemporary Evangelical Perspective*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987.

Concise summary of differences between evangelicals and Roman Catholics. Well documented and very carefully prepared by the World Evangelical Fellowship.

Sedgwick, Peter. "'Justification by Faith': One Doctrine, Many Debates?" *Theology* 93 (Jan.-Feb. 1990): 5-13.

Review of contemporary discussions of the topic, with emphasis on existential writings and Jewish beliefs in the time of Paul.

- Snodgrass, Klyne R. "Justification by Grace—to the Doers: An Analysis of the Place of Romans 2 in the Theology of Paul." *New Testament Studies* 32 (1986): 72-93.
Comes fairly close to simply stating a belief in the traditional Reformed doctrine of perseverance, but argues that all persons, even Christians, will be judged on the basis of their works. Attempts (unsuccessfully, I think) to reconcile this belief with the concept of justification by faith in Paul's theology.
- Songer, Harold S. "New Standing Before God: Romans 3:21 - 5:21." *Review and Expositor* 73 (Fall, 1976): 415-24.
- Williams, Sam K. "Justification and the Spirit in Galatians." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 29 (1987): 91-100.