November 8th, 2026

JUSTIFICATION MECHANICS

HOW JUSTIFICATION WORKS IN SALVATION

"To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

~ Romans 3:26

1. Salvation vs. Justification

a. Salvation is simple to receive (faith), but its depth teaches the wisdom & grace of God
b. 'Salvation' is the whole package, 'justification' is one part. *(Car vs. brakes)*
c. What is justification? How does it work? (*master cylinder, rotors, pads, calipers, ABS)*
d. Justification makes salvation right (confusion abounds with works, faith, faith+)

2. The Function of Justification

a. Justification *~def.* Reason or proof that one is right, proper, worthy, fit, qualified, true.
b. "*Is it right? How do we know*? *What's the evidence?"* is asking for justification.
c. A legal conclusion that declares one righteous, meets the standard, legal, dutiful.
    i. Not a statement of sins per se, but of qualification/witness - Isa 43:9,26
d. A judgment on personal integrity, walk, purpose, character (e.g. interview, spouse)
    i. (1 Tim 3:16 – Jesus was justified in the Spirit – three are one, John 3:34)
e. Vindication *~def.* Justification; defend against objections to what is right. Rom 8:31

3. A Personal Problem

a. Doing right is not a grace - it is the duty that God created us for.
b. Acting honorably is not above and beyond – it is our duty. Justification is our duty.
c. To be justified, you must simply show proof that you are right, holy, true.... but...
d. Sin corrupts our righteousness, obedience, capability to perform our duty, witness.
e. Sin alters what we worship, our purpose, godliness, devotion, direction.
f. We become what we worship (worthiness). If we worship less, we become worthless.
g. Sin makes us unfit, unqualified,unproven,unworthy, incapable, inadequate, undeserving
h. Sin creates a personal problem that cannot be justified - Rom 3:19-20, Gal 3:10-12

4. The Logic of Justification

a. Since justification demands proof/reason, it appeals to logic, not emotion.
b. Favorite self-justifications that don't work (none of these make right, most are boasts)
    i. Comparison: "I've never done anything as bad as that." "It's not that bad."
    ii. Appeal to pity: "I've had hard time/bad day."'"I was trapped/victim." "I'm sick."
    iii. Autonomy: "It's my life/ my body / my choice / my decision."
    iv. Intent: "I did not mean to." "It was an accident." "People don't' understand."
    v. Blameshifting: "They did it worse to me." "They made me do it. They started it."
    vi. Timing is off: "Right place, wrong time." "Wrong place, wrong time" "bad luck"
    vii. Entitlement: "Everyone deserves..." "It's my right."
c. Justifying sinners is wrong → Prov 17:15, Isa 5:20-23, Job 9:2, 25:4, 32:2, Rom 3:4
d. "Self-righteousness" as a sin speaks to the Bible doctrine that "all have sinned" 3:23

5. Justification Mechanics

a. Rom 1:17-5:1 explains how justification works to save the sinner through faith - 3:21
b. The impossibility of our justification, but we can be freely by grace through faith? How?
c. The great mystery of justification: Christ performed what we could not - Rom 3:23-24
d. Grace changes the qualification from receiving life to receiving a gift – Rom 4:16, 5:16
e. Boasting is excluded because we have not done the work, but him – Rom 3:27-28
f. How does his righteousness get to us? Through faith - Rom 3:26 (not pro se)
g. Imputation *~def.* To charge or impute onto the account of another. 2Co 5:21, Ro 4:5-6
h. Justification not simply a declaration, but an imputation, NOT "as if I'd never sinned"
i. Attorney *~def.* One admitted in place of another, a qualified substitute, representative.
j. To justify, he must be qualified, finish the work, offer representation, present evidence.
k. Faith in Christ is admission of trust in the capability of the one who stands for you -4:21
l. His resurrection completes the work and qualifies him to represent you – Rom 4:24-25
m. An attorney may represent at great cost to himself, for free (gratis / gratia → grace)
n. What is the evidence, proof, witness of our justification? The cross - Rom 5:9, Titus 3:7
o. It is God that justifies, and we are justified through or Lord Jesus Christ - Rom 8:33
p. God can declare us righteous, because the justifying duty was performed by Christ.
q. The death of Jesus Christ, son of God, was justified in the salvation of sinners.
r. What justifies our salvation? Faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ (God's grace)
s. What justifies our being called child of God? Being in Christ Jesus acc. to the mystery