

The Magnificent Message Of Justification

A Look at Romans Chapters 1-5

By

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This is the wonderful news that

'through Christ Jesus everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses'

(Acts 13:39 NIV)

This awesome message is revealed by the Apostle Paul, the apostle and teacher of the nations.

'For there is one God, and one Mediator of God and mankind, a Man, Christ Jesus, who is giving Himself a correspondent Ransom for ALL (the testimony in its own eras), for which I was appointed a herald and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the nations in knowledge and truth.'

(1 Timothy 2:5-7)

This good news (or evangel or gospel) has its foundations deeply rooted in the Hebrew Scriptures. Even though it was sent to the Jew first, it is ultimately for all nations, that believers may become subject to God by faith, and not by law of any kind.

'Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, a called apostle, severed for **the evangel of God** (which He promises before through His prophets in the holy scriptures), **concerning His Son** (Who comes of the seed of David according to the flesh, Who is designated Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead), Jesus Christ, our Lord, through Whom we obtained grace and apostleship for faith-obedience among all the nations, for His name's sake...'

(Romans 1:1-6)

The evangel is God's power for salvation to everyone who is believing. And in it is revealed the absolute righteousness of God - Romans 1:16-17

Let us enter the courtroom of God.

Humanity is full of injustice and irreverence, worshipping the creature rather than the Creator, even though the nations have the spiritual law of God written on their hearts, along with conscience, and the Jews having the written law of God through Moses. (Up to this point in time, good acts and law-righteousness were relative, as seen from the human viewpoint. Now all is being revealed in the absolute, from the divine viewpoint).

Yet all are charged with sin, i.e. missing the mark of God's righteousness and glory. Not one is just - not even one! Not one is understanding. Not one is seeking out God. Even those who would consider themselves good and righteous are also condemned as sinners. No one can escape the just judgment of God, who will be paying each one in accord with his acts, when He will be judging the hidden things of humanity, through Jesus Christ.

Due to the forbearance and patience and kindness of God, the penalties of sins that had occurred before had been passed over. This was a temporary set-up for Israel, but God's purpose all along was that Christ would be the propitiatory shelter (or atonement), and the ultimate sacrifice, whereby, through faith in His blood, sin is taken away, permanently. This displays God's absolute righteousness and justice - **the price has been paid in full** (Romans 1:18 - 3:18)

If even the Jews, who have benefited much from God, are condemned by the law, being under the law, then

'...the entire world has become subject to the just verdict of God, because by works of law, no flesh at all shall be justified in His sight, for through the law is the recognition of sin'

(Romans 3:19-20)

'YET NOW, APART FROM LAW, A RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IS MANIFEST (BEING ATTESTED BY THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS), YET A RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD **THROUGH JESUS CHRIST'S FAITH, FOR ALL**, AND ON ALL WHO ARE BELIEVING, FOR THERE IS NO DISTINCTION, **FOR ALL SINNED** AND ARE WANTING OF THE GLORY OF GOD'

(Romans 3:21-23)

Jesus, as God's Son and Messiah, lived a life of perfect faith - He believed His Father and God, and trusted Him in everything, especially when He died the humiliating, accursed death of the cross. **Yet He was Yahweh of the Hebrew scriptures**

'Who, being inherently in the **form of God**, deems it not pillaging to be **equal with God**, nevertheless **empties Himself**, taking the **form of a**

slave, coming to be in the likeness of humanity, and, being found in fashion as a human, **He humbles Himself**, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross'

(Philippians 2:6-8)

No one can comprehend the spiritual agony that Jesus endured for our sakes. It cost Him everything. Yet

'the One not knowing sin, God makes to be a sin offering for our sakes that **we may be becoming God's righteousness in Him**'

(2 Corinthians 5:21)

Due to Christ's faith-obedience,

'God highly exalts Him, and graces Him with the name that is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should be bowing, celestial and terrestrial and subterranean, and every tongue should be acclaiming that Jesus Christ is Lord, **for the glory of God, the Father**'

(Philippians 2:9-11)

Therefore, those who believe the evangel of God concerning His Son, which displays His righteousness in dealing with the sins and transgressions of humanity, are justified freely in His grace, through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus. But it is the faith of Jesus, which is the channel for this justification - Romans 3:24-27

'But the scripture **locks up all** together under sin, that the promise **out of Jesus Christ's faith** may be given to those who are believing'

(Galatians 3:22)

Yet even our own faith in believing God is a gift.

'For in grace, through faith, are you saved, and **this is not out of you**; it is **God's approach present**, not of works, lest anyone should be boasting'

(Ephesians 2:8-9)

What love! What grace! What condescension! God is giving humanity the offering or gift for peace, when it should be the other way round! Yet it has to be this way, so that God can reveal the depths of His Love to us all.

'Where, then, is boasting? It is debarred! Through what law? Of works? NO! But through faith's law. For we are reckoning a man to be justified by faith apart from works of law'

(Romans 3:27-28)

This justification is greater than mere forgiveness or pardon. Forgiveness or pardon by a King can be revoked due to bad behaviour. But to be justified is to be declared innocent of all offences, as though they never even existed! God is the Justifier of the one who is of the faith of Jesus. And it is by faith that it may accord with grace, not works, so that all is of God. Of course, forgiveness is also included.

This results in the Jews, (who are called the Circumcision, which was the sign of their covenant relationship to God), and the Gentiles or nations, (who are called the Uncircumcision) being justified by God on the same grounds of faith - Romans 3:29-31

'We, who by nature are Jews, and not sinners of the nations, having perceived that a man is not being justified by works of law, except alone through the faith of Christ Jesus, we also believe in Christ Jesus that we may be justified **by the faith of Christ** and not by works of law, seeing that by works of law shall no flesh at all be justified...

...For I, through law, died to law, that I should be living to God. With Christ have I been crucified, yet I am living; no longer I, but living in me is Christ. Now that which I am now living in flesh, **I am living in faith that is of the Son of God, Who loves me, and gives Himself up for me.** I am not repudiating the grace of God, for if righteousness is through law, consequently Christ died gratuitously (*for no reason*)'

(Galatians 2:15-21)

Apart from Christ, one of the greatest examples of faith in Hebrew history is that of Abraham. 'Abraham believes God, and it is reckoned to him for righteousness' - Romans 4:1-3 and Genesis 15:6

That is to say that the only right thing to do in God's sight is to believe Him. Abraham, among many others, did this and it was reckoned as righteousness. Even after the giving of the law through Moses, for an Israelite to be accounted righteous before God came only by faith, resulting in works or law-obedience. But Abraham was granted faith-righteousness BEFORE he received the sign of circumcision, which was then given as a physical seal of the faith-righteousness which he had already while in UNCIRCUMCISION!

Paul's conclusion is that Abraham is the father of ALL those who are believing God, whether Jew or Gentile. He also makes it clear that the original Abrahamic promise, whereby his seed will become the enjoyers of the allotment of the world in the coming kingdom, is not to be fulfilled through the law, but through faith's righteousness. Romans 4:4-13 & Galatians 3:5-9

'For if those of law are enjoyers of the allotment, faith has been made void and the promise has been nullified, for the law is producing indignation. Now where no law is (*Abraham in uncircumcision*) neither is there transgression. Therefore it is of faith that it may accord with grace...'

(Romans 4:14-16)

The law was brought in alongside the original promise to Abraham, as a temporary measure, to lead Israel from being minors to adults, from immaturity to maturity. The law, and their failure to keep it, does not nullify the promise, as the fulfillment rests on God's work in Christ - Galatians 3:10-29

'What, then, is the law? On behalf of transgressions was it added, until the Seed (*Christ*) should come to Whom He has promised...

...Is the law, then, against the promises of God? May it not be coming to that! For if a law were given that is able to vivify, really, righteousness were out of law...

...Now before the coming of faith we were garrisoned under law, being locked up together for the faith about to be revealed. So that the law has become our escort (*pedagogue*) to Christ, that we may be justified by faith. Now, at the coming of faith, we are no longer under an escort, for you are all sons of God, through faith in Christ Jesus'

(Galatians 3:19, 21, 23-26)

Paul, when he was Rabbi Saul, had much to boast of in the flesh. His law-obedience had resulted in law's righteousness - outwardly, in the flesh.

'But things which were gain to me, these I have deemed a forfeit because of Christ. But, to be sure, I am also deeming all to be a forfeit because of the superiority of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord, because of whom I forfeited all, and am deeming it to be refuse, that I should be gaining Christ, and may be found in Him, NOT HAVING MY RIGHTEOUSNESS, WHICH IS OF LAW, BUT THAT WHICH IS THROUGH THE FAITH OF CHRIST, THE RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH IS FROM GOD FOR FAITH'

(Philippians 3:4-10)

Now concerning Abraham's faith-righteousness,

'It was not written because of him only, that it is reckoned to him, but because of us also, to whom it is about to be reckoned, who are believing on Him who rouses Jesus our Lord from among the dead, **who was given up because of our offences, and was roused because of our justifying'**

(Romans 4:23-25)

Justification by itself is not enough though. We have all offended God and become His enemies. As a Judge, He justifies us, but we need friendship and affection. So as a loving Father He forgives all our offences and conciliates us to Himself. Reconciliation comes when we receive this gracious conciliation, and the love of God is poured out in our hearts through the holy spirit which is being given to us.

'And you, being once estranged and enemies in comprehension, by wicked acts, yet now He reconciles by His body of flesh, through His death, **to present you holy and flawless and unimpeachable in His sight...**'

(Colossians 1:21-23)

We can now have intimate fellowship with the Father and His Son by His Spirit.

We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ...

...We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.

(1 John 1:3; 4:13 NIV)

Faithful is God, through Whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

(1 Corinthians 1:9)

We then leave the courtroom and enter into the home of the family of God, as His children.

'Being, then, justified by faith, we may be having peace toward God, through our Lord, Jesus Christ, through Whom we have the access also, by faith, into this grace in which we stand, and we may be glorying in expectation of the glory of God'

(Romans 5:1-2)

The day will come when we shall no longer be wanting of the glory of God in our body of flesh, where sin is constantly lurking in the shadows, empowered by death working in our mortal bodies. We will become the glory and the righteousness of God, in the image of His Son. By faith, we can begin to live the life of the new humanity now, in spirit, having been reconciled to God.

'For Christ, while we are still infirm, still in accord with the era, for the sake of the irreverent, died...**God is commending this love of His to us**, seeing that, while we are still sinners, Christ died for our sakes. Much rather, then, being now justified in His blood, we shall be saved from indignation, through Him. **For if, being enemies, we were conciliated to God through the death of His Son, much rather,**

being conciliated, we shall be saved in His life. Yet not only so, but we are glorying also in God, through our Lord, Jesus Christ, through Whom we now obtained the conciliation'

(Romans 5:6-11)

'Yet all is of God, Who conciliates us to Himself through Christ, and is giving us the dispensation of the conciliation, how that God was in Christ, conciliating the world to Himself, **not reckoning their offences to them**, and placing in us the word of the conciliation'

(2 Corinthians 5:18-19)

Even now Christ can be formed within us by His Spirit as we mature in the faith.

My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you...

...With Christ have I been crucified, yet I am living; no longer I, but living in me is Christ. Now that which I am now living in flesh, I am living in faith that is of the Son of God, Who loves me, and gives Himself up for me.

(Galatians 4:19 NIV; 2:20)

But what does all this really mean, concerning sin and death, and the sacrificial death and subsequent resurrection of Christ? What has actually transpired? Who does it affect?

'Therefore, even as through one man sin entered into the world, and through sin death, and thus death passed through into all mankind, on which all sinned - for until law sin was in the world, yet sin is not being taken into account when there is no law; nevertheless death reigns from Adam unto Moses, over those also who do not sin in the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who is about to be'

(Romans 5:12-14)

As far as God is concerned, there are only two humans who have affected humanity universally - the first man, Adam, and the second man Christ Jesus. Adam is a type of Christ i.e. he foreshadows something of Christ's position over humanity. There are parallels between the two. The result of their acts are two monarchs or rulers: death and eonian life. The former reigns through judgment, and the latter reigns through grace. (Later, Paul also reveals that Sin reigns in death, and Grace reigns in eonian life).

Through Adam, sin entered into the world, which in turn brought death into the world as a consequence of Adam's transgression, and through Adam's seed, death has been passed through into all mankind, which results in further sin by all (Gr. 'on which all sinned'). **We sin because we are slowly dying (that is, we are mortal), and therefore we do not have the power to live righteously.**

Sin's penalty is death, but without God's law, sin is not truly recognised. Yet death reigns from Adam unto Moses (when the law was given), even over those of humanity in that era who did not transgress a command of God, in the same way that Adam did.

It would appear as though God is being unfair, because all of humanity and all of creation is subjected to frustration through no fault of its own! But God has a good reason for this and He will be justified in doing so.

'For to vanity was the creation subjected, not voluntarily, **but because of Him who subjects it**, in expectation that **the creation itself, also, shall be freed from the slavery of corruption into the glorious freedom of the children of God**'

(Romans 8:20-22)

'But not as the offense, thus also the grace. For if by the offense of the one, the many died, much rather the grace of God and the gratuity in grace, which is of the One Man, Jesus Christ, to the many super-abounds. And not as through one act of sinning is the gratuity.

For, indeed, the judgment is out of one into condemnation, yet the grace is out of many offences into a just award. For if, by the offense of the one, death reigns through the one, much rather, those obtaining the superabundance of grace and the gratuity of righteousness shall be reigning in life through the One, Jesus Christ'

(Romans 5:15-17)

The 'free uncalled-for-gift' of justification and the grace of the conciliation, made available through Christ, to all who believe, FAR OUTWEIGHS the original offense of Adam.

The one (Adam), through one offense, brought death and condemnation to the many, (the rest of humanity).

The One (Jesus), after many offences, through His righteous act, brings justification and life to those who believe.

But this is still not satisfactory! What about those who don't believe, and are therefore not granted eonian life? That is, what of those who are not chosen by God to be the firstborn ones?

'Consequently, then, as it was through **one** offense for **all mankind** for condemnation, thus also it is through **one** just award for **all mankind** for life's justifying. For even as, through the disobedience of the one man, **the many were constituted sinners**, thus also, through the obedience of the One, **the many shall be constituted just**'

(Romans 5:18-19)

'For since, in fact, through a man came death, through a Man, also, comes the resurrection of the dead. For even as, in Adam, **all are dying**, thus also, in Christ, shall **all be vivified**'

(1 Corinthians 15:21-22)

Adam disobeyed and caused humanity to become sinners

Jesus obeyed and the rest of humanity will become just or righteous (eventually)

In Adam, all humanity is dying

In Christ, all humanity will be made immortal or given Life (eventually, not all at once, as Paul goes on to show in the next verse)

As far as God is concerned, the old, primitive humanity in Adam is dead and gone, being condemned in the death of Christ. In Christ, there exists a New Humanity, which is part of a New Creation, the primitive having passed by. All believers will take their place in the new humanity for the life of the eons to come - eonian life and beyond.

But eventually, all humanity, and in fact, all of the spirit realm, will one day be saved and reconciled to God, through Christ.

'...our Saviour, God, Who wills that all mankind be saved and come into a realisation of the truth'

(1 Timothy 2:4)

'Faithful is the saying and worthy of all welcome (for for this are we toiling and being reproached), that we rely on the living God, **Who is the Saviour of all Mankind**, especially (**not solely**) of believers. These things be charging and teaching'

(1 Timothy 4:9-11)

'For the love of Christ is constraining us, judging this, that, if **One died for the sake of all**, consequently **all died**. And He died for the sake of all that those who are living should by no means still be living to themselves, but to the One dying and being roused for their sakes'

(2 Corinthians 5:14-15)

'For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him (Christ), and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross'

(Colossians 1:19-20 NIV)

'For in Him the entire complement delights to dwell, and through Him **to reconcile all to Him**, (making peace through the blood of His cross), through Him, **whether those on earth or those in the heavens**'

(Colossians 1:19-20 CV)

'The last enemy is being abolished: death. For He subjects **ALL** under His feet. Now whenever He may be saying that **ALL** is subject, it is evident that it is outside of Him (God) Who subjects **ALL** to Him (Christ). Now, whenever **ALL** may be subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also shall be subjected to Him Who subjects **ALL** to Him, that God may be **ALL IN ALL**'

(1 Corinthians 15:25-28)

Now this is Good News!

All Scripture quotations taken from the Concordant Version, unless stated otherwise.