

“In The Beginning...”

**“Justification by Grace
Through Faith”**

Gen. 15, 17, 22

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I. INTRODUCTION

- A. N.T. passages that discuss "justification"
 - 1) **Romans 4:25**
 - 2) **Romans 5:1**
 - 3) **Romans 5:9**
 - 4) **1 Corinthians 6:9-11**
 - 5) **Galatians 3:7-9**
- B. "Justification" is a very important N.T. doctrine...it is at the very core of the gospel plan of salvation. If a person wants to be saved by Jesus, he/she will have to be "justified."
- C. Our purpose in this lesson is to properly understand what is involved in justification by grace through faith.

II. DEFINITION OF "JUSTIFICATION"

- A. The term "justification" means *"to be pronounced free of guilt."* It is somewhat of a legal term in the N.T. Greek language, and refers to one who has been declared innocent or acquitted of guilt.
- B. The Scripture declares that man is to be "justified." This happens in only 2 ways:
 - 1) If man **has not sinned** → he has kept the law under which he lives perfectly. He never made a mistake. If this were the case, he could look God right in the eye and say, *"You owe me eternal life...I've earned it"* (**Romans 4:1-4**). The Scripture declares this is not possible...no man can do this (**Romans 3:9,20, 23; 1 John 1:8, 10**).
 - 2) If man **has sinned** → he has violated God's will for him. Yet, God is willing to forgive his sins. God is willing to declare the "ungodly" (*guilty*) to be "justified" (*innocent*) based on his obedient faith and genuine repentance (**Romans 4:5-8**).
- C. God wants man to have enough faith in Him that when He commands something to be done, man will trust Him enough to obey (*spiritually, socially, morally, etc.*)
- D. This has always been the kind of faith God wants in man. Man knows he cannot earn anything. All he can do is seek God's mercy & forgiveness, and believe God enough to seek His will for salvation.

III. ILLUSTRATION OF “JUSTIFICATION”

- A. Perhaps the best way to understand our topic is to see it at work in the life of an individual. Fortunately, the Scripture provides such an example. Studying some important moments in the life of Abraham recorded in **Genesis** will help us gain the right understanding about “justification” (**Romans 4:23-25; 15:4**).
- B. Before we look at specific events in Abraham’s life, we need to make sure we have properly understood the connection between faith & justification. Remember, we are justified by faith in Christ (**Romans 5:1; Galatians 3:8, 24**).
- C. We must define one more N.T. word to make sure we correctly understand how Abraham is being used as an example. The passage is **Romans 4:3**, and the word is “counted” [KJV]; “accounted” [NKJV]; “reckoned” [NASV]; or “credited” [NIV].
- D. This particular word is an accounting term in the N.T. Greek. It means “to put or credit to one’s account.” When the Scripture says “Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness,” that means God gave Abraham credit for righteousness when he believed (or had faith). It is as if God maintained a ledger on Abraham. When Abraham displayed faith in what God said, God made a “credit entry” into His ledger on Abraham’s behalf. That is how he was “justified” (or declared free of guilt) by God’s grace and his faith.
- E. The following table focuses on familiar events in Abraham’s life. By completing this chart, hopefully you will see clearly the kind of faith God “credits” for man’s “justification.”

Passage	Event In Abraham’s Life	Age

F. Answer the following questions –

1) What kind of faith did Abraham demonstrate? _____

2) Calvinism (a very popular, but erroneous religious doctrine) teaches man is saved when he has an “experience of faith”...a one-time episode where God gives him his faith (*usually attributed to the Holy Spirit coming upon him*). Looking at this chart, how does it disprove this doctrine?

VIII. CONCLUSION

A. **Galatians 3:6-9, 22-29**

B. Abraham is the “father of the faithful.”

C. He had the kind of faith that gave him credit for righteousness in God’s “ledger.”

D. Therefore, he was “justified” (*declared innocent*) by his faith.

E. Our faith must be like Abraham’s...the kind that unites belief with obedient action when God has commanded something (**Romans 4:2-5; James 2:21-22**).

F. You can be like Abraham...even when you face difficult or unknown situations.