

Systematic Theology, Lesson 27: Soteriology: The Doctrine of Salvation, Part 5

1. Review – *Ordo Solutis*: Order of Salvation
 - a. Before time: Election
 - b. In time (one-event):
 - i. Calling
 - ii. Regeneration
 - iii. Repentance
 - iv. Faith
 - v. Justification
 - vi. Adoption

2. Justification
 - a. Meaning of justification: Justification is a judicial act of God’s free grace alone in which he instantaneous forgives sins and declares sinners righteous on the basis of the person and work of Jesus Christ alone through faith alone which results in good works.
 - b. Nature of justification: justification is not an experiential _____ of righteousness, but a legal _____ (declaration) of righteousness.¹
 - i. **Rom 4:5**: But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness.
 - ii. **Rom 8:33**: Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns?
 - iii. Through imputation, God is thus both just and the justifier (**Rom 3:26**).

¹ The Bible also speaks of two other imputations: (1) imputation of Adam’s guilt to humanity and (2) imputation of humanity’s sin to Christ. For more on these two imputations, see: Dan Burrus, “Systematic Theology, Lesson 17: Anthropology, Part 2” and Dan Burrus, “Systematic Theology, Lesson 21: Christology, Part 4,” both lectures available at gracelakeville.org.

- c. Cause for justification: justification is an act of God's free grace alone (*sola gratia*).
- i. **Rom 3:23-24**: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.
 - ii. **Titus 3:7**: so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to *the* hope of eternal life.
- d. Timing of justification: justification is not an ____ - _____ process but a one-time event.
- i. **Luke 18:14a**: I tell you, this man [the tax collector] went to his house justified rather than the other.
 - ii. **Rom 8:30**: and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.
- e. Benefits of justification: justification has two primary benefits: forgiveness of sins and legally righteous.
- i. Forgiven of sins
 1. **Rom 4:6-8**: just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: "BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN, AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED. BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN THE LORD WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT."
 2. **Rom 8:1**: Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
 - ii. Legally righteous (through imputation)
 1. **2 Cor 5:21**: He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.
 2. **Phil 3:9**: and may be found in Him, 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.

- f. Ground of justification: justification is not based on the sinner's merit but based on the life, death, and resurrection of Christ alone (*solo Christo*).²
- i. Life: **Rom 5:19**: For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous [i.e., justified].
 - ii. Death: **Rom 3:24-25**: being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith.
 - iii. Resurrection: **Rom 4:25**: *He* who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification. **GCBC Statement of Faith**: (Under "God the Son," paragraph 9): We teach that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead . . .
- g. Means of justification: justification is not through _____ and _____ but through faith alone (*sola fide*).³
- i. **Rom 3:28**: For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.
 - ii. **Gal 2:16**: nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.
 - iii. We are not justified _____ of faith but _____ faith.
 - iv. The object of faith is Jesus Christ alone. **Gal 2:16**: ". . . through faith in Christ Jesus . . . by faith in Christ."
 - v. Because justification is by means of faith this is why faith logically (not temporally) precedes justification in the *ordo solutis*.
 - vi. What about **Jam 2:24**: "You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone."?

² The life and death of Christ are sometimes called his active and passive obedience, respectively. For more on Christ's active and passive obedience, see: Dan Burrus, "Systematic Theology, Lesson 21: Christology, Part 4," lecture available at gracelakeville.org.

³ For more on the nature of justifying (or saving) faith, see: Dan Burrus, "Systematic Theology, Lesson 26: Soteriology, Part 4," lecture available at gracelakeville.org.

1. James is dealing with people who think that mere intellectual assent to truths of the gospel is sufficient for saving faith. But James says that a faith that does not entail works is dead (**v. 26**). “We are saved by faith alone but not by faith that is alone.”
 2. So when James says about Abraham, “You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone” (**v. 24**), he is saying that the faith of Abraham was justifying faith because the deed of offering up Isaac on the altar proved that Abraham’s faith was a living faith (**v. 21**). Saving faith “is the child of grace and the mother of good works.”⁴
- h. Fruit of justification: justification always results in sanctification (i.e., good works).
- i. Justification and sanctification can never be separated.
 1. **Rom 8:30**: and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.
 2. **1 Cor 1:30**: But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness [i.e., justification] and sanctification, and redemption.
 - ii. Justification and sanctification are always distinguished:

Justification	Sanctification ⁵
Removes guilt of sin	Removes corruption of sin
External	Internal
Judicial	Experiential
One-time event	On-going process
Work of God alone	Work of God and man
Same for every Christian	Differs for every Christian
Perfect in this life	Not perfect in this life

- i. Justification and Roman Catholicism⁶

⁴ Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 7, *Modern Christianity: The German Reformation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1910), 22.

⁵ Sanctification is here referring to progressive sanctification. Sanctification will be covered in a subsequent systematic theology lesson.

⁶ For more on Roman Catholicism compared with Protestantism, see: Dan Burrus, “Church History, Lesson 10: The Reformation Church, Part 3,” lecture available at gracelakeville.org.

- i. The Sixth Session of The Council of Trent condemned the Protestant view of justification. Three main areas of disagreement:
 1. Timing of justification: justification is both an _____ and a _____.
 2. Nature of justification: justification is righteousness *infused* in the sinner not righteousness *imputed* to the sinner.
 3. Means of justification: justification is through faith and good works, including baptism being the instrumental beginning cause of justification.
 - ii. As you can see, how you define terms and relate them to each other matters. So the 1994 ecumenical document, *Evangelicals and Catholics Together*, stating that we are “justified by grace through faith” is insufficient as an understanding of justification.
 - iii. The Roman Catholic Church today still embraces the declarations of The Council of Trent on justification.
- j. Implications of justification:
- i. Hope:
 1. The gospel offers hope that “whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (**Rom 10:13**) and will receive pardon.
 2. “The vilest offender who truly believes that moment from Jesus a pardon receives.”
 - ii. Assurance:
 1. We are not justified on the grounds of our faith. We are justified through faith based on the work of God’s free grace in Christ alone. Therefore, the measure of our faith does not matter in our standing with God.
 2. “It is not, strictly speaking, . . . faith in Christ that saves, but Christ that saves through faith. The *saving power* resides exclusively,

not in the act of faith or the attitude of faith or the nature of faith, but in the object of faith.”⁷

iii. Innocent:

1. **Rom 8:1:** Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
2. **Rom 8:33:** Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies.

iv. Righteous: We are 100% righteous as if we have always obeyed perfectly the moral law of God.

- k. **GCBC Statement of Faith:** We teach that justification before God is an act of God [cause] by which He declares righteous [nature] those who, through faith in Christ [means], repent of their sins and confess Him as sovereign Lord. This righteousness is apart from any virtue or work of man [grounds] and involves the placing of our sins on Christ and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us [benefits]. By this means God is enabled to “be just, and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus” (Romans 3:26).

3. Adoption

- a. Meaning of adoption: Adoption is an act of God’s free grace alone by which through faith alone we become members of his family.
- b. Cause of adoption: adoption is an act of God’s free grace alone.
 - i. **Gal 4:4-5:** But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.
 - ii. **Eph 1:5-6:** He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.
- c. Means of adoption: adoption is through faith, and thus faith logically (not chronologically) precedes adoption in the *ordo solutis*.

⁷ Benjamin B. Warfield, “Faith,” in *Biblical and Theological Studies*, ed. Samuel Craig (Philadelphia, PA: P&R, 1952), 425; cited in Anthony A. Hoekema, *Saved by Grace* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989), 145-46, italics added.

- i. **Gal 3:26:** For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.
 - ii. **John 1:12:** But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.
 - iii. Note: Adoption is distinguished from regeneration (though never separated). Regeneration is a child being born in the world; adoption is a child being placed in a new family.⁸
- d. Results of adoption: adoption results in _____ in God's family.
- i. **Rom 8:15:** For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"
 - ii. **Gal 4:7:** [Because of adoption] Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.
- e. Implications of adoption:
- i. Access. We have access to God as Father.
 1. **Matt 6:9:** Pray, then, in this way: "Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name."
 2. **Rom 8:15:** For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"
 - ii. Care. We enjoy the blessings of God's care.
 1. **Matt 6:32:** For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things [food, clothing, shelter]; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.
 2. **Matt 7:11:** If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!
 - iii. Discipline. We receive fatherly discipline not punishment.

⁸ For more on regeneration, see: Dan Burrus, "Systematic Theology, Lesson 25: Soteriology, Part 3," lecture available at gracelakeville.org.

1. **Heb 12:5-8:** and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, “MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM; FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES.” It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom *his* father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

- iv. Family. We are placed into the family of God—the church (**Matt 12:50; Rom 1:13; 8:12; 16:1 1 Cor 1:10; 6:8; 7:15; 1 Tim 5:1-2; Phlmn 2 Jam 1:2; 2:15**).