

Statement on Justification

The Pauline two-dimensional theology of justification as first forensic justification “*through the faith*” and then sanctifying justification “*from faith*” is summarized as follows:¹

Forensic justification (4:5): *In the forbearance of God* (3:26), the Father sends the Holy Spirit (John 14:26) for the *baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins* (Matt 3:11, Mark 1:4, Luke 3:3) and His gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit (8:11) through the faith of Jesus Christ (3:22, 25) into all those believing (3:22), becoming *the called of Jesus Christ* (1:6); *the good-message of God* (1:1, 15:16) into a *demonstration of His righteousness* (3:25), becoming *the children of God*” (8:16-17), those whose *faith is reckoned as righteousness* (4:5), whom God has foreknown and predestined (8:29-30).

Because of Christ, “*who was handed over on account of our trespasses*” (4:25a), forgiveness of sin (4:7) has become the product of the cross and the mercy seat of the dead body of Christ, into the near-purpose (3:25) of the foreplan of God (8:29), that is, imputed forensic justification as a continuous earthly positional justification of the sinner. In this “*demonstration of His righteousness*” (3:25), the indwelling Holy Spirit acts to convict the child of God relative to current active sinning (2:9). The singular awakening event of forensic justification is represented by the one-time sign of water-baptism.

Sanctifying justification (5:1): *In the forbearance of God* (3:26) the Son sends the Holy Spirit (John 15:26) for the *baptism in the Holy Spirit* (Matt 3:11, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16, John 1:33) in everyone believing (1:16, 10:4); the *repentance* (2:5) in the *renewing of the mind* (12:2); *the obedience from faith* (1:5, 16:26) toward the *demonstration of His righteousness* (3:26) into the *good-message of Christ* (1:9, 16, 15:19, 16:26); *putting on the Lord Jesus Christ* (13:14) from the faith which is from Jesus (3:26); those *presenting their members as slaves to righteousness into sanctification* (6:19), are *the elect of God* (8:33); those *being led by the Holy Spirit, are the sons of God* (8:14-15); those whom God justifies and glorifies (8:30) are *being justified from faith and are having peace toward God* (5:1).

Because of Christ “*raised up for our justification*” (4:25b) and seated on the throne of God (Eph 1:20, Col 3:1), *newness of life* (6:4) may become the product of the empty grave and the mercy seat of the resurrected and enthroned Christ, toward the final-purpose (3:26) of the foreplan of God (8:29), that is, imparted sanctifying justification as a punctiliar heavenly functional justification of the sinner who has become mortified to sin. In this “*demonstration of His righteousness*” (3:26), the Holy Spirit acts to enable Spirit-empowered prayers (8:26) for the child of God who will become obedient “*from the faith which is from Jesus*” (3:26). The daily need for sanctifying justification is represented by the repetitive sign of the Lord’s Supper.

Paul’s meaning in *the forbearance of God* is neither forensic justification nor sanctifying justification, but an attribute of the character of God to tolerate and even bear with *the ‘having been birthed beforehand’ sins* (3:25) of sinners, among whom the apostle Paul included himself and the followers of his teaching (cf. 3:5-18). This phrase represents God as exercising divine restraint with respect to wrath while He executes His salvation plan for humanity.

Lastly, Paul did not use any form of the verb *sōzō*, which means *to save*, or its cognate noun *sōteirēa*, which means *salvation*, in his discourse relative to forensic justification. He reserved all such lexical *salvation* references to his discourse relative to sanctifying justification. In other words, the NT use of the term *salvation* never infers the earthly justification *into all those believing* (3:22), but the heavenly justification *in everyone believing* (1:16, 10:4), that is, in *spiritually-spoken worship* (12:1).

¹ All biblical references and all italicized words, unless otherwise indicated, are from the book of Romans (SWB®).