

How Can You Be Right With God?

Systematic Theology: Justification, Part 1



St. Pierre Cathedral, Geneva, Switzerland
The Site of John Calvin's Ministry during the Reformation

The Importance of Justification



From Left to Right: William Farrell, John Calvin, Theodore Beza, and John Knox

The Importance of Justification

POST TENEBRAS LUX

POST TENEBRAS LUX

(After darkness, light)





The Importance of Justification

Justification is “the article upon which the church stands or falls...The article of justification is the master and prince, the lord, the ruler, and the judge over all kinds of doctrines; it preserves and governs all church doctrine and raises up our conscience before God. Without this article the world is utter death and darkness...If the article of justification is lost, all Christian doctrine is lost at the same time.”

--Martin Luther



The Importance of Justification

“The doctrine of justification is the principle ground on which religion must be supported, so it requires greater care and attention. For unless you understand first of all what your position is before God, and what the judgment is which he passes upon you, you have no foundation on which your salvation can be laid, or on which piety towards God can be reared.”

--John Calvin



Justification from the Standpoint of Systematic Theology

- Systematic theology is simply taking all of what the Bible teaches about one particular topic and **organizing** it into a logical **set of beliefs (doctrine)**
- Emphasis on organizing the whole of Scripture



Justification from the Standpoint of Systematic Theology

- Justification is the heart of Soteriology—the **study of salvation**
- From the Greek words:
 - “soter” meaning “to save”
 - “logos” meaning “to study”



The Ordo Salutis


■ THE **THEOLOGICAL ORDER** OF SALVATION:

1. **Election**—Romans 9:11, 2 Peter 2:10
2. **Outer (Gospel) Call**—Romans 10:14,16
3. **Inner Call**—Galatians 1:15, 2 Peter 1:3
4. **Regeneration**—John 3:3
5. **Faith**—Romans 3:22, Galatians 3:11, Eph 2:8,9, Heb 12:1
6. **Repentance**—Luke 13:3, Romans 2:4
7. **Justification**—Romans 4, 5:1, 5:18, 2 Cor 5:21
8. **Adoption**—Rom 8:23, Gal 4:4-7, Eph 1:3-6
9. **Sanctification**—John 17:17, Acts 20:32, Rom 15:16
10. **Perseverance**—Phil 1:6, 2:12
11. **Assurance**—Col 4:12, 1 Tim 3:13, Heb 10:22
12. **Glorification**—Rom 8:18, 8:30



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3 Important Questions

- Is justification primarily legal or moral?
- Is justification an event or a process?
- Is justification distinct from sanctification or is it merely the same thing as sanctification?



Forensic Justification

- What does Forensic mean?



Forensic Justification

- What does Forensic mean?
 - “Having to do with legal proceedings.”



Forensic Justification

- What does Forensic mean?
 - “Having to do with legal proceedings.”
 - “Having to do with declarations.”



Forensic Justification

- What does Forensic mean?
 - “Having to do with legal proceedings.”
 - “Having to do with declarations.”



Forensic = legal declarations



Forensic Justification

- What does it mean to “justify” someone?
 - “to declare someone as right without actually **changing the nature** of the person or event.”



Forensic Justification

- Definition of Justification:
 - “An instantaneous legal act of God in which he
1. thinks of our sins as forgiven and Christ’s
righteousness as belonging to us, and 2.
declares us to be righteous in his sight.”

--Wayne Grudem



Forensic Justification

- **Forensic + Justification =**

“having to do with legally declaring a person forgiven and righteous in the eyes of God.”



Forensic Justification

- Justify means “to **declare** righteous” not “to **make** righteous.”
 - **Luke 7:29:** “When they heard this all the people and the tax collectors justified God, having been baptized with the baptism of John.”



Forensic Justification

- The opposite of justification is **condemnation**.
 - **Deuteronomy 25:1:** “They shall justify the righteous and condemn the wicked.”
 - **1 Kings 8:32:** “Judge your servants, condemning the wicked...and justifying the righteous.”
 - **Matthew 12:37:** “For by your words you shall be justified and by your words you shall be condemned.”



Forensic Justification

- The word “justify” is used in the context of a **courtroom setting**.
- **Romans 8:33-34:** “Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one justifies, who is the one who condemns?”



3 Important Questions

Is Justification...	Protestant/ Evangelical	Roman Catholic
Legal or Moral?	Legal	
An Event or a Process?		
Distinct from Sanctification or the Same Thing?		



Is justification an event or a process?

- **Luke 18:13-14:** “But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, “God be merciful to me, the sinner!” I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other.”



3 Important Questions

Is Justification...	Protestant/ Evangelical	Roman Catholic
Legal or Moral?	Legal	
An Event or a Process?	Event	
Distinct from Sanctification or the Same Thing?		



Is justification distinct from sanctification or is it the same thing as sanctification?

“(a) Justification is the reckoning and counting a man to be righteous for the sake of another, even Jesus Christ the Lord. Sanctification is the actual making a man inwardly righteous, though it may be in a very feeble degree.

(b) The righteousness we have by our justification is not our own, but the everlasting perfect righteousness of our great Mediator Christ, imputed to us, and made our own by faith. The righteousness we have by sanctification is our own righteousness, imparted, inherent, and wrought in us by the Holy Spirit, but mingled with much infirmity and imperfection.

(c) In justification our own works have no place at all, and simple faith in Christ is the one thing needful.

(d) In sanctification our own works are of vast importance and God bids us fight, and watch, and pray, and strive, and take pains, and labour.”

--J.C. Ryle



3 Important Questions

Is Justification...	Protestant/ Evangelical	Roman Catholic
Legal or Moral?	Legal	
An Event or a Process?	Event	
Distinct from Sanctification or the Same Thing?	Distinct	



3 Important Questions

Is Justification...	Protestant/ Evangelical	Roman Catholic
Legal or Moral?	Legal	Moral
An Event or a Process?	Event	Process
Distinct from Sanctification or the Same Thing?	Distinct	Same Thing



Aristotle's Causes

- The Framework of Justification:
 - **Material Cause**—That out of which something is made
 - **Formal Cause**—The design or idea followed in the process of making something
 - **Final Cause**—The purpose for which something is made
 - **Efficient Cause**—The chief agent causing something to be made
 - **Instrumental Cause**—The means or instrument by which something is made



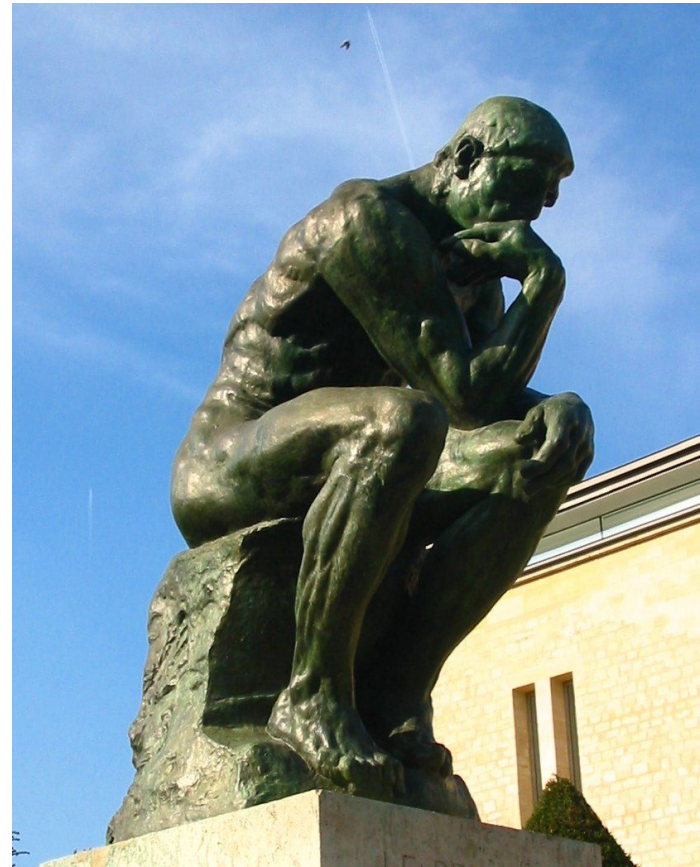
Aristotle's Causes

- The Framework of Justification:
 - **Material Cause**—What
 - **Formal Cause**—Design
 - **Final Cause**—Why
 - **Efficient Cause**—Who
 - **Instrumental Cause**—Through what means

Aristotle's Causes

Using the analogy
of a Sculpture

The Thinker
by Auguste Rodin, 1902
Musee Rodin, Paris

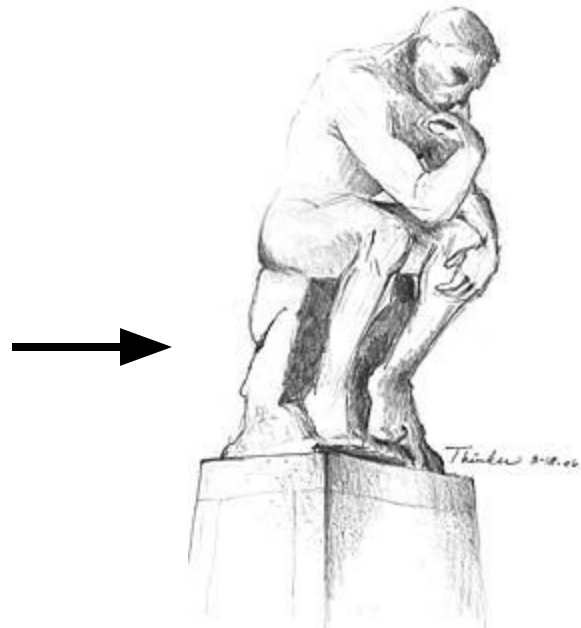


Aristotle's Causes



← **Material Cause**—the stone out of which the statue is carved

Formal Cause—the sketch or the blueprint used by the sculptor as a pattern





Aristotle's Causes

Final Cause—the purpose for making the statue
(love, glory, money, etc.)

Efficient Cause—
the sculptor himself



Auguste Rodin



Instrumental Cause—
the sculptor's chisel



Aristotle's Causes

- The Framework of Justification in **Romans 3:21-30**



The Formal Cause of Salvation

- **God's plan and blueprint of salvation:**
 - **Romans 3:21-22:**

“But now **apart from the Law** *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even *the* righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe.”



The Material Cause of Salvation

- The material out of which our salvation is made: **the person and work of Jesus Christ**
- **Romans 3:23-25:** “for there is no distinction; 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**; whom God displayed publicly **as a propitiation** in His blood through faith.”



The Efficient Cause of Salvation

- The Chief Agent causing salvation: **God**
 - **Romans 3:24-25:** “being justified...whom **God** set forth”



The Final Cause of Salvation

- The final purpose or reason for salvation: **The Demonstration of the Righteousness and Glory of God**
 - **Romans 3:25-26:** *This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*



The Instrumental Cause of Salvation

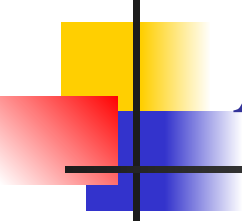
- The instrument used by God for salvation:
Faith
 - **Romans 3:28:** “For we maintain that a man is **justified by faith** apart from works of the Law.”

The Instrumental Cause of Salvation According to Scripture

Faith—the **conduit/channel/means** through which God's Grace flows

(What's important is what flows through it)





The Instrumental Cause of Salvation According to Scripture

- General faith in anything won't save you.
- It's the *object* of faith that matters most.
- Jesus Christ must be the object of faith in order for faith to be effectual.



The Instrumental Cause of Salvation According to Rome

- **Session 6 of the Council of Trent:** “the instrumental cause is the sacrament of **baptism**, which is the sacrament of faith, without which no man was ever justified.”



The Instrumental Cause of Salvation According to Rome

- According to Rome, the Instrumental Cause of Justification is **first, Baptism**:
 - “Justification is conferred in Baptism, the sacrament of faith. It conforms us to the righteousness of God, who makes us inwardly just by the power of his mercy.”

--The New Catechism of the Catholic Church



The Instrumental Cause of Salvation According to Rome

- **The Council of Trent Canon IX:** “If any one saith, that by faith alone the impious is justified; in such ways as to mean, that nothing else is required to co-operate in order to obtain the grace of Justification, and that it is not in any way necessary, that he be prepared and disposed by the movement of his own will; let him be anathema.”



The Instrumental Cause of Salvation According to Rome

- The “second plank” of justification is **Penance**:
 - “Those who through sin have forfeited the received grace of justification, can again be justified when, moved by God, they exert themselves to obtain through the sacrament of penance the recovery, by the merits of Christ, of the grace lost. For this manner of justification is restoration for those fallen, which the holy Fathers have aptly called a second plank after the shipwreck of grace lost.”

--The Council of Trent



The Instrumental Cause of Salvation According to Rome

- Three steps of Penance:
 - Making a confession
 - Make an act of contrition
 - Receive priestly absolution



The Instrumental Cause of Salvation According to Scripture

- **Ephesians 2:8,9:** “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”



Practical Application

- Understanding Justification should leave us amazed at Gospel Grace



Practical Application

- Understanding justification spells the end of racism.
 - **Romans 3:22-24:** “even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace.”



Practical Application

- Understanding Justification helps us in moments of doubt
 - Don't look to the instrument of faith itself, look to the object of faith
 - Stop having faith in your own faith, have faith in Jesus

