



*Justification by Works versus
Justification by Faith*
Romans 3 – 4

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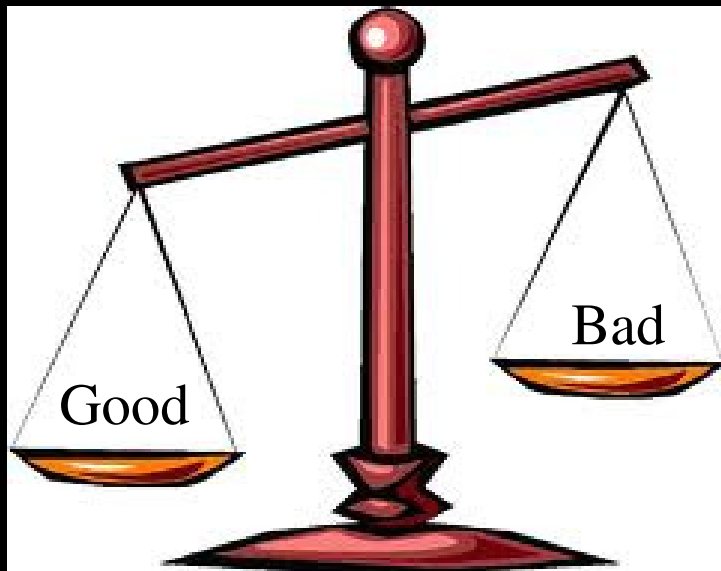
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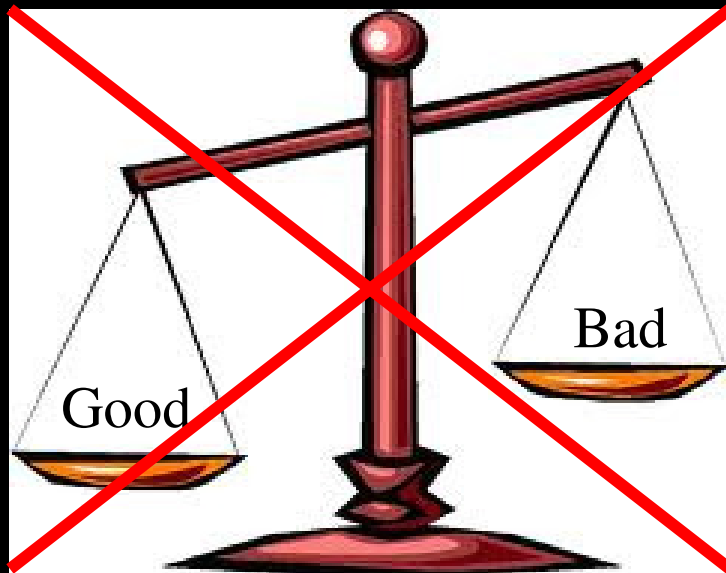
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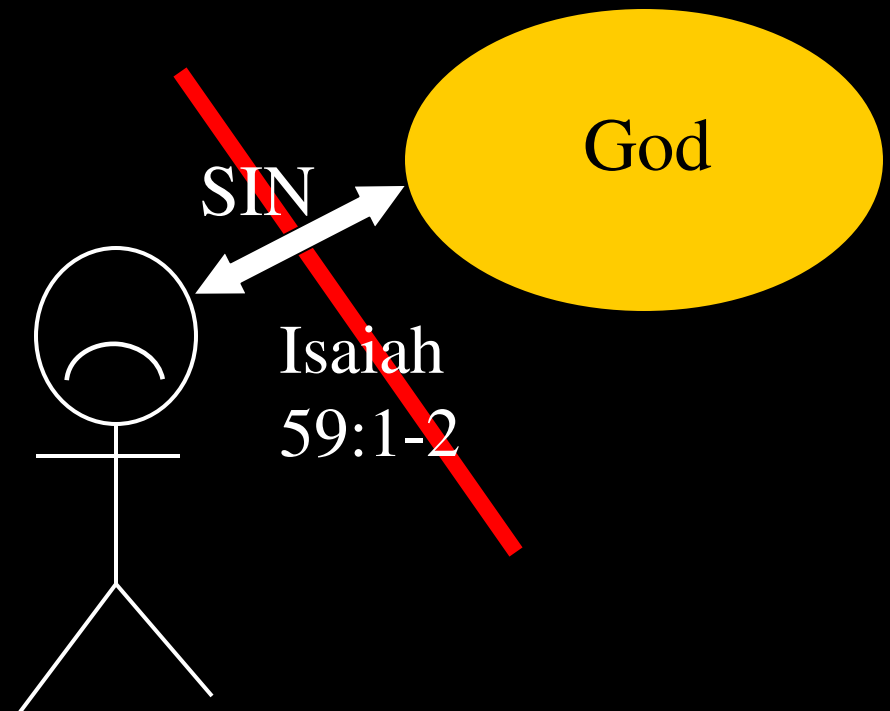
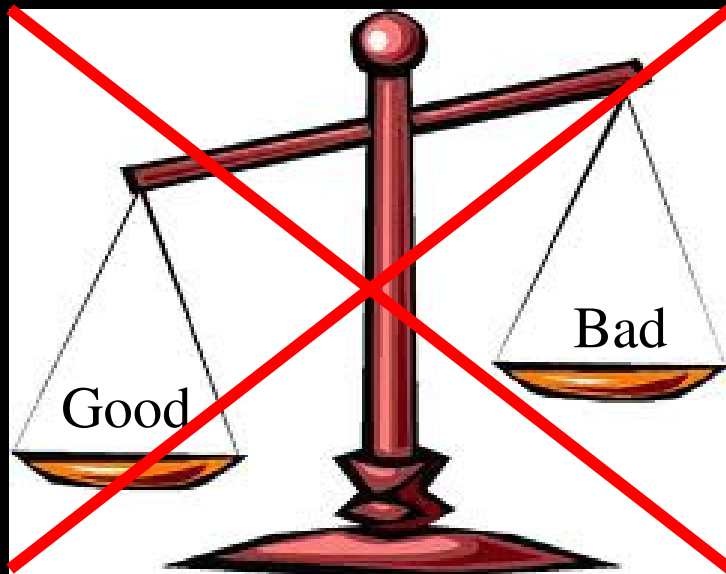
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HELPFUL DEFINITIONS

Paul used words in Romans & Galatians whose definitions need to be given in simple terms. Keep these in mind.

Law – A rule of conduct laid down by authority. Can be positive (require) or negative (prohibit). By its very nature it does not “save.”

**“Works of law” (Rom. & Gal.) – Perfect obedience.
 (“Works,” James 2:14-26) -- Active obedience.**

Sin – Transgression of law, any Divine Law (I Jno. 3:4).

Justify (justification) – To pronounce one just, or righteous, to declare one not guilty; a sentence of acquittal.

Righteousness – The character or quality of being absolutely right; guiltless.

Faith – Belief or confidence leading to and often including obedience (note ch. 1:5; 16:26).

Romans 3 & 4 discuss the question: How can a man be right with God?

Since the question involves God, and the God of all the earth must do right (Gen. 18:24), it must be a plan that upholds the righteousness, holiness, and justice of God.

Therefore, the question is also: How can God be right(eous) when He says that the unrighteous (sinners) are righteous (justified)?

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Two Possibilities:

1. **WORKS**

- What kind? Works that put God in man's debt (Rom. 4:4). *Perfect works*: Explained → Man has always kept God's law, has never made one mistake.
- Gal. 3:10 commentary – “Cursed is everyone who does not continue in *all things* which are written in the book of the law, to do them.”
- One who does all the law all the time!
- Since he lives his whole life without committing one sin, he “works” and is righteous. None has done this! If one had, he never sinned & is *righteous!*

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Two Possibilities:

2. FORGIVENESS

One's sins are washed away when he hears & obeys the gospel (Acts 22:16). -- He is *forgiven*!

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Considered in Bookkeeping Terms:

1. God keeps a record on everyone. The man who keeps God's law perfectly "works," is "righteous" & has always been. God puts down on his account (imputes, reckons) -- **RIGHTEOUSNESS**
2. In case of forgiveness, one has sinned (in context, he did not "work" --keep everything perfectly). God puts down on his account (imputes, reckons) **UNRIGHTEOUSNESS** (He is a **SINNER**).
-- But when he hears & obeys the gospel, his sins are **FORGIVEN**. Since they are no longer on his record, he is said to be **"RIGHTEOUS."**

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On what Basis Does God Forgive Sins?

- 1. Some claim there is no need for any basis, that God is able to do anything He pleases because He is God.
→ Not True! God cannot lie (Heb. 6:18)!
-- Any consideration of God's nature must include His holiness, justice & righteousness.**
- 2. Rom. 3:21-26...
-- shows that while man has sinned, through faith in God's plan (the redemption that is in Christ Jesus), man's sins can be propitiated (appeased, forgiven). Therefore, God's righteousness is upheld & He is thereby just (righteous) and at the same time the justifier of those who have faith in Jesus (Rom. 3:26).**

Romans 3 & 4 discuss the question: How can a man be right with God? Two Systems of Justification under discussion.

1. By Works of Law

Law can only *justify* (pronounce innocent) the one who has kept the law perfectly (Gal. 3:10; Rom. 10:5). Acquittal is *owed* such a person because he is innocent. His acquittal is a matter of *debt*, not *grace*.

2. By Faith in Christ

The *gospel* reveals how God *justifies* one who believes in Christ (Rom. 1:16-17). He is pronounced *righteous*, not on the ground that he is innocent, but on the ground that God has *forgiven* him. Therefore, his acquittal is a *gift* of God, and a matter of *grace*, not *debt*.

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Romans 4 gives 2 illustrations using 2 prominent Jews to show that Justification (salvation) comes to a person who: 1) Believes God's plan, & 2) Is forgiven.

1. Abraham (justified *before* the Law & *before* he was *circumcised*) *by his faith*.

How Justification by Faith is Illustrated in Abraham's Life – Romans 4

Gen. 12
3 Prom.

Gen. 15:6
Just. By Faith
& counted
Righteous

Gen. 17:9-14
Covenant of
Circumcision
given

Exodus 20
10 Commandments
& Law Given

75
yrs.

85
yrs.

99
yrs.

Abraham was *justified*
by Faith before either
Circumcision or the
giving of the Law!

430 Years from Promises to Giving of Law – Gal. 3:17

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1. Abraham (justified *before* the Law & *before* he was *circumcised*) *by his faith*.
2. David *based on forgiveness* (Rom. 4:6-8, as quoted from Ps. 32:1-2).

JUSTIFICATION

By works of the law	versus	By faith in Christ
is		is
Meritorious	versus	Gratuitous
(Rom. 4: 4)		(Rom. 3: 24)
As of the sinless	versus	As of the sinful
(Rom. 3: 10)		(Rom. 4: 5)

HENCE IS

1. Without pardon	versus	1. Through pardon
(Rom. 3: 30)		(Rom. 4: 6-8)
2. Without grace	versus	2. By grace
(Rom. 4: 4)		(Rom. 3: 24)
3. Without Christ	versus	3. Through Christ
(Gal. 2: 21)		(Rom. 3: 24)
4. Without faith	versus	4. By faith
(Rom. 4: 14)		(Rom. 3: 28)
5. Without obedience	versus	5. Through the obedi-
of faith		ence of faith
(Rom. 4: 14)		(Rom. 4: 12)

RESULTING IN

1. Occasion of boasting	versus	Exclusion of boasting
(Rom. 4: 2)		(Rom. 3: 27)
and		and
2. Reward as a debt	versus	Reward as a gift
(Rom. 4: 4)		(Eph. 2: 8)

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 - First, from the standpoint of feeling "*smug*" that we have done sufficiently "enough," and
 - Second, from the feeling of *discouragement and despondency* because we have done insufficiently "enough."

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Eph. 2:8-10