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MINISTRIES

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Justification

"What is justification? What does it mean to be justified?"

In Christian circles, this word "justification" is thrown around quite often. The subject of justification is common in some of Paul's letters, especially Romans.

Romans 4:24-25

It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus (His Hebrew name being Yeshua) our Lord, who was delivered up for our trespasses and **raised for our justification.**

Romans 5:15-17

For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the **free gift by the grace** of that one man Jesus Christ (Messiah Yeshua) abounded for many. And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the **free gift following many trespasses brought justification.**

What could Paul be talking about here?

Justification, or to be justified, is legal terminology.

If someone is about to kill me and I kill him in self-defense, I am justified in my actions. That is justification.

Justification is the action of showing something to be right or reasonable.

So again, if I kill someone in self-defense, I am justified. Why? I am justified in taking their life as they are attacking me attempting to take my own life. Therefore, it is right or reasonable for me to take theirs before I lose my own.

That is justification.

In terms of Biblical doctrine, for us to have justification, we have to be justified in something, but for

what are we justified?

Romans 5:9

Since, therefore, we have now **been justified by his blood**, much more **shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God**.

So, our salvation is “justified” through Yeshua’s gift of grace, in his death and resurrection. We are saved from the wrath that is due to us because of our sin. Previously we were condemned in our sin, condemned to eternal death, but now, we are justified unto salvation.

The wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). When we sin, our death, our life blood is owed. However, through our faith in Messiah and his work on the cross, his blood paid that debt. We are made right before YHWH through the blood of the Messiah. Just as Paul had stated that we have now been justified by his blood.

It is often said that Romans 5:18-19 sums it up rather well:

Romans 5:18-19

Therefore, as one (Adam) trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to **justification** and life for all men (what Yeshua did). For as by the one man's disobedience (Adam) the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience (Yeshua) the many will be made righteous.

So that is all “justification” means. It means that because of Yeshua, we are justified into salvation.

So, how are we “justified” unto salvation?

Well, to start, we know one way on how we are not justified. We are not justified because of something that we have done, as that would negate our Messiah’s work. We are not justified because of our following of the law of God, the Torah.

Romans 3:28

For we hold that one is **justified by faith apart from works of the law**.

Romans 4:2

For **if** Abraham was **justified by works**, he has something to boast about, but not before God.

Galatians 2:16

yet we know that a person **is not justified by works of the law** but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, **because by works of the law no one will be justified**.

Galatians 3:11

Now it is evident that **no one is justified before God by the law**, for “The righteous shall live by faith.”

Galatians 5:4

You are severed from Christ, **you who would be justified by the law**; you have **fallen away from grace**.

So, keeping the law of God does not earn us salvation. We have already sinned. Sin is defined as the breaking of the law of God (1 John 3:4), and the standard we are held to is perfect obedience to the law.

All of these verses state that we cannot be justified unto salvation by keeping the law of God. In fact, many take it a step further, and say we are not to follow the law of God, the Torah, at all because of these, and similar verses.

However, do these verses say that we should not keep the law of God at all?

Of course not... We are to keep the law of God, but just not for salvation. In a moment, we will listen to Paul explain that we are to keep the law of God, but not for justification unto salvation.

But first, how do we receive this “justification?” We know that we are not justified because we keep the law of God, so then how are we justified?

Romans 10:10

For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

So, we are justified because we believe; but, what does it mean to believe?

Paul continues in verse 11:

Romans 10:11

For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.”

Peter says the same:

1 Peter 2:6

For it stands in Scripture: “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”

This is quoting Isaiah 28:16

Isaiah 28:16

therefore thus says the Lord (YHWH) God, “Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: ‘Whoever believes will not be in haste.’

So, the idea is that we are to believe in Yeshua.

The subject of believing leading to salvation points to any number of verses:

Mark 16:16

Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

John 6:40

For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should

have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

John 6:47

Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life.

John 11:25-26

Jesus (Yeshua) said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?”

How was Abraham saved? Was it any different than those after our Messiah?

No....

Genesis 15:6

And he believed the Lord (YHWH), and he counted it to him as righteousness.

And then we have the popular verse, John 3:16.

John 3:16

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

But believing means what? What is believing? What does believing look like?

Just a couple verses later, on the same topic in John 3:16, we read...

John 3:20-21

For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who **does the truth** comes to the **light**, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.”

Those who hate the light do not come to the light. But those that love the light **DO THE TRUTH** because they came to the light that they loved.

Without defining terms, without understanding words as defined by the Bible, we are at risk of producing an empty and meaningless faith... and nobody should want that...we shouldn't even need books like 'The Purpose Driven Life', the Bible should be our purpose driven life...

Many people today know that in the back of their minds that they are missing something in their faith. They realize that what they are being taught is truth, but is it the whole truth?

It does not have to be that way...it is a frustrating feeling...but, what is the solution?

As Hosea correctly said:

Hosea 4:6

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because you have **rejected knowledge**, I reject you from being a priest to me. **And since you have forgotten the law of your God**, I also

will forget your children.

God's Word is the knowledge that we need; yet so often we fail to biblically define the terms that we are reading.

When we fail to biblically define terms, the unfortunate truth is that Scripture is rendered meaningless at best, or at worst, is subject to our own bias or this decade's latest theology book.

Knowledge is then hidden from us.

Here is the cornerstone of Biblical interpretation and understanding, **the BIBLE DEFINES ITSELF**. It has a built in glossary that can prevent error, should we be so inclined to use it.

Let's read verses 20-21 again that explain what "believing" looks like referring back to John 3:16.

John 3:20-21

For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who **does the truth** comes to the **light**, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."

We have two terms that must be defined by the Bible:

Truth and light...

What is truth?

Psalm 119:142

And Your law is truth.

That is simple enough...the law equals truth. Truth and light seem to be used interchangeably.

What is the light?

Proverbs 6:23

For the commandment is a lamp, And the law a light; Reproofs of instruction are the way of life,

It is hard to misunderstand that definition...the law equals light and is our way of life. The law is also truth.

How the Bible defines terms is very important, because it is through those definitions that we extract meaning and understanding.

So let's review this one more time.... the law is truth. Because it is truth, it is the instruction for our way of life. Because it is our instruction for our way of life, it is also our light. Walking in that light shows our path and keeps us out of darkness.

So according to the Bible, the law is the way, the truth, and the life, and the light.

But wait you might say! That sounds exactly like our Messiah Yeshua.

YES!!! That is 100% right and so many miss this!

HE IS THE WORD IN THE FLESH!

John 1:14

And the **Word** became **flesh** and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Also see Revelation 19:13...

Revelation 19:13

He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God.

Our Lord returns as the very same Word of God that He was in the first century.

Is not the Law of God also part of the Word of God?

Isaiah said:

Isaiah 2:3

For out of Zion shall go forth the **law**, And the **word** of the LORD (YHWH) from Jerusalem.

The Messiah is the Way, Truth, Life, and Light because HE IS THE WORD.

He taught the Word,

He practiced the Word,

He corrected from the Word.

He instructed us to follow and walk in the same exact example of the Word as His disciples.

So now you might be thinking, wait, you just said that we are not justified unto salvation by keeping the law of God, we are justified by believing in our Messiah...and then you said that believing in the Messiah means keeping the law of God? How does that make any sense whatsoever?

Confusing indeed...but here is how it makes sense. We will explain it, and then we will allow Paul and James to explain it.

To believe in Messiah Yeshua means to believe that everything he taught is true. That includes believing that the law of God is true (Matthew 5:17-19). It is this belief that the whole Word of God is true that is the essence of our faith. This belief affords us the grace through Messiah Yeshua that leads to the justification of our salvation.

Let us say that again...

It is this belief that the whole Word of God is true that is the essence of our faith. This belief affords us the grace through Messiah Yeshua that leads to the justification of our salvation.

If we truly believe something to be true, then we will act on that truth.

If you believe your house is on fire, you will leave your house. That is true belief.

If you believe your house is going to be hit by a tornado, you go into the basement. That is true belief. You act on it.

If you believe the Word of God to be truth, then you will do the Word of God. That is true belief.

That is where having a desire to obey the law of God results in doing the law of God.

So that is the definition of real faith. While there is nothing we need to do to earn our justification unto salvation...we only need to believe in the truth of the Word to be justified...true belief in the truth of the Word will cause us to be doers of the law of God...

Romans 2:13

For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, **but the doers of the law who will be justified.**

“but the **doers** of the law who will be justified”

As you see, Paul says the same thing, even in the same letter that says that we are not to be justified unto salvation by keeping the law of God, the Torah.

If we truly believe, we will do. While it is the believing that justifies our salvation, it is the doing of the Torah that results from true belief.

James 2:18-26

But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”—and he was called a friend of God. You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.

Let’s allow John to explain this to us as well...

1 John 2:1-6

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. (What is sin? 1 John 3:4. Sin is defined as breaking the Law of God.) But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ (Messiah Yeshua) the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. (Meaning, Yeshua’s grace saved us because of our belief...but John concludes by what real faith will do) And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth (What is truth? The Law of God.) is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in

which he walked. (So walking as Yeshua walked, in this context, is related to keeping the commandments, and the Law of God. We want to walk exactly, in the same way, as Yeshua).

So, like James, John states that yes, Yeshua took away our sin because of our belief...but, if we truly believe, then we will want to keep all of God's commandments. If we say we believe, but do not want to keep God's commandments, then we are lying about our belief.

On the subject of justification, Romans 3:21-26 is often quoted:

Romans 3:21-26

But now the righteousness of God has been manifested **apart from the law**, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ (Messiah Yeshua) for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are **justified by his grace as a gift**, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Messiah Yeshua), whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, **so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus (Yeshua)**. Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. **For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.** Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, since God is one—who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.

That sounds great, doesn't it? This section of Paul does a great job of highlighting our justification unto salvation through the grace of Messiah Yeshua. It even states how our justification is apart from the law...which is absolutely true. And this is often all that is quoted...grace only, no law, at least for salvation, which again, is true. But are we to still uphold the law of God, not for salvation, but as a result of living out our faith in the whole Word of God?

Well, let's keep reading the part that most Christian commentaries leave out on this subject...we will also find that Paul agrees with what James and John already covered.

Romans 3:31

Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! **On the contrary, we uphold the law.** (we do the law, we **continue** in the law)

As Paul already said in the previous chapter:

Romans 2:13

For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, **but the doers of the law who will be justified.**

In summary, we are justified unto salvation because of our belief in the Word of God, as exemplified through Messiah Yeshua. That is grace. We do nothing to earn that salvation.

The concepts of "salvation" and "justification" are not words that are interchangeable.

We are justified unto salvation through Messiah Yeshua, so justification is necessary for salvation, and grace is necessary for justification. Belief in the Word of God is necessary for grace, and true belief in

the Word of God will cause us to obey the Word of God.

Let's go through that one more time.

We are justified unto salvation through Messiah Yeshua, so justification is necessary for salvation, and grace is necessary for justification. Belief in the Word of God is necessary for grace, and true belief in the Word of God will cause us to obey the Word of God.

As John, James, and Paul also taught, our belief, if true belief, will yield a desire to keep the law of God, also called the Torah in Hebrew.

So, true belief means that we will not just be hearers of the Torah, but doers of the Torah.

Isaiah 45:25

In the Lord (YHWH) all the offspring of Israel shall be justified and shall glory.

We hope that this teaching has blessed you,

and remember, continue to test everything.

Shalom.

For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at www.testeverything.net

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

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