

Reconciliation and Justification

- Reconciliation
- Justification: the problem
- Justification: definitions
- The righteousness of God
- Justification

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Reconciliation

- Matera shortchanges reconciliation by making it a result of justification.
- Justification may be the result of reconciliation.
- See Ralph Martin's *Reconciliation: A Study in Paul's Theology*.
- Reconciliation is an important model of salvation that speaks to people today.

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Reconciliation

- See handout on reconciliation.
- God is the subject, not the object.
- God is not angry at us. See Romans 1.
- Reconciliation requires forgiveness.
- God reconciles the primary human division -- between Jews and Gentiles (Eph. 2).
- See Romans 5:9-10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21.
- See also making peace, adoption.

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Justification: The Problem

- The primary way in which Protestants have understood Paul's view of salvation.
 - Reformation slogan: justification by faith.
 - Understood in legal terms: sin as lawbreaking, justification as acquittal.
 - Declarative status, NOT character.
- Not THE central concept in Paul's theology.
 - Appears mostly in Romans and Galatians.
 - Also used new creation, being in Christ, adoption.

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Justification: The Problem

- Significant developments in recent research.
- Complex terminology:
 - *Dikaosune* - justice, righteousness.
 - *Dikaiosis* - justification.
 - *Dikaos* - righteous, just.
 - *Dikaioo* - justify; make/declare righteous.
- Legal? Moral? Relational? Covenantal?
- Some suggest "rightwise" for "justify."

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Justification: The Problem

- Traditional view (J. Piper) vs. New Perspective (N. T. Wright).
 - Piper: Not guilty because of the cross.
 - Wright: Members of God's covenant people.
- Righteousness is fundamentally a relational term - rightly related to God in covenant relationship.
 - A declaration of something that's true of us.
 - Not moral, but covenant obligations.

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Justification: Definitions

- Basic meaning of righteous = conforming to a norm.
 - Righteous scale weighs accurately.
 - Righteous human meets social expectations.
- For God and human beings, righteousness is in context of divine/human relationship (covenantal).
- God and humans show righteousness by their faithfulness to covenant relationship.

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Justification: Definitions

- Covenant concerns in Galatians & Romans.
- It has moral/ethical implications.
- See this in living out the covenant.
- God’s people are to be obedient to his will.
- Obedience & ethics based on relationship.
- OT law was not how to gain entrance to the covenant people, but how to live as the covenant people (“covenantal nomism”).

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The Righteousness of God

- *Dikaiosune theou*: a quality of God or a quality expected by God?
- This ambiguity creates various possibilities for understanding the expression...

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The Righteousness of God

God’s own righteousness	Moral quality	Distributive justice
		Covenant faithfulness
	God’s salvation-creating power	Acts of covenant faithfulness World-defeating actions
A righteousness that God gives to humans	Right standing [or quality] from God	Imputed righteousness
	Quality that “comes before” or “avails with” God	Imparted righteousness
		Natural quality in humans Quality given by God, then recognized by him

Table by N. T. Wright.

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The Righteousness of God

- Medieval ideas:
 - God’s retributive justice (punishes sinners).
 - God’s moral uprightness (parallel to the moral uprightness he expects from us).
- Luther’s new idea: the righteousness (legal standing) God gives to people.
- Recent scholarship: the New Perspective
 - “Works of the law” = ethnocentrism, not legalism.
 - God’s righteousness = his covenant faithfulness.

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The Righteousness of God

- See handout on justification.
 - Ps. 71:2 - in your righteousness, deliver me.
 - Ps. 143:11 - in your righteousness, bring me out of danger.
 - Gen. 38:26 - Tamar is righteous because she acts in accord with covenant obligations.

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The Righteousness of God

- Romans 3:3, 5 shows that God's righteousness means his covenant faithfulness.
- Romans 3:21-26:
 - God demonstrates his covenant faithfulness apart from the law - although witnessed to by law.
 - God's covenant faithfulness is demonstrated through the faithfulness of Jesus (v. 22).
 - Available to all who have faith in Jesus, without distinction (between Jew and Gentile).

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The Righteousness of God

- Romans 1:16-17 - in the gospel (what God has done in Christ), God's covenant faithfulness is revealed, which comes, by means of Jesus' faithfulness, to those who respond with an answering faith(fulness).

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Justification

- God brings people into covenant relationship or vindicates them as being his people.
- Has a forensic setting -- but we should think of covenant law, not statutory law.
 - Hebrew courts had judge, plaintiff, defendant.
 - The one who was judged to be in the right was righteous/justified. Vindication, not acquittal.
 - The guilty can be acquitted; vindication indicates that one is in the right.

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Justification

- The issue of justification: who will be in the right at the last judgment?
- Jews expected to be justified/vindicated as God's people. Law-keeping was "proof."
- Paul's gospel announces that Gentiles can be God's people, too – without the Law.
- Justification/vindication now depends upon one's response to God's great act of covenant faithfulness in Christ.

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Justification

- Justification is God's objective act in Christ.
- It's eschatological - to be experienced in the consummation, but available now.
- Faith is "reckoned" as righteousness.
 - Counted as righteousness although it isn't?
 - The only basis on which one can have covenant membership and be vindicated; the only proper response to God's act in Christ; the first act of trust in a relationship of ongoing trust.

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Justification

- It's linked with our union with Christ.
 - Christ is our righteousness (1 Cor. 1:30).
 - We embody God's covenant faithfulness as we share the gospel (2 Cor. 5:21).
- Justification has moral implications.
 - Sometimes suggests right living (Pastorals).
 - Living out our relationship with God in appropriate ways.

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Justification

- What are the implications of a relational or covenantal understanding of justification?