

## Justification

- Views of justification
- Terms and concepts
- Significant features of justification
- Imputed vs. imparted righteousness
- Faith and works
- Implications

© 2006 Brenda B. Colijn 1

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Views of Justification

- Luther: “The doctrine by which the church stands or falls.”
- Not always a central theological issue.
  - Little written on it before Augustine.
  - Not viewed as legal before the Reformation.
  - Split Protestants and Catholics.
  - Recent “Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification” (Lutherans, Catholics).

2

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Views of Justification

- The main way the western church has understood salvation since the Reformation.
  - It’s only one model of initial salvation.
  - Our tendency to see salvation in legal terms.
- Has come under scrutiny in recent years.

3

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Views of Justification

- Moral view
  - Righteousness = uprightness, moral purity.
  - Righteousness is imparted to us, infused into us.
  - We can be declared righteous because we are.
- Forensic or legal view
  - Strongly influenced by Greco-Roman models.
  - Righteousness = conforming to God's law.
  - We have a new standing before God.
  - We are declared righteous, although we aren't.

4

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Views of Justification

- Relational or eschatological view
  - Paul has been read through Luther.
  - OT background.
  - Righteousness is a relational term.
  - God's righteousness = covenant faithfulness.
  - Humans = right-relatedness, covenant relationship, faithfulness.
  - We are brought into covenant relationship with God.

5

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Views of Justification

- The "New Perspective"
  - Justification has corporate dimension: showing who will be vindicated as the true people of God.
  - The conditions for covenant membership.
  - Not works-righteousness vs. faith but old covenant vs. new covenant.
  - Judaizers: holding on to national privilege.
  - If justification is by law, only Jews can be saved.
  - If it's by faith in Christ, anyone can be.

6

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Views of Justification

- Affects the interpretation of key texts:
  - Rom. 3:22: God’s covenant faithfulness shown through Jesus’ faithfulness to those who respond with faith(fulness).
  - Rom. 3:26: Is this a paradox?
  - 2 Cor. 5:21: An exchange between Jesus and us, or an extension of God’s act of reconciliation?

7

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Views of Justification

- My view: justification and righteousness are fundamentally relational (covenantal).
  - Defined in terms of divine/human relationship.
  - But they bring covenant obligations (moral/legal implications).
  - Pseudo-Cicero: Justice is demonstrated where “faith” is “zealously kept,” “alliances and friendships...scrupulously honored,” and “ties of hospitality, clientage, kinship, and relationship by marriage...inviolably cherished.”

8

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Terms and Concepts

- In Hebrew and Greek, justification/justice and righteousness are the *same word*.
- They don’t necessarily have the same connotations the English words have.
- OT: more often in verb form (*sdq*).
  - God’s saving acts as his covenant faithfulness.
  - Humans: abiding by the covenant relationship.
- NT: *dikaioisune*.

9

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Terms and Concepts

- “Righteous” = both God and human beings.
- Justify = to set in right relationship (to rectify or “rightwise”) or vindicate.
- Close connection with reconciliation.
- Righteousness of God
  - Luther: the righteousness God requires/imputes.
  - More recently: God’s character or actions.
  - Romans 3:3, 5: God’s covenant faithfulness.

10

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Significant Features

- A cosmic act of God.
- Eschatological context.
- Revealed in Christ and the gospel.
- A gift of God’s grace.
- Humans participate through faith in Christ.
- Our faith is “reckoned” as righteousness.
- Expresses itself in a faithful life.

11

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Imputed vs. Imparted

- Catholic vs. Reformation theologies.
  - Catholic: righteousness is imparted (infused).
  - Luther: righteousness is imputed (an alien righteousness credited to us).
  - Luther: we’re *simul justus et peccator*.
  - Menno Simons: justification in sin?

12

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Imputed vs. Imparted

- Is declarative righteousness a legal fiction?
  - G. E. Ladd: if God declares us to be rightly related to him, we are.
  - William Hull: “God can justify the unrighteous in such a way that it will make them righteous.”
- If justification is relational, no problem.
  - God’s covenant faithfulness is shown in Christ.
  - If we respond in faith(fulness) we are righteous (faithful to the covenant).

13

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Implications

- Implications of justification?

14

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---