**He is Just, and the Justifier**

*Romans 3:26*

**Introduction**

1. ***“What must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:30)*** – important and loaded question.
   1. Implies:
      1. Knowledge of sin – personal guilt.
      2. Knowledge of justice of God – deserving of His wrath. (immutable)
      3. Knowledge of helpless state – cannot save self, must be saved by another.
      4. Knowledge of the existence of a provision for salvation – deliverance from sin within God’s just nature.
   2. We need to be careful we have the right answer to this question.
2. **Romans 3:26** – it is true that God is just, it is true that God is the justifier of sinners.
   1. This combination of thoughts is the seeming quandary concerning salvation. (We cannot understand without revelation.)
   2. How can God be just while justifying those who have sinned against Him?
3. God is Just
4. An Immutable Attribute of God is His Justice
   1. The context considers the upholding of God’s just nature – **Romans 3:26**
   2. All of God’s attributes are inseparably linked – they cannot be divorced. EX: God is love, but also light – **1 John 4:8; 1:5**
   3. When His law is violated, His justice demands retribution:
      1. **Romans 1:18** – wrath of God revealed.
      2. **Romans 2:5-6** – to sin is to treasure up wrath.
      3. **Romans 5:9** – saved from wrath.
      4. **Romans 6:23** – wages of sin is death.
      5. **Romans 8:2** – ***“law of sin and death”*** = you sin, you die.
5. Sinful Man is Helpless Before the Just God
   1. All have sinned – **Romans 3:23**
   2. ***“we were…without strength” (Romans 5:6)***
   3. God demonstrated man’s helplessness – **Romans 3:19-20; 5:20** – the law showed man’s sin and need for rescue by another.
   4. Wretched men – **Romans 7:24** – not as a Christian, but as one who sinned, and without proper atonement that the law could not offer.
      1. **Romans 8:2-3** – ***“what the law could not do” is “[make] me free from the law of sin and death”***
   5. Atonement foreshadowed – **Leviticus 17:11** – only in blood – ***“without shedding of blood there is no remission” (Hebrews 9:22)***. (blood stands for death)
      1. Daily bloodshed offered – **Hebrews 7:27**
      2. Annual day of Atonement – **Hebrews 9:7; 10:1-4** – **(v. 3)** – the sins that had already been addressed throughout the year are reminded, not taken away, as they are addressed on the day of Atonement as well.
      3. **Hebrews 10:8** – He did not desire, nor take pleasure.
6. God is the Justifier – The Righteousness of God
7. The Righteousness of God
   1. **Romans 1:16-17** – Gospel is power for salvation because the ***“righteousness of God”*** is revealed in it.
   2. What is ***“the righteousness of God?”***
      1. Something the Jews were ignorant of – **Romans 10:3** – something to be submitted to.
      2. The plan for man to be justified, or made righteous by God – **Romans 3:20-24**
         1. **(v. 20)** – not justified by deeds of law.
         2. **(v. 21)** – righteousness of God apart from law.
         3. **(vv. 22-24)** – through faith, being justified.
      3. ***“and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith” (Philippians 3:9).***
8. The Satisfaction of God’s Judicial Wrath
   1. If God is just (must punish sin), and all have sinned, how can man be justified or made righteous before God?
      1. His grace and mercy are in truth – **Exodus 34:5-7** – He is willing and eager to forgive, but His justice must still stand in regard to sin – what mercy He offers must be in truth, i.e. in accord with just nature.
      2. ***“Mercy and truth have met together; Righteousness and peace have kissed.” (Psalm 85:10)***
   2. **Romans 3:21-26** – Jesus’ death satisfies God’s wrath.
      1. **(v. 22)** – through faith in Jesus.
      2. **(v. 24)** – justified through redemption in Jesus.
         1. **Justified** – *dikaioō* – to render just or innocent (STRONG)
            1. **(v. 23)** – from sin.
         2. **Redemption** – *apolytrōsis* – “‘buying back’ a slave or captive, i.e. ‘making free’ by payment of a ransom…(2) release from a captive condition” (BDAG)
            1. Slave of sin – **Romans 6:16-17**
            2. Jesus is redeemer – **1 Corinthians 1:30**
            3. Jesus is the ransom – **Matthew 20:28**
      3. **(v. 25)** – through Jesus as a propitiation by His blood.
         1. **Propitiation** – *hilastērion* – “In Gr-Rom. lit. that which serves as an instrument for regaining the goodwill of a deity; concr. a ‘means of propitiation or expiation, gift to procure expiation’…(1) means of expiation (2) place of propitiation” (BDAG)
         2. Sin arouses God’s judicial wrath 🡪 Without blood no remission (**Hebrews 9:22**) 🡪Jesus a satisfaction of God’s wrath, appeasement, expiation by His blood (death).
         3. **Cf. Hebrews 9:5** – ***“mercy seat”*** – blood on Day of Atonement sprinkled.
      4. **(vv. 25-26)** – God’s righteousness/justice is demonstrated in His death – making way for Him to justify those who have faith in Jesus.
         1. His death is ***“to demonstrate…His righteousness, that He might be just.”***
         2. ***“through faith in Jesus Christ…through faith…of the one who has faith in Jesus”*** – i.e. not automatically effective for all, but for any who meet condition of faith.
9. The Justification of Sinful Man
   1. **Romans 3:27-28** – justified by faith apart from deeds of the law (i.e. perfect keeping of the law).
   2. Abraham as a case study – **Romans 4:1-4** – not by perfect works, but by faith.
   3. Inspired Exposition on Justification/accounting of righteousness by faith, not works – **Romans 4:5-8 (cf. Psalm 32:1-2)**
      1. **(v. 7)** – lawless deeds – shows no justification by works (perfect).
      2. **(v. 8)** – not impute sin – inverse of impute righteousness **(v. 6).**
         1. ***“impute”*** = account – i.e. what is credited to him personally.
         2. Once sin, when forgiven then righteousness.
      3. BUT GOD DID NOT DISMISS THE SIN – **Romans 3:24-25** – ATONED FOR BY JESUS’ BLOOD – applied through faith.
   4. Abraham’s justification stands as a certainty of justification for all who have faith – **Romans 4:16, 23-25; 5:1-2** – access grace by faith.
      1. GOD WILL NOT JUSTIFY MAN EXCEPT THROUGH THE SATISFACTION OF HIS JUST WRATH IN THE DEATH OF JESUS.
      2. WE CANNOT BE JUSTIFIED THROUGH THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST EXCEPT THROUGH HAVING THE SAME KIND OF FAITH.
      3. OF WHAT NATURE WAS ABRAHAM’S FAITH?
         1. THIS IS THE ONLY FAITH WHICH ACCESSES THE GRACE OF GOD WHEREBY WE ARE REDEEMED BY THE DEATH OF CHRIST.
10. The Nature of Justifying Faith
11. Obedient Faith
    1. Not considering one point in Abraham’s life where he was initially justified by faith.
       1. **Claim** – **Romans 4:3** – Abraham was not justified, in sin, lost; then believed, and justified, forgiven, saved when he believed.
       2. **Context – showing the essential nature of faith in justification – Abraham lived before God justified/righteous. How? By faith.**
       3. **Genesis 15:6** is used by Paul to refer to various points in Abraham’s life in **Romans 4**:
          1. **(v. 13)** – Promise given ***“through the righteousness of faith”*** – i.e. thought of **Genesis 15:6** basis upon which promise was given.
             1. When called out of Ur of Chaldees – **Genesis 12:3** – initial record of promise.
          2. **(vv. 18, 22)** – Promise reiterated by God, and believed by Abraham.
             1. Eliezer of Damascus? No, one from your body – **Genesis 15:1-6** – faith accounted for righteousness.
          3. **(vv. 17-22)** – Persistent belief highlighted when things seemed contrary to hope.
             1. **(v. 17)** – **Genesis 17:5**
             2. **(v. 19)** – challenge of faith – **Genesis 17:1** – when 99 yrs old.
             3. **Genesis 17:15-16** – Sarai to have your son. (Deadness of Sarah’s womb – **v. 19**)
             4. **(v. 22)** – **Genesis 15:6** applied to this moment.
       4. **Not speaking of salvation at initial point of faith, but showing essential nature of faith in justification by the way he lived his life by faith.**
    2. Not considering that Abraham was justified by faith only.
       1. Faith in Romans – **Romans 1:5; 16:26** – obedient faith. ***(“obedience of faith,” NASB***)
       2. Faith of Abraham was obedient faith:
          1. Active faith – **Romans 4:12** – ***“walk in the steps of faith”***
          2. **Genesis 12:1, 4** – called to go out and obeyed – **Hebrews 11:8** – by faith!
          3. **Genesis 12:8-9** – nature of living while following God – tents, called on name of Lord – **Hebrews 11:9** – by faith!
          4. **Genesis 22:2, 12** – obeyed God’s command to offer Isaac, demonstrated faith – **Hebrews 11:17; James 2:21-23** – justified by works – **Genesis 15:6** quoted.
    3. Such is the nature of faith whereby grace is initially accessed, and by which one continues to stand in that grace – **Romans 3:24-26; 5:2**
       1. No justification w/out God maintaining just nature.
       2. No justification w/out death of Jesus.
       3. **Death of Jesus not applied w/out this kind of faith.**
12. Justification by Faith
    1. Abraham and Romans:
       1. Abraham – **Romans 4:3, 5-6**
          1. ***“believed God…accounted to him for righteousness” (v. 3)***
             1. Eis – to or into – righteousness.
          2. ***“faith is accounted for righteousness” (v. 5***)
             1. Eis – to or into – righteousness.
          3. ***“God imputes righteousness apart from works” (v. 6***)
             1. Apart from works = sins forgiven **(vv. 7-8**)
             2. Works = perfect keeping of law. (not obedience)
       2. Romans – **Romans 6:16-18**
          1. **Romans 4:23-24** – **Gen. 15:6** recorded for ***“us”*** (Romans reading epistle) that ***“it,” “righteousness”*** **(v. 22)** is imputed in same way as Abraham…
          2. ***“obedience leading to righteousness”***
             1. Eis – to or into – righteousness.
          3. ***“though you were slaves of sin” – “set free from sin” – “salves of righteousness”***
             1. Apart from works (perfect) – sins forgiven.
             2. YET OBEYED – obedient faith.
    2. Obeyed the ***“form of doctrine”***:
       1. Fundamental truth – **Romans 6:16** – slaves to whom you obey.
       2. Past – **Romans 6:17a** – were slaves of sin.
       3. Present – **Romans 6:18** – slaves of righteousness.
       4. Process – **Romans 6:17** – obeyed ***“form of doctrine”*** – delivered from sin TO that doctrine – i.e. to be slave of righteousness.
       5. What is the ***“form of doctrine”*** concerning that deliverance from slavery to sin to slavery to righteousness?
          1. **Romans 6:3-7** – in baptism.
          2. **(v. 4)** – newness of life.
          3. **(vv. 5-7)** – died to sin, alive – to righteousness **(v. 18).**
          4. Efficacy? – **(v. 3)** – ***“into His death”*** – benefits of His death.
             1. **Romans 3:24-26** – justified, redemption, propitiation, by faith in Jesus.
             2. Justified, but God’s justice is served as His wrath is satisfied in Jesus’ death.
             3. ***“propitiation by His blood, through faith” – “baptized into His death”***
    3. In baptism, faith is accounted for righteousness:
       1. **Romans 4:5** – ***“faith is accounted for righteousness”***
          1. Negative – **(vv. 6-8)** – sin is not accounted, but forgiven.
          2. ***“for”*** – eis – to or into – ***“righteousness”*** (forgiveness of sins)
       2. **Acts 2:38** – ***“baptized…for the remission of sins”***
          1. Positive – **Romans 4:5** – ***“accounted for righteousness”***
          2. ***“for”*** – eis – to or into – ***“remission of sins”*** (accounted righteousness)
       3. Why is baptism effective as such?
          1. **Acts 2:38; Matthew 26:28** – where one meets the blood of Jesus.
             1. ***“for the remission of sins”*** – eis – to or into.
          2. **Hebrews 9:14, 22; 10:22** – blood of Jesus cleanses conscience, cleansed conscience when ***“bodies washed with pure water”*** – baptism.
             1. **1 Peter 3:21** – not the removal of filth (“***bodies washed with pure water”***) but appeal for good conscience.
             2. Faith in baptism – **cf. Colossians 2:11-12** – body of sins put off, faith in the working of God.
          3. **In baptism, one accesses the benefits of Christ’s blood/death by faith which satisfies God’s wrath, and forgiveness is given on that basis – God is just, and the justifier.**

**Conclusion**

1. God’s plan for man to be justified/saved is airtight – in it He maintains His holy and just nature, while at the same time possessing a nature of grace and mercy.
2. Such an intricate plan which exceeds man’s wisdom is unalterable and irreplaceable.
3. There is only one way God’s justice can be maintained while He justifies the sinner – to submit to that way is to be saved, to refuse is to be helplessly lost.