How Did We Get Here?

Lesson 3 · Justification — Student Notes

Based on the current 20-slide presentation. Each section follows one slide in order. Quotations, key distinctions, and terminology reflect the slide deck.

Slide 1 Lesson 3 — Justification

The lesson asks how a person is made right with God. It traces the biblical vocabulary of salvation and the historical explanations of justification.

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Slide 2 The Question

The Philippian jailer asks, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” The framing issue is salvation: from what, by whom, and how?

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Slide 3 The Answer

Acts 16:31 directs the jailer to believe in the Lord Jesus. The presentation centers salvation on Christ and identifies faith as the required response; it then explores what God does in saving.

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Slide 4 Jesus and the Language of Salvation

Jesus calls for repentance and belief (Mark 1:15), teaches new birth (John 3:3–8), uses the language of justification for the repentant tax collector (Luke 18:13–14), and joins belief with eternal life (John 3:16). Mark 10:26–27 stresses God’s ability to save; Luke 19:8–10 speaks of salvation coming to Zacchaeus; John 14:15 connects love for Christ with obedience.

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Slide 5 What Happens When We Are Saved?

The deck distinguishes grace (God’s undeserved saving favor), repentance (turning from sin), faith (trust in Christ), regeneration (new birth), justification (being declared or made right with God), and righteousness (right standing, conduct, or righteousness received from God). It also defines sanctification as growth in holiness, adoption as being received into God’s family, redemption as deliverance from bondage, reconciliation as restored relationship, and glorification as salvation’s final completion.

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Slide 6 Paul and Justification by Faith

Romans 3:28 and Galatians 2:16 emphasize justification through faith rather than works of the Law. Romans 4:3–5 says Abraham’s belief was reckoned as righteousness; Romans 5:1 connects

justification by faith with peace with God. Philippians 3:8–9 contrasts one's own righteousness with righteousness through faith in Christ.

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Slide 7 Abraham: Faith Counted as Righteousness

Genesis 15:6 and Romans 4 center on the words "reckoned," "credited," and "counted." The presentation emphasizes receiving righteousness by faith rather than earning it as wages, setting up the later term "imputed righteousness." Discussion: What does it mean to count righteousness to someone?

Notes: _____

Slide 8 Paul and James

Paul (Romans 3:28) says justification is by faith apart from works of the Law. James (James 2:24) says justification is by works and not by faith alone. The deck contrasts Paul's rejection of relying on works as the basis of justification with James's rejection of empty profession without fruit. The interpretive question concerns each author's meaning of faith, works, and justify.

Notes: _____

Slide 9 Historical Development

The historical section asks how Christians explained the relationship between grace, faith, righteousness, and works as theological language developed.

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Slide 10 The Early Church

Early Christians frequently addressed faith, repentance, baptism, grace, obedience, perseverance, and holiness. The technical distinction between justification and sanctification had not yet been fully systematized; later Catholic and Protestant systems should not simply be imposed on these earlier writers.

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Slide 11 Pelagius and Augustine

Pelagius emphasized sufficient moral freedom to respond to God's commands, with grace assisting but not necessary in Augustine's sense. Augustine emphasized the damage caused by sin and held that grace must precede and enable the saving response. The central question is whether fallen humanity can turn to God without God first acting.

Notes: _____

Slide 12 Augustine → Medieval Christianity

Key developments include Augustine's emphasis on original sin and divine initiative; infused grace as an inwardly transforming gift; sacramental grace communicated through Church sacraments; cooperation through grace-enabled obedience; merit as reward for works done in grace, not

autonomous self-salvation; penance involving repentance, confession, satisfaction, and restoration; and righteousness that increases as the believer is renewed.

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Slide 13 The Reformation

Justification became one of the central dividing lines of Western Christianity during the Reformation.

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Slide 14 Martin Luther

Sola fide means justification through faith alone. Forensic justification describes God's judicial declaration that the sinner is righteous because of Christ. Imputed righteousness means Christ's righteousness is credited to the believer. Simul iustus et peccator means "at the same time righteous and sinner."

Notes: _____

Slide 15 John Calvin and Reformed Theology

Justification and sanctification are distinct but inseparable gifts to those united to Christ. Forensic justification is God's declaration of righteousness because of Christ; sanctification is the Spirit's actual transformation of the believer. In classic Reformed theology, regeneration logically precedes saving faith.

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Slide 16 The Council of Trent

The Council of Trent (1545–1563) is presented as the Catholic response to the Reformation. Justification includes forgiveness and inward renewal; infused righteousness is given inwardly by grace. The believer cooperates through grace-enabled love and obedience; faith must be living and formed by love.

Notes: _____

Slide 17 Imputed and Infused Righteousness

In the imputed account, Christ's righteousness is credited to the believer. At justification God changes the believer's standing, while inward renewal is distinguished as sanctification. In the infused account, God gives grace inwardly; justification includes forgiveness and renewal, which grows through cooperation with grace. The key question is whether justifying righteousness is credited or given inwardly so the believer becomes righteous.

Notes: _____

Slide 18 Where Major Traditions Stand Today

Roman Catholic teaching includes forgiveness and inward renewal through infused righteousness. Lutheran teaching emphasizes God's declaration through faith, with works as fruit. Reformed

teaching emphasizes forensic justification, inseparable sanctification, and regeneration logically preceding faith. Anglican theology historically affirms justification by faith but varies in emphasis. Wesleyan/Arminian teaching describes prevenient grace as enabling the response of faith and emphasizes holiness. Baptist/Evangelical teaching commonly stresses conversion, repentance, and faith; views on regeneration differ.

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Slide 19 Return to the Question

Acts 16:30–31 returns to the jailer's question and the answer to believe in the Lord Jesus. Later disagreement concerns how to explain what God does in and for the person who believes, not replacing the biblical question and answer.

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Slide 20 What Did Christians Disagree About?

Review the lesson's unresolved interpretive questions: What does grace do? What does justification mean? Is righteousness imputed, infused, or both in different senses? How are justification and sanctification related? Does regeneration precede faith? What role do works play? How do Paul and James relate?

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