JUSTIFICATION

BY FAITH ALONE

Romans 3:19–26

Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. [20] For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

Romans 3:19-26

21 But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law,
although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— 22 the righteousness of
God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction:
23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified
by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

Romans 3:19-26

25 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. 26 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.

What Is Justification?

Justification is an act of God's free grace, in which he pardons all our sins and accepts us as righteous in his sight, only because of the righteousness of Christ imputed to us and received by faith alone.

Westminster Shorter Catechism, Q. 33

Outline

1. Justification by Grace Alone
2. Justification in Christ Alone
3. Justification through Faith Alone

1. Justification by Grace Alone

Romans 3:19–24

1. Justification by Grace Alone

a. Grace needed: Because of the law, sin, and wrath

Romans 3:19–20

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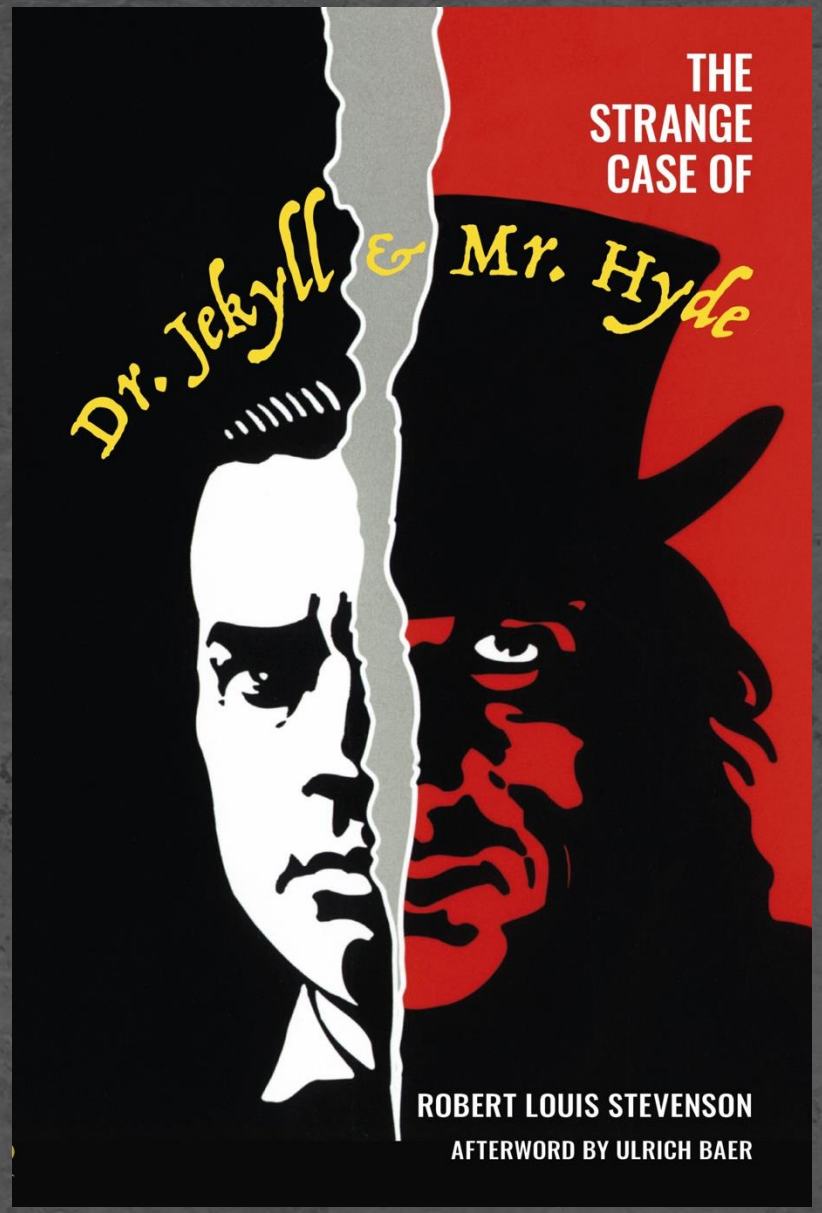

"I smiled, comparing myself with other men, comparing my active goodwill with the lazy cruelty of their neglect . . . at the very moment of that vain-glorious thought, a qualm came over me, a horrid nausea and the most dreadful shuddering . . . I looked down . . . I was once more Edward Hyde."

— Robert Louis Stevenson

The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

1. Justification by Grace Alone

a. Grace needed: Because of the law, sin, and wrath

Romans 3:19–20

b. Grace freely given: Apart from the law, through Christ, for all

Romans 3:21-24

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although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— 22 the righteousness of
God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction:
23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified
by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

“Night and day I pondered until I saw the connection between the justice of God and the statement that ‘the just shall live by his faith.’ Then I grasped that the justice of God is that righteousness by which through grace and sheer mercy God justifies us through faith. Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through the doors of paradise.”

— Martin Luther

2. Justification in Christ Alone

Romans 3:24–26

2. Justification in Christ Alone

a. Christ took our place

Redemption through substitution

2. Justification in Christ Alone

a. Christ took our place

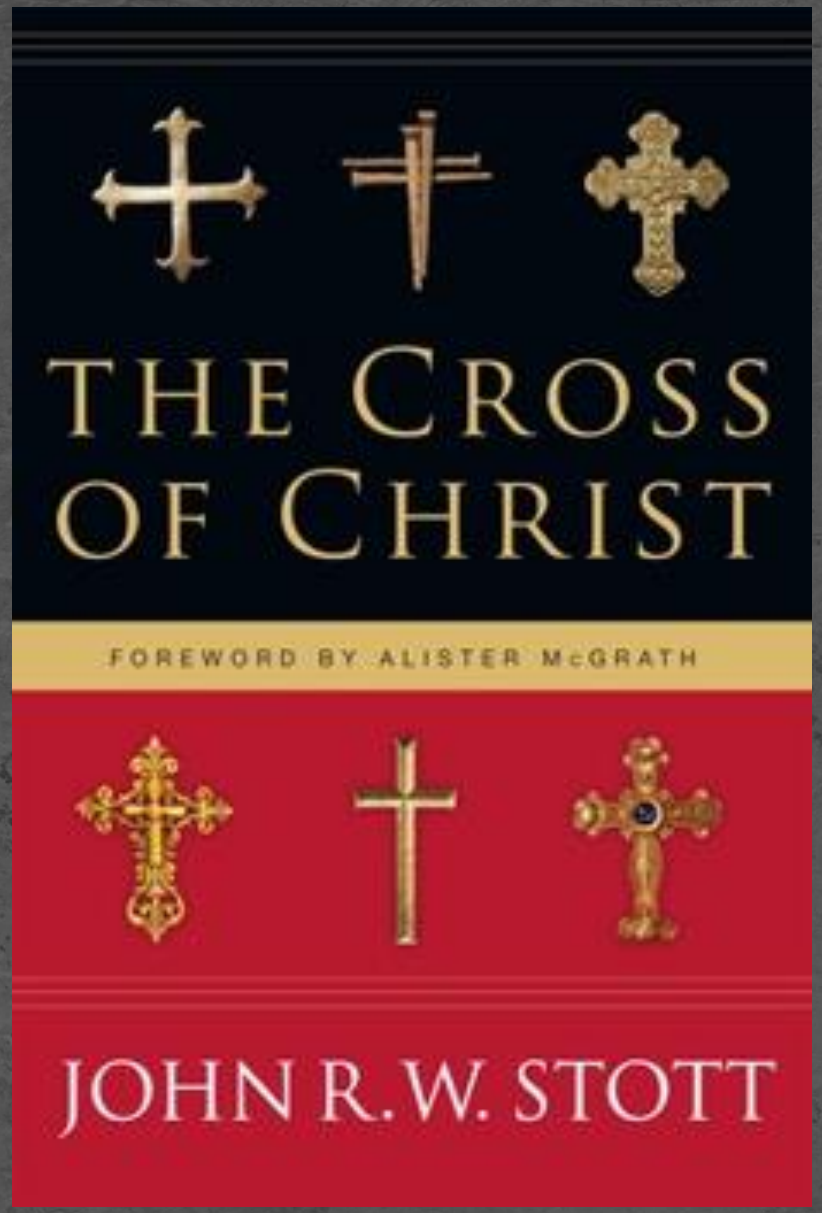
Redemption through substitution

b. Christ bore God's wrath

Vindication through propitiation

Romans 3:25–26

25 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. 26 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.



"At the cross in holy love God through Christ paid the full penalty of our disobedience himself. He bore the judgment we deserve in order to bring us the forgiveness we do not deserve. On the cross divine mercy and justice were equally expressed and eternally reconciled. God's holy love was 'satisfied.' . . . Divine love triumphed over divine wrath by divine self-sacrifice."

— John R. W. Stott

The Cross of Christ, 89, 159

2. Justification in Christ Alone

a. Christ took our place

Redemption through substitution

b. Christ bore God's wrath

Vindication through propitiation

c. Christ is our righteousness

Justification through imputation

Romans 4:3–8

For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.” 4 Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. 5 And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness,

Romans 4:3–8

6 just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works:

7 “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered;

8 blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.”

2 Corinthians 5:19, 21

In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. . . [21] For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

“Faith . . . unites the soul with Christ, as a bride is united with her bridegroom. From such a marriage, as St. Paul says, it follows that Christ and the soul . . . hold all things in common, whether for better or worse. This means that what Christ possesses belongs to the believing soul, and what the soul possesses belongs to Christ . . . Christ possesses all good things and holiness: these now belong to the soul. The soul possesses lots of vices and sin: these now belong to Christ. . . .

Now is not this a happy business? Christ, the rich, noble and holy bridegroom, takes in marriage this poor, contemptible and sinful little prostitute, takes away all her evil and bestows all his goodness upon her! It is no longer possible for sin to overwhelm her, for she is now found in Christ."

— Martin Luther

The Freedom of a Christian (1520)

1 Corinthians 1:30–31

And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, [31] so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

3. Justification through Faith Alone

Romans 3:21–31

3. Justification through Faith Alone

- “the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe” (v. 22)
- “a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith” (v. 25)
- “just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus” (v. 26)

3. Justification through Faith Alone

a. The nature of faith

Faith is trusting in and depending upon God

Romans 8:1, 33–34

[1] There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus…

[33] Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. [34] Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

3. Justification through Faith Alone

a. The nature of faith

Faith is trusting in and depending upon God

b. The results of faith

Romans 3:27–31

Romans 3:27–31

27 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. 28 For we hold that one is justified
by faith apart from works of the law. 29 Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he
not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, 30 since God is one. He will
justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. 31 Do we
then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold
the law.

3. Justification through Faith Alone

a. The nature of faith

Faith is trusting in and depending upon God

b. The results of faith

Romans 3:27–31

c. The object of faith

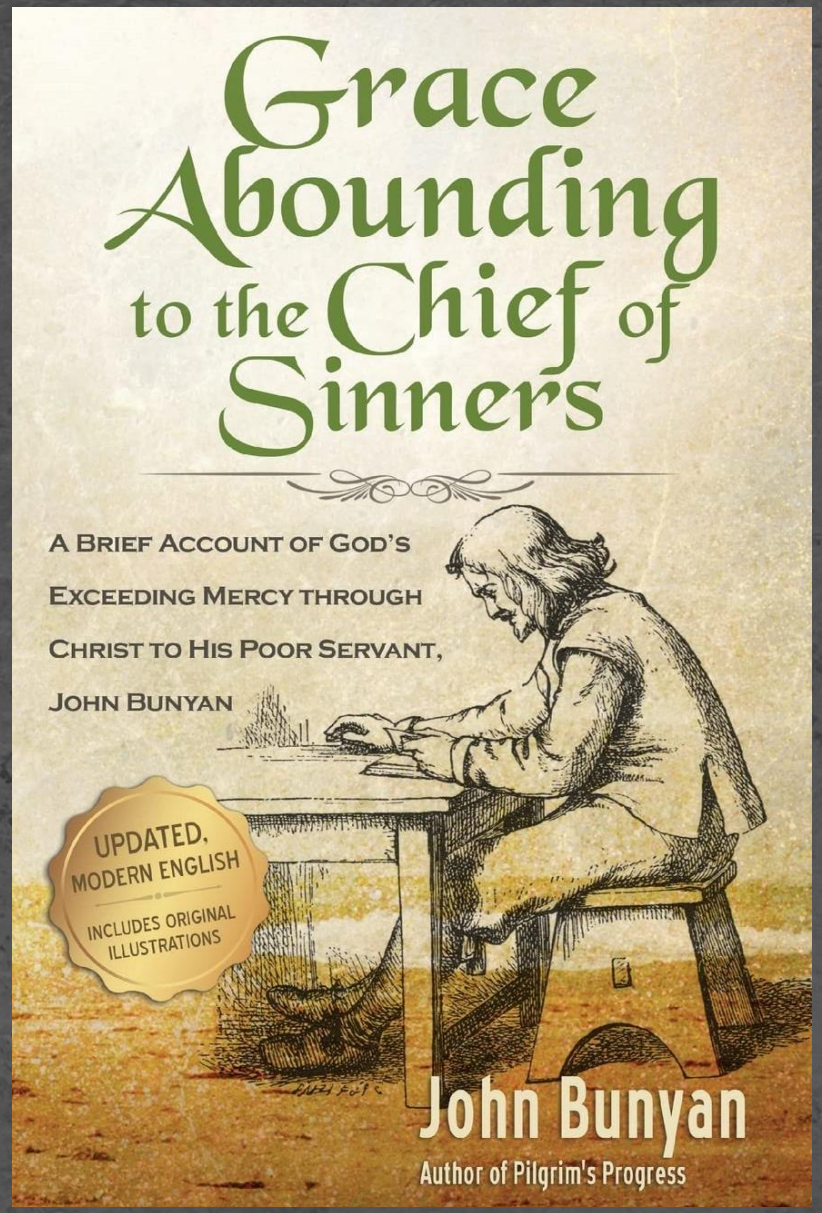
Faith's strength is in its object

“But remember, sinner, it is not your hold of Christ that saves you—it is Christ; it is not your joy in Christ that saves you—it is Christ; it is not even faith in Christ, though that is the instrument—it is Christ’s blood and merits; therefore, look not so much to your hand with which you are grasping Christ, as to Christ; look not to your hope, but to Christ, the source of your hope; look not to your faith, but to Christ, the author and finisher of your faith.”

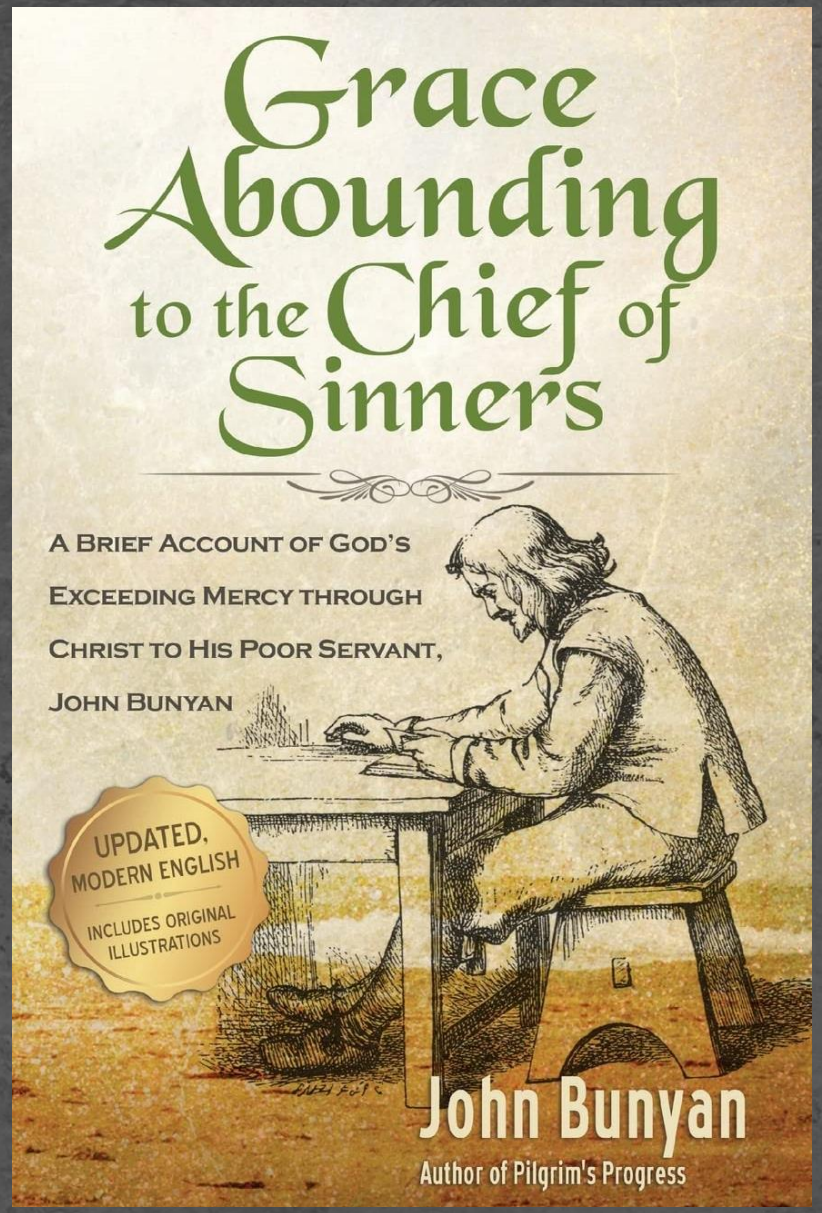
— Charles H. Spurgeon

3. Justification through Faith Alone

Romans 3:21–31



"But one day as I was passing in the field . . . fearing lest yet all was not right, suddenly this sentence fell upon my Soul, Thy righteousness is in Heaven; and methought withal, I saw with the eyes of my Soul, Jesus Christ at God's right hand, there, I say, as my Righteousness; so that wherever I was, or whatever I was doing, God could not say of me, He wants [lacks] my righteousness, for that was just before him."



"I also saw moreover, that it was not my good frame of Heart that made my Righteousness better, nor yet my bad frame that made my Righteousness worse: for my Righteousness was Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

— John Bunyan

Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners

Conclusion

Two applications

- To the guilty sinner: *Trust in Christ and Christ alone*

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Two applications

- To the guilty sinner: *Trust in Christ and Christ alone*
- To the doubting believer: *For every one look at self, take ten looks at Christ (Robert Murray M'Cheyne)*