

## How Does God Justify the Ungodly?

**Romans 4:1–5**

**Romans 5:6–8**

**1 Peter 3:18**

If a judge disregards witnesses' testimonies and evidences against the guilty to acquit the guilty, he is the one guilty of malpractice and injustice.

This is exactly the verdict that God has pronounced at the *moment* of salvation of a sinner who is guilty beyond all reasonable doubt!

Has God then committed injustice? Does God violate His own law?

Proverbs 17:15<sup>15</sup> **He that justifieth the wicked**, and he that condemneth the just, Even they both *are* **abomination to the Lord**.

The answer is declared at the Cross – where God justifies the ungodly!

So how then can God be just and justify the ungodly?

### 1. A *Substitute* is provided

1 Peter 3:18<sup>18</sup> For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, **the just for the unjust**, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

- Justice requires restitution.
- He cannot just declare, “I forgive you” apart from restitution without violating his own law.
- Therefore, there must be a voluntary substitute. But a substitute that must be acceptable to God.
- It cannot be another sinner who cannot actually pay for his sins let alone the sins of others. That is why there is no end to punishment. It will never “finish” or be paid for.

The love of God is the cause of Christ's atonement but it must be accomplished in the way that is consistent with his justice.

Isaiah 53:4<sup>4</sup> Surely **he hath borne our griefs, And carried our sorrows**: Yet we did esteem him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted.

Isaiah 53:6<sup>6</sup> All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned every one to his own way; And **the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all**.

Isaiah 53:11–12<sup>11</sup> He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; For **he shall bear their iniquities**.<sup>12</sup> Therefore will I divide him *a portion* with the great, And he shall divide the spoil with the strong; Because he hath poured out his soul unto death: And he was numbered with the transgressors; And **he bare the sin of many**, And made intercession for the transgressors.

John 1:29<sup>29</sup> The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold **the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world**.

2 Corinthians 5:21<sup>21</sup> For **he hath made him to be sin for us**, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Galatians 3:13<sup>13</sup> Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, **being made a curse for us**: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree:

1 Peter 2:24<sup>24</sup> Who **his own self bare our sins in his own body** on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: **by whose stripes ye were healed**.

- He has to be God-man.
- Fully God so he is worth more than what the sum of all that humanity owe.
- Fully human but sinless to die as the unblemished Lamb of God.
- God punishes Christ in our place and for our sin.

Genesis 22:7–8<sup>7</sup> And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here *am* I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: **but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?**<sup>8</sup> And Abraham said, My son, **God will provide himself a lamb** for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.

## 2. Righteousness is imputed

Romans 4:1–5<sup>1</sup> What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? <sup>2</sup> For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath *whereof* to glory; but not before God. <sup>3</sup> For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, **and it was counted unto him for righteousness.** <sup>4</sup> Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. <sup>5</sup> But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

James 2:23<sup>23</sup> And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and **it was imputed unto him for righteousness:** and he was called the Friend of God.

- The cross displayed the righteousness of God.
- Propitiation: Christ satisfied the wrath or justice of God.

Romans 3:25–26<sup>25</sup> **Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation** through faith in his blood, **to declare his righteousness** for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; <sup>26</sup> **To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier** of him which believeth in Jesus.

- The law points us to Christ and His righteousness.

Romans 10:1–4<sup>1</sup> Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. <sup>2</sup> For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. <sup>3</sup> **For they being ignorant of God's righteousness,** and going about to establish their own righteousness, have **not submitted** themselves unto the **righteousness of God.** <sup>4</sup> **For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.**

- It is not our own: *alien* righteousness

2 Corinthians 5:21<sup>21</sup> For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; **that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.**

Philippians 3:9<sup>9</sup> And be found in him, **not having mine own righteousness,** which is of the law, **but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:**

## 3. A Changed Life is anticipated

Romans 4:1–5<sup>1</sup> What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? <sup>2</sup> For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath *whereof* to glory; but not before God. <sup>3</sup> For what saith the scripture? **Abraham believed God,** and it was counted unto him for righteousness. <sup>4</sup> Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. <sup>5</sup> But to him that worketh not, **but believeth on him** that justifieth the ungodly, **his faith** is counted for righteousness.

- It is inevitable: the ungodly will not remain ungodly!

1 Peter 1:15–16<sup>15</sup> But as he which hath called you is holy, **so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;** <sup>16</sup> Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

- If the ungodly will not inevitably become godly Christian (Christ like) through the process of sanctification, then what God has done was an abomination!!! (Proverbs 17:15)
- From being an enemy to becoming a friend.

James 2:23<sup>23</sup> And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and **he was called the Friend of God.**

- Rebellion will be turned to reconciliation.

Colossians 1:21<sup>21</sup> And **you,** that were sometime **alienated** and **enemies** in *your* mind by wicked works, yet now hath **he reconciled**

- The old will become new.

2 Corinthians 5:17<sup>17</sup> Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, **he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.**

Galatians 2:20<sup>20</sup> I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, **but Christ liveth in me:** and the life which I now live in the flesh **I live by the faith of the Son of God,** who loved me, and gave himself for me.

- The servant of sin will become the servant of Christ.

Romans 6:16–22 <sup>16</sup> Know ye not, that **to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey**; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? <sup>17</sup> But God be thanked, **that ye were the servants of sin**, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. <sup>18</sup> **Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.** <sup>19</sup> I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members **servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.** <sup>20</sup> For when ye were **the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.** <sup>21</sup> What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things *is* death. <sup>22</sup> **But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God**, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

- There must be a necessary change in the lifestyle of the redeemed that would vindicate the justice of God – **there is a before and there must be an after.**

James 2:20–23 <sup>20</sup> But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? <sup>21</sup> Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? <sup>22</sup> Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? <sup>23</sup> **And the scripture was fulfilled** which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.

- If God justifies the ungodly, who can remain ungodly and still allowed to enter His kingdom, then God would be guilty of abomination!

1 Corinthians 6:9–11 <sup>9</sup> **Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived:** neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, <sup>10</sup> Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. <sup>11</sup> **And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified** in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

Jude 14–19 <sup>14</sup> And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, **Behold, the Lord cometh** with ten thousands of his saints, <sup>15</sup> **to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly** among them of all their **ungodly deeds** which they have **ungodly committed**, and of all *their* hard *speeches* which **ungodly sinners** have spoken against him. <sup>16</sup> These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling *words*, having *men's* persons in admiration because of advantage. <sup>17</sup> But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; <sup>18</sup> how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own **ungodly lusts.** <sup>19</sup> These be they who separate themselves, sensual, **having not the Spirit.**

- The spirit bear witness to our spirit that we are the children of God.
- A changed life is inevitable – a necessary result of salvation.

Romans 8:12–16 <sup>12</sup> Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. <sup>13</sup> For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: **but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.** <sup>14</sup> **For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.** <sup>15</sup> For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. <sup>16</sup> **The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:**

- This is our confidence, our assurance, when God converts the ungodly in order to live a godly life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Philippians 1:6 <sup>6</sup> **Being confident** of this very thing, that **he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:**