



Justification by Faith Paul: A Biblical Theological Approach

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.47814/ijssrr.v5i5.330>

Abstract

The message of salvation brought by the apostle Paul to the Romans has overcome all differences (Rom. 1:14-15), so that salvation can be obtained by all through the gospel (Rom. 1:16-17). The gospel contains God's saving act through the work of the Son of God who died, was crucified, buried, and rose again. For everyone who believes or believes in Jesus Christ the Son of God, it will obtain salvation through God's act of justification. This study aims to determine the meaning of justification by faith according to Paul. In this study, the author uses qualitative methods to obtain valid thoughts in order to build a theory related to the theme or research subject, while the approach used is biblical theology. The result of this research is that absolute justification can only be obtained based on faith in Jesus Christ. The death of Jesus Christ is a manifestation of God's high (infinite) love for sinners.

Keywords: *Justification; Faith; Paul; Biblical Theology*

Introduction

The discussion of this article is concerned with discussing Justification in Christ according to Romans 5:1-11. Since the doctrine of justification means God's act of taking away the sins of the sinner and reckoning him righteous, this is an act of freedom on His part by His grace, through faith in Christ Jesus, not on the merit of the person, but because Jesus shed His blood for the sake of the person. that, which was done for the fulfillment of the law to represent and to save him. Biblically, justification is "sighted right" before God. When a person is "righteous", then he is "sinless", "without fault", or "innocent" before God. A righteous person is "sighted right" before God. The Apostle Paul's underlying reason for the doctrine of justification.¹ Based on the Old Testament background, which is explained by Ladd in his book, namely: "*tsedeq, tsedage*" means the right person (*tsaddiq*) is a human who obeys the existing rules. The verb "to be right" (*tsadaq*) means to obey the existing rules, and in certain forms, means to "state right" or "to justify."² In general, in the Indonesian Dictionary "justification is a process, act or way of justifying".³ This means that someone who is found to have made a mistake is tried in order

¹ Mark A. Seifrid, *Justification by Faith* (BRILL, 1992), <https://brill.com/view/title/397>.

² George Eldon Ladd, *Teologi Perjanjian Baru 1* (Bandung: Yayasan Kalam Hidup, 2002).

³ Fahmi Idrus, *Kamus Lengkap Bahasa Indonesia* (Surabaya: Greisinda Press, 2007), 88.

to get a true or false statement from that person. And this is also in the world of Christianity in order to be able to reveal the actions of the individual believer that shows whether the person is worthy or not. However, it is not as easy as it is applied in Christianity because there are many conflicts between churches.⁴ Widarty Hetmina explain that God at this time and there have been disputes regarding justification by faith since the 1500's until now.⁵

Justification does not make a person righteous, but only declares a person righteous before God. In the Bible there are 29 times the word justification is written in Paul's letters especially in Romans 4:25; 5:18 contains the noun *dikaiosis* (*dikaiosis*). The notion of justification is the basis of the doctrine of human salvation. Justification is a doctrine that is the basis of Christianity, which includes God's forgiveness of sinners. The Apostle Paul emphasized the doctrine of justification by faith as an analytical exposition of facts in a fully theological context. J.I. Packer, said that "the doctrine of justification determines the character of the entire Christian faith."⁶

Biblically or theologically, "justification from the Hebrew language is *tsadeq*, while in Greek it is *dikaioo*, meaning to justify from the same root word correctly, namely *dikaioo* (*dikaioo*) and truth, namely *dikaioo* (*dikaioo*)."⁷ It is clear that the God worshiped by believers is the true God, who has absolute truth. Therefore, as believers, we must live in the truth that has been revealed by God.

In this study, the author or researcher uses a qualitative approach or method to obtain valid data in order to build a theory related to the theme or research subject. The qualitative method in question is reviewing and elaborating each source, information and data obtained from the library. The type of research used in this research is library research, namely research carried out through collecting data or scientific writings aimed at the object of research or data collection that is library in nature, or studies carried out to solve a problem that basically relies on on a critical and in-depth review of relevant library materials. Before conducting a review of library materials, researchers first know for sure about the source from which the scientific information will be obtained. The sources used include textbooks, scientific journals, statistical references, research results in the form of theses, theses, dissertations, the internet, and other relevant sources.⁸

The type of research used in this research is library research, namely research carried out through collecting data or scientific writings aimed at the object of research or data collection that is library in nature, or studies carried out to solve a problem that basically relies on on a critical and in-depth review of relevant library materials. While the approach used is the biblical theology, which biblical theology is the theological approach from the point of view of the Progressive History of the Lord who declared himself through the contents of the Scriptures of the Old Testament and the overall New Testament towards fulfillment to Jesus Christ.⁹ From this explanation it can be observed that the biblical theological approach centered on the contents or the texts in the Scriptures including how to understand the flow of history in it.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Widarty Hetmina, "Studi Tentang Pembeneran Dalam Kristus Menurut Roma 5:1-11," *JURNAL LUXNOS* 4, no. 2 (February 14, 2021): 255–266, https://luxnos.sttpd.ac.id/index.php/20_luxnos_20/article/view/133.

⁶ J.I. Packer, *Evangelical dictionary of Theology*.

⁷ Ladd, *Teologi Perjanjian Baru 1*, 196; Seifrid, *Justif. by Faith*.

⁸ Jean J.I Schensu, "Methodology, Methods, And Tools In Qualitative Research," in *Qualitative Research: An Introduction to Methods and Designs*, ed. Stephen D. Lapan, MaryLynn T. Quartaroli, and Frances Julia Riemer (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2012); Steven J. Taylor, Robert Bogdan, and Marjorie L. DeVault, *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods: A Guidebook and Resource*, 10th ed. (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2016); Sarah J. Tracy, *Qualitative Research Methods. Collecting Evidence, Crafting Analysis, Communicating Impact*. Chichester (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013).

⁹ Ryan A Brandt et al., "Journal of Biblical and Theological Studies" 3, no. 1 (2018); Brian S. Rosner et al., "Systematic Theology and Biblical Theology," *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (InterVarsity Press, 2000); Brevard S. Child, *Biblical Theology a Proposal* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2002).

Discussion

The message of salvation brought by the apostle Paul to the Romans has overcome all differences (Rom. 1:14-15), so that salvation can be obtained by all through the gospel (Rom. 1:16-17). The gospel contains God's saving act through the work of the Son of God who died, was crucified, buried, and rose again. For everyone who believes or believes in Jesus Christ the Son of God, it will obtain salvation through God's act of justification. Thus, the message of salvation has broken the particular concepts of salvation, which are claimed by certain religions, specifically Judaism. The apostle Paul's view of salvation that can be obtained by all people without any distinction of ethnicity, culture, and religion has opened a new view of the way of salvation. The term justification that Paul uses to describe salvation has a meaning if God as the Supreme Judge has saved people in the present and as a guarantee of salvation in the future. Thus, through the act of justification, two kinds of gifts will be produced, namely peace because sins have been removed, and hope for God's glory because sinners have been accepted as righteous (Rom. 5:1-2).¹⁰

Justification does not make a person righteous, but only declares a person righteous before God. In the Bible there are 29 times the word justification is written in Paul's letters, especially in Romans 4:25; 5:18 contains the noun *dikaiosis* (*dikaiosis*). The notion of justification is the basis of the doctrine of human salvation. Justification is a doctrine that is the basis of Christianity, which includes God's forgiveness of sinners.¹¹ For Paul, the word justification goes beyond simply referring to ethical qualities, for Paul's emphasis is on the relationship of right position with God. In other words, the righteous were already right at the time the judgment was announced.¹²

The philosophy of the life and ministry of the Apostle Paul is that the basis of justification is not obedience to the law, but the death of Christ on Calvary. In other words, absolute justification can only be obtained by faith in Christ. His death was a manifestation of God's high (infinite) love for sinners (Rom. 5:9). This philosophy is what causes the contradiction between Paul's teachings and Jewish thought.

The word justification is a term that is often used in court. When examining a case, the judge can make a decision on the people involved, whether they are right or wrong. The phrase "justification" in the Bible refers to what God does to mankind, implying that God justifies humans and views righteousness to be more than simply being His children.¹³ The Old Testament provides the background or basis for Paul's doctrine of justification; in the Old Testament, truth was clearly a religious doctrine; the verb translated "to justify" is *tsadag*; even if the correct meaning of the root word has been lost, scholars generally agree that the basic idea is compliance with regulations. The Greek term "justify" is *dikaio* and the noun *dikaiosis* can be translated as "justification" and from the adjective *dikaios* can be translated just and righteous. Some Catholic scholars argue that the meaning of *dikaio* is "to make right" and *dikaiosis* is to show the quality of that truth.¹⁴

For Paul, the word justification goes beyond simply referring to ethical qualities, for Paul's emphasis is on the relationship of right position with God. In other words, the righteous were already right at the time the judgment was announced. The relationship between faith and justification can be said to be "one package." This means that the two cannot be separated. When a person decides to believe,

¹⁰ Seifrid, *Justif. by Faith*; Mark A. Seifrid, "'Justification by Faith' and Paul's Conversion," in *Justification by Faith* (BRILL, 1992), 136–181, <https://brill.com/view/book/9789004267015/B9789004267015-s004.xml>.

¹¹ John A Kincaid, "Justification by Faith in the Letters of Saint Paul: Keys to Interpretation. By Jean - Noël Aletti . Translated by Peggy Manning Meyer," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 71, no. 2 (June 17, 2021): 865–867, <https://academic.oup.com/jts/article/71/2/865/5959866>.

¹² John Ziesler, "Justification by Faith in the Light of the 'New Perspective' on Paul," *Theology* 94, no. 759 (May 20, 1991): 188–194, <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0040571X9109400306>.

¹³ Hadiwiyono Harun, *Iman Kristen* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2014), 407.

¹⁴ Ladd, *Teologi Perjanjian Baru* 1, 189.

accepts the Lord Jesus Christ as a personal Savior, then at the same time he is justified. Faith in Christ brings a person out of the power of death to eternal life. The work that Christ has done for believers brings the result of atonement for sins and reconciliation of sinners with God.¹⁵

Based on this understanding, Paul in Romans 1:17 says: God's righteousness departs from faith leading to faith. Justification is a source of renewal of the life of the believer. Justification is not just a term that has a theological meaning, but is a term that gives Christians hope of life. True faith in Christ justifies the guilty to be sinless. Along with the statement of faith, assurance of salvation (well-being/assurance in the mind), the strength to stand on the truth of God's word in the midst of trials, can become a part of the believer's life.¹⁶

Basic Justification

The importance of justification in Paul's theology is much debated. There are some people who feel Paul is too radical in terms of faith in God, so that he seems to ignore the principles in the Old Testament (Torah). This is what caused the controversy between Paul and Judaism. Contemporary Jewish thinkers agree with the Apostle Paul in viewing justification as an eschatological forensic action (God is understood as ruler, lawgiver, judge).¹⁷ Of the thirteen letters of Paul, the message of soteriology dominates. Therefore, it can be implicitly noted that two things are the basis of justification for the church.

Faith to Jesus Christ

Indeed, faith is often an unreal concept because it is a bit difficult to know whether or not we really have that faith (or we are lying to ourselves). Many people say they have faith but actually they have nothing. They are only deceiving themselves. When faith is tested, their faith collapses, scatters. God does not want faith that is only partial, God wants faith that is complete, firm, whole, faith with complete surrender. Faith that is only lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, is not pleasing to God. God wants faith that is willing to sacrifice, willing to surrender itself to God.¹⁸

Faith in God will always experience challenges to test faith and to purify the faith of believers. Every time we pass the test and pass a test of faith we move up a level to experience a more severe test. In the Bible, God knew Abraham loved God so he was willing to leave his hometown and loved ones to go to God's promised land. But that was not enough, Abraham had to wait a very long time before he had a child. It was also still not enough, God asked Abraham to sacrifice his only son to God. In each of those trials Abraham passed.¹⁹

Believe in God also contains meaning not to rely on self-esteem, independent of their own understanding or understanding, but fears God and acknowledges Him in all living behavior. Often the believer then begins to make assumptions or suppositions as if God wanted something like this or that. Make your own interpretation of God's purposes. If that is the case, then you have fallen into sin. Sin always tries to trap people through the mind. Man's greatest weakness is his mind.

¹⁵ Kincaid, "Justification by Faith in the Letters of Saint Paul: Keys to Interpretation. By Jean - Noël Aletti . Translated by Peggy Manning Meyer"; Seifrid, *Justif. by Faith*.

¹⁶ Ziesler, "Justification by Faith in the Light of the 'New Perspective' on Paul."

¹⁷ Ladd, *Teologi Perjanjian Baru 1*; Geoffrey Turner, "Judgment and Justification in Early Judaism and the Apostle Paul. By Chris VanLandingham," *The Heythrop Journal* 50, no. 6 (November 2009): 1028–1029, https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-2265.2009.00523_26.x.

¹⁸ Charles H. Cosgrove, "Justification in Paul: A Linguistic and Theological Reflection," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 106, no. 4 (December 1987): 653, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3260825?origin=crossref>; Ziesler, "Justification by Faith in the Light of the 'New Perspective' on Paul."

¹⁹ Chris Bruno, "Faith, Works and Justification," *Outreach Magazine* (Colorado Springs, CO, September 2019), <https://outreachmagazine.com/resources/books/theology/46516-faith-works-and-justification.html>.

Grace

Grace cannot be obtained from parents or families even from living partners though. This kind of love is only found in Jesus Christ who is willing to empty himself, take the appearance of a servant and become the same as humans and in a state of humans he has humbled himself and obeyed to death on the cross (fil. 2: 5- 7). Grace is only sourced from God. His love is great for humans (John 3: 16). Grace is divine love that is agape, perfect and does not demand even without limits. The role of grace becomes clear to humans in the holy book that reveals that the sin and all human depravity bears and makes humans right, because they respond to the greatest work of God via faith.

Justification according to Paul's observation is fixed. A New Testament assessed that the apostle Paul made faith as the entry point of delegation of the divine blessing, namely true justification. Based on this observation, it becomes clear that faith is a condition needed to be justified before God. Fisuits can be described as an action where sinners who are not properly justified before God who is holy and fair. The main needs of people who are not true are truth. This truth, is provided by Christ to believing or believing sinners. Protestant theology recognizes that faith is a tool or means that causes justification. Catholic Rome theology is a little different. They accept that justification based on faith, but denies that justification is only based on faith.²⁰

In other words, good deeds need to be added to be justified. The Apostle Paul has a fairly congrasid understanding of faith. On several occasions when he poured the questioning fruit, faith was always an important theme. In 2 Corinthians 5: 7, "Because our life is life because of believing, not because of seeing." In other versions say for we walk by faith, not by sight (in Holy Bible). The free translation of the text is: because of our trip with faith, not with vision.

Paul is aware of definitely that to walk (living) with no sight of faith. But when walking (living) with faith we do not need to see. Rationally this is of course contrary to human thinking patterns in general. Modern Age human mandar, believes after seeing. In the Bible the sequence is reversed, believing first then seeing something behind it. Christianity with faith must penetrate this adult paradigm that depends on the rationalist element.

True justification is delegated to each individual who has a substance, the existence of faith in the right person is Jesus Christ the only savior for the penalizing the sins of mankind. Faith enables someone to achieve a higher level and possible things for God will be possible for those who believe. As Christians in their lives must have a divine character, and grow a new temperament who wants to believe in God and His Word without demanding evidence.²¹

Justification because faith reveals the core of the gospel. This noble truth is a driving force of reform. Because of this important doctrine of all the other Christian doctrines become harmonious. Luther said the fall of the church depends on the doctrine.²² Safety becomes Ephetf for humans if accepted in faith. Therefore, Paul strictly said that humans are justified by faith. It can not be said that the faith that one rescue, but must be realized for sure that the saving is God himself.

God's work is effective if it is responded to by faith. Of course this is, opposite the law and human effort. Furthermore, Paul said in Ephesians 2: 8-9 Safety is only because of the grace (*Sola Gracia*), with His mercy we are saved not by human efforts but God's actions actively in lifting human

²⁰ Cosgrove, "Justification in Paul: A Linguistic and Theological Reflection"; Bruno, "Faith, Works and Justification."

²¹ Bruno, "Faith, Works and Justification"; Ziesler, "Justification by Faith in the Light of the 'New Perspective' on Paul"; Seifrid, "Justification by Faith' and Paul's Conversion."

²² G. Raymond Carlson, *Surat Roma* (Malang: Yayasan Gandum Mas, 2002), 40.

life from mud sin (the total depravity). Faith that really does not care about feelings. He took and hoped for the Word of God completely.²³

People who believe in it gets certainty. The righteous will live by faith, justification is obtained from the truth that God has prepared and who is only acceptable by faith. Humans need the truth and this is only obtained through the gospel of God's power that brings salvation. Only by one's faith becomes true that is justified and the truth that has been accepted should continue to take place in faith and will end in faith. The eternal heaven is uncertain because of the sins he has committed, and sin continues to actively offer his life to eternal death, but thanks to God who gives his Son, who is single and the first who is beloved in Him, God receives sinners and therefore abolishes sin because of faith.²⁴

Paul approached all the problems of Jewish corners, but also Jews. The exclusive thought of the Jews as the elect is not immediately the true justification in the hands means there is no doubt. That is why Paul wants to straighten the subdivided thoughts of such a sort of voice of the truth that faith in Christ Jesus who was born in Humah Bethlehem through the virgin of Mary and from the descendants of Judah justification was paid. A book of the book named Bezt commented in his thesis, "Jews even though they have salvation as a chosen nation, but without faith in Jesus Christ can not be saved. They are also only saved because of faith in Christ."²⁵ So the knot of safety by Christ is not only exclusive to certain individuals or certain nations but for all people. Faith is not a price of justification, but is a means to obtain justification. It is clear that both godly people during the Old Testament and Saleh in the New Testament period need to justification from God.

Conclusion

The philosophy of life and the service of the apostle Paul is that the policy of justification is not obedience to the law, but the death of Christ in Kalvari. In other words, the absolute justification can only be obtained based on faith in Christ. His death is a manifestation of the highest (infinite) of the sinner for sinners (Rom. 5:9). This philosophy that led to contradiction between Paul's teachings and Jewish thoughts. This philosophy that led to contradiction between Paul's teachings and Jewish thoughts. Paul considers that the law can only be obtained through the perfect obedience to his demands, because it is not the one who hears the true law before Allah, but the person who does the law will be allowed (Rom.2: 13).

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²³ Thomas R. Schreiner, "Justification by Works and Sola Fide," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 19, no. 4 (2015): 48–49, galaxie.com/article/sbjt19-4-03.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 46–51.

²⁵ Turner, "Judgment and Justification in Early Judaism and the Apostle Paul. By Chris VanLandingham"; Tom Jacobs, *Paulus: Hidup, Karya Dan Teologinya* (Jakarta: Kanisius dan BPK Gunung Mulia, 1993).

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