

# Faith Alone

Sunday, October 22, 2023

## Sola Fide: Recovery or Innovation?

### Introduction

1. The Sufficient Testimony of Justification by Faith from Scripture
  - a. The Nature of Justification:
    - i. Justification is forensic (Rom. 8:33-34).
    - ii. Justification is declarative (1 Tim 3:16; 1 Cor. 4:3-4).
    - iii. Justification involves an "alien" righteousness (Phil 3:8-9)
    - iv. Justification is the imputation of God's righteousness to our account (2 Cor. 5:21; Phil 3:7-9; Rom. 4:3).
  - b. The Nature of Faith (Phil 3:7-9; Rom. 4).
    - i. Faith is a gift not a work. (Rom. 3:22-24; Eph. 2:8).
    - ii. Faith is knowing, confident, assurance and entrustment of oneself to the truth. (Heb. 11:1)
    - iii. Faith is *evidenced* by the action it takes (Eph. 2:8-10; James 2:14-26).
2. The Supporting Testimony of Justification by Faith from Church History:

### **Clement of Rome (~100 AD)**

And so we, having been called through his will in Christ Jesus, are **not justified** through ourselves or through our own wisdom or understanding or piety, **or works** that we have done in holiness of heart, **but through faith** by which the Almighty God **has justified** all who have existed from the beginning; to whom be the glory for ever and ever, Amen.

-Clement of Rome, *Epistle to the Corinthians* 32.4

### **Origen (182-254 AD) on Romans 3:28:**

"He is saying that the justification of faith alone suffices, so that the one who only believes is justified even if he has not accomplished a single work."--Origen, *Commentary on Romans*. 3.9

### **Hilary of Poitiers (300-368):**

"Wages cannot be considered a gift, because they are due to work, but God has given free grace to all men by the justification of faith." -- Hilary of Poitiers, *Commentary on Mt. 20.7*

### **Ambrose (337-397):**

"It is not because of your efforts, but because of the grace of Christ. 'By grace you are saved,' says the apostle. Therefore, it is not a matter of arrogance, but faith." --Ambrose, *Jac. 2.2.9*

**Ambrosiaster (337-397) on Romans 3:24:**

"They are justified freely because, while doing nothing or providing any repayment, they are justified by faith alone as a gift of God."

--Ambrosiaster, *Ad Rom.* 3:27

**John Chrysostom (347-407) on Acts 15:9:**

"From faith alone, he says, they obtained the same gifts [the Jews]. This is also as a lesson to those [objectors]; this is able to teach them that faith alone is necessary, and not works or circumcision.

**John Chrysostom (347-407) on Romans 5:1-2:**

"He died for us, and further reconciled us, and brought us to Himself, and gave us grace unspeakable. But we brought **faith only** as our contribution."

**Justin Martyr (100-165):**

"For Abraham was declared to be righteous, not on account of circumcision, but on account of faith..."

**Irenaeus of Lyons (130-202)**

"All who, following the example of his faith [Abraham's], trust in God, should be saved...For he learned from the Word of the Lord, and believed Him; wherefore it was **accounted** to him by the Lord for righteousness. For faith towards God justifies a man."

**John Chrysostom on Abraham:**

"The patriarch Abraham himself before receiving circumcision had been declared righteousness on the score of faith alone."

**Chrysostom on Forensic Nature of Justification:**

"What does the word 'justified' mean? It means, that if there could be a trial and an examination of the things God had done for the Jews, and of what had been done on their part toward him, the victory would be with God, and all the right on his side."

**Chrysostom on Romans 8:33-34:**

"Paul does not say it is God who forgave our sins, but what is much greater, 'It is God who justifies.' For when the Judge's sentence declares us just – and he is a Judge such as the one we have here —what can the accuser say? And so, we should not be afraid of trials either, because God is for us and has shown he is for us by what he has done. Nor should we fear Jewish triflings [about the law], for he has both elected and justified us."

**Polycarp (69-160) on Justification differing from Sanctification:**

"I also rejoice because your firmly rooted faith, renowned from the earliest times, still perseveres and bears fruit to our Lord Jesus Christ,...knowing that by grace you have been saved, not because of works, but by the will of God through Jesus Christ."

**Ignatius of Antioch (ca. 35-110 AD):**

"None of these things escapes your notice, if you have perfect faith and love toward Jesus Christ. For these are the beginning and the end of life: faith is the beginning and love is the end...The tree is known by its fruit; thus those who profess to be Christ's will be recognized by their actions."

**Origen:**

And this faith, when it has been justified, is firmly embedded in the soil of the soul like a root that has received rain, so that when it begins to be cultivated by God's law, branches arise from it that bring forth the fruit of works. The root of righteousness, therefore does not grow out of the works, but rather the fruit of works grows out of the root of righteousness, that root, of course of righteousness that God also credits even apart from works."

**Justin Martyr:**

"Let those who are not found living as He taught, be understood to be no Christians, even though they profess with the lip the precepts of Christ; for not those who make profession, but those who do the works, shall be saved."

**Origen:**

"If we have risen together with Christ, who is our justification, and we now walk in newness of life and live according to righteousness, then Christ has risen for the purpose of our justification. But if we have not yet cast off the old man with all his works but instead live in unrighteousness, I dare to suggest that Christ has not risen for our justification, nor has he been sacrificed for our sins."

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