

Peace with God

This is what may be called your **justification**, or **righteousness**. This begins your salvation; or to put it another way, this is your first **salvation**. By responding in humility to God's grace and forgiveness, believing in Jesus as your redeemer and savior, you are directing your faith toward God and His instruction and guidance. This means you have been given authority to become children of God. And the very first application for that instruction is how to be in, or restore, **right relationship** with Him. Some people like to describe "righteousness" as being in **right-standing** with God. The Hebrew words Tzedek and Tzedakah carry the idea of conformity with God's claim of higher authority, His commands; of accepting God's instruction and direction in one's life and not deviating from His moral and ethical standards. The Greek word in Scripture is Dikahyossunay, and carries the same ideas. This is being **righteous** or **just**.

Peace with God is the same as being considered righteous. One can see in the Old Testament that Adam and Eve were "born" or created **righteous** by virtue of never having sinned. They were creatures pure and unpolluted, in fellowship with God. But they were "born" or created with the ability to sin, also known as free will. When they did sin, blood sacrifice was introduced: Genesis 3:21 states: *And YHVH Elohim made to the man and to his wife covers of hide and clothed them*. So, God made clothing from animal skins to cover their "shame". This was total mercy and grace, but it also established a key precedent or model. An animal was slaughtered (instead of them) in the presence of Adam and Eve in order to show them the **consequence** of their rebellion, the **cost** of their forgiveness, and the **way** to repent, repeat and stay in fellowship with God. Giving the ancient believers this system for **justification**, this system of being forgiven and maintaining fellowship, is an act of grace or unmerited favor from God. In the same way, and from the same model, Jesus Christ, God's "only begotten Son", has now become our "blood sacrifice", our "righteousness" and means of justification before God; and permanently, too. Today we no longer have to repeatedly go to the altar and sacrifice animals, thank heaven!

However, in order for this system to be effectual for the humans, they must first accept and believe the **judgment and consequence** from God (that they rebelled or disobeyed and rebellion causes death / separation from God), and they must accept the **cost** and believe the **way** God establishes for the forgiveness and restoration of fellowship ("and without the shedding of blood there is no remission or forgiveness of sin" Heb.9:22), and they must do this according to God's example and instruction (acknowledge God's authority; confess the sin to God; repent of the sin; shed the blood). For us now, it is through this paradigm, made perfect through Jesus Christ, the initiation of God's sovereign and universal grace, that one **is saved** from past sins, forgiven, justified before God and prepared to be called to walk **with** Him (see Hebrews 9:15; Gen.6:8; 17:1-2; Job 1:1).