

Key words in Romans

Justification: Greek *dikaiosis* — 4:25; 5:18 — derived from the Greek verb *dikaio*, meaning “to acquit” or “to declare righteous,” used by Paul in 4:2, 5; 5:1. It is a legal term used of a favorable verdict in a trial. The word depicts a courtroom setting, with God presiding as the Judge, determining the faithfulness of each person to the law. In the first section of Romans, Paul makes it clear that no one can withstand God’s judgment (3:9-20). The law was not given to justify sinners but to expose their sin. To remedy this deplorable situation, God sent His Son to die for our sins in our place. When we believe in Jesus, God imputes His righteousness to us, and we are declared righteous before God. IN this way, God demonstrates that He is both a righteous judge and the One who declares us righteous, our justifier (3:26).

Reconciliation: Greek *katallage* — 5:11; 11:15 — basically means “change” or “exchange.” In the context of relationships between people, the term implies a change an attitude on the part of both individuals, a change from enmity to friendship. When used to describe the relationship existing between God and a person, the term implies the change of attitude on the part of both a person and God. The need for change in the sinful ways of a human being is obvious, but some argue that no change is needed on the part of God. Yet inherent in the doctrine of justification is the changed attitude of GOd toward the sinner. God declares a person who was formerly His enemy to be righteous before Him.

Hope: Greek *elpis* — 4:18; 5:2; 8:20, 24; 12:12; 15:4, 13 — denote “confident expectation” or “anticipation,” not “wishful thinking “ as in common parlance. The use of the word hope in this context is unusual and ironic, for it suggests that the Gentiles, who know nothing or little about the Messiah, were anticipating His coming. However, we need only think of Cornelius (Acts 10) to realize that some Gentiles had anticipated the coming of the Jewish Messiah. Jesus was sent not only for the salvation of the Jews, but also for the Gentiles. Sine God is the Author of our salvation, we can call Him the God of hope for He has given us hope (15:13).

Law: Greek *nomos* — 2:12, 27; 3:27; 4:15; 7:1, 7, 23; 9:31; 13:10 — means an inward principle of action, either good or evil, operating with the regularity of a law. The term also designates a standard for a person’s life. The apostle Paul described three such laws. The first is called “the law of sin” which was operating through his flesh, causing him to sin. Paul, like all others believers, needed another law to overcome “the law of sin.” This is “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus,” which makes us “free from the law of sin and death” (8:2). By following this “law,” believers can actually fulfill the righteous requirements of “God’s law” (8:4). God’s law is the standard for human action that corresponds to the righteous nature of God.