



**A Systematic Overview of Objective & Subjective Justification**

|                       | <u>Objective Justification</u>   | <u>Subjective Justification</u>  |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| <b>Definition</b>     | Describes the extent of Christ’s saving work. By His holy life, death, and resurrection, Jesus has atoned for the sin of the whole world. Τετέλεσται, “It is finished” (Jn. 19:30).  | When an individual receives the objective work of Christ by faith delivered by the Holy Spirit through the Word, Baptism, Absolution, and the Lord’s Supper.   |
| <b>Maintains</b>      | Grace alone.   | Faith alone.   |
| <b>Scriptures</b>     | <p><b>John 1:29</b> – The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who <u>takes away the sin of the world!</u>”</p> <p><b>Romans 5:18</b> – Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so <u>one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.</u></p> <p><b>1 John 2:2</b> – He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also <u>for the sins of the whole world.</u></p> <p><b>Titus 2:11</b> – For the grace of God has appeared, <u>bringing salvation for all people.</u></p> | <p><b>Habakkuk 2:4b</b> – the righteous <u>shall live by his faith.</u></p> <p><b>John 3:16</b> – For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that <u>whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.</u></p> <p><b>Acts 2:38</b> –And Peter said to them, “<u>Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.</u>”</p> <p><b>Romans 4:5</b> – And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, <u>his faith is counted as righteousness.</u></p> |
| <b>Results</b>        | Gospel proclamation to all nations.  | Believers from all nations.  |
| <b>Possible error</b> | Universalism.  | Limited atonement.   |

“[W]e believe, teach, and confess that the entire obedience of Christ’s entire person (which He has offered to the Father for us, even to His most humiliating death on the cross) is credited to us for righteousness.... As mentioned above, the obedience not only of one nature, but of the entire person, is a complete satisfaction and atonement for the human race. By this obedience God’s eternal, unchangeable righteousness, revealed in the Law, has been satisfied. So our righteousness benefits us before God and is revealed in the Gospel. Faith relies on this before God, which God credits to faith, as it is written [Ro. 5:19; 1 Jn. 1:7; Hab. 2:4].” (FC SD III. 56-57)

### **An Exegetical Overview of Objective & Subjective Justification**

**Romans 5:18–19** – Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous.

**2 Corinthians 5:17–21** – Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

**Colossians 2:11–14** – In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

**1 Peter 3:18–21** – For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, because they formerly did not obey, when God’s patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

**Matthew 13:47–50** – “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

## The Practical Implications of Objective & Subjective Justification

### **Romans 1:16–17**

<sup>16</sup> For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. <sup>17</sup> For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”

### **Romans 10:9–18**

<sup>9</sup> [I]f you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup> For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. <sup>11</sup> For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.” <sup>12</sup> For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. <sup>13</sup> For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

<sup>14</sup> How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? <sup>15</sup> And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” <sup>16</sup> But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” <sup>17</sup> So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

<sup>18</sup> But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have, for  
“Their voice has gone out to all the earth,  
and their words to the ends of the world.”