

Question 39: What does it mean to be justified before God?

Short answer

To be justified means that God declares us “righteous” and completely forgives us because Jesus took our guilt and gives us His righteousness.

Explanation

“Justification” is a word from the courtroom: imagine a judge who must decide whether a person is guilty or innocent. Before God, because of sin, we are guilty. But God did something incredible: through Jesus, He can forgive us and declare us righteous.

How does it happen?

1. Jesus takes our guilt

On the cross, Jesus bears the punishment for sin in our place.

2. God truly forgives us

It is not a “halfway” forgiveness. God wipes away the guilt and no longer holds it against us.

3. God counts us righteous because of Jesus

Not because we are perfect, but because God credits Jesus’ righteousness to us. It is as if God says, “You belong to Jesus, so I see you through what Jesus has done.”

Justification does not mean we become immediately perfect in our behavior. That is growth (sanctification). Justification is the change of our “status”: from enemies to forgiven, from guilty to accepted, from far away to children.

Reference verses

- **Romans 5:1** — “Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God...”
- **2 Corinthians 5:21** — “...so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.”
- **Romans 3:23–24** — “...all have sinned... and are justified freely by His grace...”

In simple words

To be justified means God forgives you and accepts you as if you were “right” before Him, not because you are perfect, but because Jesus took your guilt and gave you His “goodness.” So you can have peace with God.

1 mini practical example

Imagine you did something wrong, and a friend who loves you very, very much feels sorry for you and decides to take the blame instead of you—this is what Jesus did for us when He came to earth and took all our guilt upon Himself through the crucifixion.