

**Am I**  
Catholic,  
Protestant, or  
Christian?

THE **New**  
**American**  
**Bible**

FOR CATHOLICS

Is the Good News,  
that all God's  
people are freely  
justified by his  
grace received  
through faith, in the  
Catholic Bible?



the law who are just in the sight of God; it is those who keep it who will be declared just.<sup>a</sup> 14 When Gentiles who do not have the law keep it as by instinct, these men although without the law serve as a law for themselves. 15 They show that the demands of the law are written in their hearts. Their conscience bears witness together with that law, and their thoughts will accuse or defend them. 16 On the day when, in accordance with the gospel I preach, God will pass judgment on the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.

**Judgment by the Mosaic Law.** 17 Let us suppose you bear the name of "Jew" and rely firmly on the law and pride yourself on God. 18 Instructed by the law, you know his will and are able to make sound judgments on disputed points. 19 You feel certain that you can guide the blind and enlighten those in darkness, 20 that you can discipline the foolish and teach the simple, because in the law you have at hand a clear pattern of knowledge and truth. 21 Now then, teacher of others, are you failing to teach yourself? You who preach against stealing, do you steal?<sup>b</sup> 22 You who forbid adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? 23 You who pride yourself on the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law? 24 As Scripture says, "On your account the name of God is held in contempt among the Gentiles."<sup>c</sup>

25 Circumcision, to be sure, has value if you observe the law, but if you break it you might as well be uncircumcised! 26 Again, if an uncircumcised person keeps the precepts of the law, will he not be considered circumcised? 27 If a man who is uncircumcised keeps the law, he will pass judgment on you who, with your written law and circumcision, break it. 28 Appearance does not make a Jew. True circumcision is not a sign in the flesh. 29 He is a real Jew who is one inwardly, and true circumcision is of the heart; its source is the spirit, not the letter. Such a one receives his praise, not from men, but from God.<sup>d</sup>

### CHAPTER 3

**Answers to Objections.** 1 What is the advantage, then, of being a Jew, and what value is there in circumcision? 2 The answer is, much in every respect. First of

all, the Jews were entrusted with the words of God. 3 You may ask, what if some of them have not believed? Will not their unbelief put an end to God's faithfulness?<sup>e</sup> 4 Of course not! God must be proved true even though every man be proved a liar, so that, as Scripture says,

"You shall be vindicated in what you say, and win out when you are judged."<sup>f</sup>

5 But if our wrongdoing provides proof of God's justice, what are we to say? "Is not God unjust when he inflicts punishment?"<sup>g</sup> (I speak in a merely human way.) 6 Assuredly not! If that were so, how could God judge the world? 7 Another question: If my falsehood brings to light God's truth and thus promotes his glory, why must I be condemned as a sinner? 8 Or why may we not do evil that good may come of it? This is the very thing that some slanderously accuse us of teaching; but they will get what they deserve.<sup>h</sup>

**Universal Bondage of Sin.** 9 Well, then, do we find ourselves in a position of superiority? Not entirely. We have already brought the charge against Jews and Greeks alike that they are under the domination of sin.<sup>i</sup> 10 It is as Scripture says:

"There is no just man, not even one; 11 there is no one who understands, no one in search of God.<sup>j</sup>

12 All have taken the wrong course, all alike have become worthless; not one of them acts uprightly, no, not one.

13 Their throats are open tombs; they use their tongues to deceive; The venom of asps lies behind their lips.<sup>k</sup>

14 Their mouths are full of curses and bitterness.<sup>l</sup>

15 Swiftly run their feet to shed blood;<sup>m</sup> 16 ruin and misery strew their course.

17 The path of peace is unknown to them; 18 the fear of God is not before their eyes."<sup>n</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Lk 8, 21; Jas 1, 22-25.

<sup>b</sup> Ps 50, 16-21; Mt 23, 31.

<sup>c</sup> Is 52, 5; Ez 36, 20; 1 Cor 7, 19; Gal 5, 3.

<sup>d</sup> Jer 9, 24f.

<sup>e</sup> 1 Jer 4, 4.

<sup>f</sup> U Ps 89, 30-37; 2 Tm

2, 13.

<sup>v</sup> Ps 116, 11.

<sup>w</sup> Jb 34, 12-17.

<sup>x</sup> Rom 6, 1-15.

<sup>y</sup> Sir 8, 5.

<sup>z</sup> Ps 14, 1ff.

<sup>aa</sup> Ps 5, 10; 140, 4.

<sup>ab</sup> Ps 10, 7.

<sup>ac</sup> Is 59, 7; Prv 1, 16

<sup>ad</sup> Ps 36, 2.

19 We know that everything the law says is addressed to those who are under its authority. This means that every mouth is silenced and the whole world stands convicted before God, 20 since no one will be justified in God's sight through observance of the law; the law does nothing but point out what is sinful.<sup>a</sup>

### III: SALVATION THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST

**Justice Apart from the Law.** \* 21 But now the justice of God has been manifested apart from the law, even though both law and prophets bear witness to it—22 that justice of God which works through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. 23 All men have sinned and are deprived of the glory of God. 24 All men are now undeservedly justified by the gift of God, through the redemption wrought in Christ Jesus.<sup>b</sup> 25 Through his blood, God made him the means of expiation for all who believe.<sup>c</sup> He did so to manifest his own justice, for the sake of remitting sins committed in the past—26 to manifest his justice in the present, by way of forbearance, so that he might be just and might justify those who believe in Jesus.

27 What occasion is there then for boasting? It is ruled out. By what law, the law of works? Not at all! By the law of faith.<sup>d</sup> 28 For we hold that a man is justified by faith.<sup>e</sup> 29 Does God belong to the Jews alone? Is he not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles too. 30 It is the same God who justifies the circumcised and the uncircumcised on the basis of faith. 31 Are we then abolishing the law by means of faith? Not at all! On the contrary, we are confirming the law.<sup>f</sup>

### CHAPTER 4

**Abraham Justified by Faith.** \* 1 What, then, shall we say of Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh?<sup>a</sup> 2 Certainly if Abraham was justified by his deeds he has grounds for boasting, but not in God's view; 3 for what does Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as justice."<sup>b</sup> 4 Now, when a man works, his wages are not regarded as a favor but as his due. 5 But when a man does nothing, yet believes in him who justifies the sinful, his faith is credited as justice. 6 Thus

David congratulates the man to whom God credits justice without requiring deeds:

7 "Blest are they whose iniquities are forgiven, whose sins are covered over."

8 Blest is the man to whom the Lord imputes no guilt."

9 Does this blessedness apply only to the circumcised, or to the uncircumcised as well? For we say that Abraham's faith was "credited as justice." 10 What were the circumstances in which it was credited? Was it after he was circumcised or before? It was before. 11 In fact, he received the sign of circumcision as a seal attesting to the justice received through faith while he was still uncircumcised. Thus he was to be the father of all the uncircumcised who believe, so that for them too faith might be credited as justice,<sup>c</sup> 12 as well as the father of those circumcised who are not merely so but who follow the path of faith which Abraham walked while still uncircumcised.

**Inheritance through Faith.** 13 Certainly the promise made to Abraham and his descendants that they would inherit the world did not depend on the law; it was made in view of the justice that comes from faith.<sup>d</sup> 14 If only those who observe the law are heirs, then faith becomes an empty word and the promise loses its meaning. 15 Indeed, the law serves only to bring on wrath, for where there is no law there is no transgression.<sup>e</sup> 16 Hence, all depends on faith, everything is grace. Thus the promise holds true for all Abraham's descendants, not only for those who have

<sup>a</sup> Rom 7, 7.

<sup>b</sup> Rom 5, 2.

<sup>c</sup> Acts 17, 30; 1 Jn 4,

10.

<sup>d</sup> 1 Cor 1, 29.

<sup>e</sup> Rom 5, 1.

<sup>f</sup> Mt 5, 17.

<sup>g</sup> Gal 3, 6-9.

<sup>h</sup> Gn 15, 6; Jas 2, 14-

20-24.

<sup>i</sup> Ps 32, 1f.

<sup>j</sup> Gn 17, 10f.

<sup>k</sup> Gal 3, 16ff.

<sup>l</sup> Rom 5, 13.

3, 21-31: The justice of God is his mercy whereby he declares guilty man innocent and makes him so. He does this, not as a result of the law but apart from it (v 21), not because of any merit of man, but through forgiveness of his sins (v 24), in virtue of the redemption wrought in Christ Jesus for all who believe (22, 24f). No man can boast of his own holiness, since it is God's free gift (v 27), both to the Jew who practices circumcision out of faith, and to the Gentile who accepts faith without the Old Testament religious culture symbolized by circumcision (29f).

3, 31: We are confirming the law: placing it in its proper perspective. The Old Testament law, unable to effect salvation, was observed out of the motive of faith. Now, through the revelation of Christ, the importance of faith is manifest.

4, 1-25: This is an expanded treatment of the significance of Abraham's faith, which Paul discusses in Gal 3, 6-18; see notes there.

The Good News is here.



his adopted sons—such was his will and pleasure—6 that all might praise the glorious favor he has bestowed on us in his beloved.

**Fulfillment through Christ.** 7 It is in Christ and through his blood that we have been redeemed and our sins forgiven, 8 so immeasurably generous is God's favor to us. 9 God has given us the wisdom to understand fully the mystery, the plan he was pleased to decree in Christ, 10 to be carried out in the fullness of time: namely, to bring all things in the heavens and on earth into one under Christ's headship.

**Blessing for Jew and Gentile.** 11 In him we were chosen; for in the decree of God, who administers everything according to his will and counsel, 12 we were predestined to praise his glory by being the first to hope in Christ. 13 In him you too were chosen; when you heard the glad tidings of salvation, the word of truth, and believed in it, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit who had been promised. 14 He is the pledge of our inheritance, the first payment against the full redemption of a people God has made his own, to praise his glory.

**Fulfillment in the Church.** 15 For my part, from the time I first heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the members of the church, 16 I have never stopped thanking God for you and recommending you in my prayers. 17 May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, grant you a spirit of wisdom and insight to know him clearly. 18 May he enlighten your innermost vision that you may know the great hope to which he has called you, the wealth of his glorious heritage to be distributed among the members of the church, 19 and the immeasurable scope of his power in us who believe. It is like the strength 20 he showed in raising Christ from the dead and seating him at his right hand in heaven, 21 high above every principality, power, virtue, and domination, and every name that can be given in this age or in the age to come.

22 He has put all things under Christ's feet and has made him, thus exalted, head of the church, 23 which is his body: the

fullness of him who fills the universe in all its parts.

CHAPTER 2

**Generosity of God's Plan.** \* 1 You were dead because of your sins and offenses, 2 as you gave allegiance to the present age and to the prince of the air, that spirit who is even now at work among the rebellious. 3 All of us were once of their company; we lived at the level of the flesh, following every whim and fancy, and so by nature deserved God's wrath like the rest. 4 But God is rich in mercy; because of his great love for us 5 he brought us to life with Christ when we were dead in sin. By this favor you were saved. 6 Both with and in Christ Jesus he raised us up and gave us a place in the heavens, 7 that in the ages to come he might display the great wealth of his favor, manifested by his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 8 I repeat, it is owing to his favor that salvation is yours through faith. This is not your own doing, it is God's gift; 9 neither is it a reward for anything you have accomplished, so let no one pride himself on it. 10 We are truly his handiwork, created

- e Jn 1, 12; 1 Jn 3, 1.
- f Mt 3, 17.
- g Eph 2, 7; Rom 3, 24; Col 1, 14, 20.
- h Col 1, 9.
- i Eph 3, 9; Rom 16, 25.
- j Is 46, 10; Rom 8, 28; Col 1, 12; Ev 4, 13.
- k
- l 2 Cor 1, 22; 5, 5.
- m Col 1, 3f; Philm 4f.
- n Eph 3, 14, 16; 1 Jn 5, 20.
- o 2 Cor 13, 4; Col 1, 11.
- p Ps 110, 1.
- q Phil 2, 9; 1 Pt 3, 22.
- r Ps 8, 6; Mt 28, 18; Col 1, 18.
- s Eph 4, 10; Rom 12, 5; 1 Cor 12, 27; Col 1, 19.
- t Col 1, 21; 2, 13.
- u Eph 6, 12; In 12, 31; w Rom 5, 6, 6, 10, Col 2, 13.
- x Rom 8, 10f; Phil 3, 20; Col 2, 12.
- y Gal 2, 16.
- z 1 Cor 1, 29.

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final rule of Christ (v 10). The Christian community has the initial understanding of the gifts God has so freely given to men for the sake of Christ (6.8f), which all humanity will eventually possess.

1, 15-23: Paul prays that the blessings of the faith imparted by God the Father (v 3) to the Ephesians will be strengthened in them through the message of the gospel (1, 17ff). Those blessings are to be measured by his power in establishing the sovereignty of Christ over all other creatures (1, 20f) and in appointing him head of the church (1, 22f). For the allusion to angelic spirits, see the note on Colossians 1, 15-20.

2, 1-10: The recipients of Paul's letter have experienced, in their redemption from sin, the effect of Christ's supremacy (1f), the power of which overcame the evil force of demons. (In Jewish thought these were considered to dwell in the air.) Both Jew and Gentile have experienced, through Christ, God's generosity, his free gift of salvation which already marks them for a heavenly destiny (3-6). In Christ, God reveals the wealth of his kindness (v 7), saving men through faith and not by any works of their own (8f). Christians are a newly created people in Christ, fashioned by God for a new life of goodness (v 10).

in Christ Jesus to lead the life of good deeds which God prepared for us in advance.

**All United in Christ.** \* 11 You men of Gentile stock—called "uncircumcised" by those who, in virtue of a hand-executed rite on their flesh, call themselves "circumcised"—12 remember that, in former times, you had no part in Christ and were excluded from the community of Israel. You were strangers to the covenant and its promise; you were without hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near through the blood of Christ. 14 It is he who is our peace, and who made the two of us one by breaking down the barrier of hostility that kept us apart. 15 In his own flesh he abolished the law with its commands and precepts, to create in himself one new man from us who had been two and to make peace, 16 reconciling both of us to God in one body through his cross, which put that enmity to death. 17 He came and "announced the good news of peace to you who were far off, and to those who were near"; 18 through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. 19 This means that you are strangers and aliens no longer. No, you are fellow citizens of the saints and members of the household of God. 20 You form a building which rises on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the capstone. 21 Through him the whole structure is fitted together and takes shape as a holy temple in the Lord; 22 in him you are being built into this temple, to become a dwelling place for God in the Spirit.

CHAPTER 3

**Commission to Preach God's Plan.** 2 I am sure you have heard of the ministry which God in his goodness gave me in your regard. 1 That is why to me, Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus\* on behalf of you Gentiles, 3 God's secret plan as I have briefly described it was revealed. 4 When you read what I have said, you will realize that I know what I am talking about in speaking of the mystery of Christ, 5 unknown to men in former ages but now revealed by the Spirit to the holy apostles and prophets. 6 It is no less than this: in Christ Jesus the Gentiles are now

co-heirs with the Jews, members of the same body and sharers of the promise through the preaching of the gospel.

**Mission to the Gentiles.** 7 Through the gift of God in his goodness bestowed on me by the exercise of his power, I became a minister of the gospel. 8 To me, the least of all believers, was given the grace to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ 9 and to enlighten all men on the mysterious design which for ages was hidden in God, the Creator of all. 10 Now, therefore, through the church, God's manifold wisdom is made known to the principalities and powers of heaven, 11 in accord with his age-old purpose, carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord. 12 In Christ and through faith in him we can speak freely to God, drawing near him with confidence. 13 Hence, I beg you not to be disheartened by the trials I endure for you; they are your glory.

- a 2 Cor 5, 17.
- b Rom 9, 4; Col 1, 21, 27.
- c Is 57, 19; Col 1, 20.
- d Gal 3, 28.
- e 2 Cor 5, 17; Col 2, 14.
- f Col 1, 20, 22.
- g Is 57, 19; Zec 9, 10.
- h Eph 3, 12.
- i Heb 12, 22f.
- j Is 28, 16; Rv 21, 14.
- k Col 2, 19; 1 Cor 3, 16.
- l 1 Pt 2, 5.
- m Phil 1, 7, 13; Col 1, 24-29; 2 Tm 2, 9.
- n Col 1, 26.
- o Col 1, 25, 29; 1 Thes 2, 4.
- p 1 Cor 15, 8f; Gal 1, 16; 2, 8.
- q Rom 16, 25; Col 1, 26f.
- r 1 Pt 1, 12.
- s Rom 5, 1f; Heb 4, 16.
- t Col 1, 22, 24; 2 Tm 1, 8.

2, 11-22: The Gentiles were without Israel's messianic expectation, without the various covenants God made with Israel, without hope of salvation and knowledge of the true God (11f); but through Christ, all these religious barriers between Jew and Gentile have been transcended (13f) by the abolition of the Mosaic covenant-law (v 15) for the sake of uniting Jew and Gentile into a single religious community (15ff), imbued with the same Holy Spirit and worshipping the same Father (v 18). The Gentiles are now within the pale of God's revelation (v 19) as it derives from the apostles, assisted by those endowed with the prophetic charism, the preachers of Christ (v 20; cf Acts 8, 4f; 1 Cor 12, 28). With Christ as the capstone (v 20), they are being built into the holy temple of God's people where the divine presence dwells (21f).

3, 1: A prisoner for Christ Jesus: see the Introduction. 3, 1-13: Paul reflects on his mission to the Gentiles. He alludes to his conversion and appointment to the apostolic office (2f) and observes that his own apostolic experience, as well as that of the other apostles and charismatic prophets in the church (4f), has deepened his understanding of God's plan of salvation in Christ. Paul is the special herald (v 7) of a new revelation to the world (v 6); that the divine plan includes the Gentiles in the spiritual benefits promised to Israel. Not only does he enjoy this unique apostolic role, but he also has been given the task of explaining to all men the divine plan of salvation (8f). Through the church, God's plan of salvation in Christ becomes manifest to angelic beings (v 10), a plan which God had kept hidden from all creatures (v 11). The fulfillment of the plan in Christ gives the whole church more confidence in God (v 12). The readers of this epistle are also encouraged to greater confidence despite Paul's imprisonment (v 13).



# Catechism of the Catholic Church

Is the Good News in  
Catholic Orthodoxy?



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[God] does not want each person to keep all the counsels, but only those appropriate to the diversity of persons, times, opportunities, and strengths, as charity requires; for it is charity, as queen of all virtues, all commandments, all counsels, and, in short, of all laws and all Christian actions, that gives to all of them their rank, order, time, and value.<sup>33</sup>

### IN BRIEF

- 1975 According to Scripture the Law is a fatherly instruction by God which prescribes for man the ways that lead to the promised beatitude, and proscribes the ways of evil.
- 1976 "Law is an ordinance of reason for the common good, promulgated by the one who is in charge of the community" (St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* I-II, 90, 4).
- 1977 Christ is the end of the law (cf. *Rom* 10:4); only he teaches and bestows the justice of God.
- 1978 The natural law is a participation in God's wisdom and goodness by man formed in the image of his Creator. It expresses the dignity of the human person and forms the basis of his fundamental rights and duties.
- 1979 The natural law is immutable, permanent throughout history. The rules that express it remain substantially valid. It is a necessary foundation for the erection of moral rules and civil law.
- 1980 The Old Law is the first stage of revealed law. Its moral prescriptions are summed up in the Ten Commandments.
- 1981 The Law of Moses contains many truths naturally accessible to reason. God has revealed them because men did not read them in their hearts.
- 1982 The Old Law is a preparation for the Gospel.
- 1983 The New Law is the grace of the Holy Spirit received by faith in Christ, operating through charity. It finds expression above all in the Lord's Sermon on the Mount and uses the sacraments to communicate grace to us.

33 St. Francis de Sales, *Love of God* 8, 6.

- 1984 The Law of the Gospel fulfills and surpasses the Old Law and brings it to perfection: its promises, through the Beatitudes of the Kingdom of heaven; its commandments, by reforming the heart, the root of human acts.
- 1985 The New Law is a law of love, a law of grace, a law of freedom.
- 1986 Besides its precepts the New Law includes the evangelical counsels. "The Church's holiness is fostered in a special way by the manifold counsels which the Lord proposes to his disciples in the Gospel" (*LG* 42 §2).

## ARTICLE 2

### GRACE AND JUSTIFICATION

#### I. JUSTIFICATION

1987 The grace of the Holy Spirit has the power to justify us, that is, to cleanse us from our sins and to communicate to us "the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ" and through Baptism.<sup>34</sup> 734

But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. For we know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves as dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.<sup>35</sup>

1988 Through the power of the Holy Spirit, by participating in Christ's Passion by dying to sin, and in His Resurrection by being born to a new life; we are members of His Body, which is His Church, branches grafted onto the vine which is himself.<sup>36</sup>

Adding anything to God's grace is not good news.

[God] gave himself to us through his Spirit. By the participation of the Spirit, we become communicants in the divine nature. . . . For this reason, those in whom the Spirit dwells are divinized.<sup>37</sup> 460

34 *Rom* 3:22; cf. 6:3-4.

35 *Rom* 6:8-11.

36 Cf. *1 Cor* 12; *Jn* 15:1-4.

37 St. Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 1, 24; PG 26, 585 and 588.



1989 The first work of the grace of the Holy Spirit is *conversion*, effecting justification in accordance with Jesus' proclamation at the beginning of the Gospel: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."<sup>38</sup> Moved by grace, man turns toward God and away from sin, thus accepting forgiveness and righteousness from on high. "Justification is not only the remission of sins, but also the sanctification and renewal of the interior man."<sup>39</sup>

1990 Justification *detaches man from sin* which contradicts the love of God, and purifies his heart of sin. Justification follows upon God's merciful initiative of offering forgiveness. It reconciles man with God. It frees from the enslavement to sin, and it heals.

1991 Justification is at the same time *the acceptance of God's righteousness* through faith in Jesus Christ. Righteousness (or "justice") here means the rectitude of divine love. With justification, faith, hope, and charity are poured into our hearts, and obedience to the divine will is granted us.

1992 Justification has been *merited for us by the Passion of Christ* who offered himself on the cross as a living victim, holy and pleasing to God, and whose blood has become the instrument of atonement for the sins of all men. Justification is conferred in Baptism, the sacrament of faith. It conforms us to the righteousness of God, who makes us inwardly just by the power of his mercy. Its purpose is the glory of God and of Christ, and the gift of eternal life.<sup>40</sup>

But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins; it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies him who has faith in Jesus.<sup>41</sup>

38 Mt 4:17.

39 Council of Trent (1547): DS 1528.

40 Cf. Council of Trent (1547): DS 1529.

41 Rom 3:21-26.

1993 Justification establishes *God's grace* in man's freedom. On man's part it is *the free assent* to the Word of God, which invites *man to cooperate*, and in the cooperation of charity with the prompting of the Holy Spirit who precedes and preserves his assent:

When God touches man's heart through the illumination of the Holy Spirit, **man himself is not inactive** while receiving that inspiration, since he could reject it; and yet, without God's grace, **he cannot by his own free will** move himself toward justice in God's sight.<sup>42</sup>

Denying the spiritual inactivity and deadness of man apart from grace is not good news.

Affirming the spiritual inactivity and deadness of man's will apart from grace is good news.

1994 Justification is the *most excellent work of God's love* made manifest in Christ Jesus and granted by the Holy Spirit. It is the opinion of St. Augustine that *"the justification of the elect is a greater work than the creation of the world"* because *"heaven and earth were created by the justification of the elect."* Justification of sinners surpasses the creation of the angels in justice, in that it bears witness to a greater mercy.

1995 The Holy Spirit is the master of the interior life. By giving birth to the "inner man,"<sup>44</sup> justification entails the *sanctification* of his whole being:

Just as you once yielded your members to impurity and to greater and greater iniquity, so now yield your members to righteousness for sanctification. . . . But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the return you get is sanctification and its end, eternal life.<sup>45</sup>

## II. GRACE

1996 Our justification comes from the grace of God. Grace is *favor, the free and undeserved help* that God gives us to respond to his call to become children of God, adoptive sons, partakers of the divine nature and of eternal life.<sup>46</sup>

1997 Grace is a *participation in the life of God*. It introduces us into the intimacy of Trinitarian life: by Baptism the Christian participates in the grace of Christ, the Head of his Body. As an "adopted

42 Council of Trent (1547): DS 1525.

43 St. Augustine, *In Jo. ev.* 72, 3: PL 35, 1823.

44 Cf. Rom 7:22; Eph 3:16.

45 Rom 6:19, 22.

46 Cf. Jn 1:12-18; 17:3; Rom 8:14-17; 2 Pet 1:3-4.

JOHN ELDREDGE

Is the Good News in the modern 'coffee table' Christian books of today?

EPIC

THE STORY GOD IS TELLING



For you made us only a little lower than God,  
and you crowned us with glory and honor.

(Psalm 8:3-5 NLT)

I daresay we've heard a bit about original sin, but not nearly enough about original glory, which comes *before* sin and is deeper to our nature. We were crowned with glory and honor. Why does a woman long to be beautiful? Why does a man hope to be found brave? Because we remember, if only faintly, that we were once more than we are now.

God creates us in his image, with powers like unto his own—the ability to reason, to create, to share intimacy, to know joy. He gives us laughter and wonder and imagination. And above all else, he endows us with that one quality for which he is most known.

#### THE GREATEST DIGNITY OF ALL

He enables us to love.

He gives us the greatest treasure in all creation: a heart. For he intends that we should be his intimate allies, to borrow Dan Allender's phrase, who join in the Sacred Circle of intimacy that is the core of the universe, to share in this great Romance.

Just as we have lost our wonder at the world around

us, we have forgotten what a treasure the human heart is. All of the happiness we have ever known and all of the happiness we hope to find is unreachable without a heart. You could not live or love or laugh or cry had God not given you a heart.

And with that heart comes something that just staggers me.

God gives us the freedom to reject him.

He gives to each of us a will of our own.

Good grief, *why?* He knows what free-willed creatures can do. He has already suffered one massive betrayal in the rebellion of the angels. He knows how we will use our freedom, what misery and suffering, what hell will be unleashed on earth because of our choices. *Why?* Is he out of his mind?

The answer is as simple and staggering as this: if you want a world where love is real, you must allow each person the freedom to choose.

Power can do everything but the most impor-

tant thing  
concentrat  
unlimit  
make yo  
ily, wor  
kill and then bury your closest friend or even

This is curious, even Catholic orthodoxy occasionally defines sinful man as dead and without a 'free' will capable of loving God, but this modern Protestant book promotes the 'free' will of man. This is not good news.

# John Eldredge

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

**John Eldredge** (b. June 6, 1960) is an author, counselor, and lecturer of Christianity.

After being involved in the Los Angeles drug culture and kicked out of high school, Eldredge was looking for a "worldview." After exploring other religions, Eastern mysticism, Lao-Tzu, and New Age spirituality, he discovered the writings of Francis Schaeffer, who he calls one of the best philosophers of the 20th century. Through Schaeffer, Eldredge came to Christ and later to the church. He eventually got a master's degree in counseling and practiced in Colorado Springs before working for Focus on the Family.

John received his undergraduate degree in theater from California Polytechnic University (Pomona) and his MA in biblical counseling from Colorado Christian University under the direction of Dr. Larry Crabb and Dr. Dan Allender. Prior to joining Focus on the Family in 1988, John served for five years on the staff of Sierra Madre Congregational Church in Southern California.

In July of 2000, John left Focus on the Family to launch Ransomed Heart Ministries, a ministry devoted to furthering the message of his book *The Sacred Romance*. A sought-after speaker, John travels extensively in the U.S. and abroad. John, his wife, Stasi, and their three sons live in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

## Criticism

Some of the self-affirming passages in his books have caused leaders in certain Evangelical churches to question the perspective that defines Eldredge's style. As an example Christianity Today quotes **Rut Etheridge III, a seminarian in the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America who finds Eldredge to have an "alarmingly unbiblical worldview"**.<sup>[1]</sup> (<http://ctlibrary.com/11237>)

## Authored books

- *The Sacred Romance* (Nelson Books, 1997)
- *Wild at Heart* (Nelson Books, 2001)
- *The Journey of Desire* (Nelson Books, 2001)
- *Waking the Dead* (Nelson Books, 2003)
- *Epic* (Nelson Books, 2004)
- *Captivating* (Nelson Books, 2005)
- *The Way of the Wild Heart* (Nelson Books, 2006)


Orthodox Protestantism has faithfully defended the Good News in the past, but sadly not all that call themselves Protestant today are faithful to the Good News. Many modern Protestants and Catholics are not even schooled in the supremacy of God's grace over every work of man.



## CHAPTER IX.

### *Of Free Will.*

- I. God hath endued the will of man with that natural liberty, that is neither forced, nor by any absolute necessity of nature determined to good or evil.
- II. Man, in his state of innocency, had freedom and power to will and to do that which is good and well-pleasing to God; but yet mutably, so that he might fall from it.
- III. Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.
- IV. When God converts a sinner and translates him into the state of grace, he freeth him from his natural bondage under sin, and, by his grace alone, enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good; yet so as that, by reason of his remaining corruption, he doth not perfectly, nor only, will that which is good, but doth also will that which is evil.
- V. The will of man is made perfectly and immutable free to good alone, in the state of glory only.



The Westminster Confession summarizes the generally accepted Orthodox Protestant view of God's grace and man's will. Some points above may be debated, but the essential point is undisputed; sinful man's will is not free, but in bondage to sin. Each individual sinful man can not and will not bow in faith and obedience to Jesus Christ apart from a special work of God's grace.

# THE BONDAGE OF THE WILL



## MARTIN LUTHER

Translated by  
J. I. Packer & O. R. Johnston

"This is the greatest piece of writing that came from Luther's pen. In its vigour of language, its profound theological grasp, and the grand sweep of its exposition, it stands unsurpassed

... Luther's writings.

Can Martin Luther add to our discussion?

—From the introduction by  
J. I. Packer  
and  
O. R. Johnston



The following letter to Erasmus summarizes Luther's passion for the Good News.

I.

## INTRODUCTION (W.A. 600-602)

*To the Venerable Master Erasmus of Rotterdam, Martin Luther wishes Grace and Peace in Christ.*

NOBODY expected, venerable Erasmus, that I should take so long to answer your Diatribe on 'Free-will'. Nor is it like me to have delayed; for thus far I have shown myself as one who has gladly seized all such opportunities for writing and, indeed, gone out of his way to look for them. Some, perhaps, will wonder at this new and strange forbearance—or fright!—on Luther's part. His opponents crow over him and write to congratulate Erasmus on conquering him; they sing their champion's triumph-song—'So at last that Maccabaeus, that most obstinate assertor, has met his match, and dares not open his mouth against him!'—and Luther does not stir! Well, I do not blame them for their surprise; I yield you the palm—an unprecedented thing for me!—not merely for far outstripping me in literary power and intellectual ability (we all grant you that as your due, the more so since I am an uncivilized fellow who has lived his life in the backwoods<sup>1</sup>), but also because you checked my zeal for battle and drained my strength before the fight began. That was due to two things: first, your skill in debate—for you discuss the matter throughout with quite remarkable restraint, by which you have prevented my wrath waxing hot against you; and, second, the fact that Fortune (or Chance, or Fate, if you prefer) has led you to say nothing at all on this whole vast topic that has not been said before, and to say so much less about, and assign so much more to, 'free-will' than the Sophists<sup>2</sup> did before you (I shall say more about that later), that it seemed a complete waste of time to reply to your arguments. I have already myself refuted them over and over again, and Philip Melancthon, in his unsurpassed volume on

<sup>1</sup> *barbarus in barbarie semper versatus.*

<sup>2</sup> i.e. the Scholastics.

the doctrines of theology,<sup>1</sup> has trampled them in the dust. That book of his, to my mind, deserves not merely to live as long as books are read, but to take its place in the Church's canon; whereas your book, by comparison, struck me as so worthless and poor that my heart went out to you for having defiled your lovely, brilliant flow of language with such vile stuff. I thought it outrageous to convey material of so low a quality in the trappings of such rare eloquence; it is like using gold or silver dishes to carry garden rubbish or dung. You seem to have had more than an inkling of this yourself, for you were reluctant to undertake the task of writing; because, I suppose, your conscience warned you that, whatever literary resources you might bring with you into the fray, you would not be able to impose on me, but I should see through all your meretricious verbiage to the vile stuff beneath. For 'though I am rude in speech, yet'—by the grace of God—'I am not rude in understanding' (cf. 2 Cor. 11.6.); with Paul, I dare to claim that I have understanding, and that you have not—though I freely grant, as I must, that you have eloquence and I have not.

That made me think like this: my doctrines are fortified with mighty Scripture proofs; now, if there is anyone who has not drunk so deep of them and is not so firmly attached to them as to be impervious to the trivial, nonsensical arguments which Erasmus puts up, however elegantly expressed they may be—well, no reply from me can put him right. For people of that sort you could never speak or write enough about anything, however many thousand books you turned out. You might as well plough the beach and sow seed in the sand, or try to fill a leaking cask with water. To those who have drunk in the Spirit's teaching in my books, we have given enough and to spare already, and such find no difficulty in dismissing your arguments. But it is not surprising if those who read without the Spirit are tossed hither and thither, as a reed is tossed by every wind that blows. God would not have said enough for them if all His creatures were turned into tongues; and it might have been wisdom to leave such as were disturbed by your book in the company of those who glory in you and hail you conqueror.

So, you see, what kept me from rushing in with an answer to

<sup>1</sup> *Loci Communes*, first ed. 1521.



you was not the difficulty of so doing, nor pressure of other work, nor the grandeur of your eloquence, nor fear of you, but simply disgust, disinclination, and distaste—which, if I may say so, express my judgment of your Diatribe. I forbear at the moment to mention the further fact that, in your usual way, you have taken vast pains throughout to be slippery and evasive. You are more canny than Ulysses in the way you suppose yourself to be steering between Scylla and Charybdis—you would have nothing actually asserted, while yet you would seem to assert something! Who, I ask, but one who could catch Proteus himself could bring forward anything to touch people like you? But with Christ's help I shall show you later how much I can do, and how little your twisting has gained you.

But you must not think that I have no reason at all for writing this present reply. Faithful brethren in Christ press me to it, telling me that everyone expects it, seeing that Erasmus' authority may not be treated lightly, and Christian truth is in danger in many hearts. And I myself have begun to think that my silence has not been altogether right. I suspect that I have been led astray by carnal policy,<sup>1</sup> or ill-will, and am not sufficiently mindful of my office, which makes me debtor both to the wise and to the unwise (cf. Rom. 1.14); especially when the prayers of so many brethren call me to fulfil that office now. It is true, as first thoughts told me, that our cause is such that external instruction is not enough, but over and above him who plants and waters without there is need of the Spirit of God within, the living Teacher whose teaching is life, to give the increase (cf. 1 Cor. 3.7); yet since that Spirit is free, and blows, not where we will, but where He wills, I ought to have observed Paul's rule, 'Be instant in season, and out of season' (2 Tim. 4.2), for we know not at what hour the Lord comes. Granted, there are some who have not yet felt the teaching of the Spirit in my writings and have been overthrown by your Diatribe; perhaps their hour had not yet come. And who knows but that God may even condescend to visit you, most excellent Erasmus, by me, His poor weak vessel, and I may come to you by this book in a happy hour and gain a beloved brother. From my heart I beseech the Father of mercies through Christ our Lord that it

<sup>1</sup> *carnis meae prudentiae.*

may be so. For though what you think and write about 'free-will' is wrong, I owe you no small debt of thanks for making me far surer of my own view; as I have been since I saw the case for 'free-will' argued with all the resources that your brilliant gifts afford you—and to such little purpose that it is now in a worse state than before. That in itself is clear proof that 'free-will' is an utter fallacy. It is like the woman in the Gospel; the more the doctors treat the case, the worse it gets (cf. Mark 5.26). So it will be the highest token of gratitude that I can give you, if I bring conviction to you, as you brought assurance to me. But conviction in these matters is the Spirit's gift, and not a work of my own office. So we should pray to God that He will open my mouth and your heart and all men's hearts; that He Himself will be our Teacher in the midst of us, working in us both our speaking and our hearing.<sup>1</sup>

But may I ask you, my dear Erasmus, to bear with my want of eloquence, as I in these matters bear with your want of knowledge. God does not give everything to any single man, and we cannot all do everything—as Paul says, 'there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit' (1 Cor. 12.4). It remains, therefore, for these gifts to render mutual service, and for one with his gifts to bear the burden of the other's lack; so shall we fulfil the law of Christ (cf. Gal. 6.2).

<sup>1</sup> *qui in nobis loquatur et audiat.*

The Good News, that all God's people are freely justified by his grace received through faith, must be further defended by a discussion of God's sovereign grace in salvation to refute those claiming to be saved by their 'free will.'



# Protestantism

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia  
(Redirected from Protestant)

*For more details on the origins of protestantism, see Protestant Reformation.*

**Protestantism** encompasses the forms of Christian faith and practice that originated with the doctrines of the Reformation. The word *Protestant* is derived from the Latin *protestatio* meaning *declaration* which refers to the letter of protestation by Lutheran princes against the decision of the Diet of Speyer in 1529, which reaffirmed the edict of the Diet of Worms against the Reformation.<sup>[1]</sup> Since that time, the term Protestantism has been used in many different senses, often as a general term to refer to Western Christianity that is not subject to papal authority.<sup>[1]</sup>

The doctrines of the Reformation can be summarized as a) *the rejection of papal authority*, b) *rejection of some fundamental Roman Catholic doctrines*, c) *the priesthood of all believers*, d) *the primacy of the Bible as the only source of revealed truth*, and e) the belief in **justification by faith alone**.<sup>[2][3]</sup>

While the faiths and churches born directly or indirectly of the Protestant Reformation constitute Protestantism, in common usage, the term is often used in contradistinction to Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy<sup>[4]</sup>. This usage is imprecise. There are many non-Roman-Catholic, non-Eastern-Orthodox communions that long predate the Reformation (notably Oriental Orthodoxy). The Anglican Church, although born of the Protestant reformation, differs from the reformation principles of most other Protestants and is referred to as a middle path - a *via media* - between Roman Catholic and Protestant doctrines. Yet **Wikipedia Protestants are faithful to the Good News** Mormons and the Jehovah's Witnesses, reject Protestantism as having deviated from themselves as restorationists.

The churches most commonly associated with Protestantism can be divided along four fairly definitive lines:<sup>[5]</sup>

1. Mainline Protestants - a North American phrase - are those who trace their lineage to Luther, Calvin, or Anglicanism. The doctrines of the Reformation are their doctrines. They include such denominations as Lutherans, Presbyterians, and Methodists.
2. Anabaptists are a movement that developed from the Radical Reformation. Today, denominations such as Baptists<sup>[6]</sup>, Pentecostals, Brethren, Mennonites and Amish eschew infant baptism and see baptism as aligned with a demonstration of the gifts of the spirit.
3. Nontrinitarian movements reject the doctrine of the trinity. Today, they include such denominations as the Universalists, Unitarians, and some Quakers.
4. Restorationists are a more recent movement. Today, they include such denominations as the Latter-day Saints, and Adventists.

# Augustine of Hippo

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

**Aurelius Augustinus**, **Augustine of Hippo**, or **Saint Augustine** (November 13, 354 – August 28, 430) was one of the most important figures in the development of Western Christianity, therefore considered to be one of the church fathers. He framed the concepts of original sin, just war and DeHartian ethics.

In Roman Catholicism and the Anglican Communion, he is a saint and pre-eminent Doctor of the Church, and the patron of the Augustinian religious order. Many Protestants, especially Calvinists, consider him to be one of the theological fathers of Reformation teaching on salvation and grace. In the Eastern Orthodox Church he is a saint, and his feast day is celebrated annually on June 15, though a minority are of the opinion that he is a heretic, primarily because of his statements concerning what became known as the filioque clause.<sup>[1]</sup> Among the Orthodox he is called **Blessed Augustine**, or **St. Augustine the Blessed**. "Blessed" here does not mean that he is less than a saint, but is a title bestowed upon him as a sign of respect.<sup>[2]</sup> The Orthodox do not remember Augustine so much for his theological speculations as for his writings on spirituality. In addition he believed in Papal supremacy.<sup>[3]</sup>

Born in present day Algeria as the eldest son of Saint Monica, he was educated in North Africa and baptized in Milan. His works—including *The Confessions*, which is often called the first Western autobiography—is still read around the world.

This is also curious, Catholic Saint Augustine is remembered as the Father of Reformation because he preached the salvation doctrine of justification by grace received through faith! This is curious because many Protestants of our day are wrong about the gospel of grace while Catholic Saint Augustine was right. So we see that there are Catholics in history faithful to the Good News just as there are Protestants unfaithful to the Good News!

## Saint Augustine of Hippo



Augustine as depicted by Sandro Botticelli, c. 1480

### Bishop and Doctor of the Church

<b>Born</b>	August 3, 354, Tagaste, Algeria
<b>Died</b>	August 28, 430 (aged 75), Hippo Regius
<b>Venerated in</b>	most Christian groups
<b>Major shrine</b>	San Pietro in Ciel d'Oro, Pavia, Italy
<b>Feast</b>	August 28 (W), June 15 (E)
<b>Attributes</b>	child; dove; pen; shell, pierced heart
<b>Patronage</b>	brewers; printers; sore eyes; theologians

 Saints Portal



# Catholic


From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

**Catholic** is an adjective derived from the Greek adjective καθολικός, meaning "general; universal" (cf. Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*) (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.04.0057%3Aentry%3D%2351864>).

In the context of Christian ecclesiology, it has several usages:

- The word commonly refers to the members, beliefs, and practices of the Roman Catholic Church, including all those *sui juris* particular Churches that are in full communion with the Pope (Bishop of Rome), namely the Latin Rite and twenty-two Eastern Catholic Churches. The latter include the Ukrainian, Greek, Greek Melkite, Maronite, Ruthenian Byzantine, Coptic Catholic, Syro-Malabar, Syro-Malankara, Chaldean, and Ethiopic Rites.
- The Eastern Orthodox Church also identifies itself as Catholic, as in the title of *The Longer Catechism of the Orthodox, Catholic, Eastern Church* ([http://www.tserkovnost.org/catechism\\_filaret/catechism\\_filaret-1.html](http://www.tserkovnost.org/catechism_filaret/catechism_filaret-1.html)).

- Most Reformation and post-Reformation Churches use the term *Catholic* (sometimes with a lower-case *c*) to refer to the belief that all Christians are part of one Church, regardless of denominational divisions. It is in line with this interpretation, which applies the word "catholic"/"universal" to no one denomination, that they understand the phrase "One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church" in the Nicene Creed, the phrase "the catholic faith" in the Athanasian Creed, and the phrase "holy catholic church" in the Apostles' Creed.



Names can be useful to identify our beliefs and associations. However, when the name Catholic or Protestant cannot identify if we believe the Good News then the name is useless. Whether we sport the name Catholic or Protestant is not the crucial issue. The crucial issue is, are we a Christian? Do we receive by faith that we and all God's people are sinners who can only be justified or made right before Holy God only by his grace, or unmerited favor, given to us through Christ's atonement for our sins?

# I Am

catholic with a lower case c  
because through faith in the  
saving grace of Jesus Christ I  
am a member in the one true  
universal church, protesting  
any claim of salvation that does  
not give praise to the unmerited  
favor of God at every point,  
and preferring to simply be  
called a Christian!