

Justification by Faith

The central issue of the Reformation was the question of soteriology: how are we saved? Medieval Catholicism had several different ways to answer this question, all of which involved a combination of grace and human effort. Protestants, on the other hand, insisted that we are saved entirely by God's grace operating in our life through faith.

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I. Catholic Views of Justification

A. Dogmatic Theology: Nominalists (e.g. Gabriel Biel)

1. Moral Effort
2. Rewarded with Grace
3. Grace Enables Moral Cooperation
4. Rewarded with More Grace
5. Repeat 3 and 4
6. At Death, Salvation as Reward

7. Luther's Objection: Pelagianism

B. Dogmatic Theology: Realists (e.g Thomas Aquinas)

1. Born in Sin

2. Grace (Baptism and Holy Spirit) Enables Obedience

3. Obedience is Rewarded with More Grace (Sacraments and Holy Spirit)

4. Repeat

5. At Death, Salvation as Reward

6. Luther's Objection: Semi-Pelagianism

C. Mystical Theologians (e.g. Johannes Tauler)

1. *Synteresis*

2. Fan into Flames of Love

3. Produces Salvation

4. Luther's Response

a. Pelagianism

b. Saved by Faith, not Love

II. Justification in Protestantism

A. Justified by Grace Alone (*sola gratia*)

B. Justified through Faith Alone (*sola fide*)

C. Eph. 2:8-9