

# Justification

By what are we justified? It all depends upon what we mean by the word “by.”

The meaning of the English term “by”, like all prepositions, is difficult to nail down. Consider the following examples:

The ball was hit by the boy.

The ball landed by the fence.

It began to rain by the time the boy found the ball.

He hit it far by swing hard.

By golly, that was a good hit.

In each example, the term “by” means something different. This phenomenon is true for most prepositions in English as well as in the Greek (the language of the New Testament). The various English translations of the Bible wrestle with this, resulting in differing readings for the same Greek constructions from the original language. The chart below answers the question “By what are we justified?”

## We are justified:

Concept <sup>1</sup>	Character	Scripture	Greek	Description
By Grace	Principle	Rom 3:24 Eph 2:8	dative dative	We do not deserve to be justified, we deserve the exact opposite
By Faith	Means	Rom 5:1 Eph 2:8	<i>ek</i> + genitive <i>dia</i> + genitive	Faith is our human response to God’s grace. Means by which we accept the free gift. Justified “through” faith.
By blood	Price	Rom 5:9	<i>en</i> + dative	Blood is the price paid to procure our justification
By God	Agent	Rom 8:33	nominative	He is the person who justifies
By power	Energy	Rom 4:25	direct assoc.	Our justification is linked to the power of the resurrection.
By works	Proof	James 2:24	<i>ek</i> + genitive	Outward proof of the reality of our faith.

C. R. Gianotti 11/29/99

---

<sup>1</sup> Parts of this have been adapted from “Believers Bible Commentary” by William MacDonald.