

Greek Word Studies:

Gift (1432) (dorean from dorea = a gift, something bestowed freely, without price, or compensation, as in Jn 4:10; Ac 2:38; 2Co 9:15,, God is always Giver of dorea) conveys the basic meaning of "for nothing". It pertains to being freely given, given without charge or without payment. As a free gift or gratis. Undeserved.

Dorean emphasizes the free character of the gift, given spontaneously and without reference to human merit.

Here in Romans 3:24 the prominent thought is the grace of the Giver.

In some contexts dorean conveys the idea of needlessly as in Gal 2:21

"I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly (or "for nothing", "not without impact").

In other contexts dorean means without a cause or reason (similar use in Lxx of Ge 29:15) or undeservedly, as when Jesus explained...

"But they have done this (they have both seen and hated Me and My Father as well) in order that the word may be fulfilled that is written in their Law, 'THEY HATED ME WITHOUT A CAUSE.' (John 15:25)

Webster says that a gift is something voluntarily transferred by one person to another without compensation.

Dorean is found 8 times in the NAS

Matthew 10:8 "Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons; freely you received, freely give.

John 15:25 "But they have done this in order that the word may be fulfilled that is written in their Law, 'They hated Me without a cause.' (cp use of dorea in Lxx of Ps 35:19, 69:4, 109:3, 119:161, Job 1:9 "for no reason")

Romans 3:24 (note) being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;

2 Corinthians 11:7 Or did I commit a sin in humbling myself that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you without charge?

Galatians 2:21 "I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly (in vain, done without due result, without or for no purpose, cp use in Lxx of 1Ki 2:31 "without cause")."

Comment: Don't miss what Paul is stating in this verse - His point is that if righteousness can be obtained by sinful men by keeping the law, then Christ's death on the Cross was of no purpose and did not need to occur.

2Th 3:8 nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we kept working night and day so that we might not be a burden to any of you;

Rev 21:6 (note) And He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost.

Rev 22:17 (note) And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost. Guzik writes that...

Freely is the Greek word dorean. The way this word is used in other New Testament passages helps us understand the word. Matthew 10:8 (Freely you have received, freely give) and Revelation 22:17 (And whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely) show that the word means truly free, not just "cheap" or "discounted." Perhaps the most striking use of the ancient Greek word dorean is in John 15:25: They hated me without a cause (dorean). Even as there was nothing in Jesus deserving of man's hatred, so there is nothing in us deserving of justification - all the reasons are in God.

Calvin on the use of both the words freely and grace:

He thus repeats the word to show that the whole is from God, and nothing from us . . . lest we should imagine a half kind of grace, he affirms more strongly what he means by a repetition, and claims for God's mercy alone the whole glory of our righteousness. (Ref)

Dorean is found 26 times in the non-apocryphal Septuagint (LXX) (Ge 29:15; Ex 21:2, 11; Nu 11:5; 1Sa 19:5; 25:31; 2Sa 24:24; 1Ki 2:31; 1Chr 21:24; Job 1:9; Ps 35:7, 19; 69:4; 109:3; 119:161; 120:6; Isa 52:3, 5; Jer 22:13; Lam 3:52; Mal 1:10)

Exodus 21:2 "If you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve for six years; but on the seventh he shall go out as a free man without payment (Heb = chinnam = freely, undeservedly, without cause, for no purpose, in vain; Lxx = dorea).

2 Samuel 24:24 (1Chr 21:24) However, the king said to Araunah, "No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price, for I will not offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God which cost me nothing (Heb = chinnam = freely, undeservedly, without cause, for no purpose, in vain; Lxx = dorea)." So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.

Dorean means that God declares a believer righteous without any cause or legitimate reason. In other words, there is nothing in mankind merits the declaration of righteousness by God. Justification is a gracious gift which God extends to the repentant, believing sinner, wholly apart from human merit or work. That gift cost God the suffering and death of His own Son on the cross, so that, for the believer, there is nothing left to pay. How fitting that the Bible ends with God's invitation

And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost (literally "as a gift" = dorean). (Rev 22:17)(note)

McGee emphasizes this point writing that...

Freely is the Greek word dorean, translated in John 15:25 "without a cause." Our Lord Jesus said that they hated Him freely, without a cause "there was no basis for it. Now Paul is saying, Being justified freely "without a cause. There is no explanation in us. God doesn't say, "Oh, they are such wonderful people, I have to do something for them!" As we have seen before, there is nothing in us that would call out the grace of God, other than our great need. We are justified without a cause. It is by His grace, which means that there is no merit on our part. Grace is unmerited favor; it is love in action. (McGee, J V: Thru the Bible Commentary: Nashville: Thomas Nelson)

Stated another way, justification is not based in any way on our moral improvement.

As William Newell says...

We are justified dorean-freely, gratis, gratuitously, giftwise, without a cause in us! This great fact should deliver just now some reader who has been looking within, to his spiritual state, or feelings, or prayers, as a ground of peace. (Romans 3 Commentary)

Barnhouse has this to say about dorean...

When we understand this (word dorean), we can see the true basis of our salvation. There was absolutely nothing within man that could recommend him to God. God did not sit in Heaven and look down upon this earth until He had found something in some men that recommended them to Him. He gave salvation to men who deserved Hell. There will not be one person in Heaven who deserved Heaven except the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the only one who merited Heaven. But an innumerable company who merited Hell are going to be in Heaven simply because the grace of God decided that they should be there. (God's Remedy : Romans 3:21-4:1-25)

Peter uses the verb form of dorean (doreomai) in 2 Peter 1:3-4 writing that

His divine power has granted (doreomai from dorea - gift, stressing the gratuitous character) to us everything (How much?) pertaining to life and godliness (eusebeia - word study), through the true knowledge (epignosis - word study) of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted (doreomai) to us His precious (timios - word study) and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped (apopheugo - word study) the corruption that is in the world by lust (epithumia - word study). (see note 2 Peter 1:3-4)

Justification is not a wage that God owes us--the only wage He owes us is death (Ro 6:23); it is a gift that He offers freely.

Justification is not reward that we deserve but in fact is charity for the undeserving.

The forgiveness of sins and the righteousness of God are free gifts. That means they cost us nothing because they cost Christ everything! They cannot be earned with works or inherited through parents or absorbed through sacraments. They are free, and can only be received by faith.

Nothing in my hand I bring;
Simply to Thy cross I cling
(Play "Rock of Ages")

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