

## Romans 3:21-31

### Verse 21:

--***But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,***

--At this point, Paul has all the world standing before God, mouth closed, and guilty.

--***But!*** Changes things. Here we begin to find grace for the guilty! The whole world has been put in need of grace, and now it is given in Jesus.

--Righteousness and justification become Paul's focus. We are justified—pronounced righteous with Christ's own righteousness—on the grounds of grace (3:21-26), by the means of faith (3:27-4), for the end of peace, assurance, and relationship (5:1-11).

--Paul now declares the revelation of ***the righteousness of God*** or *God's way of righteousness* for Him (as perfect) and for us (as sinners), and that, ***apart from the law***. Guilty man needs the revelation that we are made righteous by a totally separate principle than our own actions.

--This revelation is not something Paul is making up. In fact, it is witnessed to ***by the Law and the Prophets***, as he mentioned before in 1:2: ***which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures***.

--The gospel Paul preached was not a secondary plan of salvation God had to fall back on. The emphasis of a consistent Biblical message is seen in the apostles' preaching through the book of Acts: (Acts 3:18; 10:43; 13:27).

--The apostles realized they were living in a special season of God's work.

***\*Galatians 4:4-5: But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.\****

### Verses 22-23:

--(22) ***even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference;***

--The word ***even*** or *namely* further qualifies that revealed righteousness of God. It is two things:

1) ***Through faith in Jesus Christ***, and 2) ***to all and on all who believe***.

--First, Jesus Christ is the One in whom our faith must be placed. He is the One who has revealed God's righteous way of dealing with all our sins.

***\*Phil. 3:9: That I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith.\**** (That I might know Him...leads to relationship).

***\*1 Peter 3:18: For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.\****

--Second, this righteousness through faith in Jesus is **to all** because all are sinners and all are in need of God's answer to sin.

--Here is the good news—Our need for righteousness is universal, and so is the offer!

--**All** is sometimes hard to believe personally. It is easy to say Jesus saves "men" in general, but still have personal unbelief or refusal to confess and repent of individual guilt. This is where faith and God's Word meet our unbelief and excuses.

--Do you hear God's testimony? Have you come to Jesus Christ for God's righteousness? Have you confessed your need of Him as your Savior?

--**(23) for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,**

--There is no difference for Jew or Gentile because all fall short of His glory.

--**All have sinned** is past tense and **fall short** is present tense (still are falling short).

--In what way? In every way! In image, in purpose, in design, in destiny, etc.

--But now, we have incredible promises of sharing in His glory because of the work of Christ!

**\*(Rom. 5:2; 8:18; 9:23; 15:7)\* + (1 Cor. 2:7; 15:43; 2 Cor. 3:18; 4:15-17; Col. 1:27; 1 Thess. 2:12; 2 Thess. 2:14; 2 Tim. 2:10; Heb. 2:10; 1 Peter 5:1; 4; 10; 2 Peter 1:3).**

**Verses 24-26:**

--**(24-25a) being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith,**

--Now, Paul comes to the very heart of his argument that began all the way back in **1:16-17**. Here we find that our salvation includes: justification (law); redemption (slave market); and propitiation (sacrificial altar). It also includes so much more!

--The salvation gifted to us in God's gracious purpose is so great it cannot be explained with one term or even one picture. In fact, there are stern warnings for those who dare to reject God's offer. **How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? (Heb. 2:3).**

--Because God's salvation is so great a gift, it is described in numerous ways. We could say the Bible teaches a "Salvation Rainbow," as our great salvation contains many shades of Biblical terms, such as:

- 1) Justification: Courthouse—Legal declaration of guilty or not guilty.
- 2) Redemption: Marketplace—Ransom or price of release from bondage
- 3) Propitiation: Temple and Altar—Offering made to appease and cover
- 4) Reconciliation: Relationship—Distance/our Heavenly Father
- 5) Regeneration: Life and death—New birth and New creation
- 6) Sanctification: Holy and profane—Set apart
- 7) Glorification: Weight and Light—The end of it all

--We are **justified freely by His grace!** Freely—as a gift, a gracious gift given by the One worthy of giving such a gift. Without cost! Same as **Revelation 21:6; 22:17.**

--Justification doesn't immediately make us practically just in our dealings with God or man, but it is the foundation of the work of God in our lives.

*\*(OT )Isaiah 53:11: He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities.\**

*\*(NT) 1 Corinthians 6:9-11: Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of God.\**

--How do we come by this justification? ***Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.***

--The word ***redemption*** is used 10 times in the NT and means deliverance by payment of a ransom, particularly the ransom of a slave to set them free from bondage. It is used in the context of God bringing His people out of Egypt and Babylon.

--Is there not an implied special relationship remaining after redemption?

***\*Ephesians 1:7: In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.\****

--How were these things revealed in Jesus Christ? It was Jesus ***whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood. Set forth*** has the idea of *presenting before the eye*.

***\*Leviticus 17:11: For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.\**** (This commandment was given to make sure the Israelites didn't offer the sacrifices in other places or to other gods.)

--***Propitiation*** again has the idea of a sacrifice upon an altar or the covering of the mercy seat. It contains the Godward aspect of the cross. And like the ark of the covenant hidden away in the Holy Place before Jesus' incarnation, God was concealed in the Holiest. Hidden from the eyes of sinful men. So too the Savior was hidden in heaven, where no man could go. Jesus' coming at the command of His Father was a manifestation of what was hidden.

--***Propitiation by His blood*** speaks of life. It speaks of an innocent party slain so that a guilty party could enter God's presence. ***\*Ps. 16; 22; 40; 69; 88; 102; 109\****

***\*F.F. Bruce (Romans): "The death of Christ, then, is the means by which God does away with his people's sin—not symbolically, as in the ritual of Leviticus 16 in which the material mercy-seat figured, but really. And really in a twofold sense: the sin has been removed not only from the believer's conscience, on which it lay as an intolerable burden, but also from the presence of God."\****

--Another form of the Greek word is in ***Luke 18:13: God be propitious (merciful) to me a sinner!***

--The doctrine of Substitutionary Atonement is under attack in our day and age.

--Jesus did not die just to be an example, or defeat Satan, or as a symbol. Jesus died in our place as our substitute to make atonement for our sins:

***4:25: Who was delivered up because of our offenses***

**5:6: In due time Christ died for the ungodly.**

**5:8: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**

**5:9: Having now been justified by His blood.**

**5:10: For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son.**

**8:32: He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all.**

**--(25b-26) to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.**

**--The present time** is contrasted to the times of **His forbearance** in the past.

--Why would God need to **demonstrate His righteousness**? Because if you only looked at the past, God would not appear as the holy Judge of sin that He truly is.

--How is it that God could righteously be patient with past sins? How was it that Moses the murderer, Aaron the idolater, and David the adulterer were passed by? How was He patient with Ahab in his short repentance? Was God playing favorites? Was His mercy unjust?

--Paul now tells us. God righteously passed over sins in the past because of His righteous plan now revealed to deal with all sin, once and for all, in Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. The cross shows God is not negligent in judging sin or ignorant in offering mercy.

**\*Joshua 5:9: Then the LORD said to Joshua, "This day I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you." Therefore the name of the place is called Gilgal to this day.\***

**\*Acts 17:30: Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent.\***

**\*1 John 2:2: And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.\***

--Where the OT saints looked *ahead* to the Messiah. We look *back* at the work of Christ. They had to believe that the Lamb of God *would come*, and we believe that the Lamb of God *has come*. Everyone, past, present, and future, needs to look to Christ **as a propitiation by His blood, through faith**.

--It is as if God took both His hands, one extending into the past and one extending into the future, and rolled all the sins of the past and future onto the cross of Christ to deal with them there. He is righteous and free to Judge and Justify, in the past and future as He sees fit.

--This was the plan from the foundation of the world.

**\*Govett (On Romans): "Christ's obedience and atonement are the ground of righteousness both to the Judge, and to the criminal."**

--This is how God is now **Just and the Justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus**. Our sins are not just forgiven—they are paid for **by His blood**. **\*This is why Christ is the only Way, Truth, and Life. Only He paid for sins and therefore, only He can forgive them.\***

--Anselm says that if we fail to recognize the moral problem involved in God's forgiving grace, it may be because we have not yet considered how serious a thing sin is.

***\*Isaiah 45:21: Tell and bring forth your case; Yes, let them take counsel together. Who has declared this from ancient time? Who has told it from that time? Have not I, the LORD? And there is no other God besides Me, a just God and a Savior; there is none beside Me. Look to Me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.\****

**Verses 27-31:**

***--(27-28) Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.***

--We are saved by the work of another and condemned by our own—this realization stops all boasting. Man, now justified, redeemed, and covered in the righteousness of God, is still silent, yet saved and lives in humble gratitude for the incomparable gift of the Son of God.

***--(29-31) Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.***

--If salvation were of the law, then God would be the God of the Jews alone. But that is not the case. Religious Pharisees always stumble at the law of faith. They want to live by their own works, but the Scriptures are clear: ***The just shall live by faith!***

--The law still retains its purpose in revealing the irreparable sinfulness of men. That is why lawless religious people are stumbled by the establishment of the law. The law is established and upheld by God's way of righteousness. God is perfect, and so is His law. The fault is in us.