

Romans 3:21-31

Romans 3:21-31 But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, (22) even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; (23) for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (24) being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, (25) whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, (26) to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. (27) Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. (28) Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. (29) Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, (30) since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. (31) Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.

Questions On The Text

How is the righteousness of God revealed?

Verse 21: God's righteousness is revealed apart from the law. In other words, there is a totally new kind of righteousness that doesn't depend on a person's ability to keep the law perfectly.

How is the righteousness of God obtained?

Verses 22-23: God's righteousness is available as a gift to anyone who has faith in Jesus Christ. There is no longer any difference between Jew and Gentile, since all have fallen short of His perfect expectations because of sin.

If all have sinned, are all then doomed for eternity?

Verses 24-25: No one needs to go to hell, as God has provided the opportunity to be completely justified to all who have faith in Jesus Christ. Justification means to be declared righteous before God, uncondemned and guiltless. This is a free gift, available only through God's grace because of what Jesus did on the cross.

Also part of this provision is redemption. Redemption refers to the fact that we have been purchased by the blood of Christ, are no longer under the dominion of sin and Satan, but belong totally to God.

The price of all this is the blood of Christ which is our propitiation. Propitiation is a word that is used only twice in the Greek New Testament and its meaning is much debated. Although it isn't within the scope of this Bible study to explain why, the interpretation that makes most sense to me is that it refers to the mercy seat (see Leviticus 16:2) upon which the sacrificial blood was poured. Suffice it to say that, because of Christ's blood, God has now passed over our previous sins.

Can God remain just if He forgives without requiring us to pay the penalty of sin?

Verse 26: The question could be asked: If a person can so easily receive God's forgiveness without paying the penalty for sin (which is death), how can God be righteous? Surely the price has to be paid.

God has created a scenario whereby He not only remains righteous, but is able to make sinners righteous too. His righteousness is not in doubt because the price actually has been paid for all sin through Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross. In addition, because Jesus Christ is actually the Second Person of the Triune God, then it follows that God Himself has actually paid the price.

In other words, God is both just and the justifier.

How has God silenced the boastful?

Verse 27: Boasting has been excluded by the law of faith. If righteousness came by keeping the law, anyone good enough to keep that law would be able to boast about their own righteousness. However, God has introduced a different law, the law of faith. Since the law of faith is not based on personal performance but on Christ's achievement on the cross, there is no room for boasting... except in God!

What are the results of the law of faith?

Verses 28-30: The law of faith means that there is one way for everyone, both Jew and Gentile, to be counted as righteous before God, and that's by faith in what Christ has done on the cross. This demonstrates that God is not just a local god of the Jewish nation with a localised religion, but God over all with a concern for all humanity and their salvation.

Does this mean that the law has been nullified?

Verse 31: Paul says that it doesn't. Instead, he claims that the law is established. We will not explain this here. Paul begins his explanation in the next chapter, but fills the picture out more completely in chapter seven. At this point, it should just be noted that under the New Covenant, the law has been assigned its proper position as a means to convict man of his guilt.

Further Questions For Discussion:

How has God's righteousness been revealed apart from the law?

What is justification?

What is redemption?

How is justification before God achieved?

What was the price that was paid for our justification and redemption?

Why is there no room for boasting under the law of faith?

Why are Jews and Gentiles justified on the same basis?