

“Grace & Peace to You”

A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF ROMANS

Voice of China and Asia

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ROMANS 23 PART 1: ESTABLISHING GOD’S RIGHTEOUSNESS #2

READ: ROM 3:25-31

God is JUST... and the Justifier... What a summation! This is truly the message Paul presents in the LETTER TO THE ROMANS. Because GOD is the “Justifier,” He extends “Justification” to ALL who believe in Jesus Christ as the “Redeemer.” They are JUSTIFIED by their faith.

JUSTIFICATION is the ACT of GOD whereby He **declares** the believing sinner righteous IN CHRIST... on the basis of the finished work of CHRIST on the cross.

- To begin with, **Justification is an act, not a process.** There are **no degrees of justification**; each believer has the same right standing before God.
- **Justification** is something **GOD DOES**, not man. No sinner can justify himself before God.
- **Justification** is “freely given” BY the operation of God’s grace. There is NO merit / demerit... there is NO such thing as, “more” for some and “less” for others. ALL need grace! (**Subject of ROM 4 & 5**)
- Most important, **Justification** means more than God *makes* us righteous, but that He *declares* us righteous. Justification is a legal matter.

God puts the righteousness of Christ on our record in the place of our own sinfulness.
And nobody can change this record.

*Do not confuse **justification** and **sanctification**. Sanctification is the process whereby God makes the believer more and more like Christ. Sanctification may change from day to day. Justification never changes. (Subject of ROM 6; 7; 8)*

ROM 3:23-24 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,²⁴ and are **justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...**

Consider: Rom 3; 4; & 5... **Righteous / Righteousness = 25x’s**
Just / Justified / Justification = 14x’s
Faith / Believe = 29x’s

And we ask: What might be the **“Over-shadowing Subject”** of this great section of Scripture?

ROM 3:25c This was to show **God's righteousness**, because **in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.** –

THIS is not **“our righteousness”** but GOD’S ALONE...

There are “2” Actions here...

- **because in His divine forbearance** – “Anoche” – a pause / temporary delay / suspension until a determined time - GOD “kept-on passing over the sins of mankind” until the determined time when HE would execute His wrath
 - **Forbearance** is NOT the same as “long-suffering” (putting-up-with for a time)
 - He did NOT overlook them, excuse them, or dismiss them...
- HE **had passed over** former sins. – this is a unique word: “Pretermission” – Paresis – to **set-aside** an action which is already determined –
 - This is NOT “Remission” - Although from the same root, “remission” and “pretermission” differ in application:
 - In **remission** guilt and punishment are **sent away** - “Aphesis”
 - In **pretermission** they are *wholly or partially undealt with... for a TIME...*

Paul’s argument is that the gracious gift by which God provided the “propitiation” was, ‘to demonstrate that He was **NOT UNRIGHTEOUS** when he passed over sins committed in earlier days, in the period of his forbearance’.

In Paul’s day, as in ours, to “**pass over wrong**” was as much **an act of injustice** on the part of a judge as to “**condemn the innocent**”

- ²⁶ **It was to [so that He could] show His righteousness at the present time**, - THIS was the “time” –

ROMANS 23 PART 2: ESTABLISHING GOD’S RIGHTEOUSNESS #2

- His righteousness was NOT shown in the sacrifice of Lambs / Bulls / Goats ...
- THAT was “forbearance” (see above)

Vs 21 - “But now **the righteousness of God** has been manifested... “-

Vs 22 – “...**the righteousness of God** through faith in Jesus Christ...” -

Vs 25 – “This was to show **God’s righteousness...**” -

Vs 26 – “...It was to show **his righteousness** at the present time...” -

This 4-fold repetition regarding the righteousness of God is a glaring declaration that it is **ALL about God’s actions...** NOT ours!

- There is NO allowance here for man to receive any credit for what was accomplished.
- Just as in ROM 1:16, the “**righteousness**” referred to is **NOT as much to God’s character** as it is His “**demonstrated actions**” (which do of course reflect His character).
- **so that HE might be just** – ACT JUSTLY – Righteously
- The very highest and strongest reason why God should make men “**right**” lies in His own righteousness.
- Because **He IS righteous**, He must HATE sin... and THIS antagonism can be removed only by removing the sin...

Making “sinful humanity” RIGHTEOUS is the means BY WHICH He can bring them into HIS presence ... fulfilling HIS Need... NOT Ours

“He made us Righteous because to satisfy HIMSELF!”

- and THE JUSTIFIER – HE and HE ALONE would Justify those...
- of the one who has faith in JESUS. – Who had /have “faith”
 - In what HE WOULD DO... - *the OT Promise of Redemption...*
 - In what HE HAS DONE... - *The Testimony of the Cross...*

ROM 3:27-31 *Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. ²⁸ For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of THE LAW. ²⁹ Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, ³⁰ since God is one—who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. ³¹ Do we then overthrow THE LAW by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law.*

Vs 27 *Boasting – Self-glorification - to make self “larger” - implied that this is by “keeping the Law”*

- *Excluded* - A peculiarly vivid use of the Greek tense. “It WAS excluded” by the revelation of righteousness by faith.
 - “*Boasting*” never was to have been included... but the “ability to DO the Law” generated a “*self-glorification*” that was supposed to be eliminated by the NEED for a Redeemer.
 - *They FORGOT the Redeemer... looked to their “ability” and BOASTED in themselves...*
- *By what law?* - What is the nature of this excluding law –
- *By the law of faith... - THIS* has superseded the LAW of WORKS –
 - There are NOT “2” laws to choose... The Law (of Works) has been “taken away” and The Law (of Faith) has been established...
 - Works were a temporal “law” leading to the fulfillment found in “faith”
- The Law could WITNESS to God’s righteousness, but it could not PROVIDE it for sinful man.
Only Jesus Christ as their Redeemer could do that

Vs 28 *For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of THE LAW.*

- Paul does not mean that such works need not be performed, but that, even when they are performed well, one is not thereby justified in God’s sight.

- He is eliminating those who say, **"I always do the best I can ... I try to live a decent life ... I pay my lawful dues, and what more can God expect of me?"**

ROM 3:29-30) Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also,³⁰ since God is one—who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.

- Since the Law was given to the Jews, then ONLY the Jews could be **"made righteous"**
- But God is the God of **ALL**... therefore **"faith"** is the "way to righteousness for ALL / BOTH":
 - **Jews... BY** Faith – **"out-from faith as a source"** – the Jews HAD a faith in the true God, His words, His covenant, the Hope of the Redeemer/Messiah – their "righteousness" would come out-from that same source BY FAITH...
 - **Gentiles... THROUGH** Faith – The Gentiles would need to **"pass-into" Faith as if through an entrance from the outside.**

ROM 5:1-2 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ² Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

EPH 2:15-19 "...[Having abolished] the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace,¹⁶ and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.¹⁷ And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.¹⁸ For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God...

- The "FAITH" and resulting "RIGHTEOUSNESS" are the same...

ROM 3:31) Do we then overthrow THE LAW by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold THE LAW.

- **Overthrow** – **"Katargeo"** – to make "not work" / render useless / to nullify – Same as **"Having abolished..."** in **EPH 2:15**
- **Uphold** - This is the verb used in the rabbinical assertion that Abraham **"fulfilled the law"**. Paul goes on to argue in **ROM 4** that Abraham did indeed **"fulfil or 'uphold'"** the law, according to the testimony of Scripture... **he upheld it through receiving God's gift of righteousness by faith.**