

**I. THE REVELATION OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS (ROM. 3:21-31)**

- A. Romans 3:21-31 is the clearest statement in the Scripture on our salvation by grace. The challenge is Paul's use of legal language—justification, propitiation, redemption, etc. *The reason for this is because the way God saved us is through a legal exchange in His divine court.* When we understand that we have a legal problem with a legal solution, we will better understand grace.
- B. The foundational truth about grace is that the righteousness of God—the very quality of God's righteousness (His perfect character) has been freely given to all sinners who repent and come to Jesus in faith.
- <sup>21</sup>Now the righteousness of God apart from the law [earning it] is revealed... (Rom. 3:21)*
- C. We have received a quality of righteousness that can never be improved. It is the righteousness that God Himself possesses. God is not more righteous than the righteousness He gives us. Even He cannot increase the quality of it. The day we were born again we received His righteousness. A million years from now we will not be more righteous than on the day we were born again.
- D. God is holy and we are sinful. Therefore, we could not be in relationship with Him until sin was removed. God did not overlook our sin—He paid for it. Jesus as the Innocent One became guilty before God so that we as the guilty ones might become innocent before God. Therefore, our confidence before God is not based on if we are doing good or bad, but on a legal exchange.
- E. There are **two** expressions of God's righteousness revealed in scripture, imputed and imparted. The moment we are born again, He gives us the gift of righteousness to empower to us live righteously. This is **imputed** righteousness, which gives us a new **legal position** before God (Rom. 3-5); it is instantaneous. God gives us **imparted** righteousness, which describes our **living condition** (Rom. 6-8).
- F. When God looks at me, He sees my debt paid by Jesus and His righteousness imputed or credited to my account. This is a legal term. When He looks at us, He sees "100% righteousness" imputed to our account and He relates to us on the basis of that account. Thus, nothing hinders God from embracing us. Our compromise keeps us from enjoying His presence, but it does not hinder God.
- G. **Imparted** righteousness is the righteousness that gets worked out in our character. God gives us **imputed** righteousness to put us in a position before Him to receive His imparted righteousness.
- H. By understanding God's justice, we realize that *all* can be saved, that we can stand *confidently before God*, and that we can be kept from the error of believing that there is *another way of salvation*, outside of Jesus paying the debt for our sin.
1. Everybody can be saved—even the most perverse man can receive God's righteousness as a free gift because it is based on the justice of the innocent One paying our debt.
  2. We can have confidence before God—even when sincere believers are failing.

3. There is only one way of salvation—because salvation is not God overlooking our sin, but paying for it in a just way. Since there is only One Man who was innocent and who became guilty, there is only one way to salvation.

## II. THE NEW CREATION AND NATURE OF GOD’S CHARACTER

- A. Paul describes the way of salvation (Rom. 3:21-24). The only way to earn salvation would be to be 100% obedient to God in all our thoughts, words, and deeds for 100% of our life (Jas. 2:10).

***<sup>21</sup>Now the righteousness of God apart from the law [earning it] is revealed [made known], being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, <sup>22</sup>even the righteousness of God, through faith [confidence in] in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; <sup>23</sup>for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup>being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. (Rom. 3:21-24)***

1. **Righteousness of God (v. 21):** We receive a righteousness that can never be improved. Our new legal position of standing in God’s presence is based on a historical event, in which a legal transaction occurred in His court when.
2. **Freely (v. 24):** We receive God’s righteousness freely, fully (100%), and instantly (at our new birth). Righteousness is a gift given on the basis of what Jesus did, not what we do.
3. **Witnessed by the Law (v. 21):** This is the same way of salvation seen in the OT (Rom. 4). Some wrongly believe that in the Old Testament people were saved by works. They offered animal sacrifices which were a prophetic picture of the Messiah who would be the sacrifice. Jesus as the Lamb of God fulfilled the Old Testament sacrifices.
4. **Redemption (v. 24):** Sin is not overlooked but paid for. Redemption is the term that the Greeks used to describe releasing a prisoner by paying the ransom price. Jesus, the innocent One, became guilty, so that we, the guilty ones, might become innocent.
5. **Being justified (v. 24):** God declares us legally justified—“just as if we never sinned.” In His divine court, we are accepted, with no guilt or judgment against us.
6. **There is no difference (v. 22):** There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, between the most religious and the most perverse, or between the most moral person and the most immoral, because all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

## III. CHARACTERISTICS OF SALVATION – ROMANS 3: 25-31

- A. Paul gives characteristics of our salvation (Rom. 3:25-31). It is consistent with God’s character (v. 25-26), available to all (v. 29-30), and fulfills the purpose of the Old Testament law (v. 31).

*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 [in OT animal sacrifices], <sup>26</sup>to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*

*<sup>27</sup>Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law [principle]...the law of faith.*

*<sup>28</sup>Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law [earning it]. (Rom. 3:25-28)*

1. **Just and justifier (v. 26):** The cross enables God to forgive sin without denying justice. God was perfectly just in all that He did in providing our justification by faith.
    - a. Justice was satisfied when Jesus as the Innocent One became guilty so that we as the guilty ones might become innocent. When God looks at me, He sees the debt Jesus paid and the righteousness imputed to my account. This is the basis of my confidence.
    - b. It would be injustice for God to punish Jesus with our sin then punish us with sin that was paid for. When we feel like we are failing, we must speak the truth to our heart about Jesus having fully paid for our sin and failure.
  2. **Propitiation (v. 25):** This means “to appease”; it is the word that is translated as “mercy-seat” (Heb. 9:25), the place of propitiation by sacrifice. Jesus was the “mercy-seat” for sinners and paid the just payment for our sin by becoming a propitiatory sacrifice, which appeased (satisfied) all the claims of justice in God’s court (1 Jn. 2:1-2). In Greek culture, a propitiatory sacrifice was one which averted wrath and appeased the gods.
  3. **Forbearance (v. 25):** God showed forbearance (restraint) in the Old Testament by passing over sin because of animal sacrifices, which prophetically spoke of Jesus’ death.
  4. **Boasting (v. 27):** The freeness of our salvation removes pride and condemnation.
- B. There are four words Paul uses to describe the salvation God has provided.
1. Justified – (Rom. 3: 24) – Legal court room term – legal transaction legitimized by law
  2. Redemption – (Rom. 3:24) – Marketplace term – buying back from creditors
  3. Propitiation – (Rom. 3:25) – Priestly term – appeasing God through sacrifice
  4. Reconciliation – (Rom. 5:10) – Familial term – restoring broken relationship

*<sup>10</sup> For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. <sup>11</sup> And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation. Rom. 5: 10-11*

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