

The Revelation of the Righteousness of God (Rom. 3:21-31)

I. THE FOUNDATION OF THE GOSPEL

- A. The theme in the book of Romans is the revelation of God's righteousness (Rom. 1:16-17).
¹⁶ *I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation...*
¹⁷ *For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith... (Rom. 1:16-17)*
- B. The gospel is the good news about salvation or receiving God's righteousness (in three tenses):
1) **Justification**: our legal position—past tense focused on my spirit (I have been saved)
2) **Sanctification**: our living condition—present tense focused on my soul (I am being saved)
3) **Glorification**: our eternal exaltation—future tense focused on my body (I will be saved)
- C. All human beings have three basic desires:
1) **For acceptance**: relationship with God and people
2) **For significance**: a sense of destiny in making a relevant impact on others
3) **For ability to change**: power to overcome sin and change our circumstances
- D. All human beings have three basic problems before salvation:
1) **They are rejected**: found guilty and condemned by God
2) **They live aimlessly**: without the ability to make a lasting (eternal) impact
3) **They are powerless**: to overcome sin and satanic strongholds
- E. God's solution for all human beings is to give them the gift of righteousness (Rom. 3:21-31). The righteousness of God, or the very quality of God's righteousness and purity, has been given freely to all sinners who will come to Jesus in faith and repentance.
²¹ *Now the righteousness of God apart from the law [earning it] is revealed [openly manifest] ...²² through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. (Rom. 3:21-22)*
- F. Paul summed up the gospel (Rom. 1:16-17), showing how all people are guilty before God (Rom. 1:18-3:20), and then explained how sinful people can be saved by faith (Rom. 3:21-31). In ***Romans 1:18-3:20***, Paul establishes that all men are guilty and unable to save themselves.
- Rom. 1:18-32***—the immoral person is guilty before God without Jesus
Rom. 2:1-16—the moral person is guilty before God without Jesus
Rom. 2:17-3:8—the religious person is guilty before God without Jesus
Rom. 3:9-20—all people are guilty before God without Jesus
- G. In ***Romans 3:21-4:24***, salvation by faith is explained and illustrated.

Rom. 3:21-31—salvation by faith is explained
Rom. 4:1-25—salvation by faith is illustrated in the lives of two famous Jewish fathers: Abraham, who lived before the law of Moses, and David, who came after law of Moses.

II. PAUL DESCRIBES THE WAY AND CHARACTERISTICS OF SALVATION (ROM. 3:21-31).

- A. Paul describes the way of salvation (Rom. 3:21-24). God provided righteousness as a free gift through what Jesus did on the cross. The only way to earn (deserve) salvation is to be 100% obedient to God in our thoughts, words, and deeds for 100% of our life.

²¹ Now the righteousness of God apart from the law [earning it] is revealed [openly manifest], being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, ²² even the righteousness of God, through faith [confidence in] 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, (Rom. 3:21-24)

1. Through faith (v. 22): Living in agreement with God (always involves repentance).
2. Freely (v. 24): It is given to us on the basis of what Jesus did, not what we do. We receive God's righteousness freely, fully (100%), and instantly (at our new birth).
3. Being justified (v. 24): God legally declares us justified or "just-as-if-we never sinned." God declares in the divine court that we are accepted, without any guilt against us.
4. Redemption (v. 24): Sin is paid for, not merely overlooked. Redemption was a term used by the Greeks when they released a prisoner due to someone paying the ransom price.

- B. 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 fulfilling 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], 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 [principle]...the law of faith. ²⁸ Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law [earning it]. (Rom. 3:25-28)

1. Propitiation (v. 25): Means "to appease" and is the word which is translated "mercy-seat" (Heb. 9:25) or the place of propitiation by sacrifice. Jesus was the "mercy-seat" for sinners and paid the justice payment for our sin by becoming a propitiatory sacrifice, which appeased or satisfied all the claims of justice in God's court (1 Jn. 2:1-2). In the Greek culture a propitiatory sacrifice was one which averted wrath and appeased God.
2. Forbearance (v. 25): God showed forbearance or restraint in the Old Testament by passing over sin in light of animal sacrifices, which prophetically spoke of Jesus' death.
3. Just and justifier (v. 26): The cross enables God to forgive sin without denying justice.
4. Boasting (v. 27): The freeness removes pride and condemnation and produces gratitude.