

Romans

The Solution: Faith [3:21-31]

- **The Righteousness of God Through Faith [3:21-26]**

- But now independent of the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested,
Νυνὶ δὲ χωρὶς νόμου δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ πεφανέρωται
 - The word “now” is νυνί (nuni) which is an emphatic form of the word for “now” (νυν, nun).
 - This word is use to create a sharp contrast with the previous verse which states that justification does not come as a result of the works of the Law.
 - There is also the temporal aspect of this word indicating a change that has taken place in God’s unfolding A to Ω plan.
 - The phrase “apart from” is χωρὶς (chōris) which means “apart from” or “without”.
 - The basic idea of this word is that something is separate from or independent of something else [Eph 2:12; 1 Cor 11:11].
 - The phrase “has been manifested” is a perfect passive of φανερώω (phaneroō) which means “reveal” or “make known”.
 - The perfect tense is used for a past completed action with present ongoing results.
 - This is similar to Rom 1:17 which uses a present tense of ἀποκαλύπτω (apokaluptō) in reference to the gospel revealing the righteousness of God.
 - However, this passage is describing how God has manifested His own righteousness to us.
 - Independent of the Law, God manifested His righteousness through the past completed action of the saving work of Jesus Christ on the cross.
 - The present ongoing result is that His righteousness is imputed to all who believe.
- *this* being attested to by the Law and the Prophets,
μαρτυρουμένη ὑπὸ τοῦ νόμου καὶ τῶν προφητῶν,
 - The phrase “being witnessed” is from μαρτυρέω (martureō) which means “bear witness” or “be a witness”.
 - Paul uses this word to point out the way the O.T. attests to the truth he is describing here.
 - The phrase “the Law and the Prophets” is simply a reference to the O.T.
 - Jesus used similar wording in His teaching [Matt 5:17; 7:12; 22:40; Luke 16:16; 24:44].
 - We see similar language in the gospel of John [John 1:45] and the book of Acts [Acts 13:15; 24:14; 28:23].
- even *the* righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ
δικαιοσύνη δὲ θεοῦ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ
 - The word “even” is the conjunction δὲ (de) which is typically translated “but” or “and”.
 - Here this word is used to continue the discussion on the manifestation of the righteousness of God.
 - The phrase “faith in Jesus Christ” is πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (pisteōs Iēsou Christou).
 - This can be translated “faith in Jesus Christ” (objective) or “faith of Jesus Christ” (subjective).

- Much discussion has been given to the topic of which translation is the correct one.
 - More and more scholars today prefer the subjective genitive translation “*the* faithfulness of Jesus Christ”.
 - The first argument they make is that “faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe” is redundant.
 - In saying this they fail to realize that “for all those who believe” emphasizes the universal offer of salvation to anyone who believes [John 3:16].
 - The second argument they make is that the faith in verse 25 is clearly Jesus’ faith, so it does not make sense to have faith in Christ here in this verse.
 - There is no reason, however, to insist that the word faith in every verse refers to Jesus’ faith.
 - The third argument they make is that the faith in Rom 4:12, 16 is the faith of Abraham, so it should be the faith of Jesus Christ here.
 - The issue, however, is what the phrase means here in this context.
 - There are examples of the objective genitive regarding faith elsewhere in Scripture...
 - Matt 11:22 – faith in God
 - Acts 3:16 – faith in His name
 - Jas 2:1 – faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ
 - 2 Thess 2:13 – faith in the truth
 - Col 2:12 – faith in the working of God
 - Given all these considerations and based upon the context, the translation “faith in Jesus Christ” is the proper one.
- to all those who believe; for there is no distinction;
εἰς πάντα τοὺς πιστεύοντας. οὐ γάρ ἐστιν διαστολή,
 - The word “for” is εἰς (eis) which is most often translated “to”, but sometimes translated “for”.
 - Here the normal translation makes sense because God’s righteousness is manifest to believers.
 - The word “distinction” is διαστολή (diastolē) which means “difference” or “distinction”.
 - The distinction between Jew and Gentile [Rom 10:12] is in view, so that is the best translation.
 - for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
πάντες γὰρ ἥμαρτον καὶ ὑστεροῦνται τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ
 - The word “sinned” is from ἁμαρτάνω (hamartanō) which means “miss the mark” or “transgress”.
 - This word is used frequently in the N.T. to refer to sin [Luke 17:3-4; 1 Cor 15:34; 1 Tim 5:20, ...].
 - The phrase “fall short of” is from ὑστερέω (hustereō) which means “lack” or “come short of”.
 - The basic meaning is to fail to reach some standard through one’s own fault.

- The phrase “the glory of God” speaks of God’s splendor that is a reflection of His perfect holiness.
- Stephen witnessed this glory [Acts 7:55] which will illuminate the New Jerusalem [Rev 21:23].
- being justified as a gift by means of His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; δικαιούμενοι δωρεάν τῆ αὐτοῦ χάριτι διὰ τῆς ἀπολυτρόσεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.
 - The phrase “being justified” is from δικαιώω (dikaioō) which means “pronounced righteous”.
 - This is a judicial word meaning to be acquitted (declared innocent) in the heavenly courtroom.
 - The phrase “as a gift” is δωρεάν (dōrean) which means “without payment” or “as a gift”.
 - This word describes something freely given without charge or cost [Matt 10:8; 2 Cor 11:7; Rev 21:6].
 - The phrase “by His grace” is τῆ αὐτοῦ χάριτι (tē autou chariti).
 - This phrase is a dative of means.
 - The word “redemption” is from ἀπολύτρωσις (apolutrōsis) which means “release from captivity” and was used of purchasing slaves to be freed.
 - The word “which” is τῆς (tēs) which refers back to the word “redemption”.
- Principles of Romans 3:21-24
 - After closing his dissertation on the depravity of man by stating that the Law brings knowledge of sin, not justification, Paul began his explanation of exactly how we *do* become justified in God’s sight.
 - He started by pointing out that the righteousness of God has been manifested independent of the Law and the works associated with it.
 - This truth is attested to by the Old Testament Scriptures [Acts 10:43; Gal 3:8-9].
 - Our justification comes about not through works, but through faith in Christ as the righteousness of God is manifest to all who believe [Rom 4:5; 10:4].
 - This is true for Jew and Gentile alike – there is no distinction [Rom 10:12-13; Gal 3:28].
 - All of us – regardless of our lineage, background, financial means, etc. – are sinners who fall short of the glory of God [1 Kgs 8:46; Pr 20:9; 1 John 1:8].
 - It was the work of Jesus Christ on the cross that made it possible for sinners like us to have God’s righteousness manifest to us by grace through faith [2 Cor 5:21; Eph 2:8-9].
 - This salvation (justification, eternal life) is offered to *whoever* believes in Jesus [John 3:14-16; 6:40; 11:25-26; 1 John 5:1, 11-13].
 - When we believe in Jesus we are justified as a gift (without any cost to us), but Jesus Christ paid the highest cost of all [Isa 53:11; 1 Pet 1:18-19] for our redemption to be possible [Eph 1:7; Col 1:13-14].

- whom God made available to everyone as a propitiation by His death through His faith.
ὄν προέθετο ὁ θεὸς ἱλαστήριον διὰ [τῆς] πίστεως ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι
 - The pronoun “whom” is ὄν (hon) which refers back to Christ Jesus at the end of verse 24.
 - The phrase “displayed publicly” is from προτίθημι (protithēmi) which means “set forth publicly”.
 - In this verse this word means “made available to everyone”.
 - The word “propitiation” is ἱλαστήριον (hilastērion) which means “means of propitiation”.
 - The meaning is to be an instrument which is used to satisfy God.
 - The only other place this word is used in the N.T. is Heb 9:5 where it applies to the mercy seat (of the tabernacle’s ark of the covenant) where blood was sprinkled on the Day of Atonement.
 - A related word (ἱλασμός, hilasmos) is used in 1 John 2:2 and 1 John 4:10 to refer to Jesus Christ as the propitiation for our sins.
 - The phrase “in His blood” is translated “by His blood” in Rom 5:9 and Rev 1:5.
 - The word “blood” refers to His death on the cross, so “by His death” works best.
 - The phrase “through faith” could refer to the faith of Jesus Christ in going to the cross or the faith of the person who believes in Him.
 - Many commentaries prefer the latter meaning.
 - However, the context and sentence construction give preference to the first meaning – the faith of Jesus Christ.
- *This was* to result in the demonstration of His righteousness,
εἰς ἔνδειξιν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ
 - The phrase “This was” is not in the Greek text.
 - This is part of a run-on sentence in the Greek, so the NASB translators decided to break it up into multiple sentences for the sake of readability which required the addition of this phrase.
 - The phrase “to demonstrate” sounds like an infinitive form of a verb.
 - Instead, this is actually the preposition εἰς (eis) plus the noun ἔνδειξιν (endeixin) which means “proof” or “demonstration”.
 - The phrase which follows should be translated “of His righteousness”.
 - The best way to translate the entire clause is “to result in the demonstration of His righteousness”.
- because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed;
διὰ τὴν πάρεσιν τῶν προγεγονότων ἁμαρτημάτων ἐν τῇ ἀνοχῇ τοῦ θεοῦ,
 - The word “forbearance” is from ἀνοχή (anochē) which means “relief”, “tolerance” or “forbearance”.
 - We saw this word back in Rom 2:4 translated as “tolerance”.
 - The meaning here is a period of respite provided as a result of patience and tolerance of God.

- The phrase “passed over” is from *πάρεσις* (paresis) which means “pass over”, “let go unpunished”.
 - This is the only use of this word in the N.T.
 - This word is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew words *כַּפַּר* (caphar) and *פֶּסַח* (pasach) which are translated “atonement” and “Passover” respectively [see Lev 16 and Exod 12].
 - The phrase “previously committed” refers to all sins committed prior to Jesus Christ becoming the propitiation for sins at His death on the cross.
- looking toward the demonstration of His righteousness in the present age,
πρὸς τὴν ἔνδειξιν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ,
- Verse 26 begins with the same phrase we saw in verse 25 except the preposition *πρὸς* (pros) is found in place of the preposition *εἰς* (eis).
 - The preposition *πρὸς* (pros) is used here in the sense of “striving toward” or “aiming at”.
 - Relating to the “passing over” of verse 25 the translation “looking toward” is best here.
 - The phrase “I say” was added by the translators and is not really necessary here.
 - The phrase “the present time” is used by Paul multiple times in Romans [Rom 3:26; 8:18; 11:5].
 - Here it is used as a reference to the current dispensation/age.
 - The word “time” is from *καιρός* (kairos) which does not refer to chronological time.
 - To capture the meaning here we will translate this word “age”.
- to the end that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.
εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν δίκαιον καὶ δικαιοῦντα τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ.
- The phrase “so that” is *εἰς* (eis) which means “to” or “toward”.
 - This word is used in the sense of “to the end that” in this verse.
 - The words “just” is critical here in this verse.
 - God sent His Son Jesus Christ to the cross to do a propitiatory work without which He would not be just in forgiving (or passing over) sins.
 - The word “justifier” is a participle of *δικαιόω* (dikaioō) which means “justify”.
 - Christ’s propitiatory work also allows God to be a justifier of anyone who believes.
 - The phrase “has faith” is literally “of faith”.
 - The overall phrase would be “the one who is of faith in Jesus” which means he “has” faith.

- Principles of Romans 3:25-26
 - The crucifixion of Jesus was a public event for anyone and everyone to witness [Gal 3:1].
 - Likewise, the benefits which God made available through His death (the Salvation Grace Package) are available to anyone and everyone [John 3:16].
 - Jesus was offered up by the Father as a means of propitiation for our sins [1 John 2:2; 4:10].
 - Propitiation is that which satisfies – in this case Jesus satisfied the righteous demand of His Father for the just punishment due for our sins.
 - The penalty due for sin is spiritual death [Gen 2:15-17; Rom 6:23], so Jesus had to die spiritually on the cross for our sins [Luke 23:44-46; Jn 19:30; Isa 53:11-12] to satisfy that righteous demand.
 - The Father’s satisfaction with the work of Christ on the cross is eternal because the blood (death) of Christ, offered in faith, fulfills the Father’s eternal plan and purpose [Acts 2:22-23; Eph 3:8-11].
 - Prior to Jesus paying the penalty due for our sins on the cross, God covered over (atoned) the sins of believers in His gracious forbearance.
 - This covering over of sins was possible only because God is omniscient and knew that the Christ would one day bear our sins on the cross [Heb 10:28; 1 Pet 2:24].
 - Because their sins were merely covered over, these saints went to Abraham’s Bosom, not heaven, when they died [Luke 16:22].
 - Once Jesus had completed His substitutionary work on the cross, their sins could be taken away [John 1:29; 1 John 3:5] and Jesus could usher them into heaven [Eph 4:8-10].
 - Today we no longer have to go to Abraham’s Bosom when we die, but instead go directly to heaven to be face-to-face with Christ [2 Cor 5:6-8].
 - God, being absolutely and infinitely holy, could not cover over sins (past) or take away sins (present) by simple fiat because that would be unjust [Gen 18:25; Deut 32:4; Job 8:3; 34:12].
 - The substitutionary sacrifice of Christ on the cross was necessary in order to allow God to be just in forgiving our sins.
 - Since the penalty for sins has already been paid by the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, God is now free to demonstrate His righteousness in this present age in being the justifier of all those who believe in Him [Rom 4:5; 8:33-34; Gal 3:8].

- **Faith Apart from Works [3:27-31]**

- Where then is bragging? There is no place for that.

Ποῦ οὖν ἡ καύχησις; ἐξεκλείσθη.

- Paul asks a question here that he surmised his readers might ask.
 - He will continue asking such questions in the verses which follow.
 - The word “where” is ποῦ (που) which means “where” or “at what place”.
 - This word can be used regarding location or movement, but is used here in the sense of “where in our thinking/actions”.
 - The word “boasting” is καύχησις (kauchēsis) which means “taking pride in something”.
 - Here this word involves an outward expression of this pride by boasting or bragging about one’s superiority in some aspect of life.
 - The phrase “It is excluded” is from ἐκκλείω (ekkleiō) which means “shut out” or “exclude”.
 - This word means “make no room for” something.
 - Given the question of “where” or “at what place” we should translate this with that in mind.
- Through what kind of law? Of works? No, but through a law of faith.
διὰ ποίου νόμου; τῶν ἔργων; οὐχί, ἀλλὰ διὰ νόμου πίστεως.
 - The words “by” here are both διὰ (dia) which means “through” or “via”.
 - Given the context this question has to do with how one might be justified [Rom 3:24, 28].
 - The words “law” here are both from νόμος (nomos) which means “law”, “rule” or “principle”.
 - Here Paul is talking about the system by which one might be justified – works versus faith.
 - Paul could have used a different word here, but given that the next verse references the works done under the Mosaic Law, he likely used this word here as a word play in contrast with that.
- For we maintain that a man is justified by means of faith independent of the works of the Law.
λογιζόμεθα γὰρ δικαιοῦσθαι πίστει ἄνθρωπον χωρὶς ἔργων νόμου.
 - The phrase “we maintain” is from λογίζομαι (logizomai) which means “reckon” or “consider”.
 - This word involves coming to an understanding of something through careful thought.
 - The phrase “by faith” is a dative of πίστις (pistis) which means “faith”.
 - This is a dative of means which explains by what means one can be justified.
 - The phrase “apart from” is χωρὶς (chōris) which we translated “independent of” in verse 21.
 - This word is used in the exact same way here.
 - Here we have another occurrence of νόμου (nomou), but this time it refers to Mosaic Law.
 - Paul is giving his detailed explanation of his answer regarding the “law of works” he had asked about in the previous verse.

- Or is God *the God* of Jews only? Is He not *the God* of Gentiles also?
ἢ Ἰουδαίων ὁ θεὸς μόνον; οὐχὶ καὶ ἐθνῶν;
 - The NASB translators added the phrase “the God” twice to express the meaning of the Greek.
 - Paul posed these two questions to make it obvious to his readers that God’s offer of salvation is not limited to the Jewish people.
- Yes, of Gentiles also, since indeed God who will justify the Jews as a result of faith and the Gentiles through faith is one.
ναὶ καὶ ἐθνῶν, εἴπερ εἷς ὁ θεὸς ὃς δικαιώσει περιτομὴν ἐκ πίστεως καὶ ἀκροβυστίαν διὰ τῆς πίστεως.
 - Paul then answers his own questions to remove any doubt about the universal offer of salvation.
 - The word “circumcised” is actually “circumcision” and is a reference to the Jewish people.
 - The word “uncircumcised” is actually “non-circumcision” and is a reference to the Gentiles.
 - The phrase “by faith” is ἐκ πίστεως (ek pisteōs) which means “as a result of faith” here.
 - In verse 25 the phrase “through faith” referred to the faith of Jesus in going to the cross.
 - Here this phrase is a reference to the faith of the Gentiles who believes in Jesus.
 - The phrase “God is one” is a reference to Deut 6:4 – a very important verse to the Jewish people.
 - Paul now explains how that fundamental principle extends to all people, not just Jews.
- Do we then nullify the Law through faith? Absolutely not!
νόμον οὐκ καταργοῦμεν διὰ τῆς πίστεως; μὴ γένοιτο·
 - The word “nullify” is from καταργέω (katargeō) which means “invalidate”, “nullify” or “abolish”.
 - We saw this word in Rom 3:3 in reference to the faithfulness of God.
 - Once again we see the phrase “through faith”.
 - Here it is used as in verse 30 as a reference to the faith of the one who believes in Jesus.
 - Paul answers his own question with the now familiar phrase μὴ γένοιτο (mē genoito) .
 - We will translate this phrase as we have before with the emphatic phrase, “Absolutely not!”.
- On the contrary, we reinforce the validity of the Law.
ἀλλὰ νόμον ἱστάνομεν.
 - The phrase “On the contrary” is ἀλλὰ (alla) which means “but”, “yet” or “rather”.
 - This word indicates a sharp contrast with what precedes it, so “On the contrary” is a very good translation.
 - The word “establish” is from ἵστημι (histēmi) which means “set”, “establish” or “validate”.
 - To fully express what Paul is saying here we will use the somewhat verbose translation “reinforce the validity of”.

- Principles of Romans 3:27-31
 - Since salvation comes about by grace through faith, there is no place for bragging [Eph 2:8-9].
 - In terms of our eternal salvation, we are justified independent of any type of works [Rom 3:20-24].
 - In terms of the justification of the daily walk of a born-again believer, faith and works are both involved [Jas 2:20-26].
 - Salvation has always been by grace through faith alone, not only for the Church Age [Rom 4:1-3].
 - Because no Jew was ever saved through the Law, no Gentile was ever excluded from salvation by virtue of not being under the Law [Acts 13:38-39].
 - The message of salvation was always intended for all people [Psalm 67:1-2; Isa 45:22; 49:6; 52:10].
 - There is one God and one mediator between God and men (Jews and Gentiles) who provided one way of salvation when He gave Himself up as a ransom for all [1 Tim 2:5-6].
 - This truth of the universal provision of salvation is the central theme of the eternal hymn of praise to Jesus Christ [Rev 5:9-10].
 - Jesus did not come to abolish the Law, but to fulfill the Law [Matt 5:17].
 - Faith does not nullify the Law just as the Law did not nullify the Promise [Gal 3:17-18].
 - In our walk of faith [2 Cor 5:7] we do not nullify the Law but reinforce the validity of the Law [Rom 8:4].