

ROMANS 3:20-5:11 | THE CASE FULFILLED: A GOSPEL FOR ALL

ROMANS 3:20-30 | THE MYSTERY REVEALED AND CLEARLY STATED

Supplemental Resource: Romans Graphically Presented, pg 20

ROMANS 3:20-22 | THE PREMISE

Supplemental Resource: Romans Graphically Presented, pg 21

VERSE 20 – BLUE

NOTE: v. 20 also included on session 7

Based on the Gentile rejection of God and the Jewish failure to live righteous according to the Law, Paul is now ready to state that which would have been an utter shock to every Jew: **by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight**. In Romans 2:13 Paul had declared that **the doers of the law shall be justified**, but now he says there will be no justification in the Law. Paul is declaring a clear dispensational change, a revelation from God so fundamental that all the rules change from this point forward.

Paul speaks in the future tense, not past. Many theologians make the truth of verse 20 to be a truth for all times past, and thus create a conflict within the Scriptures. In James' epistle (prior to Romans), James said that **by works a man is justified** (James 2:24), and such was true at that moment. But now **by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified**. Note that the Greek word ἔργον [ergon] is used in both James 2:24 and Romans 3:20, and that the same Greek word is also used for **justified**, with the only change being in tense, James using the present and Paul using the future.

VERSE 21 – BLUE

Having set forth the basic problem of humanity, Paul here declares that **now** (a time word) something has been **manifested** which *solves the problem*.

Manifested is φανερώ [phaneroo]. Greek verbs with an -oo ending indicate a *bringing out* of the root word. Here, *phaneroo* is a "bringing out of appearance" since the root is φαίνω [phaino], *to appear*. The root is also the root word of our English word *phantom*, because a phantom is the *appearance* of the unseen. The importance of the word **manifested** is that it was *once unseen* but now can be seen.

When was this **righteousness of God without the law** manifested? At the birth of Jesus? At the cross? At the resurrection? At Pentecost? No, not until the Apostle Paul. Few in Christendom recognize or accept this premise, however. The recognition of this premise is the basis of **rightly dividing the word of truth** (2 Tim. 2:15).

Note that earlier the problem was one of being **justified** (v. 20), which the law cannot do (it can only make known the *unrighteousness*, v. 20). **But now the righteousness of God** is *made to appear*. The word **righteousness** is based on the same root as **justified**. So, an amplified translation of vv. 20-21 could be, "no flesh will ever have its righteousness brought forth by works of law, because law cannot do this. All law can do is point out unrighteousness. But now, righteousness of God is seen, and it is this righteousness that was **witnessed by the law and the prophets**."

VERSE 22 – BLUE

Paul expands on **the righteousness of God** as also coming **by faith of Jesus Christ**. The word **of** is based on the genitive form of the noun **Jesus Christ**, which is typically the possessive noun form. Thus, grammatically Paul refers to "Jesus' faith" and NOT "faith in Jesus." Therefore, NASB, ESV, NIV, NLT, NKJV and

many others are all wrong by saying *faith in Jesus*. Faith in Jesus is certainly important, but this verse explains how God's righteousness was manifested by Jesus' faith.

Though the modern translations erroneously change this to *faith in Jesus*, there is a clear and simple way the Greek could have made this declaration. Even in verse 25 Paul spoke about **faith in his blood**, using grammar that could only be translated as **in his blood** and never *of his blood*. Furthermore, passages like Galatians 3:26 and Ephesians 1:15 speak of **faith in** Jesus Christ, using the appropriate grammar. Furthermore, passages like Romans 4:16 use the same grammar found here to speak of the **faith of Abraham**. Perhaps the only justification for diverting from the correct translation in this verse is the preconceived notions of evangelicalism which trumped grammar itself.

Thus, the **righteousness of God** has been **manifested** (v. 21) through the **faith of Jesus Christ** and has been manifested **unto all** but is only **upon all them that believe**. This argues against the Calvinist concept of Limited Atonement (a concept made necessary by the flawed assumptions which are foundational to Calvinism). The argument against Limited Atonement is strengthened when Paul declares **there is no difference** within the **all** [of humanity] under consideration.

ROMANS 3:23-26 | THE PROPITIATION

Supplemental Resource: Romans Graphically Presented, pg 22

VERSE 23 – BLUE

The reason that **there is no difference** (v. 23) is that **all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God**. This is a universal condition but to build a *Total Depravity* doctrine from this is going beyond what the passage (or Scripture as a whole) teaches. Total Depravity surmises that *all carry Adam's guilt*. This passage teaches that **all have sinned**. Whether Paul has *all individuals* in mind or, more likely, *both Jews and Gentiles* (see v. 9), the truth remains that *none of us measure up to the glory of God*.

VERSE 24 – BLUE

The question must be asked, *Who is being justified freely by his grace?* Grammatically, there is only one possibility: the same **all** found in v. 23. This justification of all is given **freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus**.

It is extremely important not to stop reading at verse 24, for to do so would create a false idea of universal salvation. A universal justification and redemption is made available to all, but verse 25 clarifies that it is **through faith in his blood**.

VERSE 25 – BLUE

The reason that there is a universal **redemption that is in Christ Jesus** (v. 24) is because **God hath set [Him] forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood**. Those who come to God with this faith find Jesus to be their *mercy seat* (the literal interpretation of the word translated **propitiation**).

As a result of this **propitiation** there is a **remission of sins that are past**. The English word **remission** is found 10 times in the New Testament, but only here is it translated from *πάρεσις* [paresis], which means *to pass over*. This aligns with the Pauline-exclusive theology found in 2 Corinthians 5:19.

VERSE 26 – BLUE

God **set forth** (v. 25) Jesus as a **propitiation** (v. 25) in order **to declare his righteousness** (v. 25). Paul then repeats **to declare, I say, ...his righteousness** in verse 26 to emphasize another point: **at this time**. That is, the *now* time is a new declaration in a new dispensation. In **this time** God is **the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus**.

This "now time" is unbelievably different from the "then time." It is this fundamental difference that Paul desires to declare through the epistle to the Romans.