

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 3:27-30 | THE PRONOUNCEMENT

Supplemental Resource: Romans Graphically Presented, pg 23

VERSE 27 – BLUE

Since God has done the work of the now-offered individual salvation (v. 25) there is no more place for **boasting** because of the **law of faith** that now rules in this dispensation. Under the **law of works** there was that of which a man might boast (compare Rom. 2:17, Rom. 4:2, and Eph. 2:9, for example). But the **law of faith** excludes boasting because the payment (works) was done by Another.

VERSE 28 – BLUE

This **therefore** is a summary conclusion from verses 20-27, and states the new salvation, offered under the new revelation, in clear and unequivocal terms: **man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.**

In Greek the word **without** is an adverb, and **without the deeds of the law** becomes an adverbial phrase. The verb which this phrase modifies is **justified**. From our vantage point the shocking truth of this verse becomes lost in familiarity, but from the standpoint of the Torah observant Jew, the words **justified...without the deeds of the law** are simply the most shocking religious words ever spoken.

In Romans 2:13 Paul had declared that **the doers of the law shall be justified**, using the future tense. In verse 20 he speaks again in the future tense but now says that **by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified**. Then in verse 28 he speaks in the present, saying that **man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.**

The progress of Romans 2:13, 3:20, and 3:28 is as follows:

Romans 2:13	Romans 3:20	Romans 3:28
Under Law	Paul Explaining the Transition	Under Grace
Future	Future	Present
Works Will Justify	Works Will Not Justify	Faith Justifies

VERSE 29 – BLUE

Paul gives this concluding thought, which is an implication of the pronouncement of justification by faith. The concluding thought was just as stunning as the pronouncement. He begins by asking the question, **Is he the God of the Jews only?** At first, we want to answer a solid *No!* And in one sense, there is only one God, so He must be the God of all.

However, in the context of the dispensation of Promise and of Law, He was **God of the Jews only**. Consider passages like Genesis 17:7, where God enters covenant **to be a God unto thee**. God was God of all prior to Genesis 17:7, but at that point He entered a covenant relationship and was *their God* specifically.

Many prophecies after that point look to a future day in which God will be the God of *everyone*, but that is not the condition at that point. For example, Zechariah 2:11 says that **many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, And shall be my people**. To argue that *God was always the God of the Gentiles* is to argue that Zechariah and other prophets were prophesying that which was already reality (a foolish proposition).

In the Gospels, Jesus was not sent for everyone, for He said Himself, **I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel** (Mt. 15:24), and He instructed the twelve to **Go not into the way of the Gentiles** (Mt. 10:5).

So, from the time of Abraham, God was in an exclusive covenant relationship with the **Jews only**. But now, under the newly revealed mystery, He is God **of the Gentiles also**. Once again, we should not underestimate how stunning this was to Paul's audience.

VERSE 30 – BLUE

Unlike the old reality, expressed in Ephesians 2:12, in which Gentiles were **without hope**, now God is justifying both Jew and Gentile under one criteria: **faith**. He is thus God **of the Gentiles also** (v. 29).

There has been much speculation about the significance of the fact that the Jews are justified **by faith** while the Gentiles are **through faith**. I think it is likely that there is no measurable theological difference in the two terms, but that Paul is using them synonymously, simply using two words for rhetorical purposes.

ROMANS 3:31-4:25 | ADDRESSING THE SHOCK

Supplemental Resource, Romans Graphically Presented, pg. 20

ROMANS 3:31-4:8 | THE LAW DOES NOT PROHIBIT A FAITH PROMISE

Supplemental Resource, Romans Graphically Presented, pg. 24

VERSE 31 – BLACK

The habitual error in interpretation of this passage is taking the pronoun **we** to be "all of us who are saved by faith." But in the book of Romans, the default interpretation of **we** is *those of the Apostolic order* (see note on Romans 1:5). Are the Apostles who, along with Paul accepted this revelation of justification by faith making **void the law**? Paul answers with a firm **God forbid**.

In fact, Paul says, that **we establish the law**. Clearly the word is not used in a *creative* way (for the Law was established on Mt. Sinai), but rather an *affirmative* manner, setting the law *beyond dispute*.

Let's consider the Law as taught by "standard evangelicals," by whom it is taught simply as a teacher of right and wrong, and an instrument that could not justify. Instead, justification was always *by faith* (according to the common thinking). But what does this do to the law? It *weakens* it. Paul says that by separating law from grace the Apostles **establish the law**, giving it its separate identity.

Dispensationalism *should* do this same thing, for it recognizes a dispensation of Law and another of Grace. Doing so establishes real meaning to **the law**. Sadly, modern dispensationalism has largely lost the distinction (and is dispensational in name only).

This verse, then, becomes an affirmation of the reality of the law for its time and place. In the verses that follow, Paul will argue that law did not have its place in the Abrahamic covenant, and to put Abraham under Law would *weaken* the Law rather than establish it.

Paul has done a similar thing in Romans 1:16 where he testifies his confidence in **the gospel of Christ** (which, as we interpreted, was the prophetic Gospel of the Messianic reign). He began his treatise with this affirmation of the Messianic Gospel as a way of saying, "the new does not invalidate the old."

I believe we should honor the distinct position of each dispensation (even in soteriology) or simply quit calling ourselves *dispensational*.