

Exegetical Notes - Romans 3:21-31

“Saved By Grace Through Faith”

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Romans 3:21-31

Verses 21-24

But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify.²² This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile,²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,²⁴ and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

- Scripturally, “righteousness” is used in three specific ways: (1) It refers to God’s character (John 17:25). God is righteous. He is without flaw. (2) Righteousness is the gift given by God to those who believe in Jesus Christ. This is the meaning used in this passage. (3) It is the standard of right living (Romans 6:18 and 2 Timothy 2:22).
- In these verses, Paul connects the Old Testament, which gives the law and speaks of Jesus’ coming, and the New Testament. Since it is impossible for human beings to become acceptable to God by keeping the law perfectly (becoming righteous on their own) God sent Jesus, his Son, to die to make us righteous.
- Righteousness, then, is God’s gift to us, an expression of God’s grace which comes to us through faith in Jesus alone.

Verses 25-26

God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—²⁶ he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

- Since we are the problem, “all have sinned and fallen short” (see verse 23), God provided the “sacrifice of atonement.” As the Old Testament required

the sacrifice of a lamb to atone for sin, so God sent his only begotten Son, Jesus, to be THE sacrifice for sin. God provided the Lamb.

- God did this to prove his own character. He is righteous. Therefore, the penalty for sin & rebellion against him, death, had to be paid. So HE PAID IT!
- But just as the Hebrew children in Egypt had to spread the blood of the Passover lamb on their doorposts, trusting by faith that the blood of the lamb would save them, so we must accept the act of God in Jesus by faith trusting that his blood alone will save us. Thus, we are made righteous before God by trusting Jesus.

Verses 27-31

Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. Because of what law? The law that requires works? No, because of the law that requires faith. ²⁸ For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law. ²⁹ Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, ³⁰ since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith. ³¹ Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.

- Paul's resounding conclusion is the Gospel, the good news. All people, Jew and non-Jew are saved by God's grace through faith in Jesus. There is no other way to be saved!
- People should still strive to set a "right example" by following the moral law of God, knowing that they will fail but desiring to please God. So the law is not nullified. But works of the law cannot save us or make us righteous.
- We are saved by having faith in Jesus! Jesus is the expression of God's grace, and righteousness is God's gift to us received by faith in Jesus.

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