

GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR MAN FROM START TO FINISH

Part III: God's Righteousness Imputed To Man, Romans 3:21-5:21

A. God's Righteousness Graciously Provided In Justification By Faith (Romans 3:21-31)

I. Introduction

- A. Having established in Romans 1:18-3:20 that all men in themselves stand hopelessly condemned before a perfectly righteous God, Paul discussed how God imputes Christ's righteousness to believers as a gift by faith.
- B. This infinitely magnanimous transaction is explained in Romans 3:21-31, and we view it for our edification:

II. God's Righteousness Graciously Provided In Justification By Faith, Romans 3:21-31.

- A. In great contrast to the way the Law could only condemn all men as it only exposed their sin (Romans 3:20), Paul taught that the righteousness of God Himself on behalf of men had been made known apart from the Law in circumventing its condemnation, a fact even testified by the Hebrew Scriptures themselves, Romans 3:21!
- B. Having shocked his Hebrew readers about this different access to righteousness, even **GOD'S** righteousness, Paul explained that this divine righteousness was through faith in Jesus Christ unto all who believed, be they pagan, moral or Jewish in heritage, for there was no difference between these classes of men in the spiritual realm since all of them stood condemned in themselves before God, Romans 3:22.
- C. Paul then described **how** this righteousness from God comes into sinful man's possession, Romans 3:23-26:
 - 1. It is noteworthy to recall that as taught back in Romans 1:18-3:20, all men, pagan, moral and Jewish, have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, Romans 3:23. This is the starting point of God's saving program!
 - 2. However, such men are justified, that is, pronounced righteous by God literally "as a free gift" (*dorean*, Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 451) by God's grace, His unmerited favor, through the redemption, the "ransom payment" (*apolytrosis*) that is in Christ Jesus, Romans 3:24; Ibid.
 - 3. To explain this "ransom payment," Paul claimed that God had set Christ Jesus forth as a "propitiation," a *hilastarion*, what averts God's wrath against man's sin by way of God's wrath having been so fully poured out on Christ at the cross that God's wrath against sinful man is fully expended! (Romans 3:25a; Ibid.)
 - 4. The benefits of this "propitiation" is available by sinful man's expressing faith in Christ's "blood," a figure of speech for Christ's substitutionary death on the cross in sinful man's place to absorb the full brunt of God's infinite wrath against sinful man in His own Son Jesus on the cross! (Romans 3:25b)
 - 5. The work of Christ on the cross thus worked righteousness not only for one who today believes in Christ, but also for the removing of the sins of men that had accumulated in human history before the cross since God throughout the past the ages had anticipated handling such sins by Christ's cross, Romans 3:25c.
 - 6. Accordingly, God can now declare His righteousness in every way: (a) He retains His perfect standard of righteousness by having fully expended His wrath against man's sins on the cross of Christ, (b) but He can also in love graciously pronounce righteous him who trusts in Jesus! (Rom. 3:26) Both the righteousness and the love of God have met together in perfect harmony at the cross of Christ to the glory of God!
- D. The question is then raised about the issue of boasting on man's behalf simply because he is justified by God, but Paul immediately answers that boasting by any and all men is utterly excluded, Romans 3:27a.
- E. What excludes man's boasting is not only the law of works, for works could only condemn man (Romans 3:30), making it impossible for man to boast, but the law of faith also excludes boasting though it leads to the justification of sinful men, for the route of faith only glorifies God for His grace, not sinful man, Rom. 3:27b.
- F. Accordingly, Paul concluded that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the Law, that God is God not only of the Jew, but also of the Gentile since it is one God who will justify circumcised Jews by faith and uncircumcised Gentiles through faith, Romans 3:28-30. God deals with all men on the equal basis of grace.
- G. Paul anticipated the objection of his Jewish readers who might respond that he made the Law void through teaching justification by faith, but Paul replied that he rather established God's Law, Romans 3:31. "The purpose of the Mosaic Law is fulfilled and its place in God's total plan is confirmed when it leads an individual to faith in Jesus Christ (cf. v. 20; Gal. 3:23-25)." (Ibid., p. 452)

Lesson: *In getting the whole world to be utterly condemned before Himself by means of the Law, God then expended His wrath on His Son, Jesus Christ on the cross, freeing Himself to justify any who believe in Christ.*

Application: *(1) May we rejoice in the gift of God's salvation to us by faith in Jesus Christ. (2) May we also realize that there is no meritorious work we can add to faith for justification, for the Law only condemns all such works!*