



A Divine Dilemma

Romans 3:21-26

TO: THE CAPITOL COMMUNITY

FROM: DAN MADISON

DATE: April 2010

Man has expertise in many areas of life, including business and politics. Righteousness, however, is not an area where man excels. In fact, Scripture tells us that “There is none righteous, no, not one.” (Rom 3:10) Righteousness is the business of God. Have you ever stopped to contemplate how righteousness works? By that I mean, how does a holy and just God redeem fallen man? 18th century German commentator Johann Bangel calls this “The Supreme Paradox of the Gospel.”

I. INTRODUCTION

The section of Scripture before us has been called “the very heart of the book of Romans.” Donald Gray Barnhouse called these verses “The heart of the Bible” and reformer Martin Luther labeled them as “the marrow of theology.” God’s entire gospel is here—**all of it** and in a way found nowhere else in the Word of God¹. Here we find the answer for the self-righteous (all have sinned), the self-sacrificing (God provides the sacrifice), the self-condemning (all can receive righteousness), and the self-sufficient² (boasting is excluded vv. 27-31).

We have previously seen that the righteousness of God is revealed in the Gospel (Rom. 1:17), and His righteousness is demonstrated in His judgment of sin (Rom. 1:18-3:20). Now we will see His Righteousness demonstrated by His provision for man’s salvation—when the penalty for men’s sin was borne by our Lord Jesus Christ, who suffered God’s righteous wrath in man’s place.

II. RIGHTEOUSNESS PROVIDED (ROMANS 3:21-22)

^{NKJ} Romans 3:21 But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,²² even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference;

Righteousness of God is the key to Romans:

- GOD IS THE CENTER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS
- GOD IS THE SOURCE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS
- GOD IS THE STREAM OF RIGHTEOUSNESS OVERFLOWING
- GOD IS RIGHTEOUSNESS
- GOD DEMANDS RIGHTEOUSNESS
- GOD PROVIDED RIGHTEOUSNESS

If these statements are understood, then the whole gospel will be understood. If not, then the gospel can never be understood³.

Query: What kinds of heresies come from a failure to understand that **God is all righteousness**?

- **THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD HAS BEEN DECLARED/REVEALED.**
(Romans 1:17; 1 Corth. 15:3-4)

Revealed= *phanēroō*, to *render apparent* — appear, manifestly declare, (make) manifest; show (self).

Notice that this is a righteousness that ***is without the law: i.e. apart from the law.*** Even so the law and the prophets both bore witness to it. The whole sacrificial system bore witness to the righteousness of God in Christ, as did the prophets and patriarchs.

1. The sacrificial system
2. The prophets witness (Is. 53:4-6)
3. Abraham as proof that this righteousness is without the law. (Rom. 4:3)
4. David as an example (Romans 4:6-8)

III. RIGHTEOUSNESS NEEDED (ROMANS 3:23)

^{NKJ} Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

This statement presents to us God’s verdict as to the universality of sin, the nature of man’s shortcomings, and the goal which he has failed to reach. **All fall short!**

No amount of rationalization will change the fact that humanity has failed to abide by the standard of God.

All in the Capitol Community are Welcome to be a Part of Regular Bible Study and Fellowship

RENO SATELLITE STUDY-2ND TUESDAY OF THE MONTH

CARSON CITY SATELLITE STUDY-2ND WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH

LAS VEGAS SATELLITE STUDY-3RD TUESDAY OF THE MONTH

WWW.CAPMIN.ORG

DAN.MADISON@CAPMIN.ORG

CAPITOL MINISTRIES, NEVADA OFFICE

1894 HWY. 50 EAST #4-117

CARSON CITY, NV 89701

PHONE (775) 842-0765





A Divine Dilemma

Romans 3:21-26

IV. RIGHTEOUSNESS BESTOWED (ROMANS 3:24)

NKJ Romans 3:24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

The righteousness of God is demonstrated in Justification by faith.

Justification: dikaiōō— to render (i.e. show or regard as) just or innocent: — free, justify (-ier), be righteous.

“Justification” is a word used to describe what happens when God declares the guilty “not guilty.” He declares the guilty, clean. He declares the bound, free. The sinner is no more righteous or clean the moment after justification as he was the moment before, it is simply a change in standing; a change in relationship or position⁴.

Freely: dōrēa, a *gratuity*: — gift.

Justified freely by His grace, what a thrilling statement! Not by works, good intentions, gifts, or prayers, but freely by His grace alone⁵.

The NASB makes the point: **Romans 3:24** “*being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;*”

Query: Paul speaks of “the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” What is the idea behind “redemption”, and how would you explain it to a non-believer?

V. RIGHTEOUSNESS DECLARED (ROMANS 3:25-26)

NKJ Romans 3:25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,²⁶ to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Propitiation: hilastērion, **means of forgiveness, a sacrifice of atonement, place of forgiveness, atonement cover;**

Forbearance: anōchē, *self-restraint, tolerance.*

We see here that in the ages before the full revelation of the Gospel of Christ, God appeared to be unjust in “passing over” the sins of mankind and

forgiving such people as Noah, Abraham, and Enoch. True, He did send wrath in some cases; but generations of sinners seemed to escape the judgment of God. How was God able to do his? Because He knew at the cross, He would give a full display of His wrath against sin, and yet through Christ’s death provide redemption for sins that had merely been “covered” by the blood of bulls and goats (Heb. 9-10)⁶.

The over arching idea here is that God justifies the wicked **by being both the judge and the sacrifice.** Jesus left heaven to dwell among us and die for us. “How is that possible?” “How could he pay the price for all of our sins when He was only on the Cross for a few hours?” Revelation 13:8 tells us that “...He (Jesus) was slain from the foundation of the world.” Thus, to a mysterious degree, His punishment for our individual sins, and for the sins of the world collectively, was, and is, eternal. All of this comes at a cost that is incalculable⁷.

VI. CONCLUSION/APPLICATION

F.F. Bruce summarizes nicely by noting, “Paul has thus pressed into service the language of the law (‘justified’), the slave-market (‘redemption’) and the altar (‘propitiation-expiation’ ‘atoning sacrifice’) in the attempt to do justice to the fullness of God’s gracious act in Christ. Pardon, liberation, atonement—all are made available to men and women by His free initiative and may be appropriated by faith⁸”

When we choose to look at salvation from a merely human perspective, we see salvation from the standpoint of what it does for us. God becomes the One who “meets our needs.” While God does meet our needs, the focus is all wrong. At its core, this focus is selfish and self-centered. God, as the Giver should not be our focus, **but God as the Gift.** He is to be our great reward and not just our rewarder⁹.

¹ McClain, Alva, *Romans, The Gospel of God’s grace* (BMH Books, Winona Lake, IN, ©1973 by the Moody Bible Institute) p101

² Anders, Max, *Holman New Testament Commentary Romans* (Broadman & Holman, Nashville, ©2000) p102

³ Barnhouse, Donald Grey, *God’s Remedy* (Evangelical Foundation, Philadelphia, ©1959) p8

⁴ MacArthur, John, *Bible Study Notes on Romans 3:21-26*

⁵ Wiersbe, Warren W, *Wiersbe’s Expository Outlines on the New Testament* (Victor Books, Wheaton, © 1992) S. 370

⁶ Ibid



A Divine Dilemma

Romans 3:21-26

⁷ Courson, Jon, *Jon Courson's Application Commentary*, Thomas Nelson, Nashville, © 2003) S.891

⁸ Anders, p111, (quoting Bruce , pp. 101-102)

⁹ Deffinbauch, Bob, *Justification: A Divine Perspective*,

<http://bible.org/seriespage/justification-divine-perspective-romans-321-26>

(Genesis 15:1 NASB margin)