

Romans 3:21-24

Righteousness Revealed in Justification – 3:21-5:21

Verse 21

But now – Paul uses this expression several times in Romans to introduce a sharp contrast.

Apart from law – There is no definite article in the Greek. This law would be the Mosaic code or *any* human code.

*“This is the astounding fact which no man of his own accord would have thought even possible, that righteousness is to be had by sinners wholly apart from anything like law (the Mosaic law or any other code such as human ethics presents.”*¹

The righteousness of God – Literally, ‘a righteousness of God’. This is not here an attribute of God but a *status of righteousness* given as a gift to sinners when they believe in Jesus Christ.

Has been manifested – To make visible or know that which was hidden or unknown, to make actual or realized, to be thoroughly understood.

Being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets –
The Law – For example the sacrificial system
The Prophets – For example Isaiah 53:11

Verse 22

Through faith in Jesus Christ – We are not saved by faith. We are saved *through faith in Jesus Christ*. It is the object of our faith that saves us. Faith is not a work! It is our response to the good news of the gospel.

*“For, as regards justification, faith is something merely passive, bringing nothing of ours to the recovering of God’s favor, but receiving from Christ what we lack.”*²

For all those who believe for there is no distinction - Just as there is no distinction between Jews and Gentiles concerning their sin, there is no distinction between them regarding how they receive salvation. All are justified by faith alone in Christ alone.

Verse 23

Fall short of the glory of God – The definition of sin in the Greek

lexicon is “to miss the mark” or “to violate God’s law”. Our sin is an offense to God and holds us guilty before Him.

Verse 24

Being justified as a gift by His grace - Justification is a legal term. On one hand it means to acquit. On the other it means to *declare* righteous. Justification is not a change wrought by God in us, but a change of our relationship to God.

*“Justification describes a person’s status in the sight of the law, not the condition of his or her character. The condition of one’s character and conduct is that with which sanctification deals.”*³

As a gift by His grace - Gift = *dorean* - which means “freely”, “undeservedly”.

Through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus -
“Redemption is an act of God by which He Himself pays as a ransom the price of human sin which the outraged holiness and government of God requires.”⁴

Redemption – Three Greek words:

lutron – To redeem or liberate by payment of ransom
“who gave Himself as a ransom (*lutron*) for all...”
1 Timothy 2:6

agorazo – To purchase in the market

“For you have been bought (*agorazo*) with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.” 1 Cor. 6:20

exagorazo – To purchase out of the market

“Christ redeemed (*exagorazo*) us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us...”
Galatians 3:13

Objective – Christ, by His death on the cross, purchased us in the slave market of sin and liberated us from the penalty of sin (Matthew 20:28, 1 Timothy 2:6, 2 Peter 2:1).

Subjective – The emphasis is shifted from the price paid to the liberation of the slave (Galatians 3:13, 4:4)

Which is in Christ Jesus - “Christ’s ransom price was sufficient for all mankind and provisionally available to all, but the liberation has been effectual only for those who believe.”⁵

³ Thomas Constable, *Romans*, www.soniclight.org, p. 39.

⁴ Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology, Vol III*, Dallas Seminary Press, 1948, p. 88.

⁵ C. Gordon Olson, *Getting The Gospel Right*, Global Gospel Publishers, Cedar Knolls, New Jersey, 2005, p. 63.

¹ R.C. H. Lenski, *St. Paul’s Epistle To The Romans*, Augsburg Publishing, Minneapolis, MN, 1936, p.246.

² John Calvin quoted by David R. Anderson, *Free Grace Soteriology*, Xulon Press, 2010, p. 164.