

RIGHTEOUSNESS COMES ONLY THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST

Romans 3: 21-26

OR "THE MANNER BY WHICH SINFUL MANKIND OBTAINS RIGHTEOUSNESS ... IS ON BASIS OF CHRIST BLOOD BY MEANS OF FAITH"

Exegetical Idea: The purpose of justification by faith... is to show that God is righteous in His method of salvation.

Introduction: Having used six Old Testament quotations in the previous eleven verses to show the general sinfulness of men, Paul now proceeds to show the true way of acceptance with God. The way is through faith in Jesus Christ, regardless of whether one is Jew or Gentile, and Paul regards it as vital that God's system is a just and righteous system.

Verse 21: *Nυνὶ δὲ* ^{η λογικὴ ἢ τὸ ἀποκάλυψ?} "but now", introduces this verse showing the contrast of this righteousness of God with the supposed legal obedience spoken of in verse 20. *δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ* is best translated "a righteousness from God" (NIV, Robertson, Grammar, 781), the article being absent. God's method of justification involves an unearnable righteousness and one which is attained, hence *χωρὶς νόμου*; (Hodge, p. 88, feels this is the equivalent of *χωρὶς ἔργων νόμου* in Gal. 2:16). *μαρτυρούμενη* "being witnessed" is in the present because the testimony of the Old Testament (the law and the prophets) was still continued.

Verse 22: The repetition of the subject with *δὲ* is used for special emphasis (Robertson, 1184), and we translate it "even the righteousness of God", God being the author. This righteousness is "through faith in Jesus Christ", noting the objective genitive (F.F. Bruce, 102), of which Christ is the object. It is a righteous method of saving, for all who believe, no distinctions remaining. God's very method of saving through faith alone, manifests a most excellent righteousness and simplicity.

Verse 23: This verse, often quoted in evangelism, must be remembered in the context in which it occurs, *γὰρ*. It is not written specifically to unbelievers (though certainly relevant to), but to and about believers, reminding them of their history, and natural disposition. The aorist *ἤμαρτον* is used rather than the fuller perfect tense, and rather than a present tense, and is more forceful in its simple assertion of fact. Wallace (Syntax Notes, p.185) classifies it as a gnomic or constative aorist, stressing the fact of man's sinfulness. It is comprehensive, "summing up the merits and deeds of all men before God. Before God, all we are is sinful." *ὕστεροῦνται* is in the present tense though, and shows that while the sinning is as a past act, the "abiding consequence of sin is the want of the glory of God" (Hodge, 90).

Verse 24: The subject of this verse is the "all" who have sinned of verse 23. All are unworthy and must be freely justified through His grace by being bought as a slave out of bondage, to freedom. F.F. Bruce (p. 104) notes E. K. Simpson's comment that *ἀπολυτρώσει* and its cognates in the LXX are frequently used "of redemption by one who is under a special obligation because of kinship or comparable relation to the person redeemed- by a go'el, to use the Hebrew word (Lev. 25: 47-49). The idea echoes the covenant love so wonderfully prominent in Old Testament theology. *ὅσοις ἐδικαιώθησαν* ^{ὡς ἔστιν ἡ δόξα τοῦ θεοῦ?} *ἔρχονται εἰς δόξαν* ^{ἢ ἐξαιτίας τοῦ θεοῦ?}

Verse 25: This verse shows the second part of the Apostle's display of God's righteous plan of salvation. The grounds of deliverance from the law is the *ἱλαστήριον*, propitiation, the alternative means by which

usage of this word? ἵλαστον? why not subjective? usage of γὰρ?

usage of δικαιώθησαν? ὅσοις ἐδικαιώθησαν ἔρχονται εἰς δόξαν ἢ ἐξαιτίας τοῦ θεοῦ? ὡς ἔστιν ἡ δόξα τοῦ θεοῦ?

USE of υποθετο?
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ΔΙΑ ΠΙΣΤΕΩΣ v. 25 &
ΔΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΑΠΟΛΥΤΩΣΤΕΩΣ?

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God does away with His people's sin. Bruce (p.106) calls the word a substantive, alluding to the Old Testament mercy seat, and consistent with Paul's use of familiar motifs (also the law-court and the slave market. The word appropriately describes God's gracious act, and displays His own right and justness in method.

Verse 26: In the provision of Christ the propitiation, God's own righteousness is both vindicated and displayed through the attainment of that provision by faith. Again Bruce aptly offers (p. 108) "as the representative Man He (Christ) absorbs the judgement incurred by human sin; as the representative of God He conveys God's pardoning grace to men."

Conclusion: The way of faith, God's way of saving men, is open to all with out distinction. God is absolutely righteous in what He does, but also in how He does it. His wisdom is clearly manifest in the provision of a substitute in His Son Jesus Christ.

Theological Implication: While the problem of Deism was surely not articulated in the first century, the temptation to view God as removed and detached from man's problems is present in every age. The deistic claim that God is not personal or personally involved with men is well-met by this passage. A review of the vocabulary itself is relevant. The key theological terms used so characteristically by Paul speak very specifically of a God very much at work among men. God is interested in how men approach Him. He is in fact approachable, and His method is necessary to learn. A man's unworthiness is the first part. Free grace in the Savior is the second part. Romans 3 speaks very clearly to the deistic tendencies of this age.

GOOD EFFECT, MGIC! THE SYNTHESIS of your PAGE is GOOD.
BUT THE TREATMENT of MAJOR PARTICULARS is MISSING I FEEL.

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LETTING GOD BE GOD
Romans 9:19-24

Exegetical Idea: The manner by which God displays His mercy . . . is by exercising His sovereignty over all.

Introduction: Having just stated that the answer to the question "Is God just in what He does?" the Apostle now turns to the overall question of God's sovereignty. Moses and Pharaoh served as illustrations of the principle that God has mercy and withholds mercy as He sovereignly decrees, not as man wills it (vss. 16-18). Paul anticipates the next line of argument in the polemic, where he deals with God's motivation in the sovereign exercise of His mercy.

Verse 19: Ἐρεῖς μοι οὖν , "You will say to me therefore," the οὖν tying this section to the discussion from the preceding section. Two figures are employed here, first, counter-question and second, anticipation ("anteisagoge," and "prolepsis," Bullinger, 964, 981). Paul is playing out a hypothetical argument, dealing with the seemingly inescapable determinate will of God. Although the verb ἀνθεστήκειν is in the perfect tense, it has the force of a present condition and is translated, "who withstands His will?" (Murray, II, 31; Zerwick, 480). The objection then (as now) is common when dealing with the matter of reprobation.

Verse 20: The answer to the question is one of reprimand, not implying that the question is irrelevant, but rather inappropriate. The construction μενοῦνγε is rare, occurring only here, in 10:18, Phil. 3:8, and without γε in Luke 11:28, (MG, 628) where it invariably means, "no, rather," and corrects the self-vindication implied in the preceding questions (Murray, 31). As Murray notes, the answer appeals to the silence which the majesty of God demands of us. God is not obligated to answer to us for His acts. This is the evidence of His sovereignty. The contrast "O man" and "God" sets up the emphasis of the section. Man, in Romans, is the one on trial, not God. Verse 20b illustrates a personification (Bullinger, 867), and is reminiscent of Isaiah 29:16. F. F. Bruce adds (p. 195), "God is not answerable to man for what He does, yet He can be relied upon to act in consistency with His character . . ."

Verse 21: This verse continues the thought of 20b, ἢ , "or." The question here expects an affirmative answer, employing the introductory οὐκ (Goetichius, 230). BAGD (278) gives ἐξουσίαν as "freedom of choice," putting the freedom attribute emphasis squarely with God, not man.

Verse 22: εἰ δὲ is translated "What if" and reiterates the question of verse 20. The verse indicates God's restraint of His execution of His wrath, out of His longsuffering. His patience is evident. σκευῆ ὀργῆς , "vessels of wrath," is a genitive of direction (Wallace, 35), as indicated by the participial phrase, κατηρτισμένα εἰς ἀπώλειαν.

It must be borne in mind that in earlier chapters of Romans, Paul has shown that the wrath of God is earned by its objects, not arbitrarily handed out.

Verse 23: There is a great contrast in this purpose of God. The vessels of wrath stand in contrast to the vessels of mercy, *σκευῆ ἐλέους* (again, the genitive of description) but these are specially prepared by God for glory. The absence of God from the subject in the case of verse 22 does not neglect that God is still involved in the hardening, verse 18. Here though, God is clearly the subject both of the preparation and of the glory. With Murray (p. 35), "God's glory is the sum of His perfections and the riches refer to the splendour and fullness characterizing these perfections." The *ὥστε* clause indicates result.

Verse 24: This continues the description of the vessels of mercy. The purpose of God is to call out His chosen. *προητοίμασεν... ἐκάλεισεν* is somewhat reminiscent of 8:29 where the same idea occurs. The verse here speaks of the covenant promise, and brings the discussion back to personal application, out of the realm of the abstract. The verse ties back to verses 6-8 where the promise is articulated.

Conclusion: The section illustrates Paul's skill in anticipating and answering objecting arguments to stated Christian theology. Where he has an answer, he offers it, logically and Scripturally. In areas where he has little or no answers, he is not intimidated, but defers to the sovereignty of God. Here however, the answer to the objection is given: God is sovereign, do not be surprised by this! Rather, let us focus on His mercy and longsuffering.

Theological Implication: There are few places in Scripture more full of theological grappling than this one. The fear (and here charge) of God is that He is arbitrary and coldly determinate. Paul tells us that He is sovereign, but that He is also longsuffering and merciful. Those two attributes, so masterfully displayed by Paul's account of the purposes of God, stand as evidence against the proposed "cold-hearted orb, that ruled the night."