

## **Romans 3:21-25A**

### **Overview of Principles**

We see the Holy Spirit setting up contrasts for us in the first two chapters of Romans between God and man:

#### **Romans 1: Principles of Righteousness**

The righteousness of God in His wrath against sin (Rom. 1:18)

The unrighteousness of man (Rom. 1:18-32).

#### **Romans 2: Principles of Judgment**

Man's judgment is hypocritical (Rom. 2:1), and there *is* respect of persons. From Romans 2:3 we get the principle of *relative righteousness*.

The judgment of God is according to truth, and there is *no* respect of persons.

God's judgment is according to man's deeds (Rom. 2:2, Rom. 2:6-11). This demonstrates the principle of *absolute righteousness*.

(No one gets privilege, no one gets special treatment. Everyone is measured up against the same standard of perfection.)

The Law of Conscience - Rom. 2:15

The Law of Moses - Rom. 2:17

### **Romans 3: Principles of Condemnation and Justification**

Since God's judgment is according to man's deeds (Rom. 2:2, 2:6-11), and all have sinned, all are naturally condemned:

Condemnation - Rom. 3:9-10, 20, 23

Justification - Rom. 3:22, 24, 26-28

Justification operational through the Law of Faith

### **Operational Laws**

The Law of Conscience - Rom. 2:15

The Law of Moses - Rom. 2:17

The Law of Faith - Rom. 3:27

The Law of Sin and Death - Rom. 7:23, Rom. 5:12, Rom. 1:32

The Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ - Rom. 8:2

### **Romans 3:21-22**

*But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;*

*Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference...*

We saw last week that the Holy Spirit pulled extensively from the Old Testament scriptures to give witness to the truths the book of Romans is presenting. We must understand that with Romans comes doctrine that is *entirely new* in the context of God's dealings with man in human history. Thus the necessity to have prior revelation bear witness to this new information.

We saw that there *is* a righteousness contained in the Law (Phil. 3:6, Deut. 6:24-25).

This is not just limited to the “Old Testament” portion of the Bible, but is a “New Testament” teaching as well (Matt. 5:17-20, Matt. 19:17).

This is why discerning Paul’s unique apostleship and ministry, and the dispensation in which we live, is so important. What we’re being taught in Romans is revolutionary in the scope of the Bible. God has turned His attention to Roman gentiles, and is communicating to them a righteousness without the Law.

This righteousness however is not the perfect righteousness of God, but a mere shadow (Heb. 10:1, Col. 2:16-17).

This is why the Hebrews of old are held in waiting until that prophesied salvation comes (**Hebrews 11:39-40**). This is the salvation prophesied to Israel in the Old Testament prophets that they receive when the Lord Himself returns and sets up His kingdom on the earth, and they receive the promises made to their fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, through Jesus Christ as the Seed of Abraham and the Son of David.

It is at this time, when they are brought into that New Covenant at the Lord’s return, that they will receive that perfect righteousness of God that we presently have the benefit of obtaining *without* Israel or covenants in the dispensation of grace. Their “perfection,” as Hebrews 11 says, will occur for the Old Testament Hebrews, who obtained a good report through faith, at the same time as the “New Testament” Hebrews who obtain a good report through faith—they are all

waiting for a future “perfecting” and salvation. This is why Israel’s resurrection occurs when Christ returns (see Daniel 11-12).

(Notice, they must *obtain a good report*, through their belief in the truth.)

But now, Paul writes, the righteousness of God *without* the Law is manifested, and to this the Law and prophets give witness (Habakkuk 2:4, *the just shall live by faith*).

### **Romans 3:22**

*Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference...*

In the gospel of Christ is the righteousness of *God Himself*, which He accomplished through *the faith of*—that is, *the faithful performance of*—Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was faithful to the Will of the Father in every aspect and completely fulfilled everything necessary to accomplish the work salvation for humanity.

We saw the a similar construct with *faith of God* in **Romans 3:3** and saw that the very statement made there precluded the interpretation of the audiences faith *in* God, as it states that they were in *unbelief*, and then concludes *yea, let God be true, but every man a liar* (3:4).

This construct in Romans 3:22 is different in that it does not contain the definite article *the*. This lends to a more general understanding of what is being said, and, if not for the content and context, the argument could be made that this was speaking about the faith of the individual in Christ. The wording however indicates this is not the case.

The righteousness of God without the Law is now manifested, *even...* that is to say, the next statement is *even with* and *equal to* what was previously identified. So, the righteousness of

God without the Law *is* the righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ. They are one and the same.

This righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ is unto *all*, and upon them *that believe*: this means it is something offered to those who *don't believe*, and is given to (or upon) all that *do believe*. Thus, again, this is speaking of Christ's faithfulness to perform that which was necessary to wholly propitiate, redeem, impute righteousness to, and sanctify those who accept that work on their behalf.

The righteousness of God was accomplished by the faith of Christ, by the faithfulness of Christ, as we would say it today. Your individual faith could not produce or accomplish the righteousness of God. Jesus Christ accomplished that; and it was accomplished and is being offered independent of you. The individual can only access it by faith in the work He performed and accomplished, but you did not bring it to pass.

God revealed His righteousness *in* the Law; *but now* He has revealed His righteousness without the Law and that is accomplished through the work Jesus Christ performed in life, death, burial, and resurrection. And He accomplished this all by *lawful means*, that He might now offer it to us by.

This may seem like splitting hairs, but it's important that we understand *exactly* what Christ did *for* us and is offering *to* us, because that is directly tied to our position and identity before God; it is directly related to the issue of "salvation."

Now, it is *unto all*—meaning this offer of God's righteousness without the Law, by the faithful performance of Jesus, is an offer made to all men; whereas prior to Paul, the kingdom offer that was being made by Christ and the apostles was a specific offer relating to Israel's inheritance in their land and kingdom.

**1 Timothy 2:1-7** explicitly states God's will is for all men to be saved, and that this was testified *in due time*, and that it was for this purpose and at this time Paul was ordained a preacher, apostle, and teacher of the gentiles, that is, *the nations*, because, as we have seen, this offer is *unto all*.

And though it is *unto all*, it is only *upon them that believe*; for, Paul writes, there is no difference.

Romans was written after Israel rejected their third offer of the kingdom in Acts 7, in the one year extension of mercy, when they rejected the Holy Ghost and stones Stephen, during which

they received 3 offers, perhaps to mirror their 3 agreements to the Old Covenant system in Exodus.

We will see that there “being no difference” is a dispensational distinctive. Prior to Acts 7 there was a difference, and indeed the middle wall of partition Paul speaks of in Ephesians 2:14, the covenants and promises, are what made Israel distinct and were still intact. We will learn more fully of Israel’s unbelief, their fall, their present state and their future hope when we get to Romans 9, 10, and 11.

Presently, there is no difference, and if that difference was their covenants, then that means those covenants have been temporarily set aside.

### **Romans 3:22-23**

*Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:*

*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God...*

Man was created in God’s image and glory (**1 Cor. 11:7**). Through Adam we lost that image, which will be expounded in further lessons.

We learn that Jesus Christ is the image of God (**Col. 1:13-15**).

This is why He is called the last Adam (**1 Cor. 15:45**). Though the ministry of the quickening Spirit of Christ, we are being transformed into that same image, that we would bear the image of the heavenly—that is, the New Man, the Last Adam. The gospel of Christ is to restore man to the image and glory of God which he lost in the garden. Adam, and we in him, have all sinned and come short of that glory, and the doctrine that is found in Paul's epistles are the mechanism by which the Spirit of Christ is going to transform us into the image of the New Man.

### **Romans 3:24**

*Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...*

Grace is of course commonly defined as *unmerited favor*. In this context this is exactly what it means. Of course, the Greek word it comes from, *charis*, is alternatively rendered simply as *favor* itself, as *thanks*, and as *gift* in certain contexts.

Grace here in Romans 3 is the unmerited favor of God. We get this idea that it is favor that we have not merited from the verses themselves, and they state all have sinned, and there is no difference.

Beginning with verse 21 we have the righteousness of God without the Law manifested. Verse 22 begins with *even*, thus, equating the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ with that which is *without the Law*, and states that it is unto all and upon all that believe.

The next verse is an explanation of why it's unto all, and that is because all have sinned, and then another semicolon, meaning that all the previous information, though distinct, is again related to the next statement, that justification is given freely by God's grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

*Redemption* is simply regaining possession of something by payment. We see this principle elaborated on in the Old Testament Law (Ex. Leviticus 25:23-28).

Our justification comes through the *redemption*, or payment, that is *in* Christ Jesus. He Himself is the payment.

*Propitiation* is the means by which that *redemption*, or buying back, occurs. Propitiation requires an act, as the -ion suffix denotes action, that action resulting in making one party *propitious*, or *favorably disposed*, to another party, and we have defined grace as *unmerited favor*. This was accomplished through Jesus Christ's faithfulness, as that propitiation.

Webster's 1828 American Dictionary of the English Language defines *propitious* as:

1. Disposed to be gracious or merciful; ready to forgive sins and bestow blessings; applied to God.
2. Favorable; as a propitious season.

Easton's Bible Dictionary defines propitiation as follows:

*That by which God is rendered propitious, i.e., by which it becomes consistent with his character and government to pardon and bless the sinner. The propitiation does not procure his love or make him loving; it only renders it consistent for him to exercise his love towards sinners.*

This propitiation is accessed by faith in His blood. We know from Leviticus 17:11 that the life of the flesh is in the blood, and God gave it to make an atonement for the soul.

Implicit in this statement is the fact that we believe His blood, that is, His life, was entirely pure, perfect, sinless, and acceptable to God, that He, by His faithful performance to the will of God the Father, met every criteria necessary to satisfy and appease God the Father's demand for justice.

Remember the principle of absolute righteousness, that God's judgment is according to truth, that is, according to an absolute standard, that He will judge every man according to His deeds, and there is no respect of persons—this means that Jesus Christ, if made an offering for sin, must have been judged perfect in His every deed.

Propitiation->redemption->atonement  
Imputation

justification (?)