

(21) But now a righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the Law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it --- the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus for all who believe.

(22b) For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by His grace as a *gift*, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by His blood, to be received by faith.

(25b) This was to show God's righteousness, because in His divine forbearance He had passed over former sins. It was to show His righteousness at the *present* time, so that He might be just and the Justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

(27) Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.

(29) Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, since God is one --- who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. Do we then overthrow the Law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the Law.

Think on These Things:

- 1) Verse 21 states that there is a new kind of "righteousness" that has been revealed in the relationship between God and mankind. What is it? Can you recall what the "old" kind of righteousness was that the Jews understood and taught? (Consider its 'lack' of efficiency in Isaiah 64:6.) According to v. 22, how does one get the "new" kind of righteousness?

New kind? **It is called the "righteousness of God"**

Old kind? **Self-righteousness by perfect obedience to the Law of God (which comes from the 1st five books of the Bible, including the 10 Commandments and over 600 other 'rules' for life). Isaiah said that men's righteousness before God is about as good as filthy rags.... (See also Romans 3:10-11)**

How to get? **The "righteousness of God" is given as a GIFT to those who believe in Jesus and place their faith in Him. And, as with all gifts, it's not ours until we accept and receive it.**

- 2) How many people stand condemned before God as sinners (v. 23, see v. 10 also)? **ALL**

- 3) Is God's grace free? Explain your answer.

God's grace is free to those who choose to believe in Jesus and put their faith in Him for salvation. However, God's grace was not free for Him. He sent His Son, Jesus, into our sinful world to die a horrific sacrificial death on the cross, and, for a brief period, mankind's sin separated the Father from the Son. Think John 3:16 and Romans 5:8.

- 4) God offers His gift of grace. An individual believes God, receives the gift of grace, puts his/her faith in Jesus, and becomes "justified" (e.g., 'just as if I never sinned') in GOD the Father's sight. What word is used in v. 24 to describe this action on God's part 'in Christ Jesus?' What does this word mean in everyday life usage?

The word in v. 24 is redemption. Redemption broadly means to buy back, something given in payment. When we redeem coupons, we turn them in (or scan them...) to help pay the price for the item we want. God's redemption for mankind is only found in the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus.

- 5) God the Father “put forward” Jesus as a propitiation. Can you explain what propitiation means? See 1 John 2:2, 4:10 (same root word). A clue is given in Romans 3:25 when it says, ‘propitiation by His blood.’ As with animals used in the Jewish sacrificial system, it has to do with sacrifices.

Animal sacrifices resulted in God ‘passing over’ sins committed before Jesus came (i.e., former sins, v. 25). Now, however, something different happens when we put our faith in Jesus. Our sins are forgiven --- and forgotten --- not passed over, as God the Just justifies us because of the sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross (v. 26). Jesus was the sin-bearer for ALL mankind, and He is whom the Father sent into our world according to His Plan. This is the Gospel, our Good News! (Review Ephesians 1:7-10 and 3:7-11; see also Romans 4:24-5:1)

Propitiation is a very challenging word. In terms of God, it is a ‘sacrifice that God finds acceptable to remove (pacify) His great wrath against mankind’s sinfulness.’ God showed ‘forbearance’ or patience (v. 25) during the time of animal sacrifices that simply covered the sins of the sinners until Jesus came. They were inadequate to remove His wrath for sin. Jesus was selected especially for this need. As a God-man, He lived a perfectly obedient life, yet died anyway (the curse or sting of sin). His spilt blood is sufficient to wash away all our sins, and the only thing that satisfies the Father!

- 6) What will God not tolerate in heaven (v. 27, think of the Frank Sinatra/Elvis Presley song....)? See also Ephesians 2:8-9. Now we have natural laws such as gravity, physics, math, etc.... Paul says there are also spiritual laws for works and faith. How might you define the “law” of works and the “law” of faith as it pertains to being saved?

God will NOT tolerate... - **Boasting! Sinatra/Presley sang the song, “I Did It My Way.” That doesn’t wash for getting one into heaven....**

Law of Works? **My righteousness is based on how I have lived life. I have earned the right to heaven.**

Law of Faith? **My righteousness is inadequate (I’ve failed...). Instead, believing in Jesus, I put my faith in Jesus’ righteousness to get me into heaven. I haven’t earned anything but God’s wrath by the way I’ve lived, but I accept His gift of salvation through Jesus.**

- 7) On what basis will you stand justified before God one day (v. 28, 30)? **By faith alone**
- 8) The Jews are God’s “Chosen People.” Does God belong only to them (v. 29)? Why is this?

No. God created the whole world and all peoples. He chose the Jews because of the faith of Abraham, but not for their salvation exclusively. In Genesis 12:1-3, God said ALL the families of the earth would be blessed because of Abraham (not just his descendants). The Jews are His light to the nations (Isaiah 42:6).

- 9) Let’s summarize a bit. Everybody is a sinner, falling short of God’s standards and regularly violating God’s law. Those sinners who choose to believe in Jesus will be shown grace, redeemed because of His sacrificial death on the cross, and justified in the end when standing before God’s throne because the “acceptable and perfect” righteousness of Jesus is seen in us by the Father. Explain how this saving faith “establishes” the law (v. 31).

Who can go to heaven? Only the pure in heart (Psalm 24:3-5). The “Law of God” defines what is necessary to get into heaven through ‘perfect’ behavior. It also says to fail in just one matter in the course of one’s entire life, is to fail in all commands. Jesus, though, DID live perfectly. He also took all the wrath and punishment of the Father for everyone’s sin (the propitiation). So, if God now allows former sinners, now ‘believers,’ to enter heaven, it is because of the perfect obedience of Jesus!

People and situations I want to pray for this week: