



# PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

## ROMANS 3:21-31

### LESSON: RIGHTEOUSNESS THROUGH FAITH

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#### INTRODUCTION:

**3:9-20** <sup>1</sup>Paul has already charged that both Jews and Gentiles are guilty before God. Now he declares that all men are sinners and he seeks to prove it with references from the Old Testament. *"All are under sin"* (3:9). This sin reaches into every area of life:

- I. Our character - "There is no one righteous, not even one" (3: 10)
- II. Our mind - "There is no one who understands, no one who seeks God" (3:11)
- III. Our heart - "All have turned away, together they have become worthless" (3:12)
- IV. Our speech - "Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit" (3:13-14)
- V. Our feet - "Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways" (3:15-17)
- VI. Our eyes - "There is no fear in their eyes" (3:18)

Paul declares that "Every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (3:19). While it is true that God's standard is perfect, and that obedience to it would secure Divine blessing, the fact remains that in actual life no one is able to keep it (3:20). Sin has infected and affected every part of our being. But to say that, is to say nothing more than the historic Protestant doctrine of Total Depravity. It means that sin has affected every part of man's being; his mind, his emotions, his will, his intellect, his moral reasoning, his decision making, his words and his deeds. No part of man's being is exempt from the debilitating effects of sin. *"Total depravity"* means there is an evil seed inside each of us which may lie dormant for years, and pop up without warning. Wow!

#### LESSON:

#### I. ROMANS 3:21-23

**3:21** But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;—The words *"But now"* is very important. There was a time before, hundreds and hundreds of years ago, God had patience in that He put up with man's attempts at self-righteousness through the law. *"But now"* refers to an appointed time; a period in time for God to reveal, manifest, bring to light His righteousness. In order for righteousness to come, God had to do it without the law and the prophets! The righteousness of God is Christ Himself! Paul is showing them a better way to become righteous, not by the works of the law, meaning no human being is justified by the works of the law because the law could only show them the sin, not take it away. The Lord Jesus was tempted in all points as we are, yet totally apart from sin. This is righteousness of God, *"without the law."* The law fails in two critical areas:

Every time a man took his sacrifice to the Temple for a sin offering, confessed his sin, and the animal was sacrificed, he was testifying that he had faith in a righteousness that was not his own and it was a temporary covering for sin. Thus, the law bears witness to an external righteousness that God provided, but the law itself could not provide.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/romans-39/>  
<https://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>





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1. The law does not allow disobedience. It requires obedience. Anyone who disobeys the law becomes a lawbreaker, a transgressor. He's guilty and is to be condemned.
2. The law does not have the power to make a person obedient. It does not have the power to prevent a person from disobeying. It only shows a person's disobedience and inadequate strength to be obedient. It only reveals a person's inability to secure any righteousness whatsoever by self-effort.

Jesus is that righteousness, the perfect embodiment of God's righteousness. "*God's Righteousness*" means the perfection of God's character which God provides for man in Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus was tempted in all points as we are, yet He was totally apart from sin. It was at the cross that God's righteousness through Jesus Christ was made, but now comes to light first to the Jews and then to Gentiles without the law. Jesus was the fulfillment of the law and completed its purpose. So, when we come to Christ and are forgiven, the law is fulfilled. The law and prophets had witnessed to the righteousness of God. The scriptures referred first to Abraham. It signified God's plan. "*And he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him as righteousness*" Gen.15:6 and in Rom.4:3 says "*For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.*" This was a taste of God's righteousness to come for every man.

**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:—** The righteousness of God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. However, the demons believe and tremble, but it's to those who by faith claim the name of Jesus Christ. This Saving faith in Christ is a necessary part of righteousness God provides (Acts 4:12). Two words that stood out to me are faith and believe.

The dictionary defines faith as a strong belief or trust in someone or something. The scripture says, "*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*" (Heb.11:1). When people say they have faith, what they really mean is "I believe" or "I trust." But having faith is more than just believing or trusting, because faith speaks. Everyone believes in or trusts something. The scripture says "*Thou believest that there is one God, thou doest well; the devils believe, and tremble*" Jam.2:19. That's why we must have faith in the Person of Jesus Christ who brought God's righteousness (the perfection of God's character) to and upon all who believe! "*So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God*" Rom.10:17. The scriptures had spoken of the righteousness of God, now what was spoken, we receive Jesus by confessing with our mouths (by faith) and believing in our hearts (Rom.10:9). Faith is the action of what I believe. It's the activation of both together. Heb.11:6 says, "*But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.*"

All of us, whether Jew or Gentile needed the Saving faith of Jesus Christ. He is the perfect embodiment of God's righteousness. Scripture is clear in its declaration that righteousness is for everyone to believe by faith, whether Jew or Gentile. There is no difference.

**3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;—** All have offended God's holy Being, and have broken God's righteous law, and all are short of God's glory. Therefore, all are under God's condemnation. Instead of man expressing God, we express sin and our sinful self. Hence, man falls short.

Man was made by God in His image, that man might express Him—His glory, for the glory of



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God is God's standard for man. It means His excellence, splendor, brilliance, brightness, magnificence, preeminence, dignity, majesty, and grace. Lastly, Glory is light.

- John sees how bright the glory of God is when he has the vision of the New Jerusalem (Rev.21:10-11).
- Jesus' inner circle looks on at the light of God's glory manifested at the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt.17:1-2).
- Stephen sees the glory of God as he is stoned to death (Acts 7:55).
- Paul experienced the light of God's glory as he is struck down off his horse (Acts 22:6, 11).
- And Moses experienced the light of God's glory as he came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of testimony as the skin of His face shone brightly (Exo.34:29-30).

Although they saw and experienced the glory of God, they all missed the mark; for they all have the sin nature, just like us; sin is present in all of us, and this makes us come short of being perfect of glorifying God.

## II. ROMANS 3:24-26

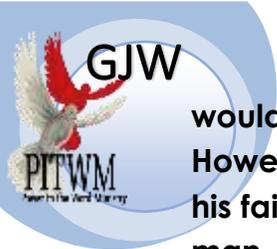
**3:24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:—** Our gift of righteousness is provided only through the action of God's redemption through Jesus Christ. His redemptive measure of His sacrifice, His cross, and His death brought it all about. Paul makes three observations about the justification of God.

1. Justification is a free gift of God. Being justified freely means being justified without any prior conditions being met.
2. Justification is not earned by man, but it is by God's grace alone. It is graciously given. You cannot earn something that's freely given.
3. Justification is only provided through the redemptive work of Christ. He bought us back; accomplishing it by the payment of a hefty price. It was by the blood of Christ (Matt.20:28, I Cor.6:20; I Pt.1:18-19).

Therefore, we are justified in the sight of God when the righteousness of Christ is placed upon us by the grace of God, freely and without cause. Only then, God views us as ransomed by the blood of Christ. Scripture is abundantly clear Redemption was brought about by His sacrifice, His cross and His death! The price was paid on that cross!

**3:25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;—** Righteousness is by an act of God alone. Jesus Christ is the One whom God had "set forth" to be the propitiation. "**Propitiation**" means to be a sacrifice, a covering, a satisfaction, a payment, an appeasement for sin. Three significant points:

1. God is the One who set forth Christ to be the propitiation for man's sins. "**Set forth**" means purposed, determined, resolved, and ordained Christ to be... God purposed and foreordained before the beginning of the world, that Christ was to be the propitiation for the world's sins. It is appropriated to the sinner by faith.
2. The propitiation was through faith in Christ's blood. For God to accept Christ as the propitiation for man's sin, the sacrifice would have to be a blood sacrifice (Christ's blood). This was something man couldn't work for, because if he tried, the wages



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wouldn't be counted as grace, but as debt (4:4). And this was a debt man couldn't pay. However, if he didn't work for it, but believed on the One who justifies the ungodly, then his faith is counted for righteousness (4:5). Jesus is the only Perfect One willing to die for man. So, we are to believe and have faith.

- a. It meant the supreme sacrifice Christ paid for man's sins.
- b. It meant the terrible sufferings Christ underwent for man's sins.
- c. It meant the voluntary laying down of Christ's life on the cross that caused God to accept man.

All of man's sins were laid on that cross.

### 3. To declare God righteousness: For and Through...

a. For the remission of sins that are past. In the Old Testament it was the blood of the slain lamb on the doorpost of the Israelites for the remission (pass over) of sins. The death angel passed over the Israelites when judgment came upon the Egyptians. God's righteousness is seen in that prior to Calvary, they were not permanently dealt with under the Old Covenant. The death angel passed over them. But now, God declares His righteousness without the law (3:21) in a propitiation through faith in Christ's blood (3:25) to atone and justify mankind. Christ died for our sins, and God accepts His death as the sacrifice for our sins.

b. Through the forbearance of God. God's righteousness is seen in the forbearance (restraint), that is, in His patience and longsuffering with man's sin. The sacrifice was necessary because God had not fully punished sin. God could have destroyed all flesh, but He kept eight in the time of Noah. God waited until Christ came before condemning sin in the flesh (our sins were placed upon Him).

Therefore, His forgiveness of sin through Jesus Christ declares God's righteousness!

**3:26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.** Paul is saying that Righteousness had to come at the right time and had one great purpose—to declare God's righteousness in Him being the Just and Justifier. Therefore, He always does what's right, and He always acts justly toward all of us. This is the reason God has provided a perfect righteousness for man.

1. God's righteousness is seen in His justice. It was necessary to validate the justice of God. He did the right and just thing as He accepted the death of Christ as the substitute for our sins, placing the punishment of sin upon Christ. And in Him being a just God, His righteousness is declared by His justice.
2. God's righteousness is seen in Him being the justifier of all who believe. God takes our faith and counts it as righteousness. He takes our faith and judges us acceptable to Him. That's what He did for Abraham! Therefore, all who believe in Jesus have been justified, thus declaring God's righteousness.

## III. ROMANS 3:27-31

**3:27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.** The answer to where is boasting is that it is shut-out. There is no room for man's boasting



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in the plan of God. *"What caused boasting to be inappropriate?" "Is it by the law of works?" – Paul answers, "No, but by a law requiring faith." If man could work to be justified, then he would have reason to boast. But, "we are saved by God's grace through faith, not of works." And why? – "Lest any man should boast" (Eph.2:8-9). When we consider that man is corruptible, and that man can do nothing beyond this life, then boasting is excluded.*

## **3:28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.**

Paul comes to the conclusion that a man is justified by faith alone, and not by the deeds of the law. This says that faith justifies a man without the works of the law. Why does God save us by faith alone?

1. Faith eliminates human pride.
2. Faith exalts God, not people.
3. Faith makes salvation available to all.
4. Faith admits that we can't keep the law or measure up to God's standards—we need help.
5. Faith is based upon relationship with God, not on performance for God. We are to believe in God and His righteousness.

## **3:29 Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also:—**

The question is asked and answered. There is not a god of the Jews and another god of the Gentiles. There is but One God of Jews and Gentiles. Paul is a Jew, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, but he is also called apostle to the Gentiles. God created everyone, therefore, He is the God of all, meaning Jews and Gentiles. There are not different gods of the races and nations of the world; not a different god of Africa, and a different god of India, and a different god for Arabs, and a different god for Americans, and so on. There's only One God who created all things, and He will be the One who will justify us. 1 Corinthians 8:6 says *"One God, the Father of whom are all things and we in Him"*.

**3:30 Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.** It has been proven that there is One living God, and He alone justifies the Jews (the circumcised) by faith and justifies the uncircumcised (everyone else) through the same faith. Faith is the common denominator in which the living God upholds their justification.

**3:31 Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.** The answer to the question of do we void the law through faith? That would be God forbid! We do not void the law. Faith upholds and establishes the Law! God is the One who established the Law by fulfilling both the statutes and penalty demanded by the law. Jesus Christ is the One the law pointed to and set forth as the penalty demanded by the law. He's everything that God said a man should be. Therefore, Jesus Himself is the perfect fulfillment of the law. He took the penalty and the punishment of man upon Himself, and died for man. Man is thereby absolved (released; freed) from the penalty and punishment exacted by the law. Now, we can obey God's laws through faith in Jesus Christ. He has fulfilled what the law stood for in which man could not accomplish himself. We do not disqualify the law, for it has accomplished what it was supposed to do—bring forth the righteousness of God by faith. Thereby, God's laws are established in our hearts by faith. The believer upholds and establishes the law when he admits he is a sinner—a law breaker. And in so doing, he admits that the law is good.



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- It's good when it points out our sin. The law reveals sin. It makes us uncomfortable and leads us to confess our need for help outside ourselves.
- It's good because it points man to Christ.
- It's good when we are obedient to it.

Again, Jesus was not, and is not, a destroyer of the law; He is a builder. He did not come to destroy the Word of God, but to free it from the way the Pharisees and Scribes had wrongly interpreted it. He does not release men from the duty and responsibility of the law; He fulfills and strengthens, and even enlarges the law. It means that a person is now free to serve God in the spirit and life of the law, not just in the letter of the law.

## SIN ALIENATED US

## GRACE ACCEPTED US AND FAITH ASSURED US

THE LAW ALIENATES MAN BY SIN	CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS WAS THE FULFILLMENT THAT BOUGHT BACK MAN
THE LAW SENTENCED MAN	CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS FREED MAN
THE LAW COULD NOT SAVE MAN	CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS BROUGHT SALVATION TO MAN

## SUMMARY:

There was a time with man's attempts at self-righteousness through the law. *"But now"* the righteousness of God, without the law is revealed, manifested, and brought to light, and witnessed by the law and the prophets. Even the righteousness of God comes through faith in Jesus Christ unto all who believe. There is no difference. All have offended God's holy Being and have broken God's righteous law, and all are short of God's glory. Therefore, all are under God's condemnation (**3:21-23**).

Being justified freely by God's grace meant that justification is a free gift provided through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. God foreordained Christ to be the propitiation (sacrifice) for man's sins. The propitiation was through faith in Christ's blood, declaring God's righteousness for the remission of sins that were past (in former times), through the forbearance (holding back) of God to declare at the right time God's righteousness, that He might be Just and Justifier to those who believe in Jesus. (**3:24-26**).

There is no room for man's boasting in the plan of God. Paul comes to the conclusion that a man is justified by faith alone, and not by the deeds of the law. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. The question is asked is He the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? The answer is yes also for the Gentiles is not a god of the Jews and another god of the Gentiles. There is but One God of Jews and Gentiles who shall justify the Jews (the circumcised) by faith and justifies the uncircumcised (everyone else) through the same faith. The answer to the question of do we void the law through faith? That would be God forbid! We do not void the law. Faith upholds and establishes the Law! (**3:27-31**).

