

Romans: Verse-by-Verse

Romans 3:21

Student Notes:

"... There are only two religions in the whole world: the religion of human achievement and that encompasses every human religion, they're all the same; and the religion of divine accomplishment, and that alone is Christianity." – John MacArthur

- Righteousness and The righteousness of God**

"Righteousness" -- to be right with God – to be in right relationship.

"The Righteousness of God": God's own righteousness – which in context means that God is good – completely good – as opposed to evil. He is holy, as opposed to unholy.

- The Critical Question:**

Job: "How should a man be right before God?"

We saw that humans can't be right through moralization. They cannot be right through only having the Law and the mark of the covenant. They cannot be right through their own efforts.

So how can they be right? Paul says, "But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness is given through faith."

- The Approach Of Human Religion:**

Every religion tells us we can be right with God if we do certain things based upon his human effort. It is always the religion of human achievement, the religion of works, the religion of self, the religion of human activity.

Or religion takes another tact; instead of trying to appease God we simply take him out of the picture and make ourselves gods.

- **Paul's Introduction of Righteousness:**

Earlier Paul said "A righteousness from God has been revealed." Now he says, "Apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been made known".

The emphasis of both statements – a righteousness has been revealed; a righteousness has been made known. Humans can be right with God – but not on their own terms; not by their own means.

- **A Review Of Man's Inadequacy:**

- Romans 1:18 told us, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness."

- Romans 2: When God holds his final judgment He will judge according to the facts: "Do you think you will escape the judgement of God?"

- Romans 2:11: "There's no respect of persons with God ... "As many as have sinned without the law shall perish without the Law, as many as have sinned in the Law shall be judged by the Law."

- Romans 3:9: "What then? Are we better than they?" That is, are Jews better than Greeks? "No, in no way, for we have before proven both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin."

- Romans 3:10: "There is none righteous, no, not one. There's none that

understandeth. There's none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way; they are altogether become unprofitable."

- Romans 3:20: "Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin."

The sum of Paul's statements: "All humans are under the power of sin. No human can stand before God and claim to right before Him."

- **The Old Testament Fallacy: "Righteousness Through Rituals"**

Some believe that the Old Testament men and women were right with God on the basis of sacrifices and rituals. That isn't true. They were acting on faith in the systems God set up for them – but God had to forgive their sin annually.

Micah6: "With what shall I come before the Lord and bow myself before a high God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings and calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams or ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"

There is no solution that mankind can devise and employ to solve the problem of sin. But all is not lost – because God has solved the problem from His end:

"But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known. "But now" meaning "at the present time." -- "At this critical moment in salvific history... a righteousness from God ... apart from the Law has been made known."

The impetus is with God. The impulse for solving our sin problem did not and does not rest with us. Man can't be right with God if he approaches it from the human side, so God has to establish it from His end.