

Romans: Verse-by-Verse

Romans 3:22

Romans 3:22-26 -- The very heart of the Book of Romans. Perhaps no passage in Romans better outlines Paul's whole thesis – that a righteousness apart from the Law has been made known to us – whether we are Jews or Non-Jews.

- **The Verb Tense Change**

A righteousness had been *made known*: Paul is thinking of a specific moment in time when this righteousness was made known. Note verse 25: “God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith.”

- **The Division of History**

The apostles saw the Cross as the division point of all salvation history. All human history is divided by the Cross: BC and AD – “Before Christ” and “Anno Domini” (The year of our Lord).

Paul sees salvation's history divided by Christ's birth, death, and resurrection. That is the true meaning of the words “Last Days” in the New Testament. See: Hebrews 1:2; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; 1 Peter 1:20; Galatians 4:4-5; 2 Peter 3:3-4.

When did this righteousness become known to the world? When God's Son became an atoning sacrifice and created a spiritual status called righteousness.

- **Righteousness “Given” – verse 22**

“This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.”

John MacArthur (again): "... 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

The righteousness of God that is offered because of Christ's atonement is the "religion of divine accomplishment". It is a righteousness that is apart from legalism and is built on revelation and faith.

This is a righteousness that belongs to God. It is a natural element of his God-character. But when applied to His relationship with humans – it becomes a gift of right relationship.

- **Righteousness By Faith**

How does it come? It comes through faith. Paul tells us what we need from God is the righteousness of God and it comes through faith. It's simply a matter of believing. See: Romans 4:4-8; 5:1; Ephesians 2:8-9

Look at Romans 4:20: "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief but he was strong in faith, giving glory to God and he was fully persuaded that what God promised He was able to perform and therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness."

How did Abraham get right with God? He believed that what God said God would do. That, my friends, is the whole issue. How is a human made righteous? "It is a gift of God, not of works."

Faith in God; Faith in all that God has said – Faith is what God has revealed.

God has revealed much more to us than he did in Abraham's day ... Moses' day ... or any other day. What does Hebrews 1:2 say?

"But in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the

universe.”

- **Faith In Christ**

Now I want you to notice that in verse 22 it specifically says “faith in Christ”.

Would you notice in verse 22 that it says, “This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe

This is not just a vague faith in God. It is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; it is a faith in his work on the Cross.

Is some kind of faith in God – apart from His Son – actually a “saving faith”? No ... it can't be. Lots of people say “I believe in God. Isn't that enough?”

Look at James 2:19: “You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.”

Salvation is far more than a vague belief in God. The demons have a very solid belief in God ... based upon eons of personal experience ... yet they are damned for eternity.

True saving faith has to be far more than a vague belief in God. Saving faith is in a person. It is faith directed at the Lord Jesus Christ.

When we needed God to come on the stage and turn the impossibly estranged relationship around, he did. He came in the person of His Son. He lived among us. He revealed himself to us. And then He died to restore us to himself.

Through Christ he offered us His righteousness. It's apart from anything we do. It's not by our works or legalism. It's what the Old Testament taught and predicted all along. And it's ours by faith – specifically in Christ.