

# Romans 3:21-23 Commentary

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**Romans 3:21** But [now apart](#) from the [Law](#) the [righteousness](#) of [God](#) has been [manifested](#), being [witnessed](#) by the [Law](#) and the [Prophets](#), ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek:** nuni de choris nomou dikaiousuno theou pephanerotai (3SRPI) marturomene (PPFNSN) hupo tou nomou kai ton propheton

**Amplified:** But now the righteousness of God has been revealed independently and altogether apart from the Law, although actually it is attested by the Law and the Prophets, ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**Phillips:** But now we are seeing the righteousness of God declared quite apart from the Law (though amply testified to by both Law and Prophets) ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** But now, apart from law, God's righteousness has been openly shown as in view, having witness borne to it by the law and the prophets (Eerdmans)

**Young's Literal:** But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify.

ROMANS ROAD to RIGHTEOUSNESS				
Romans 1:18-3:20	Romans 3:21-5:21	Romans 6:1-8:39	Romans 9:1-11:36	Romans 12:1-16:27
SIN	SALVATION	SANCTIFICATION	SOVEREIGNTY	SERVICE
NEED FOR SALVATION	WAY OF SALVATION	LIFE OF SALVATION	SCOPE OF SALVATION	SERVICE OF SALVATION
God's Holiness In Condemning Sin	God's Grace In Justifying Sinners	God's Power In Sanctifying Believers	God's Sovereignty In Saving Jew and Gentile	God's Glory The Object of Service
Deadliness of Sin	Design of Grace	Demonstration of Salvation		
		Power Given	Promises Fulfilled	Paths Pursued
Righteousness Needed	Righteousness Credited	Righteousness Demonstrated	Righteousness Restored to Israel	Righteousness Applied
God's Righteousness IN LAW	God's Righteousness IMPUTED	God's Righteousness OBEYED	God's Righteousness IN ELECTION	God's Righteousness DISPLAYED
Slaves to Sin	Slaves to God			Slaves Serving God
Doctrine				Duty
Life by Faith				Service by Faith
Modified from Irving L. Jensen's excellent work " <a href="#">Jensen's Survey of the NT</a> "				

## THE GREATEST ANSWER TO THE GREATEST QUESTION

**But now** - Always pause to query this contrast phrase. In this case it presents the contrast with "before" (Ro 3:22) where Paul made it very clear that "by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified (DECLARED RIGHTEOUS) in His sight; for (TERM OF EXPLANATION - WHAT IS HE EXPLAINING?) through the Law comes the knowledge of sin." Law was like a ruler or straightedge that you can place on something to see if it is straight or crooked. The "straightedge" of the Law is placed on fallen man's heart and the verdict is "crooked!" If such a man dead in his trespasses and sins has his eyes opened by the Spirit, he looks at the Law and looks at his heart and realizes it is "crooked" and he has a major problem. He thought that keeping the Law was the way he could "straighten" out his heart problem, but Paul says the truth is the only thing the Law can do is uncover the heart problem. If a person begins to feel crushing chest pains, he or she knows they have a serious potentially lethal heart problem. Do they just endure the pain and seek to do nothing about it? In most cases (there might be exceptions), they call 911 to send the EMS immediately. The spiritual parallel is that the man or woman who has discovered that he has a serious heart problem, seeks a solution and there is only one solution -- call the Great Physician Whose "prescription" is the Glorious Gospel which must be "swallowed" (received, believed) in order to cure the "crooked" spiritually fatal heart condition. And what does the Great Physician do? He performs a "spiritual heart transplant" and gives you a brand new heart, not even a heart from a donor like in human heart transplants, but a brand new heart that has never been in another person's body. The Bible refers to this also as circumcision of your heart. So where did I get all of the preceding pattern from? From meditating on the little phrase "but now," examining the preceding context and allowing the Holy Spirit to teach. That's why you always want to pause to ponder these great "hinge" words like but, for, therefore and so that, for like a door hinge, these little words can open huge doors into a room full of incredible Bible truth. Try it some time!

**Apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets**- What does Paul mean by "apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested?" He is simply saying that God has provided a way for sinful men to be made right in His sight and that way is without keeping the requirements of the Law. **Manifested** means that God caused this new way, this better way, in fact the only way (Acts 4:12+), to become clearly visible, even exposed publicly. Where? At the Cross! When? When Jesus died as the sacrificial Lamb to take away the sins of the world (Jn 1:29+). His crucifixion **has been manifested** and the great (good, gospel) news is that **manifested** is in the perfect tense, meaning that this manifestation 2000 years ago is a completed act/action with enduring, eternal effect! Another way the **righteousness of God** was **manifested** was because the One on the Cross, the God-Man Christ Jesus, was called the Righteous One, Who the prophet Jeremiah declared (**being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets**) to be the Righteous Branch of David (Jer 23:5, Jer 33:15), 'The LORD our

righteousness, Jehovah tsidkenu, (Jer 23:6). What does all this mean to a lost sinner today with a terminal "heart" condition, spiritually speaking? Paul explains that God the Father "made Him Who knew no sin (THE SPOTLESS LAMB - 1Pe 1:19+, Heb 4:15+, Heb 7:28+) to be sin on our behalf (cf Ro 8:2-4+ - THIS IS THE ESSENCE OF [SUBSTITUTIONARY ATONEMENT](#)), so that (TERM OF PURPOSE/RESULT - WHAT A GREAT, GLORIOUS PURPOSE/RESULT!) we might become **the righteousness of God** in Him (CHRIST). (2Cor 5:21+), "so that no man may boast before God. But by His doing (GOD'S SPIRIT CAUSED US TO BE BORN AGAIN John 3:3, 8+) you are in Christ Jesus (FOREVER), Who became to us wisdom from God, and **RIGHTEOUSNESS** and sanctification, and redemption, so that, just as it is written, "LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD." (1Cor 1:29-31). There it is! Not by keeping the Law does one attain perfect righteousness of God, but by God's Spirit and God's Son, our Jehovah Tsidkenu.

**THOUGHT** - All of this truth calls for a personal question and a personal response - Have you had a heart transplant to correct your crooked heart? Have you believed in Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, so that even "Though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow, though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool." (Isaiah 1:18+)? Have you been washed in the precious blood of Jehovah Tsidkenu (cf Titus 3:5-7+)?

[Robert Murray McCheyne](#) died in 1843 at the age of thirty, but this godly man left God's people with a great treasure in his memoirs and other writings, one of which was his poem

**"Jehovah Tsidkenu"**

I once was a stranger to grace and to God,  
I knew not my danger, and felt not my load;  
Though friends spoke in rapture of Christ on the tree,  
**Jehovah Tsidkenu** was nothing to me.

I oft read with pleasure, to soothe or engage,  
Isaiah's wild measure and John's simple page;  
But even when they pictured the blood-sprinkled tree,  
**Jehovah Tsidkenu** seemed nothing to me.

Like tears from the daughters of Zion that roll,  
I wept when the waters went over His soul,  
Yet thought not that my sins had nailed to the tree  
**Jehovah Tsidkenu**-'twas nothing to me.

When free grace awoke me by light from on high,  
Then legal fears shook me, I trembled to die;  
No refuge, no safety in self could I see-  
**Jehovah Tsidkenu** my Savior must be.

My terrors all vanished before the sweet name;  
My guilty fear banished, with boldness I came  
To drink at the fountain, life-giving and free-  
**Jehovah Tsidkenu** is all things to me.

**Jehovah Tsidkenu!** My treasure and boast,  
**Jehovah Tsidkenu!** I ne'er can be lost;  
In Thee shall I conquer by flood and by field-  
My cable, my anchor, my breastplate and shield!

**Pastor Ray Pritchard** introduces this great section of Scripture in Romans 3:21-26 with these words...

This morning we are considering the greatest question in the world—How can a man be right with God? It is the supreme problem of life. No more important question could ever be asked. Every sincere person asks this question. Every sincere Methodist asks, "How can a man be right with God?" Every sincere Presbyterian asks, "How can a man be right with God?" Every sincere Catholic asks, "How can a man be right with God?" Every sincere Lutheran asks, "How can a man be right with God?" Somewhere in the world this morning a man is offering a child upon an altar, hoping to appease his angry God. Somewhere in the world a man is cutting himself with a knife, hoping by his pain to win the approval of his deity. Somewhere in the world a man lies on a bed of nails, proving by his mastery of pain to prove his worthiness of eternal life. In the Middle East millions of believers (in Allah) pray toward Mecca this morning, following the dictates of their religion. In Haiti followers

of Voodoo kill chickens and place the carcass before a makeshift altar, hoping to cause God to smile upon them with good fortune. **Why? Why? Why?** The answer is always the same. The men and women who do these things desperately want to be right with God. They do what they do because they hope to appease God or to please God or to pacify God or to somehow manipulate God into favoring their cause. It is a totally sincere question, is it not? We all want to stand before God someday and have him declare us righteous in his sight. **That one fact explains most of the religious activity in the world around us.** From killing chickens to bowing to Mecca, from resting on a bed of nails to praying the rosary, from going to Sunday School to saying the Lord's Prayer, we do what we do because **we want to be right with God ... and we don't know how!** What is the answer to this great question? How can a man be right with God? To that all-important question, no answer is more satisfying than the answer given in Romans 3:21-26. It is the essence of the Gospel and the heart of the Christian message. (Click the link to read the remainder of the sermon - [The Only Way to Be Right With God](#))

Note from the chart above that we now enter the second great division of the glorious Gospel in the great book of Romans as we transition from the need for salvation to the provision of salvation...

## ROMANS 3:21-5:21

SALVATION

WAY OF SALVATION

God's Grace In Justifying Sinners

Design of Grace

Righteousness Credited

God's Righteousness IMPUTED

**Leon Morris**, a NT scholar says that Romans 3:21-26 is

**possibly the most important single paragraph ever written** (Ro 1:18-3:20) is thought of in terms of our need for righteousness, and (Ro 3:21-26) is seen as God's provision of righteousness to meet our need. Here Paul examines the doctrine of salvation from God's point of view. Man's salvation through God's provision of righteousness becomes here a secondary theme. The primary theme is the demonstration of God's righteousness, through His provision of righteousness for sinners. God is in the spotlight, not men.

**Pastor Alan Carr** - "Notice the little conjunction **"but"**. It denotes a change of thought. It stands as a worthy doorkeeper to the thoughts that will follow. I certainly was a ruined man, yet I thank the Lord that there is a change that has taken place and it is represented by that little word **"but."** Pay attention to those little words in your Bible (**Ed**: read about the value of observing and "dissecting" **terms of contrast**). Remember, even the largest door turns on a relatively small hinge! For instance, think of the great passage in Eph. 2:1-10. There, the word **"but"** shows up in a similar fashion. These few verses that we are about to look into now are jammed packed full of theological truth. Donald Gray Barnhouse called them, "The heart of the Bible." Reformer Martin Luther labeled them as "the marrow of theology." This is, perhaps, the deepest theological sea in the New Testament. We can never do them justice in the few minutes we have here this evening, but let's glean what we can nonetheless. Notice these traits about the new man in my mirror.) (Read his sermon [The New Man in My Mirror](#))

As Pastor Carr noted, **Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse** called this section of Paul's letter

## THE HEART OF THE BIBLE

**I am convinced today, after these many years of Bible study, that these verses are the most important in the whole Bible.** Understand them and you will understand the whole Bible. Fail to comprehend their true meaning, and you will be in darkness concerning most of Scripture. For here is the revelation of the being of God and the nature of His being; here is the revelation of sin and of the depths of sin; here is the revelation of God's righteousness and the infinite demands and provisions of that righteousness; here is one of the keys of human history and the explanation of much that happened before the time of Christ, as well as the revelation of the principles that were to prevail in God's dealings with men since Christ; here the mouths of those that would slander God because of His free pardon of sinners are closed forever; here is the vindication of the nature and character of God, righteous in all that He does. ([Expositions of Bible Doctrines Taking the Epistle to the Romans As a Point of Departure - God's Remedy - Romans 3:21-4:25](#)).

**Comment:** It is worthy noting that the venerable expositor Donald Barnhouse took THREE CHAPTERS in his book to expound on a single verse, Romans 3:21! We dare not fly over these golden words too quickly, lest we minimize or miss [or worse even dismiss] the power of God for salvation inherent in them!

In Romans 1:18-3:20 Paul shows the **necessity** of a God-kind of righteousness.

In Romans 3:21-31 Paul explains the **nature** of this God-kind of righteousness.

**Dr. Alva J. McClain** remarked that...

This section is the very heart of the book of Romans. **For this reason, all Christians ought to memorize Ro 3:21-26.** If someone should ask me, "Brother McClain, if you could have just six verses out of the Bible, and all the rest be taken away, which would you take?", I would select these six verses. All of God's Gospel (Good News) is there, and in a way found nowhere else in the Word of God. [[The Gospel of God's Grace - 1979](#)]

**Charles Simeon** said "IT is justly observed by our Lord, that "they that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." (Mt 9:12) Persons never value a remedy till they are aware of their disease: they must know their condemnation and misery by the Law, before they will receive with gratitude the glad tidings of the Gospel. On this account Paul labours through the whole preceding part of this epistle, and especially in the ten verses before the text, to prove all, both Jews and Gentiles, guilty before God; and to show that they need a better righteousness than any which they themselves can work out. Then he introduces that righteousness which is exhibited in the Gospel, and is offered to every repenting and believing sinner." (Read his full sermon - [Romans 3:21-22 The Believer's Righteousness](#))

But when He heard this (Mt 9:11), He said, **'It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick.'** (Mt 9:12)

## **"BUT NOW" GOD'S GREAT "ROADBLOCK TO HELL"**

**BUT NOW: nuni de:**

- Romans 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Someone has well said that the "*but's*" (eg see "But God" in Eph 2:1-3 and then Eph 2:4-6) and "*but now's*" are God's "*roadblocks*" to man's journey to hell.

**But (de)** is a strong adversative (expresses antithesis or direct opposite) marking a dramatic turning point from the **"bad news"** of man's guilt and condemnation which merits God's wrath to the revelation of the **"good news"** of God's righteousness now available to undeserving sinful men. See the discussion of [BUT NOW above](#).

As **Vincent** (and other commentators) points out that the "**now**" is...

Logical, not temporal. In this state of the case. Expressing the contrast between two relations — dependence on the law and non-dependence on the law.

**Leon Morris** comments that "**But now** may be understood **logically** (Shedd, Godet); it is then seen as moving to the next step in the argument, not the next point in time. Or it may be **temporal** (Patrick Boylan; Barclay M. Newman and Eugene A. Nida: A Translator's Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Romans), moving to the next point in time. Or it may be **both** (Barrett): Paul is contrasting what people knew before the Gospel came with what the Gospel has revealed (cf. Ro 16:25, 26). The argument of the epistle up to this point has emphasized that the natural man, Jew or Greek, is a sinner who stands under the wrath of God. "**But now**" God has intervened. The human predicament has been radically transformed because of the saving act of God in Christ, which Paul proceeds to develop. (**Borrow** [The Epistle to the Romans. Grand Rapids](#))

**Gingrich** writes that...

The trial is finished. We look for the judge to summon the executioner. But surprise! Grace! Mercy! The Judge informs us that His Son Jesus has already paid our penalty and that He, the Judge, is willing to forgive us and give us the gift of righteousness if we will repent and believe on His Son.

First, Paul presents the doctrine of justification by faith, Romans 3:21-26; then he states the excellence of justification by faith, Romans 3:27-31, then he confirms the doctrine of justification by faith, Romans 4; and finally, he discusses (one of) ... the consequences of justification by faith, Romans 5:1

In **Romans 3:21-8:39**, Paul reveals God's three-fold provision for man's three-fold need. Men need deliverance from sin's penalty, power, and presence.

(1) **Justification** [the *imputation* of God's righteousness = God's righteousness on me], Ro 3:21-5:21, based upon Christ's death, delivers from the penalty of sin;

(2) **Sanctification** [the *impartation* of God's righteousness = God's righteousness in me], Ro 6:1-8:17, based upon Christ's resurrection life, delivers from the power of sin; and

(3) **Glorification** [the *completion* of God's righteousness = God's righteousness in all of me], Ro 8:18-39, based upon Christ's coming, delivers from the presence of sin.

So, God graciously makes a three-fold provision for man's three-fold need. (Modified from Gingrich, R. E. The Book of Romans)

**MacDonald** - We now come to the heart of the Letter to the Romans, when Paul answers the question: According to the gospel, how can ungodly sinners be justified by a holy God? (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

Scripture has some other dramatic "**but now's**"...

*Remember* that you (speaking of Gentiles) were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. **But now** in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. (Ep 2:12-note, Ep 2:13-note)

For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; 17 and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. 18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied. 20 **But now** Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. (1Co 15:16-20),

Other dramatic uses of **but now** - [Lk 16:25 (Lazarus)], [Lk 19:42 - speaking of the rejection of Christ and destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD - Lk 19:43, 44], [Jn 15:22, Jn 15:24], [Ro 6:21, 22], [Ro 7:5,6], [Ro 11:30 - speaking of mercy to Gentiles because of Jewish disobedience], [Ro 16:25, 26,], [Ga 3:24, 25], [Ga 4:8, 9], [Eph 5:8], [1Pe 2:10], [1Pe 2:24, 25]

The dismal picture of man's depravity and hopeless state is interrupted by one of the greatest uses of the conjunction "**but**" in all of Scripture. How thankful we can be for this "*nick-of-time*" conjunction that signals God's merciful, gracious intervention to save man from destroying himself!

What spells "**Relief**"? In this case it is not "*R-O-L-A-I-D-S*" but is "**B-U-T N-O-W**"! This should bring joy to any downtrodden sinner's heart especially in the context of Romans 1:18-3:20 which conclusively proves all men are sinners and are accountable to God.

Why do we need a the "righteousness of God?" Simply put, because we have no righteousness of our own, at least none that is acceptable to God. You may be objecting "But what about all those good works that I do?"

God's answer - "Filthy rags"

This is why we all must remember Augustus Toplady's words in his famous hymn...

#### **Rock of Ages**

Nothing in my hand I bring,  
Simply to the cross I cling;  
Naked, come to Thee for dress;  
Helpless look to Thee for grace;  
Foul, I to the fountain fly;  
Wash me, Savior, or I die.

Beginning at Romans 1:18 Paul proceeds over the next 2 chapters, to show how "foul, rotten and corrupt" our manmade righteousness is in God's eyes and therefore how every man and woman, Jew or Gentile, is under sin and judgment and destined for "eternal punishment... into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels." (Mt 25: 46,41).

The mouth of every person created in God's image is stopped and without excuse. The Law of God has confronted the rebellion of man and the result is **condemnation** not **justification**. Paul has made it abundantly clear that no one gets right with God through keeping the Law.



**Frederic Godet** explains that God's righteousness made available to men deserving His wrath...

is presented as a new fact in the history of mankind; so that one might be led to give the word now a temporal sense; cp. the *at this time*, Ro 3:26, and Acts 17:30. This, however, is only apparent. The contrast with the preceding is moral rather than temporal; it is the contrast between the condemnation pronounced by the law (Ro 3:20) and the new righteousness acquired without the law (Ro 3:21). It is therefore better to give the word now the logical meaning which it has so frequently in the New Testament (Ro 7:17; 1Co 13:12, 14:6, etc.) and in the classics: "The situation being such." The words: **without the law**, stand foremost, as having the emphasis. They evidently depend on the verb **is manifested**, and not on the word righteousness (a righteousness without law, Aug.). The absence of the article before the word law does not prove that the apostle does not mean the term to denote the Mosaic law; only the law is excluded from co-operating in the new righteousness not because it is Mosaic, but because it is law. Under the old dispensation, righteousness came to man through the thousand channels of legalism; in the new, righteousness is given him without the least co-operation of what can be called a law. ([The Epistle of St Paul to the Romans - Chapter 3](#))

**Ray Pritchard** - To some people, this is tragic news. They think that because of some inherited goodness that God will accept them. Wrong! Goodness isn't inherited like blue eyes and brown hair. In fact, what you inherited from your parents is a sin nature that causes you to turn away from God almost from the moment of your birth. You were born with an inbred tendency to disobedience. No one had to teach you to say "No!" You figured that out all by yourself. You weren't born righteous. No amount of moral reformation can change that fact. Since there is no righteousness within you, the only kind of righteousness that will save you is a righteousness that comes from outside yourself. That's what Paul means when he says a righteousness from God has been revealed. ([The Only Way to Be Right With Go](#))

So in the present context, **now** ([3570](#)) (**nun**) is not so much a reference to time, but a change in the flow of the apostle's logic or argument. Remember that what Paul is doing in these chapters is explaining the "**gospel**" and how a man can be justified or declared righteous before a holy God. Now Paul begins to explain the answer to Job's age old question...

"How can a man be **righteous** before God?" (Job 9:2)

Nearly every religion is a response to fears concerning death (cf Heb 2:14-15) and eternity and seeks to offer a way of reaching and satisfying deity. But every religion except Christianity offers only a man-made, works-based, "righteousness" which falls short of the glory of God and for that reason, none of them can succeed in bringing a person to God in this life or one to come.

Scripture makes it clear that there is indeed "the Way" (Jn 14:6) to God, but that it is not based on anything men themselves can do to achieve or merit it. Man can be made right with God, but not on his own terms or in his own power. As far as the Way of salvation is concerned, there are only two religions the world has ever known -- **God's way** defined here in Romans or **man's way**, which includes all other religions.

**Barnhouse** has an interesting introduction to Paul's words "**but now**" writing that...

The true understanding of the Bible consists in a true understanding of the meaning of its main words. No one can claim to know anything about the Bible if he is not thoroughly conversant with the meaning of such words as "sin," "salvation," "justification," "sanctification," "redemption," "imputation," "the new birth," and similar terms that are the links in the chain that holds the whole Scripture together. But in addition to these great words there are some shorter words that might seem insignificant to the casual reader, but which take on tremendous importance as we go deeper into the meaning of the revelation which God has given us. In our study of the Epistle to the Romans we have arrived at a point where two little words separate all that has gone before from all that comes after.

A mountain climber in the high Alps sometimes comes to the top of a ridge almost razor sharp, dividing two slopes. Such is the division which is to be found in the beginning of the twenty-first verse of the third chapter. Had I been the one to divide the Bible into chapters, I would have made the division here. Certainly this is the dividing line which separates the first two and a half chapters, which have been on the subject of man's complete ruin in sin, from the next section, which is occupied with God's perfect remedy in Christ. The two little words are **but now** ...A careful study of the epistles of Paul shows that in his mind all time was divided into then and now. Then, was everything that had happened before Christ died. Now, is everything that is contingent upon the death of the Saviour. Then we were dead in sins; now we are alive forevermore. Then we were under the law, slain; now we are under grace, raised from the dead by the gospel. ([Expositions of Bible Doctrines Taking the Epistle to the Romans As a Point of Departure - God's Remedy - Romans 3:21-4:25](#)).

**James Denney** introduces this next important section of Romans writing that...

The universal need of a Gospel has now been demonstrated, and the Apostle proceeds with his exposition of this Gospel itself. It

brings what all men need, a righteousness of God (see Ro 1:17) and it brings it in such a way as to make it accessible to all. Law contributes nothing to it, though it is attested by the law and the prophets; it is a righteousness which is all of grace. Grace, however, does not signify that moral distinctions are ignored in God's procedure: the righteousness which is held out in the Gospel is held out on the basis of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. It is put within the sinner's reach at a great cost. It could never be offered to him--it could never be manifested or indeed have any real existence--but for the propitiatory virtue of the blood of Christ. Christ a propitiation is the inmost soul of the Gospel for sinful men. If God had not set Him forth in this character, not only must we despair for ever of attaining to a Divine righteousness; all our attempts to read the story of the world in any consistency with the character of God must be baffled. *Pas sins* God seemed simply to ignore: He treated them apparently as if they were not. But the Cross is "the Divine theodicy for the past history of the world" (Tholuck); we see in it how seriously God deals with the sins which for the time He seemed to pass by. It is a demonstration of His righteousness--that is, in the widest sense, of His consistency with His own character,--which would have been violated by indifference to sin. And that demonstration is, by God's grace, given in such a way that it is possible for Him to be (as He intends to be) at once just Himself, and the justifier of those who believe in Jesus. The propitiatory death of Jesus, in other words, is at once the vindication of God and the salvation of man. That is why it is central and fundamental in the Apostolic Gospel. It meets the requirements, at the same time, of the righteousness of God and of the sin of man. ([The Expositor's Greek Testament](#)).

#### APART FROM THE LAW: *choris nomou*:

- Romans 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Amplified** - But now the righteousness of God has been revealed independently and altogether apart from the Law,

**Vincent** comments that **apart from the law** means...

In a sphere different from that in which the law says "Do this and live."

Do this and live, the law commands,  
But gives me neither feet nor hands.  
A better word the Gospel brings.  
It bids me fly and gives me wings.

**Apart** (5565) (**choris** from **choros** = field or place usually where cattle range) is literally at a space and means apart from, separate from. It is a marker of dissociation, indicating a distinct separation from something. The picture is that now, entirely apart from obedience to any law, man can receive the righteousness of God by faith in Christ.

**Choris** - 41x in the NT - apart(10), besides(2), independent(2), itself(1), separate(1), without(25). Mt. 13:34; 14:21; 15:38; Mk. 4:34; Lk. 6:49; Jn. 1:3; 15:5; 20:7; Ro 3:21, 28; Ro 4:6; Ro 7:8-9; Ro 10:14; 1 Co. 4:8; 11:11; 2 Co. 11:28; 12:3; Eph. 2:12; Phil. 2:14; 1 Tim. 2:8; 5:21; Philemon 1:14; Heb. 4:15; 7:7, 20; 9:7, 18, 22, 28; 10:28; 11:6, 40; 12:8, 14; Jas. 2:18, 20, 26

Ro 3:28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith **apart** from works of the Law.

Ro 4:6 just as David also speaks of the blessing upon the man to whom God reckons righteousness **apart** from works:

Ro 7:8 But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for **apart** from the Law sin is dead. 9 And I was once alive **apart** from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive, and I died;

Ro 10:14 How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear **without** a preacher?

**Absolutely separated from the Law** - In other words Paul is describing a righteousness to which our obedience to the law contributes nothing whatsoever. One can get a good sense of the absolute nature of the separation in the use of **choris** by noting that in Hebrews 4 the writer records that...

we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet **without** (*choris*) sin. (Heb 4:15-note)

Comment: Literally our Lord was "**totally apart** (*choris*) **from sin**." Just as sin and Jesus Christ have nothing in



common, so too the righteousness was not received by keeping the law but it was by faith in Christ's finished work on the cross when, for as Paul writes elsewhere God the Father "made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (2Co 5:21-note).

**John MacArthur** - Because they capitalize Law in this passage, it is evident that the translators of the New American Standard Bible understood nomos to refer to God's divine revelation, either in the narrower sense of the Mosaic law or the wider sense of the entire Old Testament. But I believe that in this passage Paul primarily has in mind the sense of legalism, of men's attempt to become acceptable to God by means of their own human efforts." (**Ed note:** Greek does not have the definite article modifying "law" and it would tend to support Dr. MacArthur's interpretation) (See [Romans Commentary](#))

As discussed below, even **apart from the law**, the Pentateuch clearly taught that righteousness has always been credited, reckoned or imputed by personal faith. The prototypical example of course is Abraham's justification by faith (Ge 15:6), which was **apart from the law** for the Law wasn't even given until 400 years later.

The Jews' own Scriptures never taught salvation by obedience to the Law, much less by obedience to the many man-made laws and traditions that had been devised by the rabbis and elders during the several hundred years before Christ. Nevertheless, the majority of the Jews in Jesus' and Paul's day chose to place their trust in man-made regulations and traditions (cp Isa 29:13, Mk 7:5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13) rather than the Gospel which was taught in the OT, Paul writing elsewhere that

the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "ALL THE NATIONS SHALL BE BLESSED IN YOU. (Gal 3:8)

In Paul's day, as in our day, many religious people sincerely believed that their religious devotion would win God's approval. They hoped that by following the Ten Commandments, by observing the rabbinical ordinances, by offering the proper sacrifices, by attending to the moral precepts of the Torah, that God would be satisfied and their sins forgiven. Paul says it doesn't work that way.

Does this mean the law was of no use? We have already established that the law revealed the righteousness of God and thus showed mankind God's righteous standard for human behavior. Unfortunately, that's all the law could do. It showed what God wanted but it could not compel or empower obedience.

**William Newell** exhorts us regarding the phrase "**apart from law**"

Lay it to heart! Unfortunately, the King James Version misses the emphasis here. For the Greek puts to the very front this great phrase "apart from law" (choris nomou), and thus sets forth most strongly the altogether separateness of this Divine righteousness from any law-performance, any works of man, whatsoever. Luther's rendering was, "without accessory aid of law." In this revelation of God's righteousness, law was left out of account. Righteousness is on another principle than our right- doing!

Now the great and most common error in setting forth God's righteousness here, is, to allow law at least some place. Men cannot, it seems, get over reasoning thus: that since God once promulgated the dispensation of law, which called for human righteousness. He must thereafter be bound by it forever. And this despite Divine assurance, over and over and over, that the present dispensation proceeds on an altogether different principle; that there has been a "disannulling of a foregoing commandment" (Heb 7:18); for He who had the right to command had also the right to disannul. It was "because of its weakness and unprofitableness-for the Law made nothing perfect, "-that the "foregoing commandment" was set aside. It had served its purpose-to make the trespass "abound" (Ro 5:20).

It is not that God has not the right to demand legal righteousness from us: but that He does not do it. "Righteousness which is of God" speaks in a way diametrically opposite to man's law- obedience, of any sort whatsoever.

Men who do not see or believe that the whole history of those in Christ ended at the cross (for they died there, with Christ) must hold that God is still demanding righteousness: for "the law hath dominion over a man so long as he liveth!"

The "teachers of the Law" (1Ti 1:7) say: "Behind God, as He talks with you in 'grace' is His eternal Law. And He must carry out what He has expressed in that Law. But, because you are not able to perform it, He has 'graciously' given Christ, to perform all its requirements for you. And the positive, or 'active' requirements are, the observance of all the commands of the Law to the letter, - which (these teachers say) Christ has by His perfect life of obedience to the Law on earth, furnished for you. And the negative, or 'passive' obedience, as they call it-that is, the penalty of death for your sins which the Law (say they) demanded, Christ has paid on the cross. So that, now your debts cancelled by Christ's death, you have Christ's legal 'merits' as your actual righteousness before God: for God must demand (they say) perfect righteousness from you, as measured by His holy Law, "-etc., etc.

This seemingly beautiful talk is both unscriptural and anti-scriptural.

God says that the believer is not under law, that he is dead to law, -to that whole principle, being in the Risen Christ; and Christ is

certainly not under law in Heaven! Believers are "in Him"; they are "not in the flesh" (Ro 8:9). They were formerly in the flesh (in the old natural life of Adam); but are now "new creatures" in Christ Risen!

If you put believers under law, you must put their federal Head, Christ, back under law; for "as He is, even so are we in this world." To do this you must reverse Calvary, and have Christ back again on earth "under law." For law, we repeat, was not given to a heavenly company, but to an earthly nation. Scripture says it was to redeem that earthly people (Israel) who were under law, that Christ was "born under the Law" (Ga 4:4). You must thus, if you are "under law," be joined to a Christ belonging to Israel, a flesh and blood Christ; and must consent to be an Israelite—to which nation He was sent. But alas! You find that such a Christ is not here! That He said He must "abide alone,"—like the grain of wheat unless it "fall into the ground and die." To an earthly, Jewish Christ, you therefore cannot be united. And so your vain hope of having Moses and Christ is wholly gone. Therefore you must be united with a Risen Christ, or with none at all! But if to a Risen Christ, it is unto One who died unto sin (Ro 6:10); and those (Jewish) believers who were under the Law died with Him unto it (Ro 7:4). And you, if you are Christ's, are now wholly, as Christ is, on resurrection ground. This truth will be brought out fully in chapters Six and Seven; we can but note it here. ([Romans 3:21-31 Justification by Faith in Christ](#))

**Robert Haldane** adds that Paul "had, in the foregoing verse (Ro 3:20), affirmed that by his obedience to the law no man could be justified. He establishes the same truth in Romans 3:28, and in the fifth verse of the fourth chapter (Ro 4:5), in a manner so explicit, as to place his meaning beyond all question. In the same sense he declares, Galatians 3:21, that "if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law." And again, he affirms, Galatians 2:21, "If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." It is needless here to dispute, as many do, about what law the Apostle alludes to, whether moral or ceremonial. It is to the law of God, whether written or unwritten,—whatever is sanctioned by His authority, whether ceremonial or moral,—all of which have been fulfilled by the righteousness of God, Mt 3:15. ([Romans 3 Commentary](#))

#### Related Resources:

- Purpose of the Law - Ro 3:20, 5:20, 7:7 Ga 3:19, 3:24 1Ti 1:9
- See study of Purpose of the Law

When Paul says that righteousness comes **apart from the law**, he is really saying that it comes apart from any of the activities by which a man thinks he can attain righteousness including religious observance, performing "good" works, attending church, being baptized, giving money, praying, being confirmed or keeping any sort of ritual or rite... what Paul is saying is that righteousness comes to those who haven't even kept the law at all (because no one can keep it perfectly). The good news is that since keeping the law is not a requirement for salvation, those who have broken the law can be saved!

**Barnhouse** writes that **righteousness apart from the law** is "Righteousness apart from human character. Righteousness without even a consideration of the nature of the being that is made righteous. Righteousness that comes from God upon an ungodly man. Righteousness that will save a thief on the Cross (Lk 23:42, 42). Righteousness that is prepared for you. Righteousness that you must choose by abandoning any hope of salvation from anything that is in yourself or that could be produced by yourself. God's own righteousness. And underline this—it is the only righteousness that can produce practical righteousness in you. ([Expositions of Bible Doctrines Taking the Epistle to the Romans As a Point of Departure - God's Remedy - Romans 3:21-4:25](#)).

#### THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD: *dikaioσuno theou*:

- Ro 1:17; 5:19,21; 10:3,4; Ge 15:6; Isa 45:24,25; 46:13; 51:8; 54:17; Isa 61:10; Jer 23:5,6; 33:16; Da 9:24; Acts 15:11; 1Cor 1:30; 2Co 5:21; Gal 5:5; Phil 3:9; He 11:4-40; 2Pe 1:1
- Romans 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Righteousness of God** - This exact phrase is found in the NASB in Ro 1:17; 3:5, 21, 22; 10:3; 2Co 5:21; Jas 1:20

Recall how Paul began his argument in Romans 1 writing that in the Gospel, "the **righteousness** of God is revealed (caused to be fully known, disclosed)" (Ro 1:17-note). And then Paul does not mention **righteousness** again until Ro 3:21, the intervening chapters serving to present Paul's "air tight" doctrinal argument of why every person ever born stands in dire need of God's righteousness (cp Ro 3:10-note)!

Clearly **righteousness** (and the related words justified, just, justifier) is the key word of this great section of Scripture in Romans 3:21-26...

- Ro 3:21 = Righteousness
- Ro 3:22 = Righteousness
- Ro 3:24 = Justified (declared righteous)
- Ro 3:25 = Righteousness
- Ro 3:26 = Righteousness, Just, Justifier

**Righteousness** (1343) (**dikaosune** from **dikaos** = being proper or right in the sense of being fully justified being or in accordance with what God requires) is the quality of being upright. In its simplest sense **dikaosune** conveys the idea of conformity to a standard or norm. In this sense **righteousness** is the opposite of hamartia (sin), which is defined as missing of the mark set by God. **Dikaosune** is rightness of character before God and rightness of actions before men. Righteousness of God could be succinctly stated as all that God is, all that He commands, all that He demands, all that He approves, all that He provides through faith in Christ (Click to read Pastor Ray Pritchard's interesting analysis of **righteousness** in the Gospel of Matthew).

**Righteousness** is rightness of character before God and rightness of actions before men. Both of these qualities are based on truth, which is conformity to the Word and will of God. Righteousness is attitude and action which conforms to a standard and can be either man's imperfect standard (as exemplified by the self-righteous Pharisees) or God's standard of perfect holiness.

**Dikaosune** is used 92 times in the NT - Matt. 3:15; 5:6, 10, 20; 6:1, 33; 21:32; Lk. 1:75; Jn. 16:8, 10; Acts 10:35; 13:10; 17:31; 24:25; Ro 1:17; 3:5, 21, 22, 25, 26; 4:3, 5, 6, 9, 11, 13, 22; 5:17, 21; 6:13, 16, 18, 19, 20; 8:10; 9:30, 31; 10:3, 4, 5, 10; 14:17; 1Co. 1:30; 2Co. 3:9; 5:21; 6:7, 14; 9:9, 10; 11:15; Ga 2:21; 3:6, 21; 5:5; Ep 4:24; 5:9; 6:14; Php 1:11; 3:6, 9; 1Ti 6:11; 2Ti 2:22; 3:16; 4:8; Titus 3:5; He 1:9; 5:13; 7:2; 11:7, 33; 12:11; Jas 1:20; 2:23; 3:18; 1Pe 2:24; 3:14; 2Pe 1:1; 2:5, 21; 3:13; 1Jn 2:29; 3:7, 10; Re 19:11; 22:11

In its original meaning, **righteousness** meant a right relationship (attained to by faith as in Ge 15:6) with the covenant God that led to loving others as oneself and doing good in order to lead others into the same right relationship with God. Over time, the Jewish interpretation of **righteousness** narrowed into acts of doing good without the vital root of a right relationship with God.

**William Cunningham** described **righteousness** as follows writing that "Under law God required righteousness from man. Under grace, He gives righteousness to man. The righteousness of God is that righteousness which God's righteousness requires Him to require.

**Charles Hodge** - That **righteousness** of which God is the author which is of avail before Him, which meets and secures His approval. ([Romans 3](#))

Someone else has well said that **righteousness** is that which the Father required, the Son became, the Holy Spirit convinces of, and faith secures.

Another has said that **righteousness** is the sum total of all that God commands, demands, approves, and Himself provides. A good definition! But it begs the question of how a righteous God can save unrighteous sinners and at the same time remain righteous Himself in so doing? We have no problem understanding that God can judge righteously, because that is what His justice demands. The more difficult truth is how can a righteous God justify sinners and not compromise His own intrinsic righteousness, for as the prophet Nahum stated "Jehovah will by no means leave the guilty unpunished." (Nah 1:3). And yet in order to justify sinners, this is exactly what God must somehow accomplish! So what is the answer? I'm sure you have already reasoned that the only way goal could be accomplished was by the death of God's Son on the Cross. On that most awesome day in all eternity, Christ bore our sins as our Substitute, in order that we the guilty might be acquitted and declared righteous. If you have never genuinely accepted Christ's sacrifice in your place, perhaps as the Spirit enlightens you to the magnitude and mystery of the Cross, today would be the day that you truly receive the Lamb of God as your Redeemer and Lord.

In this verse Paul calls it the **righteousness of God** which is unique because God is the source. Isaiah records Jehovah's declaration (which will not be completely fulfilled until Messiah's **Millennial** - 1000 year - reign on earth) - "

Drip down, O heavens, from above, and let the clouds pour down **righteousness**. Let the earth open up and salvation bear fruit, and **righteousness** spring up with it. I, the LORD, have created it. (Isa 45:8)

God's righteousness is the only righteousness that fulfills both the **penalty** and **precept** of God's law. Christ's death as a substitute pays the penalty exacted on those who failed to keep God's law, and His perfect obedience to every requirement of God's law fulfills God's demand for comprehensive righteousness (2Cor 5:21; 1Pet 2:24-note; cf. Heb 9:28-note).

God's righteousness is eternal. The psalmist records

Thy **righteousness** is an **everlasting righteousness**, and Thy law is truth. Ps 119:142-[Spurgeon's note](#))

**Daniel** - Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, **to bring in everlasting righteousness** (beginning in the Millennial reign of Christ), to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy place." (Da 9:24- note).

Finally **Isaiah** records God's declaration

Listen to Me, you who know **righteousness**, a people in whose heart is My law. Do not fear the reproach of man. Neither be dismayed at their revilings. For the moth will eat them like a garment, and the grub will eat them like wool, but My **righteousness shall be forever**, and My salvation to all generations. (Isa 51:7-8).

The one who receives the righteousness of God will enjoy it forever (another truth that should assure you that your salvation cannot be lost)

This specific phrase **righteousness of God** is found in seven times in the NT in the NASB (Ro 1:17-note; Ro 3:5-note; Ro 3:21; Ro 3:22-[note](#); Ro 10:3-note; 2Cor 5:21; Jas 1:20-note)

**The LORD our Righteousness** or **Jehovah Tsidkenu** (Tsidkenu is the Hebrew word for righteousness) is the name redeemed Israel will call their Messiah in their future restoration (Ro 11:26,27-see note).

You might still be asking, why is God's righteousness unique? (1) Unique in its Source - God (Isa 45:8). (2) Unique in essence - fulfills perfectly the requirement of God's law (2Co 5:21). (3) Unique in duration - everlasting (Ps 119:142, Isa 51:8, Da 9:24).

**Thomas Chalmers** - The foundation of your trust before God, must be either **your own righteousness** out and out, or **the righteousness of Christ**, out and out ... If you are to lean upon your own merit, lean upon it wholly—if you are to lean upon Christ, lean upon Him wholly. The two will not amalgamate together; and it is the attempt to make them do so, which keeps many a weary and heavy-laden inquirer at a distance from rest, and at a distance from the truth of the Gospel. Maintain a clear and consistent posture. Stand not before God with one foot upon a rock and the other upon a treacherous quicksand... We call upon you to lean not so much as the weight of one grain or scruple of your confidence upon your own doings—to leave this ground entirely, and to come over entirely to the ground of a Redeemer's blood and a Redeemer's righteousness.

**Charles Ryrie** ([Ryrie Study Bible](#)) writes that **righteousness** is "Used in various ways in the Bible, righteousness refers (1) to God's character (Jn 17:25); (2) to the gift that is given to everyone who receives Christ (Ro 5:17-note); (3) to standards of right living (Ro 6:18-note; 2Ti 2:22-note)

#### HAS BEEN MANIFESTED: **pephanerotai** (3SRPI):

- Col 1:26, 2Ti 1:9, 10, 1Pe 1:20, He 9:8, 26
- Romans 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD BECAME VISIBLE

**Wuest** - God's righteousness has been openly shown as in view - (Where? When? On the Old Rugged Cross!)

**Has been manifested** - Paul uses the **perfect tense** which emphasizes that this righteousness "*has been manifested and now lies open to view*", visible to all, set conspicuously before the eyes of men. The perfect tense speaks of the permanence of this visible manifestation. God's perfect righteousness was manifest in the past at a historical point in time when the Righteous One, the Spotless Lamb of God was crucified, the redemptive efficacy of this event continuing to be manifest throughout the ages.

**Manifested** ([5319](#)) (**phaneroo** [word study] from **phanerós** = manifest, visible, conspicuous from **phaino** = give light; become visible in turn derived from **phos** = light) refers to the external manifestation to senses and making open to all. It means to make visible that which has been hidden primary reference is to what is visible to sensory perception. It means to cause to become visible. To make appear. To cause to be seen, uncover, lay bare, reveal.

**Haldane** writes that **manifest** conveys the idea of "clearly discovered, or made fully evident. It was darkly revealed in the shadows of the law, and more clearly in the writings of the Prophets; but now it is revealed in its accomplishment. It was manifested in the life and death of Jesus Christ, and was, by His resurrection from the dead, openly declared on the part of God. By Him, who was God manifest in the flesh, it was wrought out while He was on earth. He fulfilled all righteousness; not one jot of the law, either in its precepts or threatenings, passed from it; but all was accomplished; and of this righteousness the Holy Spirit, when He came, was to

convince the world, John 16:8." ([Romans 3 Commentary](#))

**Barnhouse** says - "**manifest**" comes from two Latin words, *manus*, "hand," and *fendo*, "strike," we can comprehend that a thing is manifest when it is as plain as a hand that seeks to strike you... Now, if a man were to come over the roof of the world from Tibet and were to ask me what the Christian religious Book talked about, I would tell him in a sentence: the Bible was the setting forth of the divine plan whereby God could take sinful men, clean them up, and bring them into His own perfect Heaven without fouling up Heaven and without losing His own righteousness by touching sinners. Righteousness apart from law. Righteousness apart from human doing. Righteousness apart from a man's own deserving. Righteousness given freely to those who do not deserve it. Righteousness streaming forth from the heart of God because of the nature of His being. This is the theme of the Word of God. ([Expositions of Bible Doctrines Taking the Epistle to the Romans As a Point of Departure -God's Remedy - Romans 3:21-4:25](#)).

**Phaneroo** - 49 times in NT - Mk. 4:22; 16:12, 14; Jn. 1:31; 2:11; 3:21; 7:4; 9:3; 17:6; 21:1, 14; Ro 1:19; 3:21; 16:26; 1Co 4:5; 2Co 2:14; 3:3; 4:10, 11; 5:10, 11; 7:12; 11:6; Ep 5:13, 14; Col. 1:26; 3:4; 4:4; 1Ti 3:16; 2Ti 1:10; Titus 1:3; He 9:8, 26; 1Pe 1:20; 5:4; 1Jn 1:2; 2:19, 28; 3:2, 5, 8; 4:9; Re 3:18; 15:4

In his last letter **Paul** wrote that God...

has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, but now **has been revealed** (phaneroo - revealed in His divine character and purpose) by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, Who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel (2Ti 1:9,10-note, cp Titus 1:3, 1Pe 1:20, 1Jn 1:2, 3:5 [appeared], 1Jn 3:8 [appeared], 4:9)

In his letter to the Colossians **Paul** described the church of which he...

was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God, 26 that is, the mystery (the church, Jew and Gentile in one body, the Bride of Christ) which has been hidden from the past ages and generations; but has now **been manifested** (phaneroo) to His saints (Col 1:25-note, Col 1:26-note)

Earlier in Romans **Paul** wrote...

that which is known about God is **evident** (phaneroo) within them for God made it **evident** (phaneroo) to them" (Ro 1:19-note)

In Romans 1:17 Paul taught that

the righteousness of God is (continuously being) **revealed** (apokalupto = uncovered and exposed to open view that which was previously hidden) from faith to faith. (Ro 1:17-n note)

What Paul is saying in Romans 1:17 is that God's righteousness is continually being revealed to those who believe (have faith). But here in Romans 3 Paul teaches that the righteousness of God has been made known **once for all** in the incarnate Christ and His sacrificial, substitutionary death on Calvary and that Christ's righteousness continues to lie open to view (again this latter statement reflects the perfect tense).

While the Law informs men of their inability to attain righteousness by their own works, it promises a righteousness God Himself provides.

For example, **Moses** declares to Israel

Yet to this day the LORD has not given you a heart to know, nor eyes to see, nor ears to hear. (Dt 29:4)

In spite of seeing all the signs (manna from heaven, water from the rock, etc), they still did not perceive the truth about God and His righteousness. They were spiritually blind to the significance of what the Lord had done for them. God had given Israel sign after spiritual sign but they had persisted in their stubborn and rebellious ways. And so their failure to receive His righteousness was not God's "fault". He had always desired to provide them His righteousness. They had a faulty understanding of "righteousness", Moses declaring to Israel

"Do not say in your heart when the LORD your God has driven them out before you, 'Because of my **righteousness** the LORD has brought me in to possess this land,' but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is dispossessing them before you. It is **not for your righteousness** or for the **uprightness of your heart** that you are going to possess their land, but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD your God is driving them out before you, in order to confirm the oath which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Know, then, it is **not because of your**



**righteousness** that the LORD your God is giving you this good land to possess, **for you are a stubborn people.**" (Dt 9:4-6+)

It was not that God did not want Israel to possess His righteousness, because clearly He did, lamenting

Oh that they had such a heart in them, that they would **fear** Me, and **keep** all My commandments always, that it may be well with them and with their sons forever! (Dt 5:29+)

God sought from His chosen people reverential fear and honor, a devotion which would be eternal and all-inclusive, a heart bent on loving and obeying Him.

When the **righteousness of God** was revealed through the Person and work of Jesus Christ, the standard which the Law laid down was met. The Law continues to bear witness that Jesus is righteous, and that He is the Righteous One whom God promised would come to save His people from their sins. Jesus could rightly appeal to the Law as His witness, as proof of His identity as Messiah. The Law therefore defines true righteousness and declares that this righteousness would be manifested apart from the law-keeping of the Israelites, in God's time.

**God's righteousness** was not being revealed for the first time. His righteousness is evident in anything and everything He does. God's righteousness is evident in His giving men over to their sin, as a present manifestation of His wrath toward sin (see Romans 1:18ff.). But with the earthly appearance of Jesus Christ, God's righteousness is revealed in yet another way. It is revealed in Jesus Christ and in His work of redemption. While this present manifestation of God's righteousness in Christ is new in one sense in terms of time, it is not utterly new in kind. In the past, God's righteousness was revealed by His wrath toward sin as it was poured out upon sinful men. The present manifestation of God's righteousness is revealed by the outpouring of His wrath on His only Son, Who bore the sins of the world.

**Haldane** - When the question is put, why is the Gospel the power of God unto salvation? how few give the clear and unfaltering answer of the Apostle, Because therein is The Righteousness Of God revealed. ([Romans 3:21-31 Commentary](#) - Haldane has a very lengthy "treatise" on the phrase the righteousness of God if you are interested)

**Leon Morris** - It has been part of Paul's method to demonstrate in the section leading up to this point of the argument that **law** cannot bring salvation. It can show up the problem; it can and does make clear that all are sinners. But it can do no more. The word **law** (not "the law") is general. What is true of the Jewish law is true also of all other law. The way to God is not the way of law (cf. the way "works of law" are treated in Ro 3:20). No one can take refuge in law and the way he thinks he has kept it. This is not a human discovery; Paul is not congratulating himself on having uncovered an important spiritual law. It has been made known (for the verb cf. Ro 1:19); that is to say, it is a matter of revelation. This means more than that it has now been discovered. It means that it is something in the secret counsels of God from of old (cf. Eph. 1:4, 5). But whereas it has always been true, it has only now been "manifested". Paul is making the point that the gospel is no afterthought. God had always planned to save people by the way of grace. It is the making of this known that is recent. ([Borrow The Epistle to the Romans. Grand Rapids](#))

**Barnhouse** - Why is it called "the righteousness of God?" There might be several answers to this question, and since all of them are true, they are probably all parts of the complete answer which we will only know fully when we have been made like Him. The righteousness of God is specifically His because of the nature of His being. He is the One who is righteousness in Himself. But also because it is His righteousness, He must demand it of us. The righteousness which He is must be the righteousness with which He surrounds Himself. Therefore He must demand of us a righteousness equal to His own. However, since none of us can produce this righteousness, it is proper to call it the righteousness of God because it is also the righteousness which He provides freely for us... The theme of the Epistle to the Romans is the righteousness of God. It is God as the **center** of righteousness, it is God as the **source** of righteousness, it is God as the **stream** of righteousness outflowing. God **is** righteousness, God **demand**s righteousness, and God **provides** righteousness. If those three statements are understood, then the whole gospel will be understood. If those three statements are not understood, then the gospel can never be understood. Wherever there is heresy, men have departed from the idea that **God is righteousness**, and that therefore He must demand that righteousness of all His creatures; and, that since none can have it apart from Him, because His nature is also love, He provides His righteousness in His way. ([Expositions of Bible Doctrines Taking the Epistle to the Romans As a Point of Departure - God's Remedy - Romans 3:21-4:25](#)).

**Baker's Evangelical Dictionary** - God the Father is righteous (just); Jesus Christ his Son is the Righteous (Just) One; the Father through the Son and in the Spirit gives the gift of righteousness (justice) to repentant sinners for salvation; such believing sinners are declared righteous (just) by the Father through the Son, are made righteous (just) by the Holy Spirit working in them, and will be wholly righteous (just) in the age to come. They are and will be righteous because they are in a covenant relation with the living God, who is the God of all grace and mercy and who will bring to completion what he has begun in them by declaring them righteous for Christ's sake. ([Reference](#))

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## **Torrey's Topic**

### **Righteousness Imputed**

- Predicted -Isaiah 56:1; Ezekiel 16:14
- Revealed in the gospel -Romans 1:17
- Is of the Lord -Isaiah 54:17

#### **DESCRIBED AS**

- The righteousness of faith -Romans 4:13; 9:30; 10:6
- The righteousness of God, without the law -Romans 3:21
- The righteousness of God by faith in Christ -Romans 3:22
- Christ being made righteousness to us -1 Corinthians 1:30
- Our being made the righteousness of God, in Christ -2 Corinthians 5:21
- Christ is the end of the law for -Romans 10:4
- Christ called THE LORD OF OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS -Jeremiah 23:6
- Christ brings in an everlasting righteousness -Daniel 9:24
- Is a free gift -Romans 5:17
- God's righteousness never to be abolished -Isaiah 5:16
- The promises made through -Romans 4:13

#### **SAINTS**

- Have, on believing -Romans 4:5,11,24
- Exalted in righteousness Psalms 89:16
- Desire to be found in -Philippians 3:9
- Glory in having -Isaiah 45:24,25
- Exhortation to seek righteousness -Matthew 6:33
- The Gentiles attained to -Romans 9:30
- Blessedness of those who have -Romans 4:6

#### **THE JEWS**

- Ignorant of -Romans 10:3
- Stumble at righteousness by faith -Romans 9:32
- Submit not to -Romans 10:3

#### **Exemplified**

- Abraham -Romans 4:9,22; Galatians 3:6
- Paul -Philippians 3:7-9

## **Torrey's Topic**

### **Righteousness in General**

- Is obedience to God's law -Deuteronomy 6:25; Romans 10:5; Luke 1:6; Psalms 1:2
- God loves -Psalms 11:7
- God looks for -Isaiah 5:7

#### **CHRIST**

- Is the Sun of -Malachi 4:2
- Loves -Psalms 45:7; Hebrews 1:9
- Was girt with -Isaiah 11:5

- Put on, as breast-plate -Isaiah 59:17
- Was sustained by -Isaiah 59:16
- Preached -Psalms 40:9
- Fulfilled all -Matthew 3:15
- Is made to his people -1 Corinthians 1:30
- Is the end of the law for -Romans 10:4
- Has brought in everlasting -Daniel 9:24
- Shall judge with -Psalms 72:2; Isaiah 11:4; Acts 17:31; Revelation 19:11
- Shall reign in -Psalms 45:6; Isaiah 32:1; Hebrews 1:8
- Shall execute -Psalms 99:4; Jeremiah 23:6
- None, by nature have -Job 15:14; Psalms 14:3; Romans 3:10
- Cannot come by the law -Galatians 2:21; 3:21
- No justification by works of -Romans 3:20; 9:31,32; Galatians 2:16
- No salvation by works of -Ephesians 2:8,9; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 3:5
- Unregenerate man seeks justification by works of -Luke 18:9; Romans 10:3
- The blessing of God is not to be attributed to our works of -Deuteronomy 9:5

## SAINTS

- Have, in Christ -Isaiah 45:24; 54:17; 2 Corinthians 5:21
- Have, imputed -Romans 4:11,22
- Receive, from God -Psalms 24:5
- Are renewed in -Ephesians 4:24
- Are led in the paths of -Psalms 23:3
- Are servants of -Romans 6:16,18
- Characterised by -Genesis 18:25; Psalms 1:5,6
- Know -Isaiah 51:7
- Do -1 John 2:29; 3:7
- Work, by faith -Hebrews 11:33
- Follow after -Isaiah 51:1
- Put on -Job 29:14
- Wait for the hope of -Galatians 5:5
- Pray for the spirit of -Psalms 51:10
- Hunger and thirst after -Matthew 5:6
- Walk before God in -1 Kings 3:6
- Offer the sacrifice of -Psalms 4:5; 51:19
- Put no trust in their own -Philippians 3:6-8
- Count their own, as filthy rags -Isaiah 64:6
- Should seek -Zephaniah 2:3
- Should live in -Titus 2:12; 1 Peter 2:24
- Should serve God in -Luke 1:75
- Should yield their members as instruments of -Romans 6:13
- Should yield their members servants to -Romans 6:19
- Should have on the breast-plate of -Ephesians 6:14
- Shall receive a crown of -2 Timothy 4:8
- Shall see God's face in -Psalms 17:15
- Of saints endures forever -Psalms 112:3,9; 2 Corinthians 9:9
- An evidence of the new birth -1 John 2:29
- The kingdom of God is -Romans 14:17
- The fruit of the Spirit is in all -Ephesians 5:9
- The Scriptures instruct in -2 Timothy 3:16
- Judgments designed to lead to -Isaiah 26:9
- Chastisements yield the fruit of -Hebrews 12:11
- Has no fellowship with unrighteousness -2 Corinthians 6:14

## MINISTERS SHOULD

- Be preachers of -2 Peter 2:5
- Reason of -Acts 24:25
- Follow after -1 Timothy 6:11; 2 Timothy 2:22
- Be clothed with -Psalms 132:9
- Be armed with -2 Corinthians 6:7
- Pray for the fruit of, in their people -2 Corinthians 9:10; Philippians 1:11
- Keep saints in the right way -Proverbs 11:5; 13:6
- Judgment should be executed in -Leviticus 19:15

## **THEY WHO WALK IN, AND FOLLOW**

- Are righteous -1 John 3:7
- Are the excellent of the earth -Psalms 16:3; Proverbs 12:26
- Are accepted with God -Acts 10:35
- Are loved by God -Psalms 146:8; Proverbs 15:9
- Are blessed by God -Psalms 5:12
- Are heard by God -Luke 18:7; James 5:16
- Are objects of God's watchful care -Job 36:7; Psalms 34:15; Proverbs 10:3; 1 Peter 3:12
- Are tried by God -Psalms 11:5
- Are exalted by God -Job 36:7
- Dwell in security -Isaiah 33:15,16
- Are bold as a lion -Proverbs 28:1
- Are delivered out of all troubles -Psalms 34:19; Proverbs 11:8
- Are never forsaken by God -Psalms 37:25
- Are abundantly provided for -Proverbs 13:25; Matthew 6:25-33
- Are enriched -Psalms 112:3; Proverbs 15:6
- Think and desire good -Proverbs 11:23; 12:5
- Know the secret of the Lord -Psalms 25:14; Proverbs 3:32
- Have their prayers heard -Psalms 34:17; Proverbs 15:29; 1 Peter 3:12
- Have their desires granted -Proverbs 10:24
- Find it with life and honour -Proverbs 21:21
- Shall hold on their way -Job 17:9
- Shall never be moved -Psalms 15:2,5; 55:22; Proverbs 10:30; 12:3
- Shall be ever remembered -Psalms 112:6
- Shall flourish as a branch -Proverbs 11:28
- Shall be glad in the Lord -Psalms 64:10
- Brings its own reward -Proverbs 11:18; Isaiah 3:10
- Tends to life -Proverbs 11:19; 12:28
- The work of, shall be peace -Isaiah 32:17
- The effect of, shall be quietness and assurance for ever -Isaiah 32:17
- Is a crown of glory to the aged -Proverbs 16:31

## **THE WICKED**

- Are far from -Psalms 119:150; Isaiah 46:12
- Are free from -Romans 6:20
- Are enemies of -Acts 13:10
- Leave off -Amos 5:7; Psalms 36:3
- Follow not after -Romans 9:30
- Do not -1 John 3:10
- Do not obey -Romans 2:8; 2 Thessalonians 2:12
- Love lying rather than -Psalms 52:3
- Make mention of God, not it -Isaiah 48:1
- Though favoured, will not learn -Isaiah 26:10; Psalms 106:43
- Speak contemptuously against those who follow -Psalms 31:18; Matthew 27:39-44
- Hate those who follow -Psalms 34:21
- Slay those who follow -Psalms 37:32; 1 John 3:12; Matthew 23:35

- Should break off their sins by -Daniel 4:27
- Should awake to -1 Corinthians 15:34
- Should sow to themselves in -Hosea 10:12
- Vainly wish to die as those who follow -Numbers 23:10
- The throne of kings established by -Proverbs 16:12; 25:5
- Nations exalted by -Proverbs 14:34

## BLESSEDNESS OF

- Having imputed, without works -Romans 4:6
- Doing -Psalms 106:3
- Hungering and thirsting after -Matthew 5:6
- Suffering for -1 Peter 3:14
- Being persecuted for -Matthew 5:10
- Turning others to -Daniel 12:3

## Exemplified

- Jacob -Genesis 30:33
- David -2 Samuel 22:21
- Zacharias -Luke 1:6
- Abel -Hebrews 11:4
- Lot -2 Peter 2:8

## BEING WITNESSED BY THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS: marturomene (PPPFSN) hupo tou nomou kai ton propheton:

- Dt 18:15, 16, 17, 18, 19; Lk 24:44; Jn 1:45; 3:14,15; 5:46,47; Acts 26:22; Heb 10:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14
- Ro 1:2; 16:26; Acts 3:21-25; 10:43; 28:23; Gal 3:8; 1Pet 1:10
- Romans 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

As **Barnhouse** phrases it...

Righteousness without law, but righteousness witnessed by the law. The testimony of the law is perfect, showing that men are saved by the work of the Saviour. (Ibid)

**Witnessed by the Law and the Prophets** - This statement would be directed especially to the Jewish readers for they had access to the OT Law and prophets. The good news of God's provision of His righteousness was foretold in **types and shadows of the Levitical sacrificial system** which required the shedding of blood for atonement (covering of sin, not taking away of sin) and by direct prophecies as discussed below.

The tragedy is that although the Jews had such privileged exposure to the witness of the OT Law and Prophets, they were blind to the fact that these witnesses testified about their own Messiah, Who Himself declared (addressing unbelieving Jews)...

You **search** (implies diligent scrutiny in investigating) the Scriptures (see graphe), because you think that **in them** (in the Law and the Prophets - referring to the very words themselves!) you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me (the main subject of the OT was and is the coming of Messiah) and you are unwilling to come to Me, that you may have life. (Jn 5:39, 40)

**John MacArthur comments:** In other words, the Law and the Prophets did not show men how to achieve their own righteousness but pointed to the coming Messiah, the Savior and Son of God, who Himself would provide the righteousness that God demands of men (Jer 23:6, 1Cor 1:30). Although the full revelation of salvation through Christ was not given in the Old Testament, that had always been the way of salvation to which that testament pointed. ([MacArthur, J: Romans 1-8. Chicago: Moody Press](#))

Note that the real reason people do not accept the Christ as Savior is not because they cannot understand the gospel or find it impossible to believe on Him. The real fault lies in man's own will (**unwilling to come to Me**). Men love their sins more than they love the Savior. They do not want to give up their wicked ways (cp Jn 3:19, 20).

The OT Scriptures indeed do give eloquent and ample testimony (witness) to the truth of the righteousness of God apart from the law...

**The law** - Ge 15:6 (Ga 3:6, 7, 8, 9, He 11:8) & Ge 7:1 (cp Heb 11:7)

**The prophets** - Isa 53:11; 45:24, 25, Je 23:5, 6, 33:16 (cp Psalms - Ps 71:2, 15, 16, 19, 24, cp 1Co 1:30, Php 3:9)

In presenting these "**two OT witnesses**", Paul also makes the point that God's righteousness that made justification possible, though **new** in the sense that it is only now fully disclosed, is nevertheless an **old** righteousness, predicted and foreshadowed in the Old Testament. Men have always been justified by faith, the OT saints by looking forward (in terms of time) to the Cross and the NT saints by looking backward to the Cross. This truth about the OT also serves to prepare the reader for the discussion of God's dealings with Abraham and David which are considered in Romans 4:1ff, 6, 7, 8,

**Witnessed** (3140) (**martureo** from **martus** = witness) means to testify, give evidence, give testimony, bear record, affirm that one has seen or heard or experienced something or provide information about a person or an event concerning which the speaker has direct knowledge

As **Morris** says this witness points out that God's way for a man to become righteous...

is not some minor truth tucked away in an obscure corner of Scripture, but a great truth blazoned forth in both law and prophets. And the present participle "being witnessed to" indicates that the testimony of the Old Testament continues. (Ibid)

**Martureo** is in the **present tense** (continuous activity) and **passive voice** (manifestation is occurring from an outside source) which indicates that this God-kind of righteousness continually being made plain by God Himself (via the OT Law and prophets) to those in the New Testament era.

To say it another way doctrine of justification by faith was **foreshadowed** by the OT **Law** and **foretold** by the OT **prophets**.

**Martureo** is used 76 times in the NT -

Mt 23:31; Lk. 4:22; Jn 1:7, 8, 15, 32, 34; 2:25; 3:11, 26, 28, 32; 4:39, 44; 5:31, 32, 33, 36, 37, 39; 7:7; 8:13f, 18; 10:25; 12:17; 13:21; 15:26, 27; 18:23, 37; 19:35; 21:24; Acts 6:3; 10:22, 43; 13:22; 14:3; 15:8; 16:2; 22:5, 12; 23:11; 26:5; Ro 3:21; 10:2; 1Co. 15:15; 2 Co. 8:3; Ga 4:15; Col. 4:13; 1Ti 5:10; 6:13; Heb. 7:8, 17; 10:15; 11:2, 4, 5, 39; 1Jn 1:2; 4:14; 5:6, 7, 9, 10; 3 Jn. 1:3, 6, 12; Re 1:2; 22:16, 18, 20

**Law** (3551) (**nomos**) in this context refers to the Pentateuch (the Torah), the books of Moses, the first 5 books of the Old Testament.

**Prophets** (4396) (**prophetes** from **pró** = before or forth + **phemi** = tell) means literally a foreteller of future events, who in the OT spoke by divine inspiration (cp 2Pe 1:20, 21-notes). In the present passage, **prophetes** refers to the prophetic books in the Old Testament (cp Mt 26:56 - so called "major" prophets like Isaiah and Jeremiah, and the "minor" prophets).

The phrase the **Law and the prophets** was commonly used to encompass all of God's written Word in the OT (Mt 7:12; 22:40; Lk. 16:16, 22:44; Jn 1:45, Acts 13:15, 26:22). Jesus used this same phrase declaring...

Do not think that I came to abolish the **Law or the Prophets**; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. (Mt 5:17-note).

Paul's point is that the righteousness he was describing was not a **new kind of righteousness** but had been spoken of throughout the Old Testament and thus has always been available to those who would receive it by faith. For example the psalmist testifies that

Phinehas stood up and interposed (thus manifesting his **faith** - this was during the event in which the men of Israel played the harlot with Moab - Nu 25:1) and so the plague was stayed. And it was **reckoned** (Lxx = **logizomai** = imputed, credited) to him for **righteousness**, To all generations forever. (Ps 106:31)

Furthermore the **Law and the Prophets** spoke of God's righteousness in the form of **shadows** (cf Col 2:17-note) that were presented in the sacrificial system (ceremonial law) that required the shedding of blood for atonement.

**God's righteousness** was foretold by direct prophecies as for example in Isaiah, where God declared

**My righteousness** is near (in the form of God's Servant, the Messiah) My salvation has gone forth, and My arms will judge the peoples. The coastlands will wait for Me, and for My arm they will wait expectantly. Lift up your eyes to the sky. Then look to the earth beneath; for the sky will vanish like smoke, and the earth will wear out like a garment, and its inhabitants will die in like manner, but My salvation shall be forever, And My

righteousness shall not wane. (Isa 51:5-6)

Later through the prophet Isaiah Jehovah clearly states

"Preserve justice, and do **righteousness**, for My salvation is about to come (He is prophesying the coming of Messiah) and **My righteousness** (which also would be Personified in the Messiah) to be revealed." (Isa 56:1)

Don't misunderstand this verse in Isaiah. We don't **do righteousness** to merit salvation. We commit ourselves **to do what is right** because we are already made righteous by faith.

In Romans 5 Paul gives two examples of this OT **witness**, Abraham and David, both of whom bear testimony that the righteousness of God become available to men by faith, even though neither man knew the fullness of how it was to come about through the life and death of the Messiah.

In the first chapter of Romans Paul has also already given witness from the OT prophet Habakkuk who declared

the righteous will live by his faith. (Hab 2:4 in Ro1:17-note)

Isaiah probably saw the shadow of the Messiah more clearly than any other OT writer, predicting both His suffering life and His substitutionary death writing that

As a result of the anguish of His (Messiah's) soul, He (God the Father) will see it and be satisfied. By His knowledge **the Righteous One**, My Servant (cf 1Cor 1:30), will justify (declare righteous those who believe) the many, as He will bear their iniquities (speaking of Christ's substitutionary sacrifice). (Isa 53:11)

**WHY THE LAW?** The Mosaic Laws were not given as a means of achieving righteousness but of describing God's righteousness and showing the impossibility of men living up to His standard of perfection.

**WHY THE SACRIFICES?** The Mosaic sacrifices were not prescribed as a means of atoning for sin but of symbolically pointing to Jesus Christ, Who Himself became the Sin Bearer and Sacrifice for the whole world. The commandments, rituals, sacrifices, and godly principles taught in the OT were, and still are, a part of His divinely inspired Word. But the Scriptures could never remove sin, forgive sin, atone for sin, or give a new and righteous life to a sinner... no matter how zealously and sincerely he tried to abide by them.

**Robert Haldane** has an excellent note on this verse writing that...

In the first part of this verse, "**without law**," where the article (Ed: "the" is not present before law in the Greek) is wanting, signifies law indefinitely,—whatever has been delivered to man by God as His law, and in whatever way; but here, with the article, it refers to the five books of Moses, thus distinguished from the writings of the Prophets, according to the usual division of the Old Testament Scriptures, and adopted by our Lord, Lk 24:44. This righteousness was obscurely testified in the first promise respecting the bruising of the serpent's head (Ge 3:15). It was expressly named in the declaration of the manner of Abraham's justification, where it is recorded that he believed in the Lord, and He counted it to him for righteousness, Genesis 15:6; as also in the covenant which God made with him, of which the sign—that is, circumcision—was a seal or pledge of the righteousness which is by faith; and when it was promised that the blessing of Abraham, which is this righteousness, was to come on all nations; Genesis 12:3. It was intimated in the writings of Moses, in every declaration of the forgiveness of sin, and every call to repentance. All the declarations of mercy that are to be found in the law of Moses belong to the Gospel. (**Ed:** A beautiful thought!) They are all founded on the Messiah and His righteousness, and are made in consequence of God's purpose to send His Son in the fullness of time into the world (Gal 4:4), and of the first promise respecting the seed of the woman (cp Gal 3:16 where "offspring" = seed).

The righteousness of God was **witnessed** not only in all the declarations of mercy and calls to repentance, but also by the whole economy of the law of which Moses was the mediator. Abraham was chosen, his posterity collected into a nation, and a country appropriated to them, that from the midst of them, according to His promise, God might raise up a Prophet, who, like unto Moses, was to be a Lawgiver and Mediator, to whom, turning from Moses, they should listen so soon as He appeared, Deuteronomy 18:15, 19. The law of everlasting obligation was given to that nation, and renewed after it had been broken by them, and then solemnly deposited in the ark of the testimony (covenant), in token that it should be preserved entire, and in due time fulfilled by Him of whom the ark was a type (see Typology - Study of Biblical types)

The sacrifices offered by the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob), and the whole of the ceremonial law in all its typical ordinances and observances, bear their direct though shadowy testimony to the righteousness of



God, of which Noah was alike a preacher and an heir, 2 Peter 2:5-note; Hebrews 11:7-note.

The righteousness of God was witnessed by the Prophets. Of their testimonies to it the following are a few examples from the Psalms:—"Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, Thou God of my salvation; and my tongue shall sing aloud of Thy righteousness." Psalm 51:14. "My mouth shall show forth Thy righteousness and Thy salvation all the day; for I know not the numbers thereof. I will go in the strength of the Lord God; I will make mention of Thy righteousness, even of Thine only. Thy righteousness, also, O God, is very high. My tongue also shall talk of Thy righteousness all the day long," Psalm 71:15, 16, 19, 24. "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven. Righteousness shall go before Him, and shall set us in the way of His steps," Psalm 85:10, 13. "In Thy name shall they rejoice all the day; and in Thy righteousness shall they be exalted," Psalm 89:16. "Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness," Psalm 119:142. "They shall abundantly utter the memory of Thy great goodness, and shall sing of Thy righteousness," Psalm 145:7.

The righteousness of the Messiah, as connected with salvation, is the constant theme of the Prophets, especially of Isaiah. "The Lord is well pleased for His righteousness' sake; He will magnify the law, and make it honorable," Isaiah 42:21. "Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness; let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the Lord have created it," Isaiah 45:8. The heavens were to drop down this righteousness, and the skies were to pour it down, while men's hearts, barren like the earth without rain, were to be opened to receive it by faith, having no part in doing anything to procure the gift. "Surely, shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength: In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory," Isaiah 45:24, 25. "I bring near My righteousness; it shall not be far off, and My salvation shall not tarry; and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel My glory," Isaiah 46:13. "My righteousness is near; My salvation is gone forth—My salvation shall be for ever, and My righteousness shall not be abolished. Hearken unto Me, ye that know righteousness," Isaiah 51:5, 7. "By His knowledge shall My righteous servant justify many," Isaiah 61:11. "This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord," Isaiah 54:17. "Thus saith the Lord, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for My salvation is near to come, and My righteousness to be revealed," Isaiah 56:1. "For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations," Isaiah 61:11. "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth And the Gentiles shall see Thy righteousness, and all kings Thy glory," Isaiah 62:1, 2.

"Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is His name whereby He shall be called, Jehovah Our Righteousness," Jeremiah 23:5. "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteous," Daniel 9:24. "It is time to seek the Lord, till He come and rain righteousness upon you," Hosea 10:12. To Balaam, who beheld the Savior at a distance, He appeared as a star; "There shall come a Star out of Jacob," Numbers 24:17; while to Malachi, the last of the Prophets, on His nearer approach, He appeared as the sun. "But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings," Malachi 4:2. ([Romans 3 Commentary](#))

**Romans 3:22** even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek:** dikaiosune de theou dia pisteos lesou Christou eis pantas tous pisteuontas (PAPMPA). ou gar estin (3SPA) diastole,

**Amplified:** Namely, the righteousness of God which comes by believing with personal trust and confident reliance on Jesus Christ (the Messiah). [And it is meant] for all who believe. For there is no distinction, ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**KJV:** 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

**NLT:** We are made right in God's sight when we trust in Jesus Christ to take away our sins. And we all can be saved in this same way, no matter who we are or what we have done.

**Phillips:** it is a righteousness imparted to, and operating in, all who have faith in Jesus Christ. (For there is no distinction to be made anywhere: ([Phillips: Touchstone](#)))

**Wuest:** indeed, God's righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe, for there is not a distinction, (Eerdmans)

**Young's Literal:** This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference

## **EVEN THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST FOR ALL THOSE WHO BELIEVE: *dikaiousune de theou dia pisteos lesou Christou eis pantas tous pisteuontas* (PAPMPA):**

- Ro 4:3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 20, 21, 22; 5:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11; 8:1; Php 3:9
- Ro 4:6, 11, 22; Gal 2:16; 3:6; Jas 2:23 (Isa 61:10; Mt 22:11, 12; Lk 15:22; Gal 3:7, 8, 9
- Romans 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Righteousness of God** - [Click](#) to see the previous verse for discussion of this topic. Paul reiterates it is God's righteousness not man's righteousness. It is something God accomplished for man and man lays hold of by simple/profound faith.

**Upon all** - Only the **KJV** (NKJV) has these words ("*unto all and upon all*"), but most modern Greek manuscripts lack these words. Nevertheless, this phrase **upon all** has led to misinterpretation as discussed by **Newell** who remarks that...

The King James Version adds, after "The righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, " the words "and upon all them that believe." The Revised Version omits "and upon all." This, we believe, is the correct reading. The righteousness of God is not put "upon" any one. That is a Romish idea, -still held, alas, among Protestants who cannot escape the conception of righteousness as a something bestowed upon us, rather than a Divine reckoning about us. But the best authorities omit these words "and upon all, " as do the oldest manuscripts, and both the English and American Revised Versions. The words, "God's righteousness through faith concerning Jesus Christ unto all them that believe, " describe it all, and fully.

**Through** ([1223](#)) (**dia**) can also be translated with the preposition "**by**" and indicates that the vehicle or instrument (an expression of the means) by which one obtains the **righteousness of God** is faith. The phrase **through faith** is found 16 times in the NASB (ESV uses "by" several times where NAS uses "through" but the Greek preposition is **dia** in all uses) (note 4 times in Romans 3) - Ro 3:22, 25, 30, 31, Gal 2:16, 3:14, 3:26, Eph 2:8, 3:12, 17, Php 3:9, Col 2:12, 2Ti 3:15, Heb 6:12, 11:4, 1 Pet 1:5)

**A T Robertson** points out that the...

Intermediate agency (*dia*) is faith and objective genitive, "**in** Jesus Christ," not subjective "**of** Jesus Christ," in spite of Haussleiter's contention for that idea.

The faith a sinner exercises is their own faith, not the faith of Christ. Paul uses the same construction in Galatians 2:16, but there clearly indicates that the reference is to the believer's faith, not the faith "of Jesus Christ". Thus Paul writes...

that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but **through faith in Christ Jesus**, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified.

**Faith** ([4102](#)) (**pistis**) (Click more detailed study of *pistis*) is synonymous with trust or belief and is the conviction of the truth of anything. In Scripture **pistis** usually speaks of belief respecting man's relationship to God and divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervor born of faith and joined with it.

**Pistis** is used 243 times in the NT and 39 uses in **Romans** -

Ro 1:5, 8, 12, 17 (3x); Ro 3:3, 22, 25, 26, 27, 30(2x), Ro 3:31; 4:5, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16 (2x), Ro 4:19, 20; 5:1, 2; 9:30, 32; 10:6, 8, 17; 11:20; 12:3, 6; 14:1, 22, 23 (2x); Ro 16:26

As **pistis** relates to God, it is the conviction that God exists and is the Creator and Ruler of all things as well as the Provider and Bestower of eternal salvation through Christ. As faith relates to Christ it represents a strong and welcome conviction or belief that Jesus is the Messiah, through Whom we obtain eternal salvation and entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven. Stated another way,

eternal salvation comes **only** through belief in Jesus Christ and no other way (Jn 14:6, Acts 4:12)

**MacDonald** writes that...

Faith here means utter reliance on the living Lord Jesus Christ as one's only Savior from sin and one's only hope for heaven... Faith is not a meritorious work by which a man earns or deserves salvation. A man cannot boast because he has believed the Lord; he would be a fool not to believe Him. Faith is not an attempt to earn salvation, but is the simple acceptance of the salvation which God offers as a free gift.

**Wayne Grudem** defines **faith** that saves one's soul - **Saving faith** is trust in Jesus Christ as a living person for forgiveness of sins and for eternal life with God. This definition emphasizes that saving faith is not just a belief in facts but personal trust in Jesus to save me... The definition emphasizes personal trust in Christ, not just belief in facts about Christ. Because saving faith in Scripture involves this personal trust, the word "**trust**" is a better word to use in contemporary culture than the word "**faith**" or "**belief**." The reason is that we can "**believe**" something to be true with no personal commitment or dependence involved in it. ([Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine](#)) (Bolding added)

**John MacArthur** makes the point that "False faith may be faith in good works, faith in ritual, faith in a religious experience or system, faith in one's own goodness, or simply a nebulous faith in faith that is so common in our day. A person is saved through faith in Jesus Christ alone, apart from anything else. But Scripture makes clear that saving faith is immeasurably more than simply making a verbal declaration of believing about Him. ([MacArthur, J: Romans 1-8. Chicago: Moody Press](#)) (See related study on relationship of faith and works in the verse by verse notes on James 2:14 ; 15; 16; 17; 18;19;20;21;22;23;24;25;26)

Given the fact that sinners are saved only by faith in Christ, it behooves us to be absolutely certain that our faith begets a genuine conversion. In 1671 the English minister Joseph Alleine addressed this vital subject in his treatise entitled [Alarm to the Unconverted](#) (at least look at the chapter entitled - [mistakes about Conversion](#))

**Paul** reiterates this same relationship regarding the **righteousness of God** and **faith** in Philippians testifying that he had counted all things...

to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a **righteousness** of my own derived from the Law, but that which is **through faith** in Christ, the **righteousness** which comes from God (cp Ps 31:1, Isa 61:10) on the basis of **faith** (Php 3:8-note, Php 3:9-note)

**Jesus Christ** - Faith is only as good as the object, and in this case the object is the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ (cp John 1:12; 3:15, 16; 8:24, 20:31, Ro 9:33, 10:14, etc). Mark it down - Faith which does not have Christ as its object is not saving faith. It is also interesting to note that this is the first time in Romans that faith is specifically linked to Christ.

**For all** - Unto all.

**All** ([3956](#)) (**pas**) does not mean that all are saved but it does mean that the Gospel that offers God's righteousness is available to all, offered to all, and sufficient for all. Paul's point is that God's righteousness is not only available to Jews but is to "all" mankind. The crucial qualifier is that this promise only applies to those who **believe** (cp Acts 13:38, 39).

**ALL FOR ALL** - One day Bible teacher and evangelist R. A. Torrey spoke with a woman who lacked assurance that her sins were forgiven. He told her to read aloud Acts 13:39, "By Him everyone (**all**) who believes is justified from **all** things." Then Torrey inquired, "Who does God say is justified?" "Everyone who believes," she replied. "Believe on whom?" he asked. "Believe on Christ," she said. "Have you accepted Him as your Savior and Lord?" asked Torrey. "Yes," replied the woman. "Then what does this verse promise?" he prodded. The doubting woman could not say, "I'M JUSTIFIED FROM ALL THINGS." So Torrey went over that Scripture again and again. At last the simple meaning of the words dawned on her. "Praise God!" she exclaimed. "I'm justified from all things!" She finally experienced the peace that comes from knowing complete forgiveness (Ro 5:1-note, Col 1:20-note, Ep 2:14-note, Ep 2:15, 16-notes, Ep 2:17, 18-notes). Self-effort, religious ritual, or agonizing prayer (cp Col 2:21, 22, 23-notes) cannot take away sin. But when we trust in Christ for salvation, we are justified--declared righteous by God. Then, as we lose our burden of guilt and experience total justification, we will have real peace.

All my iniquities on Him were laid-  
He nailed them all to the tree;  
Jesus the debt of my sin fully paid--  
He paid the ransom for me.  
--Moore

**Faith in Jesus Christ... all who believe** - Paul sees this truth about the necessity of faith is so vital that he follows up the noun (pistis - faith) with the verb (pisteuo - believe).

**Believe** (4100) (pisteuo from pistis = faith, belief) in the Biblical context is more than intellectual assent to a fact or set of facts. Biblical belief includes an adherence to, committal to, faith in, reliance upon or trust in the One Who Himself is "the Truth", the Lord Jesus Christ. This act does involve the consent of one's mind, but also results in an act of the heart and will of the subject who exercises this faith.

**Pisteuo** is used 241 times in the NT and 21 times in Romans - Ro 1:16; 3:2, 22; 4:3, 5, 11, 17, 18, 24; 6:8; 9:33; 10:4, 9, 10, 11, 14 (2x), Ro 10:16; 13:11; 14:2; 15:13.

**Pisteuo** is in the **present tense** which means the "**all**" continuously believe - the habit of their life is to believe. They believe as a lifestyle.

The **faith** that saves is not a faith that says "I trust in God". James makes this very clear writing

You believe that **God** is one. You do well; the demons also **believe**, and shudder. (Jas 2:16)

Faith in God is too general, too generic, too non-specific. In God's eyes, the only faith that saves is faith that is directed at his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Expositor's Bible Commentary** - Incidentally, it is never said that men are saved **on account of** their faith in Christ, a construction that might encourage the notion that faith makes a contribution and has some merit. On the contrary, faith is simply "**the hand of the heart**" (Godet). It takes what God bestows but adds nothing to the gift. All recipients of salvation are shut up to faith, for "there is no difference," a repetition of the verdict of Ro 3:9. ([Gaebelein, F. Editor: Expositor's Bible Commentary](#))

Contrary to popular secular opinion, Biblical belief or **faith is not a leap in the dark but is a leap into the light!** Faith is not subjective but is based on objective truth, the truth of God's wholly inspired, totally infallible Word of Truth and Life. **Faith** is not contrary to the rules of logic, good sense or reason. In fact, what could be more reasonable than that the creature should trust his Creator, Who has provided the way for him to come back into fellowship with Him through the blood of the Lamb?

As **Charles Simeon** put it...

we must obtain an interest in this righteousness (the righteousness of God), not by working, but by believing in Christ. We must no more attempt to purchase it by our works, than to add to it by our works; or, if we will purchase it, we must "buy it without money and without price." (Isa 55:1)

How this righteousness becomes ours—Faith is the means whereby alone we obtain an interest in it—This also is twice intimated in the text: nor can it be too often repeated, or too strongly insisted on. We must come to Christ as perishing sinners; and, without attempting to establish, in whole or in part, our own righteousness, we must submit to be saved by His alone (Ro 10:3-note). We must be contented to have His "righteousness imputed to us without works," (Ro 4:6-note) and to make His obedience the one ground of our hope (Ro 5:19-note). They alone who thus regard Christ, can properly be said to believe in Him; and it is only when we thus believe, that "He is made of God righteousness unto us." (1Co 1:30)

This righteousness is bestowed upon us freely by God himself; it is not only given "unto" us as a portion, but is put "upon" us as a garment. In this light it is spoken of by our Lord himself, who counsels us to "buy it of him that we may be clothed, and that the shame of our nakedness may not appear." (Re 3:18-note) Without this, we are despoiled of our innocence, and exposed to shame, as our first parents were upon the introduction of sin: but as they were covered by the skins of their sacrifices according to the direction which God himself had given them (Ge 3:7, 21), so are we by "putting on the Lord Jesus:" (Ro 13:14-note) nor, when clothed with his righteousness, can even God himself behold a spot or blemish in us (Ep 5:27-note). Hence the Church rejoices with joy unspeakable (Isa 61:10), and is rendered meet for the presence of her heavenly bridegroom (Rev 19:8-note) (Horae Homileticae Vol. 15: Romans)

In his book entitled "The Root of the Righteous", **A. W. Tozer** wrote that "Something has happened to the **doctrine of justification**... The **faith** of Paul and Luther was a revolutionizing thing. It upset the whole life of the individual and made him into another person altogether. It laid hold on the life and brought it unto obedience to Christ. It took up its cross and followed along after Jesus with no intention of going back. It said good-bye to its old friends as certainly as Elijah when he stepped into the fiery chariot and went away in the whirlwind. It had a finality about it. It snapped shut on a man's heart like a trap; it captured the man and made him from that moment forward a happy love-servant of his Lord."

**Charles Colson** - The Gospel is Good News. But Jesus never said it was easy news. The central truth of the cross is **death** before **life**, **repentance** before **reward**. Before His Gospel can be the Good News of redemption, it must be the bad news of the conviction of sin.

#### FOR THERE IS NO DISTINCTION: ou gar estin (3SPAI) diastole:

- Ro 2:1; 10:12; Acts 15:9; 1Cor 4:7; Gal 3:28; Col 3:11
- Romans 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**For** introduces this section and can mean "because", and explains why the righteousness of God is available to all on the same terms - namely because "there is no difference" in their starting point or their status before God - all have sinned.

**No** (3756) (**ou**) means absolute negation. No exception clause to this statement.

**Distinction** (1293) (**diastole** from **diastéllo** = literally to send two ways, divide, distinguish) is literally a drawing asunder (into parts) and was used in secular Greek to describe dilatation as of the heart or lungs. In medicine **diastole** ([diagram](#)) is the stage of the dilatation of the heart during which it fills with blood, the stage preceding ejection. Metaphorically **diastole** describes a clear and marked distinction or difference.

[Distinction](#) in English describes a discrimination between things as different and distinct

In the second use of **diastole** in Romans Paul records

For there is no **distinction** between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon Him (see **note** Romans 10:12)

In the third and last NT use in 1Cor 14:7 (in the context of describing speaking in tongues) **diastole** is used to describe the difference of the sounds made by musical instruments.

Yet even lifeless things, either flute or harp, in producing a sound, if they do not produce **adistinction** in the tones, how will it be known what is played on the flute or on the harp?

The "**no distinction**" could refer either to (1) the fact that there is no difference in the way in which God's righteousness is received (all must receive salvation by faith) and/or (2) if taken as a reference to the next verse mean that there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles, since all are sinners.

**TDNT** commenting on the meaning of **diastole** writes that...

The divine event in Christ has ended the "**distinction**" between Jew and Gentile established by Israel's election. The Jew is equally sinful (Ro 3:22), and the Gentile is called to the same faith (Ro 10:12). God has set up his all-embracing rule in Christ. ([Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Eerdmans](#))

**Diastole** is found 3 times in the Septuagint (LXX) (Nu 19:2, 30:6, Ex 8:23). In Exodus God declares...

"And I will put a **division** between My people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall occur." (Ex 8:23) (See uses in Nu 19:2, 30:6)

When it comes to needing salvation, there is truly "**no difference**" between people. Since all are sinners, all need salvation. In that sense, there is "no difference" between the morally bankrupt and the morally upright. Both are lost and separated from God.

**A T Robertson** - The Jew was first in privilege as in penalty (Ro 2:9f.), but justification or setting right with God is offered to both on the same terms.

**Leon Morris** notes that no distinction can be viewed in one of two ways writing that Paul "could refer back to the way of faith. All, without distinction, must come by that way (**Ed**: Certainly a true statement). But it seems more likely (**Ed**: And most commentators seem to take it this way) that we should take the words closely with those that follow: Paul is speaking of all alike as sinners. (**Borrow** [The Epistle to the Romans. Grand Rapids](#))

**William Newell** for example writes that...

There is **no distinction** between sinners-between great offenders and small, with respect to this matter of

sinnership. Not the degree of sin, but the fact of sin is looked at here. If you should visit a penitentiary, you would find some imprisoned for terrible crimes, and others for lesser offences, but you would find, in the eyes of the law, no innocent men!

**J Vernon McGee** explains "no distinction" this way...

When I was a young preacher I thought that the grace of God had to go way down to reach the bad sinners but didn't have to go down so far to reach others who weren't so bad. But now I know that God's grace has to go all the way to the bottom to get all of us. Each one of us is completely lost outside of Christ. Either you are absolutely saved in Christ, or you are completely lost outside of Christ. All of us need the righteousness of Christ. There is no difference. ([McGee, J V: Thru the Bible Commentary: Nashville: Thomas Nelson](#))

## **NO DIFFERENCE**

### **Romans 3:11**

**Alexander Maclaren**

THE things in which all men are alike are far more important than those in which they differ. The diversities are superficial, the identities are deep as life. Physical processes and wants are the same for everybody. All men, be they kings or beggars, civilised or savage, rich or poor, wise or foolish, cultured or illiterate, breathe the same breath, hunger and thirst, eat and drink, sleep, are smitten by the same diseases, and die at last the same death. We have all of us one human heart. Tears and grief, gladness and smiles, move us all. Hope, fear, love, play the same music upon all heart strings. The same great law of duty over-arches every man, and the same heaven of God bends above him.

Religion has to do with the deep-seated identities and not with the superficial differences. And though there have been many aristocratic religions in the world, it is the great glory of Christianity that it goes straight to the central similarities, and brushes aside, as of altogether secondary importance, all the subordinate diversities, grappling with the great facts which are common to humanity, and with the large hopes which all may inherit.

Paul here, in his grand way, triumphs and rises above all those small differences between man and man, more pure or less pure, Jew or Gentile, wise or foolish, and avers that, in regard of the deepest and most important things, 'there is no difference,' and so his Gospel is a Gospel for the world, because it deals with all men on the same level. Now I wish to work out this great glory and characteristic of the Gospel system in a few remarks, and to point out to you the more important of these things in which all men, be they what or who they may, stand in one category and have identical experiences and interests.

#### **I. First, There Is No Difference In The Fact Of Sin.**

Now let us understand that the Gospel does not assert that there is no difference in the degrees of sin. Christianity does not teach, howsoever some of its apostles may seem to have taught, or unconsciously lent themselves to representations which imply the view that there was no difference between a man who 'did by nature the things contained in the law,' as Paul says, and the man who set himself to violate law. There is no such monstrous teaching in the New Testament as that all blacks are the same shade, all sin of the same gravity, no such teaching as that a man that tries according to his light to do what is right stands on exactly the same level as the man who flouts all such obligations, and has driven the chariots of his lusts and passions through every law that may stand in his way.

But even whilst we have to insist upon that, that the teaching of my text is not of an absolute identity of criminality, but only an universal participation in criminality, do not let us forget that, if you take the two extremes, and suppose it possible that there were a best man in all the world, and a worst man in all the world, the difference between these two is not perhaps so great as at first sight it looks. For we have to remember that motives make actions, and that you cannot judge of these by considering those, that 'as a man thinketh in his heart,' and not as a man does with his hands, 'so is he.' We have to remember, also, that there may be lives, sedulously and immaculately respectable and pure, which are white rather with the unwholesome leprosy of disease than with the wholesome purity of health.

In Queen Elizabeth's time, the way in which they cleaned the hall of a castle, the floor of which might be covered with remnants of food and all manner of abominations, was to strew another layer of rushes over the top of the filth, and then they thought themselves quite neat and respectable. And that is what a great many of you do, cover the filth well up with a sweet smelling layer of conventional proprieties, and think yourselves clean, and the pinks of perfection. God forbid that I should say one word that would seem to cast any kind of slur upon the effort that any man makes to do what he knows to be right, but this I proclaim, or rather my text proclaims for me, that, giving full weight and value to all that, and admitting the existence of variations in degree, the



identity is deeper than the diversity; and there is 'not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not.'

Oh, dear friends! it is not a question of degree, but of direction; not how far the ship has gone on her voyage, but how she heads. Good and evil are the same in essence, whatever be their intensity and whatever be their magnitude. Arsenic is arsenic, whether you have a ton of it or a grain; and a very small dose will be enough to poison. The Gospel starts with the assertion that there is no difference in the fact of sin. The assertion is abundantly confirmed. Does not conscience assent? We all admit 'faults,' do we not? We all acknowledge 'imperfections.' It is that little word 'sin' which seems to bring in another order of considerations, and to command the assent of conscience less readily. But sin is nothing except fault considered in reference to God's law. Bring the notion of God into the life, and 'faults' and 'slips' and 'weaknesses,' and all the other names by which we try to smooth down the ugliness of the ugly thing, start up at once into their tone, magnitude, and importance, and stand avowed as sins.

Well now, if there be, therefore, this universal consciousness of imperfection, and if that consciousness of imperfection has only need to be brought into contact with God, as it were, to flame thus, let me remind you, too, that this fact of universal sinfulness puts us all in one class, no matter what may be the superficial difference. Shakespeare and the Australian savage, the biggest brain and the smallest, the loftiest and the lowest of us, the purest and the foulest of us, we all come into the same order. It is a question of classification. 'The Scripture hath concluded all under sin,' that is to say, has shut all men up as in a prison. You remember in the French Revolution, all manner of people were huddled indiscriminately into the same dungeon of the Paris prisons. You would find a princess and some daughter of shame from the gutters; a boor from the country and a landlord, a count, a marquis, a savant, a philosopher and an illiterate workman, all together in the dungeons. They kept up the distinctions of society and of class with a ghastly mockery, even to the very moment when the tumbrils came for them. And so here are we all, in some sense enclosed within the solemn cells of this great prison-house, and whether we be wise or foolish, we are prisoners, whether we have titles or not, we are prisoners. You may be a student, but you are a sinner: you may be a rich Manchester merchant, but you are a sinner; you may be a man of rank, but you are a sinner, Naaman went to Elisha and was very much offended because Elisha treated him as a leper who happened to be a nobleman. He wanted to be treated as a nobleman who happened to be a leper. And that is the way with a great many of us; we do not like to be driven into one class with all the crowd of evildoers. But, my friend,' there is no difference.' 'All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.'

## **II. Again, There Is No Difference In The Fact Of God's Love To Us.**

God does not love men because of what they are, therefore He does not cease to love them because of what they are. His love to the sons of men is not drawn out by their goodness, their morality, their obedience, but it wells up from the depths of His own heart, because 'it is His nature and property,' and if I may so say, He cannot help loving. You do not need to pump up that great affection by any machinery of obedience and of merits; it rises like the water in an Artesian well, of its own impulse, with ebullient power from the central heat, and spreads its great streams everywhere. And therefore, though our sin may awfully disturb our relations with God, and may hurt and harm us in a hundred ways, there is one thing it cannot do, it cannot stop Him from loving us. It cannot dam back His great love, which flows out for ever towards all His creatures, and laves them all in its gentle, strong flood, from which nothing can draw them away. 'In Him we live, and move, and have our being,' and to live in Him, whatever else it may mean—and it means a great deal more—is most certainly to live in His love. A man can as soon pass out of the atmosphere in which he breathes as he can pass out of the love of God. We can no more travel beyond that great over-arching firmament of everlasting love which spans all the universe than a star set in the blue heavens can transcend the liquid arch and get beyond its range. 'There is no difference' in the fact that all men, unthankful and evil as they are, are grasped and held in the love of God.

But there is a difference. Sin cannot dam God's love back, but sin has a terrible power in reference to the love of God. Two things it can do. It can make us incapable of receiving the highest blessings of that love. There are many mercies which God pours 'upon the unthankful and the evil.' These are His least gifts; His highest and best cannot be given to the unthankful and the evil. They would if they could, but they cannot, because they cannot be received by them. You can shut the shutters against the light; you can close the vase against the stream. You cannot prevent its shining, you cannot prevent its flowing, but you can prevent yourself from receiving its loftiest and best blessings.

And another awful power that my sin has in reference to God's love is, that it can modify the form which God's love takes in its dealings with me. We may force Him to do 'His work,' 'His strange work,' as Isaiah calls it, and to punish when He would fain only succour and comfort and bless. Just as a fog in the sky does not touch the sun, but turns it to our eyes into a fiery ball, red and lurid, so the mist of my sin coming between me and God, may, to my apprehension and to my capacity of reception, solemnly make different that great love of His. But yet there is no difference in the fact of God's love to us.

## **III. Thirdly, There Is No Difference In The Purpose And Power Of Christ's Cross For Us All.**

'He died for all.' The area over which the purpose and the power of Christ's death extend is precisely conterminous with the area over which the power of sin extends. It cannot be—blessed be God!—that the raven Sin shall fly further than the dove with the olive branch in its mouth. It cannot be that the disease shall go wider than the cure. And so, dear friends, I have to come to you

now with this message. No matter what a man is, how far he has gone, how sinful he has been, how long he has strayed away from the sweetness and grace of that great sacrifice on the Cross, that death was for him. The power of Christ's sacrifice makes possible the forgiveness of all the sins of all the world, past, present, and to come. The worth of that sacrifice, which was made by the willing surrender of the Incarnate Son of God to the death of the Cross, is sufficient for the ransom price of all the sins of all men.

Nor is it only the power of the Cross which is all embracing, but its purpose also. In the very hour of Christ's death, there stood, clear and distinct, before His divine omniscience, each man, woman, and child of the race. And for them all, grasping them all in the tenderness of His sympathy and in the clearness of His knowledge, in the design of His sufferings for them all, He died, so that every human being may lay his hand on the head of the sacrifice, and know 'his guilt was there,' and may say, with as triumphant and appropriating faith as Paul did, 'He loved me,' and in that hour of agony and love 'gave Himself for me:

To go back to a metaphor already employed, the prisoners are gathered together in the prison, not that they may be slain, but 'God hath included them all,' shut them all up, 'that He might have mercy upon all.' And so, as it was in the days of Christ's life upon earth, so is it now, and so will it be for ever. All the crowd may come to Him, and whosoever comes 'is made whole of whatsoever disease he had.' There are no incurables nor outcasts. 'There is no difference.'

#### **IV. Lastly, There Is No Difference In The Way Which We Must Take For Salvation.**

The only thing that unites men to Jesus Christ is faith. You must trust Him, you must trust the power of His sacrifice, you must trust the might of His living love. You must trust Him with a trust which is self-distrust. You must trust Him out and out. The people with whom Paul is fighting, in this chapter, were quite willing to admit that faith was the thing that made Christians, but they wanted to tack on something besides. They wanted to tack on the rites of Judaism and obedience to the moral law. And ever since men have been going on in that erroneous rut. Sometimes it has been that people have sought to add a little of their own morality; sometimes to add ceremonies and sacraments. Sometimes it has been one thing and sometimes it has been another; but there are not two ways to the Cross of Christ, and to the salvation which He gives. There is only one road, and all sorts of men have to come by it. You cannot lean half upon Christ and half upon yourselves, like the timid cripple that is not quite sure of the support of the friendly arm. You cannot eke out the robe with which He will clothe you with a little bit of stuff of your own weaving. It is an insult to a host to offer to pay for entertainment. The Gospel feast that Christ provides is not a social meal to which every guest brings a dish. Our part is simple reception, we have to bring empty hands if we would receive the blessing.

We must put away superficial differences. The Gospel is for the world, therefore the act by which we receive it must be one which all men can perform, not one which only some can do. Not wisdom, nor righteousness, but faith joins us to Christ. And, therefore, people who fancy themselves wise or righteous are offended that 'special terms' are not made with them. They would prefer to have a private portion for themselves. It grates against the pride of the aristocratic class, whether it be aristocratic by culture—and that is the most aristocratic of all—or by position, or anything else—it grates against their pride to be told: 'You have to go in by that same door that the beggar is going in at'; and 'there is no difference.' Therefore, the very width of the doorway, that is wide enough for all the world, gets to be thought narrowness, and becomes a hindrance to our entering. As Naaman's servant put a common-sense question to him, so may I to you. 'If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it?' Ay! that you would! 'How much more when He says "Wash and be clean!" 'There is only one way of getting dirt off, and that is by water. There is only one way of getting sin off, and that is by the blood of Jesus Christ. There is only one way of having that blood applied to your heart, and that is trusting Him. 'The common salvation' becomes ours when we exercise 'the common faith.' 'There is no difference' in our sins. Thank God! 'there is no difference' in the fact that He grasps us with His love. There is no difference in the fact that Jesus Christ has died for us all. Let there be no difference in our faith, or there will be a difference, deep as the difference between Heaven and Hell; the difference between them that believe and them that believe not, which will darken and widen into the difference between them that are saved and them that perish.

**Romans 3:23 for [all](#) have [sinned](#) and [fall short](#) of the [glory](#) of [God](#), ([NASB: Lockman](#))**

**Greek:** pantes gar emarton (3PAAI) kai husterountai (3PPPI) tes doxes tou theou

**Amplified:** Since all have sinned and are falling short of the honor and glory which God bestows and receives.  
([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**Phillips:** everyone has sinned, everyone falls short of the beauty of God's plan.) ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** for all sinned and are falling short of the glory of God; (Eerdmans)

**Young's Literal:** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

## FOR ALL HAVE SINNED: *pantes gar emarton* (3PAAI):

- Ro 3:9,19; 1:28, 29, 30, 31, 32; 2:1-16; 11:32; Eccl 7:20; Gal 3:22; 1Jn 1:8, 9, 10
- Romans 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### WE ARE ALL SINNERS: NO EXCEPTIONS!

**For** (1063) (*gar*) is a subordinating conjunction expressing or introducing an explanation. There are over 7000 "for's" in Scripture and if the context indicates, as it does in this passage, that the "for" is a term of explanation, pause and ask yourself what is the Spirit seeking to explain? In fact, stop reading right now and observe the **context** and see if you can determine what Paul is explaining. Notice how pausing to ponder will always force you to examine the context. You can (and should) practice this simple discipline every time you encounter a **for**, and while not every instance is a term of explanation, a "for" at the beginning of a verse is almost always is used with that grammatical sense. I guarantee that if you begin to "pause and ponder," you will radically rejuvenate your "Read Through the Bible in a Year" program! You might even get a small journal and begin to keep notes on what the Spirit illuminates and how this truth can be applied to your daily life. As you practice interrogating the text (for, therefore, but, so that, etc) with 5W/H questions such as "What's the for explaining?", you will begin to learn to (1) Read the Bible inductively (power point overview) and to (2) Meditate (see also Primer on Biblical Meditation) on the Scripture. Meditation or "chewing the cud" of the Scripture (cf Mt 4:4, Job 23:12-note, Jer 15:16) so to speak is a vanishing discipline in our fast paced, hi tech, low touch society, but a spiritual discipline which God promises to greatly bless (See Ps 1:1--note, Ps 1:2-note., Ps 1:3-note., Joshua 1:8-note, cf Ps 4:4, 19:14, 27:4, 49:4, 63:6, Ps 77:6, 77:12, Ps 104:34, Ps 119:15, 119:23, 119:27, Ps 119:48, 119:78, Ps 119:97, 119:99, Ps 119:148, 143:5, Ps 145:5) From the preceding passages which "organ" of our being is most often involved/engaged in meditation? What are the subjects or the focus of meditation? Reading the Bible without meditating on it is like eating without chewing.

So back to Romans 3:23 - Here Paul provides proof that there is no distinction between Jew or Gentile. The common factor is sin for all men have sinned. As Paul explains later all men contracted the "sin virus" from Adam (Ro 5:12-note) and the "sin virus" causes them to commit acts of sin.

**All** (3956) (*pas*) means that there are no exceptions to this declaration.

**Sinned** (264) (*hamartano*) means miss the mark, to err, to wander from the path of righteousness then, to do or go wrong then, to violate God's law, to sin.

There are 43 uses of **hamartano** in the NT -

Matt. 18:15, 21; 27:4; Lk. 15:18, 21; 17:3, 4; Jn. 5:14; 8:11; 9:2, 3; Acts 25:8; Ro. 2:12; 3:23; 5:12, 14, 16; 6:15; 1Co. 6:18; 7:28, 36; 8:12; 15:34; Eph. 4:26; 1Ti 5:20; Titus 3:11; He 3:17; 10:26; 1Pe 2:20; 2Pe 2:4; 1Jn 1:10; 2:1; 3:6, 8, 9; 5:16, 18

To **sin** is to act contrary to the will and law of God. Everybody is born into Adam and thus all sinned for when he sinned, for he acted as the representative for all his descendants. Men are not only sinners by nature, but are also sinners by practice and thus continually fall short (see below), in committing sin themselves. Thus there is a universal need for the gospel, which is thankfully mercifully universally available!

The **aorist tense** here is referred to as "timeless aorist" which gathers up the whole human race for all time into this condemnation (see also [A T Robertson](#)). There are no exceptions save Christ Jesus as Paul has made clear in the preceding indictment in (Ro 1:18-3:20)

**Godet** agrees writing that the aorist tense "transports us to the point of time when the result of human life appears as a completed fact, the hour of judgment." ([The Epistle of St Paul to the Romans - Chapter 3](#))

**MacDonald** writes that the aorist tense pictures the fact that "Everybody sinned in Adam; when he sinned, he acted as the representative for all his descendants. But men are not only sinners by nature; they are also sinners by practice. (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**Leon Morris** - The **aorist** pictures this as past, but also as a completion. It certainly does not mean that sin belongs wholly in the past, for Paul goes on to a **present** tense when he says fall short of the glory of God. Elsewhere in Romans the glory is often future (Ro 2:7, 10; 5:2; 8:18, 21). But there is also a present glory, for God "made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the

knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6; cf. 2 Cor. 3:18; John 17:22). But this is something Christ produces in believers. Sinners fall short of it. Not only did all sin in the past, but they continually come short of God's glory. ([Borrow The Epistle to the Romans. Grand Rapids](#))

**Vincent** writes that the aorist tense means "looking back to a thing definitely past — the historic occurrence of sin."

Remember that men and women sin because we are sinners by nature. A plum tree bears plums because it is a plum tree. The fruit is the result of its nature. Sin is the fruit of a sinful heart. "The heart is deceitful above all things" (Jer 17:9).

### DOWNWARD SPIRAL OF SIN

Sin will take you farther than you ever thought you'd stray  
Sin will leave you so lost, you think you'll never find your way  
Sin will keep you longer than you ever thought you'd stay  
Sin will cost you more than you ever thought you'd pay

**Sin** is lawlessness (1Jn 3:4), the rebellion of the creature's will against the will of God.

**MacDonald** adds that...

Sin is any thought, word, or deed that falls short of God's standard of holiness and perfection. It is a missing of the mark, a coming short of the target. An Indian whose arrow fell short of its target was heard to say, "Oh, I sinned." In his language, the same word was used to express sinning and falling short of the target.

Sin is lawlessness (1Jn. 3:4), the rebellion of the creature's will against the will of God. Sin is not only doing what is wrong but the failure to do what one knows to be right (Jas. 4:17). Whatever is not of faith is sin (Ro 14:23-note). This means that it is wrong for a man to do anything about which he has a reasonable doubt. If he does not have a clear conscience about it, and yet goes ahead and does it, he is sinning.

"All unrighteousness is sin" (1 Jn. 5:17). And the thought of foolishness is sin (Prov. 24:9). Sin begins in the mind. When encouraged and entertained, it breaks forth into an act, and the act leads on to death. Sin is often attractive when first contemplated, but hideous in retrospect.

Sometimes Paul distinguishes between sins and sin. Sins refer to wrong things that we have done. Sin (see **Sin**) refers to our evil nature—that is, to what we are. What we are is a lot worse than anything we have ever done. But Christ died for our evil nature as well as for our evil deeds. God forgives our sins, but the Bible never speaks of His forgiving our sin. Instead, He condemns or judges sin in the flesh (Ro 8:3-note).

There is also a difference between sin and transgression. Transgression is a violation of a known law. Stealing is basically sinful; it is wrong in itself. But stealing is also a transgression when there is a law that forbids it. "Where there is no law there is no transgression" (Ro 4:15-note). ([MacDonald, W & Farstad, A. Believer's Bible Commentary: Thomas Nelson](#))

**Sin** is not only doing what is wrong but the failure to do what one knows to be right (Ja 4:17).

Whatever is not of faith is **sin** (Ro 14:23-note). This means that it is wrong for a man to do anything about which he has a reasonable doubt. If he does not have a clear conscience about it, and yet goes ahead and does it, most likely he is sinning.

All sin is a despising of the Word of God and therefore of God Himself (see David's sin 2Sa 12:9,10), before it is a damage to man. All sin is a preference for the fleeting pleasures of the world over the everlasting joy of God's fellowship. When David sinned against Bathsheba, he demeaned God's glory. He belittled God's worth. He dishonored God's name. That is the meaning of sin - failing to love God's glory above everything else." "All have sinned and 'exchange' the glory of God."

Sinning is always a valuing of something in the world more than God. Righteousness is the opposite of sin. Sin belittles the worth of God by choosing against Him; righteousness magnifies the worth of God by choosing for Him. Therefore when God just passes over sin and lets sinners go without just punishment, He seems to be unrighteous. He seems to be saying: the scorning of My worth is not significant; the belittling of My glory is unimportant; the dishonoring of My name doesn't matter. If that were true God would be unrighteous. And we would be without hope. But God did not let it be true. He put forward His Son, Jesus Christ, that through death He might demonstrate that God is righteous. The death of the Son of God is a declaration of the value that God places upon His glory, and the hatred that He has for sin, and the love that He has for sinners.

**AND FALL SHORT OF THE GLORY OF GOD: kai husterountai (3PPPI) tes doxes tou theou:**

- Ro 5:2; 1Th 2:12; 2Th 2:14; 1Pe 4:13; 5:1,10
- Romans 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Heb 4:1-[note](#) Therefore, let us fear lest, while a promise remains of entering His rest (entered only by faith, faith shown to be genuine by obedience - see Heb 3:18-[note](#), He 3:19-[note](#)), any one of you should seem to have come short of it.

## GOD HAS A PERFECT STANDARD SINFUL MAN FALLS SHORT

In **Isaiah** God speaks of...

Everyone who is called by My name, and **whom I have created for My glory**, whom I have formed, even whom I have made." (Isaiah 43:7)

**Comment:** Although this affirmation was especially applied to Israel, the principle is universal, answering the great question as to God's purpose in creation = "for My glory" cf Rev 4:11-[note](#).

**Fall short** ([5302](#)) (**hustereo** [word study] from **hústeros** = last, latter, terminal, hindmost) has the basic meaning of come to late (in time) or to come after (in terms of space) and thus it means to fail in something, come short of, miss, not to reach. **Hustereo** has the basic meaning of being last or inferior. It means to be left behind in the race and so fail to reach the goal, to fall short of the end, to lack.

In the present context **hustereo** means to fail in something, come short of, to miss or not to reach. It means to be left behind in the race and so fail to reach the goal.

**Hustereo** pictures someone in a company marching together with others who march faster than he can. He cannot keep up, so he falls behind. Falling behind in spiritual matters means not being able to fulfill all the demands of the perfectly holy and righteous God.

**Hustereo** expresses in general the idea of a deficit, which consists either in remaining below the normal level, or in being behind others. As **Godet** phrases it "Paul therefore means that they all lack more or less a normal state, which he calls the glory of God. ([The Epistle of St Paul to the Romans - Chapter 3](#))

**Vincent** adds that **hustereo** in this context...

is not merely equivalent to they are wanting in, but implies want under the aspect of shortcoming.

The **present tense** describes all mankind's continual state of coming short of God's glory. Paul is saying no one will ever reach "heaven's shore" ("the glory of God") by our their own strength or merit.

**Glory** ([1391](#)) (**doxa**) is that which gives a proper opinion of something or someone. The **glory of God** is what God is essentially. The glory of God includes the outward manifestation of His splendor or radiance. It is that which we will one day see forever.

Click for an overview of the **Glory of God** including His Shekinah glory, etc - the ESV mentions this specific phrase [glory of God] 18 times -

- Ps. 19:1; 106:20; Pr. 25:2; Jn 11:4, 40; Acts 7:55; Ro 3:23; 5:2; 15:7; 1Co 10:31; 11:7; 2Co 4:6, 15; Php 2:11; Heb 1:3; Re 15:8; 21:11, 23)

Writing to the Thessalonians **Paul** exhorts them to conduct themselves as those should be motivated to live holy lives because of the incredible future that will be ours in future glory...

so that you may walk (live, conduct yourself day by day) in a manner worthy of the God Who calls you into His own kingdom and **glory**. (1Th 2:12-note)

Peter encourages the suffering saints to keep on keeping on (rejoice now because you will one be able to rejoice even more) seeking to motivate them in their sufferings because Jesus is coming again (which means their suffering will end and their suffering is short when compared to eternal glory!) ...

to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His **glory**, you may rejoice with exultation. (see **note** 1Peter 4:13)

**Comment** - Christ's return is a glorious truth that should stimulate in every true heart what I like to refer to

as **Vertical Vision**, which should serve to motivate and enable horizontal living, even though it often entails suffering for Jesus' sake (have you ever been mocked or scoffed at because of Him?).

But the **glory of God** is also that which is to be received by those who believe (speaking of our future glorification = "future tense salvation" - see [Three Tenses of Salvation](#)). In Romans 5 Paul explains that through Christ...

also (in addition to peace with God) we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the **glory** of God. (Ro 5:1, 2-notes)

**Paul** writing to the Thessalonians explains our glorious future gain (which will never fluctuate like the stock market!) writing that...

it was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the **glory** of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2Th 2:14+)

In Colossians **Paul** explains that believers have "Christ is you the hope (certainty, full assurance) of glory (in context referring to our future state of possession of glorified bodies, bodies like Christ for we shall be like Him when we see Him - 1 Jn 3:2-[note](#))." (Col 1:27-note)

**William Newell** laments our "short fall" - How sad and awful, then, man's condition! Suppose I should say, for example, to a New York audience, "Let us all go down to the Battery and jump across to England." Some vigorous young man might jump over twenty feet, 'but he would "fall short" of England. And some little old lady might not jump one foot. But all would "fall short" of the coast of England. And, for that matter, the one who leaped the farthest would be in the deepest water! Paul, the chief of sinners, leaped to the farthest distance of self-righteousness, only to cry, "Wretched man that I am" and to find he must put his faith only in Christ! ([Romans: Verse by Verse](#)).

**Marvin Vincent** writes that in respect to the "**glory of God**"...

**Interpretations vary greatly.** (then Vincent mentions various interpretations) - The glory of personal righteousness; that righteousness which God judges to be glory; the image of God in man; the glorying or boasting of righteousness before God; the approbation (act of approving) of God; the state of future glory (**Ed note**: as in Ro 5:2-note, Ro 8:30-note -- where Paul speaks of believers as "these He also glorified" using the past tense for this event is so certain)...

The **glory of God** is used of the aggregate of the divine attributes and coincides with His self-revelation, Ex. 33:22; compare face Ex 33:23. Hence the idea is prominent in the redemptive revelation (Is 60:3; Ro 6:4-note; Ro 5:2-note). It expresses the form in which God reveals Himself in the economy of salvation (Ro 9:23-note; 1Ti 1:11; Ep 1:12-note). It is the means by which the redemptive work is carried on; for instance, in calling, 2Pet 1:3-note; in raising up Christ and believers with Him to newness of life, Ro 6:4-note; in imparting strength to believers, Eph 3:16-note; Col 1:11-note; as the goal of Christian hope, Ro 5:2-note; Ro 8:18-note, Ro 8:21-note; Titus 2:13-note. It appears prominently in the work of Christ — the out-lying of the Father's glory. (Heb 1:3-note), especially in John...

**The sense of the phrase here is:** they are coming short of the honor or approbation which God bestows **Ed note**: but not all interpreters agree with Vincent's conclusion). The point under discussion is the want of righteousness. Unbelievers, or mere legalists, do not approve themselves before God by the righteousness which is of the law. They come short of the approbation which is extended only to those who are justified by faith. ([Romans 3 Greek Word Studies](#))

The **Preacher's Commentary** adds that in this verse Paul...

employs two athletically oriented terms to make his point: the verb for "**sinned**" (hamartano) is related to the idea of an archer's arrow falling short of the target while the expression "**fall short**" (hustereo) means to fall behind in a race. The objective which humanity fails to achieve, whether expressed as lagging in a race or missing the bull's eye, is "**the glory of God.**" Throughout human history, man has shown himself remarkably adept at adopting goals, lofty or otherwise, whether it be the goal of survival, personal freedom, world peace, or making a million before age thirty-five. However noble man's goals have been, they all pale beside the God-given goal, which is to reflect something of the glory of God in life (cp Mt 5:16-note, cp 1Co 6:20, 1Pe 2:12-note) and after life "to glorify Him forever." (Borrow this book - [Briscoe, D. S., & Ogilvie, L. J. Editor.: The Preacher's Commentary, Old Testament](#))

**Expositor's Bible Commentary** feels that...

Possibly the best interpretation (of "the glory of God") is to associate the glory with the divine presence and



the privilege man originally had of direct communion with God. This ever-present deprivation is depicted in the restriction of the glory to the holy of holies in the tabernacle and the denial of the right of access to the people save through the high priest once a year. God's glory is the majesty of his holy person. To be cut off from this fellowship is the great loss occasioned by sin. ([Gaebelein, F. Editor: Expositor's Bible Commentary 6-Volume New Testament. Zondervan Publishing](#))

**Leon Morris** offers a similar thought noting that "The linking of God's glory with man's sin is intriguing. It would seem that God intended people to share in his glory (as we see in the story of Eden). But sin cut Adam off from all that, and sin cuts his descendants off still. ([Borrow The Epistle to the Romans. Grand Rapids](#))

The **KJV Bible Commentary** has an interesting interpretation of "the glory of God" writing that...

When Stephen was stoned he looked steadfastly to heaven and saw the glory of God and (or even) Jesus standing at the right hand of God (Acts 7:55 = "*But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the **glory of God**, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God*"). The knowledge of the glory of God is said to be in the face of Jesus Christ (2Cor 4:6 = "*For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the **glory of God** in the face of Christ.*"). When Paul says that we have come short of the glory of God he means that we do not measure up to the sinlessness of Jesus Christ. The Mosaic law served as God's standard of righteousness until the coming of Christ. But when the Lord Jesus was made a curse for us, He redeemed us from the curse of the law (Gal 3:19; Ro 10:4-note). Thus, the standard of God's holiness today is not the Old Testament law but the person of Jesus Christ. (See free copy of [KJV Bible Commentary](#)) (Bolding and full Scripture text added)

**Godet** writes that by the phrase "**the glory of God**"...

some have understood the favorable opinion which God has of the just (righteous) man, His approbation or favor. This meaning is far from natural; John 12:43 does not suffice to justify it. Others understand by this expression: glory in God's sight, that which we should possess if we were righteous. This meaning is not much more natural than that which appears sometimes in Luther: the act of glorying in God; or than that of Ecumenius and Chalmers: the destination of every man to glorify God.

There are really only two senses possible. The first is that of the many commentators who understand the **glory of God** as the future and eternal glory. But in this case we must give to the verb (hustereo) a very forced meaning: to lack the necessary qualifications for obtaining this glory.

The second meaning, and the only one which we think admissible, is this the divine splendor which shines forth from God Himself, and which He communicates to all that live in union with Him. This meaning includes that of Ruckert and Olshausen, who understand it too specially, no doubt, to mean the original image of God in man. ([The Epistle of St Paul to the Romans - Chapter 3](#))

The **KJV Bible Commentary** explains the glory of God this way "What is the glory of God? The Bible frequently speaks of the glory of God appearing in the pillar of the cloud leading Israel (Ex 16:7, 8, 9, 10); the tabernacle of the congregation at Kadesh (Nu 14:10); the temple of Solomon (1Ki 8:11); the Mount of Olives at Jerusalem (Ezek 11:23); etc. The glory of God now, however, rests in the person of Jesus Christ (Jn 1:14). The glory of God is the person of Jesus Christ. (See free source of [KJV Bible Commentary](#))

You will find the sewer of sin and sparkling river of salvation running side by side from Romans 1 thru Romans 16. It is the I in "s-I-n" that must be removed and "replaced" with an **O** which is God's "SON."

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**Robert Morgan** - Only three people in the history of the world have been perfect and sinless, and the first two didn't stay that way—Adam and Eve. That leaves only Jesus Himself. No one else can ever gain access into God's presence or eternal life on the basis of one's own perfections or righteous efforts. We have all sinned and have fallen short of the requirements of God's glory. We can never be reconciled to God by trying to live a good life, for we are intrinsically, internally sinful; and nothing sinful can exist in the blazing holiness of God's presence and perfections. Only when we realize this can we fully appreciate what Christ has done for us.

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Sin as a fact

### **I. The necessity of a clear sense of sin.**

1. The gospel is a glorious remedy for a universal and otherwise incurable disease; and the first step must ever be to make us sensible of that disease. For one of its most dangerous symptoms is, that it makes men insensible of it. And, seeing that the remedy is not one which can be simply taken once for all, but requires long application, a man must be very thoroughly persuaded that he has the disease before he will take the necessary trouble to be cured of it. Let us try and see what "all having sinned" means.

2. When any of us looks cut upon mankind, or within himself, one thing can hardly fail to strike him. It is the presence of evil. From the first, man's history has been a history of going wrong and doing wrong. From the first, our own personal history has been a history of interrupted good and interfering bad.

3. Some have said, "Don't tell people about it; forget that there is evil in yourself; and you and they will become good. It may be true that there is such a dark spot in nature; but gazing upon it is painful and useless; look at the bright side." But do you suppose that evil in our nature can be thus got rid of? Try it for a day--for an hour; then take strict unsparing account. And if more time is wanted, try it for a year; then retire and trace your path during the time. Does not every man see that it would be simply the tale of the silly ostrich over again, which imagines itself safe from the hunter by hiding him from its sight? No; a man who wants to get rid of evil must open his eyes to it, stand face to face with it, and conquer it.

## **II. Sin is distinguished from every other evil.**

1. There are bodily pain, discomfort, misery, common to us and to all. Now, if we can manage to flee away from them, we thereby get rid of them. We need not study their nature. But the man who wishes to avoid evil in this world must be awake and alive to the forms and accesses of evil. His very safety consists in it. Therefore evil is a matter of a totally different kind from bodily pain, misery, or death.

2. Evil is not by any means our only inward source of annoyance and hindrance. Everyone has defects and infirmities. But none of these do we look upon as we look upon evil. Let it be shown that we are dull, or feeble, or inferior to some others, we put up with it, we excuse it, we make ourselves as comfortable as we may under it; but let it be once shown that we have wished, said, done, that which is evil, and we know at once that there is no excuse for it. We may try to show that we did it inadvertently, or by force of circumstances, or in some way to lessen our own share in it, but the very labour to construct an excuse shows that we hold the evil itself, as evil, to be inexcusable. So far, then, this evil is something which our nature itself teaches us to revolt from and abhor. No son of man ever said or could say, from his inmost heart, "Evil, be thou my good." It requires more than man ever to say this.

## **III. Sin is the transgression of law.**

1. What we have said shows that there is a law implanted in our nature by which evil is avoided and good desired. All our laws, public opinion, even our ways of thinking and speaking, are founded on this.

2. Now, when man says or acts evil, what sort of a thing does he do? Is it a necessary condition of our lives that we must enter into compact with evil? Certainly not. Every protest against, resistance to, victory over it, proves that evil is not necessary to our being. But true as this is, the freedom from and victory over evil is not that after which all men are striving. One man seeks sensual gratification; another wealth; a third power; a fourth reputation, etc., etc.; and so, not man's highest aim to be good, but an aim very far below this is followed by even the best of mankind sometimes. Now every one of these lower objects, if followed as an object, does necessarily bring a man into contact and compromise with evil. Greed, intemperance, injustice, unkindness, overweening opinion of self, and a hundred other evil things beset everyone in such courses of life.

3. When a man lives such a course he is disobeying that great first law of our being by which we choose the good and abhor the evil. Now, whenever we do this we sin. "All sin is transgression of law."

4. Now, sin is committed against a person. And this law of good and evil of which we have been speaking, springs from that Holy and Just One who hath made us and to whom we are accountable. All sin is against Him.

**IV. ALL HAVE SINNED.** And in dwelling on this, the fact that all men have inherited the disposition to sin, necessarily comes first. And, inheriting this disposition, but with it inheriting also the great inward law of conscience warning us against evil, we have again and again followed, not the good law, but the evil propensity. In wayward childhood this has been so; in passionate youth; in calm, deliberate manhood. Now, then, this being so, can sin be safe? Can a sinner be happy? Sin is and must be the ruin of man, body and soul, here and hereafter. (Dean Alford)

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The great Dutch artist, Rembrandt, has a famous painting of the crucifixion in which your attention is first drawn to the dying Savior. Then you notice the crowd gathered around that scene, with their various attitudes and actions. Finally, you notice at the edge of the picture a lone figure almost hidden in the shadows. That man is Rembrandt himself. The great artist realized that his sins had helped nail Jesus to the cross, and so he painted himself into the picture. And so should we!

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**ILLUSTRATIONS OF BIBLE TRUTH** by **Harry A. Ironside** - A GOOD SINNER - "There is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Ro 3:22, 23).

"Are you saved, sir?" we asked a gentleman at the close of a Gospel-meeting.

"No, I really can't say I am, but I would like to be."

"Why would you? Do you realize you are a lost sinner?"

"Oh, of course, we are all sinners."

"Ah! but that often means little or nothing. Are you a sinner yourself?"

"Well, I suppose I am, but I'm not what you could call a bad sinner. I am, I think, rather a good one. I always try to do the best I know."

"Then, my friend, I fear there is little use seeking to show you the way of salvation. Good sinners, together with honest liars, upright thieves, and virtuous scoundrels are far from being ready to submit to the grace of GOD, which is only for poor, vile, hell-deserving sinners, who have no merits to build on, no goodness to plead, but who are ready to be saved alone by the work of Another, and that One the LORD JESUS CHRIST."

Further conversation but elicited the fact that the gentleman was far from being ready to be saved and would, according to his own declarations, rather take "his chances" as he was.

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Journalists miss the point when they keep asking, after each new church scandal, if a preacher's fall has shaken the believers' faith. Sin rather confirms than challenges a faith that proclaims human corruption. The drama of salvation is played out against the constant backdrop of original sin. —Gary Wills

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At a match in archery many try their skill and some come nearer than others; but the only matter of importance is whether anyone actually hits the eye. If otherwise all alike fail. In the matter before us perfect holiness is the end of God's law. But who has reached it? No doubt some may come nearer than others, but where is one who has never failed?

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If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart? —Alexander Solzhenitsyn

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All involved in the same peril - When the ship is wrecked what difference does it make that some should be drowned far out at sea, and others come nearer land, and there be lost? or even that one is within arm's length of the shore when he sinks forever out of sight? What does it avail? They are all lost. This world is a wrecked world; the strongest soul cannot reach the haven of a perfect state of being in his own strength. We are all helpless against the storm of lightning and wind and waves. "There is no difference, for all have sinned." (H. Elvet Lewis.)

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A famous preacher of many years ago had a clock in his church that was well known for its inability to keep the time accurately. Sometimes too fast, sometimes too slow, it resisted all attempts to solve the problem. Finally, after its dubious fame became widespread, the preacher put a sign over the clock, reading, "Don't blame the hands—the trouble lies deeper." The same is true of people: the real trouble lies deeper than what shows on the surface.

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The greatest of faults is to be conscious of none. THOMAS CARLYLE

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In St. Louis there is a railroad switchyard. One particular switch begins with just the thinnest piece of steel to direct a train away from one main track to another. If you were to follow those two tracks, however, you would find that one ends in San Francisco, the other in New York. Sin is like that. Just a small deviation from God's standards can place us far afield from our intended destination.

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Sin, definition of

Man calls it an accident;  
God calls it an abomination.  
Man calls it a blunder;  
God calls it blindness.  
Man calls it a defect;  
God calls it a disease.  
Man calls it a chance;  
God calls it a choice.  
Man calls it an error;  
God calls it an enmity.  
Man calls it a fascination;

God calls it a fatality.  
Man calls it an infirmity;  
God calls it an iniquity.  
Man calls it a luxury;  
God calls it leprosy.  
Man calls it a liberty;  
God calls it lawlessness.  
Man calls it a trifle;  
God calls it tragedy.  
Man calls it a mistake;  
God calls it madness.  
Man calls it a weakness;  
God calls it willfulness.

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One of the interesting things about preaching to New Yorkers is you don't have to spend much time convincing them they're sinners. They know that they're wading waist deep in evil every day of the week. It's on every block. The city can bring out the worst from the depths of the soul. When I preach in New York City on Sunday morning, I spend only two minutes telling people they're sinners. When I'm in the suburbs, it takes about twenty minutes. —Gordon MacDonald

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My husband and I teach children's church. I was telling the boys and girls, ranging in age from four to eleven, that we all are born in sin, but by grace are saved through faith. One of the younger girls first looked puzzled, then said quite seriously, "I wasn't born in sin. I was born in November." —Peggy Jones

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I do not know what the heart of a bad man is like, but I do know what the heart of a good man is like, and it is terrible. —Ivan Turgenev

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The root of the human problem is the dynamic disease of sin operating within the soul and manifesting itself. We look at the dreadful things other people do and excuse ourselves. Human beings are not unlike volcanoes. Inside a volcano, the pressure builds until the top blows with a dramatic eruption of lava. At other times, cracks slowly and insidiously appear on the side of the volcano, and the lava flows out in a different manner. So it is with human beings. We can never say that the circumstances in which a young person's character was formed did not have some impact on the way that he behaves. But inside each of us, there's a thing called sin. No matter what way our volcano was formed, whether we blow the top or leak streams of lava, it's the lava inside that's the problem. The ultimate disease is the problem, and there's nothing human beings can do about it. —Stuart Briscoe

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There are two sure things in life:

1. There is a God.
  2. You are not He!
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Someone has offered this penetrating comparison of the difference between revenge, justice, and grace. If someone brutally murders your son and you take things into your own hands, that's revenge. If you're content to allow the law and the courts to arrest and punish the offender, that's justice. But if you pardon the murderer, adopt him, and take him home to live with you as your son, that's grace!

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A young man once said to a preacher, "I do not think I am a sinner."

Then the preacher asked him if he would be willing for his mother or sister to know all he had done or said or thought, all his motives and all his desires.

After a moment the young man said, "No, indeed, I certainly would not like to have them know; not for all the world."

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SOME SAY: Everyone is basically good.

GOD SAYS: "All have sinned" (Romans 3:23).

SOME SAY: There is no hell, so there's no need to be concerned.

GOD SAYS: "Fear him who...has power to throw you into hell" (Luke 12:5).

SOME SAY: Heaven is not a real place.

GOD SAYS: "I am going...to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2).

SOME SAY: There is no such thing as life after death.

GOD SAYS: "Man is destined to die...and after that...judgment" (Hebrews 9:27).

SOME SAY: We can do nothing about the future. What is going to be will be.

GOD SAYS: "You must be born again" (John 3:7). How can you be born again?—"Whoever confesses and renounces [his sins] finds mercy" (Proverbs 28:13). "To all who received him [Christ]...he gave the right to become children of God. (John 1:12).

SOME SAY: We cannot be sure of salvation or our destiny when we die.

GOD SAYS: "You may know that you have eternal life" (1 John 5:13).

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Bill Gates, in his book *Business the Speed of Thought*, writes:

"A good e-mail system ensures that bad news can travel fast, but your people have to be willing to send you the news. You have to be constantly receptive to bad news, and then you have to act on it. Sometimes I think my most important job as CEO is to listen for bad news. If you don't act on it, your people will eventually stop bringing bad news to your attention. And that's the beginning of the end.

"The willingness to hear hard truth is vital not only for CEOs of big corporations but also for anyone who loves the truth. Sometimes the truth sounds like bad news, but it is just what we need."

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A minister said that once he had a small white Highland terrier which he kept spotlessly clean by frequent washing, brushing, and powdering. One night a winter storm dropped a fresh blanket of snow on the countryside, and the next morning the whole world seemed to glisten under the splendor of the morning sun. As the clergyman stood gazing out his window, he saw a drab-looking dog walk across the snow. He wondered whose it was—then suddenly realized it was his own well-groomed terrier! It was as clean as always, but against that dazzling background it appeared dirty.

In much the same way, our corrupt nature is clearly revealed when our lives are measured by the absolute standard of Divine holiness. The Bible says that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." We make a favorable impression when compared with other men, but none of us can stand up against the pure whiteness of the character of Christ.

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#### Biblical Words Called Sin

Some Pastors just call sin what it is—sin. However, maybe we need to clarify the meaning of sin by using the Biblical words that shade the meaning of words that we translate as sin. Here is a list of those words.

Apeitheia—rebellion; a willful rejection of God's Word and his standards.

Asebeo—a failure to show proper reverence to God through godly behavior.

Hamartano—voluntarily "missing the mark" because we are not loving or obedient.

Parabasis—transgression, crossing over or going beyond a limit that God has set.

Agnosia—sin that results from ignorance. This ignorance can be due to an unwillingness to be open to God's truth (Ephesians 4:18), or can be an innocent ignorance (Acts 17:30).

Parakon—disobedience that results from inattention.

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In the gospel, we discover we are far worse off than we thought, and far more loved than we ever dreamed. —Singer Steven Curtis Chapman

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In my country, England, we play a game called "bowls." When you're too old to run around the block or play tennis or racquetball, you can still go to these lovely green lawns and bowl a little ball called a jack. You send it as far and as straight as you can. Then you take a big bowling ball with a spot on it. You aim the big ball at the little jack. The problem is there's a bias inside the big ball. However straight you aim it, it always goes off-key to the right or to the left. So the game isn't quite so simple as you think. Nor is the game of life. No matter how hard you aim a child at a target—the target being to do right, to think right, to be right—there is a bias within the human heart that takes it off-key. The good things we want to do, we don't. And we do the things that we don't want to do, as the Anglican prayer book has it. There is no health in us. —Jill Briscoe

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One of the great nineteenth-century preachers was a Scottish Presbyterian, Alexander Whyte, a wonderful man with a powerful sense of the evil that resided in the depths of his soul. His biographer says Whyte served a congregation that dearly loved him for nearly forty years. One day a lovely lady came to him and said, "Dr. Whyte, I just love being in your presence. You are so saintly." Alexander Whyte looked at her with great seriousness and said, "Madam, if you could look into my soul, what you would see would make you spit in my face."

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No man's really any good till he knows how bad he is, or might be; till he's realized exactly how much right he has to all this snobbery, and sneering, and talking about "criminals" as if they were apes in a forest ten thousand miles away; till he's got rid of all

the dirty self-deception of talking about low types and deficient skulls; till he's squeezed out of his soul the last drop of the oil of the Pharisees; till his only hope is somehow or other to have captured one criminal, and kept him safe and sane under his own hat. —G. K. Chesterton

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Science enormously emphasizes the unique status of Man. It makes him much more obviously the lord of creation, the measure of all things, the image of God. What it does not do is to give any guarantee whatever that this magician will use his powers well, that he will advance "pari passu" in moral as in material things. Put those two facts together, and you find yourself facing the two dogmas of the Creation and the Fall. —G. K. Chesterton

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Daniel Webster, the famous American politician and orator, once spent a summer in New Hampshire, and every Lord's Day went to a little country church morning and evening. His niece asked him why he went there, when he paid little attention to far abler sermons in Washington. He replied: "In Washington they preach to Daniel Webster, the statesman, but this man has been telling Daniel Webster, the sinner, of Jesus of Nazareth." "All have sinned" (Rom. 3:23). Preach Christ.

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Our Human Condition - There is no innocence in childhood, only less mature depravities.

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In preparation for a meeting in a large city, famed evangelist Billy Sunday wrote a letter to the mayor in which he asked for the name of individuals he knew who had a spiritual problem and needed help and prayer. How surprised the evangelist was when he received from the mayor a city directory.

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I remember Chuck Colson talking about the statements [Jeffrey Dahmer](#) made at his sentencing. He talked about being forgiven by Jesus. Colson railed at us, "If God can't save Jeffrey Dahmer, then he can't save you or me."

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"Have you any thing you did not receive from God?" inquired a teacher of his pupils.

"No," said all the scholars but one. He replied, "Yes."

"What is that?" asked the teacher.

"Sin," replied the boy.

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About the worst advice you could give anybody is 'be yourself.' —Oscar Wilde

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Every congregation is a congregation of sinners. And if that weren't bad enough, each has a sinner for a pastor. —Eugene Peterson,

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There used to be a popular song entitled, "Doin' What Comes Naturally." Probably no one thought of virtue. No doubt many thought of some sin. We tend to think that sin is doing what comes naturally. But sin is unnatural. It is something foreign to us that infects us. Instead of looking for excuses for sin, we must look for forgiveness for sin and the strength to resist temptation.

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**Illustrations of Human Depravity** from D L Moody...

### **Noah and the Antediluvians**

Now the Antediluvians would not believe Noah. "What! Do you mean to tell us that there is a deluge coming, and that we shall all perish alike? Statesmen, great and mighty men and rulers, rich and poor, all perish alike?" "Yes, every one of you that is not in the ark when the flood comes will perish." Did they believe? No, on the contrary. The Son of God tells us that when the flood came it swept them all away. And so it was even in his days. On one side of the cross of Christ was the thief, penitent and believing, and on the other the unbelieving thief. You see many different classes of people may come together; there will be the educated and the ignorant; the churchman and the nonconformist minister; Sabbath-school teachers and Sabbath-school scholars. But arrange them as you will, God sees them all; God draws the line between them. And God has drawn the line between two classes here tonight, believers and unbelievers, those who have been saved from under the curse of the law, and those who remain guilty. The verdict is given against you—Guilty. And why? Because all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

### **Respectable Sinners**

There is a woman in our country who was hoping to be saved, because she thought she was a respectable sinner. Some sinners don't think they are like other sinners. When people talk to me in this strain, I know they are great sinners. She heard a sermon, which showed her clearly that Christ died for the ungodly; and she said, "I must be ungodly; he died for the ungodly:" she awoke to



the fact that she was unlike God, and the light of eternity flashed into her soul. My friends, take your place among the ungodly. I am tired of people making out that they are not bad sinners—whereas they are bad from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot. They are bad, and God says it: and let God be true and every man a liar.

### **Short of the Standard**

In Chicago, when our constitution was young, a bill was passed that no man should be a policeman that was not a certain height—five feet six. The commissioners advertised for men to come round and be examined, and they must bring good letters of recommendation with them. Now as they are passing from one man to another, examining their letters, and trying their height, suppose there are two of us want to get in, and I say to my friend, “There is no man has a better chance than I have; I have got letters from the supreme judge, from the mayor and leading citizens of Chicago; no man can have better letters.” He says, “Ah, my friend, my letters are as good as yours.” Well, the chief commissioner says, “Look here, Moody, these letters are all right, but you must be up to the standard;” so he measures me, and I am only five feet, and he says, “You are half a foot too short.” My friend looks down on me and says, “I have got a better chance than you.” Well, he stands up and is measured, and is only one-tenth of an inch short, but he goes with me. He has come short. I admit some men have come shorter than others, but that is the verdict God has brought in—all are guilty.

### **The Law Is God’s Looking-Glass (see also Purpose of the Law)**

Dropped down into this world that man might look in it, and find how vile he is before a holy and perfect God. My little boy asked me one day to take him for a drive in the Park. I asked him if he could drive, and he said, oh yes, he could drive; so at last, after some time, his mother had got him ready; but, before I was ready to start, he contrived to fall in the mud, and get himself all covered with dirt. Well, when I got up the little fellow came alongside, and wanted me to lift him up into the chaise. “Oh no,” I said; “why, you are covered with dirt.” “Oh no, papa! mamma’s washed me.” “No, you are covered with dirt.” But I couldn’t make it clear to him, and the tears ran down the little fellow’s face, and he told me again: “No, papa, mamma’s washed me.” So I just hitched up the horse, and took him and showed him his face in the looking-glass, and he didn’t say then that he was not dirty. But, I didn’t take him to the looking-glass to wash his face; I took him there that he might see it. And so God’s law shows us our real state. But, my friends, you must stop trying to save yourself by the law. The law condemns every soul, just as grace will save every soul that will come and partake of it.

### **A Dublin Door and the Sinner’s Heart**

When we were in Dublin, I went out one morning to an early meeting, and I found the servants had not opened the front door. So I pulled back a bolt, but I could not get the door open. Then I turned a key, but the door would not open. Then I found there was another bolt at the top, then I found there was another bolt at the bottom. Still the door would not open. Then I found there was a bar, and then I found a night-lock. I found there were five or six different fastenings. I am afraid that door represents every sinner’s heart. The door of his heart is double-locked, double-bolted, and double-barred. Oh, my friends, pull back the bolts and let the King of Glory in.

### **The Artist and the Beggar**

Some time ago an artist wanted to find a man that would represent the prodigal. One day, walking up the streets, he met a poor beggar, and the thought occurred to him: “That man would represent the prodigal.” He told him what he wanted, and found the beggar was ready to come to his place of business and sit for his painting, if he would pay him for his time. The man appeared on the day appointed, but the artist did not recognize him. He said: “You made an appointment with me.” “No,” says the artist; “I never saw you before.” “You are mistaken; you did see me, and made an appointment with me.” “No; it must be some other artist. I have an appointment to meet a beggar here at this hour.” “Well,” says the beggar, “I am the man.” “You the man!” “Yes.” “What have you been doing?” “Well, I thought I would get a new suit of clothes before I got painted.” “Well,” said the artist, “I don’t want you;” he would not have him then. And so, if you are coming to God, come just as you are.

### **Passing Pardon to the Next Man**

I was in Ohio a few years ago, and was invited to preach in the state-prison. Eleven hundred convicts were brought into the chapel, and all sat in front of me. After I had got through the preaching, the chaplain said to me: “Moody, I want to tell you of a scene which occurred in this room. A few years ago, our commissioners went to the governor of the state, and got him to promise that he would pardon five men for good behavior. The governor consented, with this understanding, that the record was to be kept in secret, and that at the end of six months the five men highest on the roll should receive a pardon, regardless who and what they were; if they were there for life they should receive a pardon. At the end of six months the prisoners were all brought into the same chapel where I had been preaching; and the commissioners came up, and the president of the commissioners stood up on the platform and put his hand into his pocket, and brought out some papers, and said: “I hold in my hand pardons for five men.” And the chaplain told me he never witnessed anything on earth like it. Every man was as still as death; many were deadly pale, and the suspense was something awful. The commissioner went on to tell them how they had got the pardon; but the chaplain said to the commissioner: “Before you make your speech, read out the names. This suspense is awful.” So he read out the first name: “Reuben Johnson will come and get his pardon;” and he held it out, but none came forward. He said to the governor: “Are all the prisoners here?” The governor told him

they were all there. Then he said again: "Reuben Johnson will come and get his pardon. It is signed and sealed by the governor. He is a free man." The chaplain told me he looked right down where Reuben was, and he was looking all round to see the fortunate man who had got his pardon. Finally the chaplain caught his eye, and he said "Reuben, you are the man." Reuben turned round and looked behind him to see where Reuben was. The chaplain said the second time: "Reuben you are the man;" and the second time he looked round, thinking it must be some other Reuben. Now, men do not believe the Gospel is for them. They think it is too good, and pass it over their shoulders to the next man.

### **The Deacon's Warning**

A young man met the deacon of a church one Sabbath morning and asked him the terrible question; "How far is it to hell?" "Young man," was the reply, "don't mock such a serious reality, you may be nearer to hell than you think." They had only just turned the corner of the road, and ridden a few yards, when his horse threw him, and he was picked up dead.

### **Refusing Religion**

A few years ago, before I had left the farm, I was talking one day to a man who was working there, and who was weeping. I said to him: "What is the trouble?" And he told me a very strange story. When he started out in life he left his native village, and went to another town to find something to do, and he said he was unsuccessful. The first Sabbath he went to a little church, and there the minister preached from this text: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God;" and he said that he thought the text and the sermon were for himself. The sermon made a deep impression upon him, and he could not forget it for some days. But he said he did not want to become a Christian then. He wanted to get rich, and when he was settled in life he would seek the kingdom of God. He went on, and the next Sabbath he was in another village, and he went to church again, and he made a point of going to church every Sunday morning. It was not long before he heard another minister preach from the same text, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God." He thought surely some one must have been speaking to the minister about him, for the minister just pictured him out. But he said he would not seek the kingdom of God then; but when he got settled in life, and had control of his time, and was his own master, he would then seek the kingdom of God. Some time after he was at another village, and he went to church again; but he had not been there a great while when he heard the third minister preach from the same text: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added." He said it went right down into his soul; but he calmly and deliberately made up his mind that he would not become a Christian, that he would not seek the kingdom of God until he had got settled in life, and owned a farm, and that then he would attend to the salvation of his soul. Many a man thinks he can't make money if he becomes a Christian. How the devil deceives you! This man said: "Now I am what the world calls rich, and go to church every Sunday; but I have never heard a sermon from that day to this which has ever made any impression upon my heart. My heart is as hard as a stone," As he said this, tears trickled down his cheeks. I was a young man at that time, and did not know what it meant.

### **A Heart-Breaking Letter**

I got a letter the other day that made me weep, which I will read: "Mr. Moody: Having with great difficulty prevailed on my husband to come and hear you this evening, and two other unconverted friends, I ask you as a favor to repeat what you did this afternoon about that little praying boy and his words to his father, as I have lost seven dear little children. The eldest boy was a thorough Christian, and died rejoicing in God his Saviour. On the last Sabbath before he died, he called his father to his bedside, and told him he was dying and going to his heavenly Father, and he had prayed to him for his earthly father; and unless he left off swearing and singing foolish songs, and driving out on Sundays, where he was going he could never come; and he clasped his little hands and prayed that God might make his father a good man, so that he would go to chapel with his mother. He said: 'Father, unless you do promise me that, I cannot die.' His prayer affected two or three in the room, but, I am sorry to say although the father promised the child, after many entreaties, that he would alter his ways, he has never carried out his promise, nor has he entered any one place of worship but twice since our child died. May God have mercy upon my husband! May God help you to speak some word that may draw him in love to his mother's God. His mother died abroad, six years ago, a dear Christian, and her prayers, as well as mine, for her dear son, have gone up to God for many years. All our dear boys have died, until seven have been taken from us. Oh, dear sir, pray for my dear husband." I do confess it almost broke my heart to think how a father could go and live a life like that, losing seven children and a praying mother, and going madly down to death and ruin.

### **Lost in the Rapids**

A few years ago there were two men upon the Niagara river, and they were going toward the rapids. The oars were lying in the boat, and they were drinking and talking, and having a jolly time. Some one on the shore saw their danger, and shouted to them to turn back; but they laughed at his fears and went on. A little farther down some others saw them; but one of them held up his bottle and shook it at them, and told them what a grand time they were having. They didn't believe the warning; they didn't believe the rapids were anywhere near them. They had drunk too much, and were intoxicated with liquor. Ah! many a soul is intoxicated with this world's affairs and his plans here below. Well, it wasn't long before some one else saw their danger, and he warned them. But the men went on. And at last one of them said: "I hear the rapids!" And they seized the oars and pulled against the current—too late. They pulled and pulled; but it was too late. They could not pull against that awful current; and in a few minutes they went over the cataract and into the jaws of death, and lost their lives because they would not take the warning. So God calls upon you to seek his

kingdom; and tells you if you will seek him with all your heart, you will find him.

### **Stepping over Christ**

A young man in New York city, whose father I knew, was a great prodigal, and had broken his mother's heart, and brought her down to the grave in sorrow. Every night he was out carousing with boon companions. The father's heart was nearly broken too: and one night a few weeks after the mother's death the young man was just starting out; the old man said: "My son, I want one favor of you. I would like you to stay at home and spend one night with me." The young man said he did not want to stay, it was so gloomy. "But," said the father, "will you not stay and gratify your aged father? You know your conduct killed your poor mother. My boy, wont you stay?" The old man pleaded with him, and even begged him to stay, but he said: "No, I am not going to stay at home." The old father put forth one more effort to save his prodigal boy, and he threw himself down before him in the hall. What did that son do? He just leaped over his father's body, and went out to join his comrades. There is not one of you but would say, "That was an ungrateful wretch, not fit to live." Ah, sinner, what would you do with Christ in such a case? Why, many of you, I believe, if he were to throw himself down before you and plead with you, would step right over him.

### **Weighed in the Balance**

I would like to weigh men, and so I will put the scales up here. Imagine them hanging down from heaven in this hall, and that we are to be weighed. Perhaps if Belshazzar, who was astonished at being found wanting, had seen the scales, he would have been as willing as most of you to leap into one pan with the expectation of seeing the other go up. The majority of people want to use their own scales, feeling pretty sure that by these they would weigh heavier than their neighbors. He (the speaker) would weigh them in God's scales, which were evenly paired and balanced, and the weights would be the Ten Commandments.

### **Homely Illustration of a Sinner**

You know that when the perfect God gave a law, it had to be a perfect law, a perfect standard. No man ever kept that law. Christ only did it, because he was divine. I challenge any man or any devil to find a blemish in his life or character. So he was able to become the sinner's substitute. In England there used to be a game played with bows and arrows. A man would have ten arrows, and if he missed sending them every one through a hoop, he was called a "sinner." Now suppose that clock is a hoop. I send nine arrows all through, but miss the tenth. I am a sinner. Then some one else here, says: "Let me try it." He misses every one. We are both "sinners," and he no more than I, though I have only missed one arrow. Oh, my friend, if you sin in one point, and every one has at least done that, you must number yourself among the ungodly.

### **Every Man a Failure**

Every man, from Adam down, has proved a failure. Man was a failure in Eden; he became a wreck there. Man was also a stupendous failure under the Mosaic covenant. Then see what a failure man was under the judges and under the prophets. Walk up and down the streets of London or New York, and see the young men reeling down to a drunkard's grave. Look at them all around you hurrying on to destruction. Oh, man has ever been and is a failure. So, my friends, let us learn this lesson, that man without God is a failure, put him where you please; the law condemns him; he is at war with the God that created him.

### **The Idiot's Mother**

I know a mother who has an idiot child. For it she gave up all society, almost everything, and devoted her whole life to it. "And now," said she, "for fourteen years I have tended it and loved it, and it does not even know me. Oh, it is breaking my heart!" Oh, how the Lord might say this of hundreds here. Jesus comes here, and goes from seat to seat, asking if there is a place for him. Oh, will not some of you take him into your hearts?