

Study 3

The Solution to the World's Problem is...

Romans 3:21-31

Boy! What a headache! If you've just read through the passage we're looking at in this study, you'll be dazed by the piles of difficult words. Here's a selection:-

- **Righteousness**
- **Justified**
- **Redemption**
- **Sacrifice of Atonement**
- **Forebearance**

And the words are just a start. The really hard bit is figuring out what it means when you string them all together!

REVISION... THE BAD NEWS

Read back through 3:9-20. What conclusion has Paul come to about human beings?

Write out the words of verse 20. Then write out its meaning in your own words.

NOW FOR THE GOOD NEWS...

1. In among all the "big words" of verse 21 to 31, perhaps the most important word is one we all understand. It's the first word of verse 21, and it's worth writing down in big letters...

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It's an important word, because it's a word that can change the whole direction of a conversation. It's an important word, because it marks a total turnaround from the worst of bad news to the best of good news. Mankind has rebelled against God, everyone is sinful, BUT... God has done something about it!

2. What has finally been made known? (v21) Where in Romans have you already come across this phrase?

*Notice how Paul has built up to this point. **Righteous** means "in right standing with a Holy God." People are by nature **unrighteous**, and unable to be righteous. The only way for us to become righteous is for God to provide this righteousness for us.*

3. Read Psalm 32:1 and 2, and Habakkuk 2:4. How do these Old Testament scriptures testify to the gospel in advance?

4. Here are some definitions:-

- **Justified** means "declared righteous", or made "*right with God*." In fact, in the original greek, 'justified' and 'righteous' share the same root word. Justified would be better translated as "*righteousnessified*" – if there was any such word.
- **Grace** means "generosity" or "undeserved favour"
- **Redemption** means "buying back", as in redeeming something from a pawnbroker
- **Atonement** means putting right or paying the price for a wrong.
- **Forebearance** simply means patience.

Read through verses 22 to 26, replacing these words with their definitions:-

²²This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are _____ freely by his _____ through the _____ that came by Christ Jesus. ²⁵ God presented him as a _____ through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his _____ he left the sins committed beforehand unpunished - ²⁶ he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just, and the one who _____ those who have faith in Christ Jesus.

5. Can you explain in your own words what Paul is saying here? Which parts of the section above do you find hardest to understand?

6. What do you think Paul means when he says "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God?" Do you see evidence of this in everyday life?

7. Did God forgive people who sinned in Old Testament times?

On what conditions?

Was this JUST? (Is it fair to simply turn a blind eye to sin?)

How does the death of Jesus demonstrate God's JUSTICE? (See v25,26)

8. Reading between the lines a little, what attitudes seem to be dividing the Jews and Gentiles in the church in Rome? Try to imagine the situation that causes Paul to write as he does in verses 27 to 30.

Are we faced with similar situations? If so, what is Paul's message for us?