Romans 3:21-26 Study

"DEEPER MAGIC"

- Video clip from "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" where Aslan is slain.
  - https://youtu.be/WsOBsj8g6Dw?si=3U3vc56IY1KrN6zs
- God had a dilemma. Two attributes of His Character were in conflict:
  - **His Righteousness** (justice) demanded that any/all sin needed to be paid in full by the death of the sinner
  - **His Love** demanded that He show mercy to the only part of His Creation that was created in His Image
- Theme verse for the book of Romans:
  - Rom 1:16-17 *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith.*
    - "Power" (dynamis): God's dynamite for the power of salvation!
- Martin Luther calls Romans 3:21–26 "the chief point, and the very central place of the Epistle [to the Romans], and of the whole Bible" and called it possibly the most important single paragraph ever written.
- It highlights the single-most important SEISMIC SHIFT in God's multi-stage historical plan to save people from their sins

Objectives of Study

- Promote a deeper appreciation of the beauty and wonder of God's Grace
- Provide tools for us to be able to witness to the lost more effectively
- Describe the power available to us through faith in Jesus Christ to:
  - Encourage us to press on in our spiritual walk
  - Deal with the power of sin and our sin nature

Rom 3 [21] "But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,

- "But now": Concludes the arguments from Chapters 1 and 2 of Romans
- "Apart from the law": (*choris*) at a space, i.e. separately or apart from, beside, by itself, without.
- **This is the "Deeper Magic"**
- There is a scarlet thread of continuity from Genesis to Revelations
  - The scarlet thread shows God's plan from foundation of the world through the New Heavens and New Earth for the salvation of His saints
  - Rev 13:8 *All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*
- "Witnessed by the Law and the Prophets":
  - Isa 53 He was slain for our transgressions
  - Abramic Covenant

- Gen 12:1-3 Promises of Race and Grace
  - *"Get out of your country, From your family, And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. 2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you, And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; <u>And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.</u>"*
- Gen 15:6 *And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.* Repeated in Romans 4
- Covenant Characteristics (Gen 15:17-21 Blood covenant – the most sacred covenant)
  - Eternal (Immutable)
  - Unconditional
  - Unilateral (only God walked through the carcasses, Abram was asleep on a rock)
  - Pen: Abram's belief or faith in God
- Foreshadowed the New Covenant mentioned in Jer 31:31
  - ***And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed***

- <u>Mosaic Covenant (The Law)</u>
  - Covenant Characteristics
    - Temporary
      - Gal 3:19 … *It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come …*
      - Gal 3:16 *Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ.*
    - Conditional
      - Deut 28 Blessings and Cursings chapter
      - Exo 19:8 *Then all the people answered together and said, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do."*
    - Bilateral – Entered into jointly between God and Israel
    - Recorded on stone tablets
    - Instrument: Blood of bulls and goats
- <u>New Covenant</u>
  - Jer 31:31, 33 *"Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah … But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.* (Repeated in Heb 8)
  - Covenant Characteristics
    - Eternal (Immutable)
    - Unconditional
    - Unilateral

        - Recorded on the believer's heart and mind
        - Instrument: Blood of a Perfect Sacrifice – Jesus Christ
        - Pen: Faith of the Believer in Jesus Christ
    - The book of Jeremiah was penned around 600BC
        - There was a deafening silence regarding the "New Covenant" for over 600 years (during the Intertestamental Period) until the night Jesus was betrayed, when Jesus inaugurated it in the Upper Room, "Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, "**This cup is the <u>new covenant in My blood</u>, which is shed for you**." Luke 22:20
    - Heb 8:13 *In that He says, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.*
        - And – indeed – the Old Covenant was terminated a few short years later with the destruction of the temple by Titus Vespasian in 70 AD.
- The **DEEPER MAGIC!**
    - Col 1:26-27 ***<u>The mystery</u>*** *<u>which has been hidden from ages</u> and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is <u>Christ in you, the hope of glory</u>!*
- Grace is like the most precious jewel in the universe!
    - Many facets
    - We should hold it in our hands and admire it from every angle, fall in love with it, treasure it!
    - **GRACE: "God's Riches At Christ's Expense"**

22 even the righteousness of God, <u>through faith in Jesus Christ</u>, to all and on all <u>who believe</u>.

- "Through faith in Jesus Christ":
    - "Believe", "Believe in", "have faith in", "through faith" are synonymous
    - Heb 11:1 *faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*
    - Faith means believing to the extent that you stake your life on it.
        - Many have. Many will.
        - The demons also "believe and tremble", but it's the wrong kind of belief.
- "To all and on all who believe"
    - Many, many examples of how God extends the offer of salvation to the whole world.

Romans 3:21-26 Study

For there is no difference;

- Refers back to Rom 1 and 2.
- No difference between "people without the Law" or "people with the Law"

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

- Everyone is guilty
- Rom 6:23 *"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."*
    - Eternal separation from God
- We are "under the wrath of God" until we believe
    - John 3:36 *He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.*
    - John 3:16-18 *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. 18 "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*
        - The most popular scripture ever. Yet it is very limiting if we pay attention and properly parse it. **We MUST believe**!
- We MUST be "born again ("gennaō anōthen" born from above)"
    - John 3:3 *"… Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."*
- The only condition on our salvation is to accept it and then believe it!

24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

- "Justified freely":
    - Justification…a moment in time
        - Just like a marriage…we walk into the marriage ceremony single and unwed. At a particular moment in time, the pastor pronounces us "husband and wife" and voila! We're married!
        - Similarly, before we accept and believe in Jesus Christ we are "under God's wrath". At the moment we do accept and believe, we become JUSTIFIED (Just as if I'd never sinned)!
- "Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus":
    - The book of Ruth…Boaz is a picture of Jesus Christ as a "kinsman/redeemer"
        - Married a gentile bride – Jesus' Bride is largely the Gentile Church!
- How are we saved?
    - Rom 10:9-10 *if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

- However, not all who go down to an alter call are saved!
  - Jesus said that not all that say "Lord, Lord…" are saved, "Behold I never knew you"
  - Gal 6:7 *Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.*
  - We must examine ourselves
    - 2 Cor 13:5 *"examine yourself as to whether you are in the faith"*

25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith,

- "Propitiation by His blood": (hilastērion) Literally, "mercy seat"
- "Through faith": Over and over again in this passage, and the whole book of Romans, faith (belief) in Jesus Christ is a **requirement**! It is the pen by which we accept God's free gift of Grace.
- The bible does NOT teach Universalism. There are not many paths to God…only one! Jesus Christ!
- No works allowed!
  - Eph 2:8-9 *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.*
  - Tit 3:5 *not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit*

to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,

- Old Testament saints were on the "Credit Card" system
- New Testament saints are on the "Debit Card" system
- Regardless, OT and NT saints require belief (faith) in the atoning work of God (Jesus) to be forgiven
- Once we are Justified, we no longer need to seek forgiveness
  - God forgives all our sins; past, present and future at the moment of Justification!
    - He now views us through the veil of Jesus' blood and sees only perfection!
  - We now go to the cross to seek restoration of fellowship
  - Heb 4:16 *Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need*
  - We now give thanks to the Father and to Jesus for His sacrifice on our behalf

26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and **[also]** the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

- Two of God's attributes: His Righteousness and His Love

- He satisfies His Righteousness by transferring the just punishment due us to the head of Jesus Christ.
- He satisfies His Love for us, by now being able to justify (reconcile) us to Himself and convey His own righteousness to us through the finished work of Jesus Christ.
- I like to add the word "also" to the sentence. I think God is ok with that.
    - The word 'also' emphasizes that both attributes are simultaneously satisfied.
- Where Justification and Sanctification meet:
    - Heb 10:14 ***For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.***
    - We (imperfectly) live the rest of our lives in the process of "Sanctification".
    - We repeatedly go back to the cross to restore the loss of fellowship we have with God.
- In regards about seeking forgiveness of sins following justification. This is a debated topic within the church. The following is my opinion on the matter.
    - Of course we continue to sin following being saved. However, in the verse above (Heb 10:14), God views us as perfected once we are justified. He views us through the veil of Jesus' perfect sacrifice.
    - Col 2:13-14 *And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, 14 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross*.
        - The verse above states that he has "forgiven you all trespasses". So – from a judicial perspective – God HAS forgiven us of all our sins (past, present, future) and nailed them to the cross. Experientially, we continue to sin, but – judicially – we have been forgiven once for all time.
    - Acts 10:43 *To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins.*
        - The wording here in Acts 10 indicates that the remission is a once for all event. It does not say, "*will continue to receive remission*".
    - I John 2:12a *I write to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake*.
        - Note the past tense verbiage.
    - I believe the core issue is whether we continue to "practice" sin, which is addressed in the whole of 1 John. If we do, then we fail the test as described in 2 Cor 13:5 where we are to "*examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith*". We should not be living in such a manner that we see how close to the edge we can get while still calling ourselves Christians.
    - Experientially, we do continue to sin against God and we definitely feel estranged from Him until we go back to the cross and confess our sins to Him and have Him cleanse our sullied consciences so that we may again have unfettered fellowship with Him.
        - Judicially (legally), He has already forgiven us and He views us as perfected, however.

Romans 3:21-26 Study

God gives us power over sin and our sin nature

- Heb 12:1 *Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, **<u>let us lay aside</u>** every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*
    - ("lay aside" is an act of the will)
    - Where does our Will come from?
    - Phil 2:12 *work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; 13 **for it is God who works in you both to will and to do** for His good pleasure*
- Our Old Man (sin nature) has been rendered impotent
    - Rom 6:6 *knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be **done away with**, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.*
    - "Done away with" (katargeō)
        - to render idle, unemployed, inactivate, inoperative
        - to cause a person or thing to have no further efficiency
        - to deprive of force, influence, power
        - to cause to cease, put an end to, do away with, annul, abolish
        - to cease, to pass away, be done away
        - to be severed from, separated from, discharged from, loosed from any one
        - to terminate all intercourse with one
    - Rom 6:14 *… <u>sin shall not have dominion over you</u>, for you are not under law but under grace.*
        - A promise and an expectation

Exchanged life vs changed life

- We are to now live an "exchanged life", not merely a "changed life"!
- **Jesus did not come back to "make bad men good" or "good men better"! He came back to resurrect the [spiritually] dead to life!**
- James 2:14-26 talks about our faith vs our works.
    - Our faith and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is now our motivation to do good works. Our "works" are an outward manifestation of an inner reality.
- 2 Cor 5:21 *For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*
    - God has never forgiven a single sin!
    - Through Jesus' substitutionary atonement (propitiation), He transferred the guilt (and shame) of our sins to the head of Jesus Christ.
    - Through our identification with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, God judicially grants us Jesus' own Righteousness.
- 2 Cor 5:17 *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a **new creation**; old things have passed away; behold, **all things have become new**.*

- Gal 2:20 *I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh* ***I live by faith in the Son of God****, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*