

## Just & the Justifier

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by Wayne Goff

The book of Romans is a beautiful epistle on the subject of man's eternal redemption. It is full of wonderful truths, but we need the time and interest to dig out these truths.

Romans 3:24-26 is the passage for this article, and it contains many truths in these three verses. The saved are justified freely by God's grace (v. 24). However, grace is not a "get out of jail free" card like so many in the religious world think today! Paul plainly says in the rest of the verse that God's grace is accessed "*through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*" And there are conditions to that redemption which all of us must meet.

Furthermore, Jesus is our "*propitiation.*" This is another word which confounds the average reader, but it can simply be summed up as "that which appeases God's judicious wrath." While God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son (Jn. 3:16), there is more to the matter than just emotional feel-goodness here. In order for a just God to forgive sinful man, **a fair price** had to be paid for that redemption. Jesus Christ **is** that fair price! Jesus Christ **is** that "*propitiation.*" Romans 3:25 goes on to say that this fair price is available "*by His blood, through faith.*" But once again we must explain that in the book of Romans "*faith*" very often has reference to **the system of Faith**, or the Gospel. The context helps us to understand when that is the proper meaning, and the context we are studying confirms it here.

The fact that Jesus is the "fair price" paid for man's redemption does something else. It "*demonstrates His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed*" (v. 25). Now that is a mouthful, and it may not be read and properly appreciated. God's righteousness is demonstrated in the price paid for man's redemption. If God had forgiven man without paying a fair price for that forgiveness, then He would have been **unjust!** A judge cannot just forgive a debt and still be just. He must make sure that justice has been served. Secondly, God's forbearance or longsuffering was seen in the Old Testament when He "*passed over the sins that were previously committed.*" He did this when He accepted **a price paid** which was less than the actual price. For centuries God accepted the blood of bulls and goats as a sacrifice for sin, knowing all the while that the actual redemption price was much higher and was forthcoming in the future. That is why all sins forgiven by the blood of bulls and goats were remembered the next year (Heb. 10:3). "*For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins*" (Heb. 10:4). Had God **not** supplied the blood of His only begotten Son on the cross, then God would not have been a just God! This is the very point Paul is making here in Romans 3.

Romans 3:26 sums up the point by saying, "*to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*" In the revelation of the Gospel God demonstrates His own righteousness in the giving of His blessed Son for the sins of the world! That is a price far higher than the blood of bulls and goats. And in God's eternal court of justice the blood of Jesus Christ is more than sufficient for the sins of the whole world! So neither man nor Satan can condemn God as an unjust God! He is not. Therefore, God is both deeply loving and objectively just. What an amazing God we serve. In the words of Paul, God is both "**just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.**"

Dear reader, it took a lot more to forgive mankind of his sins than most people realize. I hope this brief article has helped you to appreciate the value of your salvation. If you are not yet saved by the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, I hope and pray that you will demonstrate your "*faith in Jesus*" through repentance (Acts 2:38), confession (Matt. 10:32-33), and baptism (Mark 16:16). At the point of baptism, you are forgiven of all your past sins because you have contacted the blood of Jesus in His death (Rom. 6:3-4).

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