

Sha'ul of Tarsus & His Letters ~ Part 123

Romans ~ Part 11

Note: To examine the graphics in this series, click on them for a pop-up version.

As I've stressed in my previous post, our journey to comprehend the profound significance of **Sha'ul's Letter to the Romans** is not just a study, but a crucial cornerstone of our faith.

The Righteousness of God ~ Part 1

In your public life, you may encounter people who quickly criticize or judge others based on their decisions and lifestyles. Romans 3:21-31 challenges us to remember that our righteousness is not of our merit but through faith. This week, practice refraining from public judgment or derogatory comments. Instead, seek to understand the stories behind people's choices. Try to express grace in conversations with others, reminding them that we are all flawed and need redemption. This will encourage a community of acceptance rather than division, reflecting **God's** love for those around you and bringing a sense of liberation and peace.

Justification Through Faith

The phrase **'but now'** marks a decisive shift in **Sha'ul's** argument. According to one interpreter, verses 21–26 are the “center and heart of the whole of Romans 1:16b–15:13” (Cranfield, Romans, I:199). This following paragraph (one long sentence in the Greek original) is a beautiful compression of theology. It contains three ways of describing **Yeshua's** work on the cross and the benefits of the **Gospel: justification, redemption, and propitiation**. Each term pictures the **Gospel** by appealing to a different realm of ancient life. This is a powerful reminder of the transformative power of faith, inspiring hope and a renewed sense of purpose.

Let's delve into the meanings of these terms. **'Justification'** is a legal term. In **God's** court, all sinners are rightfully condemned, yet He graciously pronounces **'not guilty'** to anyone who trusts **Yeshua**. **Redemption** is a term borrowed from the slave market. All people are enslaved to sin due to their fallen nature, but **Believers** are bought by **God** and set free to a new life in **Yeshua**. **'Propitiation'** is a term from **Temple** rituals, where the sacrificial animal symbolically bears **God's** wrath as it is sacrificed. **Yeshua** bore **God's** wrath on the cross. Through our faith in **Yeshua**, **God's** wrath is considered satisfied, and we are no longer under it. **God's** righteousness was thus revealed and given in the event of the cross. Sinners are pardoned not by their adherence to the law but by their faith in the **One** who fulfilled all righteousness on our behalf. The **Law and the Prophets** refers to the **Tanakh**, and the entire **Tanakh** is rightly seen as a testimony to **Yeshua** and His work.

²¹ But now, quite apart from Torah, God's way of making people righteous in his sight has been made clear—although the Torah and the Prophets give their witness to it as well—²² and it is a righteousness that comes from God, through the faithfulness of Yeshua the Messiah, to all who continue trusting. For it makes no difference whether one is a Jew or a Gentile,

Yeshua is the object of faith and the means of obtaining the gift of **God's righteousness**. The gift is for both **Jews** and **Gentiles** who believe.

²³ since all have sinned and come short of earning God's praise.

All have missed the mark that **God** intended for the human race and have lost the **glory** of the original creation (Psalms 8:5). Believing the **Gospel** starts the process of restoring glory (Romans 8:30; 2 Corinthians 3:18).

²⁴ By God's grace, without earning it, all are granted the status of being considered righteous before Him through the act redeeming us from our enslavement to sin that was accomplished by the Messiah Yeshua.

By God's grace, without earning it, all who continue faithfully trusting (understood from v. 22) are granted the status of being considered righteous before **Him (God)**, through the act redeeming us from our enslavement to sin (literally just "through the redemption"; see vv. 19–26) that was accomplished by the **Messiah Yeshua**. **Sha'ul** gives a detailed examination to this theme in chapter 6.

²⁵ God put Yeshua forward as the kapparah for sin through his faithfulness in respect to his bloody sacrificial death. This vindicated God's righteousness because, in his forbearance, he had passed over [with neither punishment nor remission] the sins people had committed in the past; ²⁶ and it vindicates his righteousness in the present age by showing that he is righteous himself and is also the one who makes people righteous on the ground of Yeshua's faithfulness.

The present age of the cross and preaching of the **Gospel** vindicated **God**, showing that He is just and the **Justifier** of those who have faith in **Yeshua**.

Law-Keeping Not Effectual

²⁷ So, what room is left for boasting? None at all! What kind of Torah excludes it? One that has to do with legalistic observance of rules? No, rather, a Torah that has to do with trusting. ²⁸ Therefore, we hold the view that a person comes to be considered righteous by God on the ground of trusting, which has nothing to do with legalistic observance of Torah commands.

No one can boast in his **works**. No one can boast, even in his **faith**. Faith is not the *cause* of justification but the *means* of justification. The cause of salvation is grace and mercy.

²⁹ Or is God the God of the Jews only? Isn't he also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, he is indeed the God of the Gentiles; ³⁰ because, as you will admit, God is one. Therefore, he will consider righteous the circumcised on the ground of trusting and the uncircumcised through that same trusting.

There is only one **God** and one way to be justified by Him, regardless of your ethnic and national identity: **by faith**. The phrase **who will justify** does not mean that justification occurs at a future time (at the last judgment) and is therefore not a present reality for the believer. Instead, it points to the fact that **God** counts us justified as we come to faith. Thus, **God** "will justify" your neighbor tomorrow if he comes to faith.

³¹ Does it follow that we abolish Torah by this trusting? Heaven forbid! On the contrary, we confirm Torah. ¹

Does the **Gospel** destroy the **law**? In the following chapter, **Sha'ul** considers the case of **Avraham** to answer this question.

In our next post, we will continue **The Righteous of Faith**.

¹ Romans 3:21–31.