



ROMANS

“...being justified as a gift by His grace...” 3:24-26

Romans 3:21-26 (NKJV)

But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, 26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Paul uses words in Romans that are interconnected in their meaning, & there are fundamentally related words used in the New Testament epistles, all of which are pivotal in this specific passage:



ROMANS

“...being justified as a gift by His grace...” 3:24-26

- Righteousness
- Ransom
- Redemption
- Forgiveness
- Justification
- Propitiation
- Faith

Once we see clearly the meanings of these words, & the ways in which the meanings of these words are interconnected, then Paul's message in this passage will become very clear to us.

Righteousness: The character of being right that is defined infinitely & eternally by God Himself. What God does comes out of His righteous character, & is therefore righteous (Psalm 11:7; 145:17; 1 John 2:29)

Here is the key to understanding the interrelationships of the next several words: Among Gentiles, military captives were taken, to be released only on payment of ransom. To the Jews, sins were looked upon as the spiritual equivalent of financial debts (Matthew 6:12; 18:21-35; Colossians 2:14). Whether by military capture held for ransom, or by having been taken into slavery because of a hopelessly large debt, the amount demanded must be paid in order for the captive or debtor to be released.



ROMANS

“...being justified as a gift by His grace...” 3:24-26

Ransom: this is the amount demanded for release of the captive or debtor. It must be paid in full or the captive prisoner remains under sentence of condemnation, under bondage &/or under the load of debt.

Redemption: The one who has been redeemed is one who has had the debt paid in full and that payment has been recognized and acted upon by the captive / debtor & by the ones holding him captive.

Forgiveness: This is a recognition by the ones holding the captive / debtor that the full amount of the ransom or debt has been paid. This forgiveness happens not because the ones holding the captive / debtor have just given up on the ransom requirement, but because the amount demanded has been recognized by the ones holding the captive / debtor as paid in full. Then ransom has been paid in full, & the redemption effected so as to bring about full forgiveness of the obligation.

Justification: This is defined as being “declared righteous”, but it assumes all the items defined above. The demanded ransom / debt has been paid in full, the price of redemption from that captivity has been recognized as paid and forgiveness of the demanded ransom or debts fully effected. Once those are in place, the legal decision is then “declared righteous”.



ROMANS

“...being justified as a gift by His grace...” 3:24-26

The sins are the violation of God’s character of righteousness & holiness which are expressed by the sin nature inherent in all those in Adam. It is that violation which places each human being into that place of captivity, & God’s justice that demands that the full ransom price – the mountain of debt - be paid. Jesus Christ, however, is the One who pays the entire price, sufficient to redeem everyone on the planet, because His death satisfies the demand for payment which initiated because of sins.

Propitiation: this is the satisfaction of God’s character of righteousness, holiness, & justice which must be satisfied so as to make payment sufficient for the redemption of every human being on the planet, the payment sufficient to effect the forgiveness of the whole world, & to declare each one righteous (justification). God was completely satisfied in this regard in the death of Jesus Christ.

Faith: The captive / debtor earned their position of captivity, but can in no way earn the payment of the ransom, nor purchase the redemption, nor buy forgiveness of the obligation, nor work towards the point of being declared righteous. The payment of the mountain of ruinous debt was paid to the full satisfaction of God’s character by God Himself through the death of Christ. So the pivotal question remains for each one: Do I believe it?



ROMANS

“...being justified as a gift by His grace...” 3:24-26

Forgiveness of sins – Acts 10:43; Colossians 2:13,14

Redemption: The **ransom** price paid through Christ’s death on the cross for the whole world, but effective for those who believe & are in Christ - Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14

Justification: Those who have forgiveness of sins as a result of redemption, which is by faith alone, are then declared righteous – they have the righteousness of Christ, because they are in Christ – **Romans 3:21-26**; Galatians 3:24



ROMANS

“...being justified as a gift by His grace...” 3:24-26

3:24

“**being justified**”: having had the ransom paid, having redemption, having forgiveness of sins & having been declared righteous.

“**freely by His grace**”: free of cost to us because God, through Christ, paid the price, since the payment of the ransom was totally at His expense, & flowing out of His character of grace.

“**through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus**”: the means of carrying out our redemption was effected through Jesus Christ in every single case & explains God’s means by which we are justified freely by His grace.

3:25

“**whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood**”: Christ Jesus is the One whom God took the initiative to set forth as a complete satisfaction of the righteous demands of God’s own character for every human on the planet. The blood of Christ is the ransom payment in satisfaction of God’s demands for payment because of His infinite, changeless character.

“**through faith**”: up to this point, God has done everything to satisfy the righteous demands of His character, & Paul has told us about our justification, which includes the ransom payment, redemption, & forgiveness. Our appropriation of that justification was by faith alone.



ROMANS

“...being justified as a gift by His grace...” 3:24-26

“to demonstrate His righteousness”: God showed forth His righteousness – basic to His eternal & changeless character - in the things detailed above; if God were not righteous by character, or if God could simply change his character, then the rest of what followed would be rather senseless. Further, what God revealed in the person of Jesus Christ & through the apostles shows in clear demonstration that He is indeed righteous.

“because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed”: this does not mean that God forgot about the sins or that He just threw up His hands or that He just winked at them for a time. It means that during this span of time faith was accounted as righteousness in anticipation of the actual satisfaction of God’s holiness & righteousness in the death of Christ – even though the payment for sins was still yet to be made in the context of the history of this universe, earth & humanity. This is similar to the word “overlooked” in Acts 17:30.

3:26

“to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness”: This expands on “to demonstrate His righteousness” in 3:25, by giving us the post-cross time context. He is now talking about the time, unlike the span of time before the cross, in which we can retrospectively look back & see the events that were included in God’s provision, & the satisfaction made.



ROMANS

“...being justified as a gift by His grace...” 3:24-26

“that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”: This is telling us that God has two essential aspects in this process Paul just outlined for us. He is at once the one who is the very definition of righteousness & the same one who declares us righteous as well, with everything else that justification includes. Paul also takes it to the bottom line: God is fully satisfied in the death of Christ as payment in full of the ruinous mountain of debt that was incurred because of the sins of every person on the planet. That payment’s unfathomably gracious benefits are taken all the way to the point of being declared righteous, for every one who has faith in Jesus Christ.

New Testament words related to slaves:

- Bought (Greek: **agorazō**; 1 Corinthians 6:20)
- Redeemed (Greek: **exagorazō**; Galatians 3:13)
- Redeemed (Greek: **lutrō**; Titus 2:14)
- Tutor/Schoolmaster (Greek: **paidagōgos**; Galatians 3:24, 25)
- Captive (Greek: **sulagōgeō** = kidnap, capture by pirates or thugs; Colossians 2:8)
- Captive (Greek: **aichmalōtizō** = military capture; 2 Corinthians 10:5)
- Freed (Greek: **dikaiō**; Romans 6:7, 18, 22)
- Master (Greek: **kurios**; Ephesians 6:5)