

Romans Bible Study
Lesson 27
Romans 3:26

Text: Romans 3:26 "It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus."

As we learned in our last lesson God, "In His divine forbearance He had passed over former sins."

1. He could do that because the blood sacrifices of animals covered the sins of Old Testament Saints so God could "pass them by" until an adequate atonement could be made for them.
2. And although God **was righteous** in not imputing their sins — never the less He was not seen as righteous because there was **no manifestation** of His Justice.
 - a. Sins that were only covered were not forgiven, so where was the penalty of the law?
 - b. It seemed that the remission of sins was achieved by God's forbearance: Which it isn't.
 - c. Where was the sword of Justice?

In the first section of verse 26 Paul begins to answer these questions: "It was to show his righteousness at the present time;"

1. God orchestrates everything in His creation according to a Divine timetable. Eccl. 3:1-22; Gen. 3:15; Isa. 42: 49:8; John 1:29;
2. Now for the first time under the gospel —the Messiah has come and now the righteousness of God will be seen. Luke 4:16-21; Eph. 3:11

And then in the remainder of verse 26 we see the glorious paradox of God's righteousness.

1. Paul writes, "That he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus."
2. "Just in punishing," and "merciful in pardoning," men can see and understand that; but being "just in justifying the guilty," that astounds the carnal mind.

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2. The propitiation through faith in Christ's blood resolves the paradox and harmonizes being, "just in justifying the guilty." 2 Cor 5:21
3. For in that "God hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin," justice has full satisfaction; and in that "we are made the righteousness of God in Him," we see undeserved mercy man could never understand.

It's also important to note that the word "Just" in our text **does not mean** benevolent, or merciful, although it may sometimes have that meaning. Matt. 1:19; John 17:25;

1. But here it refers to the fact that God had **retained the integrity** of his character as a moral governor; that he had shown a due regard to his Law, and to the penalty of the Law by his plan of salvation.
2. If God forgave sinners without an atonement, His justice would be sacrificed and abandoned. Plus, the law would cease to have any terrors for the guilty, and its penalty would be nullified.
3. But in the plan of salvation He has shown a regard to the Law by appointing His Son to be a substitute in place of sinners. Ps. 69:9; Heb. 2:9; 1 Peter 3:18;
 - a. And although He didn't endure the Law's precise penalty (His sufferings were *not eternal* nor were they attended with *remorse of conscience*, or by *despair*, which are the proper penalty of the Law) He did however, endure so much **as to accomplish the same ends** as if those who are saved by him had been doomed to eternal death. John 19:30; Heb. 9:22
4. And by the crucifixion of His Son God demonstrated that His Law could not be violated without **introducing suffering**; and that it could not be broken with impunity.

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He showed that he had so great a regard for it, that he would not pardon one sinner without an atonement. And thus he secured the proper honor to his character as a lover of his Law, a hater of sin, and a just God.

In the cross God has shown that if sinners do not avail themselves of the offer of pardon by Jesus Christ, they **must experience** in their own souls forever the pains which this substitute for sinners endured in behalf of people on the cross. Matt. 25:46; Heb. 10:29; 1 John 5:10-12;

1. Thus, no principle of justice has been abandoned; no warnings have been modified; no claim of his Law has been let down; and no injustice has been done by allowing the guilty to escape.
2. He is, in all this great transaction, a just moral governor, as just to his Law, to himself, to his Son, to the universe, when he pardons, as he is when he sends the incorrigible sinner down to hell. Rev. 20:11-15;
3. A full compensation, an equivalent, has been provided by the sufferings of the Savior in the sinner's stead, so the sinner may be pardoned. Isa. 53:5; Gal. 1:4; Rev. 1:5;

Next our text says, "He might be just" and "The Justifier."

1. Please note that while pardoning, and treating the ill-deserving as if they were innocent, he can **retain his pure and holy** character.
 - a. Even when treating the guilty with favor, God isn't implying that He's OK with guilt and pollution — He has expressed his abhorrence of sin in the atonement!
 - b. And admitting them to friendship and heaven doesn't show that He approves of their past conduct and character — because He demonstrated His hatred for sin by giving his Son up to a shameful death for them.

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- c. Christ's propitiation is **the polar opposite** of executive pardons man gives to man.
1. When a Governor pardons a man the principals and justice of the law are abandoned. The sentence is set aside; the penalties of the law are removed and **nothing is paid** for the crime committed.
 2. And it's declared that in certain cases the law may be violated, and its penalty **not inflicted**.
 3. But when God pardons a soul He shows no less regard to his law in **pardoning** than in **punishing**. This is the glorious, special feature of the gospel plan of salvation.

And Paul ends the verse with **a distinction**: God is the justifier, "of the one who has faith in Jesus."

1. The distinction is that only those who have "living faith" in Jesus can claim God's justification. John 14:15; Discuss
2. And that is in contradistinction from him who depends on his own works for salvation. Eph. 2:8-9; James 2:14-18

In our next lesson we will see how Paul summarizes everything he taught in Chapter 3 about the law and faith.