

## The Satisfaction of Divine Justice

By David Harrell  
Romans 3:25b-31

We now arrive at Romans chapter three at the end of verse 25 through verse 31. Let me read that text to you.

What I would like to do is actually just begin with verse 25.

...whom God displayed publicly [referring to Christ] as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law. Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one. Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law.<sup>1</sup>

As you all know, life is very fast and it is very chaotic. If you think about your life even this last week you will quickly agree that there were 1000 things that grabbed for your attention. We have very little time in our busy schedules these days to steal away to some private place and pensively reflect about life. Every man, however, who does this, who will take time to step aside and to get quiet, will look at his life honestly and when he does he will recognize that his past and his present and even his future is something that is very concerning to him. In fact, it has been my experience in working with people that for those who do not love God, who have no fear of God, to come away and be quiet like this is a very terrifying thing.

For most people when they do this they will feel microscopic. They look at themselves at this vast universe that to them makes absolutely no sense, a world that is vast, big and fast, everything happening and yet for them they look around and the only thing that makes any sense whatsoever is that somehow with all this that has been created there must be a Creator. And that observation is exceedingly obvious to most people who are honest.

And yet in the midst of this reflection people will acknowledge that they feel very lost. They feel alone in the vastness of this universe and that it really makes no sense to them that their life seems as though it is utterly bereft of any meaning, of any real direction or purpose. And as they begin to think about this more they begin to feel this chill of guilt and dread coming over them. They will acknowledge that there is something terribly wrong. And in their heart they will begin to speak this way.

---

<sup>1</sup> Romans 3:25-31.

## The Satisfaction of Divine Justice

By David Harrell  
Romans 3:25b-31

“I know that somehow I am not right with this Creator God, but I am not sure how to get right with him if he really even exists. But as I look at my life I must say there has got to be more to life than this. Well, what is it? My life seems to be going nowhere fast. What must I do with this guilt? I have this fear of dying and facing the unknown and I hate this feeling of being so lost and being so helpless. Why am I filled with this dread. How can I know God that he exists. How can I know what he expects of me? Maybe I ought to read the Bible even though I think that it is probably just a book of myths.”

And suddenly the cell phone rings and with the beep the reflector realizes, oh, I have got a text. And he looks on his phone and it says, “Hey, dude, what’s up? Party tonight. Call me.”

And relieved that the pain of self reflection is finally over he shakes his head and smiles and says to himself, “Wow, I have got to get back to life. This self examination stuff is just too depressing.”

He puts his head phones in his ears, turns on his music and continues to walk in inexorably towards hell.

This scenario illustrates what the apostle Paul described in the first chapter of his letter to the believers in Rome in AD 56 and it may, perhaps, describe what some of you have experienced from time to time if you are willing to get quiet before your Creator and be brutally honest.

In his timeless allegory, the great Puritan theologian John Bunyan wrote *Pilgrim’s Progress* and there he described this same kind of scenario that was played out in his life those many years ago. The only difference is he was not only exposed to creation and his conscience, but he was also exposed to the Word of the living God, the Bible. And here is what he said, quote. “As I walked through the wilderness of this world I came to a place where there was a den. Inside I lay down to sleep and as I slept I had a dream. In my dream I looked up and saw a man clothed in rags standing in a certain place with his face turned away from his home. And he carried a book in his hand and a great burden on his back. As I watched I saw him open the book and begin to read and as he read he wept and trembled. Then not being able to contain himself any longer he cried out in anguish asking, ‘What shall I do?’

“Now I saw that one day when he was walking in the fields he was reading in his book, as was his habit, and his mind was greatly distressed. As he read he burst out as he had done before, ‘What shall I do to be saved?’

“I also saw him looking this way and then that as if he would run, yet he stood motionless. I perceived that he must not have known which way to go.

“Then I looked and I saw a man named Evangelist coming toward him. Upon reaching him he asked, ‘Why are you crying?’

## The Satisfaction of Divine Justice

By David Harrell  
Romans 3:25b-31

“‘Sir,’ he answered. I can see by the book in my hand that I am condemned to die and after that I will be brought to judgment. I find I am not willing to do the first and not able to bear the latter.’

“Then Evangelist asked, ‘Why aren’t you willing to die since this life is so filled with evil?’

“The man answered, ‘Because I fear that this burden on my back will drive me lower than the grave and to hell itself and, sir, if I am not even able to face prison, then surely I cannot bear the judgment and its subsequent execution. Thinking about these things makes me cry.’

“Evangelist then asked him, ‘If this is your condition, why are you standing still?’

“He answered, ‘Because I don’t know where to go.’

“Then Evangelist gave him a parchment scroll inscribed with these words, ‘Flee from the wrath to come.’

“The man read it and looking at Evangelist very carefully asked, ‘To where do I flee?’

“Then pointing his finger to a very wide field Evangelist replied, ‘Can you see the wicket gate in the distance?’

“‘No,’ the man answered.

“Then the other asked, ‘Do you see the shining light?’

“He said, ‘I think I do.’

“Evangelist continued and said, ‘Keep your eyes fixed upon that light and go directly to it. Then you will see the gate. When you knock on it you will be told what to do.’”

Throughout Scripture God has made it clear that man knows that there is a God and that he is not right with him. He knows that he lives for himself, that he does not live for God, that he has a predisposition that to insist that the world orbit around him so that he can seek his pleasures. We learn from the Word of God that man is utterly self-willed. He is selfish, self-centered, self-absorbed. And yet he suppresses all of these things in unrighteousness. He knows that he must answer to God, but the very thought of that is repulsive to him and so he convinces himself that he is far better than he really is, that somehow God grades on the curve if he even exists.

And so he goes to the great smorgasbord of false religions that Satan offers and chooses his favorite system whereby he might earn his way into God’s good graces. And the

## The Satisfaction of Divine Justice

By David Harrell  
Romans 3:25b-31

apostle Paul has made it abundantly clear that this is utterly impossible, that man is too sinful and God is too holy.

In verse 20 of chapter three he says that, “By the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight.”<sup>2</sup>

And, dear friends, every religion that offers man some system whereby he can earn God’s favor through good deeds or through religious rituals is a false religion.

Paul has also told us in verse 23 of chapter three that, “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”<sup>3</sup>

Grammatically it is literally saying, “All are continuously falling short.”

Man’s supreme motivation is not to love the Lord his God with all of his heart, mind, soul and strength and his neighbor as himself. But, rather, to just love himself.

There is not one of us in this sanctuary that can boast of a life that is anything other than self centered, self willed. Our culture’s obsession with Facebook and My Space is a testimony to this where millions of people create a profile of themselves that will make them feel important and accepted, desperate for the world to somehow orbit around their life. Then they live in a fantasy world where they believe that there is some vast audience out there that is sitting on the edge of their chair just waiting to hear the next tidbit of their life, to read your next blog or your next poem or to read some running account of your life.

And like all idolatry this can become terribly addictive.

In the past six months I have counted 14 people that I talked with who have admitted that they spent far too much time in front of their computer on these things.

Now, I don’t want to paint with too broad of a brush. I realize that there is some benefit to these social networking sites and not all of them are used in such ways, but, dear friends, I would submit to you that for most people these things merely give their sin nature an opportunity to express itself and to gain some satisfaction, even if it is an illusion, because our sin nature screams for attention.

Please notice me. Here is my private thoughts and feelings. Please be my friend. Listen to me. Recognize me. Affirm me.

You see, man is by nature a lover of self, not a lover of God.

---

<sup>2</sup> Romans 3:20.

<sup>3</sup> Romans 3:23.

## The Satisfaction of Divine Justice

By David Harrell  
Romans 3:25b-31

In 2 Timothy three and verse two we read, “For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy.”<sup>4</sup>

Paul tells us in Philippians two verse 21 that man seeks after his own interests, not those of Christ Jesus.

You see, man lives for himself. He lives in rebellion against God. And the Bible calls this sin. It can be defined very simply as man’s innate inability to conform to the moral character and desires of God. And this manifests itself primarily in the area of our self will which is somewhat the essence of sin.

But understand that because God is holy, all sin must be punished. Yet because he is merciful he has provided a way for sin to be punished, but also for man who is guilty to somehow be reconciled unto himself.

Dear friends, that way is the miracle of justification by faith, a way whereby we can be made righteous, that is acceptable to God.

As we studied the last time we were together, a righteousness that is apart from the law, acquired by faith, available to all and accomplished by redemption.

And you will recall, as we studied the text last week that the terms righteousness and justified are practically the same terms in the original language. Righteousness is that state or that condition of being acceptable to God because of perfect integrity and virtue and purity of life. And justified means to literally render righteous, to declare someone righteous or to pronounce one righteous.

But how can man who is guilty be declared not guilty? Certainly he can be pardoned, but that is something all together different than being justified, than being pronounced and therefore treated as righteous because Paul has already said that all have sinned.

If that is the case, then how can somebody be declared righteous? Well, the answer is that God punished his sinless Son the Lord Jesus Christ for our sin so that as we stand before the bar of divine justice, he assumes our place. He comes and stands in our place and says, “Father, I will assume this man’s guilt and bear his punishment.”

Now, we must be very careful. This is not to say that Jesus took upon himself our sin nature as perhaps I led you to believe last week when I said that he took upon himself our, quote, “vile character.” That may not be the very best choice of words, because certainly if Christ’s nature had been sinful, then he could not have atoned for our sin because he would have then been guilty.

---

<sup>4</sup> 2 Timothy 3:2.

## The Satisfaction of Divine Justice

By David Harrell  
Romans 3:25b-31

But Scripture is very clear. The Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son is infinitely holy, eternally holy.

Remember what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:21. “He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”<sup>5</sup>

Now, while we can never fully understand the full scope of how the sinless Savior can stand in our stead and, therefore, because of this we will never be able to accurately wrap words around this supernatural transfer of guilt, we can certainly say with absolute assurance on the basis of Scripture that the Lamb of God was spotless.

In Hebrews seven verse 26 we read, “For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens.”<sup>6</sup>

And in 1 John three verse five we read, “And you know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin.”<sup>7</sup>

And yet as Isaiah 53 and verse six, “But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.”<sup>8</sup>

So as we look at this great concept of justification we see that without ever relaxing the stipulations and the penalties of the law to accommodate man’s sin which would, of course, impugn the holy character of God, we see that the full weight of divine vengeance fell upon Christ. Jesus bore the full wrath of God for you and for me in his body.

Therefore Paul says in Galatians three verse 13, “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us.”<sup>9</sup>

So now when God looks upon the sinner who has placed his faith in Christ as Savior, he does not see his sin, but instead he sees the righteousness of Christ. Because we have been declared righteous we have been justified. He does not treat us or consider us to be righteous though we are still guilty, but in fact, he actually has made us righteous which is a gift far beyond pardon, a gift far beyond mere forgiveness as glorious as those things are.

So in Romans chapter three verse 24 we read, “Being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.”<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:21.

<sup>6</sup> Hebrews 7:26.

<sup>7</sup> 1 John 3:5.

<sup>8</sup> Isaiah 53:6.

<sup>9</sup> Galatians 3:13.

<sup>10</sup> Romans 3:24.

## The Satisfaction of Divine Justice

By David Harrell  
Romans 3:25b-31

Redemption referring to a ransom payment that sets the sinner free from the penalty and the power and one day the presence of sin. He goes on to say, “Whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation,”<sup>11</sup> that is a satisfaction, an appeasement which is the reason for not executing punishment upon sinners who deserve it.

“God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith.”<sup>12</sup>

But now Paul anticipates certain questions that people will ask. And certainly folks are going to ask, “Why did God the Father make Christ a propitiation?”

Another way of putting this is: Why would God the Father kill his own Son?

Now many critics of Christianity find this absolutely appalling. They want nothing to do with the God who would murder his own Son who was innocent. But, of course, such a position signals a profound ignorance of all that we have just heard and certainly all that the apostle reveals here at the end of verse 25 through verse 31.

So why did God murder his own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ? We are going to see four reasons. One, to demonstrate the righteousness of God; secondly, to magnify the grace of God; thirdly, to declare the oneness of God; and, finally, to honor the law of God. And, of course, all of us points ultimately to the fact that he did this to bring glory to himself.

So why did God the Father make Christ a propitiation? Number one, to demonstrate the righteousness of God. Notice again verse 25.

“Whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed.”<sup>13</sup>

Now, first, I must remind you once again. There would be no propitiation without blood. Yet propitiation has no efficacy. In other words, it has no value. It cannot be operative without faith, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. A man cannot obtain the great blessing of Christ’s sacrifice, his forgiveness of sin, being declared righteous, having his wrath turned away from him unless he exercises genuine faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

But we can ask, how did the cross demonstrate this righteousness of God?

Now, first, I would submit to you that for the most part people don’t even think in these terms. Most of the time when people think of Christ dying on the cross of Calvary, they simply see the cross as a demonstration of God’s love for man. The most prominent evangelical pastor in America believes and put it this way.

---

<sup>11</sup> Romans 3:25.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

## The Satisfaction of Divine Justice

By David Harrell  
Romans 3:25b-31

Quote, “When God sent Jesus Christ to earth, Jesus later, as he grew to a man, stretched his arms out on a cross to die for your sins. And he was saying at that point, ‘I love you this much, this much. I love you so much it hurts. I love you so much I would rather die than live without you,’” end quote.

Well, now, indeed, Jesus’ love has no limits towards those whom the Father has given him. We read that in John 17:24 through 26. This is clearly demonstrated in his sacrifice on the cross. But was that the primary purpose for which he suffered and died? Hardly. Jesus was not saying, “I love you so much I would rather die than live without you,” but rather, “You must repent and love me or you will die in your sin and endure my wrath forever.”

You see, Scripture is very clear that Jesus came to save sinners, ultimately that he might bring glory to himself. And saving sinners demonstrates his mercy and his grace and it ultimately transforms men to worship him forever.

In Philippians chapter two, for example, verses five through 11 we read about that, how that Christ was obedient to the point of death even a death on the cross and therefore we read that God highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name. He did this all to the glory of God the Father.

So while it is true that God’s love is inherent in the cross, we must remember that God cannot exchange his wrath for love unless his justice has been satisfied. And that is what happened on the cross. This is fundamental to the gospel, clearly stated in 1 John four verses nine through 10.

By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.<sup>14</sup>

And so here, again, we do see the love of God, that Jesus’ death ultimately is this satisfaction for divine wrath.

So we come back to the question. How did the cross demonstrate the righteousness of God? And we have the answer here before us. In essence the answer is this. The cross proved that God was not unfair or unjust or in any way indifferent when in his forbearance, he chose not to punish sin immediately, but instead passed over the sins previously committed.

You see, some will say, “I don’t like this Christian God, this God of the Bible. I ask you. If the God of the Bible is so holy, then why doesn’t he punish sin? Why does he

---

<sup>14</sup> 1 John 4:9-10.



## The Satisfaction of Divine Justice

By David Harrell  
Romans 3:25b-31

allow so much injustice in the world? Why does he even allow his own to suffer? If you ask me, this God is unfair. He is unjust and he is not righteous.”

But now in God’s economy, the cross declared the righteous of God and that on the cross God perfectly satisfied his own justice by punishing the sins of all who would believe in him, even the sins of people committed in the past, a punishment sufficient to cover every sin every committed. However the efficacy of his sacrifice, in other words, the saving benefit of his payment is only available to those who believe.

In fact, dear friends, I would submit to you that the law received a greater vindication by the death of the sinless Son of God than it could have ever received had the entirety of the human race suffered upon a cross for eternity.

Again, every sin, every sinner must be punished. And on the cross Christ bore the sins of all who trust in God to give him this righteousness that is not their own. And the cross reached back to save Old Testament believers and reached forward to save all of the rest of which we are a part.

But with great sorrow I must warn that those who refused to trust in God’s provision of grace through faith will one day satisfy God’s justice on their own by experiencing his wrath for an eternity in hell.

So, because of the cross, God has proven totally righteous and just, perfectly satisfying the demands of the law.

Now think about it. God could have instantly punished Adam and Eve after the very first sin. He could have immediately punished every sinner thereafter, but instead, in his great love and in his mercy, in his forbearance we see that he passed over the sins previously committed.

The psalmist Asaph spoke of this in Psalm 78 verse 38. There we read:

But He, being compassionate, forgave their iniquity, and did not destroy them; And often He restrained His anger, And did not arouse all His wrath. Thus He remembered that they were but flesh, A wind that passes and does not return.<sup>15</sup>

But please note that when Paul says God passed over, he does not mean by that, that he passed by, that somehow he winked at sin, that somehow he overlooked it as the King James Version tends to indicate in what I believe to be a poor translation using the term “remission,” that somehow the punishment of sin was suspended or even pardoned.

---

<sup>15</sup> Psalm 78:38-39.

## The Satisfaction of Divine Justice

By David Harrell  
Romans 3:25b-31

Instead, the term “passed by” *pareisiv* (par'-es-is) in the original language, in this context means that in his mercy he temporarily withheld his judgment. That is the idea. You see, God did not always intervene with special judgment against the nations who did not know him, but that did not mean that sin had no consequence.

You will recall when Paul was on Mars' Hill giving his discourse to the Epicurean and the Stoic philosophers on the Areopagus just outside Athens in Acts 17 he said this beginning in verse 30.

Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.<sup>16</sup>

And, of course, that man was Jesus, one who was given the authority to judge all sin because of his work on the cross.

In John five verses 22 through 27 Jesus said:

For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, in order that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life. Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear shall live. For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man.<sup>17</sup>

So on the cross of Calvary, God's righteousness was vindicated, for it was there that God punished sin and gave all judgment to the Son, because he is the Son of man who satisfied the divine justice for men who have violated the law of God.

Notice, verse 26, “For the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”<sup>18</sup>

Beloved, what a staggering mystery this is. God's holiness and his justice all come together on the cross providing a way of redemption, of justification for all who place their faith in the substitute, the Lord Jesus.

---

<sup>16</sup> Acts 17:30-31.

<sup>17</sup> John 5:22-27.

<sup>18</sup> Romans 3:26.

## The Satisfaction of Divine Justice

By David Harrell  
Romans 3:25b-31

Thus, God's righteousness is fully proven. So why did God murder his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ? First of all, to demonstrate the righteousness of God. But, secondly, to magnify the grace of God.

Notice verse 27.

Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.<sup>19</sup>

Now I think you will agree to me that it is man's nature to boast and to brag. If you disagree with that you just boasted. We are hopelessly biased in our own favor. We see ourselves as better than others. And usually this is very subtle, but it is there. John calls it the boastful pride of life.

May I make it very practical? Think of somebody, perhaps, in your church family that you just don't like very much. They are the people that you never have over. And you could rehearse your very long list of why you are justified in not liking them, but, my friend, if you are honest at the very end you must see that ultimately the greatest reason for your dislike is your own pride. You think you are better than they are.

And, given an opportunity, you will boast of your superiority to those other people and you will demean your neighbor which is sin.

We all know about bragging. The braggart is the one that loves to talk about himself, who loves to dominate conversations, who loves to draw attention to himself. He is the one who is the hero of all of the stories, a legend in his own mind. And I stand before you as your pastor and say I am as guilty as you are. We have all struggled with this and we all must continue to struggle with this.

And, inevitably this wickedness bleeds over into our spiritual life. We see ourselves as more spiritual than others, more deserving, somehow of divine favor even though we would never admit it. And many would even go so far as to say, you know, I am really thankful that I was able to somehow see the narrow gate and I was wise enough and spiritual enough to make that decision to walk that aisle and to walk through that gate.

If you ever think that way, may I humbly say to you that that thought will be utterly annihilated if you ever get a hold of the doctrines of sovereign grace.

The Jews boasted of their heritage. They boasted of the privileges that they had received. They saw themselves as better than everybody else. And many people today believe that they are good enough to somehow deserve eternal life. But Paul has made it clear that such boasting is ridiculous.

---

<sup>19</sup> Romans 3:27-28.

## The Satisfaction of Divine Justice

By David Harrell  
Romans 3:25b-31

Romans three and verse 10 he says, “No one is righteous, not even one.”

And in Romans three verse 23 he says that, “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”<sup>20</sup>

And so here we see the apostle Paul driving this point home yet again.

Verse 27.

“Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith.”<sup>21</sup>

In other words, faith, he is referring to in the finished work of Christ alone.

Verse 24 he says that we are “justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.”<sup>22</sup>

And then in verse 28 he goes on and he says, “For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.”<sup>23</sup>

So, again, we see that salvation is entirely a gift of God. My friend, there is not the slightest part of salvation that you ever conceived or earned. Whatever good we possess has been received by the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians four verse seven.

“For who regards you as superior and what do you have that you did not receive? But if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?”<sup>24</sup>

So we have no basis to brag. But, instead, we magnify the grace of God. We, according to Philippians 3:3 are to “worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.”<sup>25</sup>

The hymnist said it so well and we sang it.

My hope is built on nothing less,  
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness.  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,

---

<sup>20</sup> Romans 3:23.

<sup>21</sup> Romans 3:27.

<sup>22</sup> Romans 3:24.

<sup>23</sup> Romans 3:28.

<sup>24</sup> 1 Corinthians 4:7.

<sup>25</sup> Philippians 3:3.

## The Satisfaction of Divine Justice

By David Harrell  
Romans 3:25b-31

But wholly lean on Jesus' name.

On Christ the solid rock I stand,  
All other ground is sinking sand.

So why did the Father make Christ a propitiation? To demonstrate the righteousness of God and, secondly, to magnify the grace of God, but, thirdly, to declare the oneness of God.

Now in order for you to understand this, think about the ways that Satan has deceived the pagan world into believing in so many different gods. This is true today. It was certainly true in the ancient world. In fact, Paul said in 1 Corinthians eight beginning in verse five and here he was speaking of the multiple gods of the Gentile world.

Paul says this.

For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him.<sup>26</sup>

Now, some context here. In the first century and even long before that, the Jews believed that the Gentiles lived in what you might call a parallel universe, that they lived somehow outside the realm of Yahweh, their God, that they had kind of the... the Jews had the special place before God and the Gentiles had all this other silly stuff that they believed, but that somehow the one true God belonged to them, to the Jew alone.

And, of course, this fit very well. And to their pride and prejudice. And so Paul asked rhetorically here in verse 29, "Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also."<sup>27</sup>

Verse 30.

"Since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one."<sup>28</sup>

You see, there is only one God. And he will save any man who places his faith in him.

Now, as a Gentile believer I rejoice in this. I think most of us here come from Gentile backgrounds. In fact, the apostle Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy two beginning in verse

---

<sup>26</sup> 1 Corinthians 8:5-6.

<sup>27</sup> Romans 3:29.

<sup>28</sup> Romans 3:30.

## The Satisfaction of Divine Justice

By David Harrell  
Romans 3:25b-31

three, “This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved.”<sup>29</sup>

By the way, the word “all” there, if you look at the context, is not saying “all people, everybody in the whole world universalism.” He is referring to all social classes including the kings and all who are in authority that he had just spoken of.

And so he says he desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. “For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all.”<sup>30</sup>

And there the “all” is referring to all the ethnic classes of the world.

Now, put yourself in the patios and the porticos where these early believers were sitting, Jews, Gentiles that come to Christ, others standing around the edges looking at them with kind of an angry smirk, not believing how anybody could be so stupid as to believe this.

Don’t you know that especially the Gentiles were absolutely thrilled when they first heard this read that, yes, the God of the Jews, the God of the Gentiles, there is only one God.

Isn’t it wonderful to know that we have not been excluded from the covenant blessings?

Ephesians four beginning in verse four through verse four Paul says:

There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.<sup>31</sup>

I got the point. There is one God.

But notice, finally, Paul reveals here that there is yet one final reason why God the Father made Christ a propitiation, not only to demonstrate the righteousness of God and magnify the grace of God and declare the oneness of God, but, fourthly, to honor the law of God, verse 31.

He says, “Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law.”<sup>32</sup>

You see, some might look at what Paul is teaching and say, “Ok, hang on a minute. Since no man can be justified by the law, you have said here in verse 20 and since it is,

---

<sup>29</sup> 1 Timothy 2:3-4.

<sup>30</sup> 1 Timothy 2:5-6.

<sup>31</sup> Romans 4:4-6.

<sup>32</sup> Romans 3:31.

## The Satisfaction of Divine Justice

By David Harrell  
Romans 3:25b-31

verse 21, apart from the law the righteousness of God has been manifested and since a person is only justified by faith apart from works of the law, verse 28, then what value is the law? Wherein is its worth? Has not the law been utterly eviscerated of its worth, of its value? Therefore let us do away with the law completely. All we need is faith. There is plenty of grace out there, so let's just continue to live in sin. After all, that is our nature. Paul, you have made that very clear. Let's live in sin that grace might abound."

Well, you don't want that heresy floating around and it did and it continues on today. And so Paul, in order to argue against this is very abrupt and decisive and he says, "May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law."<sup>33</sup>

Now how so? Because it was the law that the Holy Spirit used to make us conscious of sin, verse 20.

Again, remember, the purpose of the law was never to save man from his sin, but, rather, to drive them to God, to drive a man to a point where he will cry out for divine mercy and place his faith in God's provision of grace.

Paul told the Galatians in 3:24, "The Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith."<sup>34</sup>

But, moreover, beloved, I would submit to you that the cross of Christ actually establishes the law and that Christ fully met its standard and perfectly satisfied its penalty of death.

In Matthew chapter five verse 17 Jesus said, "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill."<sup>35</sup>

Now think about it. When in faith we come to Christ we are united to Christ and because we have been justified as a gift by his grace, as Paul says, we, then, are able to fulfill the law perfectly.

In Romans eight verse three Paul will go on to say, "For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us."<sup>36</sup>

Indeed, verse 32, he goes on to say, "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all."<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Galatians 3:24.

<sup>35</sup> Matthew 5:17.

<sup>36</sup> Romans 8:3-4.

<sup>37</sup> Romans 8:32.

## The Satisfaction of Divine Justice

By David Harrell  
Romans 3:25b-31

Dear Christian, think about this. The law actually becomes the friend of the Christian in that once justice has been satisfied it never again demands further payment, because if it were to do so it would become unjust. So the law actually once it has been fulfilled becomes the friend of those who have been justified.

You see, justice ceases at that point to be our enemy and now it speaks on behalf of every sinner saved by grace and says, "This man has been declared righteous, because of Christ Jesus."

Christ Jesus has taken his guilt and paid his penalty in full. Oh, what a wonderful Savior, amen? What a wonderful Savior. Justice has punished our sins through Christ.

All those things that we should have suffered he bore in his body as our substitute. And, thus, the law that we violated has been established.

I close with the words of a great Scottish theologian and poet written back in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Horatius Bonar was his name and in these words he captures the essence of these glorious truths.

He said this, quote.

Not what my hands have done,  
Can save my guilty soul.  
Not what my toiling flesh has borne,  
Can make my spirit whole.

Not what I feel or do  
Can give me peace with God,  
Not all my prayers and sighs and tears,  
Can bear awful load.

Thy grace alone, oh God,  
To me can pardon speak,  
Thy power alone, oh Son of God,  
Can this sore bondage break.

No other work save thine,  
No other blood will do.  
No strength, save that which is divine,  
Can bear me safely through.

To God be the glory.

Let's pray together.



## The Satisfaction of Divine Justice

By David Harrell

Romans 3:25b-31

*Father, we are overwhelmed by these truths. We will never be able to fully grasp the glory of your grace until some day we see you face to face. Only when we stand in the presence of your glory will we be able to fully understand what debtors we are to your grace. So, Lord, I pray as your servant that the magnitude of these truths will motivate our hearts this week so that in all we say and do your glory might be put on display in our lives. And for those who do not know you as Savior, oh God, how I plead with you that you will so overwhelm them by their sin that they will run to the foot of the cross and cry out for the mercy that can be theirs, so rich and so free. In Christ's name I pray.*

---

We pray you have been edified by this presentation. You have been listening to pastor, Bible teacher and author David Harrell. For more information or to order additional tapes or CDs of pastor Harrell's messages, please visit [OliveTreeResources.org](http://OliveTreeResources.org).

**Transcript Explanation:** Each transcript is a rough approximation of the message preached and may occasionally misstate certain portions of the sermon and even misspell certain words. It should in no way be considered an edited document ready for print. Moreover, as in any transcription of the spoken word, the full intention and passion of the speaker cannot be fully captured and will in no way reflect the same style of a written document.

**Permissions:** You are permitted and encouraged to reproduce and distribute this material in any format provided that you do not alter the wording in any way and do not charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction. For web posting, a link to this document on our website is preferred. Any exceptions to the above must be approved by Olive Tree Resources.

Please include the following statement on any distributed copy: By Dr. David Harrell. © Olive Tree Resources.  
Website: [olivetreeresources.org](http://olivetreeresources.org)