

Completed

THE FULL PICTURE OF GOD IN
ROMANS



YES, NO & MAYBE

1. I am very uncomfortable when people give me gifts.

2. I am very conscientious about keeping the rules.

3. God's grace doesn't cost anybody anything.

4. God does not have a valid reason for saving us.

5. I am saved because God's law helps me in the process.

DIG DEEPER

READ: Romans 3:21-26 (NIV)

21 But now **apart from the law** the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. 22 **This righteousness is given** through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, 23 for all have sinned and **fall short of the glory of God**, 24 and all are **justified freely** by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. 25 God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because **in his forbearance** he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— 26 he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

▲ (Vs. 21) **A little background understanding - 1** The **Jews** had been convinced for centuries that their heritage gave them good standing with God, and what their heritage did not cover, their works of righteousness would. **2**) There was no particular rhyme or reason—not to mention justice or righteousness—associated with the **Gentile** gods. There was only the will and emotion of the gods to which the Gentiles responded as best they could. **3**) The **Jews** would be shocked at the idea that they needed righteousness and that the **Gentiles** qualified to receive God's grace on an equal footing with themselves. The Gentiles would be shocked to discover that the true God would offer anything free—that he would provide his own sacrifice and turn away his own wrath; and that once turned away, it would stay away.

↓ (Vss. 21,22) **"Apart from the law...This righteousness is given..."** - In court, if the guilty party was acquitted, it was often because an official had been bribed (Isa. 5:23). Paul's gospel was bringing an entirely new way of administering justice. No one goes free without the penalty being paid. It is just that no one imagined that the judge would also pay the price.

⌚ How is it fair that your righteousness is **given**, rather than earned?

⌚ What is the difference between "free grace" and "cheap grace"? How can believers avoid cheapening the grace of God that comes to them freely?



DIG DEEPER...CONTINUED

✓ (Vs. 23) **"Fall short of the glory of God"** - From the verb (*hustereo*) has root meanings of "come late," "be behind," "come short," deriving from the adverb for "latter" or "later." In other words, the image here is not one of absence, but one of always being behind.

💡 What does it tell you about God that He would consider you "caught up," when you are actually several "laps" behind?

✓ (Vs. 24) **"Justified freely"** - Freely is *dorean*, an adverb from *dorea*, a gift. Interestingly, *dorean* is used in John 15:25 when Jesus is characterizing those who hate him: "They hated me without reason (*dorean*)."¹ When Paul says that we are justified freely, he is saying that we are "justified without reason."

💡 What does it say about God that he gifts you justification without any reason for doing so?

NOTES:

READ: Romans 3:27-31 (NIV)

27 *Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. Because of what law? The law that requires works? No, because of the law that requires faith.* 28 *For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law.* 29 *Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too,* 30 *since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith.* 31 ***Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.***

⚠ (Vs. 27) **"Where, then, is boasting?"** - The righteousness God provides comes as a free gift. It cannot be purchased or earned. In either case it would no longer be a gift.

💡 Why do you think one of our most difficult tasks is to accept righteousness as a gift?

✓ (Vs. 31) **"Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith?"** - It is the law which shows people that they have failed in all points to be righteous, forcing them to the conclusion that they must accept righteousness as a free gift of God. The law says, "You have nothing to boast in and I can prove it!"—and then proceeds to name all the places in which we have failed morally. Therefore, the free "gift of God" (Rom. 6:23) is the only way that we can attain salvation, and it took the law to reveal it. Therefore, the law serves the gospel by removing all boasting about how one might be saved.

💡 How does this help you understand what God wants you to do in regards to His law?

My Prayers This week:

1. How am I still trying to pay for God's gift of justification?
2. How are my shortcomings helping me to not boast, but to uphold the law?
3. What new aspect of God's character do I understand better this week?