

The Point of Decision

Romans 3.21-31

We now come to a passage in Romans which is a turning point in the book. It reveals God's ability to intervene on behalf of lost humanity. Up to this point in the book of Romans, we have seen how every human being stands condemned before God. The picture has been painted of a humanity that is utterly and totally without any hope. All of us stand before God guilty as charged, and there is absolutely nothing that any of us can do about it.

But that is not the final word. If it were left at that, we would have no choice but to live in despair, without any hope for deliverance. This turning point is symbolized by the first two words of verse 21 – **"But now..."**

All Have Sinned and Fall Short of the Glory of God

"But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God..." Romans 3.21-23

*"All of us have become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags;
we all shrivel up like a leaf,
and like the wind our sins sweep us away."* Isaiah 64.6

But, We are Justified Freely by His Grace

"... and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished – he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus." Romans 3:24-26

*"We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to his own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all."* Isaiah 53.6

*"Come, all you who are thirsty,
come to the waters;
and you who have no money,
come, buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk
without money and without cost.*

*Why spend money on what is not bread,
and your labor on what does not satisfy?
Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good,
and your soul will delight in the richest of fare.*

*Let the wicked forsake his way
and the evil man his thoughts.
Let him turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on him,
and to our God, for **he will freely pardon.**"* Isaiah 55.1-2, 7

Where, Then, is Boasting?

"Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law. Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith. Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law." Romans 3.27-31

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." Ephesians 2.8-10