

THE BOOK OF ROMANS

"Justification Without a Cause"

Romans 3:24

INTRODUCTION

1. Romans has as its key the "righteousness of God" (1:16, 17). Such righteousness is provided by God to those who are found condemned (1:18-3:20).
2. No one is able to offer to God anything satisfactory to His holiness (3:9-20). On this account, God intervenes and provides His own righteousness (v. 21) which is available to all (v. 22) who are sinners (v. 23).
3. Mark carefully how God describes His righteousness and the manner in which it is made available.

1. THE BESTOWAL of Divine Righteousness.

This is a personal action by God. The present passive participle "being justified" is critical. The verb does not mean to make inherently righteous, but to declare or pronounce righteous. Two passages make this clear (2:13; 3:4; cf. Mt. 11:19, 7:29; 1 Tim. 3:16). To make righteous is similar to sanctify. An altogether different fact.

To justify is more than forgiveness and pardon. It does not mean to make up a deficit that is owed by man. Rather, to justify means that a sinner is forgiven, pardoned, and declared essentially righteous. Justification makes us partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4), new creations (2 Cor. 5:17), and higher than the angels in Christ (Eph. 2:6). This is far more than being declared innocent.

2. THE SPRING of Divine Righteousness

"By His grace" is a pregnant phrase. This is the efficient cause of justification. It is God's spontaneous and unmerited favor. Nothing in man elicited justification. It is only divine grace which prompted it. A consciousness of grace makes one "pour contempt on all his pride" (Eph. 2:8, 9). The work of justification is because of grace in Him and not good in us!

3. THE METHOD of Divine Righteousness

The word translated "freely" carries with it an amazing significance. It is used nine times in the N.T. (cf. Mt. 10:8; Jn. 15:25; Rom. 3:24; 2 Cor. 11:7; Gal. 2:21; 2 Thess. 3:8; Rev. 21:6; 22:17). The use in the upper room discourse (Jn 15:25) is full of meaning. The translation "without a cause" to describe

hatred for Jesus is worthy of use in the Romans text.
Supporting the grace concept, justification is
"without a cause."

*Awake, my soul, in joyful lays,
And sing my great Redeemer's Praise;
He justly claims a song from me,
His loving kindness, oh, how free.*

*He saw me ruined in the fall,
And loved me notwithstanding all.
He saved me from my lost estate,
His loving kindness, oh, how great.*

CONCLUSION

The glory of the salvation presented in Scripture is that it is all of God. Our character did not recommend us to God, but His grace did. Blessed be His Name.