

INTRODUCTION - ROMANS 3:9 - 4:25

With this session, we're going to take a big swing. Generally, a study of 3:9-31 and 4:1-25 as separate units would be appropriate. However, it may be fitting to join these two large sections together because the issue of righteousness prevails throughout.

Keep up: complete N.T. Wright, *Romans: 18 Studies for Individuals and Groups*, p 24-33.

The need for, and the way to, righteousness***Romans 3:9-20 → The indictment against humanity***

To frame the issue of humanity's unrighteousness, this portion of text includes quotes or paraphrases of several Old Testament verses.

<u>Romans 3</u>	<u>O.T. ref.</u>	<u>Indictments</u>
● vs. 9-10	Eccl. 7:20	All are prone to sin, b/c of sin's power
● vs. 11-12	Psalms 14:2-3	Everyone follows their desires, not God
● vs. 13	Psalms 5:9; 140:3	Deceptive speech that produces death
● vs. 14	Psalms 10:7	Foul/evil/wicked and bitter speech
● vs. 15-17	Isaiah 59:7-8	Quick to war, neglect and reject peace
● vs. 18 God	Psalms 36:1	No fear, honor, reverence, obedience of God

In this section Paul responds, again, to his own question in the first part of 3:1 -- Are Jewish people better off than Gentiles? As it relates to righteousness, the answer is an unqualified "no, they are not." This far-reaching, scathing, six-count indictment demonstrates the breadth of unrighteousness that all people have in common.

Romans 3:21-31 → The way to God's righteousness

Paul, again, turns back to 3:1. This time, Paul answers the second question in that verse: What is the value of circumcision? The reader must conclude that whatever value there is in circumcision, it pales in comparison to the righteousness received by faith in Jesus Christ.

- Jesus is testified about in the O.T.
- Jesus is the means of salvation for all (***who believe***).
- Jesus is God's way to redeem humanity.
- Jesus is the righteousness of God and through Him God's righteousness is received.

Boasting "in the law of works" (read here as circumcision) is meaningless because Jesus is the one who has done the "work" and God has made Jesus accessible to everyone.

Romans 4:1-12 → The clear line separating faith and works (circumcision)

Naturally, the conversation about Abraham follows the conversation about faith, righteousness, and circumcision. After all, God's covenant with him is the lens through which Jews viewed salvific hope. Consider the implications of 4:1-3 for how one comes to righteousness. How do these implications play out over the remainder of 4:1-12?

Paul is not seeking to advance a new idea here. Instead, Paul seems determined to demonstrate that the idea of righteousness existed before the law and it was a guide to those who lived under the law. Again, this does not mean the law and circumcision are of no importance of effect. So, to be sure we get this point, what do the law and circumcision mean when we consider Jewish identity and their relationship with God (see 4:9-12)? _____

Romans 4:13-25 → The relationship between faith and the law

Paul's argument really takes shape in this section of the letter. Here, Paul seems to be tying up any loose ends from previous statements because it is necessary to really dig deeper into the essence and meaning of faith. To accomplish this, Paul locates the law as being antithetical to faith (4:14-15) and unnecessary for faith.

On what grounds can Paul suggest that righteousness does not belong only to circumcised Jews? The argument here is that uncircumcised people and non-Jews can receive the righteousness of God as faith in God's promise supersedes adherence to governing laws. Though faith and laws may shape the way we live they are not the same. Faith permits one to live according to God's word, and it comes first.