

Romans Bible Study

Scripture NASB Romans 3:22-31:

The **righteousness** of God through **faith** in Jesus Christ, for all those who **believe**; for there is no distinction; 23 for all have **sinned** and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being **justified** as a gift by His grace through the **redemption** which is in Christ Jesus; 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; 26 for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. 27 Where then is **boasting**? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of **faith**. 28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law. 29 Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, 30 since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one. 31 Do we then **nullify** the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law.

Man's universal need and God's universal offer.

Question #1: How far short do we fall of God's standard? _____

Question #2 Define in your own words, SIN: _____

22 Biblical Words for Sin and What They Teach Us

There are about two dozen words for sin in the Bible, depending on how you count. Each underscores a different aspect of sin—sin as wandering away from the straight path, sin as rebellion, and sin as a distortion of our nature, to name a few. We ought on guard for the many ways in which it is possible for us to stray from God and the good life He intends for us.

- **Sin as Being Broken** - One of the most common biblical words for sin is the Hebrew word *ra`*, which has the basic meaning of bad or evil and appears over 600 times. It comes from another verb, *ra`a*, which can mean essentially the same thing, but also refers to something broken, or, more specifically, broken into pieces. This helps us to see one way that something can be said to have gone “bad.” A broken chair is a “bad” chair—it can no longer perform its intended function of bearing the weight of a person sitting. The same goes for food that has gone bad—it is no longer suitable for eating. *Ra`* is still used in this literal

sense in the Old Testament. For example, in 2 Kings 2:19 we read that the waters of Jericho had “gone bad.”

- **Sin as Being Blemished** - *Ra`* can also refer to blemished cattle that are unsuitable for sacrifice (for example, in Leviticus 27:10 and Deuteronomy 17:1), another metaphor for sin. Something that is blemished has been deformed in some way. Man was made in the image of God, but that image became deformed as a result of sin.
- **Sin as Missing the Mark** - Another Old Testament word for sin is *chatta'ath*, which simply means sin or sinful. (It also refers to the offering made to atone for that sin.) But the word has a rich origin, coming from the verb *chata'*, which among other things, means to miss, miss the mark, miss the way. In the New Testament, its Greek counterpart is the verb *hamartano*, meaning to miss the mark as well as to wander from the path (the two noun versions are *hamartia* and, less commonly, *hamartema*). In the literal sense, *hamartano* could be used in two contexts. First, we could speak of missing the mark when you throw a spear or shoot an arrow. Second, you could miss the road you were supposed to take (like missing a turn).
- **Sin as Wandering from the Path** - Faith is a journey to God. But sometimes we wander from the path of righteousness, either intentionally or not. This is suggested by the Hebrew adjective, *rasha`*, which means wicked or criminal—specifically, in the sense of departing from the right path. The word is used in this sense in Psalm 18:21, “Because I have kept the ways of the Lord; and have not done wickedly against my God. A similar idea is conveyed in the Greek verb, *planao*, which has a basic meaning of to cause to stray, to lead astray, lead aside from the right way.
- **Sin as Crookedness:** Used more than 200 times in the Old Testament as a word for sin, the Hebrew noun *`avon* refers to perversity, depravity, and iniquity. Its root is the verb *`avah*, defined as to bend, twist, distort, or to make crooked. This reinforces two metaphors for sin mentioned above: sin makes our paths to God crooked and it also distorts and twists our nature into a contortion of what we were created to be.
- **Sin as Rebelling:** - Sin as rebellion against God and His authority. This is denoted in the Hebrew noun *pasha`* and its verb counterpart, *pasha`*, both referring to rebellion. Put simply, rebellion is (usually violent) resistance to some authority. The first sin was resistance to the highest source of authority possible—God. There is even a subtle element of violence in the story, implied in the ‘eating’ of the apple, which the Christian mystic philosopher Simone Weil saw as emblematic of all sin.
- **Sin as Trespassing:** Appearing about 30 times in the Old Testament, *'asham* is a verb that refers to sin in the sense of offending, being guilty and trespassing. A similar New Testament Greek word is *parabaino* which can be defined as to go by the side of and to go past or pass over without touching a thing—or, more specifically, to overstep, neglect, violate, transgress (the related noun is *parabasis*). This is metaphor for sin instantly recognizable to anyone who has ever said the Our Father: Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who have trespassed against us.
- **Sin as Debt:** -In Matthew is the ancient Greek word for debts, *opheilema*. (It's used only one other time in the New Testament, in Romans 4:4, in a similar context.) In the version of the prayer in Luke, a form of this word for debts and *hamartia* are used, so literally, the verse would read: Forgive us our sins as we forgive everyone indebted to us.

- **Sin as Desolation:** - One secondary definition of *'asham* refers to the ultimate consequences of sin: utter desolation. This is how it's used in Isaiah 24 in haunting imagery: "See! The LORD is about to empty the earth and lay it waste; he will twist its surface, and scatter its inhabitants. ... Therefore a curse devours the earth, and its inhabitants pay for their guilt"—or, as some translations put it, the inhabitants are desolate.
- **Sin as Drunken Swerving:** - When we wander off the path, we often are not in our right minds when we do so. This is conveyed by two Hebrew verbs that have almost identical meanings in Strong's Concordance—*ta`ah* and *shagah*. Both can be defined as to err, to go astray. There are subtle differences: *Shagah* can be defined as to swerve, meander, reel, roll, be intoxicated, err in drunkenness. Likewise, *ta`ah* can mean to be made to wander about, be made to swagger like a drunkard. In Proverbs 5:20, *shagah* is also used to describe a young man's physical "intoxication" with a prostitute. Keep this idea of intoxication in mind when you read "stray" in this petition of Psalm 119:10, "With my whole heart have I sought after thee: let me not stray from thy commandments."
- **Sin as Oppressive Toils:** - One New Testament word for evil or bad is the adjective *poneros*, which literally means full of labors, annoyances, hardships, or pressed and harassed by labors.
- **Sin as Impiety:** -Another word for sin in the New Testament is *asebeia*, a classic ancient Greek term for impiety, which referred to a lack of reverence and respect for the gods. For the Greeks, the attitude of piety implied distance from the gods. For us, our relationship is a much closer one: God is not some sky spirit who hurls down thunderbolts from Olympus, instead, he is as close to us as imaginably possible, He became man and invites us to share in His life.
- **Sin as Lawlessness:** -Aside from the laws that govern any particular society, there is the natural law that is written on the hearts of all men, as St. Paul said. Hence, some wrongdoing may not be against the law of a particular society, but it still crosses God's laws. In this context, it makes sense that the New Testament writers also spoke of sin in terms *anomos*, the Greek antonym for *nomos*. This was one of the most important words in ancient Greece. It did not mean simply the law, but the law in the sense of rules and established norms of behavior that have been established through custom and tradition
- **Sin as Injustice:** - Another key word that is related is *dike*, the ancient Greek word for justice. Its antonym, *adikos*, is used to describe unrighteous and unjust people the Bible. Whereas *anomos*, or lawlessness, highlights the offending act, *adikos* draws attention to the person who commits it: an unjust person is one who breaks the law.
- **Sin as Intrinsic Evil:** - While sin is often described in terms of its consequences for us and others, it's important to remember that sin is an intrinsic evil. This is conveyed in the Greek word *kakos*, an adjective referring to something of a bad nature or something that is base, wrong, and wicked.
- **Sin as Bound to Punishment:** - It's also important to remember that sin not only has consequences—a broken humanity, a fallen world, a disordered creation—it also makes one liable for punishment. This idea is conveyed through the New Testament Greek word *enochos*, defined as bound, under obligation, subject to, liable. According to Strong's Concordance, it can be used in a technical sense, "denoting the connection of a person either with his crime, or with the penalty or trial, or with that against whom or which he has

offended.” This is the sense in which Jesus uses the word in Matthew 5:21-22, “You have heard that it was said to them of old: Thou shalt not kill. And whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you, that whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment.”

As a Christian, a Bible-believing Christian, the fundamental human problem is one word: SIN. Our sin against God has resulted in broken relationships, between God and man, between man and his fellow man, and between man and creation.

There is no distinction, All have sinned.....

If what Paul is saying is TRUE, what we talked about last week

What kind of truth is it?

Subjective truth: I have sinned.

Objective truth: all have sinned

If sin is part of the human condition how do we respond to this state of unrighteousness? _____

Slide 3

What is FAITH

Hebrews 11 is called the faith chapter. It starts with a definition and then gives examples of what faith did in the lives of specific Old Testament people.

1. Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.
For the author faith is confidence and assurance.
2. Faith is understanding our earth was made by God
3. Faith caused a better offering to be made by Abel
4. Faith of Enoch cause him not feel death
5. Faith allows me to please God
6. Faith for Noah made him heir to righteousness
7. Faith for Abraham gave him an inheritance, a new country, received promises
8. Faith for Isaac was blessing his son to carry on the family
9. Faith for Jacob continued the blessings of God to Joesph
10. Faith for Moses kept his life for God and not Egypt and continued on to split seas, eat manna, drink water in the dessert, kept the Passover,
- 11 Faith for Joshua could crumble walls
- 12 Faith for Rahab though a sinner to please God

Question:

What does faith motivate you to do? _____

Slide 5 The church in Rome – Each group had a unique view of Faith

Five groups

1. Those who accepted Jesus by Faith and were justified –Jews and Gentiles (hopefully the biggest group)
The parallel of the church today would easily be those who are living by faith in Jesus to do what He said it would do for his children in response to their PISTIS.
2. The Gentile Intellectual Greeks. Faith was a head-focused understanding of “belief”
In today’s church, this group would be characterized by always believing and not having any motivation to do something in and with the power of God in their lives. ‘I believe in Jesus” and that is enough. In today’s church you may call them “baby Christians” not wanting to grow, satisfied with the milk.
3. The Gentile Romans Moralists. Faith was measured and metered by the moral climate of the culture.
The culturally awake in the church. Faith is always seen as keeping the social and cultural norms. It is a life full of action that could change at the whim of the people around them. They were very fluid with their “Faith acts.”
4. The low class Jews, from the slaves brought out of Judea by Pompeii. Strict methodists of Jewish law.
Faith was in things you did, it was a works-based faith.. Faith was in the methods and procedures of their belief system. It was kept and held and never displayed. It was an expectation of conformity to a never bending and extremely rigid set of rules and laws. Today these are the hard-line, hard-shell Christians whom nothing should be changed. ‘I was baptized, I take communion, I pray the Lord’s prayer, I pray at meals, I listen to the preacher and even say AMEN. But that is as far as it goes.
5. The high-class Jews, merchant class with Greek understandings. Always questioning and never satisfied. Faith was an unattainable hope. In today’s church these are those who are always asking and requiring from the Church. They are the needy and the unsatisfied.

They were and are the cliques of the church. In the church but not of the church. Always seeing themselves as special. They were living a life of separate but equal.



Slide 5 - Biblical Faith

The word in Greek is used for belief and faith is the same PISTIS.

We must understand there is a difference in our use of the English words. We must differentiate between them to draw an English understanding of this concept. Many great minds have made great attempts to explain the differences:

One listed the kinds of faith in the bible:

- Dead faith - faith without works is dead (James 2:17)
Faith or belief that was not alive.
Had no life to it.
A funeral faith: The body was evident but the heart was not beating.

- Demonic faith - James also teaches that even demons believe and shudder at the name of Jesus (James 2:19).
This kind of belief or faith only caused fear.
An understanding of impending doom
The sky was falling and there was nothing to stop it.
- Vain faith - "I never knew you; depart from me" (Matthew 7:21–23).
This is the intellectual faith that was full of pride of ownership
IT was a faith that had no foundation other than personal vanity.
Saving faith - Ephesians 2:8–10 provides us with some additional details:
You are saved by grace through faith. It is faith lived out. It is faith that motivates action.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon stated there were three parts to faith

Knowledge – Who we have faith in God

simple grounding belief that God is

First commandment. "There is a God and it is not me."

Belief – in the What of God. What he can do. An acknowledgment of his capability.

He can love me

He can justify me

He can give me a label for saying righteous

He can work all things together for good

He can be greater in me than he that is in the world

He can bring me into heaven and give me a crown for my head

Trust – The why of your faith.

Beyond knowledge

Beyond Belief

Now you have a why you can change

A why do you do things in His strength

SLIDE 6 – Old Testament Faith

Faith is only found in the OT in four places, as translated as Faith in the NASB
All different words.

- Deuteronomy 32:51 *mâ'al*
Because you broke faith with me in the midst of the people of Israel at the waters of Meribah-kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin, and because you did not treat me as holy in the midst of the people of Israel. A state of betrayal, to act treacherously, transgress, commit a trespass Lack of trust in something

- Job 39:12 *'âman*

Part of a poem. One line: Will you trust him to bring home your [d]grain, And gather it to your threshing floor?
to support, confirm, be faithful

Who can trust.....

- Psalms 146:6 *'emeth*

He is the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them—he remains faithful forever.

Faith in the Old Testament

Deuteronomy 32:51	<i>mâ'al</i>
A state of betrayal, to act treacherously, transgress, commit a trespass	
Job 39:12	<i>'âman</i>
to support, confirm, be faithful	
Psalms 146:6	<i>'emeth</i>
sureness, reliability, truth	
Habbakuk 2:4	<i>'ēmūwnāh</i>
firmness, fidelity, steadfastness, steadiness	

Only found in the OT in four places. Each place we find in NASB it is a different word in Hebrew. There is no concept of faith that parallels how it is used in the New Testament

sureness, reliability, truth

God the maker..... Remains faithful forever

- Habakkuk 2:4 'ēmûwnâh

Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.

firmness, fidelity, steadfastness, steadiness. The righteous person will live by his faithfulness

The old testament view of faith or belief does not include a spiritual context. It was a practical, continuing knowledge, such as: The sun will come up in the morning, OR that God is, Or The nation of Israel is God's chosen people. It was an accepted fact. It was not changeable, one day you are chosen and the next you are not. It was an absolute.

Each place we find the idea or concept of faith it is a different word in Hebrew translated into the NASB. There is no concept of faith that parallels how it is used in the New Testament

We have to look most closely at the last one in Habbakuk 2:4 because it is quoted by Paul in Romans 1:17

firmness, fidelity, steadfastness, steadiness

In the Hebrew text there are accents added to the words to provide associations and context.

The just, by his faith he shall live. It never implies that faith makes you righteous, but by being righteous you have a confirming, conforming, and dutiful life.

SLIDE 8 Faith in the New Testament (PISTIS)

Faith is the fourth most used word in the New Testament

487 times it is translated as either faith or belief

Pistis: a noun 243 times	Pisteuo: a verb 244 times	Oligopisos: Little faith 8 times	Apisteo: a verb 10 times
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Pistis as a noun 243 times

something that is a thing. It can be possessed, lost, taken for granted, ignored, depended upon

I have faith like a river

Pisteuo as a verb 244 times

Something to do. If you are in doubt of your salvation, you can Pisteuo it.

Oligopisos described as a quantity of faith or adjective 8 times

You have so little faith

Apisteo as a verb describing something not done.

SLIDE 10 – the controversy

The controversy of Verse 22.

Translators want to add a word.

1. Faith IN Jesus Christ NASB
2. Faith OF Jesus Christ KJV

So does the faith that saves us the faith that Jesus has given to us as a possession, OR Does the faith that saves us is OUR faith that we have pointed toward Jesus?

One says Jesus must reach out to us and gift us with faith before we can have faith in him. The other says our faith is a change of mind and decision we make toward Jesus.

Commentary

Romans 3:22b – “There is no distinction”

There are no chapters or verse numbers in Paul’s letters. It would be easy to think they were always there but those numbers haven’t always been there.

The Old Testament has long been organized into sections and subsections; our modern chapter and verse divisions generally (but not always) correspond to the traditional Jewish organization of the text. While the Old and New Testaments have been roughly organized at least since the Bible canon was established, it wasn’t until 1,000 years later that something resembling our modern chapter and verse system was widely accepted.

The person credited with dividing the Bible into chapters is Stephen Langton, the Archbishop of Canterbury from 1207-1228. But while chapters are a useful organizational tool, the ability to refer to specific phrases within those chapters would make the system even more usable. Robert Stephanus (aka Robert Estienne) created a verse numbering system in the mid-16th century and was the first person to print a Bible with verse numbers in each chapter.

The last half of Verse 22 is a part of the logic of Paul’s argument. It is first an objective statement and begins the next section.

God is not a God of separation or groups. There is no distinction. A good analogy here is a grand orchestra. Once all are tuned, using the same piece of music and directed by a single conductor, there is no distinction between the individual instruments. You may well hear each note from one or more members of the orchestra, but the purpose, the effect is to be a united, perfect piece of music.

Romans 3:23 “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”

There is no distinction **therefore** all have sinned. We are as helpless and guilty as any other.

These words have been variously translated. 1) Failing of attaining the glory of God: 2) Have not been able to bring glory to God: 3) Stand in need of the glory, that is, the mercy of God. The simple meaning seems to be (4) that all have sinned, and none can enjoy God's glory but they that are holy; consequently both Jews and Gentiles have failed in their endeavors to attain it, as, by the works of any law, no human being can be justified.

Romans 3:24 “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:”

- 1) We are justified — Pardoned and accepted.
- 2) Freely — Without any merit of their own.

- 3) By his grace — Not their own righteousness or works.
- 4) Through the redemption — The price Christ has paid.

There is no place for our efforts or work or even obedience. Wesley states: “Freely by his grace — One of these expressions might have served to convey the apostle's meaning; but he doubles his assertion, in order to give us the fullest conviction of the truth and to impress us with a sense of its peculiar importance. It is not possible to find words that should more absolutely exclude all consideration of our own works and obedience, or more emphatically ascribe the whole of our justification to free, unmerited goodness.”

Romans 3:25-26 “whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness because, in God’s merciful restraint, He let the sins previously committed go unpunished; for the demonstration, that is, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”

Whom did God display publicly? _____.

The word **propitiation** carries the basic idea of appeasement or satisfaction, specifically toward God. A propitiation is a two-part act that involves appeasing the wrath of an offended person and being reconciled to him.

The word **justify**, means to make righteous, to set upright, to move from askew to straight up.

Does any man naturally possess a righteousness acceptable to God? _____

Can any man earn righteousness? _____

Romans 3:27-31 “Where then is boasting? It has been excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. For we maintain that a person 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.

- 1) Where is boasting then? It shouldn’t be anywhere. Because we are justified freely by His grace, there is no room for self-congratulation or credit.
- 2) By what law? Boasting and pride are not excluded because there is some specific passage in the law against them. Instead, pride is excluded because it is completely incompatible with the salvation that is freely ours through faith. Boasting is excluded by the law of faith.
- 3) By the law of faith: No room for boasting! This is why the natural man hates being justified freely by His grace. Grace absolutely refuses to recognize his (imagined) merits and gives no place to his pride whatsoever.
- 4) Justification (acquittal in the court of God) is found, for both Jew and Gentile, apart from the deeds of the law.

What do verses 27-28 have to say about why nobody can boast? _____

Does anything change because of a certain religion or national heritage? _____

Is there more than one way by which a man may be justified? _____

Romans 3:31 “Do we then nullify the Law through faith? Far from it! On the contrary, we establish the law.”

Both the authority, purity, and the end of it; by defending that which the law attests; by pointing out Christ, the end of it; and by showing how it may be fulfilled in its purity. (Wesley)

There seems to be an opposition between the two ideas of law and faith. The path to righteousness is through faith and not law or works, it is easy to jump to the conclusion we don't need the law at all. We can separate the Old and the New Testaments and never shall the two meet. Two schools of Theology exist that want this separation: The dispensationalists, and the supersessionism. Dispensationalist states history is divided into multiple ages and God deals with the world differently in each age. Supersessionism states that the Christian church has replaced the covenant people of Israel. Dispensationalists

Next Week

Romans 4:1-25 - Illustration of Righteousness

- 1) Review this passage in two or three other translations. What is one thing that you observe after reading the text a few times? Read Romans Chapter 4 this week at least three times.
- 2) In this notebook list any words you need to define for yourself.
- 3) “Why did Paul use both David and Abraham as examples of righteousness?”
- 4) Assess your life. Are you all that God wants you to be for today?