

SOUL FOOD

JANUARY 31, 2017

ROMANS 3:21-26

JESUS SATISFIED GOD'S WRATH

In this passage we find teaching and argumentation that have been greatly disputed for one reason or another. What is so controversial here?

Paul has devoted 1:18–3:20 to demonstrating that all of the human race, Jews and Gentiles alike, those who have the Mosaic Law and those who do not, are guilty before God. But now, something new has happened. A “righteousness from God” has been made known. What great news! The righteousness that God demands, He provides in Christ!

Paul teaches “**a righteousness from God has been made known apart from law.**” Paul’s point is that now, with the death and resurrection of Jesus, a righteousness from God has been made known apart from the Law of Moses. On one hand there is nothing new about this righteousness in terms of prophecy. For, “the Law and the Prophets” had testified to it. In other words, “the righteousness of God” that has come to us through Jesus appeared independently from the Law, but nevertheless the old law bore witness to it and anticipated it.

This “righteousness from God” comes to all who believe. It cannot come to those who are simply good. Paul spent two chapters proving that all are bad. It comes therefore to those who believe, and it comes freely by the grace of God “through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.”

This redemption was achieved by God setting forth Christ Jesus as “a propitiation.” Through His death, Jesus died “the just for the unjust” and thereby made God “propitious” to those who would otherwise face only his wrath. Jesus fully satisfied the wrath of God. Of course, since it is God himself who provides the sacrifice, there is a profound sense in which God pacifies his own wrath.

Stated otherwise, God offers up Christ not only to justify ungodly sinners such as ourselves, who have faith in Jesus, but also to maintain his own justice, to be just, in the face of all the sins ever committed. God's very justice demands the forgiveness of His sons and daughters.