

“... the people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light, and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death, on them a light has dawned” (Matt. 4:16).

The epistle to the Romans to this point has been an unrelenting indictment of the darkness in the heart of man and his complete inability to achieve righteousness on his own. But now the light of the gospel blazes forth, showing a righteousness that comes not from our efforts but from the blood of Jesus Christ.

It might be useful to define three terms that appear in this section:

Redemption means to deliver by paying a price. It is connected to three Greek words: One meaning to buy in the marketplace, one meaning to buy *out of* the marketplace, or take off the market (as we might say of a person engaged to be married). The third meaning is to be delivered or set free, as the Israelites were from Egyptian bondage.

Propitiation or sacrifice of atonement looks back to the mercy seat, or covering of the ark. Blood from the sacrifice was sprinkled on it as a sign that the righteous demands of God had been satisfied, allowing Him to show mercy without compromising justice.

Justification: The words *justify* and *righteousness* have the same Greek root. One who is justified is not *made* righteous but is *treated* as or reckoned as being righteous by God in His role as judge. He is cleared of all charges. (Thank you to the Scofield Study Bible for help with these definitions.)

It should be noted that understanding these terms helps us appreciate our salvation in Christ but is not necessary to obtain it. Simple faith is all you need for that.

Questions:

1. How redemption, justification, and propitiation work together in saving the sinner who believes?
2. What is the newly revealed righteousness of God? How is it superior to the righteousness that could be obtained by following the provisions of the law?
3. How did the Law and Prophets bear witness to the righteousness we find in Christ?

4. We learn that there is no difference between the Jew and the Gentile; all have sinned. How else is there no distinction?
5. Why is it important to understand that salvation is a *gift*, through the grace of God?
6. In verse 25, what sins were passed over by God? How is He shown to be just by Christ's sacrifice?
7. Verse 26 says that God is just *and* that He justifies believers. Can a human judge be both just and justifier at the same time?
8. What type of boasting is forbidden? How might we as Christians make inappropriate boasts?
9. How does faith in Christ uphold the law? (Also see Matt. 5:17)