

# ROMANS: Paid in Full Text: Romans 3:21–26

## Introduction:

1. Romans is unlike any other letter in the Bible—unlike anything before or since
2. Rome was the Most Powerful City in the World—But Paul didn't send this letter
  - a. To the Emperor of Rome —(Rome's Salvation is not in Government)
  - b. Nor the Senate, or Courts of Law —(Rome's Salvation is not in the Courts of Law)
  - c. Or the Philosophers, or Rich or Powerful —(Rome's Salvation is Not in Man's Wisdom!)
  - d. This Message is **TO THE CHURCH!** —(The Kingdom of God, & Pillar & Ground of Truth!)
3. Rome Worshipped POWER but Paul Reveals a Power Greater than World Empires

**The Gospel is the POWER OF GOD to Save Humanity**

*a. And This Paragraph is the Heart of Romans—the Heart of the Gospel*

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## I. THE CRIME: Sin Against God (3:23)

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### A. THE COURT — As We Enter Romans We Enter a Courtroom Scene...

#### 1. As We Are Seated the Evidence is Presented Against Us

- a) The Evidence of God's Incredibly Powerful Creation
- b) The Evidence Within Our Own Consciousness Convicting Us
- c) The Evidence of God's Perfect Word
- d) The Evidence of our Own Depravity in the Darkness of Human Heart
- e) The Evidence of Our Rejection of God and His Will, His Word and His Love

#### 2. The Courtroom is silent in shock as the evidence stacks up against us

### B. THE CRIME — All of Humanity Has Sinned Against God...

#### 1. All of Humanity Has Sinned Against God...

- a) The World Exchanged the Truth of God for a Lie
- b) and Worshiped and Served the Creature rather than the Creator

#### 2. But Why does Paul spend 3 chapters listing Humanities Sins against God?

- a) **Because We Are in Denial**—We Don't Want to Admit Our Guilt
- b) We Are Always Looking for Exceptions... — Especially for ourselves

#### 3. So Paul Will Take the Time to Show that—THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS!

**Even Those Who Think They Are Right—Are Wrong! (Romans 3:10–18)**

- a) All Have Sinned Regardless of Race, Privilege, Nationality, Political Party, or Religion
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## II. THE VERDICT: Guilty Before God (3:19)

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### A. THE SENTENCE: Death

#### 1. God is Light— He is Holy and Cannot Be in the Presence of Sin

- a) God is Life—to be separated from God is Death
- b) Our Sins Separate Us From God Who is Light and Life (Isaiah 59:1–2)

## 2. The Tragic Result is DEATH:

a) PHYSICAL Death...

b) SPIRITUAL Death...

c) ETERNAL Judicial Death... Eternal Separation From God, an Eternity in Hell

## 3. Look at the Cities Burning, the Ghettos, the armed Gangs, the Corruption...

a) Every night after dark, armed gangs rioting, fire bombing, screaming... Swearing

b) Stopping Cars to drag people out...

c) **IF GOD DID NOT RESTRAIN THE DEPRAVITY OF MANKIND—  
—WE WOULD MAKE OUR OWN HELL**

## B. THE PROBLEM: We Can't Atone for Our Own Sin (Proverbs 20:9)

### 1. We Can't Erase Our Guilt and Condemnation Before a Holy God

a) Are You a GOOD Person? —Your Morality Can't Atone for Sin

b) Are You an INTELLECTUAL Person? — Your Intelligence Can't Save You

c) Are You a RELIGIOUS Person? — Your Religious Labor Can't Save You

### 2. Well I'll Be Better... I'll Try Harder... I'll Work Harder

a) I'll Become a Monk and live alone on a mountain in prayer

b) Or I'll Be Stricter—like the Pharisees

c) Or Deny Myself...Condemn Myself... I'll Work Harder... Be Stricter...

### 3. But We Try and Fail — and Try and Fail...

## C. THE RESULT: A Guilt / Shame Spiral that Leads to Despair

### 1. This is Why We Struggle With Despair, Depression & Hopelessness

a) Paul said, What I Want to Do—I Don't Do

b) What I Don't Want to Do—I Do

### 2. We Lacerate Our Conscience with Sin—

**then appease it to feel better about ourselves..**

a) Lacerate/Appease... Lacerate/ Appease

b) until we grow scar tissue that callouses our heart Even More!

### 3. This is the Despair the Lost World is in—

a) the Despair each of us has experienced in our own hearts (**Romans 7:21–24**)

***Who Will Save Me From this Body of Death?***

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## III. THE LAWYER: Jesus Offers to Take Your Case

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### A. WE HAVE A LEGAL PROBLEM: The Law Convicts Us But Cannot Save Us

#### 1. When We Turn to God's Perfect Law to Save Us—

**We Find that it Actually Condemns Us!**

a) Not Because God's Law is NOT PERFECT—

But Because God's Law IS Perfect — and We Are NOT!

b) Like an X-Ray — Nothing Can Hide From it's Piercing Light into our Heart!

**2. In the Blinding Light of God's Holy Law—there's only 2 Verdicts:**

- a) INNOCENCE or GUILT
- b) No One is Innocent before God—(**Ecclesiastes 7:20**)

**B. BUT THERE IS ONE LAWYER WHO OFFERS TO TAKE YOUR CASE**

**1. When You Are in Trouble with the Law—You Need a Good Lawyer**

- a) A Lawyer with the Compassion to Know What Your Going Through
- b) A Lawyer Who Knows the Law, The Court System, The Legal Strategies...
- c) A Lawyer who even knows the Judge!

**2. But Who Can Do This? Jesus Can (**1 John 2:1**)**

- a) He is our “parakletos” — which means “Defense advocate”

**C. BUT HOW CAN JESUS TURN MY GUILT INTO INNOCENCE?**

**1. How Can the Guilty Be Found Justified Before God?**

- a) It's Going to Take Faith in Your Lawyer—your Defense Advocate
- b) And it's Going to Take a Brilliant Strategy to Get You Off!
- c) It has to be a Strategy Different Than Anything the Law Can Provide!

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**IV. THE DEFENSE STRATEGY: Not By Law But By Grace**

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**A. THE STRATEGY IS NOT BY LAW — BUT BY GRACE**

- 1. It's a Defense Strategy Different than Anything the Law Can Provide**
- 2. It is Literally “apart from law” (**3:21**)**
- 3. How Will Jesus Be Able to Do This?**

**B. JESUS WILL PAY YOUR PENALTY OF DEBT IN FULL**

- 1. It is a Payment that Clears Your Penalty Off the Books**
  - a) It is an Act of Redemption (**3:24**)
- 2. Also Described as an act of Propitiation, or Sacrifice of Atonement...**
  - a) To Propitiate Literally Means “*To Turn Aside Wrath by Means of an Offering*”
  - b) The Greek word for Propitiation word was also used by Pagans who assumed their gods were angry at them, so they sought to provide their own offerings to their pagan gods to turn away their wrath.
  - c) So How is Christian Propitiation Different Than This?
  - d) In Christianity, the True God Himself, by His Amazing Love and Grace, Provides the Only Offering Capable of Turning Away His Own Wrath!
- 3. He Paid the Penalty Himself Through Jesus Christ on the Cross! (**3:25**)**

**C. JESUS IS NOT ONLY OUR DEFENSE ADVOCATE—HE OFFERED HIS LIFE BLOOD TO TURN AWAY GOD'S WRATH!**

- 1. This is His Strategy—the Strategy of Grace!**
- 2. Jesus Gave it ALL! Not Just Some of His Blood—He Gave it ALL**

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## V. THE JUDGE: Your Sentence of Death Has Been Paid in Full

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### A. SO WHAT DOES THE JUDGE THINK OF THIS STRATEGY?

#### 1. Well It Was **ACTUALLY HIS IDEA!** (3:25-26)

- a) And it Works Every Time! And it is the Only Way to Be Saved!
- b) Because it is God's Plan of Salvation!

### B. THERE IS NOW NO CONDEMNATION FOR THOSE IN CHRIST! (8:1)

#### 1. We Are Now **MORE Than Conquerers** through **HIM** who loves us!

- a) Not Because of How Good We Are—But How Good God is!
- b) Because Of HIS LOVE Love For Us!

### C. THIS GOSPEL PLAN WAS IN THE MIND OF GOD BEFORE TIME BEGAN

#### 1. From Before the Prophets...

- a) From Before Moses and the Law...
- b) From Before the Jewish Nation...
- c) From Before Abraham (Galatians 3:8)

#### 2. It Goes All the Way Back to the Garden of Eden...

- a) The Seed of the Woman (Genesis 3:15)
- b) Through the Seed of Abraham (Genesis 22:18)

#### 3. The Gospel Undoes Everything Satan Caused in the Garden

### D. ONLY THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST OPENS THE GATES OF HEAVEN...

#### 1. There are thousands of false alternatives people try to save themselves with

- a) Man-made philosophies, new age beliefs,
- b) Self-help, self-empowerment, self-esteem movements...

#### 2. Thousands of Religious Doctrines... Different Gospels

- a) offering enlightenment... or higher consciousness...

#### 3. BUT THERE IS NO GRACE IN ANY OF THEM!

- a) Only Jesus Blood Can Forgive Sins!

### CONCLUSION:

#### 1. **Jesus Paid Your Debt in Full at the Cross! The War is Already Won!**

- a) He Already Shed His Blood to Pay the Debt of Sin You Owe
- b) He Already Rose from the Grave in Victory over Death

#### 2. **What Side Will You Choose?**

- a) Will You Accept His Free Gift of Grace? Wash Away Your Sins in Baptism?
- b) Live a New Life in Christ?

#### 3. **The Choice is Yours Alone to Make—**

- a) but an entire angelic army is ready to rejoice when you make the right decision
- b) WHY? Because They KNOW What's At Stake — and the Joy awaiting you
- c) They Know the Joy that Awaits you!

(Outline idea adapted from Jack Cottrell's studies in Romans)