



# Romans

**Right With God**

# There Is No Difference

**Lesson Nineteen**

*Mission Arlington/Mission Metroplex Curriculum*

# Romans

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### There Is No Difference

In the United States there is a ridge known as the Continental Divide. All rain that falls to the east of this divide moves toward the Atlantic Ocean. All rain that falls to the west of this divide flows toward the Pacific Ocean. It is at the very top of the Rocky Mountains in the western part of the United States.

In our text today, we have the great divide. It is made up of two words: “But Now.” These two words divide all that Paul has said up to this point from all that will follow. They are at the beginning of Romans 3:21. Read Romans 3:21-23

In Romans there are the “thens” and the “nows.” It was the *then*, before Christ died; then the *now*, after the death of Jesus. Then, people were “dead in sin.” Now, they can be “alive in Christ.”\* (See Romans 6:11) Then they were under the law. Now, they are under grace. Grace is God’s undeserved favor.

In the previous several verses, Paul has been telling the Romans about the *then*. Both Jews and Gentiles were destined for destruction...without God. “BUT NOW”...there is a new day. If you lived in the then, the law was your guide. It demonstrated to you what was wrong. It condemned you. But, he tells the Romans, the *now* includes relationship with God “apart from the law.” This means that there is no human effort, no human behavior, no human price to be paid for God’s demand of righteousness.

Let’s be sure we understand the phrase, “the righteousness of God.” The most obvious understanding is that God is perfect, He is right in every way. He has not sinned, nor can He. It is His nature. And it is *His* righteousness. It is from no one else. And, since God cannot tolerate unrighteousness, since He demands righteousness equal to His own, humans, to be in His presence, must be clothed in His righteousness. Isaiah 61:10 says, “I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For He has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me with a robe of righteousness.”

This paragraph, verses 21-25, could be called the heart of Romans. Paul’s transition from seeming hopelessness to the great hope that is alive in us because of Jesus, is cause for great celebration. Paul is anxious to share this wonderful news with his Christian brothers and sisters in Rome.

Verse twenty-two says that the righteousness of God comes to us because of our faith, and that with God, “there is no difference.” God sees all of us as humans...there is no difference.

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We must be careful to see the words in the middle of the twenty-second verse. This statement is central to Paul's belief...his theology. The words are, "for all those who believe." This is how wide the Gospel is. This is how generous the Gospel is. This is the God-size of the Gospel. Paul said that it is for **all** those who believe.

Paul has come to the most dramatic statement on sin that he will ever make. He has previously told the Romans, in no uncertain terms, that there is sin and that sin is in all humans...in the Jew and in the Gentile. Now, he makes it absolutely clear. He states it in twelve words, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." No distinction is made between the sin of the Jew and the Gentile. No distinction is made in who falls short of the "glory of God." **All** have sinned and **all** fall short.

The "glory of God" is the righteousness of God by which all of us are judged. You may not be as big a sinner as the thief or murderer, but you, and everyone else, according to Paul are sinners.

**Scripture Memory: "For all have sinned and fall short of the Glory of God." Romans 3:23**

\*Underlined statements in this Teacher's Guide appear in the Student Worksheet with blanks to be filled in by the student during the lesson. Words in the Student Worksheet may not appear exactly as printed in the Teacher's Guide.

### **For the Teacher:**

**Lesson Goal: To help students see that there are no differences in humans from God's point of view.**

1. When a person graduates from high school or college, or graduate school, whichever is the end of formal education for that person, there is the then, before graduation; and the now, after graduation. There is the then, when I lived at home; and the now, I live in my own apartment, house, condo, etc. For Paul, the then was his time before the encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus. The now was everything since that encounter. Everything changed for Paul.
2. Moses was saved because he had faith in God's grace. And until time ends, God honors faith. Paul emphasized the focus of that faith by, at this point, creating the "continental divide of faith." There are numerous references to the then and now in the New Testament: Acts 17:30; Galatians 3:23, 25; 4:1-5; 1 Timothy 2:6; and Titus 1:3.
3. Paul, as a Pharisee, had insisted that rule keeping was the only thing appreciated by God in humans. Now he says that God's righteousness is available to humans by simple faith. If we try to see the gift of God's righteousness as a reward for anything that we could possibly do, we have failed the faith test. Griffith Thomas said, "Righteousness by works would mean that we **attain** it; righteousness by faith means that we **obtain** it." Look up faith and you will find synonyms: reliance, belief, conviction, confidence and trust. Notice that none of those requires any effort on our part. Faith means that you have found something that you can believe in, or have confidence in, and something that deserves your trust. Faith is not something with worth. It is that which has found something worthy.
4. Think about it, only those who know the seriousness, the awfulness, of sin can understand the seriousness of judgment. And, only those who understand lawlessness in the light of God's holiness can fully understand the joy of the new life offered by Grace.
5. Concerning the difference in sinners, Moule said, "Perhaps they are at the bottom of the mine and you are at the top of the mountain; but you are as little able to touch the stars as they."

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### *Student Worksheet*

## There Is No Difference

=In Romans there are the “thens” and the “nows.” It was the \_\_\_\_\_, before Christ died; then the \_\_\_\_\_, after the death of Jesus. Then, people were “dead in sin.” Now, they can be “alive in \_\_\_\_\_.”

=This paragraph, verses 21-25, could be called the \_\_\_\_\_ of Romans. Paul’s transition from seeming hopelessness to the great \_\_\_\_\_ that is alive in us because of \_\_\_\_\_, is cause for great \_\_\_\_\_.

=He states it in twelve words, “for \_\_\_\_\_ have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

No distinction is made between the sin of the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_. No distinction is made in who falls short of the “glory of God.” \_\_\_\_\_ have sinned and \_\_\_\_\_ fall short.

=You may not be as big a sinner as the thief or murderer, but \_\_\_\_\_, and everyone else, according to Paul are \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Scripture Memory: “For all have sinned and fall short of the Glory of God.” Romans 3:23**

#### **A Roman Road to Salvation:**

**Romans 3:23** “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Everyone is a sinner and needs salvation.

**Romans 6:23a** “For the wages of sin is death.” The law of God is unchangeable. If someone sins the penalty must be paid, the payment is death.

**Romans 5:8** “But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners Christ died for us.” God loves us so much, according to John 3:16, that He sent His Son, Jesus, to die for our sins.

**Romans 6:23b** “But the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” The penalty for sin is spiritual death, but God, through the death of Jesus on the cross, took the penalty for the sins of all people, and now everyone can have eternal life. See also, II Corinthians 5:21

**Romans 10:9, 10** “That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.” To personally receive the gift of God, eternal life in Christ Jesus, you trust God to be what He says He is. Believing that “God raised Him (Jesus) from the dead” is to accept all that the Bible says about God and His Son, Jesus. Then you speak (confess) the words, “Jesus is Lord,” as a statement of faith. Believing “with your heart” means that you believe with your mind and with everything that you are.

**Romans 10:13** “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” You have the promise of God Himself that if you do what Romans 10:9, 10 says, you will become God’s child and have eternal life.

**Romans 12:1, 2** “I urge you brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will.” Becoming a Christian is a life-long act of faith and worship.