

# Bible Study

## Christian Beliefs

### Romans 3 v. 9 – 31



# **Introduction**

In our Bible Studies we will be using a booklet from 'A Life Builder Bible Study' series. Our overall theme for these studies is: CHRISTIAN BELIEFS. The studies were originally written by Stephen Eyre, but we will be modifying them in order that they become more usable for both home study and Church study.

These studies give us the opportunity to study the Bible in a greater depth and to reflect on what it is saying to us.

If you are unable to be with us in church and have decided that you will be doing the studies from home, it is suggested that you do the study on a Wednesday morning, for an hour, starting at 10.30am. Get yourself a tea or coffee, a Bible, pen and paper (for any notes you want to make) and begin studying.

We do hope that you enjoy the studies that have been produced!

# **Context**

Knowing what we believe is foundational to a healthy relationship with God and others. These studies on Christian Beliefs explore what Christians need to understand about some vital topics: God, Christ, The Holy Spirit, God's Word, human nature, salvation, the church and the 'last things'.

Having a good grasp of these beliefs will equip us to make sense of the world we live in, strengthen our assurance of our own identity in Christ and direct us to a life of integrity.

# Some Thoughts To Help You While You Study

## The purpose of the study is:

To appreciate what God has done in Christ to deliver us from our sinfulness back into fellowship with him.

This study and the two that follow look at the way God saves us from sin. Our salvation has three parts: (1) We **were saved** when we accepted Christ, which is called justification (Study 7). (2) We **are being saved**, which is called **sanctification** (Study 8). (3) We **shall be saved**, which is called glorification (Study 9). The doctrine of justification by faith looks at how God delivers us from sin through the death of Jesus.

In this relativistic age we want to believe that anyone who is sincere can approach God. But such thinking does not take sin seriously enough. We are all accountable to God, and none of us measure up. Sin is pervasive. Every part of our being is polluted by sin. However, this is not the same as being totally bad. We also have human dignity. We prefer to define sin as merely outward acts rather than as inward spiritual disobedience. To make matters worse, we find ways to hide our disobedience – helping at church, doing good works in the community and so on – as means to serve God on our own terms rather than his.

The word justify is a legal term which means to '**declare not guilty**'. While borrowed from the legal system, it goes far beyond what any human court can do. A human court may extend mercy to someone who has been found guilty. But no human court may extend mercy to someone who has been found guilty after he or she has been convicted of a crime. Yet this is exactly what God has done for us.

The word ***redemption*** was borrowed from the slave market. It means '***to pay a price to buy someone from slavery***'. We were slaves to sin, trapped in our addiction to disobedience. One way that redemption from sin should manifest itself is in a genuine desire to come to God. On the one hand, it should humble us and fill us with pain that the Son of God had to die for us. On the other hand, it should be a tremendous relief – like being delivered from a debt that was far greater than we could pay. The meaning behind the words '***sacrifice of atonement***' is that God's wrath was satisfied through the death of a sacrificial victim. In the Old Testament, the victims were animals. In the New Testament, the one and only sacrificial victim is Jesus Christ.

Human pride is the root of sin. It is the reason why '***no one . . . seeks God***'. (**Romans 3 v. 11**). The righteousness from God is a free gift and not something we can claim as our own.

# Study 7 – Deliverance from sin

Funny thing, sin is not a word that we use to describe wrongful behaviour anymore. Somewhere in the twentieth century it dropped out of our daily speech. Yet, although the word sin is no longer used, the experience of guilt is as prevalent as ever.

**PERSONAL REFLECTION:** What is the attitude of those around you – in your workplace and neighbourhood – to the word **sin**? What sins do you struggle with, and how does the sense of being a sinner affect the way you feel about yourself?

God takes sin very seriously. That is why he has sent his Son to deliver us. The classic term to describe his initial work of deliverance is justification. The passage that we read today is the most complete summary of justification in the New Testament.

Read Romans 3 v. 9 – 20

## **QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT:**

Notice Paul's use of the words all and no one (**Romans 3 v. 9 – 12**). How would you respond to those who claim that anyone who seeks God and does good will be acceptable to him?

Paul mentions several parts of the human body – throats, tongues, lips, mouths, feet and eyes (**Romans 3 v. 13 – 18**). How do these paint a vivid picture of our spiritual and moral condition?

Why do you think we seldom see ourselves or those we know as fitting his description?

Jews tried to follow the Old Testament law as a means for overcoming sin. What was wrong with this (**Romans 3 v. 19 – 20**)?

### **Read Romans 3 v. 21 – 31**

What hope does God offer those who are condemned, who have failed to become righteous by law? What is God's part and what is our part in this righteousness?

What key words in **Romans 3 v. 24 – 25** describe what God has done for us in Christ?

We are '**justified freely**' (**v. 24**) which means to be legally acquitted of all wrongdoing. What is free and what is costly about our justification?

The word **redemption** (**v. 24**) means to be bought from bondage to sin and freed into fellowship with God. How have you experienced deliverance from the slavery of avoiding and disobeying God?

The words '**sacrifice of atonement**' (**v. 25**) comes from the temple sacrifices. How do you respond to the fact that Christ died the horrible death you deserved?

How does the righteousness from God demolish human pride (**Romans 3 v. 28 – 30**)?

This passage shows all that God has done to restore our relationship with him. How do you feel towards God after reading this passage?

Based on this passage, how would you explain to a non – Christian both the bad news about sin and the good news about Jesus Christ?

# **Something to Do Now**

Thank God that he has delivered you from bondage to sin and delivered you into the kingdom of his Son, in which we have redemption from sin and great spiritual blessings both for this life and the life to come.

Memorise the following classic definition of justification:

'Justification is an act of God's free grace, by which he pardons all our sins, and accepts us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone'.

# **Something to Do Later**

In the last study, you invited God to take a tour of your heart in order to expose some of the sins that were present.

Review those sins that you became aware of.

Now picture yourself standing before God in a courtroom with all those sins listed on legal documents.

Allow God to take that list and give it to Jesus Christ.

Then listen to hear him say directly to you:

'Not Guilty'.

What responses do you have?

# **Now use the opportunity to Pray**