



Romans 3:21-26

| | | |
|---|--------------------------|---|
|  | Translations Tool | Check passages across different translations. If there are important differences, try to find out more! |
|  | Vocabulary Tool | Mostly you can find what words mean by looking them up in a dictionary. But be alert in case Paul is using a familiar word in a special or unusual way. |

Romans 3:21-26 is an especially important passage both in Romans and in the Bible as a whole. There's a play on the word 'righteousness' that's not quite clear in the ESV, and so we decided to use the **Translations Tool**. Here's a very literal rendering taken from the highly recommended book, *Teaching Romans* (Christian Focus, 2009) by Christopher Ash:

²¹But now, apart from the law, the **righteousness** of God has been manifested to which the law and the prophets testify — ²²the **righteousness** of God through faith in Christ Jesus for all who believe. For there is no distinction, ²³for all sinned and lack the glory of God, ²⁴being '**righteoused**' freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵whom God put forward as a propitiation through faith by his blood, to demonstrate his **righteousness**, because of the passing over of former sins, in the forbearance of God, ²⁶to demonstrate his **righteousness** in the present time, so that he might be **righteous** and the **righteouser** of the one who has faith in Jesus.

The **Repetition Tool** sniffs out the main theme of the passage in a flash, but the term 'righteousness' actually carries two meanings:

- a) It means God's righteousness, his character, his justice etc
- b) It means the righteousness that is 'counted to us' in the gospel.

Complete the following table:

| 'Righteousness' | Which meaning(s) of 'righteousness' is being used? |
|-----------------|--|
| v21 | |
| v22 | |
| v24 | |
| v25 | |
| v26a | |
| v26b | |
| v26c | |

How are the two meanings of 'God's righteousness' related (harder)?

Let's finish with the Gold-Standard Tools:

- Use the Gold-Standard **Author's Purpose Tool**. How would you summarise the overall point Paul is making?

- Use the Gold-Standard **Context Tool**. How does this fit into the flow of thought of the book so far?

- Use the Gold-Standard **So What? Tool**. How does this passage make you feel about the cross?

BRAINBOX ASIDE (something extra for those interested in stretching their understanding)

What does the word 'propitiation' mean? The **Vocabulary Tool** suggests a dictionary as the first port of call, and you discover that this word refers to appeasement of someone's wrath. But actually this translation of the underlying Greek word *hilasterion* has proved very controversial in the last century, some preferring to use the English word 'expiation' which means 'to take away sin'. Use the Gold-Standard **Context Tool** to decide whether you think the ESV is right. In the light of the argument from 1:18-3:20 does it make more sense for it to be about dealing with *sin*, or dealing with *God's wrath*?