Romans 3:19-28 The One Whom God Put Forward

The editor of a magazine for which I once wrote articles asked me to write on the above scripture. As I read this passage trying to decide what part I'd like to emphasize, I recalled one of my unique experiences. For many years, I taught a Bible class at a home for unwed girls in Los Angeles. The residence housed about 75 girls. They included young ladies aged 12-18, tall and short, of all races, and various stages of pregnancy. The expectant girls stayed at the facility until after they gave birth. Home personnel helped the young ladies find couples who would adopt their babies.

Two simple words in this text—put and forward—gave me pause: "Whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement." Because of their waist size *put forward*, virtually all the girls wore maternity clothing of some type. Here's what prompted my memory. Just about every word Paul used in this section is pregnant with meaning: righteousness, justified, faith, redemption, sacrifice, atonement, forbearance, etc.

God put Jesus forward because all human efforts eventually fail. Since we all disappoint God, we stand condemned. Even our claims of innocence damn us. Had God not put *Jesus forward*, we'd have no forgiveness and no peace with God or anyone on earth. Do you trust Jesus and try to live by his standards? Unless we honor him as the one whom God put forward, we face disappointment and shame.

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