



Analysis of Covenant Theology and Christ's Redemption in Romans 3:23-24: A Redemptive-Historical Approach

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Abstract: *Romans 3:23–24 briefly outlines the universality of sin and divine redemption, but its covenantal dimensions and redemptive-historical aspects have not yet been thoroughly explored. This study aims to analyze the theology of the covenant and Christ's redemption in this passage. Using a qualitative descriptive approach and a literature review, this study conducts a redemptive-historical exegesis integrated with covenant theology. The findings indicate that justification and redemption cannot be understood solely as legal transactions, but rather as the restoration of covenantal status. Christ appears as the center of the narrative, fulfilling the roles of Prophet, Priest, and King, thereby bridging the ontological chasm caused by the Fall through the intra-Trinitarian *Pactum Salutis*. The novelty of this study lies in the integration of textual exegesis with the macro-theological framework of covenant theology through a redemptive-historical lens. Thus, this approach corrects fragmentary soteriological reductionism while providing a strong dogmatic foundation for pastoral practice.*

Keywords: *Covenant Theology, Redemption in Christ, Romans 3:23–24, Redemptive-Historical.*

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Introduction

The doctrine of atonement is a doctrine that emerged in Paul's theology. Romans 3:23-24 is the verse that frames the doctrine of atonement. Romans 3:23-24 contains a crucial urgency to elaborate two important things: the problem and the solution. Boangmanalu emphasizes that Romans 3:23-24 is important as the core of the doctrine of atonement in Paul's theology because these two verses summarize the human problem and God's solution : all humans sin, and all are justified only by God's grace through the redemption in Christ Jesus. ¹Through Romans 3:23-24, Paul elaborates the problem and the solution. The problem is the problem of human sin. Then, the solution to this problem is the redemption accomplished by Jesus Christ. Thus, the summary of the problem and the solution can be clearly seen in Romans 3:23-24. In addition, Romans 3:23-24 has an important function to summarize the understanding of soteriology elaborated by Paul. Airey, Heryanto, and Oko state that Romans 3:23–24 serves as a concise summary of Paul's soteriology: sin is universal, grace is divine, and justification occurs through Christ, not through the Law. ²Through Romans 3:23–24, the salvation or soteriology elaborated by Paul has one center, namely Jesus Christ. The Law in Romans 3:23–24 no longer functions as a tool for human justification for sin. It is God's divine grace that brings justification to sinful humans through the atonement of Jesus Christ. Thus, Romans 3:23–24 frames a doctrine of the atonement in Paul's theology that answers the problem of sin and God's solution of justification centered on the atonement of Jesus Christ.

Covenant theology is a theological system that uses covenants as its framework. Covenant theology is a narrative framework that unites the entire biblical story from Genesis to Revelation. Covenant theology explores a single story of redemption that spans the entire biblical narrative. Purwonugroho and Latunussa assert that Covenant Theology explains the Bible as a single story of redemption that moves from Genesis to Revelation through a series of covenant relationships initiated by God with humanity. ³Covenant theology unfolds the story of redemption from Genesis to Revelation. This story of redemption is an expression of the covenant relationship. The covenant involves two parties: God and humanity. However, the redemption covenant was initiated by God for humanity. Furthermore, the redemption covenant relationship within the covenant framework gives rise to a central figure. This central figure plays a major role in the covenant. Purwonugroho and Zaluchu state that Jesus is the narrative center of the covenant framework because He is understood as the fulfiller of the covenant promises, the representative of the people, and the guarantor

¹ Mestriyati Boangmanalu et al., "Kajian Teologis Tentang Konsep Keselamatan Karena Anugerah Menurut Roma 3:23-26 Dan Relevansinya Terhadap Pemahaman Jemaat GKPPD Masa Kini.," *Tri Tunggal: Jurnal Pendidikan Kristen Dan Katolik* 2, no. 4 (2024): 289–303, doi:10.61132/tritunggal.v2i4.725.

² Aser Airey, Doni Heryanto, and Oral Oko, "Partikularitas Dan Universalitas: Soteriologi Paulus Di Roma 3,," *KHARISMATA: Jurnal Teologi Pantekosta* 7, no. 1 (2024): 174–89, doi:10.47167/kharis.v7i1.273.

³ Daniel Pesah Purwonugroho and Reinhart Helbert Albrow Latunussa, "Implikasi Teologi Kovenan Terhadap Keutamaan Yesus Dalam Kehidupan Jemaat: Perspektif Ibrani 7: 22,," *Jurnal Teologi Gracia Deo* 7, no. 1 (2024): 71–84.

of the new covenant. ⁴Jesus is the central figure who plays a major role in the covenant of redemption. Jesus' role in the covenant of redemption includes the fulfillment of the promises that spanned the Old Testament. Furthermore, Jesus also serves as the representative of God's people. Furthermore, Jesus also serves as the guarantor of the new covenant. Thus, covenant theology elaborates the narrative framework of the covenant that presents Jesus Christ as the central actor in fulfilling the covenant, uniting the entire biblical narrative from Genesis to Revelation.

Romans 3:23-24 summarizes the relationship between universal sin (verse 23) and the atoning grace of Christ (verse 24) as a manifestation of the covenant of redemption (*pactum salutis*). Universal sin in Romans 3:23 expresses a human condition before God. Johnston asserts that this universal sin places all humanity in the same position before God, separated from His glory and in need of redemption that can only be provided through Christ. ⁵ Sin creates a chasm that separates humanity from God. This separates the relationship between God and humanity. This results in humanity losing God's glory. This situation requires a solution: redemption. This redemption can only be accomplished by Jesus Christ. Furthermore, Jesus' redemption for humanity is God's solution to humanity's condition. Harefa emphasizes that the gift of redemption in Romans 3:24 is God's answer to this condition: justification is given freely, through Christ's atoning work, not because of human works or obedience. ⁶Romans 3:24 articulates the gift of redemption accomplished by Jesus Christ. This gift has an absolute impact on humanity. Humanity experiences justification before God. This justification is a gift accomplished by Jesus Christ through His redemption. This justification cannot be achieved by human works or obedience alone. Furthermore, the covenant of redemption frames the intra-trinitarian relationship in the history of human salvation. Adi and Purwonugroho assert that the covenant of redemption is an eternal agreement between God the Father and God the Son to save humanity. In this context, redemption in Christ is the culmination of covenant theology, in which Christ fulfills His role as mediator who saves humanity from sin. ⁷Through the covenant of redemption, the significant role of the Son in saving humanity is seen. Through His incarnation, the Son of God plays a crucial role as mediator in the relationship between God and humanity that has been damaged by sin. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between universal sin (Romans 3:23), the grace of redemption in Christ (Romans 3:24), and the covenant of redemption. The relationship between these three things narrows down to the role of Jesus in His work of redemption.

⁴ Daniel Pesah Purwonugroho and Sonny Eli Zaluchu, "Janji Pemulihan Israel Dalam Kitab Zefanya: Refleksi Teologi Kovenan," *Jurnal Teologi Berita Hidup* 2, no. 1 (2019): 20–27, doi:10.38189/jtbh.v2i1.21.

⁵ J William Johnston, "Which 'All' Sinned? Rom 3:23-24 Reconsidered," *Novum Testamentum* 53, no. 2 (2011): 153–64, doi:10.1163/156853610X492983.

⁶ Otieli Harefa et al., "Konsep Penebusan Kristus Dalam Perspektif Teologi Pentakosta," *Apostolos: Journal of Theology and Christian Education* 1, no. 2 (2021): 103–14, doi:10.52960/a.v1i2.22.

⁷ Didit Yuliantono Adi and Daniel Pesah Purwonugroho, "Penebusan Dalam Kristus Sebagai Puncak Teologi Kovenan: Telaah Eksegetis Dan Teologis Efesus 1: 7," *Jurnal Lentera Nusantara* 4, no. 2 (2025): 166–87.

This paper attempts to answer two research questions. The first question is how does Romans 3:23-24 express the concept of redemption in the context of covenant theology? The second question is what contribution does the redemptive-historical approach make to understanding the dynamics between sin, covenant, and redemption in the text? This paper aims to theologically analyze the relationship between human sin and redemption in Christ based on Romans 3:23-24. This paper also aims to explore the dimensions of covenant theology in the text through a redemptive-historical approach. Furthermore, the author considers this issue, as well as previous research on the discussion of Romans 3:23-24 from a grace perspective ⁸, research on the structure of covenant theology ⁹, and the significance of historical redemptive narratives ¹⁰. There is still room for further research by integrating these previous research perspectives. This paper offers a novelty by integrating Romans 3:23-24 within the framework of the covenant of redemption with a redemptive-historical approach that explicitly places the verse within the context of the narrative of salvation from eternity to eternity. This paper argues that Romans 3:23-24 is not only a statement of release from the punishment due to sin, but also a proclamation of the restoration of humanity's covenantal status to return to an eternal covenant relationship through the work of Christ as Mediator, Priest, King, and Prophet.

Methods

This study uses a descriptive qualitative research approach. Descriptive qualitative research is a comprehensive methodological framework, designed to examine and understand experiences, perceptions, and phenomena in depth ¹¹This study also uses a literature study method to collect non-numerical qualitative data. Literature study is a methodological approach to research that requires the collection and review of data from various written materials relevant to a particular research subject. This process includes careful tracing, identification, and evaluation of previously existing literature, including but not limited to books, scientific articles, research documentation, and other authoritative sources. ¹²The author uses the Bible as a primary source and academic literature related to this research as a secondary source. The author will conduct a redemptive-historical theological analysis to conduct an exposition of the text of Romans 3:23-24. The redemptive-historical approach to theology is a hermeneutical method that interprets the Bible

⁸ Jetorius Gulo, "Implikasi Praktis Konsep Anugerah Bagi Orang Percaya Berdasarkan Surat Roma 3: 23-24," *Fidei: Jurnal Teologi Sistematis Dan Praktika* 3, no. 2 (2020): 228–45.

⁹ Didit Yuliantono Adi and Daniel Pesah Purwonugroho, "Analisis Pola Triadik Trinitarian Dalam Perspektif Teologi Kovenan: Eksposisi Yohanes 14:26," *Jurnal AP-Kain STAK Diaspora* 3, no. 1 (2025): 11–22.

¹⁰ Made Nopen Supriadi, "Pendekatan Sejarah Penebusan Dalam Penafsiran Alkitab," *PASCA: Jurnal Teologi Dan Pendidikan Agama Kristen* 17, no. 1 (2021): 18–29, doi:10.46494/psc.v17i1.136.

¹¹ Anugerah Ayu Sendari, "Mengenal Jenis Penelitian Deskriptif Kualitatif Pada Sebuah Tulisan Ilmiah," *Ilustrasi Penelitian*, 2019, 2.

¹² Lexy J Moloeng, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif* (Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya, 2017).

organically as a unified history of redemption, with Christ as its culmination.¹³ Then, the author will conduct a theological synthesis within the framework of covenant theology: the Covenant of Redemption, the Covenant of Works, and the Covenant of Grace. Ultimately, these findings will be formulated into a comprehensive conclusion.

Results And Discussion

Theological Exposition of Romans 3:23–24

Romans 3:23-24 is a crucial passage that summarizes the human problem and God's solution in Pauline theology. Romans 3:23 states the human problem, namely the universality of sin. Romans 3:23 contains a key phrase to frame the universality of human sin. This phrase is "all have sinned." Mangngi and Sianturi state that the phrase πάντες γὰρ ἥμαρτον or in Indonesian translated as "all have sinned" emphasizes the universality of sin as a reality for humanity, including religious people, so that no one can claim worthiness before God.¹⁴ This phrase states the total condition of humans who have experienced the corruption of sin. The corruption caused by sin makes humans unworthy before God. This is a universal human reality stated in Romans 3:23 as a human problem before God. On the one hand, Romans 3:24 elaborates several key words to elaborate God's solution for humans. These keywords are δικαιούμενοι - dikaioumenoi, χάριτι - chariti, and ἀπολυτρόσεως - apolutrōsis. Namgung states that the word "δικαιούμενοι - dikaioumenoi" comes from the root word δικ- which means "justified" or "declared righteous." In Romans 3:24, this term refers to the act of justification performed by God towards believers through faith in Christ.¹⁵ Humans cannot justify themselves because of the problem of human sin. Humans can only be declared righteous through faith in Christ. Then, Johnston asserts that "χάριτι - chariti" in this context means "by grace." This emphasizes that justification is a free gift from God, not the result of human effort.¹⁶ The justification that humans receive is not the result of human actions themselves. This justification is a free gift from God. The basis for giving this justification is through redemption. Westfall asserts that the phrase διὰ τῆς ἀπολυτρόσεως places *apolutrōsis* as a means of justification, and this term refers to liberation or release through ransom in Christ Jesus.¹⁷ Thus, the justification received by sinners is solely the grace that Jesus Christ worked through His redemption. Thus, there is a "problem-solution"

¹³ Jhon Leonardo Presley Purba, Hizkia Febrian Prastowo, and Robinson Rimun, "Kajian Hermeneutis Ungkapan 'Sungguh Amat Baik' Dalam Kejadian 1:31 Ditinjau Dari Perspektif Redemptive-Historical Approach," *CHARISTHEO: Jurnal Teologi Dan Pendidikan Agama Kristen* 1, no. 2 (2022): 122--133, doi:10.54592/jct.v1i2.14.

¹⁴ Priska Natalia Kana Mangngi and Juliana Sianturi, "Pemahaman Kasih Karunia Berdasarkan Roma 3: 23-24 Dalam Integritas Akademik Mahasiswa," *DIDAKTIKOS: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Kristen* 6, no. 1 (2023): 1–7.

¹⁵ Young Namgung, "A Semantic Analysis of Δικ- Nouns in Romans: The Differentiated Usage of Δικαιοσύνη, Δικαίωμα, and Δικαίωσις and the Multilayered Structure of Pauline Justification" 1, no. 2 (2025): 7–37, doi:10.64482/jbell.2025.1.2.1.

¹⁶ Johnston, "Which 'All' Sinned? Rom 3:23-24 Reconsidered."

¹⁷ David M Westfall, "The Mercy Seat of the Risen Christ: Atonement and the Glory of God in Romans 3.21–26," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 48 (2025): 173–96, doi:10.1177/0142064x241309937.

flow that appears in Romans 3:23-24. Boangmanalu asserts that, Romans 3:23–24 builds a flow: all humans sin, fall short of the glory of God, then are justified freely by grace through redemption in Christ.¹⁸ The universal problem of mankind, namely sin, is then resolved through the free justification that Jesus Christ worked in His redemption.

Romans 3:23-24 emphasizes two universalities: the universality of sin and the universality of grace in Christ. Sin is a universal condition as stated by Paul in Romans 3:23. Tamez asserts that sin as a universal condition according to Paul is that all humans, both Jews and Gentiles, are involved in sin. No one is righteous, and all have strayed from the right path, indicating that sin is a widespread condition and no one is exempt from it¹⁹. Sin is a fundamental problem for all humans. This condition of sin is comprehensive. No human being is exempt from this condition. Contrary to the universality of sin, God's grace is also offered to all humans. Airey, Heryanto, and Oko emphasize that because sin is universal, grace in Christ is also presented with universal scope: salvation is offered to all humans through faith, and justification applies to both Jews and Gentiles.²⁰ On the one hand, Melanchthon states that God's grace in Christ is a response to the condition of human sin. Through Christ, God offers salvation that is not limited to a particular group, but is available to all who believe.²¹ It is clear that the universality of sin as humanity's primary problem finds its solution through grace in Christ. The scope of grace in Christ justifies sinful humanity. The scope of grace in Christ does not only apply to one race of humanity—in this case, the Jewish people. This scope also applies to non-Jews. Thus, God reveals the solution to sin as humanity's problem through Christ.

A Glance at Covenant Theology in the Framework of Romans 3:23-24

Covenant theology frames the relationship between God and humanity through a covenant, commonly called a covenant. On the one hand, covenant theology also describes intra-trinitarian interactions within the framework of redemption for eternal salvation. The covenant of redemption, commonly called *the Pactum Salutis*, is the Triune God's initiative in planning eternal salvation. Williamson states that *the Pactum Salutis* is understood as an eternal agreement within God Himself that designed and guaranteed redemption before the foundation of the world. The most common historical formulation is Christological: the Father appointed the Son as Mediator and guarantor, then the Son agreed to be sent and obeyed until His suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension.²² Through *the pactum salutis*, intra-trinitarian relationships are depicted within the framework of the covenant. This

¹⁸ Boangmanalu et al., “Kajian Teologis Tentang Konsep Keselamatan Karena Anugerah Menurut Roma 3:23-26 Dan Relevansinya Terhadap Pemahaman Jemaat GKPPD Masa Kini.”

¹⁹ Elsa Tamez, “Justicia de Dios, Injusticia, Pecado y Gracia (Rom 2:1-5:21),” *Revista de Interpretação Bíblica Latino-Americana* 87, no. 2 (2022): 61–79, doi:10.15603/1676-3394/ribla.v87n2p61-79.

²⁰ Airey, Heryanto, and Oko, “Partikularitas Dan Universalitas: Soteriologi Paulus Di Roma 3.”

²¹ Monica Melanchthon, “The Grace of God and the Equality of Human Persons,” *Dialog-a Journal of Theology* 42, no. 1 (2003): 8–19, doi:10.1111/1540-6385.00134.

²² P Williamson, “The Pactum Salutis: A Scriptural Concept or Scholastic Mythology?,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 69, no. 2 (2018): 259–281, doi:10.53751/001c.27693.

relationship frames the Son's appointment as mediator between humanity and God. Then, the Son was incarnated in the history of human life. The Son lived a life of obedience to the Father until His suffering on the cross. Thus, this *pactum salutis* is eternal and culminates in the work of Christ on the cross. Then, *the pactum salutis* explores the harmonious intra-trinitarian relationship in the plan of salvation. Daliman states that the role of the Trinity in salvation reflects the view that salvation is the result of harmonious cooperation between the three persons of God, each of whom contributes to the overall plan of salvation.²³ Through *the pactum salutis*, the work of the Triune God is explored harmoniously with its contribution to saving humanity. In Romans 3:24, the expression of *the pactum salutis* appears where the redemption for humanity is carried out by the Son, Jesus Christ. Therefore, *the pactum salutis* frames the harmonious intra-trinitarian covenant with the culmination of the work of the Son, Jesus Christ, on the cross.

In addition to the covenant of redemption, the covenant of works is also explored in depth. The covenant of works frames the first human transgression as the backdrop for Romans 3:23, where "all have sinned." The covenant of works depicts the relationship between God and humanity, where human obedience determines the continuation of the covenant. However, this covenant was violated by the first humans, Adam and Eve. Purwonugroho and Telaumbanua state that within the framework of the Covenant of Works, the first human transgression is used as the backdrop for why "all have sinned": Adam and Eve violated God's specific command, and then sin, death, and the broken relationship with God are understood to enter into the universal human condition.²⁴ The violation of the covenant of works began when Adam and Eve violated God's command. This violation had comprehensive consequences for the condition of the rest of God's creation. This consequence was the entry of sin, which damaged the relationship between God and humanity. Sin not only damaged the relationship between God and humanity, but also damaged the human condition as a whole. Furthermore, Adam and Eve's transgression had a comprehensive impact on humanity. Velde emphasized that this transgression affected not only Adam personally, but also the entire human race he represented. In Christian theology, this is known as original sin, which was passed down to all of Adam's descendants.²⁵ Adam's transgression made sin the initial condition of humanity. Adam's descendants, namely humans, experienced this original sin. Therefore, the covenant of works or the agreement of works was not harmoniously established between God and humanity, represented by Adam. Original sin damaged the condition of humanity because of Adam's transgression in the covenant of works.

²³ Muner Daliman, "Peran Allah Tritunggal Dalam Karya Keselamatan: Sebuah Refleksi Teologis Efesus 1:3–14," *Immanuel: Jurnal Teologi Dan Pendidikan Kristen* 4, no. 1 (2023): 209–21, doi:10.46305/im.v4i1.179.

²⁴ Daniel Pesah Purwonugroho and Yohanes Telaumbanua, "Analisis Teologis: Total Depravity" Dalam Konteks Teologi Kovenan Dan Refleksinya Terhadap Kehidupan Manusia," *KHAMISYIM: Jurnal Teologi Dan Pendidikan Kristiani* 1, no. 2 (2024): 52–66.

²⁵ Dolf te Velde, "De Peccato Originali" (Brill, 2015), 350–83, doi:10.1163/9789004282469_018.

In addition to the covenant of works, there is the covenant of grace. The covenant of grace elaborates on Christ's role as the fulfiller of God's promise. This promise was given in Genesis 3:15 and continued throughout Israel's history. Vanhoozer asserts that Genesis 3:15 is often considered a proto-evangelium, or the first announcement of the Gospel, where the promise of the seed of the woman who would crush the serpent's head is seen as a prophecy about Christ. Christ, as that seed, fulfills this promise through his victory over sin and death. ²⁶Genesis 3:15 is the first Gospel declaration of the prophecy about Jesus Christ. This prophecy resonates throughout the history of Israel in the Old Testament. Then, this prophecy culminates in the incarnation of Jesus in this world. The incarnation of Jesus begins His role in a new covenant. Purwonugroho asserts that Christ acts as the mediator of the New Covenant, which replaces previous covenants with Israel. In this role, Christ not only fulfilled the law but also bore the penalty for sin, thus enabling humanity to enter into a new relationship with God through faith. ²⁷Christ in his life played a full role in perfectly fulfilling the law (Matthew 5:17-1). Moreover, Christ bore the penalty for sin for humanity's transgressions in the covenant of works. His suffering on the cross is an expression of the bearing of humanity's sins. In Romans 3:23, humanity's sinful condition is perfectly borne through Christ's work. In Romans 3:24, the covenant of grace is expressed through the redemption that Jesus performed so that humanity can obtain justification. Therefore, the covenant of grace elaborates on Jesus Christ as the fulfiller of God's promises.

The Redemptive Work of Christ as the Fulfillment of the Covenant

In Romans 3:24, there is a key word related to covenant theology. This keyword is redemption - ἀπολύτρωσις . From a covenant perspective, redemption is the fulfillment of God's promise. Covenant and redemption are intertwined. Sitohang asserts that covenant theology describes God's relationship with humanity through a series of covenants, including the covenant of salvation, works, and grace. Redemption is an integral part of this covenant, in which God promises to save humanity through Jesus Christ. ²⁸ Through Jesus' redemption, the pinnacle of God's salvation for humanity was achieved. The redemption of Jesus Christ is the pinnacle of God's covenant to save humanity. In redemption, humanity is bound together as one covenant people in Jesus. Furthermore, redemption, from a covenant perspective, has a significant impact on believers. Adi and Purwonugroho emphasize that redemption in Christ is the pinnacle of covenant theology. Through this redemption, human sins are forgiven and a relationship with God is restored, providing eternal salvation for humanity. Christ's redemption also provides transformative power in the ethical life of believers, demonstrating that redemption is not only about the forgiveness of sins but also

²⁶ Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "Redemption Accomplished: Atonement," in *The Oxford Handbook of Reformed Theology*, 2020, 473–96, doi:10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198723912.013.31.

²⁷ Daniel Pesah Purwonugroho, "Studi Teologis Dogmatika Tritunggal Dalam Perspektif Teologi Kovenan Bagi Kehidupan Jemaat," *Antrophos: Jurnal Ilmiah Teologi Dan Pendidikan Agama Kristen* 1, no. 1 (2024): 43–54.

²⁸ Nino Sampe Tindih Sitohang et al., "Konsep Teologi Perjanjian," *Jurnal Silih Asuh*. 2, no. 2 (2025): 15–22, doi:10.54765/silihasuh.v2i2.87.

about the renewal of life. ²⁹The impact of Christ's redemption from a covenant perspective is the forgiveness of humanity's sins. The sin that separated the relationship between God and humanity is then definitively resolved through the redemption of Jesus Christ, the pinnacle of the covenant. Furthermore, redemption, the pinnacle of the covenant, brings transformative power to humanity. Humanity experiences a change of life and a renewal of life as God's covenant people. Therefore, the redemption in Romans 3:24 is the fulfillment of God's promise in the covenant.

In addition to redemption, Romans 3:24 contains a key word that indicates the status of the covenant people. This key word is justification – δικαιούμενοι . This word affirms the covenantal status of God's people. This covenantal status is given freely by grace. The meaning of justification brings a special status to God's people. Simut emphasizes that Dikaiōsis – δικαιούμενοι as a new covenantal status means that God accepts a person into a new covenant relationship with Himself, so that justification is not only about freedom from punishment, but also about being accepted as God's property in the covenant community. ³⁰Justification is a statement that believers belong to God. Justification is not merely stating that believers have had their sins forgiven and avoided eternal punishment. Justification states that believers belong to God. Believers are absorbed into the covenant community. Believers receive this condition freely. Furthermore, the justification received by believers is accomplished through Christ. Gulley asserts that justification is seen as a divine act performed by God through Christ. In Romans 3:24, Paul states that humans are “justified by His grace alone through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” ³¹Through Christ’s atonement, believers experience complete forgiveness of sins. This forgiveness of sins brings believers into God’s possession. Therefore, Christ’s atonement is the culmination of the fulfillment of the covenant, where believers are justified and become God’s covenantal people.

The Redemptive-Historical Approach: The Narrative of Salvation and Fulfillment in Christ

Romans 3:23-24 is a verse that emphasizes the human problem and God's solution in Jesus. Romans 3:23-24 can be seen in the flow of redemptive history, namely from creation - fall - promise and fulfillment. Misztal states that Romans 3:23-24 summarizes the flow of creation - fall - promise - fulfillment : humans as God's creation lost their glory because of sin, then were justified freely by God's grace through redemption in Christ. ³²In Romans 3:23-24, the embodiment of human problems and God's solution is clearly stated.

²⁹ Adi and Purwonugroho, “Penebusan Dalam Kristus Sebagai Puncak Teologi Kovenan: Telaah Eksegetis Dan Teologis Efesus 1: 7.”

³⁰ Corneliu C. Simuț, “J. I. Packer’s Theology of Justification—His Reception and Appropriation of a Classic Protestant Doctrine,” *Religions* 14, no. 12 (2023), doi:10.3390/rel14121442.

³¹ Normal R Gulley, “Debate Over Justification by Faith: Evangelicals and Catholics,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 20, no. 1 (2009): 15.

³² Wojciech Misztal, “The Old Order Of Captivity Of Sin And Death: A Man Before Coming Of Christ,” *Studia Theologica Varsaviensia*, 2019, 97–114.

Romans 3:23 states the phase of creation until the fall. Romans 3:23 states that humans as God's creation experienced total corruption because of sin. Jackson states that the Fall of humans into sin is described in Romans 3:23 as "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." This shows that sin has damaged humanity's relationship with God and caused humans to fall short of the standard of divine perfection.³³ Sin is a crucial *problem* that separates humans before God. This state of separation causes humans to lose the glory of God. Ultimately, humans are in a state of sin that makes them fail to achieve perfection according to God's standards. However, the problem in Romans 3:23 finds its answer in Romans 3:24. In the course of redemptive history, Romans 3:24 elaborates on the phases of promise and fulfillment. Boangmanalu states that the fulfillment of this promise occurs in Jesus Christ, who, through His death and resurrection, provides a way for humans to be restored to a relationship with God. Romans 3:24 emphasizes that justification is a gift of God given through redemption in Christ Jesus, not the result of human effort.³⁴ Romans 3:24 affirms the fulfillment of the promise of salvation accomplished by Jesus Christ through His redemptive work. Jesus' redemption provides a way for humanity to experience total restoration to a relationship with God. Jesus' redemption also brings the status of justification to believers. Through this justification, believers become God's possession in Jesus Christ. Therefore, Romans 3:23-24 briefly states the flow of redemptive history, namely creation – fall – promise and fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

The historical flow of redemption brings out the central role played by Jesus Christ. Jesus is the center of the redemptive narrative, acting as priest, king, and prophet in the covenant. Adeoye emphasizes that Jesus is seen as the High Priest who connects humanity with God, replacing the Old Testament priesthood with His own sacrifice. This signifies the transition from a temporary priesthood to an eternal and perfect priesthood.³⁵ The High Priest is a faith system in the Old Testament that represents the nation of Israel before God. Jesus acts as a perfect and sinless High Priest to represent sinful humanity before God. In addition, Jesus also plays the role of King in the context of the covenant. Jesus is the king in the New Testament who is the ruler over all. Jesus became King to bring God's kingdom into the reality of human life. Then, Jesus also plays the role of Prophet in the covenant. Weinandy states that as a Prophet, Jesus is the most perfect conveyor of God's revelation, surpassing previous prophets by providing complete and final teachings and revelation.³⁶ Jesus is the transmitter of God's revelation and the revelation of God itself. Through Jesus, the revelation of God is fully conveyed and realized. Furthermore, the finality of Jesus as the complete revelation of God is a certainty. The combination of Jesus' roles in the covenant

³³ W Jackson, "The Logic of Divine Presence in Romans 3:23," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 80 (2019): 293–305, doi:10.1353/cbq.2018.0052.

³⁴ Boangmanalu et al., "Kajian Teologis Tentang Konsep Keselamatan Karena Anugerah Menurut Roma 3:23-26 Dan Relevansinya Terhadap Pemahaman Jemaat GKPPD Masa Kini."

³⁵ Moses Adeleke Adeoye, "Exploring Jesus' High Priestly Identity," *Journal of Comparative Study of Religions* 5, no. 2 (2025): 121–40, doi:10.21111/jcsr.v5i2.13224.

³⁶ T G Weinandy, "The Supremacy of Christ in the Letter to the Hebrews," *Aquinas on Scripture: An Introduction to His Biblical Commentaries*, Ed. Daniel A. Keating and John Yocum. (London T&T Clark/Continuum, 2005), n.d., 223–44.

indicates that Jesus Christ and His role are central to the redemptive narrative itself. Therefore, Jesus' role as Priest, King, and Prophet is central to the redemptive narrative from a covenant perspective.

The integration of covenant theology and Christ's atonement in Romans 3:23-24 provides unique theological significance in the history of redemption. In Romans 3:23, humanity experiences a state of total depravity. Purwonugroho and Telaumbanua assert that Romans 3:23 affirms that sin is universal and therefore requires salvation through Christ. Thus, the work of redemption establishes a unity between the particular and the universal.³⁷ This state of total human depravity necessitates the redemption of Jesus Christ. This state of total human depravity will prevent humans from perfectly obeying the covenant of works. Purwonugroho asserts that the covenant of works, which humans could not fulfill due to sin, requires fulfillment through the obedience of Jesus Christ.³⁸ Through the full role of Jesus Christ and His faithfulness unto death, the covenant of works is perfectly fulfilled and fulfilled in Jesus. This brings redemption to humanity because humanity is represented before God through Christ's obedience. Humanity, unable to respond to the covenant of works, now experiences justification through Christ's obedience. The sanctions of the covenant of works are fully borne in Jesus Christ. Vanhoozer states that Christ fulfilled the covenant by exchanging status from covenant Lord to covenant servant, suffering the sanctions of the covenant through passive obedience and fulfilling the conditions of the covenant through His active obedience.³⁹ Christ's obedience as covenant servant provides redemption for God's people. This can be seen in Romans 3:24, where Christ's atonement justifies God's people. Through this perspective, Romans 3:23-24 can be integrated into the framework of the covenant of redemption through a redemptive-historical approach. Romans 3:23 covenantally emphasizes the problem of human sinfulness, which is unable to fulfill the covenant of works, thus requiring the redemption of Jesus Christ. Romans 3:24 emphasizes the role of Jesus Christ in His obedience and redemption as a covenant servant. Thus, in the context of the salvation narrative, Romans 3:23-24 can be read through the lens of covenant theology.

Conclusion

This study concludes that Romans 3:23–24 does not stop at its basic soteriological function as a mere expression of the “problem of sin and the solution of grace”; instead, these two verses present the eschatological and historical dimensions of the *Pactum Salutis*, namely the Covenant of Redemption. The universality of sin in verse 23 emphasizes humanity’s failure in the Covenant of Works, which leads to total corruption and the loss of God’s glory. Meanwhile, justification (*dikaïoumenoi*) through redemption (*apolutrōsis*) in

³⁷ Purwonugroho and Telaumbanua, “Analisis Teologis: Total Depravity” Dalam Konteks Teologi Kovenan Dan Refleksinya Terhadap Kehidupan Manusia.”

³⁸ Daniel Pesah Purwougroho, “Memahami Substitusi Penal Dalam Roma 8: 1 Melalui Perspektif Teologi Kovenan,” *EULOGIA: Jurnal Teologi Dan Pendidikan Kristiani* 5, no. 1 (2025): 336–52.

³⁹ Vanhoozer, “Redemption Accomplished: Atonement.”

verse 24 is the explicit fulfillment of the Covenant of Grace, which has been initiated intra-trinitarianly since eternity. Using a redemptive-historical lens, this study demonstrates that redemption and justification cannot be reduced to mere legal transactions, but rather constitute a restoration of covenantal status. Christ is proclaimed as the center of the salvation narrative, fulfilling the roles of Priest, King, and Prophet—thus bridging the ontological gap caused by the fall and restoring humanity to an eternal covenant relationship. Therefore, Romans 3:23-24 states the concept of redemption which can be seen from the perspective of covenant theology where Jesus is the pinnacle of the center of the redemption narrative.

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Artificial Intelligence (AI) was used in the preparation of this manuscript solely to assist with language translation and to identify relevant references. AI was not used to generate the substantive content of the manuscript, conduct data analysis, interpret research findings, or make academic judgments or decisions. All content, arguments, analyses, interpretations, and conclusions presented in this article are the author's responsibility and have been reviewed and verified by the author.

Author Contribution

Daniel Pesah Purwonugroho: Conceptualization, development of the research methodology, literature search and analysis, manuscript preparation, critical revision of the manuscript for important intellectual content, and final approval of the version to be published. The author takes responsibility for all aspects of the research and ensures the accuracy and integrity of the work.

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