

Homework: Read through Romans 3 each day. Circle any words or phrases that you see frequently repeated. Mark what you think is the most important/key verse in Romans 3. Create a title for the chapter (below). Write down any questions you might have.

Romans 3

(ESV)

Chapter Title _____

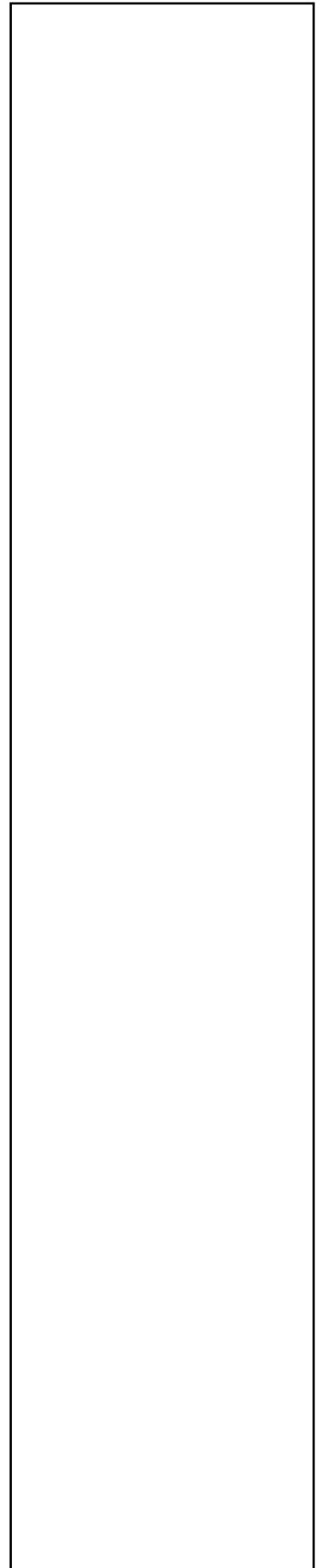
¹ Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision?

² Much in every way. To begin with, the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God. ³ What if some were unfaithful? Does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God? ⁴ By no means! Let God be true though every one were a liar, as it is written, “That you may be justified in your words, and prevail when you are judged.” ⁵ But if our unrighteousness serves to show the righteousness of God, what shall we say? That God is unrighteous to inflict wrath on us? (I speak in a human way.) ⁶ By no means! For then how could God judge the world? ⁷ But if through my lie God’s truth abounds to his glory, why am I still being condemned as a sinner? ⁸ And why not do evil that good may come?—as some people slanderously charge us with saying. Their condemnation is just. ⁹ What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, ¹⁰ as it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one; ¹¹ no one understands; no one seeks for God. ¹² All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no

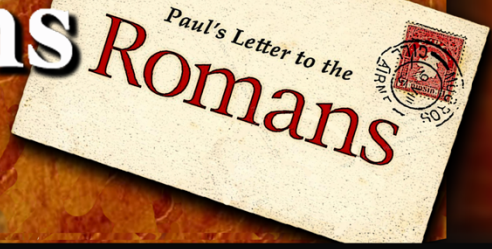
Notes

one does good, not even one.”¹³ “Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive.” “The venom of asps is under their lips.”¹⁴ “Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness.”¹⁵ “Their feet are swift to shed blood;¹⁶ in their paths are ruin and misery,¹⁷ and the way of peace they have not known.”¹⁸ “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”¹⁹ Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God.²⁰ For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.²¹ But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—²² the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction:²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,²⁵ whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.²⁶ It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier

of the one who has faith in Jesus. ²⁷ Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. ²⁸ For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law. ²⁹ Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, ³⁰ since God is one—who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. ³¹ Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law.



Romans 3



In chapter 2 Paul pointed out to the Jews that **even though they had the Law, they were sinners, just like the Gentiles without the Law.** He begins chapter 3 with some final remarks about the Jews and their relationship to God.

Read Romans 3:1-9

Paul continues with the “dialogue style” that he was using near the end of chapter 2 (going back and forth speaking first as a self-righteous Jew in an argumentative manner, and then answering that argument and essentially “putting that ‘theoretical’ self-righteous Jew in his place”). He became even more “provocative” by using **hyperbole** (exaggerated statements or claims not meant to be taken literally) in several places.

Paul had laid out the case in 2:11 that there is no favoritism with God—the Jews and Gentiles are both sinful. Paul asks, “if Jews are sinners just as the Gentiles are, do Jews have any advantage over Gentiles?” He says, “Yes, indeed!”

1. What is the advantage of being a Jew that Paul gives in 3:2? What does that mean?
2. Using hyperbole, even what may seem to be sarcasm/absurdity, Paul puts forward several seemingly contentious questions, makes some “accusations” against God (some in the form of a question), and then answers those questions and accusations with cold-hard truth. Fill out the table below to clarify those questions, accusations and truth that Paul presents.

Verses	Contentious Questions	Accusations against God	Truth
3-4	What if some (Jews) were _____?	Their _____ nullified the _____ of God.	God is _____, and everyone else is a _____.
<p>CONCLUSION—God’s promises are made only to believers; therefore, the unbelief of some, or even many, cannot make God’s faithfulness of no effect. He WILL fulfill His promises to His people, and WILL bring His threatened vengeance upon unbelievers.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">GOD IS FAITHFUL TO HIS PROMISES.</p>			
5-6	If our _____ shows the _____ of God....	God is unrighteous to inflict _____ on us.	God is able to _____ the world because He is _____.
<p>CONCLUSION—God is always just and righteous, regardless of people’s unrighteousness. It is an absolute “given” that God is going to judge the world and that His judgment will be just.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">GOD IS JUST IN HIS JUDGMENT.</p>			
7-8	If my _____ causes God’s _____ to abound to (increase) his _____, then why am I _____ as a sinner?	God’s _____ abounds to His glory because of my _____. Let us do _____ so that good may result!	Their _____ is just.
<p>CONCLUSION—God’s good ends/results do not justify mankind’s evil means/methods. (Genesis 50:20)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">GOD IS TRUE IN HIS PURPOSES.</p>			

Even though the Jews were unfaithful, God will be faithful in His promises and judgment. He will be faithful to punish sin, for both Jew and Gentile. Paul says there is an “advantage” in being a Jew, but the Jews’ disobedience had nullified (cancelled out) that advantage. The Jews lost their privilege because of unfaithfulness and were under God’s judgment.

In chapters 9-11 we will see that this rejection of Israel was not final. **God turned temporarily to the Gentiles and gave them the special responsibility of world evangelization.** The Jews were set aside and lost the joy of being God's instruments, but they were not forgotten by God. In due time (in the future) they will come back.

3. In 3:9 Paul comes to a conclusion about the advantage of being a Jew. What is his conclusion? Notice the contrast between 3:2 and 3:9. What is the reason for that contrast?

Despite the privilege of receiving God’s oracles, Jews have joined Gentiles in rebellion against God and in liability to His condemnation. (RSB)

Read Romans 3:10-18

4. How many times in 3:9-12 does Paul identify the universality of sin (of **all** people, both Jew and Gentile)? Mark them in the text. Who is righteous in God’s eyes? ([Ecclesiastes 7:20](#), [Psalm 14:1-3](#))
5. “*As it is written*”—This phrase is used 35 times in the New Testament; Paul uses it 15 times in Romans alone. This refers to quotations from the Old Testament, showing Paul’s respect/reverence for the OT the importance of the OT in Christian faith, and pointing to the **authority of Scripture**. In 3:10-18 Paul compiles a series of OT passages that, taken together, stress universal human sinfulness and the depravity and condemnation of **all** mankind. ([Psalm 14:1-3](#); [5:9](#); [36:1](#); [140:3](#); [10:7](#); [Proverbs 1:16](#); [Isaiah 59:7, 8](#)) How does he describe human beings?

These Old Testament verses describe three things in the sinful nature:

- A **character** with traits of ignorance, indifference, crookedness, and unprofitableness.
- A **tongue** whose statements are destructive, deceitful, and malignant.
- A **conduct** whose marks are oppression and destruction. (CB)

Romans 3:10 is one of the foundations of the Gospel and encapsulates (summarizes) the hopelessness of mankind to be saved on our own merits.

6. Notice in 3:10-18 the parts of the human body; these are outward expressions of the evil that is deep within. What are those body parts? Where does sin “live?” ([Romans 7:12-23](#))
7. Notice the powerful words Paul uses to describe the seriousness of these actions—“an open grave,” “the venom of asps,” “shed blood,” “ruin and misery.” What do you think of when you see these words? What does Paul seem to be describing? ([Genesis 2:17](#))

In Romans 1:18-3:20, Paul clearly reveals the dark side of human nature.

Key Doctrine #1 in Romans

Mankind's Sinfulness—Sin separates every human from God; only Jesus Christ can reconcile God and man.

Read Romans 3:19-20

Verses 19-20 serve as a summary and a transition into the next element in Paul's Gospel.

8. Who does the law "speak" to? What happens as a result of the law?

Accountable means guilty, responsible, responsible to provide an answer for something.

Jews received the written law through Moses, and Gentiles have the works of the law written on their hearts, so that both groups are accountable to God. There is no defense against the guilty verdict God pronounces on the entire human race. (JMSB)

Justified means to be acquitted of a crime, to be **declared** righteous in God's sight. No one can ever be declared righteous in God's eyes by the works of the law.

9. What is the purpose of the law? (3:20, [Romans 7:7](#))

"Guilty before God," is a dreadful word; but no man can be justified by a law which condemns him for breaking it. (MHC)

The Jews made the Law their "god" because they had left the promises and commands of Yahweh to pursue their own "righteousness" by works. They gained nothing through this but the wrath of God.

Read Romans 3:21-26

"But now" indicates a dividing line signifying that what was in the past had passed, and something is different moving forward. That line marks a distinct split separating **OT righteousness gained by observing the Mosaic Law** (which is literally impossible, v. 20), and **NT righteousness provided by God through Christ**, which the Law and the Prophets [referring to the Pentateuch (JMSB)] had **testified** (declared, established) from the beginning. (NIVSB)

10. Who can acquire "the righteousness of God?" How is "the righteousness of God" obtained? (3:22, [Genesis 15:6](#))

11. We once again see a parenthetical comment in verses 22b-23, beginning with "For there is no distinction...." What "distinction" is Paul referring to?

12. The "alls" in 22-24 are **not all** the same! Who is "all" in 3:22 and 3:24?

13. Who is the "all" in 3:23? How do we know that the "alls" are different?

God's **glory** is His perfection, magnificence, excellence, majesty, and most of all, His **holiness**. We have all "fallen short," failed to meet His standard of perfection, of who He intended us to be. ([Leviticus 11:44](#))

In Romans 3:21–5:21 Paul sets forth God's plan to provide righteousness for humankind.

Key Doctrine #2 in Romans

Justification By Faith—Complete freedom from judgment and the bondage of sin comes by faith alone in Jesus Christ. (JM)

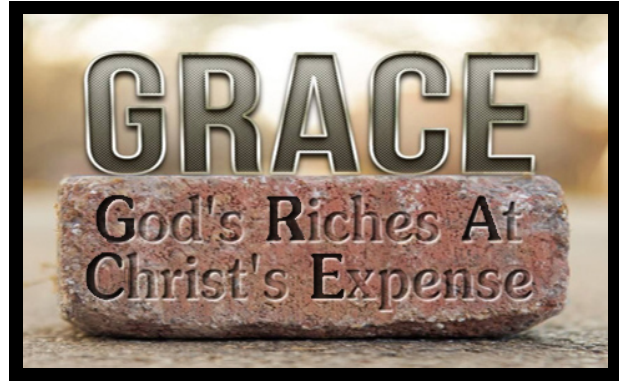
Justification/righteousness cannot be earned through works, as Paul has already established. God's righteousness is **GIVEN through FAITH to all who believe**, but must also be **RECEIVED by faith**. (25)

Faith is the moral conviction of the truthfulness of God, particularly reliance upon Christ for salvation. Faith is not just believing that something is true, but belief that deliberately and firmly puts one's **trust** in someone—Jesus Christ. “**Faith in Jesus alone**. Not faith in faith, faith in a pastor, faith in a church.” (GPL)

Grace is a free, undeserved gift from the kind, merciful hand of God, which one receives because he has **NO** merit of his own. God's grace, through Christ's sacrifice, makes it possible for Him to be both **just AND merciful**.

This gift came because of “*the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*.” **Redemption** is the release of a prisoner obtained by the payment of a ransom, freedom purchased at the expense of another. That ransom was paid by Christ Jesus.

14. Who was/is the ‘prisoner,’ and why were/are they ‘imprisoned?’ ([Romans 7:21-24](#))



Before Creation, God decreed that Jesus would die to redeem sinners. ([Ephesians 1:4](#), [Revelation 13:8](#))

Therefore, He planned for His Son to be offered as a sacrifice, “*a propitiation by His blood*.” **Propitiation**, also called a **sacrifice of atonement** (a blood sacrifice), is the act of gaining the favor or goodwill of God; it is a two-part act that involves **(1)** appeasing God's wrath toward a sinner and **(2)** being **reconciled** (restoring peace and harmony in a relationship that has been broken) to Him. Christ died as a propitiatory sacrifice, satisfying God's divine judgment against sinners, putting a stop to the Father's wrath against them, and bringing about forgiveness and justification. The only way for God's wrath against sinful man to be appeased and for us to be reconciled to God is through Christ's death on the cross. ([Colossians 1:21-22](#))

15. How is that sacrifice of atonement/propitiation obtained? (3:24-25)

16. What two things did God do “*to show His righteousness?*” How do these demonstrate His righteousness?

For centuries, God had been “passing over” billions of sins; it seemed like He had been “letting them go,”* by not punishing them. ([Psalm 103:10](#)) Why is **not** punishing sin a problem? Do most people in the world today think that God is “unjust” because He is lenient with sinners and doesn't punish sin?

The world doesn't even consider that God has the **RIGHT** to punish sin. Most assume, if they think about Him at all, that God will conform to their own rights and wishes; that they are free to do as they wish without consideration for the consequences. (**JP**) Not punishing sin might seem unjust to other believers, and cause people to erroneously think they are getting away with it. Both are equally wrong.

However, in the context of Romans (and all of Scripture!), it boils down to the “**glory of God**.” Everything that God created was a manifestation of His glory. We were created in the image of God for the purpose of bringing Him glory. Throughout Romans, we have seen how the glory of God has been treated ([Romans 1:18-31](#)) and what God's righteous response should be ([Romans 1:32](#)). We have seen how all have ‘exchanged’ the glory of God for something worthless, and that all had sinned and failed to meet the standard of God's glory.

Therefore, the ‘problem,’ when God passes over sin, is that He ‘*seems*’ apathetic to the gravity of sin and its eternal consequences. Moreover, it might ‘*seem*’ that His name and worth are of minor value or no value. This is a dangerous assumption for anyone to make; it could not be farther from the truth!

God could have settled accounts by punishing all sinners with hell. This would have demonstrated that He **does** consider falling short of his glory and belittling His honor to be a critical issue. But it was **not** God's delight to destroy everyone in hell, though everyone deserved it. ([John 3:17](#)) (JP)

So how can we explain a righteous, just God "passing over" billions of sins over centuries? Romans 3:25 says this shows God's righteousness because of His "divine forbearance." **Forbearance** means God's patience, tolerance, or self-restraint. God *passed over*, left unpunished, those sins which had been committed in the past. That doesn't mean the sins committed by the believer before they were saved, but the sins committed under the "old system" (before the Law was given, and after the Law was given but before Christ came to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins).* He did not "let them go," but in His patience, He deferred (postponed) the just punishment until Jesus came.

Although the sins of God's people were punished symbolically in the animal sacrifices of the OT period, the NT recognizes such sacrifices cannot substitute for the sins of human beings. ([Hebrews 10:1-4](#)), The real significance of the OT sacrifices was found in the way they pointed forward to Christ, through whom God would deal with human sin in an appropriate and final way. In view of what He would later do, God could righteously "pass over former sins;" they were totally punished in the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ on the cross. (NIVSB) (RSB) ([1 Timothy 2:3-4](#), [2 Peter 3:8-9](#))

The work of Christ on the cross reveals two great truths. God is **both** "just and the justifier." These seem to be contradictory. How could He possibly be **JUST**—pouring out His judgment and wrath on guilty sinners, **and** the **JUSTIFIER**—declaring those same guilty sinners to be innocent and righteous in His sight? That is **propitiation** (1) appeasing God's wrath toward a sinner and (2) being reconciled to harmony in a relationship to Him. Christ bore the wrath of God for our sins, and turned it away from us. Out of love for the glory of God, Jesus absorbed the wrath of God that was rightfully ours, so that we are "justified by his grace as a gift." (JP)

The basis for our justification before God is Christ's perfectly obedient life and substitutionary death; faith in Christ's life, death, and resurrection joins us to the righteousness of Christ. ([Romans 5:1-2](#))

Read Romans 3:27-31

Since Jew and Gentile alike are under wrath for their sin, and since the law of God does not excuse or save Jews, but rather reveals their condemnation; and since the gospel exposes a person's unrighteousness while revealing God's righteousness, no one, not even a Jew, has grounds for boasting. Justification is by faith alone, not by any human achievement. (RSB) ([Ephesians 2:8-9](#))

The "law of faith" is not a law we can try to follow in our own strength and therefore be judged by that law. Being made right before God is all about **faith in what God has done** for us in and through Jesus. ([Acts 13:39](#), [Galatians 3:11-13](#))

17. Why is God both the God of the Jews and the God of the Gentiles? ([Deuteronomy 6:4](#) ESV) [KJV](#), [NLT](#)

18. How does God justify the Jew?

19. How does God justify the Gentile?

20. Does our faith overthrow (cancel, abolish) the law? What happens to the law in light of faith? ([Matthew 5:17-19](#))

Paul anticipated being charged with **antinomianism** (anti-law): If justification comes by faith alone, then isn't the law rejected? He gives a more complete answer in chapters 6–7 and reasserts the validity of the law in **Romans 13:8–10**.

Antinomians deny or downplay the significance of God's law in the life of the believer. They have acquired their distaste for the law in a number of ways. Some believe that they are no longer obligated to keep the moral law of God because Jesus has freed them from it. They insist that grace not only frees us from the curse of God's law but delivers us from any obligation to obey God's law. Grace then becomes a license for disobedience. (RSB)

What separates Christianity from the other religions of the world is **GRACE!** God does for us what we cannot do ourselves. All other religions of the world emphasize what humans can do. Christianity alone emphasizes what God has done. Many so-called "Christian" sects and denominations are characterized by false teachings regarding salvation through baptism, church attendance, good works, communion, etc. None of these "works" can bring salvation.



Salvation is by *Grace Alone*, through *Faith Alone*
in *Christ Alone*, according to *Scripture Alone*,
for the *Glory of God Alone*.

21. What did you select as the Key Verse(s) in Romans 3? Why?
22. Write a summary of Romans 3.

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