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ROMANS CHAPTER 3

In Your Group Read Romans chapter three (aloud) in a modern translation or read it in the King James Version (below). As a Group, Discuss the general content of the chapter.

THE LETTER OF ROMANS CHAPTER 3 King James Version

ROMANS 3: [1] What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? [2] Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God. [3] For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? [4] God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, **THAT THOU MIGHTEST BE JUSTIFIED IN THY SAYINGS, AND MIGHTEST OVERCOME WHEN THOU ART JUDGED (PSALM 51:4). [5] But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man) [6] God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world? [7] For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner? [8] And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just. [9] What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; [10] As it is written, **THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NO, NOT ONE: [11] THERE IS NONE THAT UNDERSTANDETH, THERE IS NONE THAT SEEKETH AFTER GOD. [12] THEY ARE ALL GONE OUT OF THE WAY, THEY ARE TOGETHER BECOME UNPROFITABLE; THERE IS NONE THAT DOETH GOOD, NO, NOT ONE. (PSALM 14:1-3; 53:1-3; ECCLESIASTES 7:20) [13] THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN SEPULCHRE; WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY HAVE USED DECEIT; (PSALM 5:9) THE POISON OF ASPES IS UNDER THEIR LIPS: (PSALM 140:3) [14] WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS: (PSALM 10:7) [15] THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD: [16] DESTRUCTION AND****

MISERY ARE IN THEIR WAYS: [17] AND THE WAY OF PEACE HAVE THEY NOT KNOWN: (ISAIAH 59:7-8) [18] THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES. (PSALM 36:1) [19] ¶ Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. **[20]** Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. **[21]** But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; **[22]** Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: **[23]** For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; **[24]** Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: **[25]** Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; **[26]** To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. **[27]** Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. **[28]** Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. **[29]** Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: **[30]** Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. **[31]** Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE GROUP: Read and Discuss each verse and translation along with the “Additional Information” in each box provided.

**ROMANS CHAPTER 3
VERSES 1-2**

Romans 3: [1] What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? [2] Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God. (King James Version)

¹So, do Jews have anything that other people do not have? Is there anything special about being circumcised? ²Yes, of course, there is in every way. The most important thing is this: God trusted the Jews with his teachings. **(New Century Version)**

Then what is the Jew’s superiority? What is the good of circumcision? Much in every way. This to begin with – Jews were entrusted with the scriptures of God. (verses 1-2) **(Moffatt Translation)**

[1] And so, what’s the advantage of being a Jew? Or what’s the value of being circumcised? **[2]** It’s worth a great deal in every way. First, because God has given the

Jews His written messages to use and pass along to others. **(New Testament in Everyday American English)**

[1] What's the advantage then of being a Jew? And what's the benefit of being circumcised? [2] There are all kinds of advantages! First of all, it was thru the Jews that God gave His messages to mankind. **(The Last Days Bible)**

Additional Information: (Verse 2) – "Oracles of God." In all contexts the "oracles" involve oral proclamation, and refer to the living voice of God and the truths which God spoke to men. God entrusted these truths to the Jews over long periods of time. The Jews collected them and they are recorded throughout the Old Testament Scriptures (Wycliffe Bible Commentary, p. 510). This phrase (oracles of God) reveals the apostolic belief that the inspiration of the Old Testament extended to its words (Matt. 4:4) (New Geneva Study Bible, p. 1770). The Jews had a great advantage in having the Old Testament, because it contained the truth about salvation (2 Tim. 3:15) and about the gospel in its basic form (Gal. 3:8). When Paul said "preach the Word" (2 Tim. 4:2), he meant the "oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11) recorded in Scripture (MacArthur Bible Commentary, p. 1512).

ROMANS CHAPTER 3 VERSES 3-4

Romans 3: [3] For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? [4] God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, THAT THOU MIGHTEST BE JUSTIFIED IN THY SAYINGS, AND MIGHTEST OVERCOME WHEN THOU ART JUDGED (PSALM 51:4). (King James Version)

³True, some of them were unfaithful; but just because they broke their promises, does that mean God will break his promises? ⁴Of course not! Though everyone else in the world is a liar, God is true. As the Scriptures say, "He will be proved right in what he says, and he will win his case in court." **(New Living Translation)**

³If some Jews were not faithful to him, will that stop God from doing what he promised? ⁴No! God will continue to be true even when every person is false. As the Scriptures say: "So you will be shown to be right when you speak, and you will win your case." **(New Century Version)**

³It is true that some of them did not believe the message. But does this mean that God cannot be trusted, just because they did not have faith? ⁴No, indeed! God tells the truth, even if everyone else is a liar. The Scriptures say about God, "Your words will be proven true, and in court you will win your case." **(Contemporary English Version)**

³True, some of them were unfaithful, but just because they broke their promises to God, does that mean God will break his promises? ⁴Of course not! Though everyone else in the world is a liar, God is not. Do you remember what the book of Psalms says about this? That God's words will always prove true and right, no matter who questions them. **(The Living Bible)**

[3] What if some of them were not faithful? Does it mean that for this reason God will not be faithful? [4] Certainly not! God must be true, even though every man is

a liar. As the scripture says, “You must be shown to be right when you speak; you must win your case when you are being tried.” **(Today’s English Version)**

[3] What if some did not believe *and* were without faith? Does their lack of faith *and* their faithlessness nullify *and* make ineffective *and* void the faithfulness of God *and* His fidelity [to His Word]? **[4]** By no means! Let God be found true though every human being is false *and* a liar, as it is written, That You may be justified *and* shown to be upright in what You say, and prevail when You are judged [by sinful men]. [Ps. 51:4.] **(The Amplified New Testament)**

Additional Information: As keepers of the Old Testament, the Jews had in fact failed to comprehend the message of the Old Testament, especially the prophetic and messianic passages. The unbelief of the Jews is seen in their rejection of Jesus as Messiah, and consequently they did not believe the oracles of God which they so carefully guarded. The question is, “**Shall the unfaithfulness of Israel in this respect alter God’s faithfulness?**” Paul’s answer is a classic. “**God forbid!**” this expression (Gk. *me genoito*) corresponds to the Hebrews *chalilah* which is also translated “God forbid.” It is an expression which indicates a recoiling abhorrence, utter shock, and disgust. It has been variously translated as “good heavens, no,” “may it not prove to be so,” “perish the thought,” etc. (Liberty Bible Commentary, Vol. 2, p. 349).

ROMANS CHAPTER 3 VERSES 5-6

Romans 3: [5] But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man) [6] God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world? (King James Version)

⁵ If our evil deeds show how right God is, then what can we say? Is it wrong for God to become angry and punish us? What a foolish thing to ask. ⁶ But the answer is, “No.” Otherwise, how could God judge the world? **(Contemporary English Version)**

⁵“But,” some say, “our breaking faith with God is good, our sins serve a good purpose, for people will notice how good God is when they see how bad we are. Is it fair, then, for him to punish us when our sins are helping him?” (That is the way some people talk.) ⁶God forbid! Then what kind of God would he be, to overlook sin? How could he ever condemn anyone? **(The Living Bible)**

[5] But what if our doing wrong serves to show up more clearly God’s doing right? What can we say? That God does wrong when he punishes us? (I speak here as men do.) **[6]** By no means! If God is not just, how can he judge the world? **(Today’s English Version)**

[5] But if our wrongdoing brings out so strikingly the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Surely not that God is wrong – I speak humanly – when He inflicts punishment? **[6]** No indeed! Then how could God judge the world? **(Berkeley Version)**

[5] But if our sins cause God’s righteousness to be made more obvious, then what are we to say? That God is unfair to inflict His anger on us? (This is the human

viewpoint.) **[6]** Most certainly not! *If God is unfair*, then how can He judge the world? **(The New Translation)**

[5] But if our wrongdoing shows how right and fair and perfect God is, what are we going to say? Certainly not that God is unfair when He brings down His holy anger on the sinner! That's the way people talk. **[6]** But such a thing is impossible! For if God isn't fair, how is He going to judge the world? **(New Testament in Everyday American English)**

[5] But if our sinning causes people to become more aware of how good God is, what about that? Isn't it then unfair of God to punish us? (I'm just repeating how some people reason.) **[6]** Certainly not! If that were so, how could God then judge any who have rebelled and sinned against Him? **(The Last Days Bible)**

Additional Information: (Verses 5-6) – “But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say?” This is a clever but illogical argument. It is twisting Scripture to make what is inherently evil appear to be ultimately good. Paul anticipates someone saying, “If my unfaithfulness causes God's faithfulness to be more apparent, is not my sin by contrast enhancing the world's concept of the absolute holiness and faithfulness of God?” And a second question is: **“Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance?”** Would it not be unjust of God to punish me for contributing to a more pristine picture of His true character? **“I speak as a man.”** Since God's justice is not something that may be called into question, Paul indicates that only foolish human reasoning would attempt to do so. The answer to these questions is an emphatic **“God forbid.”** The consequence of this line of reasoning would be to deny God the divine right to judge any man. If God cannot judge men, then who can?

(Verse 6) – “For then how shall God judge the world?” The reference in this verse is to the final judgment, and by the use of “the world” Paul means “all mankind” (Help for Translators, p. 55). One of God's activities in presiding over the world as its sovereign Creator is to judge all people. God created all people and holds them all responsible to Him for what they do with their lives. They are created with a sense of responsibility, and they must finally give answer to the One who created them. If we try to use human logic to argue away the justice of God, then we must take away God's role as world Judge. The inspired Bible will not let us do that (Disciple's Study Bible, p. 1420). Some may think they don't have to worry about sin because (1) it's God's job to forgive; (2) God is so loving that he won't judge us; (3) sin isn't so bad – it teaches us valuable lessons, or (4) we need to stay in touch with the culture around us. It is far too easy to take God's grace for granted. But God cannot overlook sin. Sinners, no matter how many excuses they make, will have to answer to God (Life Application Bible, p. 2032).

ROMANS CHAPTER 3 VERSES 7-8

Romans 3: [7] For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner? [8] And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just. (King James Version)

⁷“But,” some might still argue, “how can God judge and condemn me as a sinner if my dishonesty highlights his truthfulness and brings him more glory?” ⁸If you follow that kind of thinking, however, you might as well say that the more we sin the better it is! Those who say such things deserve to be condemned, yet some slander me by saying this is what I preach! **(New Living Translation)**

⁷A person might say, “When I lie, it really gives him glory, because my lie shows God's truth. So why am I judged a sinner?” ⁸It would be the same to say, “We should do

evil so that good will come.” Some people find fault with us and say we teach this, but they are wrong and deserve the punishment they will receive. **(New Century Version)**

⁷For he could not judge and condemn me as a sinner if my dishonesty brought him glory by pointing up his honesty in contrast to my lies. ⁸If you follow through with that idea you come to this: the worse we are, the better God likes it! But the damnation of those who say such things is just. Yet some claim that this is what I preach! **(The Living Bible)**

It is like saying that if my lying throws into sharp relief the truth of God and increases his glory, then why should he still judge me a sinner? Why not do evil that good may come? As a matter of fact, I am reported as urging this very thing, by some slanderously and others quite seriously! But, of course, such an argument is quite properly condemned. (verses 7-8) **(Phillips Translation)**

[7] “But if my lie has brought God glory and honor by making His truth shine more brightly, why am I still being condemned as a sinner?” **[8]** Yes, why not say, “Let’s keep on doing evil things, so that good things will happen?” That’s what some people are accusing us of saying, and it’s just one of the false and insulting things they’re saying about us. People like this deserve to be punished. **(New Testament in Everyday American English)**

[7] Still others might argue, “If God’s glory becomes more obvious when His truthfulness is contrasted with my lies, why then am I still condemned as a sinner?” **[8]** Well, if that’s the case, we might as well say, “Let’s live it up in sin so that good may come from it,” as some falsely charge that we believe and live, and as others firmly declare that we teach. Such people are justly being condemned by God! **(The Last Days Bible)**

Additional Information: Although God can bring good out of an evil situation, disciples should not do evil in order that God can do more good. We cannot justify our evil behavior through twisted theological arguments. Neither can we condemn God or escape the reality of His just judgment. Sin is evil and never justified. Sin is against God, not for Him. God does good because of who He is, not because of our evil (Disciple’s Study Bible, pgs. 1420-1421). This Antinomian (lawless) philosophy is further condemned in Romans 6:2 (Liberty Bible Commentary, p. 351).

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ROMANS CHAPTER 3

VERSE 9

Romans 3: [9] What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; (King James Version)

⁹Well then, are we Jews better than others? No, not at all, for we have already shown that all people, whether Jews or Gentiles, are under the power of sin. **(New Living Translation)**

⁹So are we Jews better than others? No! We have already said that Jews and those who are not Jews are all guilty of sin. **(New Century Version)**

Are we Jews then a march ahead of other men? By no means. For I have shown above that all men from Jews to Greeks are under the condemnation of sin. the scriptures endorse this fact plainly enough. **(Phillips Translation)**

⁹What does all this mean? Does it mean that we Jews are better off than the Gentiles? No, it doesn't! Jews, as well as Gentiles, are ruled by sin, just as I have said. **(Contemporary English Version)**

[9] Well: are we any better off? Not at all: as we said before, Jews and Greeks are all under sin's dominion. **(Jerusalem Bible)**

[9] Well then, are we *Jews* any better off *than the Gentiles*? No, not at all. For we have already charged that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under *the control* of sin. **(The New Translation)**

[9] Well then, are we [Jews] superior *and* better off than they? No, not at all. We have already charged that all men, both Jews and Greeks (Gentiles), are under sin [held down by and subject to its power and control]. **(The Amplified New Testament)**

Additional Information: "**We have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin.**" The word "prove" (Gk. *proaitiaomai*) is a combination of two Greek words, *pro* meaning "before" and *aitiaomai* meaning "to bring an accusation against" or "press formal charges." Paul has charged the entire world with being innately sinful. If the evidence is sufficient and the charge can be proved, the whole world will be judged guilty before God (Liberty Bible Commentary, vol. 2, p. 351). The sinner has no means within himself to deal with sin. He is "under sin," that is, under the power, rule, command, control of sin. He needs help from without. His own resources cannot set him free (Wycliffe Bible Commentary, p. 512). The apostle has in mind here a very definite contrast between being "under sin" and being "under grace." Romans 6:14-15 speaks of being "under grace" with our sins pardoned and ourselves justified (Liberty Bible Commentary, vol. 2, p. 351).

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ROMANS CHAPTER 3
VERSES 10-11

Romans 3: [10] As it is written, THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NO, NOT ONE: [11] THERE IS NONE THAT UNDERSTANDETH, THERE IS NONE THAT SEEKETH AFTER GOD. (King James Version)

¹⁰The Scriptures tell us, “No one is acceptable to God! ¹¹Not one of them understands or even searches for God. **(Contemporary English Version)**

[10] As scripture says: *There is not a good man left, no, not one: [11] there is not one who understands, not one who looks for God. (Jerusalem Bible)*

¹⁰As the Scriptures say, “No one is good—no one in all the world is innocent.”
¹¹No one has ever really followed God’s paths or even truly wanted to. **(The Living Bible)**

[10] Like the Scriptures say: “There is no person without sin. None! **[11]** There is no person that understands. There is no person that really wants to be with God.”
(The Easy-to-Read New Testament)

[10] As the Scriptures say: *No one lives like he ought to, not even one person!*
[11] *Not one of them really understands the wisdom of serving and obeying God, and not one earnestly searches for God. (The Last Days Bible)*

Additional Information: In the following verses of Romans 3:10-18, Paul quotes a number of Old Testament passages: Psa. 14:1-3; 5:9; 140:3; 10:7; Isa. 59:7-8; Psa. 36:1. The apostle does not quote from the Hebrew text but from the Greek version of the Old Testament, the Septuagint (LXX). Sometimes he quotes it exactly; other times he paraphrases. This collection of Old Testament quotations illustrates the various forms of sin, the undesirable characteristics of sinners, the effect of their action, and their attitude toward God. This is the same picture that Paul himself has been painting (Wycliffe Bible Commentary, pgs. 512-513).

ROMANS CHAPTER 3
VERSES 12-14

Romans 3: [12] THEY ARE ALL GONE OUT OF THE WAY, THEY ARE TOGETHER BECOME UNPROFITABLE; THERE IS NONE THAT DOETH GOOD, NO, NOT ONE. (PSALM 14:1-3; 53:1-3; ECCLESIASTES 7:20) [13] THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN SEPULCHRE; WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY HAVE USED DECEIT; (PSALM 5:9) THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS: (PSALM 140:3) [14] WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS: (PSALM 10:7) (King James Version)

[12] All men have turned away from God; they have all gone wrong; no one does what is good, not even one. **[13]** Their mouths are like an open grave; wicked lies roll off their tongues, and deadly words, like snake’s poison, from their lips; **[14]** their mouths are full of bitter curses. **(Today’s English Version)**

[12] “All men have turned away from God and become completely useless. No one is kind – not even one person!” *Psalm 14:1-3; Ecclesiastes 7:20* **[13]** “Their throats

are like an open grave. They use their tongues to trick people.” *Psalm 5:9* “Like dangerous snakes, poison is under their lips.” *Psalm 140:3* **[14]** “Their mouths are filled with cursing and bitterness.” *Psalm 10:7* **(The Simple English Bible)**

[12] *Every one of them has turned aside to other pursuits. All of them, together, have become worthless. None of them practice true goodness and kindness, not even one!* **[13]** *Their throats are like stinking, open graves, and snake poison is under their lips, from which their tongues discharge lies.* **[14]** *Their mouths are open, running sewers of curses and bitter cynicism.* **(The Last Days Bible)**

Additional Information: These verses describe the vileness and wickedness of various parts of the human body, indicating figuratively that every part contributes to a person's condemnation (The Bible Knowledge Commentary, p. 449)

ROMANS CHAPTER 3 VERSES 15-18

Romans 3: [15] THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD: [16] DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR WAYS: [17] AND THE WAY OF PEACE HAVE THEY NOT KNOWN: (ISAIAH 59:7-8) [18] THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES. (PSALM 36:1) (King James Version)

¹⁵“They are quick to commit murder. ¹⁶Wherever they go, destruction and Misery follow them. ¹⁷They do not know what true peace is.” ¹⁸“They have no fear of God to restrain them.” **(New Living Translation)**

¹⁵They are quick to kill, hating anyone who disagrees with them. ¹⁶Wherever they go they leave misery and trouble behind them, ¹⁷and they have never known what it is to feel secure or enjoy God's blessing. ¹⁸They care nothing about God nor what he thinks of them. **(The Living Bible)**

[15] They are quick to hurt and kill; **[16]** they leave ruin and misery wherever they go. **[17]** They have not known the path of peace, **[18]** nor have they learned to fear God.” **(Today's English Version)**

[15] These people quickly become violent. **[16]** Wherever they go, they leave ruin and destruction. **[17]** They don't know how to live in peace. **[18]** They don't even fear God. **(Contemporary English Version)**

[15] Their feet hasten to shed blood, **[16]** ruin and misery mark their tracks, **[17]** they are strangers to the path of peace, **[18]** and reverence for God does not enter their thoughts. **(The Revised English Bible)**

[15] They murder for any reason. **[16]** They leave a trail of ruin and misery wherever they go. **[17]** They know nothing about pursuing peace. **[18]** They have no real concern about respecting God or fearing Him. **(The Last Days Bible)**

Additional Information: (Verse 18) – “**No fear of God before their eyes.**” “By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil” (See Prov. 16:6; 3:7; 8:13; 9:10; Acts 5:11). The fear of the Lord is an essential element in New Testament faith and in Biblical Christianity.

ROMANS CHAPTER 3
VERSES 19-20

Romans 3: [19] ¶ Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. [20] Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. (King James Version)

¹⁹ Obviously, the law applies to those to whom it was given, for its purpose is to keep people from having excuses and to bring the entire world into judgment before God. ²⁰ For no one can ever be made right in God's sight by doing what his law commands. For the more we know God's law, the clearer it becomes that we aren't obeying it. **(New Living Translation)**

Whatever the Law says, we know, it says to those who are inside the Law, that every mouth may be shut and all the world made answerable to God; for *no person will be acquitted in his sight* on the score of obedience to law. What the Law imparts is a consciousness of sin. (verses 19-20) **(Moffatt Translation)**

Additional Information: It is generally agreed that the word "Law" in this passage refers to the entire Old Testament, the content of which Paul has summarized in verses 10-18. Paul reminds the Jews among his readers that the Law applies (literally "speaks") to those who live under the Law, that is, to the Jews; and so this means that the Jews themselves are guilty of the sins described in the previous verses. It has already been concluded that the Gentiles stand under God's judgment, and now the Jews also are shown to be guilty in God's sight, so the purpose of the Law is clearly to stop all human excuses and bring the whole world under God's judgment. In order to stop all human excuses so that every mouth may be shut. Paul reminds his readers that the purpose of the Law is not to give men salvation, but to make them know that they have sinned (Help for Translators, p. 62-63).

Jews received the written law through Moses (Rom. 3:2), and Gentiles have the works of the law written on their hearts (Rom. 2:15), so both groups are accountable to God with no defense against the guilty verdict (MacArthur Bible Commentary, pgs. 1513-1514).

Ordinarily, in a civil court, the time of the defense is usually given to flowery speeches, discrediting of witnesses, muddling of the issues, etc. But this will not be the case at the judgment bar of God. When the evidence against the universal sinfulness and guilt of man is presented and the opportunity for defense comes, there will be no defense. Paul concludes that there is no law any where that can justify any man. The law can convict men of sin, it can define sin, but it cannot emancipate man from sin. Only the grace of God can do that (Liberty Bible Commentary, vol. 2, pgs. 353-354). The Mosaic Law is an instrument not of justification but of condemnation (The Bible Knowledge Commentary, p. 450).

The "New Geneva Study Bible" has an interesting article called "The Three Purposes of the Law" (p. 259), it states, "Scripture shows that God intends His law to function in three ways:

Its first function is to be a mirror reflecting to us both the perfect righteousness of God and our own sinfulness and shortcomings.

A second function, the "civil use," is to restrain evil. Though the law cannot change the heart, it can to some extent inhibit lawlessness by its threats of judgment, especially when backed by a civil code that administers punishment for proven offenses (Duet. 13:6-11; 19:16-21; Rom. 13:3-4). Thus it secures civil order, and serves to protect the righteous from the unjust.

Its third function is to guide the regenerate into the good works that God has planned for them (Eph. 2:10). The law tells God's children what will please their heavenly Father. It could be called their family code. Christ was speaking of this third use of the law when He said that those who become His disciples must be taught to do all that He had commanded (Matt. 28:20), and that obedience to His commands will prove the reality of one's love for Him (John 14:15). The Christian is free from the law as a system of salvation (Rom. 6:14; 7:4, 6; 1 Cor. 9:20; Gal. 2:15-19; 3:25), but is "under law toward Christ" as a rule of life (1 Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:2). ²² *But when the Holy Spirit controls our lives he will produce this*

kind of fruit in us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control; and here there is no conflict with Jewish laws" (Gal. 5:22-23, The Living Bible).

ROMANS CHAPTER 3 VERSES 21-23

Romans 3: [21] But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; [22] Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: [23] For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; (King James Version)

²¹ But God has a way to make people right with him without the law, and he has now shown us that way which the law and the prophets told us about. ²² God makes people right with himself through their faith in Jesus Christ. This is true for all who believe in Christ, because all people are the same: ²³ All have sinned and are not good enough for God's glory, **(New Century Version)**

[21] But now God's way of making people right with Himself has been clearly revealed, and it is not by obeying the Law *given by Moses*. In fact, the Law itself and the prophets themselves told about this way. **[22]** For God's way of putting people right with Himself is through faith in Jesus Christ and is for all who believe – *Jew and Gentile alike* without distinction: **[23]** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, **(The New Translation)**

[21] But now we have God's way of becoming perfectly holy plainly set before us. And it has nothing to do with any kind of law, even though the Law and the Prophets both speak about it. **[22]** Instead, we see that we become perfectly holy in God's sight when we believe in Jesus Christ, and this includes everyone who believes, for there isn't any difference in people. **[23]** You see, all men and women have sinned, and none of them has God's kind of perfect holiness. **(New Testament in Everyday American English)**

[21] Now, without *the* law, the way God makes people right has been revealed. The law and the prophets point toward this truth: **[22]** Committing oneself to Jesus Christ is what makes a person right with God. *Salvation* is for anyone who believes! It makes no difference *who you are*, **[23]** because everyone has sinned and is far away from God's glory. **(The Simple English Bible)**

[21] But now the righteousness of God has been revealed independently *and* altogether apart from the Law, although actually it is attested by the Law and the Prophets, **[22]** Namely, the righteousness of God which comes by believing *with* personal trust *and* confident reliance of Jesus Christ (the Messiah). [And it is meant] for all who believe. For there is no distinction, **[23]** Since all have sinned and are falling short of the honor *and* glory which God bestows *and* receives. **(The Amplified New Testament)**

[21] But now God's way of freeing people of guilt before Himself has been clearly revealed. It has nothing to do with obeying the Law, although the Law of Moses and the

Prophets spoke about it. **[22]** We can now make peace with God by believing in Jesus Christ! Right standing with God is now available to everyone, and will be given to all who become true followers of the Lord. **[23]** Because there's no difference, for all of us have sinned, and we all fall far short of God's perfect standard and character. **(The Last Days Bible)**

Additional Information: (Verse 21) – “The righteousness of God.” Paul means the righteousness bestowed by God. Such a righteousness is apart from the law in the sense that it is not a righteousness deserved or achieved by keeping the Law (Wycliffe Bible Commentary, p. 514). As defined in Romans 1:16, the righteousness of God is Christ Himself, who met every demand of the law for us in our stead, and is “made unto us ...righteousness” (1 Cor. 1:30). God's righteousness is demonstrated and communicated to us through the cross. **“Being witnessed by the law and the prophets.”** Every time a man took his sacrifice to the Temple for a sin offering, confessed his sin, and killed the animal, he was testifying that he had faith in a righteousness that was not his own (Liberty Bible Commentary, vol. 2, p. 355).

(Verse 22) – “Unto all and upon all them that believe.” Even though this righteousness is provided unto all, it is nevertheless applied upon only those who believe in Jesus the Christ (Ibid. p. 355).

ROMANS CHAPTER 3 VERSE 24

Romans 3: [24] Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: [(King James Version)

[24] Being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; **(New American Standard Bible)**

[24] But are freely made right with God through God's wonderful, undeserved favor in redeeming us by means of Christ Jesus. **(The New Translation)**

[24] Anyone can be made right with God by the free gift of His loving-favor. It is Jesus Christ Who bought them with His blood and made them free from their sins. **(The New Life Testament)**

[24] People are made right with God by his grace (*kindness*). This is a free gift. People are made right with God by being made free from sin through Jesus Christ. **(The Easy-to-Read New Testament)**

Additional Information: “Justified.” The word “justify” (Gk. *dikaioo*) means “to be just (or righteous) before God,” “to be made righteous,” “to establish as right,” or “to set or put right.” It denotes being in a right relationship with God. God forgives the repentant sinner, whom He had pronounced guilty through the law and condemned to eternal death, restores him to divine favor, and sets him in a right relationship with Himself (The Full Life Study Bible, p. 315). **“Being justified”** (Rom. 3:24) is in the present tense in Greek and means “to keep on being declared righteous” as each person continues in faith and is not moved away from the hope of the gospel (Col. 1:22-23). “Justification is a gracious gift God extends to the repentant, believing sinner, wholly apart from human merit or work” (MacArthur Bible Commentary, p. 1514). We are justified in the sight of God when the righteousness of Christ is placed upon us by the grace of God, freely and without cause (Liberty Bible Commentary, vol.2, p. 356).

“Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” God has provided redemption. Originally the word meant *the buying back* of a slave or captive, *the making him free* by the payment of a ransom (Arndt, *apolytrosis*, p. 95). Here redemption refers to the release provided by Christ from sin and its consequences. This redemption or release is in Christ Jesus. To be in Christ is to belong to him and to be a part of all that he has done and brought into being through his redemptive work (Wycliffe Bible Commentary, p. 515).

ROMANS CHAPTER 3
VERSES 25-26

Romans 3: [25] Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; [26] To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. (King James Version)

²⁵ God gave him as a way to forgive sin through faith in the blood of Jesus' death. This showed that God always does what is right and fair, as in the past when he was patient and did not punish people for their sins. ²⁶ And God gave Jesus to show today that he does what is right. God did this so he could judge rightly and so he could make right any person who has faith in Jesus. **(New Century Version)**

God sacrificed Jesus on the altar of the world to clear that world of sin. Having faith in him sets us in the clear. God decided on this course of action in full view of the public – to set the world in the clear with himself through the sacrifice of Jesus, finally taking care of the sins he had so patiently endured. This is not only clear, but it's *now* – this is current history! God sets things right. He also makes it possible for us to live in his rightness. (verses 25-26) **(The Message)**

²⁵ For God sent Christ Jesus to take the punishment for our sins and to end all God's anger against us. He used Christ's blood and our faith as the means of saving us from his wrath. In this way he was being entirely fair, even though he did not punish those who sinned in former times. For he was looking forward to the time when Christ would come and take away those sins. ²⁶ And now in these days also he can receive sinners in this same way because Jesus took away their sins. But isn't this unfair for God to let criminals go free, and say that they are innocent? No, for he does it on the basis of their trust in Jesus who took away their sins. **(The Living Bible)**

[25] God offered him so that by his death he should become the means by which men's sins are forgiven, through their faith in him. God did this in order to demonstrate his righteousness. In the past, he was patient and overlooked men's sins; **[26]** but now in the present time he deals with men's sins, to demonstrate his righteousness. In this way God shows that he himself is righteous and that he puts right everyone who believes in Jesus. **(Today's English Version)**

[25] For God designed him to be the means of expiating sin by his death, effective through faith. God meant by this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had overlooked the sins of the past - **[26]** to demonstrate his justice now in the present, showing that he is himself just and also justifies anyone who puts his faith in Jesus. **(Revised English Version)**

[25] Whom God put forward as a reconciling sacrifice through faith in His blood. This was for the vindication of His righteousness in forgiving the sins that previously were committed under God's forbearance, **[26]** and to vindicate His righteousness at the present time, that He is righteous and that He accepts as righteous him that has faith in Jesus **(Berkeley Version)**

[25a] Yes, God has placed Jesus before our eyes as the One who covers over all sins, so that we become perfectly holy in God's sight when we put our trust in Jesus' blood. And God did this to prove that He is a perfect judge who always does what is

right and fair, [26a] because in His patience [25b] He had apparently overlooked the sins which had been committed in the past. [26b] But now He has shown us very clearly what being perfectly holy means. For he has shown us that He is perfectly holy, always doing what is right and fair, and also that He accepts the person who believes in Jesus as perfectly holy. **(New Testament in Everyday American English)**

[25] Whom God put forward [before the eyes of all] as a mercy seat *and* propitiation by His blood [the cleansing and life-giving sacrifice of atonement and reconciliation, to be received] through faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in His divine forbearance He had passed over *and* ignored former sins without punishment. [26] It was to demonstrate *and* prove at the present time (in the now season) that He Himself is righteous and that He justifies *and* accepts as righteous him who has [true] faith in Jesus. **(The Amplified New Testament)**

Additional Information: (Verse 25) - "Propitiation through faith in his blood." Vine's Greek Lexicon, p. 895, states, "Propitiation" (*hilaskomai*) was used amongst the Greeks with the significance to make the gods propitious, to appease, propitiate, inasmuch as their good will was not conceived as their natural attitude, but something to be earned first. This use of the word is foreign to the Greek Bible, with respect to God, whether in the Septuagint or in the New Testament. It is never used of any act whereby man brings God into a favorable attitude or gracious disposition. It is God who is propitiated by the sacrifice of His Son. He has so dealt with sin that He can show mercy to the believing sinner in the removal of his guilt and the remission of his sins. In Luke 18:13 it signifies to be propitious or merciful to the person as the object of the verb. "And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, **God be merciful (mercy-seated) to me** a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified...(Luke 18:13-14a). Through the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, he who believes upon Him is by God's own act delivered from justly deserved wrath, and comes under grace." "Propitiation" means the appeasement of divine wrath by a sacrificial offering. Some deny that the Bible contains this idea because they do not think a living God would ever personally exercise wrath against His creatures. But the idea is clearly implied by the Greek word for "propitiation," and is the only saving solution to the fact of God's wrath against sin that Paul developed in Romans 1:18-3:20. At the heart of the gospel is the fact that if Christ did not bear the wrath of God that we deserved, then that wrath is still stored up for us (See Romans 2:5, 8; 3:5; 5:9; Eph. 5:6; Rev. 6:16-17) (Spirit Filled Life Bible, p. 1691). For this propitiation to be effective in the life of the individual, faith must be present (Rom. 3:25-26) (Wycliffe Bible Commentary, p. 516).

(Verses 25-26) – "The forbearance of God (longsuffering patience)." Previously Paul said God was forbearing because He wanted to lead people to repent (Romans 2:4). Here God is said to be forbearing because He anticipated His provision for sins in the death of Jesus Christ. Such forbearance was an evidence of His grace (Acts 14:16; 17:30), not of His injustice.

"That he might be just, and the justifier." God's divine dilemma was how to satisfy His own righteousness and its demands against sinful people, and at the same time how to demonstrate His grace, love, and mercy to restore rebellious, alienated creatures to Himself. The solution was the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and the acceptance by faith of that provision by individual sinners. Christ's death vindicated God's own righteousness (He is just because sin was "paid for") and enables God to declare every believing sinner righteous (The Bible Knowledge Commentary, pgs. 451-452).

ROMANS CHAPTER 3 VERSES 27-28

Romans 3: [27] Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. [28] Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. (King James Version)

²⁷ So do we have a reason to brag about ourselves? No! And why not? It is the way of faith that stops all bragging, not the way of trying to obey the law. ²⁸ A person is

made right with God through faith, not through obeying the law. **(New Century Version)**

²⁷Then what can we boast about doing to earn our salvation? Nothing at all. Why? Because our acquittal is not based on our good deeds; it is based on what Christ has done and our faith in him. ²⁸So it is that we are saved by faith in Christ and not by the good things we do. **(The Living Bible)**

What room then is left for human pride? It is excluded. And on what principle? The keeping of the law would not exclude it, but faith does. For our argument is that a man is justified by faith quite apart from success in keeping the law. (verses 27-28) **(New English Bible)**

ROMANS CHAPTER 3 VERSES 29-30

Romans 3: [29] Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: [30] Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. (King James Version)

²⁹ Does God belong only to the Jews? Isn't he also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, he is! ³⁰ There is only one God, and he accepts Gentiles as well as Jews, simply because of their faith. **(Contemporary English Version)**

[29] Is God the God of Jews only? Isn't he also the God of those who aren't Jews? Yes, he is their God too. **[30]** There is only one God. When those who are circumcised believe in him, he makes them right with himself. When those who are not circumcised believe in him, he also makes them right with himself. **(New International Reader's Version)**

[29] But is God the God of the Jews only? Isn't He also the God of the other nations? Of course He's the God of the other nations. **[30]** And since there's only one God, He will accept the person who is circumcised as perfectly holy because of his faith, and He will also accept the person who isn't circumcised as perfectly holy by that same faith. **(New Testament in Everyday American English)**

[29] Or is God merely [the God] of Jews? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, **[30]** Since it is one and the same God Who will justify the circumcised by faith [which germinated from Abraham] and the uncircumcised through their [newly acquired] faith. [For it is the same trusting faith in both cases, a firmly relying faith in Jesus Christ]. **(The Amplified New Testament)**

Additional Information: By appealing to the first article of Jewish faith ("the LORD is one," Dt. 6:4), Paul argues that there is only one way of salvation for both Jew and Gentile, namely, faith in Christ (NIV Study Bible, p. 1710). So both Jew and Gentile find acceptance with God in the same way – through a personal committal to him, a personal trust in him (Wycliffe Bible Commentary, p. 517).

ROMANS CHAPTER 3
VERSE 31

Romans 3: [31] Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law. (King James Version)

³¹ So do we destroy the law by following the way of faith? No! Faith causes us to be what the law truly wants. **(New Century Version)**

³¹ Well then, if we are saved by faith, does this mean that we no longer need obey God's laws? Just the opposite! In fact, only when we trust Jesus can we truly obey him. **(The Living Bible)**

[31] Do we then by faith cancel the Law? Never! Rather, we uphold the Law. (God's Word to the Nations)

[31] But then are we saying that our faith has done away with the Law? That's unthinkable! No, we're saying that the Law is still in force. (New Testament in Everyday American English)

[31] So do we destroy the law by following the way of faith? No! Faith causes us to be what the law truly wants. (The Easy-to-Read New Testament)

[31] Does that mean that because we are now freed from guilt by means of our faith, we no longer need to be concerned about obeying God's laws? Never! On the contrary, we confirm the fact that God's laws must be honored and obeyed. (The Last Days Bible)

Additional Information: Paul anticipated being charged with antinomianism (against law): If justification comes by faith, then is not the law rejected? God forbid! He gives a more complete answer in Romans 6-7 and reasserts the validity of the law in Romans 13:8-10 (NIV Study Bible, p. 1710). God's moral laws are not abolished by the gospel of Christ. Rather, the whole plan of salvation, including Christ's obeying the Law for us and dying to pay the penalty for our breaking the Law, shows that God's moral standards are eternally valid (See Romans 8:4; Gal. 5:22-23 Living Bible) (Spirit Filled Life Bible, p. 1692).

Salvation by grace through faith does not denigrate the law, but underscores its true importance: (1) by providing the payment which the law required for failing to keep it (the penalty of death); (2) by fulfilling the law's original purpose, which is to serve as a tutor to show mankind's utter inability to obey God's righteous demands and to drive people to Christ (See Gal. 3:24); and (3) by giving believers the capacity to obey it (See Rom. 8:4) (MacArthur Bible Commentary, p. 1515).

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QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

(Romans Chapter 3)

Instructions for Group Leader: Do not let the group read the following questions and answers. The leader of your group should ask the group the following questions and encourage the group to discover the answers by going to the appropriate Scriptures. **Discuss and answer (as a group) the questions correctly by using the Scripture(s). Turn to Romans Chapter 3.**

1. **Read Romans 3:1.** What are the two questions being asked in Romans 3:1? What is the advantage of being a Jew, or of being circumcised?

2. **Read Romans 3:2.** How does Paul answer the questions asked in Romans 3:1? The Jews have a great advantage. Most importantly, to them were committed the oracles or Word of God.

3. **Read Romans 3:3.** What are the questions being asked in Romans 3:3? If some do not believe will God be unfaithful to His promises.

4. **Read Romans 3:4.** How did Paul answer the questions of Romans 3:3? By the expression, "God forbid!" Man may be unfaithful but God is always faithful and true to His promises.
5. **Read Romans 3:5-6.** The human reasoning of man brought what forth what questions and statements? Our unrighteousness brings out God's righteousness more clearly, is God then unrighteous to punish or judge mankind? The answer, "God forbid, absolutely not!"
6. **Read Romans 3:7.** What is the question being asked in Romans 3:7? Why am I judged as a sinner if it advances the glory of God? Statement: Perverted practices lead to perverted thinking. Example: A criminal robs a bank and steals a car. After being caught he stands before a judge and says, "Judge, it is only because of guys like me that you and the police officers have jobs. My unrighteousness serves you."
7. **Read Romans 3:8.** What is the question being asked in Romans 3:8? Why not do evil so that good may come?
8. **Read Romans 3:8.** How did Paul answer that question? I am not saying to do evil so that good may result. That is perverted and twisted thinking!
9. **Read Romans 3:9.** What are the questions being asked in Romans 3:9? (1) What then? that is, What is the point of further testimony? (2) Are we any better than the other groups shown to be condemned in Romans chapters 1-3? The answer being, "No!" All are under the power, authority and control of sin (1 Jn. 5:19).
10. **Read Romans 3:10.** How are both Jews and Gentiles alike? There is none righteous, no, not one. No person who ever lived could be characterized as righteous by God's standard. To prevent some from thinking so, Paul said, "no, not one!"
11. **Read Romans 3:11.** "There is none that understandeth." What does this mean? Sin has darkened man's understanding (See Eph. 4:18).
12. **Read Romans 3:11 and Philippians 2:21.** Discuss these verses.
13. **Read Romans 3:12.** How many have turned away from God? All.
14. **Read Romans 3:12.** How many of us have kept on doing what is right? Not even one.
15. **Read Romans 3:13.** Mankind's throat is like what? An open grave.
16. **Read Romans 3:13.** With their tongues, what do men do? Lie and deceive.
17. **Read Romans 3:14.** Mankind's mouth is full of what? Cursing and bitterness.

18. **Read Romans 3:15.** Men's feet are quick to shed: a. their shoes. b. their socks. c. blood, that is, they are quick to murder.
19. **Read Romans 3:16.** Man apart from God will find his way to be? Destruction and misery.
20. **Read Romans 3:17 and Isaiah 57:21.** Discuss these verses.
21. **Read Romans 3:18 and Prov. 16:6.** By the fear of the LORD men depart from what? Evil.
22. **Read Romans 3:19.** What effect does the Law have upon an individual? It silences every mouth and makes all stand guilty before God.
23. **Read Romans 3:20.** How many people will be declared right before God by keeping the Law? No one.
24. **Read Romans 3:20.** By the Law comes the knowledge of? Sin.
25. **Read Romans 3:21-22.** What righteousness is being offered us through Jesus Christ? a. the righteousness of man. b. the righteousness of God (through faith in Jesus Christ).
26. **Read Romans 3:22.** What kind of righteousness makes people acceptable to God? A thru faith in Jesus Christ righteousness.
27. **Read Romans 3:22.** Who is this righteousness offered to? Unto all and upon all that believe.
28. **Read Romans 3:23.** How many individuals need the righteousness of God? And why? All. For all have sinned and need forgiveness and a right relationship with God.
29. **Read Romans 3:24.** How does God offer us right standing with Himself, that is, justification? a. by grace. b. freely. c. through the redemption of Christ. d. all of the above.
30. **Read Romans 3:25.** What brought man into a favorable righteous standing before God? Christ's Blood (See Eph. 1:7).
31. **Read Romans 3:26.** Through redemption God has been shown to be? Righteous and just (sin has been paid for).
32. **Read Romans 3:27.** What can we boast about doing to earn salvation? Nothing at all!

33. **Read Romans 3:28.** What is the conclusion of Paul's argument? People are declared righteous before God by faith in Christ without the works of the law.

34. **Read Romans 3:29-30.** God declares both Jews and Gentiles righteous through faith in Christ Jesus. True or False.

35. **Read Romans 3:31.** Do we uphold the law or tear down the law through faith in Christ? Uphold the law.

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