

# ROMANS 3

## GREAT CHAPTERS OF THE BIBLE



*A study at Faith Lutheran, Sharpsburg, Georgia, 2009 AD*

Luther wrote on Romans, “This epistle is really the chief part of the New Testament, and is truly the purest gospel. It is worthy not only that every Christian should know it word for word, by heart, but also that he should occupy himself with it every day, as the daily bread of the soul. We can never read it or ponder over it too much; for the more we deal with it, the more precious it becomes and the better it tastes.” Paul’s primary theme in Romans is showing us God’s plan of salvation and righteousness for Jew and Gentile alike. Specifically in chapter 3, we’ll find that our righteousness comes not from observing the law, but we are righteous by faith alone.

### THE BOOK

#### Author

Paul

#### Purpose

God’s salvation plan for fledging believers  
Prepare Rome as base for mission work  
Be mutually encouraged by one another’s faith

#### Recipients

House churches (Romans 16)  
Gentiles and Jews

#### Important Passages

The righteous will live by faith (1:17)  
Man justified by faith apart from Law (3:28)  
Faith comes from hearing the message (10:17)

#### Paul’s Writings

Romans, 1&2 Corinthians, Galatians,  
Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1&2  
Thessalonians, 1&2 Timothy, Titus, and  
Philemon

### THE TIMES

Paul probably wrote this letter while in Corinth on his third missionary journey, near 57 A.D. He was almost ready to head to Rome, but he feels the need to first deliver the Jerusalem offering.

Paul had been planting churches in Asia Minor in places like Ephesus, Phillipi, Thessalonica, and Corinth. With this work now completed, Paul turns his attention towards missionary work to the West, to Rome and regions beyond, including Spain. We see (1:13-15) that Paul has eagerly desired for a long time to come to Rome and to visit the believers there.

### THE BACKGROUND

Paul illustrates in the beginning chapters of Romans the lack of mankind’s righteousness. In the first chapter, he reveals that Gentiles have, from the beginning, known God, but instead followed their own corrupted desires.

The Jews in chapter two are strikingly similar. Although they have been given the Law and have known the will of God, they have turned from their covenant relationship with God.. These Jews foolishly rely on the Law and brag about their relationship to God, thinking themselves a guide for the blind, a light for the darkened, and an instructor for the foolish.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In verse 1, Paul asks “What advantage is their being a Jew?” What did the Jews hold on to as their advantages? See Romans 2:17.
2. In what ways in verse 2 were the Jews entrusted with the very words of God?
3. How do we apply the truth of verse 4 “Let God be true, and every man a liar.” when we read God’s Word?
4. Verses 3-8 list some assumed Jewish objections to God’s punishment. How do people object to God’s coming punishment today?
5. How is verse 8 a gross misunderstanding of God’s grace?
6. How can we use the truth of verse 9 in our outreach to unbelievers?
7. How is verse 18 an accurate picture of the unbeliever’s mindset?
8. In verse 20, we see that no one is righteous by observing the law. What are some ways people try to look righteous by their observing God’s commands?
9. Why is the “But” in verse 21 the biggest but in history?
10. How can we use the truth of verse 24 in our outreach to unbelievers?
11. What does Paul mean in verse 25 that God “left sins unpunished?”
12. For a translation of verse 28, Luther said, “that man is justified by faith **alone**.” How is this an accurate understanding of the truth in this verse?
13. How does verse 30 fly against the Old Testament Jews ears?
14. Looking at verse 31, how do we uphold the law?

## CONCLUSION

In Romans 3:23 Paul shows a level playing field. “All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.” Thankfully, Christ came down to bring us the righteousness from God. He has redeemed us freely through God’s grace.

After showing us that God’s grace triumphs over the law, some might ask, “Do we even need to follow the law?” Paul doesn’t abolish the law, but rather shows us we uphold the law by faith.

Romans 4 shows us the great patriarch, Abraham, upholding the law by his faith. Many Jews looked to Abraham as the perfect example of one upholding the law by his own actions. Paul shows that Abraham was a perfect example of one justified by faith, not by observing the law.

For faith does not make people righteous because it is such a good work or such a fine virtue, but because it lays hold of and accepts the merit of Christ in the promise of the holy gospel. For this merit must be applied to us and appropriated through faith if we are to become righteous through it. Thus, the righteousness that out of sheer grace is reckoned before God to faith or to the believer consists of the obedience, suffering, and resurrection of Christ because he has satisfied the law for us and paid for our sins.

*Formula of Concord*