LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

So far in Romans, Paul has painted a dismal picture of the world. The Greeks have abandoned God and chosen idolatry. In response, God withdrew His restraining grace, and they embraced the practice of all kinds of immorality (Romans 1:18–32). Both Jews and Greeks turned their back on God, but they hid their immorality with hypocrisy (Romans 2). Paul summarized this bleak picture of human sin with a collage of Old Testament texts (Romans 3:10–18) demonstrating that sin and alienation from God are universal problems that plague everyone and every culture. It is in this dark context that Paul began to expound the beauty of God’s good-news plan.

The plan of salvation doesn’t acknowledge a difference between ethnicities. At the most fundamental level, we are all the same—all have sinned, and all can be justified by faith in Jesus (Romans 3:22–24). Justification is a vital component of the plan of salvation. What is justification? Justification is courtroom language. In a judicial proceeding, a person can be justified or condemned. Justification by faith is God’s assurance in the present and His promise for the future, that those who have faith in Jesus will be declared righteous when they are judged. Justification is a gift of free grace bestowed upon the undeserving (Romans 3:24).

God can graciously give this incredible gift of justification because of Jesus’ death and resurrection. On the cross, Jesus shed His blood (Romans 3:25) so that He could justify those who have faith in Him (Romans 3:26). What fantastic news!
Write out Romans 3:19–31 from the Bible translation of your choice. If you are pressed for time, write out Romans 3:21–26. You may also rewrite the passage in your own words, or outline or mind-map the chapter.
Go back to your scribed text and study the passage.

Circle repeated words/ phrases/ideas

Underline words/phrases that are important and have meaning to you

Draw Arrows to connect words/ phrases to other associated or related words/phrases

What special insights do your marks seem overall to point to?

Memorize your favorite verse in Romans 3:19–31. Write it out multiple times to help memorization.

Recall a time when you gave unmerited grace. How did it make you feel?

Read more at www.inversebible.org/rom03-3
After looking at your scribed and annotated text, what special insights do your marks seem to point to overall?

What questions emerge after studying this passage? What parts are difficult?

What other principles and conclusions do you find?

How has God’s law silenced you when you were making excuses for moral failures? When and what were the circumstances?

Read more at www.inversebible.org/rom03-4
What relationship do the following verses have with the primary passage?

Galatians 2:11–14
Ephesians 2:1–10
Psalm 51
Psalm 103

What other verses/promises come to mind about experiencing grace?

Where do you see Jesus in Romans 3?

What are some Old Testament passages that you’ve found that point to Jesus?

What is Jesus saying to you through the main text?

How do you see Jesus differently or see Him again?

Prayer: How do you respond to seeing Jesus in this way?

Read more at www.inversebible.org/rom03-6

The Gift of God’s Grace
inSight

Review the memory verse.
How does it apply to your life this week?

After this week’s study of the chapter, how can you apply God’s grace in your personal life?

What practical applications can help you make His grace real in someone else’s life?

Read more inSight from the Spirit of Prophecy at www.inversebible.org/rom03-7
inQuire

Share insights from this week’s memory verse and Bible study as well as any discoveries, observations, and questions with your Sabbath School class (or Bible study group). Consider these discussion questions with the rest of the group.

Describe a time when you received unmerited grace from someone.

How did you first come to faith in Jesus?

Why is it hard for us to receive what we didn’t earn?

How can Paul’s teaching about justification by faith help to create unity in the church? Your local church?

To whom is God calling you to extend unmerited grace this week?

How is boasting about their deeds the evidence that shows people do not understand justification by faith?

How does salvation by faith in Jesus uphold God’s law?