



## [Romans 3:19-23](#)

(19) Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those 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 no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin. (21) But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, (22) even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; (23) for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

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This passage shows us the foundation of understanding justification by [faith](#) and thus where we stand in our relationship with [God](#). Paul explains that, regardless of who one is and what he has done that might be considered as righteousness, God owes Him nothing but death because "all have sinned." Sinners are those [under the law](#), and the law condemns them, making them subject to its power to take the sinner's life. Each person's own transgressions against the law and God place him in that position.

[Sin](#) is something each sinner is responsible for, and once the individual has sinned and earned the death penalty, the sin cannot be forgiven simply because he does good to make up for it. God did not make him sin. A clear example is Adam and Eve: God obviously did not make them sin; each of them *chose* to sin. [Romans 3:20](#) clearly states that no sinner can justify himself through law-keeping. The law's purpose is to make known what sin is.

Once a person sins, everything is seemingly stacked against him. The sinner can in no way make up for what he has done. Therefore, since justification cannot be claimed as a right due to his keeping the law, if a person desires to be forgiven, the only alternative is that justification *must* be received as a gift.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

The Berean: Daily Verse and Commentary for Romans 3:19-23 (<http://www.theberean.org>)

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**[Living By Faith and God's Grace \(Part Two\)](#)**

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