

**A** TN Grk “much in every way.”  
**B** TC s Most witnesses (κ A D<sup>2</sup> 33 39) have γάρ (gar) after μέν (men), though some significant Alexandrian and Western witnesses lack the conjunction (B D\* G Ψ 81 365 1506 2464\* latt). A few mss have γάρ, but not μέν (6 1739 1881). γάρ was frequently added by scribes as a clarifying conjunction, making it suspect here. NA<sup>28</sup> has the γάρ in brackets, indicating doubt as to its authenticity.  
 TN Grk “first indeed that.”  
**C** TN Grk “they were.”  
**D** TN The referent of λόγια (logia, “oracles”) has been variously understood: (1) BDAG 598 s.v. λόγιον takes the term to refer here to “God’s promises to the Jews”; (2) some have taken this to refer more narrowly to the national promises of messianic salvation given to Israel (so S. L. Johnson, Jr., “Studies in Romans: Part VII: The Jews and the Oracles of God,” *BSac* 130 [1973]: 245); (3) perhaps the most widespread interpretation sees the term as referring to the entire OT generally.  
**E** TN Grk “every man,” but ἀνθρώπος (anthrōpos) is used in a generic sense here to stress humanity rather than masculinity.  
**F** TN Grk “Let God be true, and every man a liar.” The words “proven” and “shown up” are supplied in the translation to clarify the meaning.  
**G** TN Grk “might be justified,” a subjunctive verb, but in this type of clause it carries the same sense as the future indicative verb in the latter part. “Will” is more idiomatic in contemporary English.  
**H** TN Or “prevail when you judge.” A quotation from Ps 51:4.  
**I** TN Or “shows clearly.”  
**J** SN The same expression occurs in Gal 3:15, and similar phrases in Rom 6:19 and 1 Cor 9:8.  
**K** TN Grk “abounded unto.”  
**L** TN Grk “(as we are slandered and some affirm that we say...)”  
**M** TN Grk “whose.” Because of the length and complexity of the Greek sentence, this relative clause was rendered as a new sentence in the translation.

advantages.<sup>A</sup> First of all,<sup>B</sup> the Jews<sup>C</sup> were entrusted with the oracles of God.<sup>D</sup> What then? If some were unfaithful, their unfaithfulness will not nullify God’s faithfulness, will it? <sup>4</sup> Absolutely not! Let God be proven true, and every human being<sup>E</sup> shown up as a liar,<sup>F</sup> just as it is written: “so that you will be justified<sup>G</sup> in your words and will prevail when you are judged.”<sup>H</sup>  
<sup>5</sup> But if our unrighteousness demonstrates<sup>I</sup> the righteousness of God, what shall we say? The God who inflicts wrath is not unrighteous, is he? (I am speaking in human terms.)<sup>J</sup> Absolutely not! For otherwise how could God judge the world? <sup>7</sup> For if by my lie the truth of God enhances<sup>K</sup> his glory, why am I still actually being judged as a sinner? <sup>8</sup> And why not say, “Let us do evil so that good may come of it”?—as some who slander us allege that we say.<sup>L</sup> (Their<sup>M</sup> condemnation is deserved!)

*The Condemnation of the World*

<sup>9</sup> What then? Are we better off? Certainly not, for we have already charged that Jews and Greeks alike are all under sin,<sup>10</sup> just as it is written:

- 11 “There is no one righteous, not even one, there is no one who understands, there is no one who seeks God.
- 12 All have turned away, together they have become worthless; there is no one who shows kindness, not even one.”<sup>N</sup>
- 13 “Their throats are open graves,<sup>O</sup> they deceive with their tongues, the poison of asps is under their lips.”<sup>P</sup>
- 14 “Their mouths are<sup>Q</sup> full of cursing and bitterness.”<sup>R</sup>
- 15 “Their feet are swift to shed blood, ruin and misery are in their paths, and the way of peace they have not known.”<sup>S</sup>
- 16 “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”<sup>T</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under<sup>U</sup> the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world may be held accountable to God. <sup>20</sup> For no one is declared righteous before him<sup>V</sup> by the works of the law,<sup>W</sup> for through the law comes<sup>X</sup> the knowledge of sin. <sup>21</sup> But now<sup>Y</sup> apart from the law the righteousness of God (although it is attested by the law and the prophets)<sup>Z</sup> has been disclosed—<sup>22</sup> namely, the righteousness of God through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ<sup>a</sup> for all who believe. For there is no distinction,<sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of

**N** SN Verses 10–12 are a quotation from Ps 14:1–3.  
**O** TN Grk “their throat is an opened grave.”  
**P** SN A quotation from Pss 5:9; 140:3.  
**Q** TN Grk “whose mouth is.” Because of the length and complexity of the Greek sentence, a new sentence was started here in the translation.  
**R** SN A quotation from Ps 10:7.  
**S** SN Rom 3:15–17 is a quotation from Isa 59:7–8.  
**T** SN A quotation from Ps 36:1.  
**U** TN Grk “in,” “in connection with.”  
**V** SN An allusion to Ps 143:2.  
**W** TN Grk “because by the works of the law no flesh is justified before him.” Some recent scholars have understood the phrase ἐργα νόμου (erga nomou, “works of the law”) to refer not to obedience to the Mosaic law generally, but specifically to portions of the law that

pertain to things like circumcision and dietary laws which set the Jewish people apart from the other nations (e.g., J. D. G. Dunn, *Romans* [WBC], 1:155). Other interpreters, like C. E. B. Cranfield (“The Works of the Law” in the Epistle to the Romans,” *JST* 43 [1991]: 89–101) reject this narrow interpretation for a number of reasons, among which the most important are: (1) The second half of v. 20, “for through the law comes the knowledge of sin,” is hard to explain if the phrase “works of the law” is understood in a restricted sense; (2) the plural phrase “works of the law” would have to be understood in a different sense from the singular phrase “the work of the law” in 2:15; (3) similar phrases involving the law in Romans (2:13, 14; 2:25, 26, 27; 7:25; 8:4; and 13:8) which are naturally related to the phrase “works of the law” cannot be taken to refer to circumcision (in fact, in 2:25 circumcision is explicitly contrasted with keeping the law). Those interpreters who reject the “narrow” interpretation of “works of the law” understand the phrase to refer to obedience to the Mosaic law in general.  
**X** TN Grk “is.”  
**Y** TN Nuvi δέ (Nuni de,

“But now”) could be understood as either (1) logical or (2) temporal in force, but most recent interpreters take it as temporal, referring to a new phase in salvation history.  
**Z** TN Or “which is attested by the law and the prophets.”  
**a** TN Or “faith in Christ.” A decision is difficult here. Though traditionally translated “faith in Jesus Christ,” an increasing number of NT scholars are arguing that πίστις Χριστοῦ (pistis Christou) and similar phrases in Paul (here and in v. 26; Gal 2:16, 20; 3:22; Eph 3:12; Phil 3:9) involve a subjective genitive and mean “Christ’s faith” or “Christ’s faithfulness” (cf., e.g., G. Howard, “The ‘Faith of Christ,’” *ExpTim* 85 [1974]: 212–15; R. B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ* [SBLDS]; Morna D. Hooker, “Πίστις Χριστοῦ,” *NTS* 35 [1989]: 321–42). Noteworthy among the arguments for the subjective genitive view is that when

πίστις takes a personal genitive it is almost never an objective genitive (cf. Matt 9:2, 22, 29; Mark 2:5; 5:34; 10:52; Luke 5:20; 7:50; 8:25, 48; 17:19; 18:42; 22:32; Rom 1:8; 12; 3:3; 4:5, 12, 16; 1 Cor 2:5; 15:14, 17; 2 Cor 10:15; Phil 2:17; Col 1:4; 2:5; 1 Thess 1:8; 3:2, 5, 10; 2 Thess 1:3; Titus 1:1; Phlm 6; 1 Pet 1:9, 21; 2 Pet 1:5). On the other hand, the objective genitive view has its adherents: A. Hultgren, “The Pistis Christou Formulations in Paul,” *NovT* 22 (1980): 248–63; J. D. G. Dunn, “Once More, ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ,” *SBL Seminar Papers*, 1991, 730–44. Most commentaries on Romans and Galatians usually side with the objective view.

**SN** ExSyn 116, which notes that the grammar is not decisive, nevertheless suggests that “the faith/faithfulness of Christ is not a denial of faith in Christ as a Pauline concept (for the idea is expressed in many of the same contexts, only with the verb πιστεύω rather than the noun), but implies that the object of faith is a worthy object, for he himself is faithful.” Though Paul elsewhere teaches justification by faith, this presupposes that the object of our faith is reliable and worthy of such faith.

**ATN** Or “declared righteous.” Grk “being justified,” as a continuation of the preceding clause. Because of the length and complexity of the Greek sentence, a new sentence was started here in the translation.

**BTN** Or “purposed, intended.”  
**CTN** Grk “whom God publicly displayed.” Because of the length and complexity of the Greek sentence, a new sentence was started here in the translation.

**DTN** Grk “in his blood.” The prepositional phrase ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι (en tō autou haimati) is difficult to interpret. It is traditionally understood to refer to the atoning sacrifice Jesus made when he shed his blood on the cross, and as a modifier of ἱλαστήριον (hilastērion). This interpretation fits if ἱλαστήριον is taken to refer to a sacrifice. But if ἱλαστήριον is taken to refer to the place where atonement is made as this translation has done (see note on the phrase “mercy seat”), this interpretation of ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι creates a violent mixed metaphor. Within a few words Paul would switch from referring to Jesus as the place where atonement was made to referring to Jesus as the atoning sacrifice itself. A viable option which resolves this problem is to see ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι as modifying the verb προέθετο (proetheto). If it modifies the verb, it would explain the time or place

God.<sup>24</sup> But they are justified<sup>A</sup> freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.<sup>25</sup> God publicly displayed<sup>B</sup> him<sup>C</sup> at his death<sup>D</sup> as the mercy seat<sup>E</sup> accessible through faith.<sup>F</sup> This was to demonstrate<sup>G</sup> his righteousness, because God in his forbearance had passed over the sins previously committed.<sup>H</sup> <sup>26</sup> This was<sup>I</sup> also to demonstrate<sup>I</sup> his righteousness in the present time, so that he would be just<sup>K</sup> and the justifier of the one who lives because of Jesus’ faithfulness.<sup>L</sup>  
<sup>27</sup> Where, then, is boasting?<sup>M</sup> It is excluded! By what principle?<sup>N</sup> Of works? No, but by the principle of faith!<sup>28</sup> For we consider that a person<sup>O</sup> is declared righteous by faith apart from the works of the law.<sup>29</sup> Or is God the God of the Jews only? Is he not the God of the Gentiles too? Yes, of the Gentiles too!<sup>30</sup> Since God is one,<sup>Q</sup> he will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.<sup>31</sup> Do we then nullify<sup>R</sup> the law through faith? Absolutely not! Instead<sup>S</sup> we uphold the law.

*The Illustration of Justification*

**4** What then shall we say that Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh,<sup>T</sup> has discovered regarding this matter?<sup>U</sup> <sup>2</sup> For if Abraham was declared righteous<sup>V</sup> by works, he has something to boast about—but not before God.<sup>3</sup> For what does the scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited<sup>W</sup> to him as

in which God publicly displayed Jesus as the mercy seat; the reference to blood would be a metaphorical way of speaking of Jesus’ death. This is supported by the placement of ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι in the Greek text (it follows the noun, separated from it by another prepositional phrase) and by stylistic parallels with Rom 1:4. This is the interpretation the translation has followed, although it is recognized that many interpreters favor different options and translations. The prepositional phrase has been moved forward in the sentence to emphasize its connection with the verb, and the referent of the metaphorical language has been specified in the translation. For a detailed discussion of this interpretation, see D. P. Bailey, “Jesus As the Mercy Seat: The Semantics and Theology of Paul’s Use of *Hilasterion* in Romans 3:25” (Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge, 1999).

**ETN** The word ἱλαστήριον (hilastērion) may carry the general sense “place of satisfaction,” referring to the place where God’s wrath toward sin is satisfied. More likely, though, it refers specifically to the “mercy seat,” i.e., the covering of the ark where the blood was sprinkled in the OT ritual on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). This term is used only one other time in the NT: Heb 9:5, where it is rendered “mercy seat.” There it describes the altar in the most holy place (holy of holies). Thus Paul is saying that God displayed Jesus as the “mercy seat,” the place where propitiation was accomplished. See N. S. L. Fryer, “The Meaning and Translation of *Hilasterion* in Romans 3:25,” *EVQ* 59 (1987): 99–116, who concludes the term is a neuter accusative substantive best translated “mercy seat” or “propitiatory covering,” and D. P. Bailey, “Jesus As the Mercy Seat: The Semantics and Theology of Paul’s Use of *Hilasterion* in Romans 3:25” (Ph.D. diss.,

University of Cambridge, 1999), who argues that this is a direct reference to the mercy seat which covered the ark of the covenant.  
**FTN** The prepositional phrase διὰ πίστεως (dia pisteōs) here modifies the noun ἱλαστήριον (hilastērion). As such it forms a complete noun phrase and could be written as “mercy-seat-accessible-through-faith” to emphasize the singular idea. See Rom 1:4 for a similar construction. The word “accessible” is not in the Greek text but has been supplied to clarify the idea expressed by the prepositional phrase (cf. NRSV “effective through faith”).  
**GTN** Grk “for a demonstration,” giving the purpose of God’s action in v. 25a. Because of the length and complexity of the Greek sentence, a new sentence was started here in the translation.  
**HTN** Grk “because of the passing over of sins previously committed in the forbearance of God.”  
**ITN** The words “This was” have been repeated from the previous verse to clarify that this is a continuation of that thought. Because of the length and complexity of the Greek sentence, a new sentence was started here in the translation.  
**JTN** Grk “toward a demonstration,” repeating and expanding the purpose of God’s action in v. 25a.  
**KTN** Or “righteous.”  
**LTN** Or “of the one who has faith in Jesus.” See note on “faithfulness of Jesus Christ” in v. 22 for the rationale behind the translation “Jesus’ faithfulness.”  
**M** TN Although a number of interpreters understand the “boasting” here to refer to Jewish boasting, others (e.g. C. E. B. Cranfield, “The Works of the Law” in the Epistle to the Romans,” *JST* 43 [1991]: 96) take the phrase to refer to all human boasting before God.  
**NTN** Grk “By what sort of law?”  
**OTN** Here ἀνθρώπων (anthrōpon) is used in an indefinite and general sense (BDAG 81 s.v. ἀνθρώπος 4.a.γ).  
**PTN** See the note on the phrase “works of the law” in Rom 3:20.  
**QTN** Grk “but if indeed God is one.”  
**RTN** Grk “render inoperative.”  
**STN** Grk “but” (Greek ἀλλά, alla).  
**T** TN Or “according to natural descent” (BDAG 916 s.v. ἀπξ 4).  
**UTN** Grk “has found.”  
**V** TN Or “was justified.”  
**WTN** The term λογίζομαι (logizomai) occurs 11 times in this chapter (vv. 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 22, 23, 24). In secular usage it could (a) refer to deliberations of some sort, or (b) in commercial dealings (as