

# Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

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## Key Concepts in Romans 3:24-26

by Dan Trygg

This passage of Scripture is "pregnant" with significant words that are very important to grasp in order to get a handle on what the New Testament is teaching. In order to help us, we need to look briefly at the background of these terms, since they are somewhat obscure to us in modern-day English.

- 1.) **Justification** -- "being justified" -- This is primarily a "law court term". It was the common word used to describe being acquitted of a charge in a court case. In the eyes of the law, and in the eyes of God in this passage, to be "justified" means to be "declared innocent". It meant that you were viewed and treated as innocent, "just-as-if-I'd-never-sinned", ...whether you really were innocent, or not. The Greek word is a participle form of the same word as "righteous" or "righteousness", hence "being righteous-i-fied" or "being made right" would be a good translation. What does this mean? It means that God views and treats you as a righteous person, not as a sinner.
- 2.) **Freely** -- This word is an adverb, describing or modifying the verb, "being justified". How are we justified? Freely, without cost, as a free gift, for nothing, or without any causal action on my part -- these are all definitions of the same Greek word.
- 3.) **Grace** -- "by His grace" -- This phrase tells us where the free justification is coming from. Other options for this word are: "unmerited (unearned by us) favor, graciousness, good will or generosity". Clearly, the grace or graciousness comes out of the richness and fullness of His good heart toward us.
- 4.) **Redemption** -- Lit., "from ransom" -- This is a term that refers to buying something out of bondage, indebtedness, or obligation to another by paying a price or ransom. It was used in the Old Testament for property and the slavery, or bond-service, of Israelites (e.g., Leviticus 25:23-34). It was also commonly used in the general Greek culture as a slave market term for buying a slave out of bondage to another, setting him free by paying the purchase price to return to his real home and identity.
- 5.) **Propitiation** -- This word refers to the just means, methods or place where the release, removal and satisfaction for sin is made. This word was used in the Greek Septuagint translation for the "mercy seat", which was the lid that covered the ark of the covenant in the Holy of Holies. It was upon this mercy seat that blood was sprinkled once a year on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) as a satisfying offering to indicate God's acceptance of the people's worship of the past year (Lev. 16). The blood was also put upon a goat, which was led out into the wilderness and released, symbolically taking the sin of the people outside the camp. In the Greek culture, the emphasis of this word was that it referred to the sacrifice necessary to placate the anger of the gods. Paul's use of the term here is that God displayed the redemptive payment of Jesus as a satisfactory, just means, method, and location by which His wrath and judgment against sin could be satisfied and removed. Jesus became the sacrificial offering to appease and remove wrath, so that none could question God's justice and integrity. Cf. I Jn. 2:2; 4:10.