

Romans-Chapter 3

Rom 3:1 What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?

- Continuing with the thoughts of whom a true Jew is (2:29), Paul here asked two preemptive, rhetorical questions. Concerning the profit of circumcision, Paul wrote that the faithful uncircumcised Gentile was in a better condition than the unfaithful circumcised Jew (2:26-27). He will answer the first question posed here in verses 2 and 9 and the second one in verse 30. In the meantime, he sets the stage through proper hermeneutic (*relating to or consisting in the interpretation of texts*) in order to make a good argument for his answers.

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Rom 3:2 Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.

- The one big advantage the Jew had over the Gentile, not that if unfaithful it saved them anymore than had they **not** been given them, was that they were entrusted with the *utterances* of God. They, for the most part, understood where their salvation came from via prophesy and others who “spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet 1:21). When prompted by the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4, Jesus was asked “where people ought to worship” whether “on this mountain” or, according to the Jews, “in Jerusalem”. Jesus then answered that “the hour is coming when neither” would be the place, continuing...

Joh 4:22 You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, **for salvation is from the Jews**. (*Emp. added*)

The Jews understood the true form of worship to God since they “received the Law as delivered by angels [but] did not keep it” (Act 7:53). Through inspiration Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible known as the Pentateuch. The other 34 Old Testament writings were through other inspired Hebrews having been “entrusted” (*Gk.4100- Thayer- “to entrust a thing to one, i.e. to his fidelity”*) with them. Such a responsibility was to their advantage in that it too showed their relationship to God as “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Ex 19:6).

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Rom 3:3 For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?

- Two more rhetorical questions, ones that are elementary and given in such a way as to answer themselves. No matter their number, they were possibly more unfaithful than they were faithful. (*The second question, directly relating to the first, is one he answers in verse 4.*)

*Num 14:11 And the LORD said to Moses, "How long will this people despise Me? And how long will they not believe in Me, in spite of all the signs that I have done among them?"

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Rom 3:4 God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

- God forbid- properly, “By no means! (*From two Greek words; 1096 negation and 3361 cause to be.*) Whether some or all did not matter. Even if every man were a liar God would still be true since history has revealed it. Just because there might be safety in numbers in most cases, even if the majority voted on the lie, God is, as is Jesus Christ, “the same yesterday and today and forever” (*Heb 13:8*). If truth doesn’t line up with Scripture it cannot be reliable, as the truth certainly is. In a covenant, all sides have a part to play in order for it to exist, thus certain conditions must be met. If one side keeps their end of the contract and the other side doesn’t, is the one who is faithful to be lumped in with those who are not? If the majority is for misrepresenting the facts will the minority who continue to represent the truth be counted among them? By no means!
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- The latter part of this verse is from Ps 51:4. This is accredited to David “when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba” (*51:1*). No matter what sin David committed against God he understood, correctly, that God would always be true.

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Rom 3:5 But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man)

- In comparison to God “none is righteous, no, not one” (*v. 10*). Nobody can even compare to God’s righteousness so, no matter how much sin an unrighteous (*or even righteous*) person commits, whether little or much, God will always commend (*Gk.4921- exhibit*) Himself as the “Most High God” (*Lk 8:28*). To make the argument that if our sin makes God look good we should sin all the more, and then ask why His punishment is unjust for us doing such, is a foolish premise. God doesn’t need anyone to clearly exhibit His righteousness!* So in order for Him to be a fair Judge, no matter how **we** might measure fairness, He must punish any and all sin since “iniquities have made a separation between [us] and [our] God (*Isa 59:2*), while showing “that there is no partiality with Him” (*Eph 6:9*).

*Act 17:24 The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, 25 nor is He served by human hands, **as though He needed anything**, since He Himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. (*Emp. added*)

- For Paul to speak as a man he is making the point that such thinking was not his own, it wasn’t from inspiration, that God would be unjust if He punished sinners who were only adding to His righteousness by “[continuing] in sin that grace may abound” (*Rom 6:1*).

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Rom 3:6 God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?

- In order for there to be any amount of direction in any society there must be a form of rule to go by, to successfully exist in peace where sin is present. Without it, chaos would be the norm. With it, there must exist the need for a form of law to define sin, “and through the commandment [*that defines sin, it*] might become sinful beyond measure” (7:14). Thus the need for a source that explains those acts that justify punishment and those that “will receive [the] approval” of governments (13:3), since they “have been instituted by God” (13:1). Such a basis for defining right from wrong through a judicial yet unbiased rule, confirms the need for an impartial judge. Without a rule of law there can be no one to judge laws that don’t exist (7:8), since when “the sentence against an evil deed is not executed speedily, the heart of the children of man is fully set to do evil” (Ecc 8:11).

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Rom 3:7 For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto His glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?

- Speaking to his Jewish detractors, Paul begins here with a supposition as he did in verse 5. He asks that if my (supposed) lie (stating truthfully that Jew and Gentile are both equally “under sin”- v. 9) added *excessively* to God being honored, why was he still being condemned? How can a lie bring honor to the person being lied about and yet the ‘liar’ still be slandered? One would think the more a lie brought positive feedback the more it would be praised. Here, the Judaizers were calling Paul a liar after accusing him, not only of teaching that Jew and Gentile were equals, but of teaching that the more a person sinned the more they would receive God’s grace. That’s the truth of God that Paul would deal with later in the end of chapter 5 and the beginning of chapter 6, but in its proper context.

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Rom 3:8 And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just.

- “Why not *benefit* from *depravity*?” Paul, along with his fellow aids, were being wrongfully accused of promoting the idea that the more evil a person commits the more grace they would receive so why not (*even though not stated*) just “eat and drink, for tomorrow we die” (1 Cor 15:32)? The whole first part of this verse should be in parentheses and not, as in some versions, only a portion of it. The last part, according to the Interlinear, should read (*as it does in the KJV, ASV, etc.*) “whose judgment just is”, or “whose condemnation is just” (ASV). This expression, without the parenthetical phrase that separates it, belongs at the end of verse 7 and should read “...judged as a sinner, whose condemnation is just”. Paul stated that sinners deserved to be condemned and that if he was what they were saying he was then he too should have received the wrath of God’s justice.

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Rom 3:9 What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;

- As though answering a question that a Jew might pose, whether he was better off than his Gentile counterpart, Paul responds how both are under sin since the Law

was made void at the cross (*Col 2:14*). Without the Mosaic Law, the Jews no longer had a connection to God and were, as it was with the Gentiles “cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, (*as*) the natural branches (*would have to*) be grafted back into their own olive tree” (*11:24*).

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Rom 3:10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

- As Jesus did in Mat 4 with Satan, Paul does here with the Jewish converts who were claiming some sort of superiority over the Gentile Christians; he used what had already been written in Scripture **for** them, but here as being **against** them.

Psa 14:1 To the choirmaster. Of David. The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds, there is none who does good. 2 The LORD looks down from Heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. 3 They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one.

- They claimed immunity to God’s wrath because of a relationship through the Mosaic Law but forgot (*possibly by convenience*) that the word of God has always been against evil doers, and now they were the ones who were corrupting it by introducing doctrines that went against it.

Eze 18:20 The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.

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Rom 3:13 Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: 14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: 15 Their feet are swift to shed blood: 16 Destruction and misery are in their ways: 17 And the way of peace have they not known: 18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

- See also Ps 5:9; 140:3 for v. 13; Ps 10:7 for v. 14; Isa 59:7-8 for vs. 15-17; and Ps 36:1 for v. 18. With these passages, Paul was able to demonstrate the unrighteous behavior that God had to deal with from the Israelites, making them no better than the Gentiles they were looking down on with reproach here.

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Rom 3:19 Now we know that what things soever the Law saith, it saith to them who are under the Law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

- them who are under the Law, is an expression with reference to the Jews, and the apostle was reminding them that the Law they claimed to obey wasn’t even written to Gentiles, so why be in obedience to a law that didn’t apply to them. But to the Jew he asked, “Since you **were** under it, why didn’t you keep it?” If they

claimed to be a part of the Old Covenant but didn't do their part in obeying it, then every mouth of those pompous hypocrites that ineffectively defended their status, who made judgments against faithful Gentiles for doing what they refused to do, should have been stopped. Once that "wall of hostility" (*Eph 2:14*) came down, the whole world (*Jew and Gentile alike*) became accountable (*Gk.5267-under sentence*) to God. The only way that sentence could be commuted was through "cancelling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This He set aside (*by*) nailing it to the cross." (*Col 2:14*)

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Rom 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the Law is the knowledge of sin.

- Of all the deeds of the Law these misguided Jewish brethren were promoting, here it was circumcision. How could obeying one part of the Law that was "outward and physical" (*2:28*) excuse not fulfilling "the righteous requirement of the Law" to walk "according to the Spirit" (*8:4*) by loving "the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind... and... your neighbor as yourself" (*Mat 22:37-39*)? They hadn't "stored up [His] word in [their] heart..." (*Ps 119:11*) or they would have understood how Christ was the fulfillment of "the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms" (*Lk 24:44*). What they thought they were doing was justified in His sight was the very thing "that neither [their] fathers nor [they had] been able to bear" (*Act 15:10*). It was all to get themselves off the hook with their Jewish brethren who were still practicing the customs and rites associated with the Mosaic Law, and were persecuting those who 'converted' to Christianity. By bragging how they had forced the issue of converting to the part of Judaism that promoted circumcision on those of the uncircumcised Gentiles, they may have been avoiding such harassment.

Gal 6:12 It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh (*Jews*) who would force you (*Gentiles*) to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. 13 For even those who are circumcised do not themselves keep the Law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh.

- Adam and Eve lost their covenant relationship with God because they gained the knowledge of sin once they disobeyed the one law they were given. That law, to not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (*Gen 2:16-17*), was equivalent to a mother telling her child to not eat of the batch of cookies she just placed in the cookie jar. The mother established a law by first saying there was something that would please the child's pallet and then forbid him from being satisfied by it, even though the aroma made the disobedience so tempting. Was she wrong to make the command when she knew it would spoil the child's appetite for the healthy meal she was preparing for supper? The command was a preemptive attempt to keep the child from getting himself into trouble (*7:7-8*).

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Rom 3:21 But now the righteousness of God without the Law is manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the prophets;

- manifested- Gk.5319- to *render apparent*.^{*} It was now clearly understood that the righteousness (Gk.1343- *equity; specifically [Christian] justification*) of God could be attained separately from the (Mosaic) Law. The only “Way” (Jn 14:6) these Jews could be “justified in His sight” was not through the works of the Law but through something entirely foreign to them, which the apostle deals with in the next verse (v. 22).

*2Ti 1:10 and which now (*the “holy calling”- v. 9*) has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, Who abolished death and brought life and immortality **to light through the Gospel**, (*Emp. added*)

- witnessed- As Jesus sited in Lk 24, He was what Moses, along with the other O.T. prophets, prophesied concerning Him as the Messiah. They were the means to the end, as witness to His coming via God’s righteousness, namely...

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Rom 3:22 the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction:

- According to other English versions and the Interlinear, instead of **faith in Jesus Christ**, it is rendered the “*faith of Jesus Christ*”. If this is to be understood as a faith “in” Him then the Greek (4102) would render it “a *reliance* upon Christ for salvation”. If, on the other hand, it is to be rendered the faith “of” Jesus Christ, then it would refer to “the system of religious (Gospel) *truth* itself”, by which the righteousness of God is revealed (*see notes on 1:17*). Both glosses are from the same Greek word, *pis’-tis*.

Php 1:27 Only let your manner of life be worthy of the Gospel **of** Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith **of** the Gospel, (*Emp. added*)

- all who believe- This applies only to Christians, and not from any denominational point of view since the Bible makes it clear who the faithful are. To believe (Gk.4100- *to have faith; by implication to entrust [especially one’s spiritual well-being to Christ]*) denotes a specific group, here those who are **in** Him, thus “all of us who have been baptized (*via obedience*) into Christ Jesus” (6:3).

Jas 2:19 You believe that God is One; you do well. Even the demons believe--and shudder!

- no distinction- This refers “to the Jew first and also the Greek” (1:16) and how salvation has nothing to do with being either “Jew nor Greek... slave nor free... male nor female, for [believers] are all one **in** Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:28). A soul is a soul, and God sees each individual from that perspective. Also, this has nothing to do with eliminating the authority that God recognizes between men and women since that order was well established in His mind before the creation and thus related **to** man for man to live by (Gen 2:22-23; 3:16).

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Rom 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

- Picking up with the end of verse 22, Paul gives the reason for there being no distinction. We can't compare ourselves with others by stating we are neither more righteous nor less evil than them. We all must come to the conclusion where "none is righteous" (*v. 10*) and if we are to be compared to anyone it must be as we stack up to the glory of God where we all will find, if we are honest, we all come short (*Gk.5302- to be inferior; [be deficient]*). How? Because all have sinned and our "iniquities have made a separation between [us] and [our] God" (*Isa 59:2*).

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Rom 3:24 Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

- Those who are *rendered just or innocent* have, *gratuitously*, received the Father's *gratitude through the redemption* (*Gk.629- ransom in full, [specifically] Christian salvation*) that can only be found in Jesus Christ. Again, the phrase "in Christ" denotes a (fixed) *position* wherein this justification and grace are found.

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Rom 3:25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

- propitiation- *Gk.2435- an atoning victim (or 'mercyseat' as in Heb 9:5)*. It was *determined* "because of His Own purpose and grace, which He gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began" (*2 Tim 1:9*) that Jesus, through the body that was prepared for Him (*Heb 10:5*), would "[appear] once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (*Heb 9:26*). We "on whom the end of the ages has come" (*1 Cor 10:11*) are experiencing the last dispensation, thus denoting the end of both the Patriarchal and Mosaic ages. The Interlinear reads "*God set forth a mercy seat through faith in His blood*" meaning, Christ is our mercy seat and He, as our High Priest, offered His own blood as representing the atoning *victim* (*Heb 8:3,6*). Having "*faith in His blood*" is what persuades us to rely on Christ for salvation and ultimately on the Gospel (*death, burial and resurrection of Christ*) as it pertains to truth.

- His blood- *Acts 20:28* uses this similar phrase but since God the Father didn't come in the flesh it refers to Jesus the Son and in so doing equates Jesus with Deity.

- To *determine* that His only Son (*Jn 3:16*) would become our only hope as 'proof of God's righteousness (*Gk.1343- equity; specifically [Christian] justification*), His *self-restraint and tolerance* of sins that *have previously transpired*, was only possible through Christ as the only atoning *victim* Who "appeared to take away sins [since] in Him there is no sin" (*1 Jn 3:5*).

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Rom 3:26 To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the Justifier of Him which believeth in Jesus.

- God indicated His *tolerance* of past sins committed by the Gentiles, through “kindness” which was “meant to lead [people] to repentance” (2:4), i.e., those who sinned before Christ came, “as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Him” (Eph 1:10). This was so He might be *equitable* when He rendered *just* those who *relied/rely* upon Christ for salvation, whether Jew or Gentile.

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Rom 3:27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the Law of faith.

- boasting- Speaking of his Jewish Christian brethren who claimed some sort of closer walk with God because of their heritage, Paul here stated that it had been *shut out* since God, according to Peter, “shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears Him and does right is acceptable to Him” (Act 10:34-35).

- law of works- The law stated here is the Mosaic with all its *regulation* thus works. It then has to do with the *act* that was satisfied by obeying it. It was replaced with the Law of faith, i.e., the Gospel. God understood our human nature as it pertains to keeping whatever law perfectly, thus the Gospel with its ability to forgive our hopeless sinful nature through repentance and not sacrifice.

Act 13:38 Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this Man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, 39 and by Him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the Law of Moses.

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Rom 3:28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the Law.

- Paul, along with the other apostles and inspired teachers, *took an inventory*, i.e., concluded that justification comes via the Gospel and not from the Mosaic.

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Rom 3:29 Is He the God of the Jews only? is He not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also:

- God has always been the God of the whole world since He created everything in it and has said “the world and its fullness are Mine” (Ps 50:12). Not that the Jews were more righteous, but that the nations more evil, they were God’s people of choice to bring the Messiah into the world to save the whole world (Jn 3:16) and not them only. They were made jealous by, and therefore hardened their hearts against, the Gentiles “until the fullness of the Gentiles [had] come” (11:25) when Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, began sharing the Gospel with those who were not part of “the commonwealth of Israel... But now in Christ Jesus [those] who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ” (Eph 2:12-13).

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Rom 3:30 Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by (Gk.1537- out [of]) faith, and uncircumcision through (Gk.1223- because of) faith.

- The same God over Jew and Gentile *renders just (justufued)* both via the Gospel as it pertains to their *reliance* on Jesus for their salvation through obedience to His word, and not according to the works of the Law.

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Rom 3:31 Do we then make void the Law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the Law.

- Do Christians no longer need the O.T. Law of Moses since Jesus “set [it] aside, nailing it to the cross” (*Col 2:14*)? Did the Gospel *render* it *entirely useless*? Certainly not! Paul deals with the idea of **not** having the Law in chapter 7:7, 13. *Contrariwise*, according to Jesus’ purpose for coming, He didn’t “come to abolish the Law or the Prophets... but to fulfill them” (*Mat 5:17*). He came to *finish* what “the Law... could not do. By [coming] in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin [to] condemn sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us” (*8:3-4*) who “by the Spirit... put to death the deeds of the body... (*v. 13*) and “by the Spirit of God are sons of God” (*v. 14*).

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