

Romans 3

1 Is there any real advantage in having been born a Jew?

2 Yes! First and foremost they had the revelation from God, the Holy Scriptures with its commandments, predictions and promises.

3, 4 The fact that many of them had proven to be unfaithful, misunderstanding, misinterpreting God's word, does not take away from the truth of God. The problem was not with God's word but with the Jews, who were unfaithful. These God will judge.

5, 6 Paul argues God's right to judge them for their sins as He is The Judge of all. In spite of the fact that their sins highlight the righteousness of God.

7, 8 Similarly some would suggest that their falsehood highlights the truthfulness of God therefore they should not be found guilty. This implied that good having resulted from their sins they should not be condemned. Some had slandered Paul and his gospel teaching that being saved by faith and not our own good works implied – "Let us do evil that good may result". He rejects this proposition!

9 Having revealed the plight of the heathen gentiles in their idolatry and shameful sins they have generally indulged; and having dealt with the general condition of the Jews who have boasted about their superior knowledge and religion but have lived accordingly; Paul reaches a conclusion. Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin. We all belong to the sinful guilty human race.

10-12 From here Paul quotes a series of statements about our fallen human nature taken from the Old Testament scriptures, Psalms, Isaiah etc. No one is righteous, no one understands, no one seeks after God. All have turned aside – become worthless, no one does right 100%.

13, 14 Paul now selects quotes which stress the prevalence of the sins of verbal communication. The throat, tongue, lips and mouth. Lies, deception, slander, flattery, blasphemy and foul language.

15-18 Now he focuses on actions and conduct. Strife, violence, wars and the ruin and human misery that result. No fear of God. No realization that we are accountable to Him and will be judged by Him.

19 All are answerable to the holy law of God, the whole world guilty. Every mouth silenced! No self justification, no excuses, no blame shifting.

20 We cannot be found righteous by our own law keeping because we have failed again and again. The law, i.e. what God requires, shows us that we are sinners. Conscience is awakened and alarmed.

21 The gospel tells us of another righteousness, which does not depend upon our law keeping. As well as reveal what God requires of us, the Old Testament scriptures i.e. the prophets, testify and prepare for this gospel.

22 This gospel righteousness is God's free gift to all who come to believe in The Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour. There is no difference as far as race or religion is concerned.

23 As has been stated all are sinners. All fall short of achieving satisfactory law righteousness.

24 Here is the substance, the essence of the gospel.

Justified – declared innocent – righteous, accepted, approved!

Freely, a free gift. No works, no merit, no achievement required.

By God's grace. His favour bestowed upon those who could never deserve it.

Redemption. Christ Jesus paid the price for the sins of His people.

25, 26 God Himself is the Author of this gospel. He provided the perfect sacrifice, a wrath removing sacrifice, the Blood of His Son. Effective only for those who believe in Him. Thus He demonstrates that He is a Just God, requiring adequate punishment for sins committed. Particularly was this so with reference to the sins of His true believing people prior to Christ's coming, which He had treated with forbearance until He came, suffered and died. The benefit from the death of our Lord reaches backwards and forwards in time. So God is just even when He forgives sinners.

27 There is no ground for boasting. If we kept the law we could boast. Having received God's grace by faith, no boasting is possible.

28 These two principles are mutually exclusive. We are saved by faith alone - no self righteousness applies.

29 Paul returns to the question of the relation of Jews and Gentiles to the gospel. God is The God of both.

30 Both can only be saved through believing in the gospel.

31 "If we are not saved by our law keeping does this mean we set aside the law as of no use or consequence"?? No says Paul. We uphold the importance of the law of God. The law, as we have seen, makes us aware of our sinfulness. God showed His respect for the law, being unwilling to forgive sinners without an adequate sacrifice. Christ died to show that God was serious about inflicting the penalty of the law.

The saved justified sinner gives his heart to the Lord to become His obedient follower. His heart is changed so that he loves God's law and seeks to obey it. He hates the sin that caused the Saviour to suffer on that Cross.