

ROMANS 3

I) God's Just Judgment (3:1-8)

- A) Did the Jew and his circumcision have any advantage? (questions/objections anticipated)
 - 1) Yes, to them were committed the oracles of God (cf. Rom. 9:4-5; Eph. 2:12; Deut. 4:7-8; Psalms 147:19-20)
- B) What about unbelief of some? It did not make God's faithfulness without effect
 - 1) Let God be true and every man a liar who does not believe His word
 - 2) Quotes Psalm 51:4 – David's confession of sin that God had justly condemned
- C) Jews' unrighteousness demonstrates the righteous judgement of God (cf. Amos 3:2)
 - 1) Is God unjust who inflicts wrath? No! God must judge the sin of all men
 - 2) Some slandered Paul as saying, "Let us do evil that good [God's judgment] may come"
 - a) Never right to do wrong (cf. 6:1)! God is just in condemning all sin in His wrath

Paul affirms the advantage of the Jew, especially in possessing the oracles of God. The unbelief of some Jews did not make God's faithfulness of no effect. God justly condemns unrighteousness and ungodliness in whomever it is found.

Paul had been slandered by some claiming that he taught that evil should be done that good may come (situation ethics). Some may have misunderstood what Paul said (things hard to understand – 2 Pet. 3:16), but others intentionally twisted Paul's words. Paul would never encourage sin under any circumstance or for any reason!

II) All Have Sinned (3:9-20)

- A) Both Jews and Greeks are charged as "all under sin"
 - 1) No one better than another – all condemned
- B) Series of OT quotes as to the utter sinfulness of mankind
 - 1) Psalm 14:1-3; 53:1-3; 5:9; 140:3; 10:7; Isa. 59:7, 8; Psalm 36:1
- C) Law speaks to those under law to stop every mouth (boasting) and bring all the world to account under the judgment of God by revealing its guilt
- D) By the deeds of law (demanding perfect law-keeping) no man will be justified
 - 1) By the law is the knowledge of sin – identifies sin and condemns sinners (Rom. 7:7; Gal. 3:22)
 - 2) All men are in desperate need of the gospel of salvation!

This is the point and conclusion of Paul's first section (1:18-3:20). All men, Jew and Gentile, are under the condemnation of sin. Paul then strings together a series of Old Testament quotes from Psalms and Isaiah to illustrate the fact that man has been sinful in the sight of God, and there has been no one (except Jesus) who has perfectly kept God's law.

The law of God reveals the way of righteousness and, thereby, the knowledge of sin and its condemnation to those who disobey (cf. 1 Tim. 1:5-11). By revealing the divine standard, the law informs man that he has fallen short of the standard (the glory of God). No one has kept the law perfectly, a requirement to be justified by law. Therefore, no flesh is justified by law. It is impossible due to the sin of every individual.

Paul has demonstrated that man is doomed to be condemned by God. The reason is that he does not keep law perfectly. Once he has sinned, there is no work that he can do, even in the observance of law, that can save him. It matters not whether one is a Jew or a Gentile. All men are doomed in this predicament, unless God is able to justify the sinner.

III) The Righteousness of God through Faith (3:21-26)

- A) But **now** the righteousness of God is revealed (apart from law justification)
 - 1) Is revealed in the gospel of Christ (1:16-17)
 - 2) Witnessed by the Law and the Prophets – pointed to the grace that would come
 - 3) Through faith in Christ Jesus to all who believe (cf. 1:16 – faith is a key element)
 - a) “Faith of Christ” (KJV) – would refer to faithful obedience of Jesus (Heb. 5:8)
 - 4) For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God
- B) Justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus
 - 1) **Justified** – acquitted as not guilty, pronounced and treated as righteous (cf. Phil. 3:9)
 - 2) **Freely** – not earned (unmerited), as a gift
 - 3) **Grace** – unmerited (undeserved) favor kindly bestowed, loving-kindness, good will
 - 4) **Redemption** – payment of full ransom for liberation, deliverance
- C) God set Christ to be a “propitiation” by His blood through faith
 - 1) **Propitiation** = that which expiates [atones for], or means of expiation [atonement]
 - 2) See 1 Jn. 2:2; 4:10; Heb. 2:17; Lk. 18:13; Jesus is the expiation for our sins
 - 3) Blood sacrifice of Christ sufficient to cover sin and satisfy justice of God (avert wrath)
 - 4) This blessing of our justification is received through our faith in Christ Jesus
- D) Demonstrate the righteousness of God
 - 1) God had, in His forbearance, passed over sins previously committed (cf. Acts 14:16; 17:30; Heb. 9:15)
 - a) God waited in view of atoning sacrifice of Christ that would forgive sins of all faithful
 - 2) God is just (righteous) and the justifier of (declaring righteous) the one who has faith in Jesus

Thankfully, the righteousness of God apart from the law (i.e. apart from perfect law-keeping), which is through faith in Jesus Christ has been revealed to all who believe. Faith continues to be a key condition of accessing the justification God has provided man through His grace. It is a free gift provided through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Justification is through faith in Christ, not perfect law-keeping.

By his blood sacrifice, Jesus was a propitiation (expiation, atonement) for our sins. By this means, God is shown to be just and the justifier of those who have faith in Jesus.

IV) Boasting Excluded (3:27-31)

- A) Self-boasting excluded, not by a law of works, but by the law of faith
 - 1) A boasting in works performed – seeking to achieve perfection
 - 2) Law of faith is dependent on God’s free grace to save (praise and thanksgiving)
- B) Man is justified by faith, not by the deeds (perfect works) of law
 - 1) Not justified by perfect meritorious works (cf. Gal. 2:16)
- C) God is the God of the Jews and Gentiles – justify all by faith
- D) Make void the law? No! Rather establish the law
 - 1) Though not justified by perfect law-keeping, obedience to divine law is always necessary for faithful men to please God; forgiveness is now available if we sin
 - 2) The need of forgiveness establishes the power of God’s law over sinful man

There can be no boasting of perfect law-keeping when the sinner is justified by faith. Such boasting is excluded. We can only glory in the Lord who saved us freely by His grace.

The law is not voided through faith. On the contrary it is established. The law’s demand for obedience must be respected. True faith is a faith that works (Jas. 2:14-26), and those saved by grace through faith have been created for good works (Eph. 2:8-10). Fortunately for all who believe, the violations of that law are atoned for by the blood of Christ.