

Romans 3:1-8
“Feeling alright; not feeling too good myself”

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I. Intro

In the movie “*Fiddler on the Roof*” Tevye asks God, “*I know, I know. We are Your chosen people. But, once in a while, can't You choose someone else?*” Looking at the tragic history of the Jewish people it is hard to see how anyone would see an advantage of being Jewish. Their history has been one of slavery, hardship, warfare, persecution, captivity, humiliation, and mass murder. In 70 A.D. over a million Jews of all ages were butchered and over 100,000 that survived were sold into slavery. In A.D. 115 600,000 men were killed when they rebelled against Rome. And of course, in the 1940’s 6 million were murdered! Yet the reality is that in spite of this they are chosen by God to be the people to whom God would bring forth the Messiah, the savior for all humanity. *Chapter 3 is divided with the first eight verses being an imaginary dialogue with an objecting religious Jew.* The second part of this chapter Paul deals with mankind’s condition before God, (*all have sinned*). I can picture Paul debating some distinguished old Jewish Rabbi, where he tells him that the only thing that makes him right before God is faith in the Messiah Jesus. In the first 8 verses of chapter three Paul offers up what he anticipated would be *three arguments to his position that all three groups were under the wrath of God because of unrighteousness.*

- **What advantage is it to be a Jew**
- **Will Jewish unbelief cancel God’s faithfulness**

- If our sin commends God's righteousness, how can He judge us?

II. Vs. 1-2 God's Librarians

Paul has put the religious Jew on the same level of the sinning and moral gentile and realizes that the Jew would naturally object to being in the same class. What advantage is there in being God's "Chosen People" (a classification that God made Himself)? **Paul was anticipating that the Jews could charge God with breaking His deal with them.** "Without respect of persons, you say Paul????? Hold on there a minute! You're telling me that my position and privilege don't matter?"

1. Vs. 1 **Objection:** "Well, then Paul if what matters is being a Jew inwardly the circumcision of the heart than what advantage is there in being a Jew outwardly?" This is **a twofold question of religious superiority;** the first part of this question will be addressed in verse 2-8 the 2nd part of Paul won't take up until chapter 4. Their argument was that in Paul's teaching there seemed to be no use for the Old Covenant and that being the case it would call into question God faithfulness as He is the One that initiated the Covenant to start with.
2. Vs. 2 **Answer:** Paul answers this make-believe Rabbi, "Advantages! Well of greatest importance is the Word of God!" **They were God's librarians, as this heavenly treasure was entrusted to them.** The Word of God cannot make a sinner a saint by their mere possession, and they are no substitute for the righteousness of God in Christ, but they do point clearly to salvation. **The word of God not only held the law but the promises of God to His people and God has not and will not forfeit those promises, He will yet be faithful to His people!** When the bubonic plague swept across Europe killing 1 out of every 3 people, **the Jewish populations was left virtually untouched.** The reason for this was their keeping the strict dietary and personal hygiene of the Law. The same can be said of their applying the biblical financial principals.

Though everyone has been given the light of a conscience and the truth about God made visible in His creation the Jews were given the advance degree as they had the written Word of God.

More than all other people they had been given the greatest advantage to obey the word of God.

But like a power tool in the hands of an infant they hadn't used it at all. Jesus said in Matthew 23:24 that they were "*Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!*" ***Saint's we don't have to answer every person's question with regards to the Bible all we need to do is apply its principals in our lives and folk's will see the truth and not just hear about it.***

III. Vs. 3-4 Special People, Special Life

1. Vs. 3 **Objection:** "*What if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect?*" What about the fact that some of the Jews lacked faith? Does their lack of faith destroy the validity of the Word of God making the faithfulness of God of no effect? The make-believe Rabbi goes right at Paul saying that under Paul's teaching that Jewish unbelief made the Word of God of powerless.
2. Vs. 4 **Answer:** "*Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar. As it is written: That You may be justified in Your words and may overcome when You are judged.*" The very idea of this horrifies Paul! **Just because some religious Jews didn't believe the Word of God doesn't mean that the Word is any less powerful and God any less faithful.** In the Greek Paul uses the strongest possible word which can be translated, "*God forbid*" or "*May it never be so!*" To suggest such a thing would be tantamount of saying that somehow God failed, and Paul says let "*God be true and every man a liar*". To prove his point Paul quotes the 51st psalm which David wrote when he repented of his double sins of adultery and murder. He had tried to hide his sins and went on acting as if he was the righteous king of Israel, then along came Nathan the prophet who said to him "David, you are the man, you're guilty!" And when David confessed his sins he sat down and wrote this psalm saying, "*It's not God's*

*fault that I did these things it's my fault, I did it! I'm a lying, murdering, adulterer". It is their unfaithfulness not God that's the problem. **Suppose every single person was issued a winning lottery ticket number but no one cashed it in, would it prove that the number was not a winning because no one came forward? No, it would just show how foolish people are not to cash it in!***

God will still fulfill His promises to the religious Jews even though some fail but He will do so not upon the rituals they keep but upon faith in Jesus. Jesus spoke to the religious leaders who felt that the Word of God and the rituals were why they would inherit all of God's promises saying in John 5:39 "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me."

In a similar way today, people might ask, "What's the point of being a good Christian, going to Church, being baptized, reading my Bible, praying, and doing the right things, if I don't have a special privilege?" **Paul believed that with a special position came a special responsibility not a special privilege.** "You're a special people therefore you must live a special life!" *Man's faithlessness never alters God's faithfulness or frustrates His purposes. Man's unfaithfulness simply sets God's truth in relief: His righteousness is always vindicated over against man's unrighteousness. **In the end not one person in Christ will ever be able to say that one promise of God has failed them.** When our hearts are examined we will find that what failed us was not God's promises but rather our faithfulness to enter into His promises by faith!*

IV. Vs. 5-8 Evangelizing the Evangelists

Vs. 5-8 The 3rd objection raised by the hypothetical Rabbi is, "Paul you say that God is going to be glorified even though we make mistakes, why would He judge us, in fact why not sin all the

more so that he can look even better?” Paul’s argument to that logic is that “*If that was the case then no one could be judged by God for sin. And if God isn’t Judge then the world is locked into sin and the world would be in a helpless and hopeless state.*”

1. Vs. 5 **Objection**: “*But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unjust who inflicts wrath? (I speak as a man.)*” Salvation by grace not by works was said to give an excuse for continual immoral behavior. Evidently, some were using Paul’s teaching to justify their habitually practicing sin, the sloppy agape deal. What Paul wrote of was that the righteousness of God was gifted to people based upon trust in Jesus alone, which caused some to say that we should continue in sin that grace might abound.
2. Vs. 6 **Answer**: “*Certainly not! For then how will God judge the world?*” Paul answers this upon the principal of logic which is that such an approach would prevent God from Judging righteously. God is the sole Judge of His creation and He does so consistently to His character, not separate from it. The gospel of justification by faith, apart from works was misrepresented by many who insisted on being saved by works. **Paul’s argument is that we are not saved by works but by grace because we have placed our trust in Jesus, and this will be seen in our works!**

Today people argue that “*God is unjust if He inflicts wrath because He is in control of everything, and He is unjust if He inflicts His wrath on me.*” Judas could make his case: “*Lord, I know that I betrayed You, but You used it for good. In fact, if I hadn’t done what I did, You wouldn’t have gone to the cross for everybody. What I did even fulfilled the Scriptures. How can You judge me at all?*” The answer to Judas is: “*Yes, I used your wickedness, **but it was still your wickedness.** There was no good or pure motive in your heart at all. It is no credit to you that I*

*brought good out of your evil. You stand guilty before Me." **Friend's it is never right to do wrong, and it is never wrong to do right!***

Vs. 7-8 Paul further strengthens his argument by including himself as a sinner in using the personal pro noun "**I**". To use the ridiculous "*Let's do evil that good may come*" argument would eliminate the difference between "*good and evil*". All this would do is bring anarchy and chaos as society would plunge into a moral abyss. God's rejection of Israel was not final! The door was opened to the Gentiles to do what the Jews didn't evangelize the lost. God had called the Jews to bring salvation to the Gentiles but because of their hard hearts God sent the gentiles to evangelize the Jews.

The Jews believed they had a special position before God and Paul agreed but the more opportunity a person has to do right the greater the condemnation if they do wrong! With privilege always comes responsibility! Once man has sinned, he displays an amazing ingenuity in justifying his sin. The need is not for ingenuity to justify sin, but for humility to confess it and power of God to turn us from it!