

## Romans 3

### *The Great Indictment of the Jew: Romans 3:1-9*

1 What advantage then hath the Jew? Or what profit *is there* of circumcision?

3:1 Paul maintains there is no moral distinction between Jew and Greek or Gentile. All are devoid of a righteousness that will justify. Are will face a terrible judgment unless God can provide a righteousness for them.

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

3:2 Though the Jew had certain advantages over the Gentiles by possessing the Holy Scriptures called the oracles of God, such possession only served to make guilt more obvious.

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

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.

3:3-4 Despite the Jewish failure to be a righteous people and live a holy life while spreading the gospel to other nations, God will keep His Word. In judgment

He will establish His righteousness as David acknowledge in his Psalm of repentance (Pas. 52:1-4).

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)

3:5 At this point Paul anticipates an objection to the concept of God judging the guilty. If the unrighteousness of man prepares the way for God to display His own righteousness, is not sin a necessity? If so, then man, sinning as a part of the divine plan, cannot be held accountable.

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

3:6 In a moment of protective holy anger Paul dismisses such thinking with the words, "*God forbid!*" God is just. God is righteous. He will judge men for their sins according to true gospel light and what their deeds deserve.

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?

3:7 The objection is raised again. If God is glorified more through a lie or through an act of sin, why is the person who lies or sins judged as a sinner?

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.

3:8 If the glory of God is advanced through sin is not Paul really teaching that men should do evil that good may come of it? Paul's response is simple. Those who raise such a question and make a slanderous accusation only demonstrate afresh a lack of moral integrity despite the cleverness of the inquiry and the unfairness of the accusation.

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;

***The Great Indictment of the Whole World: Romans 3:9-20***

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 [useless]; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

13 Their throat *is* an open sepulcher [grave]; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps [snakes] 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.

3:10-18 There are fourteen separate counts in this universal indictment to prove the whole world is guilty before God.

- There is none righteous, no not one.
- There is none that understandeth
- There is none that seeketh after God.
- They are all gone out of the way.
- They are together become unprofitable.
- There is none that doeth good, no, not one.
- Their throat is an open sepulcher.
- With their tongues they have used deceit.
- The poison of asps is under their lips.
- Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.
- Their feet are swift to shed blood.
- Destruction and misery are in their ways.
- The way of peace have they not known.
- There is no fear of God before their eyes.

These words are taken from the Psalms and from the Prophet Isaiah. Study Psalm 14:1-3; 53:1-3; 5:9; 140:3; 10:7; Isaiah 59:7,8; Psa. 36:1.

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.

3:19 Though the Law was given to the Jew and has found them guilty the Jew is not alone for all the world is guilty before God. Who can honestly deny never violating the Law of the Lord?

20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh [man] be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

3:20 Here is a great purpose of the Law. The Law was given that all men could have a clear knowledge of sin and be humbled by that knowledge. As a sense of desperation sets in men could turn their eyes from themselves to God and ask for redeeming grace. The Law cannot redeem. The Law can only accentuate the guilt of man and condemn. .

21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

3:21 "*But now*". These precious words introduce a message of hope in contrast to the desperate plight of all men who by nature are born into a slave market of sin and the object of God's divine wrath having lost a righteousness that will justify. The divine remedy for the ruin is now set forth in Romans 3:21-5:11. The good news of the glorious gospel is set forth in two parts. First, the story is told as to what God has done with our sins. Secondly, the story is told as to what God has done with our sin – the sin principle that dominates the carnal mind of the unregenerate person.

22 Even the righteousness of God *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference [distinction]:

3:21-22 In contrast to a legal righteousness based on works there is another righteousness revealed without the law. This righteousness of God is rooted in faith in the person of Christ. There should be no surprise that such righteousness exists. It too is "*witnessed*" or borne testimony to by the Law and the prophets. In the Law Moses spoke through symbolism of the Lamb who would take away sin. Isaiah wrote of One who would be "*bruised for our iniquities.*" In the Garden God provided a covering for Adam and Eve, a righteousness not of their own doing.

3:22 "*And upon all.*" While these words are not found in the Greek manuscript there is no question but that God freely and sincerely offers righteousness to all. There is a blood covenant of grace providing a covering for all those who believe. All men need this righteousness of God for all men have sinned.

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

24 Being justified freely [without cost] by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

3:24 To "*justify*" means to be declared righteous in the eyes of the law. It is the verdict of the judge in favor of the accused.

No one is declared righteous because they are righteous in heart and life. First God justifies and then by the Spirit there is divine enablement to walk in a sanctified righteousness. Moreover, this justification is free or without a price. A person is justified freely, without a cause, when there is faith in Jesus. Such is the nature of grace.

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*“Here’s pardon for transgressions past,  
It matter not how black their cast,  
And O my soul, with wonder view,  
For sins to come, here’s pardon too.  
Fully discharged by Christ I am,  
From Christ’s tremendous curse and  
blame.”*

25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation [a mercy seat] through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

3:25 Faith is simply taking God at His Word. God speaks and the heart says, “I believe.”

26 To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

3:26 The righteousness of God allowing Him to extend free grace to sinners and justify the guilty has a basis. Sin cannot be overlooked or dismissed. It must be atoned for and it has been “*through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*” Redemption means to buy back.

By His death and with His blood Jesus bought back those who were sold under judgment. “*He bore on the tree, the sentence for me, And now both the Surety and sinner are free.*”

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

3:27 Inside the Ark of the Covenant were the tablets of the Law present to condemn. But above the Law there was the mercy seat where justice and judgment met. Blood, typifying the sacrifice of Christ on the cross was sprinkled on the mercy seat and the justice of God was satisfied. Then Jesus came as the Lamb of God to shed His precious blood. “*Mercy rejoiceth against judgment*” for God found a ransom. No one need fear God’s wrath nor may anyone boast of being worthy or producing their own salvation. It is all of grace and apart from the deeds of the Law..

28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

29 *Is he* the God of the Jews only? *Is he* not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also:

30 Seeing *it is* one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.

3:30 Great is the grace of God. It is freely given to Jew and Gentile alike. The gospel has a universal appeal.

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

3:31 By offering free grace to sinful men, by justifying the guilty is the Law made void or of no effect? No, the Law is established and in this manner. The Law condemned all that transgressed it and demanded vengeance. Christ bore the wrath of the Law in His own body at Calvary so the majesty of the Law is upheld. Nevertheless, sinners can be saved.

*“On Christ Almighty vengeance fell  
That would have sunk a world to hell;  
He bore it for a chosen race,  
And thus became a Hiding-place.”*

## Romans 3

### *Questions on Romans 3*

1. What is one purpose for the Law?
2. Clarify the distinction in *Scripture* between sins in the plural and sin in the singular.
3. Give three examples of how the gospel of God's righteousness was witnessed to in by the law and the prophets.
4. Define the word "*faith*" and "*redemption*."
5. Explain the word "*justify*."

### *Answers to Romans 3*

1. When the Bible speaks of "*sin*" in the singular it often refers to the sin nature of man which dominates the mind of the unsaved and compels the heart to do evil. The fruit of this sinful fleshly nature are "*sins*" in the plural (Matt. 15:19; Gal. 5:19).
2. The Law was given that all men could have a clear knowledge of sin and be humbled by that knowledge
3. In the Law, Moses spoke of the righteousness of Christ through the symbolism of the sacrifices. The coats of skin provided by God to Adam and Eve spoke of this alien righteousness. Isaiah spoke of the Messiah who would be "*bruised for our iniquities*."
4. Faith simply means to take God at His Word. Redemption is buying back what has been sold.
5. To "*justify*" means to be declared righteous in the eyes of the law. It is the verdict of the judge in favor of the accused.

### *Personal Application and Reflection*

1. Do you believe the offer of the gospel by God is sincerely given to all men? Why?
2. Are you amazed that the *guilty* can be declared righteous? Why or why not?
3. Would you agree that in all the ages souls have been saved only on the basis of grace through faith? Explain.
4. There is a teaching that the *Old Testament* saints did not understand as much about salvation as believers of the New Covenant. Do you think this is true?
5. Do you have any lingering questions about the righteousness of God in declaring the guilty just in His sight? If so what might they be?