

### Romans 3:1—9 Jew's Condemnation Explained Further

Paul continues to address the Jewish person who is trusting in his own self-righteousness in knowing (not doing) the Law while condemning others for not following the Law. Paul turns aside from his main argument to answer the question: "If even the most religious Jew stands condemned just like the Gentiles, what is the advantage of being a Jew?"

#### Verses 1—2

Is there any advantage in being Jewish? Paul says there is much advantage. The first benefit to being a Jew is that through them the oracles of God were given. God did not speak through any other people than the Jews. God chose the nation of Israel to reveal Himself, whether through His Word, His prophets or His Son. The only book of the Bible that many consider to be written by a Gentile is Luke, but God speaking to a Gentile a message pertaining to Israel would not make sense. This is also contrary to what Scripture says in this passage in Romans.

These oracles were mentioned four times in the New Testament and are only given to Israel. Even though many believe Paul wrote Hebrews, it is addressed to Israel. Peter's writings are also directed to Israel. Many try to fit the Church, the Body of Christ into what Peter wrote but the focus is in the Second Coming and Tribulation. There is no mention of the Rapture. He also assured believing Israel that the prophetic promises given to Israel will in fact come to pass but will happen at a later date.

**Acts 7:38**"This is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness together with the angel who was speaking to him on Mount Sinai, and who was with our fathers; and he received living oracles to pass on to you.

**1 Peter 4:11** Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

**Hebrews 5:12** For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food.

Paul calls this revelation of God's word to Israel an advantage because they were entrusted with it and therefore the first to know what God's will was. To be the people whom God spoke through meant they should find it hard not to hear what He was saying. Other nations around them could hear God's word only from the Jew.

#### Verses 3—4

The second question is related to the first question and brings up the Jew who does not believe or obey the oracles of God. The question could be stated this way: "If the Jew does not believe will not this nullify God's faithfulness in fulfilling His promises to Israel?" There must have been those questioning why God would be faithful to Israel because of the unfaithfulness of individual Jews. However, the true Jew is one who has a true faith (Romans 2:28—29; 9:6; Galatians 6:16). The Jews who turn their back on God are not considered Jews. God will be faithful in fulfilling all He promised to Israel even though many Jews by birth will not be a part of God's future blessing. (See Zechariah 13:8 concerning 2/3rds of Israelites being cut off because of unbelief).

**Romans 2:28—29** <sup>28</sup>For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. <sup>29</sup>But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.

**Romans 9:6** But it is not as though the word of God has failed For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel;

**Galatians 6:16** And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

Galatians 6:16 is an often-misinterpreted verse. Many covenant theologians understand this verse to prove that the church today is spiritual Israel. The verse would be written as follows to bring this idea across:

And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, even upon the Israel of God.

This makes the Israel of God synonymous with those who will walk by this rule, which would indeed make the Church spiritual Israel. However, this is the only time this phrase is used so to really understand what Paul means it would be necessary to see if he calls today's church Israel anywhere in Scripture. I don't know of any other passage where Paul equates Israel with the Church. He separates between the two but never merges or mixes the two entities.

If Paul did not reference the Church as the Israel of God then to whom was he referring? I believe he acknowledged Jews who became believers when the Kingdom was at hand. They were saved under the Gospel of the Kingdom but with Israel's rejection of their Messiah, God quit His dealings with her, raised up Paul and gave him the Gospel of the Grace of God as part of the Mystery. These Jewish believers stayed under the Kingdom program and continued to practice the Mosaic Law until they are told in Hebrews to put those things aside. If they had become members of the Church, the Body of Christ then there would not have been any distinction between Jew and Gentile. This verse really addressed two distinct groups—those who are a part of the Church, the Body of Christ and the Kingdom believers, those of Israel who believed in their Messiah and were continuing to worship as they had done before Paul was raised up. We see this group of believing Kingdom believers in Acts 21, written after Romans was written.

Paul's response to this question is: "May that thought never come into existence!" God will be faithful and true no matter what man does. He acts on His own not depending upon man's actions. The liar in verse four is the unbeliever who stands in sharp contrast to God, the standard of truth. Since they stand apart from and are in contrast to God, they are the opposite of anything truthful. Paul continues his answer by quoting a passage in Psalms, which states that when God speaks it will come to pass. He will be vindicated when His words are scrutinized.

It turns out the advantage Israel obtained by being a steward of the Law and Prophets turned into a condemnation of the individual who turned his back on God's word. The advantage only belongs to the believing Jew.

### **Verses 5—6**

The third question Paul answers is "If our unrighteousness amplifies God's righteousness isn't God unjust in condemning the unrighteous Jew?"

Paul's response to this question is the same as the second question: "May that thought never come into existence!" If God were found to be unrighteous then how would He be qualified to judge the world? He is the only One qualified to Judge because He knows intimately the thoughts and motives of a person.

We see here that there is no doubt that God will be the judge. Men will need to give an account of themselves. This is contrary to many in the Emergent Church who see things getting better and better until it is good enough for the Millennial Kingdom to come into existence. Their hope is in what man can do to make this world a better place. If things are getting progressively better, there is no room for God's judgment. This thinking is not Biblical and allows people to put aside any fear of their eternal destiny. If no judgment then no condemnation and thus universal salvation.

### **Verses 7—8**

This last question Paul now points the finger at himself as an example of the Jew who thought he magnified God's righteousness by his unrighteous actions. This is a rationalization that the end result justifies the means. If God looked good by me being bad then God is glorified by my sin. This argument is

without merit. God cannot be more righteous by my actions than He already is but I can be more unrighteous.

Man likes to make evil appear good. In verse three those sinning desire to keep sinning thinking God will give Israel all that He promised in spite of living a sinful lifestyle. In verse five they go a step further as say their sinning is to God's advantage because it magnifies God's righteousness. Verse seven uses Paul as an example of the Jew who was a master of twisting evil into good.

### **Romans 3:9—20 All Mankind Stands Condemned**

We have seen that the person who denies there is a God is condemned (the ungodly). The person who denies that God has given us moral restraints is condemned (the unrighteous). Even those who are born of God's chosen people (Israel), through whom have been given the word of God and have been used to bring to us the Savior of the world, will find themselves just as condemned in their own self-righteousness. This final section on the condemnation of man sums up the last two chapters. In case there is someone who thought any of the preceding did not apply to them, this section makes it clear that all human beings who ever lived on this earth are lost sinners who face utter condemnation without exception.

#### **Verse 9**

The Jews having been given the Law always thought themselves better than the Gentiles. It was obvious the Gentiles stood condemned. But to see that even they were condemned was hard to comprehend and accept. In fact, since they were the caretakers of the Law, they were even more responsible than the Gentiles and were under greater condemnation for their rejection of it.

**Romans 4:15** for the Law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, there also is no violation.

**Romans 7:9** I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died;

**Romans 7:13** Therefore did that which is good become a cause of death for me? May it never be! Rather it was sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by effecting my death through that which is good, so that through the commandment sin would become utterly sinful.

#### **Verses 10—18**

Paul quotes verses from Psalms and Isaiah to emphasize his point about man's spiritual condition. We learn the following:

1. There is no person who is righteous.
2. There is no person who can comprehend things of a spiritual nature.
  - It is as impossible for an unbeliever to comprehend spiritual matters as much as a dog could sit down and comprehend a book. The dog is limited mentally and will not be able to read no matter how much time you work with him. A person without Christ has no (not limited) spiritual understanding and on their own cannot understand things of a spiritual nature.

**Romans 11:34** For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR?
3. There is no person who diligently reaches out to God to try to find Him.
  - Man does not reach out to God because it is not in his nature. There is no reason for an unspiritual man to reach out to God because he cannot comprehend anything spiritual.
  - Man is alive physically but dead spiritually. To worship God, a person must become alive in the spiritual realm. God is the only One who can add the spiritual side to man.

**John 4:24** "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."  
**John 6:44** "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.
4. There are absolutely none who are capable of doing anything good.
  - Obviously there are people that do things that are interpreted as being good. That is because we judge by the outer man and cannot see what the inner person is really like. God judges the inner

person and even though they may help or be kind to someone the attitude of the heart is what really counts. Only a believer energized by the Holy Spirit can do anything good—as defined by God.

5. No one speaks anything righteous.
  - All the various body parts that are involved in speaking are mentioned (throat, tongue, lips).
  - Their mouth is stuffed with cursing and harsh talk. The word filled with has the idea of stuffing the mouth to overflowing.
6. All are propelled to do evil and wherever they go they leave a path of destruction and affliction.
7. All are propelled to do evil and wherever they go they leave a path of destruction and affliction.
8. No one has any fear (reverence) of God.
  - The Greek makes it clear that this is a fear belonging to God and not a fear that men should have of God. In other words this fear or reverence that men should have towards God can only come from God since He is the possessor of this fear. Since man does not possess this fear in the natural state, this verse (18) proves the natural man is completely devoid of anything godly.

All of the above points show that all mankind is totally depraved. They are as bad off as they can possibly be. These arguments proving the condition of mankind are leading up to the solution found only in Jesus Christ.

### Verse 19

The Law was given to Israel alone. Any Gentile who wanted to come to God needed to come through Israel and put themselves under the yoke of the Law. Even now certain Jewish groups require a Gentile converting to Judaism to put themselves under the yoke of the Torah.

The essence of converting to Judaism is to accept upon oneself the yoke of the Torah and the commandments before a rabbinic court. (<http://www.jewishmag.com/124mag/conversion/conversion.htm>)

**Galatians 5:1** It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

Paul pointed out the inability of the Jews to follow the Law and thus making them guilty before God. If even the Jews are found guilty of sinning against God, the Gentiles are even more guilty and accountable to God. If those closer to God were found lacking then those farther from God would be even worse off. Even though Israel was given the Law, it also affected the Gentiles.

**1 Timothy 1:9—11** <sup>9</sup>realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers <sup>10</sup>and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching, <sup>11</sup>according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted.

### Verse 20

The Law never justifies a person, it can only condemn. It is through the Law that man are made conscience of sin and of their complete hopelessness. The Law is a signpost that can tell you where you are but can't tell you how to get where you need to go. The Law can point out man's sinful state but is powerless to energize a person to live righteously. If the Law could impart righteousness then it would be unnecessary for Christ to die for us.

**Galatians 3:21** Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law.

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