

# Book of Romans



## Chapter 3

*Theme: Availability of a righteousness from God*

**Michael Fronczak  
564 Schaeffer Dr.  
Coldwater, Michigan 49036**

**Bible Study Resource Center.com  
Copyright © 2018**

## Romans Chapter 3

### **Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:**

First, there should never have been a chapter break at this point; it completely disrupts the flow and to most Believers it has the force of separating what is being said in chapter 2 from what is being said to begin chapter 3. Second, the first few verses of chapter 3 answer the obvious burning question just left hanging at the end of chapter 2. And the question is this: If Israel (and the Jews) are God's covenant people. And if circumcision is the Godrequired sign of the Abrahamic Covenant and one of the laws of the Mosaic Covenant. And if God Himself has divided the world's population into two groups: Hebrews and everybody else and circumcision is a required ritual to be identified as a Hebrew. Then after everything Paul has just said about gentiles and Jews being equally liable to sin in God's eyes, and therefore being equally liable to God's wrath, what is the point of being a Jew? Why continue with male circumcision as a required sign of being Jewish? Has, indeed, the advent of Christ changed the entire dynamic and indeed, God has backed away from His old covenant people, the Hebrews, and become instead the God of the new covenant people, gentile Believers? Or just as profound, has God abolished the distinction that once existed between Hebrews and gentiles?<sup>1</sup>

### **<sup>1</sup>What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit *is there* of circumcision?**

Good questions. The first question pertains to Paul's words in 2:17-24, and the second question to his words in 2:25-29.<sup>2</sup>

### **Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:**

Paul, the Rabbi, in typical Talmud style, then asks the question at hand that is intended to lead to a religious ruling. The question is: "Then what advantage has the Jew?" Of course, the question means: then considering what has been previously said, what advantage does a Jew have over a gentile....if any? Does it still mean anything to become a member of God's covenant people? Now if gentile disciples of Christ answered this question after reading what Paul just said about the equality of Jews and gentiles in the first 2 chapters of Romans, with Paul even seemingly berating his fellow Jews over the matter of circumcision, then we would be compelled to answer, "No advantage whatsoever". And, I'm sad to say, that is generally what a good portion of the Church has done. It would be intellectually dishonest to not admit that if there really is no advantage for being a Jew, if there is no benefit from being circumcised, this can only mean that the words of the Old Testament are a false witness or that God is not the faithful husband to Israel that He always claimed to be. As the renowned Bible commentator Charles Cranfield once

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

<sup>2</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

courageously said about this passage: "The question raised here is nothing less than the question of the credibility of God."

Let me paraphrase that. If throughout the Torah and the Tanakh (the Old Testament) God could claim an ongoing faithfulness to His people, even in the face of their faithlessness to Him, and promise them that He would be their God forever. If God could establish a set-apart people, lead them into 4 centuries of slavery in Egypt, rescue them and give them the Torah, guide them through a forbidding wilderness to their own land, and offer them a justice system that promised atonement for their sins and that this justice would be forever, and then abandon it all and give it instead to Israel's enemies, the gentiles, what sort of God is this? Why should we believe the promises of the New Testament that are supposed to be "forever" if God could simply extend it to His worshippers and then pull it all back from us if He gets upset enough or changes His mind? Cranfield is essentially posing the question that I posed in my introduction to Genesis many years ago.

Christianity honestly believes that God broke His promises to Israel, revoked not one but two covenants that He said would be forever (the Abrahamic and the Mosaic Covenants), and then made a new one, with a new set of rules, and gave it to gentiles. So if this is possible, if indeed that happened, why should any of us believe that at some point God might not revoke the new covenant, and give us a yet newer one with entirely different terms from the previous two? One that perhaps doesn't even involve Christ? The good news is that this long held Christian premise is a false one simply based on an anti-Jewish prejudice. God did not abrogate any of His covenants; He has stayed completely faithful to His Word and gives us no reason to suspect that He won't always be faithful to His Word.

Paul, the articulate Rabbi, even nuances his question to the straw man a bit more by asking a second one; he says, "What is the value of being circumcised". So, the issue of circumcision for Believers is back on the table. And he answers it: "Much in every way". Suddenly the entire dynamic of Paul's diatribe begins to come into focus, and it is not what we might have expected given what was said in chapters 1 and 2. We'll look at where Paul now seems to be heading, next time.

I want you to keep in mind that what Paul is doing (at least for the first few verses of Romans 3) is defending Israel's election as God's set apart people. Romans chapter 3 is but a continuation of chapter 2 (there never should have been a chapter break here as it completely disrupts the flow of Paul's thought pattern). Paul's opening words are "Then what advantage has the Jew"? This question is what sets the stage for Paul to make the argument that Israel was, is, and shall remain God's set-apart people despite what he may have said in chapter 2. So whatever commonality Jews and gentiles share does not diminish Israel's special standing before the Lord. On the other hand, being Yehoveh's set-apart people, having received and ratified covenants from God that makes them set-apart, does not so totally separate them from the rest of humanity that they are considered exempt from the shared fate of the human race. They are still liable to sin and to experience God's wrath.

Throughout this chapter we see Paul struggling, as do we, to define the place of the Law (meaning the Law of Moses) within the lives of Believers: Jew and gentile. But the real reason for this struggle is not so much that the Law's place in the lives of worshippers of the God of Israel has changed due to Christ's advent, because it hasn't. The reason for the struggle is because the place and purpose of the Law within 2nd Temple Judaism had become corrupted and was now not being utilized as God intended. Yeshua's Sermon on the Mount was largely about recovering the true purpose and meaning of the Law of Moses. Yeshua was not trying to reform

or recast the Law itself; in fact, he stated straightaway that not the tiniest speck of the Law would change until Heaven and Earth passed away. Rather He was trying to reform the religion of the Jews (Judaism) that was misusing and misunderstanding the Law. In many ways that is what Paul is trying to do. He is trying to put the Law into the proper perspective as it was always intended because it had become diluted, subverted, and twisted over the centuries since the Babylonian Exile as manmade rules and regulations (Tradition, Halakhah) crept in at an ever-increasing rate, until finally Yeshua could say:

**Matthew 15:7-9 CJB** 7 You hypocrites! Yesha'yahu was right when he prophesied about you, 8 "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far away from me. 9 Their worship of me is useless, because they teach man-made rules as if they were doctrines."

So up to now in the Book of Romans we find Paul teaching some basic God-principles that the Believing Jews of Rome, especially, should have already known. But their Judaism had distorted these God-principles by intertwining them with manmade doctrines such that they had to un-learn much of what they believed before Paul could teach them the divine truth. Ironically, this is precisely the place that we find Christianity in the 21st century. The Church has so mixed God's Word with the hundreds of doctrines of men (supplemented by the new political correctness of the West) to the point that for the average laymen it is nearly impossible to distinguish truth from error. So it falls to a few individuals to step forward and try to re-establish God's most basic principles by re-establishing God's Word, just as it is, as the only reliable source of truth. And just like what Paul discovered, there is much un-learning that must come about among Believers before Godly illumination can take place and rid us of our false beliefs.<sup>3</sup>

**McGee:** "Profit" means that which is surplus, that which is excess, and the question has to do with the outward badge of God's special covenant with the Jews, circumcision.

It looks as if Paul is in danger of erasing a distinction which God has made. The question is, if Jew and Gentile are on the same footing before God, what then is the supposed advantage of the Jew and what good is circumcision?

Let me give you a statement of Dr. James Stifler: "If circumcision in itself does not give righteousness, if uncircumcision does not preclude it, what profit was there ever in it? A distinction that God made among men seems, after all, not to be one." Now, this is the same question, I think, that we hear today. I get it because the gospel that I preach says that church membership has no advantage for salvation, that any rite or ritual you go through is meaningless as far as salvation is concerned. God has the world shut up to a Cross. He's not asking you to join anything or do anything. What God is asking the lost sinner to do is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and he shall be saved. And until a person answers that question, then God hasn't anything else to say to him. After he's saved, then God probably will talk to him about church membership and about baptism. We hear people say today, "Well, doesn't my church, my creed, my membership, my baptism help toward my salvation?" The answer is no, it doesn't help you toward salvation. But if you are saved, then these things are a badge, and these things are a means of communicating to the world who you are. But if you're not measuring up, then your church membership and your baptism are a disgrace; and instead of being sacred they become profane.

Now Paul is going to answer the question: What advantage then did the Jews have?<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

<sup>4</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

**Guzik:** a. What advantage then has the Jew: Paul has carefully explained in Romans 2 that the possession of the law or circumcision will not save a Jewish person. If this is the case, then what is the advantage of being “God’s chosen nation”?

After all, if there is no partiality with God (Romans 2:11), what good is it to be Jewish?<sup>5</sup>

**ESV:** After arguing that the Spirit’s work in Gentiles renders them true Jews and the true circumcision, Paul raises the logical question of whether there is any advantage or value in being an ethnic Jew and physically circumcised. He probably means “value for salvation” since he uses a Greek noun (*ōpheleia*) that corresponds to the verb *ōpheleō* (“to give value, benefit”) in 2:25.<sup>6</sup>

**FCBSN: 1–2** The advantage of being Jewish. Because of Paul’s warnings to the Jews about relying only on the law rather than on faith, the reader might conclude that being Jewish (and following the law) was something negative. But Paul saw being Jewish as an advantage because the Jews had been entrusted with the “words of God” (the law). The law was supposed to harmonize with, not replace, a life lived in faith.<sup>7</sup>

**CJBSN: 1–2** Then what advantage has the Jew? Everything! Jews were entrusted with the very words of God. Isra’el is also referred to as “the fewest of all peoples” (Deut. 7:7), yet Adonai loved them and chose them, separating them to himself.<sup>8</sup>

**<sup>2</sup>Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.**

**Missler:** “Great in every respect...” How so, Paul?

“Oracles” = logion, divine utterances; not just “custodians” of the Scripture: but the very recipients of God’s promises.

Note: No promises given to the Church in the OT! (Rom 16:25, 26); Kept secret (Cf. Eph 3:1-6);

Dan 9:26, an interval between vv.25 & 27 (occurs 24 X in Scripture, Cf. Rev 24 elders, etc.).

Church born by a miracle (Acts 2) and will be removed by a miracle (1 Thess 4:17f, 1 Cor 15:51f).

Let’s look at some of the promises: Gen 17:6-11.

Three ways to become a “Seed of Abraham”:

- 1) Physical seed of Abraham (some of the promises are to those direct descendants, even if unbelievers);
- 2) Believers get spiritual benefits;
- 3) Gentiles through union with Jesus Christ.

Jer 31:35-37 (!) The world would have to disintegrate before Israel would be cast off!

[Reconstructionists, et al, are calling God a liar! The reconstructionist heresy led to the antisemitism in Europe that led to the Holocaust; and it is happening again!...]

Ezekiel 37:11-14; Romans 11:25-29 [“until”...]<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001)

<sup>6</sup> ESV Study Bible Notes

<sup>7</sup> First-Century Study Bible Notes

<sup>8</sup> Complete Jewish Study Bible Notes

<sup>9</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

### **Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:**

Let me begin by reminding you that what we see here, especially at the opening of the chapter, is Paul speaking in a way that is quite familiar in the Jewish Talmud. Paul debates as a Rabbi because he is a Rabbi. His method is to present a problem and then argue against a previous ruling in order to arrive at the correct solution. The solution then becomes a doctrine or a regulation. So, he begins the argument by asking the question: "Then what advantage has the Jews?" This refers back to chapter 2 where Paul explains that Jews and gentiles are equal before God. And rather surprisingly, when it seems as though from everything he has said up to now the answer would be "no advantage", he answers the question: "Much in every way". The Jews' advantage, says Paul, stems from the reality that they have a God established priority, a preeminence, which in every respect is valuable and important. And then Paul begins to explain the most important aspect of this pre-eminence: they have received, and were entrusted to keep and maintain, the Word of God. No other nation, no other people, had this received such an honor. When we hear Paul say that the Jews' advantage is "Much in every way", we need to take that in a conversational sense and not as a theological absolute. Often, I hear Pastors and Bible teachers say that in the Bible 'all means all: 100%'. No, it doesn't. In the Bible the terms "all" or "every" mean mostly, almost entirely, or the vast majority. "All" and "every" are not meant to be precise terms; there will be exceptions to the rule.<sup>10</sup>

**McGee:** Paul is saying, "Yes, the Jew has an advantage." The advantage, however, created a responsibility. We need to note carefully the advantage the Jew had because there is a great deal of confusion in this area. I know men who are teaching in theological seminaries who make no distinction between Judaism in the Old Testament and the church in the New Testament. Paul is making it clear that God not only gave to the nation Israel the oracles of God -- they were the ones who communicated the Word of God -- but in the Word of God was something special for them. God is not through with the nation Israel. I always test a theologian at that particular point: Does God have a future for Israel? My friend, if God doesn't have a future for Israel, I don't think He has a future for you either or for that theological professor. All God's promises are in the same Word of God. God is going to make good John 3:16, and God is also going to make good His covenant with Abraham in chapter 12 of Genesis. Listen again to Dr. Stifler as he is speaking of Israel: "His advantage was not that God sowed Judaism and the world reaped Christianity. That blots out Judaism. It was first of all 'that unto them were committed to the oracles of God,' not that they were made a mere Bible depository, but that God gave them, as Jews, promises, not yet fulfilled, and peculiarly their own. The Old Testament, the record of its oracles, contains not one promise either of or to the church as an organization. It does not predict a church; it foreshadows a kingdom in which the Jew shall be head and not lose his national distinction as he does in the church." Now, friend, I think that's one of the most important and profound statements that has been made concerning the Word of God. At this point "great" theologians differ. Dr. Adolph Saphir was a converted Jew, and he made this tremendous, pointed statement: "The view that is so prevalent, that Israel is a shadow of the church, and now that the type is fulfilled vanishes from our horizon, is altogether unscriptural. Israel is not the shadow fulfilled and absorbed in the church, but the basis on which the church rests." Friend, that is an important comment, and that's what Paul is saying here -- that the Jew has a great advantage. God has a future for him, and his faithlessness will not destroy God's promise. Listen to Paul:<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

<sup>11</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

**Guzik:** Much in every way! Paul knows there are many advantages God gave to the Jewish people. In particular, He entrusted them with the oracles of God, which speaks of God's written revelation before the time of Jesus. He gave the Jewish people His Word, and that is an indescribable gift.

“This was their prime privilege, that they were God's library-keepers, that this heavenly treasure was concredited to them.” (Trapp)

Paul will later expand on the advantage of the Jewish people in Romans 9:4, explaining that Israel also had the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises.<sup>12</sup>

**ESV:** One might expect Paul to answer that no advantage or “value” results from being Jews. Instead, he claims that the Jews have great advantages, consisting chiefly in possessing the oracles of God, which refers to the OT Scriptures and may focus (given what Paul says in the verses following) on God's promises to save Israel. On the Jews being entrusted with the oracles of God, see Deut. 4:8; 5:22–27; Ps. 147:20.<sup>13</sup>

**<sup>3</sup>For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?**

“Shall their unbelief nullify the faithfulness of God?”<sup>14</sup>

**Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:**

And yet, even with their great distinction as the keepers of God's oracles to mankind, the Jews failed in their obligations. And so, Paul acknowledges this failure by asking yet another question in verse 3. He asks: 'but if Israel was unfaithful, does that lack of faithfulness cancel God's faithfulness towards them?' That, my friends, is a very volatile question because it involves the issue of whether Israel is still God's special people, or has God abandoned them because they broke the covenant? Or in what in Theology circles is called supersessionism (Replacement Theology), due to their rebellion has Israel been replaced by the gentile Church? For centuries, including in our day, much of the institutional Church answers this question with a resounding, "Yes it does!" It would have been nice if Church authorities would just read, and take seriously, a couple more verses because in verse 4 Paul answers the question that he asked to his straw man. He says that if some Jews failed by being unfaithful to God, that this certainly does not affect God's faithfulness to them. Let's be clear that this faithfulness of God has to do with His being faithful to the covenants that He made with Israel. And conversely, Israel's unfaithfulness is based upon their not being faithful to those same covenants. So while Israel broke their end of the deal, God kept His (and continues to keep it). Thus the covenants remain intact and effective (the Covenants of Abraham and Moses) not because Israel upheld them (they didn't); it is because God, the guarantor of the covenants, upheld them. Therefore the advantage that Israel and the Jewish people have always enjoyed over the gentiles continues enforce. Gentiles have not superseded Jews as God's covenant people. Gentiles do not have an advantage over Jews.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001)

<sup>13</sup> ESV Study Bible Notes

<sup>14</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, [khouse.org](http://khouse.org)

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

**McGee:** "If some were without faith" is a better translation. Shall their lack of faith cancel out the faithfulness of God? This is another objection that would be put up, and Paul meets this by going back to the first. Now if the advantage of the Jew did not serve the intended purpose, does this not mean God's faithfulness to His people is annulled? The Jew failed; doesn't that mean God failed? No. God's promise to send Israel the Redeemer was not defeated by their willful disobedience and rejection. All His promises for the future of the nation will be fulfilled to His glory in spite of their unbelief. Now, my friend, you may not like that, but I personally thank God that His promises to me do not depend on my faithfulness. If it had depended on me, I would have been lost long ago. Thank God for His faithfulness!<sup>16</sup>

**Guzik:** For what if some did not believe? The fact that the Jewish people as a whole to that point had rejected the gospel did not mean that God's faithfulness to them was in vain. It did not mean that God's work was futile or without effect.

"I have to say, with Paul, 'What if some did not believe?' It is no new thing; for there have always been some who have rejected the revelation of God. What then? You and I had better go on believing, and testing for ourselves, and proving the faithfulness of God, and living upon Christ our Lord, even though we see another set of doubters, and another, and yet another ad infinitum. The gospel is no failure, as many of us know." (Spurgeon)<sup>17</sup>

**ESV:** 3–4 Even though the Jews were unfaithful and refused to trust and obey God, he remains faithful to them and therefore will fulfill his covenant promises, particularly his promise to save them. (Paul is speaking generally and does not mean that every single Jew will be saved; he further develops God's faithfulness to the Jews in chs. 9-11.) Since every person is a liar and a sinner, God is justified, i.e., vindicated in the justice of his judgment, especially (in this context) his judgment of unbelieving Jews.<sup>18</sup>

**4God 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.**

**Missler:** *may genoito!* "Let it not be so!"

If you don't believe the promises that God has given the Jew, you are calling God a liar! [Paul is calling the Reconstructionists liars!] Cf. 1 John 5:10 Cf. Psalm 51:1-4. David right after he confessed his sin and acknowledge his guilt and repented ( 1 John 1:9).

Repentance is essential to the Jew—and to ourselves as Christians!  
Cf. Zechariah 12:10-13:1; Hosea 5:15.<sup>19</sup>

### **Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:**

So Paul refutes the straw man's suggestion by saying "Heaven forbid!" in answer to the question of whether God has rescinded His faithfulness to the covenants He made with Israel. In Greek the term "Heaven forbid" is *me genoito*. Literally it translates to "let it not be". However, what we are actually dealing with is Hebrew idiom, and it gets watered down when it is

---

<sup>16</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>17</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001)

<sup>18</sup> ESV Study Bible Notes

<sup>19</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, [khouse.org](http://khouse.org)

expressed in Greek. I showed you a little trick a few lessons ago to find out how we can, in some cases, better understand what the Hebrew thought is behind these Greek words of the New Testament. The trick is that we go to the Greek Septuagint, which is a very early translation of the Hebrew Bible (the Old Testament). Then we compare the Greek next to the Hebrew and we can see which Greek word was chosen to translate a particular Hebrew word in the Old Testament. Next, we can investigate exactly what that Hebrew word meant, which tells us how it was also meant for the Greek equivalent word to be taken. Once we know that, we can apply it generally anywhere we find that same Greek word, OT or NT. In the Septuagint (the Old Testament) it is the Greek words *me genoito* that are used to translate the Hebrew expression "*chalilah*". *Chalilah* is a very passionate and strong expression of intense negativity. In the Old Testament *chalilah* is often translated to English as "a curse on it" or "away with it". This is why you'll see some English translations say, "God forbid" or "Heaven forbid" because in English those are intensely negative terms. But in reality, the words God, Heaven and forbid are not there. It is merely an attempt to show just how emphatic of a response Paul is making. And yet, there is one other element. Saying "*chalilah*" is a standard Rabbinic response in the Talmud for when one Rabbi disagrees with the premise and/or religious ruling that another Rabbi has established. So, what we read is Paul arguing in a familiar, standard Rabbinic way.<sup>20</sup>

**McGee:** In other words, the unbeliever that raises this question is a liar and God is going to make him out to be a liar someday. Why? Because the faithfulness of God is true and cannot be changed. How important that is! John says, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son" (1John 5:10). How bad is it not to believe that God gave His Son to die for you? Well, I'll tell you how bad it is: You make God a liar. That's what you do when you reject His Son.<sup>21</sup>

**Guzik:** Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar: Paul reminds us that God will be justified in all His actions. In the end, it will be demonstrated that even our unrighteousness somehow proclaimed His righteousness and glory, even if only in judgment.

"Should any man say that the promise of God had failed toward him, let him examine his heart and his ways, and he will find that he has departed out of that way in which alone God could, consistent with his holiness and truth, fulfill the promise." (Clarke)

Spurgeon on let God be true but every man a liar: "It is a strange, strong expression; but it is none too strong. If God says one thing, and every man in the world says another, God is true, and all men are false. God speaks the truth, and cannot lie. God cannot change; his word, like himself, is immutable. We are to believe God's truth if nobody else believes it. The general consensus of opinion is nothing to a Christian. He believes God's word, and he thinks more of that than of the universal opinion of men."<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

<sup>21</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>22</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001)

**CJSBN:** Heaven forbid! A Jewish idiom from the LXX from the Hebrew Chalilah! (Gen. 44:7, 17; Josh. 22:29; 24:16), translated, "A curse upon it!" Occurring fifteen times in the NT, ten in Romans (here and 3:6, 31; 6:2, 15; 7:7, 13; 9:14; 11:1, 11), Sha'ul uses this to set at the forefront God's eternal covenant with the Jewish people and his refusal to set them aside.<sup>23</sup>

**<sup>5</sup>But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man)**

Implied: "We did God a favor by being so rebellious! Is God going to judge us for glorifying Him?"<sup>24</sup>

**Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:**

Verse 5 enters us into a fascinating theological whirlpool, and I will confess up front that my recent research has caused me to change my mind on what I used to think this passage was conveying to us. The passage reads: "Now if our unrighteousness highlights God's righteousness, what should we say? That God is unrighteous to inflict His anger on us?" Along with most other Biblical commentators I used to believe that what is being said as a theological principle is that it is the extreme nature of humanity's lack of righteousness that necessarily demonstrates God's profound righteousness. Thus, says Paul, would God be unrighteous to inflict His anger on us? To which Paul answers "Heaven forbid". If this was true how could God judge the world?

The usual theological assumption is that God uses the unrighteousness of mankind to prove His own righteousness. Let me say it another way: it is regularly assumed that Paul is saying that God more or less allows people to sin in order that He has a means to show the world just how righteous He is. This is rather standard Christian doctrine, but I don't buy it because if God had to allow wicked things to be done for sin to happen in order to prove His own righteousness, then how can it be just to turn around and punish man for committing these same sins? After all, according to this theological rationale, if mankind didn't sin then God would have little way to prove His righteousness. Or in another way of thinking, God's righteousness is to be measured relative to man's unrighteousness. None of this works; to me the entire premise is just wrong minded. This explains why Paul replies in a typical Rabbinic fashion to this straw man's ruling that he disagrees with, "Heaven forbid!" But what is he saying "Heaven forbid" to? He is not replying to whether God is unrighteous to inflict His anger, but rather he is saying "Heaven forbid" to the entire line of reasoning. That is, it is a false reasoning to think that God's righteousness can only be established in proportion to mankind's sinfulness.<sup>25</sup>

**McGee:** By some subtle sophistry it might be argued that since the nation's unbelief merely puts in contrast the faithfulness of God, God is not just to punish that which brings greater glory to Himself. A better translation would be: "Is God unjust who visiteth with wrath by judging" these people? Now this is the severest criticism that Paul faced in preaching the gospel of the grace of God. If God uses sin to get glory to Himself, then He should not punish the sinner. This, of course, was used by some as an excuse for sinning. We'll find this again in Romans 6:1 and will deal with it then. Paul asks the question in such a way in the Greek as to demand a negative

---

<sup>23</sup> Complete Jewish Study Bible Notes

<sup>24</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

answer. God is not unjust. He says, "I speak as a man." That doesn't mean that Paul is not writing this particular passage by inspiration, but rather that he is presenting this question from the finite and human standpoint.

Now, the whole point is this: if my unrighteousness reveals the marvelous, wonderfully infinite faithfulness of God in the grace of God, then has God a right to judge me? That's what Paul is asking here. This makes it very clear that the unsaved world in Paul's day understood that Paul was preaching salvation by the grace of God. How wonderful!<sup>26</sup>

**Guzik:** a. But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Paul brings the counter-argument of an opponent: "If my unrighteousness will demonstrate God's righteousness, how can God judge me? My sin ultimately serves to bring Him more glory, and that is good!"

Is God unjust who inflicts wrath? Paul was familiar with the line of thinking that says, "God is in control of everything. Even my evil will ultimately demonstrate His righteousness. Therefore God is unjust if He inflicts His wrath on me, because I'm just a pawn in His hand."

In theory, the most dramatic example of someone who might ask this question is Judas. Can you hear Judas make his case? "Lord, I know that I betrayed Jesus, but You used it for good. In fact, if I hadn't done what I did, Jesus wouldn't have gone to the cross at all. What I did even fulfilled the Scriptures. How can You judge me at all?" The answer to Judas might go like this: "Yes, God 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 God brought good out of your evil. You stand guilty before God."

I speak as a man: This doesn't mean Paul is without the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and apostolic authority. Instead he explains that only as a man – a fallen man at that – would anyone dare to question God's justice.<sup>27</sup>

**ESV:** Paul considers a false implication that could be drawn from his argument. If the Jews could repent only by God's grace, then it would be unrighteous, according to Paul's Jewish opponents, for God to pour out his wrath on those who did not repent, since as sinners they were unable to respond to him.<sup>28</sup>

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

The rabbis knew that the Gentiles were to be judged, so Paul is using an ellipsis on their own conviction...<sup>29</sup>

### **Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:**

He follows up his "Heaven forbid" response by saying (and I'm paraphrasing) that if God has to measure His faithfulness in proportion to mankind's unfaithfulness, how can He judge the world? We'd have a sliding scale of God's righteousness that is forever moving according to the forever moving level of mankind's righteousness! Essentially Paul is saying that the notion that God's

---

<sup>26</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>27</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001)

<sup>28</sup> ESV Study Bible Notes

<sup>29</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

faithfulness must be demonstrated by mankind's unfaithfulness is absurd. And he goes on to give an example of its absurdity in verse 7.

**McGee:** If God would have no right to judge us because our sin merely reveals the grace of God, then God would have no right to judge any person, you see, because they would reveal something of the common grace of God.

Paul's answer is again an emphatic and categorical denial of any such premise that God is unjust. The argument here is that if this particular sin merely enhances the glory of God and the grace of God, then all sin would do the same. Therefore, God would not be able to judge the world. He would abdicate His throne as Judge of all the earth. This specious argument would say that Hitler ought not to be judged. And whoever you are -- even if you are an unbeliever -- you do believe that some people ought to be judged. Now, you may not think that you ought to be, but you believe somebody ought to be judged. Everyone believes that. We have that innate sense within us today, and God has put it there.<sup>30</sup>

**Guzik:** Certainly not! For then how will God judge the world? Paul dismisses the question of his opponent easily. If things were such as his opponent suggested, then God could judge no one.

It is true that God will use even the unrighteousness of man to accomplish His work and bring praise to His name – Judas' betrayal of Jesus is a perfect example. Nevertheless, part of the way God glorifies Himself in man's sin is by righteously judging that unrighteousness.

How will God judge the world? For both Paul and his readers it was a given that a judgment day was coming, when some will be acquitted and some condemned. He didn't need to contest this point; it was simply understood in that culture.

Paul understood that God would judge the world, both Jew and Gentile. Many of the Jews of Paul's day figured that God would condemn the Gentile for his sin, but save the Jew despite his sin.<sup>31</sup>

**ESV:** Paul does not provide a full answer to the objection here (for that, see chs. 9-11). He shows that the Jewish objector's position is untenable, for then God could not judge the (Gentile) world either, and no evil behavior would be punished.<sup>32</sup>

**<sup>7</sup>For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?**

#### **Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:**

Paul says (and again, I paraphrase), if I lie, and by means of being a liar this elevates God's righteousness (remember that sliding scale?); and by my lying God therefore receives even more acclaim and honor, then why should I get punished as a sinner for making God even more glorious by my lying? Isn't it advantageous to God for me to sin, since the more sin I do the more glory He gets? I hope you're seeing why this standard theological doctrine that indeed our unrighteousness is meant to highlight God's righteousness simply can't be so. And that doctrine pretty much has to ignore everything Paul says in verses 7 and 8 because in verse 8 Paul then

---

<sup>30</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>31</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001)

<sup>32</sup> ESV Study Bible Notes

takes such faulty reasoning to its logical conclusion. He says that if the straw man's suggestion was really true, then what else is a good Jew to do in response but to say, OK; then "let us do evil so that good can come from it". In fact, apparently this same doctrine of God's righteousness being established according to humanity's unrighteousness, which much of Christianity has held to for centuries, is what many Jews held to in Paul's day. And so, he says that even though as Jews we certainly don't think or say to one another "let's do evil so that good can come from it" in fact the Jews are accused by gentiles of believing that, due to their tradition that man's unrighteousness establishes God's righteousness.

Let me pause to say this: our Christian doctrines are vitally important. They are not just important to what we believe but also to how we are perceived by the unsaved world. In Scripture we find that God is always concerned with the worldly perception of us, His worshippers, because it reflects on Him. And when we don't bother to think through some of these doctrines that we causally tell others that we believe in, and so they should too, and when we don't examine where they logically lead to or ask where they came from, it can not only relegate us to living a deception, it can also make us appear anywhere from mean to irrational to the world. And thus, it makes God look mean and irrational. What we just examined is a perfect example of this.<sup>33</sup>

**McGee:** The lie here means moral falsehood. Each individual could claim exemption from the judgment of God because his sin had advanced the glory of God.<sup>34</sup>

**Guzik:** For if the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner? Paul re-states the objection of an imaginary questioner: "If God will glorify Himself through my lie, how can He judge me, since I seem to indirectly increase His glory?"<sup>35</sup>

**ESV:** 7–8 Indeed, some of Paul's Jewish opponents insisted that he taught a doctrine of "cheap grace," i.e., that God receives more glory when Christians do evil and then are forgiven. Paul emphatically rejects such a view (as "slander") but waits until ch. 6 to examine this charge in more detail.<sup>36</sup>

**<sup>8</sup>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.**

**Missler:** Elliptical confirmation of Paul's message: salvation by grace alone, not works. Thus, salvation cannot be lost through works—it is secure eternally. You cannot add to what Christ has completed on the cross.

What keeps you from sinning? A grateful heart, overflowing with love for their Savior!<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

<sup>34</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>35</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001)

<sup>36</sup> ESV Study Bible Notes

<sup>37</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, [khouse.org](http://khouse.org)

**McGee:** In this verse Paul drives his argument to its logical, yet untenable conclusion. This is called an argumentum ad absurdum. If sin magnifies the glory of God, then the more sin the more glory. Some had falsely accused Paul of teaching this absurdity. It was ridiculous, for it was Paul who insisted that God must judge sin. As surely as there is sin there must be judgment. You see, this facetious type of argument which Paul has met here makes a Robespierre a saint in the name of utilitarianism. It's the old bromide that the end justifies the means.

Now we come to this section where we have the accusation of "guilty" by God against mankind. Paul is going to conclude this section on sin by bringing mankind up before the Judge of all the earth. And the accusation of "guilty" is made by God against all mankind -- both Jew and Gentile, black and white, male and female, rich and poor. It doesn't make any difference who we are; if we belong to the human race, you and I stand guilty before God. And then Paul is going to take us to God's clinic. It's a real spiritual clinic, and the Great Physician is going to look at us. We see that there are fourteen different charges made; six of them before the Judge and the other eight before the Great Physician who says we're sick. In fact, we're sick nigh unto death. To tell the truth, we are dead in trespasses and sin. That is our condition.<sup>38</sup>

**Guzik:** Let us do evil that good may come: This was a perversion of Paul's doctrine of justification by faith, and an extension of the objection of his imaginary questioner. If you take the thinking of Paul's adversary far enough, you end up saying, "Let's sin as much as we can so God can be glorified even more." This shows us that one way to examine a teaching is to extend its meaning and consequences and see where you end up.

Of course, let us do evil that good may come was not Paul's teaching. He was slanderously reported to teach this. Still, it is possible to see how this accusation came as Paul freely preached forgiveness and salvation by grace through faith in Jesus, not works.

Most Christian preaching is so far from the true gospel of free grace that Paul preached that there is no way anyone could even slanderously report that they taught "let us do evil that good may come." If we find ourselves sometimes accused of preaching a gospel that is "too open" and too centered on faith and grace and God's work then we find ourselves in good company with Paul.

Their condemnation is just: Paul will not even answer such an absurd twisting of his gospel. He simply says of those who would teach such things or accuse Paul of teaching them, their condemnation is just. God rightly condemns anyone who teaches or believes such a thing.

Twisting the glorious free gift of God in Jesus into a supposed license to sin is perhaps the peak of man's depravity. It takes the most beautiful gift of God and perverts it and mocks it. This twisting is so sinful Paul saves it for last, because it is beyond the depravity of the pagan (Romans 1:24-32), beyond the hypocrisy of the moralist (Romans 2:1-5), and beyond the false confidence of the Jew (Romans 2:17-29).<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>39</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001)

**<sup>9</sup>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;**

**Missler:** (“We” = the Jew; “They” = the Gentile)

All Guilty:

1:18-32: The Pagan Man has the creation;

2:1-16: The Moral Man also guilty; he doesn't even live up to his own conscience;

2:17-29: The Religious Man (Jew): the greatest historical illustration that commitment and sincerity still doesn't make it.

Summary Argument: (airtight case!)

The Case Against the Entire Human Race 14 Distinct Counts: (Quoted from Ps 14:1-3; 53:1-3;

5:9; 140:3; 10:7; Isa 59:7, 8; Psa 36:1)

10-12: Man's Character hopelessly flawed

13-17: Man's Conduct

13-14: Speech

15-17: Actions

18: The Cause<sup>40</sup>

### **Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:**

In verse 9 Paul expands on the argument with his straw man. He says, "So are we Jews better off?" Notice first of all that Paul says "we Jews". To those who think Paul has "converted" and thus become a "Christian", which at all times referred to a gentile, this is yet another proof that he did not. He is a Jewish Believer in Yeshua; not a Christian. I'll paraphrase Paul's question: In light of Believing Jews having an advantage over Believing gentiles in every way, does this make us (Jews) better off than our gentile brothers in Christ? To which Paul answers the straw man: "not entirely". So, this modifies his answer to "Then when advantage has the Jew" when he said that the advantage was much in every way. But now he says that there are limitations. And that limitation is that in the end a Jew is as much a slave to sin as a gentile. Thus, any thought of inherent Jewish superiority over gentiles because of their election as God's people must be abandoned. A hierarchy of superior Jews versus inferior gentiles was never God's intention. Whatever advantage Jews have is contained in the fact that God has given to them the honor of having His Laws and commands in their midst, and in having a set apart land, and the special protection and guidance of God. So, while the Jews do have God's Torah to show them what sin is and it isn't, the Torah (the Law) doesn't have the power to change people's lives. The Law doesn't have the power to break the stranglehold that sin has upon people; ALL people, including Jews. Further, no matter how hard a Jew might try to obey the Law, God is going to judge each person (Jew and gentile) impartially based on what they do. So even though trying not to sin, when a Jew inevitably sins he is as much liable to God's wrath as a gentile who doesn't have the Law, and sins.

To back up his premise that Jews are no better off in this respect than gentiles, he begins to list several Bible passages and weaves them together to form a logical thread. Verses 10 through 12 are from Psalms 14:1-3, and 53:1- 3. Verse 13 is Psalms 5:10 and 140:4. Verse 14 is Psalm 10:7. Verses 15 through 17 is Isaiah 59:7, 8 and Proverbs 1:16. Verse 18 is Psalm 36:2. The flow is that no one is righteous or kind (righteous unto God, kind unto his fellow man) so no one is adhering to the two God-principles that undergird the entire Torah: "Love your God with all your

---

<sup>40</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

heart, soul, and strength and love your neighbor as yourself". Further everyone sins if not by deed, certainly by their words (what comes up from their throats and exits from their mouths). And everyone has evil in their lifestyle rather than only good (even if they may think otherwise). I can't tell you the number of people I've spoken to who won't give their life to Messiah, but do firmly believe they're going to Heaven because they are basically good people. Therefore they don't feel they need to be saved from their sins, because they see no sin in their lives. Or, even though they may sin, it is small sins and on balance their good outweighs their bad. And finally Paul says that there is not sufficient fear of the Lord within people thus they don't have enough wisdom to see themselves as they really are.<sup>41</sup>

**McGee:** Now Paul doesn't mean "proved" here. That word is a little too strong; it does not have quite that shade of meaning, because Paul is not trying to prove man a sinner. Rather, he is showing that God judges sin. He assumes man is a sinner, and you don't have to assume it -- it is evident. He is merely stating that which is very obvious today. The better word is charged -- "for we have before charged both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin." He is just stating the case, by the way, that it doesn't make any difference who we are today -- high or low, rich or poor, good or bad -- we're all under sin.

Now it's very important to understand what it means to be "under sin." Man is a sinner four different ways. God is giving man four strikes (in baseball you get only three). (1) Man is a sinner by act. (2) Man is a sinner by nature. Sinning does not make a sinner; we sin because we are sinners. (3) Man is a sinner by imputation. We'll see that later in this epistle. (4) The estate of man is under sin. We all are under sin -- the entire human family.<sup>42</sup>

**Guzik:** a. Are we better than they? Not at all: Since Paul was Jewish by birth and heritage (Philippians 3:4-6), when he says "we" he means "we Jews." The point is that by nature, the Jewish person is no more right with God than the pagan or the moralist. Paul demonstrates that the pagan, the moralist, and the Jew are all under sin and under condemnation.

Under sin: This is a powerful phrase. It speaks of our slavery to sin, literally meaning "sold under sin." By nature every person knows what it is like to be a slave to sin, both Jews and Greeks.

"Under the power of sin, but chiefly under the guilt of sin." (Poole)

Morris on under sin: "He is regarding sin as a tyrant ruler, so that sinners are 'under' it (Jerusalem Bible, 'under sin's dominion'); they cannot break free."<sup>43</sup>

**CJSBN:** All people, Jews and Gentiles alike, are controlled by sin. In Judaism, human nature is understood as having the *Yetzer HaTov* and/or the *Yetzer Hara*. Yetzer HaTov, the good inclination, is the result of God's transforming work in our lives through Messiah Yeshua (Ps. 103:3-4).<sup>44</sup>

---

<sup>41</sup> <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

<sup>42</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>43</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001)

<sup>44</sup> Complete Jewish Study Bible Notes

**<sup>10</sup>As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:**

All have failed at something.

Verses 10 through 12 are from Psalms 14:1-3, and 53:1- 3.

**Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:**

Obviously, Paul is not suggesting that all people have sinned in exactly the same way or level of seriousness. But rather it is that among these sins, all have succumbed to one or more. Let me stop here to say that this is the point at which many commentaries say that it was not ever, and is not currently, possible to obey all of God's laws and commandments. Thus, the Law was, from its inception, a faulty covenant. I disagree; ideally it is possible to obey everything in the Torah. The problem for humanity is that from a practical point of view our evil inclinations are simply too powerfully developed for us to fully overcome them. From a technical standpoint, we can obey all of God's moral laws, and in fact during the 1000-year reign of Christ, we will.

**Deuteronomy 30:11-14 CJB** 11 For this mitzvah which I am giving you today is not too hard for you, it is not beyond your reach. 12 It isn't in the sky, so that you need to ask, 'Who will go up into the sky for us, bring it to us and make us hear it, so that we can obey it?' 13 Likewise, it isn't beyond the sea, so that you need to ask, 'Who will cross the sea for us, bring it to us and make us hear it, so that we can obey it?' 14 On the contrary, the word is very close to you- in your mouth, even in your heart; therefore, you can do it!

Did God lie to Israel, and to mankind? Or was this just kind of a hyperbolic Heavenly cheerleading to obey the Law all the time knowing it was not possible? Of course not. Obedience to the Law is possible and expected for Israel, and all who join themselves to Israel.<sup>45</sup>

**McGee:** This is the first charge: This should read, "It is written that there is none righteous, no, not one," because it is a free rendering of Psalm 14:1.

He makes the positive statement that "none... doeth good." "Doeth good" and righteousness are the same. What does it mean to be righteous? Well, it means to be right. Right with whom? We are to be right with God. And if we are going to be right with God, it is a little different from being right with your fellow man. When we have differences with friends, we may or may not be to blame, but we have to reach some sort of compromise. But if we are going to be right with God, we are going to play according to His rules. Actually, you can't play games with Him. You see, God's salvation is a take it or leave it proposition. God is not forcing anybody to take His salvation. You don't have to be saved. You can turn it down. God says, "This is My universe. You're living on My little world, using My sunshine and My water and My air, and I have worked out a plan of salvation that is true to My character and My nature. My plan and My program is the one that's going to be carried out. You're a sinner, and I want to save you because I love you. Now here it is. Take it or leave it." That's what God is saying to a lost world. This is what He is saying to you. Have you accepted it? Well, I want you to know that I have accepted it. To be right with God, then, means to accept His salvation.

When I was in school, I had a professor of sociology who really enjoyed batting that little ball around, saying, "Who is right? Who is going to make the rules?" Well, I know one thing: that professor is not going to make the rules. I know something else: I am not going to make the

---

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

rules, and you are not going to make the rules either. God makes the rules. Take it or leave it. That is God's plan; that is God's program. There is none who is righteous, none right with God. But He has worked out a plan. No one has done good according to God's standard, according to God's method. That is the Judge's first charge.<sup>46</sup>

**ESV:** 10–12 Paul focuses on the sinfulness of every human being, citing Ps. 14:1–3 and perhaps echoing Eccles. 7:20. When Paul says none is righteous, no one seeks for God, and no one does good, he means that no human being on his own seeks for God or does any good that merits salvation. Paul does not deny that human beings perform some actions that conform externally to goodness, but these actions, prior to salvation, are still stained by evil, since they are not done for God's glory (Rom. 1:21) and do not come from faith (14:23).<sup>47</sup>

**Guzik:** There is none righteous, no, not one: These quotations from the Psalms (Psalms 14:1-3; 5:9, 140:3, 10:7 and 36:1) and from Isaiah 59:7-8 all support this opening statement.

Paul looks at the human condition from top to bottom. He begins with the head and moves down to the feet. Warren Wiersbe calls this passage “An X-ray study of the lost sinner, from head to foot.”

This look at the human condition is depressing. What’s the point? The Apostle Paul wants us to understand our complete inability to save ourselves. The fall touches every part of man’s being, and the inventory of body parts corrupted by the fall demonstrates this.

There is none righteous, no, not one: When God finds none righteous, it is because there are none. It isn’t as if there were some and God couldn’t see them. There has never been a truly righteous man apart from Jesus Christ. “Even Adam was not righteous: he was innocent – not knowing good and evil.” (Newell)<sup>48</sup>

**<sup>11</sup>There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.**

All are willfully ignorant! (Chapter 1:18-32 nailed this thoroughly)

**McGee:** The second charge is this: In other words, there is none who acts on the knowledge that he has. No one is the person he would like to be.

The third charge:

"There is none that seeketh after God." God is not concealed today. God is not playing hide-and-seek with man. He has revealed Himself. You remember that Paul told the Athenians, the philosophers on Mars Hill: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30). He is not winking at sin today. God is out in the open telling man that he is a sinner and offering him salvation. And His salvation is clear, you see. That's what He is saying here. And there is none that seeks after God. The anthologies of religion say man is out looking for God -- how fallacious they are! It's claimed that in the evolutionary process religion is man's search for God. Well, actually, is religion man's search for God? No. That's not what the Bible teaches. Believe me, man hasn't found out very

---

<sup>46</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>47</sup> ESV Study Bible Notes

<sup>48</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001)

much about God on his own. He hasn't advanced very far in that direction, because he's going the wrong way. He's going away from God.<sup>49</sup>

**Guzik:** There is none who seeks after God: We deceive ourselves into thinking that man, on his own, really does seek after God. But don't all the religion and rituals and practices from the beginning of time demonstrate that man seeks after God? Not at all. If man initiates the search then he doesn't seek the true God, the God of the Bible. Instead he seeks an idol that he makes himself.

"You have gone through this form of worship, but you have not sought after God. I am sick of this empty religiousness. We see it everywhere; it is not communion with God, it is not getting to God; indeed, God is not in it at all." (Spurgeon)<sup>50</sup>

**12<sup>2</sup>They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.**

**Missler:** They have deliberately turned their backs on the truth. They have dishonored God instead of glorifying Him. (What use are they?) They do not follow after that which is good. [Man does not evolve upwards: he devolves downward!]<sup>51</sup>

**McGee:** Then the fourth charge that He makes is: They've detoured. They left the way they knew was right. And primitive tribes have an ancient tradition that way back at one time their forefathers knew the living and true God. My friend, if you are honest, you know that you are not doing what you ought to do. Furthermore, you are not going to do it, although you know what it is. You have gone out of the way. Man has deviated from the way. This is the fourth charge that God makes.

The fifth charge is: "they are together become unprofitable." The word unprofitable suggests overripe, spoiled fruit. It could be translated, "they have altogether become sour." I am very fond of fruit, especially the papaya. But when it passes the ripe state and becomes rotten, there is nothing quite as bad as that. Mankind is not lush fruit; he is corrupt fruit. That is what the Judge of all the earth is saying.

The sixth charge: "there is none that doeth good, no, not one." This is a triple negative. Mankind is like a group of travelers who have gone in the opposite direction from the right one, and not one can help the others. Our Lord said to the religious leaders of His day, "You are blind leaders of the blind" (see Matt. 15:14). That is what the Judge of all the earth says about you and about me and about everyone on the face of the earth.

Now Paul transfers us over to God's clinic into the hands of the Great Physician. This is a spiritual clinic, and the Great Physician says that we are spiritually sick.<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>50</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001)

<sup>51</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

<sup>52</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

**Guzik:** They have together become unprofitable: The word unprofitable has the idea of rotten fruit. It speaks of something that was permanently bad and therefore useless.<sup>53</sup>

**13***Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips:*

(Psa 5:9.) Asp = Egyptian cobra. Cf. Psa 140:3.  
Verse 13 is Psalms 5:10 and 140:4.

**McGee:** When you go to the doctor, what's the first thing that he says to you? Well, I have to go in for a regular check-up because of the fact that I apparently have cancer in my system, and I report regularly in case of an outbreak. Well, it is a ritual for me to go in, and I sit down in the little room where he does his examination. Do you know the first thing that he says to me? "Open your mouth." Then he takes a little wooden stick and pushes it around in my mouth, and he looks at my throat. Likewise God, the Lord Jesus, the Great Physician, does that with mankind. Do you know what He says? "Their throat is an open sepulchre." Have you ever smelled decaying human flesh? When a little girl in Nashville was kidnapped many years ago, the sheriff of the county was a member and a deacon in my church. He called me up and told me they had found the body of a little girl, and they were going out to exhume it. He wanted to know if I wanted to go with them. I got to the place where they had taken the body out -- it had been buried several days -- and the body was corrupt. Oh, it was terrible! I've never been as sick in my life as I was at the odor of corrupt human flesh. I always think of that in connection with this verse.

God says you smell like an open grave! Someone, I think it was Mel Trotter, said, "If we could see ourselves as God sees us, we couldn't even stand ourselves!" Well, that is what Paul is saying here.

And "with their tongues they have used deceit." That's number two. And the second thing my doctor says to me (after he looks at my throat) is, "Stick out your tongue!" That's what the Great Physician says to the human family. "Stick out your tongue." And when God looks at the tongue of mankind -- that means your tongue and mine -- do you know what He says? "The poison of asps is under their lips." There's a snake house and a place for reptiles in the zoo in San Diego, California, which I have been through several times. As I look at the vicious fangs of those diamondback rattlers, I think of the poison that is there. Friend, right now, if you go and look in the mirror, you will see a tongue that is far more dangerous than any diamondback rattlesnake.

He can't hurt your reputation at all. He can kill your body, but he can't hurt your reputation. You have a tongue that you can use to ruin the reputation of someone else. You can ruin the fair name of some woman. You can ruin the reputation of some man. I think today the most vicious thing in some of our churches is the gossip that is carried on. I actually advised someone not too long ago not to join a certain church, because I happen to know that some of the worst gossips in the world are in that church. And I want to tell you they have slaughtered the reputation of many individuals. Do you know who they are? They are the so-called spiritual crowd. I call them the spiritual snobs, because that's what they are. With their tongues they use deceit, and "the poison

---

<sup>53</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001)

of asps [adder's poison] is under their lips." Oh, how vicious the human tongue is! How terrible it can be.<sup>54</sup>

**Guzik:** Their throat is an open tomb: With these references from the Psalms, Paul calls virtually every part of man's body into guilt. The throat, tongue, lips, mouth, feet, and eyes are filled with sin and rebellion against God.

Their feet are swift to shed blood: "For further details, read your daily papers!" (Newell). For example, the Los Angeles Times reported that in 1992 murders reached a record level of 800 in Los Angeles County.<sup>55</sup>

**ESV:** 13–14 Paul zeros in on sins of the tongue, quoting from Ps. 5:9 and 10:7. The reference to the grave highlights either the corruption of the heart or the deadly effects of sin. Human beings deceive through flattery or lying, and the venom of asps points to the poisonous effect of one's speech. Nor is evil speech merely occasional, for people's mouths are full of evil, so that cursing and malice characterize their lives before salvation.<sup>56</sup>

#### **<sup>14</sup>Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:**

Man's tongue is a window into his heart. Cf. Mk 7:18-23; Mt 12:34-37; Cf. Romans 10:9, 10! Verse 14 is Psalm 10:7.

**McGee:** This is the fourth thing the Great Physician says about man. His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud; under his tongue is mischief and vanity. Also he is prone to curse. And if you listen to what is being said today, you know that cursing is in the vocabulary of all men, whether he is a ditch digger or a college professor. They're better at using profanity than they are at any other language. A man challenged this verse one time when I was a pastor in downtown Los Angeles. He didn't believe it was true. So I said to him, "Let's test it. You and I will walk out here to the corner, and the first man who comes by, whoever he is, you punch him in the mouth and see what comes out. I guarantee that it will be as God says."<sup>57</sup>

#### **<sup>15</sup>Their feet are swift to shed blood:**

(Isa 59:7) Cf. Eph 6:15  
Verses 15 through 17 is Isaiah 59:7, 8 and Proverbs 1:16.

**McGee:** Then God says the fifth thing. Isaiah 59:7 gives the unabridged version: "Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths." What a picture this is of mankind -- "Their feet are swift to shed blood."<sup>58</sup>

---

<sup>54</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>55</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001)

<sup>56</sup> ESV Study Bible Notes

<sup>57</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>58</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

**ESV:** 15–17 Next Paul considers the impact of evil in terms of actions and in society, modifying and abridging Isa. 59:7–8. Human history is littered with murder and warfare. Sinners leave in their wake devastation, ruin, and misery. Instead of knowing peace (see note on Rom. 1:7) they have sown disorder and confusion into the world.<sup>59</sup>

**<sup>16</sup>Destruction and misery *are* in their ways:**

Man has no fulfillment except in glorifying God.

**McGee:** Man leaves desolation and distress behind him. This is included in Isaiah 59:7 which we have quoted.<sup>60</sup>

**<sup>17</sup>And the way of peace have they not known:**

Eph 6:15. There is no peace when separated from God.

**McGee:** Man does not know the way of peace. Look about you in the world today. After all these years man is still talking about peace, but he hasn't found it. Just read your newspaper, my friend; there is no peace in this world.<sup>61</sup>

**<sup>18</sup>There is no fear of God before their eyes.**

(Psalm 36:1) As in the days of Noah: “The end of all flesh has become before me.” Gen 6:12, 13; Deut 5:29.

Verse 18 is Psalm 36:2.

**McGee:** Paul seems to sum up all of man's sin in this final statement. He has no fear of God at all. Man is living as if God does not exist. Man actually defies God. What a picture this gives of mankind!

Now we come to the final thing Paul has to say about sin. Because there are still those who will say, “Well, we have the Law and we'll keep the Law. We will hold onto it.”<sup>62</sup>

**Guzik:** There is no fear of God before their eyes: This summarizes the entire thought. Every sin and rebellion against God happens because we do not have a proper respect for Him. Wherever there is sin, there is no fear of God.

John Calvin on the fear of God: “In short, as it is a bridle to restrain our wickedness, so when it is wanting, we feel at liberty to indulge every kind of licentiousness.”<sup>63</sup>

---

<sup>59</sup> ESV Study Bible Notes

<sup>60</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>61</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>62</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>63</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001)

**ESV:** This citation from Ps. 36:1 identifies the root cause of sin as the failure to fear and honor God. Any society that commonly assumes that God will not discipline sin in this life or judge it in the next will have no fear of God and will therefore give itself increasingly to evil.<sup>64</sup>

**<sup>19</sup>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.**

Deut 27:26; James 2:10; Gal 3:10, 11 (q.v. Hab 2:4!)

**Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:**

Verse 19 is a kind of summary meant to hammer home the point that whether living within the Law (Jews) or living as part of the non-Jewish world (gentiles), everyone deserves God's wrath. "Every mouth being stopped" is meant to depict a defendant in a courtroom who has been pleading his case; but the evidence against him is now so overwhelming that he has nothing left to say. He is guilty as charged; there is no doubt and he knows that nothing is left but the verdict and the punishment. So he goes silent.

Recall that chapter 3 is being aimed very much at Jews because Jews in this era sincerely believed that simply being a Jew exempted them from God's judgment and wrath. And if that is the case, then they have little need for the Gospel. The gentile who believes he lives a good and moral life, and the Jew who believes that his fortunate heritage immunizes him from God's wrath, are in the greatest danger. This is sort of Paul's version of that TV crime show called Scared Straight where youthful offenders are taken to an adult penitentiary and given a taste of what true prison life is. Hopefully they'll leave so scared and shaken that they will change their ways and never wind up there for real.<sup>65</sup>

**McGee:** Man cannot attain righteousness by the Mosaic Law. It is as if mankind in desperation grabbed for the Law as the proverbial straw when drowning. The Law won't lift him up. Actually, it does the opposite. To hold onto the Law is like a man jumping out of an airplane, and instead of taking a parachute, he takes a sack of cement with him. Well, believe me, the Law will pull you down. It condemns man. It's a ministration of death.<sup>66</sup>

**Guzik:** Whatever the law says: Paul points out that this horrific description of man's utter sinfulness come to us in the law; and it is intended for those under the law, to silence every critic and to demonstrate the universal guilt of mankind – that all the world may become guilty before God.

"We may add, that though all the vices here enumerated are not found conspicuously in every individual, yet they may be justly and truly ascribed to human nature, as we have already observed." (Calvin)

It says to those who are under the law: If God speaks this way to those who had the law, and attempted to do the law, it is evident that by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight.

---

<sup>64</sup> ESV Study Bible Notes

<sup>65</sup> <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

<sup>66</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

Remember that many Jewish people of Paul's day took every passage of the Old Testament describing evil and applied it only to the Gentiles – not to themselves. Paul makes it clear that God speaks to those who are under the law.<sup>67</sup>

**ESV:** 19–20 These verses represent the culmination and conclusion of vv. 9–18 and all of 1:18–3:20, showing that all, without exception, are sinners.

3:19 The law here, as is typically the case in Romans, refers to the Mosaic law. Those under the law are the Jews. But why is every mouth left without excuse and condemned before God if the law is addressed only to the Jews? Paul's logic is that if the Jews, who are God's special covenant people, cannot keep the law, then it follows that Gentiles, who are taught much of the law by their consciences, will not avoid God's condemnation either.<sup>68</sup>

Whatever the Torah says...in order that every mouth may be stopped. From a kal v'chomer argument, reasoning from the lesser to the greater, Sha'ul draws upon his understanding of Adonai's relationship with Isra'el. If a Jew, who had the Torah, is guilty of breaking Torah, then how much more for the nations who have no measurable or identifiable covenant with the God of Isra'el?<sup>69</sup>

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

**Missler:** The beginning of the answer: acknowledgment of reality:

- 1) To show us what sin is;
- 2) To drive us to sin more (!?): Rom 5:20-21
- 3) To drive us to our knees! Gal 3:24. Faith (in Christ) alone.<sup>70</sup>

### **Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:**

Then we come to the powerful verse 20. Here Paul states just what the purpose of the Law is, and what it is not. First, no one will be righteoused by God as a result of obeying the Law. Or in Christian-eze, no one will be justified by God as a result of obedience to the Law. Then why do the Law? Because says Paul, the Law shows us what sin is. To do the Law is to do right; to NOT do the Law is to sin. The Law reveals just how high that standard is in order for us, by our own deeds, to achieve justification. And even that isn't sufficient because in addition to all else, our underlying attitude as to why we do the Law matters. The words "For in His sight no one alive will be considered righteous" is taken from a Psalm of David: 143.

**CJB Psalm 143:1** A psalm of David: ADONAI, hear my prayer; listen to my pleas for mercy. In your faithfulness, answer me, and in your righteousness. 2 Don't bring your servant to trial, since in your sight no one alive would be considered righteous.

So 1000 years before Christ, King David knew that there is no one alive who can be considered righteous based on their works and deeds. Because of our fallen natures, our evil

---

<sup>67</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001)

<sup>68</sup> ESV Study Bible Notes

<sup>69</sup> Complete Jewish Study Bible Notes

<sup>70</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

inclinations, and the impossible circumstances of the corrupt world all around us, God's standard of righteousness cannot be met by any normal human being. King David had the Law of Moses; and he grasped that while obedience to the Law was always the right thing to do, the Law wasn't created in order to manufacture a self-righteousness.<sup>71</sup>

**McGee:** Now, I challenge any person today who believes that you have to keep the Law to be saved to take this verse and explain it. "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." And "justified" means to be declared righteous, to be saved, to meet God's standards. You can never do it, my beloved. It's absolutely impossible for mankind to do. "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified." Then what is the purpose of the Law? "By the law is the knowledge of sin." Rather than providing a salvation for man, the Law reveals man to be a sinner.

Between verses 20 and 21 there is a "Grand Canyon" division. We move out of the night into the day. Now Paul begins to speak of God's wonderful salvation. He will talk about justification by faith, which will be explained in the remainder of the chapter.<sup>72</sup>

**Guzik:** Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight: The law cannot save us. The law can't justify anyone. It is useful in giving us the knowledge of sin, but it cannot save us.

Since the time of Adam and Eve, people have tried to justify themselves by the deeds of the law. In the Garden of Eden Adam tried to make himself presentable to God by making coverings out of fig leaves – and he failed. In Job, the oldest book of the Bible, the problem is presented clearly: how can a man be righteous before God? (Job 9:2). God makes part of the answer clear here through Paul – the answer is not in the performance of good works, in the deeds of the law.

How we need to deeply understand this – that by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified!

- This means that the law, having been broken, now can only condemn us – it can never save us
- This means that even if we could now begin to perfectly keep the law of God it could not make up for past disobedience, or remove present guilt
- This means that keeping the law is not God's way of salvation or of blessing under the New Covenant

For by the law is the knowledge of sin: J.B. Phillip's paraphrase of this phrase is striking. He writes, "it is the straight-edge of the Law that shows us how crooked we are."

"Lest any should think that the law hereupon is useless, he goes on to show its use, but a quite contrary one to what they intended." (Poole)<sup>73</sup>

**ESV:** Works of the law is understood by some to refer only to the ceremonial law, i.e., those laws that separate Jews from Gentiles (such as circumcision, food laws, and Sabbath). But the context gives no indication of such a restriction, and therefore the phrase should be taken to refer to all the works or deeds required by the law. The law required perfect obedience to God's will. All people sin and fall short of this standard, therefore no one is justified by the law. Justified is a

---

<sup>71</sup> <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

<sup>72</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>73</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001)

legal term and indicates that no one will be declared to be righteous by God, who is the divine judge by virtue of his own goodness, since all violate and none fulfill God's requirements.<sup>74</sup>

No one alive will be considered righteous on the ground of legalistic observance of Torah commands. "Legalistic observance of Torah comments," instead of "works of the Law" (as this is often translated), correctly translates this verse in a non-antinomian (i.e., anti-Torah) manner since the Torah is holy, just, and good, according to Sha'ul (7:12).<sup>75</sup>

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

**Missler:** "But now..." Marks the key conclusion: The Gospel as the (only) remedy.

"The Righteousness of God" is the theme of the Epistle to the Romans.

Jer 23:5, 6; Name! (Jehovah's Witnesses refuted!); Ps 43:1, 2:Luther noted: on the basis of God's righteousness... not man's!

The only righteousness that counts is one that is given; Ps 32:1, 2 (quoted in Romans 4) Luther called this psalm "a Pauline

Psalm"; Isa 53:11 (cross justifies...)

"Without the Law" —apart from the law...Acts 10:43. From Gen 3:21ff—"Deliver me in thy righteousness" Psa 51.<sup>76</sup>

**Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:**

Then verses 21 and 22 bring Paul's listeners a solution for what up to now has been an insolvable problem. Everyone in the world, without exception, is going to be judged. If doing the Law won't be enough to forego judgment, and if sincerely trying to live a good and moral life won't be enough to forego judgment, then what hope does anyone have? Paul's answer? There is only one hope and it is expressed in only one way. And that way doesn't come from doing the Torah, and yet it is in full conformance to the Torah. And that way is that we must be righteous by God. And we will be righteous (justified) IF we trust Messiah Yeshua.

There is an important theological distinction to be made here. Many Bible versions read, or many doctrines interpret the Bible to say, that it is our faith in Messiah that saves us. That is, our salvation is more or less dependent on our level of faith. The more faith we have the better our chances not only of salvation but also of achieving God's favor in other ways. That is NOT what this passage says. Rather it is that if we are to be righteous (justified) by God, we must place our trust in Messiah's own faithfulness. Messiah's faithfulness was, and is, perfect. Biblically, faithfulness is about being obedient to God and to His covenants. So to be unfaithful is to break a commandment or a term of a covenant. To be unfaithful is another way of saying "to sin". Our human faithfulness will always be flawed, if not intermittent. If we have to rely on our faith for salvation, we're in trouble. I can trust but still not have sufficient faith to be perfectly obedient to God. Our faith will be sufficient for some circumstances, but not for others. So in lieu of our faith, we are instructed to trust in Christ's faith. If we trust in Him, God will substitute Yeshua's perfect faithfulness for our imperfect faith. That is the picture that the sacrificial system in the

---

<sup>74</sup> ESV Study Bible Notes

<sup>75</sup> Complete Jewish Study Bible Notes

<sup>76</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

Law of Moses paints for us. Animals that are 100% sinless (and thus can be said in Bible-speak to have perfect faithfulness) can be substituted for our human lives that are so full of sin and unfaithfulness. And God, in His grace, will deem that animal as paying the ransom price for atoning for our sins. But atonement for sins is one thing; being gifted with a saving righteousness is another. Christ provides for both, yet He is not the one who actually bestows righteousness upon us. The Father is the one who reaches down to righteous us (to justify us) as a free gift.

Later on in Romans Paul makes a statement about Yeshua's faithfulness that we really must take a moment to examine. In Romans 10:4 we read this (I'm going to use the KJV because it is more familiar to our ears):

**KJV Romans 10:4** For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

I know what this probably sounds like to you, because this verse is the source of much Church doctrine that says Christ has ended the Law for everyone who believes in Him. That is, we transition from trust in the Law to trust in Christ. This is not what it says. In fact, it falls perfectly in line with what we have been studying when we properly understand the meaning of the word "end"; telos in Greek.

Listen to what the Greek Dictionary says that telos means:

A telos (from the Greek ????? for "end", "purpose", or "goal") is an end or purpose, in a fairly constrained sense used by philosophers such as Aristotle. It is the root of the term "teleology," roughly the study of purposiveness, or the study of objects with a view to their aims, purposes, or intentions.

Oh my! So it doesn't mean end, as in "end of the world" or "end of the road". It doesn't mean end in the sense of something is over and done. Telos means a purpose or a goal. Let's reread that verse adding in the word purpose: For Christ is the purpose (or goal) of the law for righteousness to every one that believes. So the Law is meant to lead us to Christ, and Christ is the goal of the Law, and He is the one that provides a way for us to attain righteousness, provided we believe in Him. It is anything but meaning that Christ has done away with the Law.

In verse 21 Paul makes the statement that even though the Torah doesn't provide the righteousness that we need, it is a witness to it. That is, the Holy Scripture (in Paul's day that meant only the Old Testament) presents the plan of God's redemption. Listen to Jeremiah 23. **Jeremiah 23:5-6 CJB** 5 "The days are coming," says ADONAI when I will raise a righteous Branch for David. He will reign as king and succeed, he will do what is just and right in the land. 6 In his days Y'udah will be saved, Isra'el will live in safety, and the name given to him will be ADONAI Tzidkenu [[ADONAI our righteousness]].<sup>77</sup>

**McGee:** "The righteousness of God" should be a righteousness of God, since the article is absent in the Greek. This "righteousness" is not an attribute of God -- He says that He will not share His glory with another -- nor is it the righteousness of man. God has already said that "...our righteousness are as filthy rags..." (Isa. 64:6), and God is not taking in dirty laundry. Then what righteousness is Paul speaking of? It is the righteousness which God provides. Christ has become our righteousness. "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1Cor. 1:30). Also we are told in 2Corinthians 5:21: "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." It is very important for us to recognize tht God is the One who

---

<sup>77</sup> <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

provides this righteousness. It's not something that you and I can work out, but rather it is something that God has provided for us. A righteousness that God demands, God also provides.

This is a righteousness that is apart from the Law, that is, you can't get it, my friend, by doing something or keeping something -- not even God's Law. You can't keep the Law to begin with. God can't save you by law for the very simple reason that you can't measure up to it. God can't accept imperfection, and you and I cannot provide perfection. Therefore, He cannot save us by law. "Being witnessed by the law and the prophets" means that the Law bore witness to it in that at the very center of the Mosaic system was a tabernacle where bloody sacrifices were offered which pointed to Christ. Also the prophets witnessed to it when they spoke of the coming of Christ, His death and resurrection. For example, Isaiah prophesied, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.... Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand" (Isa. 53:6, 10).

Both the Law and the prophets witnessed to this righteousness that God would provide in Christ.<sup>78</sup>

**Guzik:** But now: These words provide the most glorious transition from the judgment of Romans 3:20 to the justification of Romans 3:21.

But now speaks of the newness of God's work in Jesus Christ – it really is a New Covenant. Being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets reminds us that there is still continuity with God's work in former times.

Apart from the law: The law cannot save us, but God reveals a righteousness that will save us, apart from the law. This is the essence of God's plan of salvation in Jesus Christ. It is a salvation that is offered apart from the law, apart from our own earning and deserving, apart from our own merits.

Being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets: This righteousness is not a novelty. Paul didn't "invent" it. It was predicted long ago, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets. The Old Testament said this righteousness was coming.

Apart from the law: It isn't that the righteousness of God is revealed apart from the Old Testament, but that it is revealed apart from the principle of law. It is apart from a legal relationship to God, based on the idea of earning and deserving merit before Him.

"The Greek puts to the very front this great phrase apart from law (*choris nomou*) and this sets forth most strongly the altogether separateness of this Divine righteousness from any law-performance, any works of man, whatsoever." (Newell)

God's righteousness is not offered to us as something to take up the slack between our ability to keep the law and God's perfect standard. It is not given to supplement our own righteousness, it is given completely apart from our own attempted righteousness.<sup>79</sup>

**ESV:** The righteousness of God has been manifested now, i.e., in the period of salvation history inaugurated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. On the righteousness of God, see note on 1:17. Here in ch. 3 it refers to the morally right character of God that is clearly shown in his saving action by which human beings may stand in the right before God as the divine judge. This righteousness has been revealed apart from the law, which means that it is not based on

---

<sup>78</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>79</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001)

human obedience to the works of the law. Paul may also intend to say it is not based on the Sinai covenant. Even though God's saving righteousness is apart from the law, the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it. In other words, the OT Scriptures prophesied this very way of salvation (see 1:2).<sup>80</sup>

**CJSBN: 21-22** Apart from Torah. Righteousness has nothing to do with our obeying Torah and its prescriptions, but instead through emunah, trusting faithfulness (see Heb. 11:8), through the faithfulness of Yeshua the Messiah. This implies that God considers those as righteous who trust in Yeshua and his atonement for sin.<sup>81</sup>

**<sup>22</sup>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:***

**McGee:** When I was a young preacher I thought that the grace of God had to go way down to reach the bad sinners but didn't have to go down so far to reach others who weren't so bad. But now I know that God's grace has to go all the way to the bottom to get all of us. Each one of us is completely lost outside of Christ. Either you are absolutely saved in Christ, or you are completely lost outside of Christ. All of us need the righteousness of Christ. There is no difference.

The righteousness of Christ comes to us through our faith in Christ. Great men of the past have given some apt definitions of this righteousness. William Cunningham wrote: "Under law God required righteousness from man. Under grace, He gives righteousness to man. The righteousness of God is that righteousness which God's righteousness requires Him to require." That is a deep definition, but it is a good one. The great Dr. Charles Hodge has given this definition: "That righteousness of which God is the author which is of avail before Him, which meets and secures His approval." Then Dr. Brooks gives this definition: "That righteousness which the Father required, the Son became, and the Holy Spirit convinces of, and faith secures." Dr. Moorehead writes: "The sum total of all that God commands, demands, approves, and Himself provides." I don't believe it can be said any better than the way these men have said it.

Now this righteousness, as we have seen it, is secured by faith, not by works. Let's look at these verses together.<sup>82</sup>

**Guzik:** To all and on all who believe: In Romans 3:21, Paul told us how this righteousness does not come. It does not come through the deeds of the law, it is apart from the law. Now Paul tells us how this saving righteousness does come. It is through faith in Jesus Christ to all and on all who believe.

Through faith in Jesus Christ: The righteousness of God is not ours by faith; it is ours through faith. We do not earn righteousness by our faith. We receive righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ.

Through faith "points to the fact that faith is not a merit, earning salvation. It is no more than the means through which the gift is given." (Morris)

---

<sup>80</sup> ESV Study Bible Notes

<sup>81</sup> Complete Jewish Study Bible Notes

<sup>82</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

“But faith is not ‘trusting’ or ‘expecting’ God to do something, but relying on His testimony concerning the person of Christ as His Son, and the work of Christ for us on the cross... After saving faith, the life of trust begins... trust is always looking forward to what God will do; but faith sees that what God says has been done, and believes God’s Word, having the conviction that it is true, and true for ourselves.” (Newell)

For there is no difference: There is no other way to obtain this righteousness. This righteousness is not earned through obedience to the law; it is a received righteousness, gained through faith in Jesus Christ.

“There is a little book entitled, Every man his own lawyer. Well, nowadays, according to some people, it seems as if every man is to be his own saviour; but if I had, say; a dozen gospels, and I had to sort them out, and give the right gospel to the right man, what a fix I should be in! I believe that, oftentimes, I should be giving your gospel to someone else, and someone else’s gospel to you; and what a muddle it would all be! But now we have one universal cure... The blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ will save every man who trusts him, for ‘there is no difference.’ ” (Spurgeon)<sup>83</sup>

**ESV:** This right standing with God is available to all who believe, whether Jew or Gentile. On the righteousness of God, see note on 1:17.<sup>84</sup>

### **<sup>23</sup>For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;**

The pagan, the moral man, the religious man—all have fallen [keep coming] short of the glory of God...Job 25:4-6.

#### **Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:**

Paul continues the theme that rolls over into verse 23 that since it is God who gives us righteousness, and since this occurs apart from the Law, then this way to achieve righteousness applies to both Jews and gentiles. Why? All humanity is in the same leaky boat. We’ve all sinned....Jew and gentile.....and we all come up short of being able to earn God's praise ....Jew and gentile.<sup>85</sup>

**McGee:** Let me give you a free rendering of these verses: Even the righteousness from God which is obtained by faith in Jesus Christ unto all and upon all that believe: for there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory [approval] of God. That this righteousness is by faith, not by works, the Lord Jesus made clear when they asked him, "...What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" Jesus answered and said unto them, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (John 6:28-29). And the important thing about securing this righteousness of God is not that there's any merit in your faith or that there's merit in just believing. Because, actually, faith is not a work on your part. The object of faith is the important thing. Spurgeon put it like this: "It's not thy hope in Christ which saves you. It's Christ. It's not thy joy in Christ that saves you. It is Christ. And it is not thy faith in Christ

---

<sup>83</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001)

<sup>84</sup> ESV Study Bible Notes

<sup>85</sup> <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

that saves you, though that be the instrument, it is Christ's blood and merit." Now, friend, that's very important to nail in our thinking.

And that righteousness is like a garment. It is available to all, but it only comes upon all that believe. And then he says that it's needed by everyone: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Now that doesn't mean that there is not a difference in sinners. Let me illustrate this with a very homely illustration. Let's suppose that we folk here in California play a game called "Jumping to Catalina." Catalina Island is out in the Pacific Ocean at least fifteen or twenty miles from the shore of California. We will go down to the pier in Santa Monica, and we will take a big running jump, and we'll see who can jump to Catalina. Somebody's going to say, "That's an impossible jump!" Frankly, no one has jumped it, but it's a lot of fun playing the game. Suppose you and I play the game. You may be able to jump farther than I can jump, but you will miss Catalina. And the fellow who jumps the farthest gets the wettest and has to swim farther back to shore. Of course, nobody could jump to Catalina. Some are better than others, but it's rather childish to play a game like that and say, "I jumped farther than you did. I'm better than you are, and I'm better than half the church members." Suppose you are -- and you may well be - - but what difference does that make? You have not come up to the glory of God.<sup>86</sup>

**Guzik:** Being justified: Paul develops his teaching about salvation around three themes.

- Justification is an image from the court of law
- Redemption is an image from the slave market
- Propitiation is an image from the world of religion, appeasing God through sacrifice

Justification solves the problem of man's guilt before a righteous Judge. Redemption solves the problem of man's slavery to sin, the world, and the devil. Propitiation solves the problem of offending our Creator.

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God: This universal statement is answered by a universal offer to be justified freely by His grace. It is open to everyone who will believe.

Morris, quoting Moule: "The harlot, the liar, the murderer, are short of it; but so are you. Perhaps they stand at the bottom of a mine, and you on the crest of an Alp; but you are as little able to touch the stars as they." Everyone falls short, but everyone can be justified freely by His grace.

Fall short of the glory of God: It's impossible to describe every way we fall short, but here are four important ways man falls short of the glory of God.

We fail to give God the glory due Him, in our words, thoughts and actions.

We fail to qualify for, and thereby reject the glory and reward that God gives faithful servants.

We fail to properly reflect God's glory by refusing to be conformed into His image.

We fail to obtain the final glory God will bestow on His people at the end of all history.

Justified freely by His grace: Being in such a sinful state, the only way we can be justified is to be justified freely. We can't purchase it with our good works at all. If it isn't made free to us, we can't have it all. So we are justified freely by His grace – His unmerited favor, given to us without regard to what we deserve. It is a giving motivated purely by the giver, and motivated by nothing in the one who receives.

Freely is the ancient Greek word *dorean*. The way this word is used in other New Testament passages helps us understand the word. Matthew 10:8 (Freely you have received, freely give) and Revelation 22:17 (And whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely) show that the word

---

<sup>86</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

means truly free, not just “cheap” or “discounted.” Perhaps the most striking use of the ancient Greek word *dorean* is in John 15:25: They hated me without a cause (*dorean*). Even as there was nothing in Jesus deserving of man’s hatred, so there is nothing in us deserving of justification – all the reasons are in God.

Calvin on the use of both the words freely and grace: “He thus repeats the word to show that the whole is from God, and nothing from us... lest we should imagine a half kind of grace, he affirms more strongly what he means by a repetition, and claims for God’s mercy alone the whole glory of our righteousness.”

Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Again, Paul’s gospel centers squarely in Christ Jesus. Salvation is possible because of the redemption found in Him. God cannot give us His righteousness apart from Jesus Christ.

Redemption: This has the idea of buying back something and involves cost. However, God pays the cost and so we are justified freely.

The word translated redemption had its origin describing the release of prisoners of war on payment of a price and was known as the “ransom.” As time went on, it was extended to include the freeing of slaves, again by the payment of a price.

The idea of redemption means that Jesus bought us; therefore, we belong to Him. Paul expressed this thought in another letter: For you were bought at a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s (1 Corinthians 6:20).<sup>87</sup>

**ESV:** No one can stake a claim to this righteousness based on his or her own obedience, for all people have sinned and fall short of what God demands (see 1:21).<sup>88</sup>

Since all have sinned and come short of earning God’s praise. See 1 Kings 8:46; Eccl. 7:20; Isa. 59:1–2; 64:5. In Judaism, the *Yetzer Hara* (or evil inclination) can be loosely correlated to the Christian concept of the “sin nature” or “old self.”<sup>89</sup>

**CJSBN: 23–26** In this well-known passage Sha’ul explains the significance of atonement in the context of Yom-Kippur: “God put Yeshua forward as the *kapparah* for sin through his faithfulness in respect to his bloody sacrificial death” (v. 25). The word *kapparah* (translated as “propitiation”), is somewhat misunderstood today since it is not commonly used. The Greek word contains the idea of appeasing an angry Greek god. While there may be some relationship, the Hebrew equivalent of the word is clear. *Kapparah* means more than appeasement. It also means “atonement,” a term any Jew of the first century could understand. On the execution-stake, Messiah Yeshua was displayed as our *kapparah*, our sacrifice, the fulfillment of Yom-Kippur.

Since the theme of atonement is so central to the message of the New Testament, it should not be surprising to discover other references to Yom-Kippur within it. Luke 4:16–22 records that Yeshua is called to the Torah in his local synagogue of Nazareth. After reading the powerful passage from Isaiah 61, he delivers a simple yet strong message, claiming to be the Messiah, the anointed one, who would set the captives free. Some of the classical rabbis believed this passage would be the words Messiah would speak to Isra’el when he came (Kimchi qtd. in Williams 76). The fact that this passage speaks of the Messiah as the liberator of the Jewish people has led

---

<sup>87</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001)

<sup>88</sup> ESV Study Bible Notes

<sup>89</sup> Complete Jewish Study Bible Notes

other rabbis to speculate that Messiah would appear on a very special Yom-Kippur in the Year of Jubilee (see Lev. 25:10).<sup>90</sup>

## **24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:**

**Missler:** Four critical words:

“Justify,” declare legally without guilt; righteous not a process: all at once...

“Freely” [gift], *dwrea,n dorean*, “without a cause,” (John 15:3);

“Grace,” To earn salvation by works would be to put God in man’s debt.

“Redemption” set free from a slave market by paying the ransom (Cf. 1 John 5:19; John 12:31; Eph 2:2,3; Col 2:14; Heb 2:14, 15; 1 Pet 1: 18, 19).

When John the Baptist first introduced Jesus to the public (John 1:29), he summarized the God’s remedy to our failures: “Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.”<sup>91</sup>

### **Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:**

Paul’s next thought in verse 24 is the center, the focus, of his entire theology. It is that this righteousness that comes from God comes freely to the one who receives it. And yet there is a cost even though we don’t pay it. Messiah paid that cost through his act, his deed, of permitting himself to be a sacrifice and a curse in our stead.

I think it is important in Seed of Abraham Torah Class to always realize this amazing reality; that although we obey God by doing the Biblical Feasts, eating Biblically kosher and observing the Sabbath, NONE of this is our righteousness. Christ is the vehicle of our righteousness, and God freely gives us that righteousness through Him. But I would also like us to embrace something that is going to gain more and more importance as the years go by. The release of the findings of the Dead Sea Scrolls shows the close connection between the theology of the NT and the theology of the Essenes who developed their theology from a careful study of the Holy Scriptures, the Tanakh.

So we’ll close today with a short reading from the Dead Sea Scrolls, from what is called the Community Document, scroll number 1QS. It is beautiful, it is poignant, and it is the truth that we all need to hear. Listen closely, please.

For to God belongs my righteousness and the perfection of my way, and the uprightness of my heart is in His hand. By His righteousness are my rebellions blotted out. For God’s truth is the rock of my steps and His power is the stay of my right hand; and from the fount of His righteousness comes my righteousness. The fountain of righteousness, the reservoir of power, and the dwelling place of glory are denied to the assembly of flesh. But God has given (those things) as an everlasting possession to those who He has chosen. For is a man the master of his way? No; mankind cannot establish their steps, for their righteousness belongs to God, and from His hand comes perfection of the way. And if I stagger, God’s mercies are my salvation forever; and if I stumble because of the sin of the flesh, my righteousness is in the righteousness of God which exists forever... He has caused me to approach by His mercy and by his favors He will bring my righteousness. He has righteoused me by His true justice, and by His immense goodness He will pardon my iniquities.

---

<sup>90</sup> Complete Jewish Study Bible Notes

<sup>91</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, [khouse.org](http://khouse.org)

Right there is a wonderful way to express the Gospel. The Essenes seemed to have it absolutely figured out; everything except that Yeshua was Messiah. Everything except that trust in Him is how they had to obtain this righteousness from God that they knew they must have.<sup>92</sup>

### **Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:**

I'm not sure that more beautiful, soaring, hope-inspiring words have been written in the Bible than what we read in Romans 3:24:

**CJB Romans 3:24** By God's grace, without earning it, all are granted the status of being considered righteous before him, through the act redeeming us from our enslavement to sin that was accomplished by the Messiah Yeshua.

While this is stated in about half as many words in most English Bible versions, the meaning is the same. It is that salvation and our release from the power of sin is a free gift from God that cannot be earned or merited by our own good works (nor can it be denied by our lack of good works). Rather it was accomplished on our behalf by the good works of Jesus Christ, specifically by Him being so perfectly faithful that He went to the cross as our atonement and as our Passover Lamb.

Since this indeed is the case, then why does Paul spend so much time talking about, and teaching about, the Law? It can be reduced to this admittedly over simplistic but nevertheless true principle: while the Law and the Gospel of Christ are organically connected, they serve two critically important, but entirely different purposes. The Law and the Gospel are not competitors; they are teammates. For human or animal life to exist we all must have as basic needs air, water, and food. These 3 necessities for physical life are critically important and organically connected, but they are each for entirely different purposes. No one can tell us to choose one, or even two, out of the three as most important. Any one of the three that is taken away from us for very long means physical death. It is the same with the Law and with the Gospel of Christ. For centuries the institutional Church has told us to choose one of the two (obviously with the intent that we choose the Gospel). God gave us both because we need both. So Paul is attempting to explain the difference between the Law and the Gospel, and what the purposes for each are and (just as important) are not. And that we must not confuse one for the other.

We must never forget that both the Law and the Gospel were given by God to Israel. It is only later that Christ told His disciples that the Gospel was to be taken to the gentile world. This is something that confused and angered most Jews of Paul's day. And much of what we have been reading is Paul explaining himself for bringing the Gospel to gentiles and in doing so establishing some of the basic principles of our Judeo-Christian faith.<sup>93</sup>

**McGee:** "Freely" is the Greek word *dorean*, translated in John 15:25 "without a cause." Our Lord Jesus said that they hated Him freely, without a cause -- there was no basis for it. Now Paul is saying, "Being justified freely -- without a cause." There is no explanation in us. God doesn't say, "Oh, they are such wonderful people, I'll have to do something for them!" As we have seen before, there is nothing in us that would call out the grace of God, other than our great need. We are justified without a cause. It is by His grace, which means that there is no merit on our part. Grace is unmerited favor; it is love in action.

---

<sup>92</sup> <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

<sup>93</sup> <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

It is "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Redemption is always connected with the grace of God. The reason that God can save you and me is that Christ redeemed us; He paid a price. He died upon a cross to make it available to us. You see, justification by faith is actually more than subtraction of our sins -- that is, forgiveness. It is the addition of the righteousness of Christ. In other words, we are not merely restored to Adam's former position, but now we are placed in Christ where we shall be throughout the endless ages of eternity the sons of God! John Bunyan was driven almost to distraction because he realized that he was such a great sinner with no righteousness of his own. And he said at that time, "When God showed me John Bunyan as God saw John Bunyan, I no longer confessed I was a sinner, but I confessed that I was sin from the crown of my head to the sole of my feet. I was full of sin." And Bunyan struggled with the problem of how he could stand in God's presence even with his sins forgiven. Where could he gain a standing before God? And so, walking through the cornfields one night, as he wrestled with this problem, the words of Paul (who was another great sinner, who called himself the chief of sinners) came to him, and his burden rolled off his shoulders. The word from Paul was Philippians 3:9: "And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." And when you read Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, you're reading actually the story of Bunyan's life. And you remember, when Pilgrim came with that great burden on his shoulders through the Slough of Despond, he didn't know what to do until finally he came to the Cross, and there the burden rolled off, and he trusted Christ as his Savior.

"By his grace" is the way God saves us. This is the fountain from which flow down the living waters of God in this age of grace. And so, because of what God has done -- sending His Son to die -- God is able to save by grace. And Paul in Ephesians 2:4-5 says, "But God, who is rich in mercy [that means He has plenty of it], for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)." And Dr. Newell said of that grace, "The grace of God is infinite love operating by an infinite means -- the sacrifice of Christ; and an infinite freedom, unhindered, now, by the temporary restrictions of the law." Today a holy God is free to reach down to meet your needs. How wonderful it is to know a holy God is free to save those who will trust Christ. Dr. Newell again said, "Everything connected with God's salvation is glad in bestowment, infinite in extent, and unchangeable in its character." And it's all available, and only available, in Christ Jesus. He alone could pay the price. As Peter put it to the nation Israel, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).<sup>94</sup>

**ESV:** Therefore, all are justified (declared not guilty but righteous by the divine Judge) only by God's grace (unmerited favor). The word redemption reaches back to the OT exodus and the blood of the Passover lamb (see Exodus 12-15), by which the Lord liberated Israel from Egypt; the exodus likewise points forward to the greater redemption Jesus won for his people through his blood by forgiving them their sins through his death on the cross (cf. Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14). On justification, see note on Gal. 2:16.<sup>95</sup>

**CJSBN:** Redeeming us from our enslavement to sin. Drawing upon the Exodus motif, where God liberated his people from slavery to Pharaoh (Exod. 6:6-8), he redeems his people from enslavement to sin through Yeshua, the "second Moshe." A midrash concerning Isa. 52:13 states

---

<sup>94</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>95</sup> ESV Study Bible Notes

that the miracles Moshe performed were done to ensure that only one nation (Isra'el) would serve Adonai; but when the Messiah comes, he will cause all people to serve him (cf. Rom. 6; Phil. 2:10–11).<sup>96</sup>

**<sup>25</sup>Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;**

Propitiation = greatest love word in the Scripture!

*hilasterion*, the lid of expiation, from Hebrew *kapporeth*, mercy seat. Ex 25:10-22; Lev 16:2; Heb 9:2-10.<sup>97</sup>

### **Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:**

Essentially in verse 25 Paul explains the nuts and bolts of just how it is that the Gospel as stated in verse 24 is able to do what he claims it does. In other words Paul asserts that a person is made righteous by God's free gift of grace, and not by any kind of work or deed. But especially a Jew who is steeped in Judaism is going to look skeptically at that assertion for a couple of reasons. First because it was standard Jewish doctrine of Paul's day that simply being Jewish was sufficient for God to see a Jew as righteous. And that by doing the Law one maintained their status as a Jew and therefore maintained their position of righteousness before God. I'm sorry to keep repeating myself, but it is necessary. When Jews insisted that they were doing the Law, they did not specifically mean that they were doing the Law of Moses. They meant that they were doing Jewish Law; Tradition; Halakhah. The religious philosophy of Judaism was (and still is) that Halakhah was effectively doing the Law of Moses, because Halakhah was the rabbinical interpretations of the Law of Moses, which included a long list of subsequent rabbinical rulings about required behaviors and rituals that were derived from those interpretations. But were the rank and file Jews consulting the Torah, the Law of Moses, on religious matters? No. They were following the Halakhot (the many Traditions) that the Pharisee synagogue teachers said they should be following. Thus there was no longer a clear line between Holy Scripture (the Law of Moses) versus Traditions of the rabbis.

The second reason that Jews were skeptical of Paul's assertion of salvation as a free gift of grace for all who believe in Messiah is because they didn't see a Messiah as having any direct involvement in their spiritual relationship with God. For them a Messiah was merely a real, physical descendant of King David who would militarily lead the Jews out of being oppressed by Rome and into a golden era of Israel becoming the dominant world-wide kingdom.

What we ought to be furrowing our brows about is that Paul (at least in his own mind) has decided that it is necessary to lecture these Jewish and gentile Believers of the city of Rome about these faith principles. Clearly, he is skeptical that they have been taught the Gospel correctly or that they have been taught the proper doctrines to live their lives by. Paul has not decided to write an extensive general theology of Christianity and randomly send it off to Rome. He is responding to what he thinks are certain pressing issues within the Believing congregations of Rome. And as the Christ-designated Apostle to the gentiles, Paul also believes that it is not only his duty to set down the doctrines of the faith of Messiah, but that he also has the authority to do so.

---

<sup>96</sup> Complete Jewish Study Bible Notes

<sup>97</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

So by way of explanation as to just how it is that God offers salvation as a free gift to everyone who trusts in Messiah Yeshua, he says in verse 25 that God (meaning the Father) put forth Yeshua as the sacrifice for sin. Therefore, as a sacrifice (and Paul has in mind an altar sacrifice, not something theoretical or allegorical), the blood of Yeshua meets the Torah requirement of innocent blood being shed for the sake of the guilty. Let's pause for a moment. The Greek word hilasterion is what is being variously translated into English Bibles as propitiation, or sacrifice of atonement, or expiation. What is interesting is that in the Greek Old Testament hilasterion is used to translate the Hebrew word kapparah. And kapparah means Mercy Seat (the lid on the Ark of the Covenant). So the proper literal English translation is: "God put Yeshua forward as the Mercy Seat...." That is, the Mercy Seat is the place where atonement is made by the High Priest, once per year, for all Israel. Now God has put Yeshua forth as that Mercy Seat....as that place where atonement must be made. Not allegorically but actually.

I'd like to note that in Paul's day (and since the Jews' return from Babylon) there was no Ark and no Mercy Seat in the Holy of Holies. It had been taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar as a spoil of war and never returned. So when the High Priest went into the Holy of Holies in the Temple annually on Yom Kippur, he still performed the required ritual of atonement but instead of sprinkling blood on the Mercy Seat he sprinkled blood onto the floor where the Ark used to sit. Was this efficacious for remittance of sins for Israel? I can't be 100% certain, but I don't think so.

Paul continues by saying that this remittance of sin was the result of faith in Christ's blood. This passage has always created some difficulty because the usual way it is interpreted is that it is OUR faith in Christ's shed blood that counts as our righteousness. But as Joseph Shulam points out, that cannot be correct because in order to arrive at that conclusion one must alter the verb and word order of the verse. And in fact, that is regularly done by Bible scholars who think it makes more sense to alter the order of the Greek words in this passage. But if we leave the word order as it stands in the original Greek, then the meaning changes from OUR faith to Christ's faith as the catalyst for atonement and forgiveness. And this meets well with the meaning of verse 22 that speaks of Yeshua's faithfulness to God. So when properly read this passage it is saying that atonement has been made through Yeshua's faithfulness by Him allowing His blood to be that sacrifice of atonement for all who believe. I only point this out because too much OUR faith is emphasized in modern Christianity, when in fact the Scriptures point to Messiah's faith and faithfulness as the primary issues. And then we are to TRUST in HIS faithfulness. And often this manifests in Christians constantly being concerned about how much faith we have, and thus a higher level of faith brings with it more favor and more rewards. Or there is a belief that if things don't turn out the way we want them to because we don't have enough faith, then if only we could muster up MORE faith more of what we want to happen would happen. Our faith will never be perfect; our faith will never be sufficient to warrant our salvation. Therefore we are to trust in Messiah's perfect faith.

The remainder of verse 25 and its flow into verse 26 is quite difficult. It speaks of how Yeshua's sacrifice highlights God's forbearance because God passed over the sins that people had committed in the past, even though He had never remitted those sins nor punished the sinners for those sins. To understand this, we have to go back a few weeks when we carefully defined what is meant by God's righteousness. What is the righteousness of God? And we found that first of all how God's righteousness is defined is entirely different than how human righteousness is defined. Human righteousness is defined as being right before God, and by doing right before

God. God's righteousness is summed up in His saving will. That is, God's righteousness is His determination to take people who are not right with Him and to make them right with Him. In this instance Paul is saying that at least for some, God passed over their past sins and postponed a punishment they richly deserved. He didn't wink at those sins or forget them. Rather by postponing the punishment until Yeshua came, now Yeshua's blood could atone for them once and for all. And the mere fact that God would so graciously do this magnifies His glory all the more.<sup>98</sup>

**McGee: (25-26)** Notice it is "faith in his blood." That blood speaks of His life -- "...without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9:22). And I tell you, when you put a knife in the body of a man and the blood pours out, that man is a dead man because "the life of the flesh is in the blood." And the life of Jesus Christ was given. That blood is a very precious thing according to Simon Peter.

Now, these two verses are filled with words that are jawbreakers: propitiation, righteousness, remission. Although they are difficult words, don't be too frightened of them, because when we boil them down to our size, we find that in these two verses we have what Calvin called the very marrow of theology. Calvin also wrote: "There is not probably in the whole Bible a passage which sets forth more profoundly the righteousness of God in Christ."

"God hath set forth" -- God is the sole architect of salvation, and He is the One today who is able to save. You and I cannot save; no religion can save; no church can save. Paul said to the Corinthians, "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ..." (2Cor. 5:18). He did it. Now, He is giving to us the ministry of reconciliation, and so all that the holy God is asking you and me to do today is to be reconciled to Him. You don't have to do anything to soften God's heart. I have a friend who was an evangelist for years, and he always liked to get people to cry. I used to ask him how many tears you'd have to shed to soften God's heart. "Oh," he said, "don't be ridiculous." I told him, "I'm not being ridiculous. You are. You say you've got to come down to the altar and shed some tears." My friend, God's heart is already soft. All you have to do is come. He is reconciled to you. He says to you, "Be ye reconciled to God." Christ has been "set forth"; that is, He has been exhibited or displayed.

"To be a propitiation" points back to the time over nineteen hundred years ago when Christ was set forth as the Savior. You will recall that the veil of the temple hid the mercy seat and only the high priest could go in past that veil. But today Christ has been set before us as the mercy seat. Speaking of the mercy seat, the writer of Hebrews says, "And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy seat..." (Heb. 9:5) -- the Greek word for mercy seat, hilasterion, is the same word translated "propitiation." Christ has been set forth as the mercy seat. You recall that the poor publican cried out, because he needed a mercy seat, "...God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13), which literally is, "God, if there were only a mercy seat for me, a poor publican, to come to!" You see, when a Jew became a publican, he cut himself off from the temple and from the mercy seat that was there. Paul is saying that now there is on display a mercy seat -- God hath set forth Christ to be a propitiation through faith in His blood. It is wonderful to know that we have a holy God who in joy and in satisfaction and delight can hold out to the world today a mercy seat.

And God doesn't reluctantly save you. If you come, He saves you wholeheartedly, abundantly. Some folk tell me that after I am saved I still have to search and pray and tarry for something more. My friend, when I came to Jesus, I got everything (see Eph. 1:3). Oh, how good

---

<sup>98</sup> <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

He was! He didn't hold back anything. And He says to come, He can accept you. "...him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). Actually, you and I were shut out from a holy God. But the way now has been opened up for us by His blood.

"To declare his righteousness for the remission of sins are past." That doesn't mean your sins and my sins of the past; it means the sins of those who lived before the Cross. You see, back in the Old Testament, they brought a little lamb. And I'm sure you don't take a little lamb to church to sacrifice. Today it would be sinful to do that. But back then, before Christ came, it was required; the Law required it. Now, that little lamb pointed to the coming of Christ. No one back in those days believed that the little lamb could take away sins. I don't think any of them did. Suppose you had been there when Abel brought a little lamb to God, "Abel, do you think this little lamb is going to take away your sin?" He would have told you no. And you would have said, "Then why did you bring it?" His answer would have been, "God required it. God commanded us to bring it." Hebrews 11:4 tells us "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain..." In other words, he did it by revelation, because "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). The only way Abel could have brought that sacrifice by faith was for God to have told him to bring it. And that is what God did. You might have said to Abel, "Specifically what do you think God has in mind?" And I think he would have said this, "Well, God has told my mother that there's coming a Savior. We don't know when, but until He comes, we're to do this because we're to come by faith." And so the "sins that are past" means that up to the time when Christ died, God saved on credit. God did not save Abraham because he brought a sacrifice. God never saved any of them because they brought a sacrifice. A sacrifice pointed to Christ. When Christ came, He paid for all the sins of the past and also for the sins this side of the Cross.

"To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." On this side of the Cross we don't bring a sacrifice, but we are to trust in Christ and His blood.<sup>99</sup>

**Guzik:** a. Whom God set forth as a propitiation: Jesus, by His death (by His blood) was a propitiation (substitute sacrifice) for us. As He was judged in our place, the Father could demonstrate His righteousness in judgment against sin, while sparing those who deserved the judgment.

Wuest on propitiation: "The word in its classical form was used of the act of appeasing the Greek gods by a sacrifice... in other words, the sacrifice was offered to buy off the anger of the god."

The NIV translates propitiation as sacrifice of atonement; the Living Bible has: to take the punishment for our sins.

A propitiation: The ancient Greek word for propitiation (hilasterion) is also used in the Septuagint for the mercy seat, the lid covering the Ark of the Covenant, upon which sacrificial blood was sprinkled as an atonement for sin. While it might be said that this passage means "Jesus is our mercy seat," it probably has the more straightforward idea of propitiation – a substitute sacrifice.

At the same time, the "mercy seat" idea should not be neglected as an illustration of propitiation. Inside the Ark of the Covenant was the evidence of man's great sin: the tablets of law; the manna received ungratefully; the budded rod of Aaron, showing man's rejection of God's leadership. Up over the Ark of the Covenant were the symbols of the holy presence of the

---

<sup>99</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

enthroned God in the beautiful gold cherubim. In between the two stood the mercy seat, and as sacrificial blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16), God's wrath was averted because a substitute had been slain on behalf of sinners coming by faith. We really can say that Jesus is our "mercy seat," standing between guilty sinners and the holiness of God.

Whom God set forth as a propitiation: This shows that Jesus did not somehow appease a reluctant, unwilling Father to hold back His wrath. Instead, it was God the Father who initiated the propitiation: whom God set forth.

Passed over the sins: God, in His forbearance, had passed over the sins of those Old Testament saints who trusted in the coming Messiah. At the cross, those sins were no longer passed over, they were paid for.

The idea is that through the animal sacrifice of the Old Testament, those who looked in faith to the coming Messiah had their sins "covered" by a sort of an "IOU" or promissory note. That temporary covering was redeemed for full payment at the cross.

The work of Jesus on the cross freed God from the charge that He lightly passed over sin committed before the cross. Those sins were passed over for a time but they were finally paid for.<sup>100</sup>

**ESV:** Jesus' blood "propitiated" or satisfied God's wrath (1:18), so that his holiness was not compromised in forgiving sinners. Some scholars have argued that the word propitiation should be translated expiation (the wiping away of sin), but the word cannot be restricted to the wiping away of sins as it also refers to the satisfaction or appeasement of God's wrath, turning it to favor (cf. note on John 18:11). God's righteous anger needed to be appeased before sin could be forgiven, and God in his love sent his Son (who offered himself willingly) to satisfy God's holy anger against sin. In this way God demonstrated his righteousness, which here refers particularly to his holiness and justice. God's justice was called into question because in his patience he had overlooked former sins. In other words, how could God as the utterly Holy One tolerate human sin without inflicting full punishment on human beings immediately? Paul's answer is that God looked forward to the cross of Christ where the full payment for the guilt of sin would be made, where Christ would die in the place of sinners. In the OT, propitiation (or the complete satisfaction of the wrath of God) is symbolically foreshadowed in several incidents: e.g., Ex. 32:11–14; Num. 25:8, 11; Josh. 7:25–26.<sup>101</sup>

**ESV:** A sacrifice of atonement. This can also be translated "a place of expiation." Paul seems to have been alluding to the Day of Atonement, when the sins of the entire people were atoned for and blood was sprinkled on the atonement cover of the ark (see note on Lev 16:1–34). Faith in Christ is both redemptive and atoning.<sup>102</sup>

**CJSBN:** God put Yeshua forward as the kapparah for sin. As "propitiation, expiation, atonement," from the Hebrew kapar, which has the sense of "ransom by means of a substitute." On Yom-Kippur, the Day of Atonement, the rabbis point to a need for teshuvah (repentance), t'fillah (prayer), and tzedakah (charity). Yet these alone do not satisfy the requirements of kapparah as prescribed in the Torah (Lev. 17:11; Heb. 9:22). Only Yeshua is the final kapparah

---

<sup>100</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001)

<sup>101</sup> ESV Study Bible Notes

<sup>102</sup> First-Century Study Bible Notes

and full redemption for humanity (see note on Heb. 9:22). See “Yom-Kippur,” Lev. 23:26–32; Isa. 58:5; Rom. 3:23–26.<sup>103</sup>

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

**Missler:** “That..” the most important purpose clause! This is God’s greatest problem: “that He might be just, and [yet] the justifier of him...” Jesus is the solution.

God’s Greatest Barrier: His Own Character

- 1) Sovereign; accountable only to Himself;
- 2) Omniscient; knows all;
- 3) Omnipotent; all powerful, visible and invisible;
- 4) Omnipresent; (particle physics: non-locality...)
- 5) Love;
- 6) Immutable; unchanging;
- 7) Just; the standard of His own character: absolute righteousness.

Links to (1).<sup>104</sup>

**Guzik:** That He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus: At the cross, God demonstrated His righteousness by offering man justification (a legal verdict of “not guilty”), while remaining completely just (because the righteous penalty of sin had been paid at the cross).

It’s easy to see how someone could be only just – simply send every guilty sinner to hell, as a just judge would do. It’s easy to see how someone could only be the justifier – simply tell every guilty sinner, “I declare a pardon. You are all declared ‘not guilty.’” But only God could find a way to be both just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

“Here we learn that God designed to give the most evident displays of both his justice and mercy. Of his justice, in requiring a sacrifice, and absolutely refusing to give salvation to a lost world in any other way; and of his mercy, in providing the sacrifice which his justice required.” (Clarke)<sup>105</sup>

**ESV:** Paul repeats again, because of its supreme importance, that God has demonstrated his righteousness, i.e., his holiness and justice, at the present time in salvation history. In the cross of Christ, God has shown himself to be just (utterly holy, so that the penalty demanded by the law is not removed but paid for by Christ) but also the justifier (the one who provides the means of justification and who declares people to be in right standing with himself) and the Savior of all those who trust in Jesus. Here is the heart of the Christian faith, for at the cross God's justice and love meet.<sup>106</sup>

---

<sup>103</sup> Complete Jewish Study Bible Notes

<sup>104</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

<sup>105</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001)

<sup>106</sup> ESV Study Bible Notes

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

Faith is taking God at His Word.

**Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:**

So after explaining the reason why Yeshua's death on the cross is the legal justification for God reaching down from Heaven and righteousing those who trust in this amazing protocol of grace, Paul then asks a simple question in verse 27: "So what room is left for boasting?" That is, clearly the sinner whose sins are atoned for 1) doesn't deserve forgiveness, 2) has done nothing to earn forgiveness, and 3) receives the forgiveness as a free gift. Therefore, he can't hold himself up as having worked tirelessly at being Torah observant as the reason why God would choose to righteous him. His deeds don't earn him merit; they earn him condemnation if he counts on those deeds to be his righteousness. So as usual, Paul answers his own question. He says that there is no room at all for boasting about one's works as the reason for God righteousing him, since works was never the way one received righteousness. Rather it is trust and trust alone that gains a person righteousness. Paul says it another way in verse 28: obeying the Law is not how one attains the righteousness that saves.<sup>107</sup>

**McGee:** If God is saving by faith in Christ and not by your merit, your works, then where is boasting? What is it that you and I have to crow about? We can't even boast of the fact that we're fundamental in doctrine. We have nothing to glory in today. Paul asks, "Where is boasting then?" And he answers the question he raises.

"It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith." The word law in the first instance is not restricted to the Old Testament Law but means the principle of law -- any law, anything that you think you can do. The second reference to law excludes the Old Testament Law and means simply a rule or principle of faith. In other words, God has the human race not on the merit system, but on the basis of simply believing what He has done for us. Therefore, it excludes boasting.<sup>108</sup>

**Guzik:** Where is boasting then? It shouldn't be anywhere. Because we are justified freely by His grace, there is no room for self-congratulation or credit.

By what law? Boasting and pride are not excluded because there is some specific passage in the law against them. Instead, pride is excluded because it is completely incompatible with the salvation that is freely ours through faith. Boasting is excluded by the law of faith.

By the law of faith: No room for boasting! This is why the natural man hates being justified freely by His grace. Grace absolutely refuses to recognize his (imagined) merits and gives no place to his pride whatsoever.<sup>109</sup>

---

<sup>107</sup> <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

<sup>108</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>109</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001)

**ESV:** Since salvation is accomplished through Christ's atoning death, all human boasting . . . is excluded. The word law in this verse probably means principle, though some think that a reference to the OT law is intended. If righteousness came through works, then human beings could brag about what they have done. But since salvation is through faith, no one can boast before God.<sup>110</sup>

**28<sup>th</sup> Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.**

**Missler:** Abraham was reckoned to righteousness by his faith when he was still on Gentile ground (Gen 15:6), two chapters before the covenant sign of circumcision was placed upon his flesh. [This will be developed in Chapter 4.]<sup>111</sup>

**McGee:** This is not a conclusion that Paul is coming to or even a summing up of what he has said. Rather, he is giving an explanation of why boasting is excluded. Why is boasting excluded? Man is justified by faith.

Now Paul not only drives the nail in, he turns the board over and clinches it. Listen to him:<sup>112</sup>

**Guzik:** Justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law: It isn't that we are justified by faith plus whatever deeds of the law we can do. We are justified by faith alone, apart from the deeds of the law.

"Since all works of law are barred out, faith alone is left. Luther so translated, and since his time Sola Fide has become a slogan." (Lenski)

Apart from the deeds of the law: Doesn't James contradict this in passages like James 2:14-26? How can we say that it is faith alone that saves, apart from the deeds of the law?

It is true faith alone saves, but true faith, saving faith, has a distinct character. It is not just agreeing with certain facts, but it is directing the mind and will in agreement with God. The whole purpose of the book of James is to describe the character of this saving faith.

Calvin explains: "What James says, that man is not justified by faith alone, but also by works, does not at all militate against the preceding view [of justification by faith alone]. The reconciling of the two views depends chiefly on the drift of the argument pursued by James. For the question with him is not, how men attain righteousness before God, but how they prove it to others that they are justified; for his object was to confute hypocrites, who vainly boasted that they had faith... James meant no more than that man is not made or proved to be just by a feigned or dead faith, and that he must prove his righteousness by his works."<sup>113</sup>

---

<sup>110</sup> ESV Study Bible Notes

<sup>111</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

<sup>112</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>113</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001)

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

**Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:**

Paul moves his case forward for gentile inclusion into the Biblical faith in verse 29. He asks the rhetorical question: Is God only God of the Jews or is He God of the gentiles, too? He of course answers his own question and he says, yes, God is the God of both Jews and gentiles because God is one (in Hebrew, echad). Or in modern English, there is only one God so there can't possibly be separate Gods; one for Jews and one for gentiles. Really? That's funny because this plainly contradicts another rather widespread Christian doctrine that essentially does make the claim that there are two Gods: one for the Jews and one for the gentile Christians. The one for the Jews is the God of the Old Testament, the Father. The one for gentile Christians is the God of the New Testament, the Son. And if we have two Gods, then we necessarily have two different loyalties for two different sets of people along with two separate sets of rules. Paul tackles this question headon and says no; there is but one God for both Jews and gentile Christians.<sup>114</sup>

**McGee:** In other words, does God belong to the Jews alone and not also to the Gentiles? And Paul says, "Yes, to the Gentiles also." Now, listen to this. This is a very cogent argument. Paul says, "If justification is by the law, then God does belong to the Jews. But if justification is by faith, then He is the God of both Jews and Gentiles." Now, notice the logic of this. If the Jew persisted in this position, then there must be two Gods -- one for the Jews, one for the Gentiles. But the Jew would not allow this. He was a monotheist, that is, he believed in one God. Probably the greatest statement that ever was given to the nation Israel was Deuteronomy 6:4, "Hear, O Israel: Jehovah, our Elohim is one Jehovah" (literal translation mine). That was the clarion message He gave in the pagan world before Christ came.<sup>115</sup>

**Guzik:** Yes, of the Gentiles also: This righteousness is offered to both Jew and Gentile. The universal character of the offer is demonstrated by a simple fact: Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Of course He is. If there is only one God, then God is God of the Gentiles as much as He is God of the Jews. It's just up to the Gentiles to recognize Him as God.<sup>116</sup>

**29–30** God is one. The oneness of God, expressed daily in the Shema, applies not only to Jews but to all humanity and creation itself. Circumcised and uncircumcised are among God's righteous through Christ. Gentiles can be in right relation to the one God without becoming Jewish converts (see word study on Ac 2:11). Paul's monotheistic perspective as a Jew expansively includes all humanity. Paul was echoing the eschatological vision of the prophets that all nations will one day worship God (see Isa 2:1–4; 11:1–9; 49:5–6; 65:17–25; Da 7–12; Mic 4:1–5). The noncanonical book of Tobit summarizes this prophetic hope: "After this they all will return from their exile and will rebuild Jerusalem in splendor; and in it the temple of God will be rebuilt, just as the prophets of Israel have said concerning it. Then the nations in the whole world will all be converted and worship God in truth. They will all abandon their idols, which deceitfully have led them into their error; and in righteousness they will praise the eternal God."<sup>117</sup>

---

<sup>114</sup> <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

<sup>115</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>116</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001)

<sup>117</sup> First-Century Study Bible Notes

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

Hab 2:4.

**Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:**

And now in verse 30 Paul draws a conclusion. But let me remind you that throughout this dissertation he has been following the standard rabbinical Talmud method of making his case. He presents the question; next he presents the ruling that a previous rabbi made; next he refutes that ruling (usually by saying Heaven Forbid); and then finally he pronounces his own, correct, ruling. Paul's arrival at a conclusion is announced by beginning the verse "therefore". And the ruling is that since there is only one God, logically meaning that God then must be God of everyone (Jews and gentiles), then God will righteous those who are circumcised (meaning the Jews) based on their trust, just as He will righteous those who are uncircumcised (meaning gentiles) also based on their trust.<sup>118</sup>

**McGee:** In other words, there's only one God. And in the Old Testament, He gave man the Law. Man failed. God didn't save them by their keeping the Law; salvation was always by the sacrifice which man brought in faith, pointing to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>119</sup>

**Guzik:** There is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith: Not only is this righteousness available to both Jew and Gentile, it is also received the same way by both Jew and Gentile. Since one God justifies both Jew and Gentile, He justifies them in the same way: by faith... through faith.<sup>120</sup>

**<sup>31</sup>Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.**

**Missler:** ...in the purpose that it was given:

- 1) To show us what sin is;
- 2) To drive us to sin more (!?): Rom 5:20-21
- 3) To drive us to our knees! Gal 3:24. Faith (in Christ) alone.<sup>121</sup>

**Torah Class, Seed of Abraham; Tom Bradford:**

But now in verse 31 comes the question of the ages. Because of all the previous arguments about Jews and gentiles, and that the Law (the Torah) does NOT save, only trust in God saves, does that mean that the Torah is abolished because of this trusting? In other words, since because of Yeshua's blood sacrifice on the cross in which we can place our trust, does this render the Law (the Torah) obsolete, replaced, and therefore abolished? How might Paul answer that question?

And regardless of his answer, what might he base his theology on? I think I know, and I think most of you know. As much as I enjoy using the CJB, on this passage I want to use the KJV just to demonstrate that it doesn't matter which version we use, the outcome is the same.

---

<sup>118</sup> <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

<sup>119</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>120</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001)

<sup>121</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Romans, khouse.org

**Matthew 5:17-19 KJV** 17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. 19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Paul's answer is directly connected to Yeshua's statement. And his answer to the question of if all that he said regarding equality of the Gospel for Jew and gentile, and that the Law does not save, means that the Law is therefore abolished.....HEAVEN FORBID! Let's face it; had he said otherwise, he would have refuting His Savior.<sup>122</sup>

**McGee:** The reference to the Law, I think, brings in another meaning of this word. It is not restricted to the Mosaic system here. Neither does it refer to just any law. Rather, it refers to the entire Old Testament revelation. "Faith" excluded the works of the Law. But did it abrogate the entire Old Testament revelation? Of course not! Paul will demonstrate in the next chapter by Old Testament illustrations of two men, Abraham and David, that it did not exclude that. These two key men, outstanding men, were saved, not by law but by faith. To begin with, Abraham was born and lived and died four hundred years before the Law was ever given. Abraham did not live on the basis of the Mosaic Law since it was not yet given in his day. God saved him on a different basis, which is by faith. And somebody says, "Well, then what about David?" Now, very honestly, do you think David could have been saved by keeping the Law? Of course he couldn't. The Old Testament made it very clear that David broke the Law. And yet God saved him. How? Well, He saved him by faith. David trusted God and believed God. Even in his sin, he came in confession to God. God accepted him and saved him by faith.

Today, my friend, when you and I will take the position that we're sinners and come to God and trust Christ as our Savior -- regardless of who we are, where we are, how we are or when we are -- God will save us. For God today has put man on one basis and one basis alone. His question is, What will you do with My Son who died for you on the Cross?<sup>123</sup>

**Guzik:** Do we then make void the law through faith? We can see how someone might ask, "If the law doesn't make us righteous, what good is it? Paul, you have just made the law void. You are going against the law of God."

Certainly not! Of course, Paul does not make void the law. As the Apostle will demonstrate in Romans 4, the law anticipated the coming gospel of justification by faith, apart from the deeds of the law. Therefore, the gospel establishes the law, fulfilling its own predictions.<sup>124</sup>

**ESV:** overthrow . . . uphold. Justification by faith does not nullify the law but establishes it. That is, the law itself points to the fact that human obedience to the law cannot save and that righteousness can be achieved only through faith in Christ; Christ has achieved this righteousness on behalf of all who believe in him, through his perfect fulfillment of the law and his atoning death on the cross for the salvation of all who believe. When Paul says, "we uphold

---

<sup>122</sup> <http://www.torahclass.com/teacher/author/tom-bradford/new-testament-studies/new-testament-romans>

<sup>123</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>124</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Rom/Rom-3.cfm?a=1049001)

the law,” he also affirms the abiding moral norms of the law and thus anticipates the charge of antinomianism, to which he responds more fully in chs. 6 and 7.<sup>125</sup>

**CJSBN:** Heaven forbid! On the contrary, we confirm Torah. Sha’ul’s methodology here follows the rabbinical method where in the Talmud, the rabbi, anticipating a hypothetical questioner, answers the student’s inquiry ahead of time. Traditional Christianity often believes that “works of the law” have no soteriological benefit. However, Sha’ul responds with “Heaven forbid!” as the NT upholds, establishes, and fills out the instructions of God (Matt. 5:17–20).<sup>126</sup>

---

<sup>125</sup> ESV Study Bible Notes

<sup>126</sup> Complete Jewish Study Bible Notes