

ROMANS 1:18-3:19 | THE CASE REJECTED

Supplemental Resource: Romans Graphically Presented, pgs. 5-6

ROMANS 2:17-3:19 | THE MISERABLE STATE OF JUDAISM

ROMANS 3:3-18 | WILL GOD DENY THE BELIEVING JEW?

Supplemental Resource: Romans Graphically Presented, pg 18

VERSE 3 – BLACK

Paul is in the process of revealing the mystery, in which anyone can be **justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses** (Acts 13:39). During the time of the mystery, God will not be dealing directly with the elect nation. Verse three is part of the foundational thinking that Paul will use to show that God is still at work even **if some did not believe** (referring to **some** of Israel).

The **faith of God** is the faith God placed in the Jewish people when He **committed** (entrusted or "faithed") His **oracles** in them (v. 2). Was God's faith misplaced? Has God failed? This is what Paul is about to answer.

Calvinists use this verse as a portion of their support in limited atonement. To do so, they apply the passage universally, beyond the election of the Jewish nation to every individual. This is an interpretive error, a failure to rightly divide, upon which they build a foundational doctrine.

VERSE 4 – BLACK

The phrase, **let God be true, but every man a liar** could have been a well-known proverb that communicated the truth that God's veracity is not dependent upon man's obedience. That is, even if *every Jew* was unfaithful, this would not affect the righteousness of God, who entrusted to them the **oracles of God**. God is not to blame, nor at any fault, if the Jewish people do not respond correctly to their election.

As mentioned in the previous note, Calvinism has made a doctrine that makes God out to be some kind of liar or failure if His work and will is not fully accomplished. Rather, we should place the blame where it belongs: in man. The reformed doctrine of Limited Atonement is built on a "God cannot fail" foundation, and thus not in alignment with this passage.

The verse concludes with a quote from the confessional Psalm 51:4. The point is *God is right, even when man is wrong*.

VERSE 5 – BLACK

When Paul speaks of **our unrighteousness** he refers to the unrighteousness of Judaism. The word **commend** can be understood as *recommend* or *point to*. The phrase presents the idea that somehow Jewish unrighteousness makes God look good, and therefore God would be **unrighteous** if He **taketh vengeance**.

Paul concludes his thought by a disclaimer: **I speak as a man**. This phrase, used similarly on a number of occasions, is always used to show that he is using flawed logic to prove a point.

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VERSE 7 – BLACK

This rhetorical question is built on the thoughts in verse 5. Why should a person be **judged as a sinner** when that judgment would glorify God's righteousness? Of course, the condition (**if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie**) is fallacious. Paul is building his case that the Jewish people are under righteous condemnation.

VERSE 8 – BLACK

I shall comment on the closing phrase first. Paul says that the Jew's **damnation is just**. This is the heart of the matter in verses 5-8, in contrast to the flawed logic that has been presented. This last phrase is key to understanding the previous verses.

But if the previous contention was true, then instead of being **judged as a sinner** (v. 7), then why **not rather** say, **Let us do evil, that good may come?**

Paul includes a parenthetical commentary that it has been **slanderosly reported** that his message (or that of the Jewish people, depending on the interpretation of the pronoun **we**) promotes evil behavior. Those who preach pure grace will always be slandered and misunderstood. They are portrayed as *antinomian*, or *cheap grace*, or holding to a *crossless Gospel*, etc.

VERSE 9 – BLACK

Paul asks, **are we** (the Jews who have great advantage) **better than they** (the Gentiles with no advantage). He then summarizes his point of the previous arguments, that everyone is **under sin**.

VERSES 10-18 – BLACK

Verses 10-18 contains a string of quotations from the Hebrew Scriptures, each without reference to the author. This testifies to the Hebrew familiarity of Paul's audience.

Rather than use these quotes to prove that every single individual is wretched, we should take them in the context of which they are found both here and in their original source. The point is not the "total depravity" of every man, woman, boy, and girl, but rather that **Jews and Gentiles...are all under sin** (v. 9). When we make these descriptive of every individual, we do injustice to context and cause conflict with passages of Scripture which speak of individual righteousness, such as Luke 1:6, Genesis 7:1, Job 1:8, Philippians 3:6, etc.

ROMANS 3:19 | ALL THE WORLD IS GUILTY

Supplemental Resource: Romans Graphically Presented, pg 19

Paul brings his argument to a close declaring first that *the law speaks to them who are under the law*. Sadly, Christianity has assumed that *the law speaks to them who are not under the law*.

Secondly, Paul declares that the Law, commanded of the Jews caused **every mouth to be stopped**. How does the Law, which was for Israel alone, conclude that **every mouth may be stopped** and prove the guilt of all? If the Gentiles turned from knowing and acknowledging God (as Paul argues in chapter 1), and the Jews turned from obeying God (as argued in chapters 2-3), then **all the world is guilty before God**.

ROMANS 3:20-5:11 | THE CASE FULFILLED: A GOSPEL FOR ALL

ROMANS 3:20-30 | THE MYSTERY REVEALED AND CLEARLY STATED

Supplemental Resource: Romans Graphically Presented, pg 20

ROMANS 3:20-22 | THE PREMISE

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VERSE 20 – BLUE

Based on the Gentile rejection of God and the Jewish failure to live righteous according to the Law, Paul is now ready to state that which would have been an utter shock to every Jew: **by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight**. In Romans 2:13 Paul had declared that **the doers of the law shall be justified**, but now he says there will be no justification in the Law. Paul is declaring a clear dispensational change, a revelation from God so fundamental that all the rules change from this point forward.

Paul speaks in the future tense, not past. Many theologians make the truth of verse 20 to be a truth for all times past, and thus create a conflict within the Scriptures. In James' epistle (prior to Romans), James said that **by works a man is justified** (James 2:24), and such was true at that moment. But now **by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified**. Note that the Greek word ἔργον [ergon] is used in both James 2:24 and Romans 3:20, and that the same Greek word is also used for **justified**, with the only change being in tense, James using the present and Paul using the future.