

Romans Chapter 3

vv 1,2 *“What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit [is there] of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.”* (1-2)

Possession of the Word of God, is an immense privilege, and responsibility. The Jews had been given the “oracles” of God. God’s spoken word. These words had been passed on to the Jews by the fathers. *“This is he, (Moses) that was in the church (Israel) in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and [with] our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us”* (Acts 7:38). Later, these oracles were put in written form, and in their written form are referred to in the New Testament nearly a hundred times.

That which the unbelieving Jews boasted in (the Law, ch.2:23) was the very word which condemned them. (see 3:19)

We, (Those composing Christendom) have the completed Word of God, and are in a very privileged place also. Those who know this Truth, and do not love it come under a special judgment from God.

“And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: [Even him], whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie” (2 Thess 2:8-11).

Privilege brings responsibility. *“For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more”* (Luke 12:48).

v 3 *“For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?”*

God’s Word remains true, and unbelief on man’s part will not annul it. God is faithful, and His Word will accomplish its purposes, in His own time and way. The law could not bless man because it needed the flesh (Man) to keep it in order that the law might bless man. God now accomplishes blessing to men, because of His grace, and faith He gives to believe His Word.

v 4 *“God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every*

man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.”

It seems to me this quote from Psalm 51 is a beautiful example of what had just been said in verse 3. In God’s faithfulness, grace, and mercy, David comes by faith, when so very guilty, (and consequently condemned by the law) casts himself upon the mercy of God, and experiences the forgiveness of God. Paul will soon quote from Psa. 32: *“Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, [Saying], Blessed [are] they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed [is] the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin”* (Ch. 4: 6-8).

v 5 *“But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? [Is] God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man)”*

Scarcely could a man have behaved himself in a more wretched way than David had, and yet he was the one could write of the blessedness of a soul being forgiven, whose sins were covered (by God). And who is it chosen to record this wonderful message of the gospel of God? Was it not the chief of sinners?

So some, in unbelief, might reason; “our unrighteousness commends the righteousness of God. How then can God punish sin? Look at David, look at Paul”.

v 6 *“God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?”*

God has in this very book proven that the whole world is guilty before God. The only hope for man is God’s gospel. David, and Paul recognized what they needed was the mercy of God. By faith they received it. Those who did not feel their need of mercy and despised the goodness of God, would be judged. *“despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance”* (Rom. 2:4).

The gospel of God is the only hope for all men, for truly there is no difference all have sinned. To despise that gospel, is additional grounds for God’s just judgment upon those who reject it. *“In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel”* (Ch. 2:16).

v 7 *“For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also*

judged as a sinner?"

The apostle still has the thought of the faithfulness of God before him (verse 3). *"For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith (or faithfulness) of God without effect?"* If men are liars and they are, (verse 4) God will still be glorified in the redemption of sinful men.

v 8 *"And not [rather], (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just."*

Some were falsely saying, because of God glorifying Himself by redeeming sinful men, (even the chief of sinners), that Paul was consequently teaching we should sin so God can be more glorified..

The reasoning was since sin brought about the display of goodness on God's part, then it is concluded that we should sin that good may come. Such reasoning however brings one into a just judgment.

v 9 *"What then? are we better [than they]? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;"*

Again, the Apostle asserts the truth that as far as man's relationship with God is concerned, there is no difference, all are under sin. God's goodness consequently had to be shown to sinful men, and when known, it led men to repentance, not into more sin. *"despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"* (2:4).

vv 10-18 *"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat [is] an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps [is] under their lips: Whose mouth [is] full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet [are] swift to shed blood: destruction and misery [are] in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes."*

These quotes, from the Psalms and Prophets are what Paul will now say *"the law saith"*. The law, includes the entire writings pertaining to the children of Israel, and they were boasting in them, while it was their very *oracles* that proved them to be sinners no different than the Gentiles. The law goes

beyond the Ten commandments, and is sometimes a reference to the whole dispensation under which Israel was placed. Also, as here it may include more than the books of Moses.

v 19 *"Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."*

It is rather solemn to think that something some one boasts in, is often something that, when applied to themselves, condemns them. It is written concerning the Jew, *"Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?"* (Rom. 2:23). Consequently, the Oracles of God, which they had, and boasted in, were the very Oracles that proved them *"guilty before God."*

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

Most Christians seem to want to be under the ten Commandments in some form, little realizing what the Scriptures say, *"For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed [is] every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them"* (Gal. 3:10).

All believers in Christ have died to the law, and to place ourselves under it again, is to leave Christ, and go back to the law, as *"our husband"*. *"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, [even] to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God"* (Rom. 7:4). We might well ask ourselves, why do we desire to leave Christ, and have the law as a *"husband"*? This return puts all who are under the law, under the curse of it.

The law came to show man his sinfulness, or convict him with the knowledge of sin. After the law was given, there came the need of the sin offerings (Exo. 29), the law being given in Exo. 20.

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

The law, even if it had been possible to keep it, only could provide man with that which would have been called, *"My righteousness"* *"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” (Php. 3:9). This righteousness of God, is by means of the gospel. “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ:...For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, *The just shall live by faith*” (Rom. 1:16-17).

Faith in Christ, (the gospel), gives us God’s righteousness. Isaiah, for one, records, “[there is] no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; [there is] none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I [am] God, and [there is] none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth [in] righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Surely, shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed” (Isa. 45:21).

vv 22-23 “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: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;”

Here we learn that the righteousness of God is made available unto all, but it is only upon those who believe. This is by faith. The law, and righteousness by it, on the principle of works, had its special application to the Jew, the righteousness of God by faith is available to all. There is no difference made regarding the righteousness of God, as there is no difference made in the fact that all have sinned. And we might note, the righteousness of God is adequate to place us in the glory of God.

We might quote here, “For if that annulled (the law) [was introduced] with glory, much rather that which abides [subsists] in glory” (2 Cor.3:11, JND tr.)

The Prophets “witnessed” concerning the righteousness of God without law, but now it is “”manifested” (see verse 21).

vv 24-25 “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 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;”

Here we learn an important difference between

the righteousness of the law, and that of God. The Law, even if kept, had no provision for the forgiveness of sins. But the righteousness which God freely gives, He gives on a righteous basis. The righteous basis for imparting righteousness to a sinful man was faith in the blood of Christ. (Remember here, all have sinned and are guilty before God.)

One thought at least in “propitiation” (mercy seat) is that God can righteously now come out to man in mercy, rather than in judgment. The righteousness of the law had to come out in judgment. No blood, or consequently mercy there. God had been able to remit in righteousness the sins of the old Testament saints, (“sins that are past”) in forbearance, that is, in view of Christ’s, shedding of blood. “The redemption that is in Christ Jesus”. His work which allowed forbearance, and remission of sins being yet future.

v 26 “Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?” The “righteousness of the law” is not God’s righteousness but rather man’s—were he able to keep it. God’s is received by faith. “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.” (Php. 3:9). However the point is here made of the vanity of boasting of having the law, when there was no accompanying righteousness in the life. The outward advantage of having the law, and circumcision were of no avail. Reality was what was important to God.

v 27 “Where [is] boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.”

Those who revert to the principle of law being applied to Christians, do so to have something to boast in. For the principle of law, makes man the doer, it is, his works.

“Not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph. 2:9). “But God forbid that I should glory, (boast) save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me” (Gal. 6:14).

Glory and boast in these two verses are the same word. You will find Paul boasting, sometimes in others, or in the fruits of grace, working in his own life. For example, “For if I have boasted any thing to him of you, I am not ashamed; but as we spake all things to you in truth, even so our boasting, which [I made]

before Titus, is found a truth" (2 Cor. 7:14).

It is not wrong to speak well of our brethren to others. A blessed thing in fact. Paul's boast of the Corinthians was in "truth". *"But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which [was bestowed] upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me"* (1 Cor. 15:10).

For us, however it is well to remember, *"Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips"* (Prov.27:2). It is unbecoming to imply that we are faithful. Let others, and the Lord make that judgment.

"Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?" (Prov. 20:6).

vv 28-30 *"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. [Is he] the God of the Jews only? [is he] not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: Seeing [it is] one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith."* (28-30)

Being justified by faith, brings the conclusion, that since justification is apart from the law, or the principle of law, the Gentiles would be included. The Jew boasted in the law. It had been given by God as the basis of the Jews relationship with God, (Jehovah). When relationship with God is on the principle of faith, it of necessity includes all. For it is "unto all" (Verse 22 of this chapter).

"Even the righteousness of God [which is] by faith of Jesus Christ unto all..." . *"What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith"* (Rom. 9:30).

"And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, [saying], In thee shall all nations be blessed" (Gal. 3:8).

The wonderful thing about faith that saves is that faith is the gift of God.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that [faith] not of yourselves: it is [faith] the gift of God" (Eph 2:8).

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

The Christian establishes the law in this way. We own its just authority to take our life because *"all have sinned"*. Christian baptism owns this, in that it

is a baptism unto Christ's death. *"we, as many as have been baptised unto Christ Jesus, have been baptised unto his death? We have been buried therefore with him by baptism unto death"* (Rom.6:3,4).

It is by death we are freed from the law's authority, and only by death.

"So that, my brethren, ye also have been made dead to the law by the body of the Christ, to be to another...What shall we say then? [is] the law sin? Far be the thought...But I was alive without law once; but the commandment having come, sin revived, but I died. And the commandment, which [was] for life, was found, [as] to me, itself [to be] unto death: for sin, getting a point of attack by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew [me]. So that the law indeed [is] holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (Rom.7:4-12).

Well meaning Christians who use the Law as a standard of life, do not establish the law, for they deny that it slays those under it, and profess themselves to live by it. This is true even in the principle of the law.

"Who has also made us competent, [as] ministers of [the] new covenant; not of letter, but of spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit quickens" (2 Cor.3:6).

"Letter" refers to the law. If any walk by the principle of law, they do not establish it, they deny its authority. *"For it is written, Cursed is every one who does not continue in all things which [are] written in the book of the law to do them...Christ has redeemed us out of the curse of the law..."* (Gal.3:10,13).