

Right in God's Sight

Studies from the Book of Romans

Lesson 4

Romans 3:1–31

Romans 3:1–8 The Judgment of God is Defended

Paul stated in the previous chapter that being a “true Jew” is not based upon circumcision of the body, but rather of the heart. Here in chapter 3, Paul will systematically pick apart the Jews’ perspective of their religion by continuing with the diatribe he began in chapter 2:1, asking a series of questions designed to answer the objections he knew the Jewish believers would raise.

Read Romans 3:1–31.

1. What, according to Paul, was the benefit of being a Jew? vv. 1–2

2. If some of God’s own people are unfaithful to Him, does that mean that He also is unfaithful? vv. 3–4 Please explain.

Some of the Jews did not believe in God or in His written word, which was committed to them, but this did not nullify God’s faithfulness. He was always faithful to His covenant with them and would remain forever faithful.

Paul’s quote in verse 4 is directly taken from Psalm 51:4, the confession of King David, Israel’s greatest king: *“Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight—that You may be found just when You speak, and blameless when You judge.”* David was willing to be judged a sinner and for God to be proven right when pronouncing judgment upon him. God’s judgment is indicative of His faithfulness to His covenant.

Look Closer . . .

God’s faithfulness is not dependent upon our obedience. What does Paul further teach about this in 2 Timothy 2:11–13? How do these verses encourage you today?

Some would likely argue that if it takes man's sin to display God's righteousness, wouldn't that make God unjust for punishing sinners? Paul states in vv. 5–6 that such reasoning is based on *human argument* (NIV translation, which means a *depraved mind*, as stated in 1:28). The point being, the standard of God's judgment is His holiness, not the arena of public opinion.

3. Further addressing this same irrational line of thinking, what does Paul ask in verses 7–8? Look these verses up in more than one Bible translation and put them in your own words.

Selah . . .

Some people presume upon God's grace by thinking that because He is loving, He will tolerate sin—but not so! He is loving and forgiving, but He cannot overlook sin; He must judge it. Is there an area of your life where you have tried to rationalize an attitude, habit, or behavior? Do not think for a moment that because God is faithful even when you are not that you do not have to obey what His Word says. If you know of something in your life where you have proven unfaithful, note it here and repent of it today.

Memory Verse: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Romans 3:23–24

Word Wealth:

Using the resources you have on hand (i.e., additional Bible translations, dictionary, Bible dictionary, concordance, etc.), write a definition for the words below.

justified (3:20, 24) _____

righteous (3:10) _____

righteousness (3:25) _____

propitiation (3:25) _____

Romans 3:9–20

All Have Sinned

Paul had just stated that there was an advantage to being a Jew—God had entrusted them with His revealed word. Now Paul drops a bombshell, declaring that the Jews' unique privilege does not apply to salvation.

1. What declaration does Paul make in verse 9?

To bolster his argument, Paul cites the Old Testament: *“As it is written . . .”* (v.10). The strongest witness against them would be recorded scripture, which they would immediately recognize.

2. In verses 10–12, finish Paul's words that convey the guilt of all mankind.

v. 10: There is none _____

v. 11: There is none _____

There is none _____

v. 12: They have all _____

They have together _____

There is none _____

No one seeks God; all have turned away and become worthless! Paul is now specific in verses 13–18, pointing to the affect of sin on our relationship with others.

3. What is the result of each of the following: (Consider Paul's meaning here.)

a. Throat - _____

b. Tongues - _____

c. Lips - _____

d. Mouth - _____

e. Feet - _____

f. Eyes - _____

4. Paul declares that all have sinned; the Old Testament has declared the same. What other witness speaks out against them in verses 19–20?

a. Why did God give the law?

b. What is the law not able to do?

The law was intended to show people they are sinners and to reveal their need for a savior. Jesus stated this regarding the law: *“Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill”* (Matthew 5:17 NASB).

Romans 3:21–31

Justification by Faith

Paul's readers would most likely still be absorbing the shock of the bad news of their true condition when, with the words "*But now*" in verse 21, Paul shifts to the hope of God's plan—the Good News. The law was previously God's requirement for righteousness, but man could not live up to the standard. In verses 21–31, Paul declares how it is that a righteous God can declare guilty sinners as righteous in His eyes.

1. No matter who we are, what is the way God has revealed for us to be made right with Him? vv. 21–22
2. Who falls short of God's standard for righteousness? Does anyone merit it? v. 23
3. How can anyone be made right in God's sight? vv. 24–26 (Please explain God's provision in your own words.)

God had to fulfill His own requirement for righteousness by offering the sacrifice of His Son for sin; everyone who puts their faith in Christ is *justified*—declared righteous in God's sight.

4. Because man's acquittal is not based upon obeying the law but faith alone, is there any room for boasting? vv. 27–31 (Review Ephesians 2:8–9.)

Since we cannot *achieve* righteousness but only *receive* it, this eliminates any possibility of boasting in our salvation. Paul points out that only when we have faith do we truly establish—*affirm, endorse, validate, fulfill*—the law (v. 31).

Selah . . .

- ❖ Have you taken time lately to reflect on the sacrifice God made and the price Jesus paid by shedding His own blood to secure your salvation?
- ❖ When you realize the grace and mercy that was extended to you, how does it motivate you to extend the same to someone who has done you wrong?

For Group Discussion . . .

Justification is not a process; it is the gracious act of God that instantly gives a believer righteous standing before Him. Once God has declared you righteous through faith in Jesus Christ, the sin issue that separated you from Him is settled forever!

Look up the verses below in Romans that address the *method* of justification and briefly note the result of each one for you.

- 3:24 – _____
What does this mean for you? _____

- 3:28 – _____
What does this mean for you? _____

- 5:9 – _____
What does this mean for you? _____

- 5:18 – _____
What does this mean for you? _____

(Note: In a future lesson we will examine how this new standing before God affects the daily life of the believer.)

- ❖ Personal: Have you placed *your* faith in Jesus Christ? Are you trusting in anything or anyone apart from Him?

God freely offers justification by His grace, having nothing to do with human merit. If you will put your faith in Jesus Christ—His blood has paid the price for your sin—you will have right standing before God and will enter into a new life of peace and joy and glory.

“Justification means not only that God forgets our sins—past, present, and future—but that God forgets we were ever sinners. He never again treats us as sinners.”

Warren Wiersbe

My Romans Road

Listen . . . Learn . . . Live . . . God's Truth!

Take a look back at this week's lesson. Briefly recap what you learned this week and how you intend to live it out.

1. What lesson in your study became real to you this week?

2. How do you intend to apply this lesson to your daily life?

Memory Verse:

Write down what you learned about God from this week's memory verse.

Write out the verse from memory.

Prayer Request:

Write out your most earnest prayer request and lift it to the Lord.
