

ROMANS

Lesson 3

Romans Chapter 3

We continue our study of Romans with an examination of Chapter 3. Again, we will be studying some foundational principles that are part of our faith and the Gospel message. I want to thank all of you who indicated that they were helped by my inclusion of the Contemporary English Version passage in our last lesson. We will once again use that approach in this lesson. Please read the following text, or Romans Chapter 3 from your favorite version, before answering the questions that follow.

Romans 3

¹What good is it to be a Jew? What good is it to be circumcised? ²It is good in a lot of ways! First of all, God's messages were spoken to the Jews. ³It is true that some of them did not believe the message. But does this mean that God cannot be trusted, just because they did not have faith? ⁴No, indeed! God tells the truth, even if everyone else is a liar. The Scriptures say about God,

"Your words
will be proven true,
and in court
you will win your case."

⁵If our evil deeds show how right God is, then what can we say? Is it wrong for God to become angry and punish us? What a foolish thing to ask. ⁶But the answer is, "No." Otherwise, how could God judge the world? ⁷Since your lies bring great honor to God by showing how truthful he is, you may ask why God still says you are a sinner. ⁸You might as well say, "Let's do something evil, so that something good will come of it!" Some people even claim that we are saying this. But God is fair and will judge them as well.

No One is Good

⁹What does all this mean? Does it mean that we Jews are better off than the Gentiles? No, it doesn't! Jews, as well as Gentiles, are ruled by sin, just as I have said. ¹⁰The Scriptures tell us, "No one is acceptable to God!

¹¹Not one of them understands
or even searches for God.

¹²They have all turned away
and are worthless.

There isn't one person
who does right.

¹³Their words are like
an open pit,
and their tongues are good
only for telling lies.

Each word is as deadly
as the fangs of a snake,

¹⁴and they say nothing
but bitter curses.

¹⁵These people quickly become violent.

¹⁶Wherever they go, they leave ruin and destruction.

¹⁷They don't know how to live in peace.

¹⁸They don't even fear God."

¹⁹We know that everything in the Law was written for those who are under its power. The Law says these things to stop anyone from making excuses and to let God show that the whole world is guilty. ²⁰God doesn't accept people simply because they obey the Law. No, indeed! All the Law does is to point out our sin.

God's Way of Accepting People

²¹Now we see how God does make us acceptable to him. The Law and the Prophets tell how we become acceptable, and it isn't by obeying the Law of Moses. ²²God treats everyone alike. He accepts people only because they have faith in Jesus Christ. ²³All of us have sinned and fallen short of God's glory. ²⁴But God treats us much better than we deserve, and because of Christ Jesus, he freely accepts us and sets us free from our sins. ²⁵⁻²⁶God sent Christ to be our sacrifice. Christ offered his life's blood, so that by faith in him we could come to God. And God did this to show that in the past he was right to be patient and forgive sinners. This also shows that God is right when he accepts people who have faith in Jesus. ²⁷What is left for us to brag about? Not a thing! Is it because we obeyed some law? No! It is because of faith. ²⁸We see that people are acceptable to God because they have faith, and not because they obey the Law. ²⁹Does God belong only to the Jews? Isn't he also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, he is! ³⁰There is only one God, and he accepts Gentiles as well as Jews, simply because of their faith. ³¹Do we destroy the Law by our faith? Not at all! We make it even more powerful.

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In this lesson, we have again encountered a very powerful chapter, which speaks of so many fundamental teachings. Let's pray that we don't miss any of them, as we consider the following questions:

1. Paul seems to contradict himself in the beginning of the chapter. Is it good to be a Jew (see Rom. 3:2)? Are the Jews "better off"? (see Rom. 3: 9) What is Paul telling us in these two verses about the Jews?
2. Read Romans 3:3-8 again. While these verses may seem confusing at first, what is Paul teaching us?
3. In Romans 3:9-20, Paul really puts it plainly: All have fallen short and have sinned. No one is perfect; neither Jew nor Gentile. What does he say that the purpose of the Law is? Is it meant to "save" people? Does it provide salvation? What is the purpose of the Law?

4. Now reread Romans 3:21-31. In verse 21, Paul states that the Law and the Prophets tell us how we become acceptable. If we accept that the "Law and the Prophets" in Paul's day referred to what we today call the Old Testament, does Paul's assertion indicate that they speak of Christ and salvation? Is Paul revealing to the Jews and Gentiles of the day that God has been telling them all along how they can be saved?

5. If indeed Paul is making the statement that Christ, and the means for salvation, can be found in the Old Testament; are we able to confirm this? What did Jesus himself say about the Old Testament (The Law and The Prophets)? Read Matthew 5:17-20 and summarize Jesus' assertions regarding this subject.

6. What else did Christ tell us about the Old Testament, i.e., the "Scriptures" in each of the passages below?
 - a. Matthew 26:23-24

 - b. Mark 9:12-13

 - c. Luke 18: 31-33

 - d. Luke 22:37

 - e. Luke 24:44-47

7. What did the Apostles tell us about the Old Testament, i.e., the "Scriptures" in each of the passages below?
 - a. Acts 3:18

 - b. Acts 10:43

 - c. Acts 17:2-3

8. Have you ever tried to find Christ, Salvation, or the Redeemer in the Old Testament? Have you ever considered the fact that the Bible that we have today is so much more than what the Apostles had during their times? In their day, they had the "scriptures", what we would call the Old Testament. Do you realize with only that, and the power of the Holy Spirit, millions were saved? Could you witness to someone today using only the Old Testament, as the Apostles did? Let's try to find out how the Old Testament spoke to the Jews and Gentiles from the time of Moses onward, pointing them to believe in God and in the Messiah He would send. Look up the following scripture verses and note what they tell us about the Messiah, Christ the Savior.
- a. Isaiah 59:20

 - b. Isaiah 62:11

 - c. Jeremiah 23:5-6

 - d. Daniel 7:13-14

 - e. Isaiah 53:5 and Daniel 9:26

 - f. Jeremiah 33:14 and Matthew 22:42

 - g. 2 Samuel 7:12-16

 - h. Numbers 21:9 and John 3:14

 - i. Galatians 3:16 and John 7:42

 - j. Psalm 19:7

 - k. Psalm 51:3 and Matthew 18:3

 - l. Isaiah 7:14

 - m. Isaiah 9:6-7

 - n. Zechariah 9:9

 - o. Micah 5:2

 - p. Malachi 3:1

I apologize for assigning so many verses to look up in this lesson. I really want you to understand at least two fundamental things. The first of these is that "...all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."; Romans 3:23 [NIV]. Therefore, there are no favorites; no one has an "inside track". We have all sinned, and there is no hope apart from God's great grace and Christ's great gift.

The second fundamental is that this message was known to all from the beginning of time, and was revealed in The Prophets and The Law before Christ physically came to earth.

We need to understand that before God created a single thing, He understood that we would sin and that we would need to be saved, to be redeemed. He also knew (1) that it would take the blood of His only son Jesus on the Cross to atone for that sin; (2) that through faith we could be reconciled to Him once again through Jesus, and (3) that without Jesus the Christ as our Savior, there is no hope; only condemnation through the Law.

I pray that you will see the great hope in this chapter that Paul reveals for us: that Jesus' birth, death, and resurrection was not an accident, not a coincidence, and not an invention of man. It was the plan of God since before creation, revealed in the Old Testament through The Law and The Prophets, to all, both Jew and Gentile, and manifested bodily in Jesus, the Christ, our Messiah.

May He richly bless you as you study His Holy Word with us this week.

In Christ,

Wes