

ROMANS

Lesson 3 w/Answers

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?
 - a. ANSWER: Paul is telling them they are special, but for only one specific reason: because God chose them to pass on His messages. God chose to speak to the world through the Jews and no one else. Indeed, the Jews are special, but they were unable to live up to God's standards.
2. Read Romans 3:3-8 again. While these verses may seem confusing at first, what is Paul teaching us?
 - a. ANSWER: He is teaching us that sinning in order to be forgiven and enjoy God's favor is bad wisdom and is to be avoided. We cannot manipulate God through sinning, just to enjoy His grace all the more. People were accusing some of Jesus' followers of doing exactly this—it's wrong and a false accusation. When we sin, we knowingly go against God's will and need to ask His forgiveness. Intentionally sinning to somehow win His favor is blasphemous.
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?
 - a. ANSWER: The Law was given us from God so that we understood what sin was and is. It was never intended to be a method or way to salvation—only as a measuring rod that God would use in judging all of us. It shows us how far short we fall; it does not "earn" us salvation if we try to follow it. Salvation is obtained only by the grace of God

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?
 - a. ANSWER: Yes, Paul is telling us that the scriptures we refer to as the Old Testament "tell how we become acceptable, and it isn't by obeying the Law of Moses. God treats everyone alike. He accepts people only because they have faith in Jesus Christ."
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.
 - a. ANSWER: Christ tells us that he came to fulfill the Law and the Prophets—a phrase that references what we today call the Old Testament. Christ himself called out that he was in the Old Testament, and that he came to fulfill everything in it.
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
 - i. ANSWER: His death and resurrection were already written about him in the Old Testament.
 - b. Mark 9:12-13
 - i. ANSWER: He referred to Elijah coming ahead of him, and he is telling us that Elijah did come and did all that was written, just as the scriptures had said.
 - c. Luke 18: 31-33
 - i. ANSWER: Everything written by the prophets about Christ would be fulfilled. This means that if we study the prophets, we will see them pointing toward Christ.
 - d. Luke 22:37
 - i. ANSWER: This refers to Isaiah 53:12; Jesus is telling them that he is fulfilling what is mentioned in this scripture.
 - e. Luke 24:44-47
 - i. ANSWER: Jesus explains all of the scriptures that pointed to him throughout the Old Testament; he refers to these writings as "Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms." So we know that if we study these, we'll see Christ.
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
 - i. ANSWER: God told us from the beginning through all of the prophets "that his Messiah would suffer."
 - b. Acts 10:43
 - i. ANSWER: "All of the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."
 - c. Acts 17:2-3
 - i. ANSWER: Paul used the Old Testament to prove to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah, and that he had suffered, died, and risen from dead—all of this using the Old Testament.

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
 - i. ANSWER: The Redeemer is coming to Zion.
 - b. Isaiah 62:11
 - i. ANSWER: Your Savior Comes!
 - c. Jeremiah 23:5-6
 - i. ANSWER: God will raise up The Lord, Our Righteous Savior.
 - d. Daniel 7:13-14
 - i. ANSWER: The coming kingdom of Christ.
 - e. Isaiah 53:5 and Daniel 9:26
 - i. ANSWER: Foretold Christ's crucifixion, and his coming again at the end of the Great Tribulation Period.
 - f. Jeremiah 33:14 and Matthew 22:42
 - i. ANSWER: The days are coming when God will fulfill His promises, including sending us the Messiah.
 - g. 2 Samuel 7:12-16
 - i. ANSWER: David's house and kingdom will last forever through Christ.
 - h. Numbers 21:9 and John 3:14
 - i. ANSWER: Jesus will be lifted up so that "everyone who believes may have eternal life in him."
 - i. Galatians 3:16 and John 7:42
 - i. ANSWER: Christ will be a descendant from David and from the town of Bethlehem. This refers all the way back to Genesis 12:7; 13:15; and 24:7 regarding the lineage of Christ.
 - j. Psalm 19:7
 - i. ANSWER: The Law describes perfection, which Christ was. It was not intended to be a burden; but rather refreshing, reliable, and edifying.
 - k. Psalm 51:3 and Matthew 18:3
 - i. ANSWER: Sin will keep us from God. We must be "changed and become like little children," or we will never enter the kingdom of heaven.
 - l. Isaiah 7:14
 - i. ANSWER: The Messiah will be born of a virgin, and she will call him Immanuel.
 - m. Isaiah 9:6-7
 - i. ANSWER: "He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." His kingdom will have no end.
 - n. Zechariah 9:9
 - i. ANSWER: "The king will come to the Jews, lowly and riding on a donkey."
 - o. Micah 5:2
 - i. ANSWER: He will come out of Bethlehem.
 - p. Malachi 3:1
 - i. ANSWER: John the Baptist, "my messenger," will prepare the way and then he will come.

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,

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