

(1) Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision? Much in every way. To begin with, the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God. What if some were unfaithful? Does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God? By no means! Let God be true though every one were a liar, as it is written,

“That you may be justified in your words, and prevail when you are judged.” (Ps.51:4)

(5) But if our unrighteousness serves to show the righteousness of God, what shall we say? That God is unrighteous to inflict wrath on us? (I speak in a human way.) By no means! For then how could God judge the world? But if through my lie God’s truth abounds to His glory, why am I still being condemned as a sinner? And why not do evil that good may come? --- as some people slanderously charge us with saying. Their condemnation is just.

(9) What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, as it is written:

“None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.” (Ps.14:1-3; 53:1-3)

“Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive.” (Ps.5:9)

“The venom of asps is under their lips.” (Ps. 140:3)

“Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness.” (Ps. 10:7)

“Their feet are swift to shed blood; in their paths are ruin and misery, and the way of peace they have not known.” (Prov. 1:16; 3:15-17; Is.59:7-8)

“There is no fear of God before their eyes.” (Ps. 36:1)

(19) Now we know that whatever things the Law says it speaks to those within the Law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. For by works of the Law no human being will be justified in His sight, since through the Law comes knowledge of sin.

(:10) Think on These Things

- 1) Is there an advantage to being a Jew? Paul says, “Yes.” Name some advantages they were given. (This discussion comes up again later in Romans.) Do you think Christians have been given similar advantages in today’s world?

They are God’s covenanted people through circumcision, entrusted with God’s Words and messages. God engaged personally with several Jewish individuals over the years, and provided a visible presence to the entire nation at times (especially leaving Egypt under Moses). Thus, they had the role being witnesses in this world of who the True God is! In a way, Christians now join Jews as witnesses to the world, having the record and Words of God the Son, Jesus. We worship weekly and are instructed in God’s ways to live our daily lives. If anyone should know the True God, Christians and Jews should!

- 2) Did all Jews --- God’s chosen people --- believe in God? Do all people raised in Christian homes or exposed to the Gospel believe in God? What remains true in this situation (v.3)?

No, among Jew and Christian families (by heritage), there remain many who reject the God of their parents. However, this rejection doesn’t nullify the truth that God remains faithful to us.

- 3) The Gnostics were a first century group who perverted Christian teaching by saying that since God is Spirit, salvation only involves your spirit, not your body. Therefore, whatever you did with your body would have no impact on your being saved. Go ahead and live like you want; satisfy your fleshly body's needs and desires. All that matters is that your spirit is right.

This **false teaching** is being addressed here in Romans. What do you think of the "life thought" expressed in vs.5-8, that: **WE SHOULD SIN** so that God can be glorified when showing sinners like us His grace and forgiveness? Also, that when God judges us because we sin He is being unjust, since it is in showing us grace that He is ultimately glorified? Is this what Paul taught, that basically the worse I behave, the better God looks? Consider Rom. 6:1-2.

The Gnostic view was rejected and refuted from very early on (Rom. 6:1-2). Jesus' disciples knew Him personally "in the flesh," and they never embraced a concept that what we do in our bodies is disconnected from our minds or spirits --- nor that this was how God the Father viewed believers! In fact, we are told our battles with the flesh are "spiritual" battles (Rom 7:14-24), and we fight against the "forces of evil in high places" (Eph. 6). Paul NEVER taught that we SHOULD sin so that God, in forgiving us, can be glorified!

- 4) Verses 1-8 are primarily addressed to Jews. In v.9, Paul asks, "Are we Jews any better off?" The answer he gives is "No, not at all." What reason is given? (Hint, it includes vs. 10-18, which is an assessment of all humanity.)

Verses 10-18 are a fairly comprehensive look at how people are driven in this world, what we refer to in religious terms as the TOTAL DEPRAVITY of mankind. When we use this term, we don't mean that mankind is incapable of doing good things. Rather, we mean that every one of us --- and every part of each of us (body, soul [mind or personality], and spirit) --- is "contaminated" and affected by sin. It does not matter if we are a Jew or a non-Jew (Greek or 'Gentile', v.9), we are ALL infected with this condition.

Our nature is to be true to SELF and intentionally ignorant of --- or arrogant towards --- God. We want to dismiss Him and His Word to decide for ourselves what's right or wrong. People tend to focus on self-sufficiency and self-reliance, trying to live life without regard for Him --- and without Him!

- 5) In vs. 19-20, what method of seeking salvation is being discussed? Is there hope pursuing God in this way? Why do you think this is so? (The Law giving us the knowledge of sin will be discussed later in chapter 6.)

Some people noted in vs. 19-20 are trying to secure God's favor (salvation) by obeying the Law (the Torah [Gen.-Deut.] with things like the 10 Commandments). Basically, they are using God's Law like a self-help checklist. "If I do this and this and this correctly, God will have to accept me into heaven." Paul says in v.20 that NO ONE will be justified in God's sight by trying to gain His favor and acceptance in this life path. God's verdict has already been decreed: There is NO ONE who is righteous, no, not one! Everyone is a sinner --- and sins against God!

People and situations I want to pray for this week: