

Glen Park Gospel Church
Tuesday Evening Bible Study Group Notes

Rev Chris Trinham

Studies in Romans Series 1

No 4

Series 1. Condemnation - No One Is Righteous
The Jew and God's Judgment

Scripture Reading: Romans 2:17-3:20

Paul paints for us a picture of the attitude of a typical learned first century Jew. His words apply in particular to the Jew at that time and place in history but may be applied in principle to any religious persons who by reason of their religion consider themselves special and above their fellows. Christians today ought not to say, 'This does not apply to me. Certainly, a Christian enjoys a place within the redemptive work of God in Christ that the world does not understand, but ought to remember that this is by God's grace alone through faith in His provision and that with God there is no respect of persons, and God's offer is open to all who will believe. Without this he himself would not enjoy it. God's grace is unearned and undeserved.

First, The Jew Knew He was

Privileged. Paul shows us how the Jew considered himself in a special relation to God and then others in v17-20.

Although there is irony in these words, they are not cynical. He outlines the benefits of being a Jew, "If then you Jewish *people* instructed from the law - resting on law and boasting in God;" This is the nominative part of the paragraph in v17&18.

The law had been given to the Jew and the Jew v20 was intended to be a guide, a light, a teacher. This is an honest picture of his self image.

Second, The Jew Failed in Practice.

V21-24. Paul questioned the integrity of, but did not accuse his reader. The inference was that he was not able to do as he told others. It is a challenge for us to examine our own soul. Paul quotes Isaiah 52:5, "*My name continually every day is blasphemed.*" by the Gentile.

May this never be said of you. Ensure that it is not, for this is hypocrisy.

Third, The Jew Trusted Rites Instead of Reality v27. Circumcision was given as a symbol of relationship, but the Jew had made it the seal of salvation, dividing the world into the two groups.

Paul had plenty of Old Testament support for his comparison of heart to bodily circumcision "*The days are coming,*" declares the LORD, *when I will punish all who are circumcised only in the flesh.*" Jeremiah 9:25NIV. See also Deuteronomy 30:6 & Jeremiah 4.4. 'Judge' here refers to the achievement of one being a standard for another.

Fourth, A True Jew v28&29 says Paul (as the Greek has it in v29) is 'hidden Jewish, heart circumcised in spirit not a document'.

Some translations capitalise the 'spirit' as (the Holy) Spirit, however the context does not support this interpretation. So to be truly Jewish is to humbly live out in life what the law reflects. This will be a God honouring, God intended life.

Then, Paul's FAQ Page 3.1-9 These questions Paul had been answering from hostile Jews throughout his long ministry to the Gentiles. He answers his most asked:

Q1 What advantage do Jews have v1? Much. They are custodians of God's own utterances. (Here is also a statement of Paul's view of the inspiration of Scripture.)

Q2 Does the unfaithfulness of some Jews (to whom God's revelation was given v1) void God's integrity v3? How could this ever be? God's faithfulness does not depend on ours. Paul quotes Psalm 51:4. as his basis.

Q3 If our sinfulness magnifies God's righteousness, isn't God unjust in judging us v5?

No way! This is corruption. God would thereby invalidate His right as judge. It would leave the world without the standard of holiness by which the world will be judged.

Q4 If my falsity enhances God's truth and glory why am I still judged for my sinfulness v7?

This is the same as saying, 'Let us do evil to obtain good', or 'The end justifies the means'

Q5 Aren't we (Jews) any better off (than the Gentiles)?

'No way!' says Paul, we have already told you, but here is the evidence from your own Scriptures:

v10-12 Psalm 14:1-3 & 53:1-3

v13&13 Psalm 5:9, 140:3

v14 Psalm 10:7

v15-17 Isaiah 59:7&8

v18 Psalm 36:1&2

Last, The Real Benefit of the Law

v19-20. If Jewish trusteeship of the oracles of God added to their guilt before God, what benefit does the law bring? Why did God give the law to Moses? Paul hammers home his nail with five strong blows:

First, it applies to the people who received it. God is not so unjust as to judge a person by a legal code of which he has not heard, but those who have it in their Bible. This law, or legal code is for, the Greek has it, those (involved) in the law (the Torah).

Second, it answers the claims of its recipients. Their acts will be judged by what they understand God requires, and finds wanting.

Third, all men are answerable to God. 'To God' is dative which indicates the person to whom all are accountable. All men, the Jew is included, the sentence reads, 'that all the accountable world may come up before God.'

Fourth, trying to keep the law can justify no one. This, says Paul, is because men are not capable of meeting all that the law demands. He tells us why this is so in Romans 7.

Fifth, the law shows us that we all are sinners in need of God's grace. The function of the law is not to justify people it is to tell them that they are sinners.

God's law is not a bath to cleanse me. It is a mirror to show me that I need to have a wash.

Welcome

Glen Park Gospel Church

Lower Road, Eltham North

Sundays 10.30 am

These notes may be reproduced in part or in full when distributed without cost, if the words 'Used by Permission, Glen Park Gospel Church.' is included