

Rom 205 - **Religious Debates - Rom 3:1-20**

I said in our Last Msg - that we were going to get to the Divine Remedy for our sin in **ROM Ch 3** (& we are)

& I was just going to "Lightly Touch" on the **1st half** of Ch 3 & get right into the **Miracle of Salvation** in the **2nd half**

But **instead** - we're going to go **slow down** a bit
Partly to give the **2nd half** more time next week
Partly to pause on a **very important point** this week

& that Very Important Point - **Is the Religious Debates we get into**
about God, & God's Plan of Salvation

Have you **ever known** someone who seems like they'd argue face-to-face w/ God Himself about God's plan of Salvation in Jesus Christ

Most of us have had that difficult experience of sharing God's Love in Christ to a person . . .

Only to have them say - **Well . . . Here's what I believe !!!**

. . . here's what you believe ???

It's **hard** for me to **understand** how a person can consider the Bible w/ over **2,000 yrs** of Miraculous Documented Proof in Every area of science known to man

A book that holds **Hundreds** of miraculous "proofs" of its authenticity & protection over 2,000 years

& so many can look at all that mountain of evidence - & still say
... **well, here's what I believe !!!**

& then **go on** to basically "argue" with God . . .

using their **30 or 40 yrs** of sinful, human experience
to argue with to over **2000 yrs** of miraculous proof of the scriptures

HOWEVER - we all seem to get into those **Religious Debates**

& **THAT** is exactly what Paul has sort of "put himself into"
as we begin **Rom Ch 3**

Paul - being an EX Pharisee of Pharisees,
'anticipates' the Pharisee's response

& **it's like** Paul has one of these "Religious Debaters" in his **mind**

& **as he dictates** this section of Romans,
it's like he's seeing himself have this **Religious Debate** . . .

with someone who thinks that they have grounds
to **debate** the truths of God based on their Own Understanding

Let's Pray - & we'll get into it

I'm **going to use** both the **ESV** & the **NLT** today
because the LITERAL wording in this section can be difficult

& I'll **put them both** up side-by-side
so you can benefit from both translations

In the **last 2 Vs's** of Ch 2 Paul had made it clear;

A **true** Jew is **not** one outwardly,
nor is **true** circumcision physical

But a **true** Jew **is** one inwardly,
& **true** circumcision is a matter of the heart

& so now - **Paul anticipates** the Jewish argument

& he **begins** his Mock Religious Debate in **Rom 3:1**
by putting himself **in the Jew's place** . . .

Rom 3:1 - ESV

1 Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision?

Rom 3:1 - NLT

1 Then what's the advantage of being a Jew? Is there any value in the ceremony of circumcision?

& Paul **answers** this first objection re:

God's Sovereign Choosing of the Jewish people - **In V.2**

Rom 3:2 - ESV

2 Much in every way. To begin with, the Jews were entrusted with the oracles [whole revelation] of God.

Rom 3:2 - NLT

2 Yes, there are great benefits! First of all, the Jews were entrusted with the whole revelation of God.

Paul answers the first objection;

"Of course, there are **great benefits** to being a Jew,
to begin with - they were entrusted with the **Revelation** of God"

That's an **incredible benefit** (& honor) for the Jewish people . . .

& so Paul's imaginary "**Debater**" begins to "challenge"
God's **faithfulness** in **V.3**

Rom 3:3 - ESV

3 What if some [of the Jews] were unfaithful? Does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God?

Rom 3:3 - NLT

3 True, some of them were unfaithful; but just because they were unfaithful, does that mean God will be unfaithful?

Here - The Jewish "**Debater**" is challenging God's Character

This would be **Exactly like** someone saying to us;

"If God is Love, then **HOW** could He send anybody to hell"

That is applying "fallen man's - human reasoning"
to the **Character of God**

& **God's Character** - is always beyond Being Contested !

& so **Paul answers** with Absoluteness
using the Jews own scripture

Rom 3:4 - ESV

4 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."

Rom 3:4 - NLT

4 Of course not! Even if everyone else is a liar, God is true. As the Scriptures say about him, "You will be proved right in what you say, and you will win your case in court."

Paul uses the Scripture from **Psa 51** & says "**that's ridiculous**"

We know that God is;

Perfectly **Faithful**, Perfectly **Just**, Perfectly **Fair**, & Perfectly **True**

& this **SHOULD** *quiet* the Debater
but **seldom** is it that easy

& so - the **Religious Debater** throws **another curveball** at Paul

Rom 3:5 - from the NLT

Rom 3:5 - ESV

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.)

Rom 3:5 - NLT

5 "But," some might say, "our sinfulness serves a good purpose, for it helps people see how righteous God is. Isn't it unfair, then, for him to punish us?" (This is merely a human point of view.)

Now **the Debate** starts to just get "**Silly**"

The Debater says;

*"If our sin - serves a good purpose for God -
in that it shows His Righteousness -
Isn't it unfair for Him to punish us for our sin?"*

Have you ever had a person throw up
a "Smoke Screen" argument about God

*"Well, if my sin shows God's Righteousness
He ought to thank me for my sin - I'm just helping Him out"*

Obviously **that's crazy** - & Paul points that out **in parenthesis** in **V.5**
(This is merely a human point of view)

& then **he responds** accordingly in **V.6 - Again from the NLT**

Rom 3:6 - ESV

6 By no means! For then how could God judge the world?

Rom 3:6 - NLT

6 Of course not! If God were not entirely fair, how would he be qualified to judge the world?

Again Paul answers with **God's Perfect Character**

God is **Perfectly Just** & **Perfectly Fair**

& He **IS** Qualified to **Judge the World**

BUT - some Debaters Just **persist in Debating** - Don't they
& **That's the kind** Paul has plenty of experience with

So **the Religious Debater** throws back to him in **V.7 - Again NLT**

Rom 3:7 - ESV

7 But if through my lie God's truth abounds to his glory, why am I still being condemned as a sinner?

Rom 3:7 - NLT

7 "But," someone might still argue, "how can God condemn me as a sinner if my dishonesty highlights his truthfulness and brings him more glory?"

This is basically a Re-Phrased Question from V.5
Which is how many of these types of debates go

When someone is Committed to arguing
about God's Plan of Salvation - & God's Word

They often take it way past the limit
& start saying stuff that's just truly crazy

Which is what Paul address in V.8 - Again - NLT

Rom 3:8 - ESV

8 And why not do evil that good may come?—as some people slanderously charge us with saying. Their condemnation is just.

Rom 3:8 - NLT

8 And some people even slander us by claiming that we say, "The more we sin, the better it is!" Those who say such things deserve to be condemned.

OK - so much for the foolish arguments
Paul's Patience is reached here - & he throws up his hands

But we've experienced similar Smoke Screens haven't we ??

If God is love, why would He send someone to Hell ?

If there is a God, why are there starving children in Africa ?

If God loves me, why is He allowing this to happen to me?

While those MAY BE appropriate questions for the right time & place

They are usually used - as a Smoke-Screen
to avoid the real issue - of SIN

If you are a believer today

& you really want to know the answers to those questions

Call one of the Elders or Ministry Leaders & ask them

But if you are an Unbeliever - & you're using questions like those
to justify NOT dealing with God on a PERSONAL LEVEL . . .

Then those "Objections" are probably just a smoke-screens
to keep you from honestly dealing with God - about your OWN SIN

& that's exactly how the Apostle Paul treats them

& in V.9 - Paul turns this Imaginary Religious Debate
right back to the Real, Central Issue - - SIN !

if we get caught in Esoteric, Head in the Clouds, Religious Debates
it's very hard to get back to the real issue - which is SIN

Paul has spent 2 Ch's proving - we are all under the Curse of SIN

& now he's going to prove to His Jewish Debater

that we must deal with the Central Issue of PERSONAL SIN

ALL Debates about God must come down to this;

What are you going to do about your PERSONAL SIN ?

& Paul brings it down to that Central Point - V.9

Rom 3:9 - ESV

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, [means - under the power of sin]

Rom 3:9 - NLT

9 Well then, should we conclude that we Jews are better than others? No, not at all, for we have already shown that all people, whether Jews or Gentiles, are under the power of sin.

Whatever the "Debate" is - It MUST come down to this
"*all people, Religious or Not, are under the power of sin*"

& when we get caught up in these "Religion Debates"

We've got to be able to say - *Yeah But, What about SIN ?*
Because we know all people are under the power of Sin

Paul's NOT talking about individual acts of sin here
he's talking about the Sin Nature of the entire Human Race

Someone has said;

If Sin were the Color RED
then we would ALL be some shade of RED

Just as the Famous next Vs says

Out of the NKJV - Rom 3:10

10 As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one;

Rom 3:10 - NLT

10 As the Scriptures say, "No one is righteous— not even one.

& w/ this vs - Paul begins - possibly the most explicit description of the Depravity of Mankind - in the NT

& he does it with what is called (in Hebrew) a Charaz which means - A string of Pearls

& Paul is going to string together some awful truths about Mankind designed to leave us speechless before God

Whatever Excuse, Debate, or Argument we may've had before - this Charaz (String of Pearls) is designed to stop us in our tracks

It goes from V.10 - to V.18

Rom 3:10-18 - ESV

10 as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one;

11 no one understands; no one seeks for God.

12 All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."

13 "Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive." "The venom of asps [snakes] is under their lips."

14 "Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness."

15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood;

16 in their paths are ruin and misery,

17 and the way of peace they have not known."

18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

These String of Judgments

is taken from the Psalms, Proverbs, & Isaiah

& maybe - after a 1st read

you may think - well, those **DON'T ALL** apply to **ME**

But remember - Paul is teaching about the **SIN NATURE**

& here my friends - is the truth of the **Sin NATURE**

Jer 17:9 - NLT

9 “The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?”

later in his life - Paul **wrote** to his "Pastoral Disciple" **Titus**

these words about Himself & Titus - in **Titus 3:3**

Titus 3:3 - ESV

3 For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another.

WOW

Paul the Apostle acknowledging such sins - ***how can it be ?***

But **what** Paul is **saying** to young Titus is;

"Hey we were just as bad a sinners as anyone else"

Whether Paul **specifically** committed **each** of those sins - **or Not**

he was **acknowledging** - that his **SIN NATURE** was capable
because it was the **same sin nature** as Every Other Sinner

Either way - **Paul knew** - that when God said

NO ONE is Righteous, No Not ONE

Paul knew - **THAT** included **him**
& **we** must know **THAT** includes **us** too

So - Back in Rom Ch 3

the *Charaz* - the *String of Pearls*
Leaves **NONE** of us "**RIGHTEOUS**" before God

By **BOTH Sin Nature** - & **Sinful Choices**
we really have **NO DEFENSE** before God

& Again - **as soon as** we get to **that** point -
THEN we are **ready** for the *Free Gift of Salvation*

& **THAT'S** exactly **how** Paul is *going to wrap up* this section

by leaving **NO DEFENSE** for the guilt of the world

Rom 3:19 - ESV

19 Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God.

Let me read **Rom 3:19** - out of the **NLT**
& pls **watch closely** - for **THE PURPOSE** of the Law

Rom 3:19 - NLT

19 Obviously, the law applies to those to whom it was given, for its purpose is to keep people from having excuses, and to show that the entire world is guilty before God.

The purpose of God's Law is:

"to keep people from having excuses, & to show that the entire world is guilty before God"

THIS is the point to where our Religious Debates must come

When it comes down to **SIN** - We are **ALL GUILTY** !

& **can we** be made **right** by following the Law ? - **NO**
not because the law is **Faulty** - but because we are **Sinful**

& **as soon** as we accept the fact
that God's Law **PROVE'S** our **GUILT**

Then we have come - to the END of ourselves
to **the end** of all our own "Human Thinking"
to **the end** of all our "Human Effort" to be **made right** with God

& Paul brings us - to the **End of Ourselves** - in **V.20**
Again - in the NLT

Rom 3:20 - ESV

20 For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

Rom 3:20 - NLT

20 For no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. The law simply shows us how sinful we are.

For those "**Religious Debaters**"

Who believe they can "Cover themselves" with God

For those who think their "Human Reasoning"

will somehow correctly "CLOTHE" them before God . . .

I'd **like to tell** a **short** children's story

There is a classic children's story called
The **Emperor's New Clothes**

The Emperor was very fond of his appearance
& he always loved to look "**Fairer**" than all the rest

& **some very** "Crafty" Tailors heard of this - & came into town

& **they offered** to weave the King
the most rare garment ever made

They promised it would be **invisible** to all but the wise & pure in heart

So he commissioned them at great cost
& they sat down before **empty looms**

The Emperor sent his chief minister to ck the progress
Who didn't want to be thought unwise & impure

& **though** he saw nothing -
he returned with a **fabulous report** of great beauty

& **after** the Tailors asked for more money –
the emperor sent a **second chief minister** in to check

Though also seeing nothing - he returned with an **even grander report**

Then the emperor went in himself

& **when** the emperor himself saw **nothing**
he proclaimed **even higher beauty** & gave out medals

A Parade was set – Emperor dressed **au naturel** by the Tailors
who then quietly **skipped town**

By now - the whole town knew the story

So they all praised the incredible unseen clothing

Until, in a moment of silence,

a child stripped away all the hypocrisy & pretense

& **Yelled out** - "*The emperor has no clothes!*"

which caused everyone (inclgd emperor) to finally admit the truth

Guys - **this** well describes the condition

of **those who think** they've come up with

their own "**WAY**" to cover themselves with God

They imagine themselves clothed with some Human Understanding

Generally with a "Cloak" of some **misled religious confidence**

They think their **works** & their **good deeds**

will somehow **cloth them** in Righteousness

But the Word of God

has "*Cried Out*" **the Truth** about their Clothing

& one day - on Parade before God

they will **realize** that they are actually - **Naked** before Him

Have **WE** yet understood - that without Jesus Christ

we also stand "Un-Clothed" in our **own efforts** to please God ??

Skip ahead w/ me - just 2 Vs's

Rom 3:22 - NLT

22 We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are.

We - Emperors - **Are we** clothed with the righteousness
the **comes only** by faith in Jesus Christ ??

Or are we preparing to enter that Eternal Parade;

Thinking we are **Clothed** in our Human Understanding
When *really* we are **Unclothed** before the God of Heaven

It may seem easier to put on the Emperor's New Clothes
& parade around in our own Human Understanding

But it will be an Eternal Shame to realize
not only is our Self-Righteousness as Filthy Rags
But it is actually - NO Clothing at all

Let's Pray

When drawn into a Religious Debate
be *very careful* when you choose to speak

If you choose to "**Spar**" with a "**Debater**" based on human intellect
you will **NEVER** accomplish God's Will in that Debate

Man's Wisdom is foolishness to God
so *be careful* not to compare *man's wisdom* w/ *man's wisdom*

Instead - I encourage you to *bring the debate* to the subject of **SIN**

Whatever the person's background or beliefs are

try to **bring the debate** to the subject of **SIN**

Because **THAT** is exactly what Paul has done here

They will **Squirm** - & they will **Duck & Weave** to Avoid it

But try to **get to the fact**;

that a *Perfectly Holy & Perfectly Righteous* God
can **Never** overlook - Even **one sin**

Because If He were to **overlook** even one sin
He could not be *Perfectly Holy & Perfectly Righteous*

Here in Romans - Paul has spent a **HUGE** amount of time
convicting us **ALL** - of our *Sinful Condition*

& Now that we are **Truly Convicted** of our Sinful Condition
We are **Truly Ready** - to Hear *God's Miraculous plan of Salvation*

Remember - the **ONLY** Profitable Debate
is one that **ends** with an understanding of **SIN** - & - **SALVATION**

If you'd like to understand more
on how to have a **Profitable** *Religious Debate*

Go to these two websites;

www.needgod.com

www.livingwaters.com