

Paul's Epistle to the **ROMANS**

Lesson 5 - Romans 3

Assignments

1. Memorize Romans 3:23-24 and write as much from memory as you can in the space below.

2. Use your ***Romans Scripture Journal*** to mark up the text and make notes about the text. Be prepared to share with the class your *observations* of the text. (e.g. Questions you have about the text; things you have never noticed before; things you have been reminded of that are important; repeated or key words, phrases, concepts, etc.; important concepts/ideas used outside of Romans; things that impressed you; something you learned about God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit; something you learned about yourself from the text; etc.)

Key Words/Phrases

Questions

Observations

In Romans chapter 2 we learned that God is the judge of Jews, Gentiles, me, you, and all others. Unlike us, He is righteous in all His evaluations and judgments of all people. God looks at the inward person of the heart and their conscience.

According to His gospel He will judge the secrets of each person. The Jews had a problem in their evaluation of others compared to themselves. They saw themselves as better because of God's covenant with them, signified by circumcision and the law, not taking into account their own sinful failures against God's law. Their judgment of others became unjust. Their evaluation of others and self was based on how things appeared externally. Like the Jews, our judgment of others tends to be imbalanced as we make weighty comparisons in favor of justifying self and condemning others.

Who the Jews were genetically has no bearing on spiritual standing before God and others. Who we are on the outside does not automatically or properly represent who we are on the inside. How well the Jews may have thought they kept and upheld God's law does not properly place them in a higher standing before God in comparison with others. The same is true for us.

We are *who* we are, and *what* we are, not because of ethnicity (i.g. Jew or Gentile) or outward designations (circumcision, keeping the externals of the law of God, etc.), but we are categorized and identified by the change (circumcision) of the heart by the Spirit that rules in the inward person of the heart for God's approval.

In his commentary on Romans, Jim McGuiggan notes the following:

Chapter 3:1-20 has one main thrust and one important deviation from the main argument. The main thrust of the section will be to present a biblical indictment of the Jew (see especially 3:9-20). In 2:17-29 he has bluntly indicted the Jews with sinful inconsistency and foolish trust in the mere possession of Law and the covenant of circumcision.

He will acknowledge a protest in 3:3-8 and then go back to what he was talking about in 3:1-2. That protest in 3:3-8 involves the seeming unfaithfulness of God as Paul presents him. But the material of 3:3-8 is fully developed in Chapters 9-11 where Paul vindicates God and his gospel.

A number of questions are raised in 3:3-8. "If the Jews really were given an advantage, how come the bulk of them are unblessed?" "If the Jewish crucifixion of Jesus Christ was the will of God, how can the Jews be held criminals for carrying out God's will?" "If the death of Christ was the indispensable channel through which God's blessings were to flow to the Jew (and Gentile), how does it happen that the Jew isn't blessed even though the cross has been accomplished?" These and others are raised, briefly addressed and then left for further development in Chapters 9-11.

So, you will better grasp the thread of the argument if you go from 3:1-2 to 3:9-20. I will make the comments on the verses as they come to us in the text but you need to bear in mind that 3:3-8 is a deviation from the theme of this whole section.

[McGuiggan, Jim. The Book of Romans. Sunset Institute Press, 2012. Pg. 109]

Questions

1. What provoked the question which Paul asks in verse 1, “Then what advantage has the Jew?”
2. What are the “oracles of God” and why are they a significant advantage to the Jew? (Cf. Acts 7:35)
3. Notice in verses 3-8 the synonymous terms Paul uses of “some” Jews and God and the comparisons he makes of “some” Jews and God (unbelief/faithfulness, liar/true, unrighteousness/righteousness). What point is Paul trying to make by using these terms and comparisons?
4. What scripture does Paul quote in verse 5, and what point is he trying to make by quoting it?
5. According to vv. 9-20, can anyone claim to be better than the Jews who operated in unbelief and didn’t follow God’s law? Why or why not?

6. What scriptures references is Paul quoting in vv. 10-18, and what significant points is he making with them?
7. What important points do we learn from Paul about the law, self, and God in vv. 19-20?
8. What do vv. 21-26 teach us about the righteousness of God? How does it fit with Paul's argument in the context?
9. What's the difference between the law of works and law of faith?
10. How should we apply this the truths of this chapter to our lives today? What misunderstandings/lies does it debunk? What significant truth(s) does it give to help toward a person's walk with God? What do you learn about God?