

Romans

“I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes”

– Romans 1:16

All Have Sinned

- 3:1 – “What advantage then has the Jew?”
 - Paul now anticipates and answers several arguments against the teachings of 2:1-28 (i.e. Jews are lost just like Gentiles)
- 1. vs. 1-2: Are you saying there was no benefit (*before the cross*) to the Jewish religion?
 - Not so: the Jews enjoyed *many* benefits over the Gentiles – e.g. a land given by God, the lineage of the Messiah, but most of all:
 - The oracles of God, i.e. the *very words of God*, were delivered to only them (Acts 7:53; II Tim 3:14-17; Heb 2:2; etc.)
 - They had what we call the Old Testament: God’s wisdom and instruction, prophecies of the Messiah, answers to huge questions
 - BUT, as we’ll see in vs. 9, these advantages didn’t make the Jews inherently better than the Gentiles: *they still chose to sin!*

All Have Sinned

2. **vs. 3-4:** Promises were made to the Jews that they did not receive due to unfaithfulness: *does that make God unfaithful?*
- i.e. Can the Jews really be lost: wouldn't that make God unfaithful to His promises?
 - Absolutely not: they forfeited their own salvation and privileged position by breaking the covenant (cf. Acts 7:38-39; Jer 31:31-34)
 - When God's promises fail it is because *man did not comply with His conditions* (e.g. Neh 1:8), not because He is in any way unfaithful!
 - This is the very thrust of the quotation from Psalm 51:1-4
 - David sinned and brought God's judgment upon himself
 - God's judgment against him (II Sam 12:10-15) was true and just
 - In fact, God anticipated and foretold the downfall of the Jews due to unfaithfulness (see Rom 3:9-20, 10:16-21), so even their sin proved His truth and omniscience

All Have Sinned

3. **vs. 5-8:** If my unrighteousness illustriously amplifies the righteousness of God, why should I be punished?
- Paul will anticipate virtually the same argument concerning the gospel of God’s grace in Romans 6
 - Paul shows the false reasoning of this argument in several ways:
 - Firstly, this reasoning would rule out the need for judgment, which God everywhere promises that we will all face (vs. 6)
 - Job 19:29; Ps 1:5, 9:7; Ecc 12:13-14; etc.
 - Secondly, a *necessary consequence* of this argument is the justification of evil and increased sinfulness:
 - i.e. the more I sin, the more God is proven righteous
 - Justifying wickedness and calling evil good is a trait of sinful man that God absolutely hates
 - Isa 5:20; Prov 17:15; Amos 5:6-7; etc.

There Is None Righteous

- 3:9-20 – “What then? Are we better than they?”
 - These verses mark the climax of Paul’s argument since 1:18, while vs. 21-26 give his detailed explanation of 1:16-17
- 1. Having a written law did not make the Jews inherently better or more righteous than the Gentiles
 - They had *advantages*, but their sins made them all the same!
 - Their own law condemned them with this truth (vs. 10-18)
 - cf. Ps 14:1-4, 5:9, 140:3, 10:7; Isa 59:7-8; Ps 36:1 – w. Deut 9:5
- 2. As they were so proud of noting, the Law was written *to the Jews (vs. 19)*, not to the Gentiles:
 - Every one of them, speaking arrogantly of their heritage, should have realized their own unrighteousness by these inspired passages!
- 3. Rather than justifying the Jews, since they were all law-breakers, the Law served to condemn them before God!

The Just Shall Live By Faith

- 3:21-26 – “the righteousness of God has been manifested”
 - Now we understand what was meant in 1:17, “in [the gospel] the righteousness of God is revealed”
 - God allows the sinner to become righteous, justified by faith in His Son who paid the price for all
 - God shows *Himself* righteous by lovingly offering reconciliation to the sinner, while still requiring a ransom for sin (Christ’s blood)
- God could not simply ignore our wrongs: this would have been unjust – and ALL His ways are justice and truth (Deut 32:4)
- At the same time, God’s love moved Him to long for reconciliation with His sinful creation (Isa 59:1-16)
 - **So out of His great love for us, God accomplished both:** He is both just (by paying the price Himself, through His Son), and our Justifier (by offering us reconciliation through His Son)!

Bibliography

- Whiteside, Robert L. *A New Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Romans*. Denton: Whiteside, 1961.
- Mott, L. A., Jr. *Faith In The Book of Romans*. Gainesville: Mott, 1977.
- Macknight, James. *A New Literal Translation of all the Apostolical Epistles with a Commentary, and Notes, Philological, Critical, Explanatory, and Practical*. Philadelphia: Thomas Wardle, 1841.
- Grubbs, Isaiah Boone. *An exegetical and analytical commentary on Paul's Epistle to the Romans*. Cincinnati: F. L. Rowe, 1936.
- Reese, Gareth L. *New Testament Epistles: Romans*. Moberly: Scripture Exposition Books, 1996.
- Hamilton, Clinton. *Truth Commentaries: Romans*. Bowling Green: Guardian of Truth, 1998.
- Copeland, Mark A. *Romans: Study Guide*. <http://executableoutlines.com/ro.htm>. Last accessed on 6/25/11.
- Gamble, Harry Y. *The textual history of the letter to the Romans*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977.
- Trench, R.C. *Synonyms of the New Testament*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1989.