

(12) "Let God Be Found True": Lessons from Israel (3:1-8)

Romans: The Outwork of the Righteousness of God

Condemnation!—Line of Thought

- Proclaiming a Fact: All Men Are Condemned!
 - The Gentiles Are Condemned due to Sin (1:18-32).
 - The Jews Are Condemned due to Hypocrisy (2:1-5): A Diatribe.
- Answering Expected Questions:
 - Is God Just in This Judgment? (2:6-11)
 - Is God Fair in This Judgment? (2:12-16)
- Resuming the Diatribe (of 2:1-5): Having the Law Is Not Secure.
 - There Is a High Expectation for the Jews (2:17-20).
 - They Failed Tragically and Miserably (2:21-24).
- Answering Expected Questions:
 - Are Not the Jews Secure due to Circumcision? (2:25-29)
 - Is God Faithful if He Condemns the Jews? (3:1-8)
- Conclusion (3:9-20): All Have Sinned!

The Jewish Advantage

- “**3** ¹Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision? ² Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God.” (Rom 3:1-2 NAU)
- Paul Just Debunked Several Lies of the Jews:
 - They Are Secure from Divine Judgment because They
 - Have the Law (2:17-24).
 - Are Circumcised (2:25-29).
- Other Lies Have Already Been Debunked by God:
 - They Are Secure from Divine Discipline because They
 - Have the Temple.
 - Have a Son of David as King.

The Jewish Advantage

- Paul Turned Against the Opposite Extreme:
 - The Jews and the Gentiles Are Equal in:
 - The Standard of God's Judgment: Deeds/Works.
 - Failing to Reach God's Standard: Guilty and Condemned.
 - But the Jews Did Have Great Advantages:
 - Being Circumcised = Being Chosen as the Nation from Whom the Messiah of All Nations Will Come.
 - Having the Oracle of God = Being Entrusted as the Keeper of God's Word (Promises, + & -).
 - Ruth Had to Join the People to Have Its God (Ruth 1:16).
 - Naaman Had to Have the Land/Dirt to Worship Its God (2 Kgs 5:17).

The Oracle of God

- Oracle (Gk: *logia*) = Saying from Supernatural Source.
 - Pagan Oracles:
 - Bird Talk: Augurs => "Inauguration".
 - Bird Watch: Auspice/Auspicious.
 - Check the Entrails of Animals.
 - Check the Burnt Turtle Shells.
 - Words of Pythia from Delphi.
 - Astrology.
 - Crystal Balls, Tarot Cards, Palm Reading ...
 - Judeo-Christian Divine Oracles:
 - Promises or Prophecies of God.
 - Revelation of God = Whole Bible.

Advantage and Expectation

- Being Entrusted (Gk: *pisteuo*) = Believed by the Person Who Entrusted (God) to Be Responsible for the Treasure (Bible).
 - They Should Demonstrate Believing It by
 - Keeping and Reading.
 - Obeying and Practicing.
 - But They Have
 - Lost the Law till Josiah Found It in the Temple Wall.
 - Departed from the Moral Character of God (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, David, Solomon...).

Let God Be Found True

- “³ What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it?
- ⁴ May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man *be* found a liar, as it is written,
- ‘THAT YOU MAY BE JUSTIFIED IN YOUR WORDS, AND PREVAIL WHEN YOU ARE JUDGED.’ (Ps 51:4b) ” (Rom 3:3-4)

Let God Be Found True

- **“Some Did Not Believe”**
 - Actually All Have Sinned. Some Were Apparently Unfaithful. Paul Was Reducing the Opposition.
 - Not Believing = Being
 - Unfaithful to the Level of Apostasy.
 - Not Trusting Enough to Obey Fully.
- **“Nullify the Faithfulness of God”**
 - Q: “If God Judges the Jews Whom He Promised Blessing, Is He Faithful if He Condemns Them?”

Let God Be Found True

- “May It Never Be!” (NASB) = “God Forbid!” (KJV) = “Absolutely Not!” (NIV): Strongest Objection.
- “God Is True” to His Character and Words.
 - These Words Include:
 - Promises of Blessing.
 - Prediction of Judgment.
 - If Either of Them Comes True, God Is Proven True (i.e. Being Right/Righteous, Just/Fair/Blameless, Faithful).
- Men’s Faithlessness Does Not Nullify God’s Faithfulness!

Let God Be Found True

- The OT Quotation Is from Ps 51:4
 - “Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight, So that You are justified when You speak And blameless when You judge.”
 - David Was Confessing His Sins about Bathsheba.
 - He Sided with God to Judge Against Himself.
 - God Is Justified and Blameless in Judging David.
 - David Accepted the Penalty of Death (Applied on His Son, Rather than Himself, by God’s Mercy).
- **Every Man Found a Liar:**
 - True to the Core, Evidenced by History.
 - Paul Is Willing to Accept the Verdict if It Is Necessary to Prove God Is Faithful and True.

God Is Right in Judging the Jews

- “⁵ But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? The God who inflicts wrath is not unrighteous, is He? (I am speaking in human terms.)⁶ May it never be!” (Rom 3:5-6a)
- “Our Unrighteousness” = “Unbelief/ Unfaithfulness” (v. 3) = “Liar (v.4)
- “Righteousness of God” = “Faithfulness of God (v. 3)
- God’s Judgment on the Unrighteous Is Righteous/Right!

God Is Right in Judging the World

- “For otherwise, how will God judge the world?”
- ⁷ But if through my lie the truth of God abounded to His glory, why am I also still being judged as a sinner?
- ⁸ And why not *say* (as we are slanderously reported and as some claim that we say), ‘Let us do evil that good may come’?
- Their condemnation is just.
- (Rom 3:6b-8 NAU)

God Is Right in Judging the World

- If God Is Not Right in Judging the Jews, He Would Be Not Right in Judging the World.
 - If the Unrighteousness (Unfaithfulness/Unbelief) of the Jews (Who Had the Oracles of God) Are Not Judged, God Would Not Be Right in Judging the Unrighteousness of the World (Who Did Not Have It).
- Another Expected Question:
 - If God Is Justified/True to Judge My Sins, and the More I Sin, the More God's Glory Will Be, Did I Not Do Good in Sinning?
 - Why Am I Still Judged?
 - Should I Sin More?
- Paul's Answer: That's Absurd and Blasphemous!

Lessons and Applications

- The Jews Had Great Advantages, but They Failed the Expectation.
 - All Who Have the Advantages by God's Grace (Christians, Protestants, Evangelicals, Conservatives ...) Are Guilty of Falling Short.
- God's Word Has both the Positive Promises of Blessing and the Negative Predictions of Discipline.
 - If either of Them Comes True, God Is True to His Character and Word.

Lessons and Applications

- Men's Faithlessness Is a Proven Fact.
- God's Faithfulness Is Also a Proven Fact.
- Even Though God Will Be Glorified When Men Are Blessed or Judged, That Is Not an Excuse to Keep on Sinning.
- Recognition and Repentance of Our Sin, and Receiving and Responding to Grace, Are the Only Rational and Right Decisions.
- Are We Ready to Make it?