

ROMANS CHAPTER 3

Romans 3 - Session 1 (3:1-31)

by Abri Brancken

Title: "All the world is guilty of sin and can only be justified through faith"

Romans 3:1-31 (ISV)

Rom 3:1 What advantage, then, does the Jew have, or what value is there in circumcision?

Rom 3:2 There are all kinds of advantages! First of all, the Jews have been entrusted with the utterances of God.

Rom 3:3 What if some of the Jews were unfaithful? Their unfaithfulness cannot cancel God's faithfulness, can it?

Rom 3:4 Of course not! God is true, even if everyone else is a liar. As it is written, "You are right when you speak, and win your case when you go into court."

Rom 3:5 But if our unrighteousness serves to confirm God's righteousness, what can we say? God is not unrighteous when he vents his wrath on us, is he? (I am talking in human terms.)

Rom 3:6 Of course not! Otherwise, how could God judge the world?

Rom 3:7 For if through my falsehood God's truthfulness glorifies him even more, why am I still being condemned as a sinner?

Rom 3:8 Or can we say—as some people slander us by claiming that we say—"Let's do evil that good may result"? They deserve to be condemned!

Rom 3:9 What, then, does this mean? Are we Jews any better off? Not at all! For we have already accused everyone, both Jews and Greeks, of being under the power of sin.

Rom 3:10 As it is written, "Not even one person is righteous.

Rom 3:11 No one understands. No one searches for God.

Rom 3:12 All have turned away. They have become completely worthless. No one shows kindness, not even one person!

Rom 3:13 Their throats are open graves. With their tongues they deceive. The venom of poisonous snakes is under their lips.

Rom 3:14 Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.

Rom 3:15 They run swiftly to shed blood.

Rom 3:16 Ruin and misery characterize their lives.

Rom 3:17 They have not learned the path to peace.

Rom 3:18 They don't fear God.

Rom 3:19 Now we know that whatever the Law says applies to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God.

Rom 3:20 Therefore, God will not justify any human being by means of the actions prescribed by the Law, for through the Law comes the full knowledge of sin.

Rom 3:21 But now, apart from the Law, God's righteousness is revealed and is attested by the Law and the Prophets—

Rom 3:22 God's righteousness through the faithfulness of Jesus the Messiah—for all who believe. For there is no distinction among people,

Rom 3:23 since all have sinned and continue to fall short of God's glory.

Rom 3:24 By his grace they are justified freely through the redemption that is in the Messiah Jesus,

Rom 3:25 whom God offered as a place where atonement by the Messiah's blood would occur through faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because he had waited patiently to deal with sins committed in the past.

Rom 3:26 He wanted to demonstrate at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies anyone who has the faithfulness of Jesus.

Rom 3:27 What, then, is there to boast about? That has been eliminated. On what principle? On that of actions? No, but on the principle of faith.

Rom 3:28 For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from the actions prescribed by the Law.

Rom 3:29 Is God the God of the Jews only? Is he not the God of the gentiles, too? Yes, of the gentiles, too,

Rom 3:30 since there is only one God who will justify the circumcised on the basis of faith and the uncircumcised by that same faith.

Rom 3:31 Do we, then, abolish the Law by this faith? Of course not! Instead, we uphold the Law.

QUICK RECAP:

Romans 1 deals with the topic of the sinful gentiles. God reveals Himself through nature, yet people choose to ignore it and serve false idols. If people continue to reject God, He hands them over to His abandonment judgment.

Romans 2 deals with the self-righteous person who thinks he is more righteous than others, yet he himself partake of the same sin as the unrighteous gentiles. Both the gentiles and the self-righteous are guilty before God.

Romans 3 deal with that fact that **“All the world is guilty of sin and can only be justified through faith”**

If the final judgment will turn solely on the state of the heart and not on good deeds or religious activity, what better are the Jews? There is a benefit because God communicated with them as a people first. They had the privilege to share in God’s great plan of salvation first. Many of the Jews did not believe in Jesus as God’s way of salvation, but that does not mean that God’s plan will not be fulfilled in the end and that Israel will not be saved.

WHY DID GOD GIVE THE LAW?

The law was given so that we can identify what sin is. Without the law, we will not know what is right or wrong. The law shows us how far we are falling short of God’s glory. We cannot reach the standard. The religious Jew feels guilty because of the fact that he knows how far he is falling short of God’s glory. He has the Law, yet he cannot fulfil it in his own power, producing a sense of guilt.

When it comes to the non-Jew (gentile), the conscience that God has placed within us is activated when we transgress against God’s Law and our conscience accuses us, letting us know that we are guilty. One-day judgment is coming and humanity knows that we are not living up to the standard set out by God. Experiencing a sense of guilt is one of the major issues we as people have to deal with. For that reason, God sent His Son Jesus in order that guilt and sin can be dealt with.

We are all accountable to God (v19)

Everyone, Jew and gentile is caught in the power of sin and cannot get free no matter what we do. Humanity is trapped because sin forms part of our nature. We call it the sinful nature. We cannot but sin.

All men are immoral and sinful. The thing is this, we don't have the capacity to change our sinful condition. How are we to escape judgment? We can't, except if God Himself comes to help us.

PAUL SPEAKS IN A LEGAL, TRIAL, JUDICIAL TONE

In chapter 3 Paul follows a typical legal tone in his argument. At this trial, humanity is brought before the eternal judge. All evidence of guilt is against us.

V9 What, then, does this mean? Are we Jews any better off? Not at all! For we have already accused everyone, both Jews and Greeks, of being under the power of sin.

We often forget that man is not primary good, but primary bad. Paul gives a testimony of God Himself against us, and that is that we are all guilty. That is the charge that God brings against us, not man.

Rom 3:10 says

As it is written, "Not even one person is righteous.

In Greek, this concept is "a perfect tense", meaning that "It has been written and it continues to be true, man is forever guilty before God." This quote of Paul comes from Ps 14:1-3.

Psalm 14:1-3

The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds; There is no one who does good.

2 The Lord has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God.

3 They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; There is no one who does good, not even one. (NASB)

Jeremiah 17:9

"The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is? (NLT)

We stand guilty in our heart, speech and actions. There are people trying to be good, but all of your goodness falls so far short of God's goodness that it is a bad good that we have.

Rom 3:11

No one understands. No one searches for God. (PS 14:2, 53:3)

Psalms 14:2

The Lord has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God.

In the heart of every sinner is a hostility towards truth and God. A non-redeemed heart is hostile towards God. They are unable to understand God. The flesh cannot understand the nature of God. In Ephesians, Paul says they walk in the darkness or their mind.

Rom 3:20 Therefore, God will not justify any human being by means of the actions prescribed by the Law, for through the Law comes the full knowledge of sin.

OUR ONLY HOPE

Our only hope is that someone greater than ourselves will come to free us. That is why God sent His Son, Jesus Christ.

Rom 3:24 By his grace they are justified freely through the redemption that is in the Messiah Jesus, Rom 3:25 whom God offered as a place where atonement by the Messiah's blood would occur through faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because he had waited patiently to deal with sins committed in the past.

You can deal with guilt in many ways, e.g. alcohol, drugs, depression, suicide. Guilt is a destructive force. Any way to deal with guilt except by accepting God's cure is temporary.

Rom 3:28

For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from the actions prescribed by the Law.

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had no Bible. Noah had no Bible. Enoch had no Bible, yet they were righteous. How, they believed God concerning the revelation they had of Him.

BEING IN JESUS

Animal sacrifices could not take sin away. It was just a picture pointing towards the perfect sacrifice that will one day be made, when God sacrifices the perfect Lamb on our behalf, the Messiah.

When the Hebrews were in Egypt, God punished sin with the death of the first-born sons. Only one thing caused the punishment of God to move past some of the houses, and that was the blood of a lamb on the doorposts. Those with blood on their doorposts survived, while those houses without blood on their doorposts lost their first born sons.

Remember that Jesus is perfect. He kept every letter of the law perfectly. His nature and character is God's standard and it is reflected in and through the Law of God. Those who apply the blood of Jesus to their lives escapes God's punishment. You exchange your sin with Christ righteousness through faith, not through your deeds. Jesus experienced the punishment of God so that those who remain in Him do not have to be punished. There is only one way to uphold the Law of God, and that is through your faith in Jesus.

Rom 3:30 since there is only one God who will justify the circumcised on the basis of faith and the uncircumcised by that same faith.

Rom 3:31 Do we, then, abolish the Law by this faith? Of course not! Instead, we uphold the Law.

After Jesus' death, all animal sacrifices ended because there was nothing else to point towards. The final and complete sacrifice for sin has been made.

All our efforts to deal with sin is futile. Therefore, salvation is a gift from God, purely by grace. You did not work for it.

The purpose of this free gift is to glorify God and to praise Him because it is not because of our doing that we are saved, but because God desired it, God initiated it, God fulfilled it and therefore God gets the glory.

WHAT TYPE OF FAITH DOES IT TAKE TO BE SAVED?

Non-reliable evidence

Here are some actions that do not necessarily reflect that someone is saved:

1. Visible morality.

This does not necessarily prove that you are saved. The Pharisees had a visible morality but their hearts were far from God. Visible morality is the result or outflow and manifestation of someone who is saved, but it is not necessarily the proof that someone is saved.

2. Intellectual knowledge.

Knowledge of the truth is important but does not equal salvation.

3. Religious involvement.

Just because someone is involved in church life does not prove that he or she is saved.

4. Ministry involvement.

Just because you are in the ministry and doing Kingdom work is not proof that someone is saved. Jesus even said that "Many will say to me Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name... and He will tell them, I do not know you."

5. Assurance.

Some people feel they are saved, but that is not necessarily the proof that they are.

6. Goodness.

Some people believe they are saved because they do good to others. Even this can be a false evidence.

7. A once-off decision and making a salvation prayer.

There are many-many false conversions to Jesus in the world. If someone has said a prayer once does not mean that their lives are right with God.

Reliable evidence

Here is some evidence that better reflect that someone is in fact saved.

1. A love for God.

The saved person will nurture a love for God in his or her heart. The first commandment will remain first in your life. Your love for the Lord will be seen through what to say and do.

2. Living a lifestyle of repentance.

An ongoing brokenness and dependency on the Lord, repenting when you walk in sin or fall into it. Living your life steered away from sin. You have a hate for sin. Do you hate sin because of its effect on you or because God hates it?

3. Humility

Living a life of meekness, denying yourself for the sake of Christ. Remember, God gives grace to the humble but He opposes the proud.

4. A life that seeks the glory of God.

In everything you do you seek to bring Him glory!

5. Separation from the world.

Those that are saved have not received the spirit of the world. Those who continue to grow in their spiritual relationship with the Lord. Spiritual maturity.

6. Obedience

The saved person will desire to obey the Lord in everything he or she does. Jesus said that he that continue in my Word, is my disciple.

These are the marks is reminiscent of the real believer.

There are not 2 ways of being saved, only one, and that is through Jesus Christ. The way of salvation for the Jew is the way for the gentile and visa-verse. Everyone gets saved on the basis of faith in the completed work of the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

IS THE LAW BAD AND ABOLISHED BY FAITH?

Rom 3:31

Do we, then, abolish the Law by this faith? Of course not! Instead, we uphold the Law.

In the strongest term in the Greek. No! There is punishment for every sin ever committed, either the sinner is punished or the substitute Christ was punished on behalf of the sinner. Because salvation does not come by the law it does not nullify the law, but the law is upheld in Christ. The law is a righteous standard, but the flesh is too weak to uphold it. The law is not bad, its good because it reflects God's standard. The thing is just that you cannot keep it, only God Himself can keep it and therefore only those who are in Christ are declared righteous by God seeing that Christ fulfilled the Law.