

Context: This is a tough section of Scripture but well worth digging into.¹

God uses people to reach people.

Romans 3:1-8

God's Righteousness Upheld

Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision? ²Much in every way. To begin with, the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God. ³What if some were unfaithful? Does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God? ⁴By 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." ⁵But 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.) ⁶By no means! For then how could God judge the world? ⁷But if through my lie God's truth abounds to his glory, why am I still being condemned as a sinner? ⁸And why not do evil that good may come?—as some people slanderously charge us with saying. Their condemnation is just.

Keys to the roadmap of Romans

Q: *Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision?* – 3:1

A: *Much in every way. To begin with, the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God.* – 3:2

Q: The Jews are God's chosen people: What does this mean?

A: "Chosen" is not an exemption from repentance and obedience.

A: Chosen for what? To help the world know God. Israel was God's "Missionary Nation."

God's gifts to the world through Israel

- Protection of children: sexual abuse and child sacrifice.
- Protection of animals: sexualization of animals.²
- Protection of human life: foreshadowing of liberty and freedom: Year of Jubilee, forgiveness of debts, freedom of indentured servants, etc.
- Highlighting the need for a heart change rather than mere outward conformity: Shema in Deuteronomy 6: Love God with your everything.
- Retribution vs. Limited revenge: An eye for an eye? You only get *one* eye for *one* eye. vs. Excessive and unrestrained violence. Genesis 4:23-24 *Lamech said to his wives: "Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; you wives of Lamech, listen to what I say: I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me. ²⁴ If Cain's revenge is sevenfold, then Lamech's is seventy-sevenfold."*
- Moses' Law and Solomon's wisdom and their influence on Plato.
- Prophets' moral reforms: Even if you disagree with their *theology*, we should be able to agree with the Prophets on the human rights abuses they spoke out against.
- The vessel through which the Messiah would come.

Q: Does human unfaithfulness nullify God's power? *What if some were unfaithful? Does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God?* – 3:3

A: *By no means!* – 3:4a

A: God's sovereignty does not negate our responsibility – 3:4b-8 *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."*
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.)* ⁶ *By no means! For then how could God judge the world?* ⁷ *But if through my lie God's truth abounds to his glory, why am I still being condemned as a sinner?* ⁸ *And why not do evil that good may come?—as some people slanderously charge us with saying. Their condemnation is just.*

Application

- God chose to bless the world through Israel, but blessings bring burdens.
 - Leadership is a weight, not a perk.
- God uses people to reach people!
 - Q: Why couldn't God just send angels or write His message in the sky?
 - A: Through the frailty of human witness and the foolishness of preaching God is glorified
 - A: If the 'evidence' was 'overwhelming' would it not negate the need for faith?
 - How can God use you to reach out to others for Him?
- How are you using what you know about God to help others know God?

¹ "The paragraph 3:1–8 is "one of the most difficult, perhaps, in the Epistle...Indeed, many of our difficulties in interpretation are caused by the fact that Paul is touching here very briefly and sometimes allusively on themes that he develops at greater length elsewhere in the letter—especially chaps. 9–11. The paragraph as a whole, then, while something of an "excursus" in Paul's exposition, contributes in important ways to our understanding of Paul's view of God's righteousness in its relationship to Israel's unbelief." Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1996), 178, 180.

² Clay Jones, "We Don't Hate Sin So We Don't Understand What Happened to the Canaanites: An Addendum to 'Divine Genocide' Arguments." *Philosophia Christi* 11, no. 1 (2009). <https://clayjones.net/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/We-Dont-Hate-Sin-PC-article.pdf>.