

## WHAT ADVANTAGE THEN HATH THE JEW?

**Text: ROMANS 3:1-8**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. In Romans chapter 2, the apostle Paul declared that, "there is no respect of persons with God" (2:11).
2. Therefore, contrary to what they have been taught by their rabbis, the Jews have no special privileges.
3. The Jew would object to this because the Bible teaches that the Jews are God's chosen people. Paul himself thought this way before he was converted to Christ. He had been a zealous Pharisee -- "a Hebrew of the Hebrews" (Phil. 3:5).
4. W.H. Griffith Thomas said, "The objections may well have been (Paul's) own opinions before conversion, and like other Jews he might have thought that the Gospel of Jesus Christ really disparaged the Jewish position" (*St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*).
5. There are four objections here in our text tonight, and Paul answers each objection.

### **I. WHAT ADVANTAGE THEN HATH THE JEW? (3:1, 2).**

1. The first objection: If the Jews were on the same level as the despised Gentiles, "what advantage then has the Jew?" (3:1).
2. This calls into question, God's faithfulness and God's character, because the Jews are repeatedly referred to in Scripture as God's chosen people.
3. Deuteronomy 7:6 says, "For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth."
4. Deuteronomy 14:2 says, "For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth."
5. Psalm 105:6 says, "O ye seed of Abraham his servant, ye children of Jacob his chosen."
6. Psalm 135:4 says, "For the LORD hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure."
7. Isaiah 44:1 says, "Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen."

8. There are many similar Scriptures. So Paul asks, "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?" (3:1).
9. The answer: "Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles (Word) of God" (3:2).
10. The Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God -- the Old Testament Scriptures. This is a great privilege.
11. But with this great privilege comes great responsibility (cf. 2:17-23).

## II. WHAT IF SOME JEWS DID NOT BELIEVE? (3:3)

1. Many of the Jews lacked faith. Does their lack of faith nullify the authority of the oracles of God (3:3)?
2. The word "faith" in Romans 3:3 means faithfulness" (Scofield margin). It means "fidelity." Titus 2:10 says, "shewing all good fidelity (same word); that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things."
3. Romans 3:3 means, "Shall their unbelief make void or nullify the faithfulness of God?"
4. The answer: "God forbid" (3:4; cf. 3:6, 31; 6:2, 15; 7:7, 13; 9:14; 11:1, 11).
5. Paul also uses the expression in I Corinthians 6:15, "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid."
6. And in Galatians 2:17, "But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid."
7. And in Galatians 3:21, "Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law."
8. And in Galatians 6:14, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."
9. Although the oracles of God were not believed by the Jews, nevertheless they still retained their divine power and authority.
10. W.H. Griffith Thomas said, "Even if some of the Jews have failed to realize their advantages, it has been due to their unfaithfulness and not to any fault of God's nature" (*St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*).
11. If every man on earth were proved to be false, God would still "be true" (3:4). "As it is written" in Psalm 51:4 -- "that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest."
12. The unchangeable faithfulness of God ("the faith, literally the faithfulness, of God" -- 3:3; and, "let God be true..." -- 3:4) is the foundation of Scripture. The Bible repeatedly says, "Thus saith the LORD."

- "Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father;  
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;  
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not;  
As Thou hast been, Thou forever will be" -- Thomas O. Chisholm.*
13. W.H. Griffith Thomas said, "God is ever true to His Word, both as to promises and to threatenings" (*St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*).
  14. Man's unfaithfulness cannot diminish God's faithfulness. Man's unfaithfulness makes us appreciate God's faithfulness. Second Timothy 2:13 says, "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself."

### **III. IS GOD UNRIGHTEOUS WHO TAKETH VENGEANCE? (3:5)**

1. The righteousness of God and the judgment of God are emphasized in this epistle (cf. 1:18), and throughout the Bible.
2. Another argument presented is: If man's unrighteousness commends (demonstrates or shows forth) the righteousness of God, is God unrighteous for taking vengeance on sinners? (3:5).
3. "I speak as a man" (3:5b) means, "looking at this from man's perspective, not God's perspective.
4. From man's perspective, it could be argued that if men sinned more and more, this would show forth the righteousness of God, and therefore bring more glory to God. The argument then, is that God would be unrighteous in punishing sinners.
5. Some of Paul's critics accused him of giving an excuse for sinning. Proclaiming salvation by grace has always been misunderstood. To this accusation, Paul said, "God forbid" (3:6; cf. 6:1, 2).
6. God must "judge the world" (3:6) for its wickedness. These two doctrines are taught throughout Scripture -- salvation by grace through faith; and God's judgment upon sinners.

### **IV. LET US DO EVIL THAT GOOD MAY COME (3:7, 8).**

1. Paul identifies this charge as "slander" (3:8), that is, blasphemy. This argument is similar to the last argument (3:5).
2. Sin can never be a necessity; it is always wrong.
3. "The truth of God" (3:7) stresses God's righteous character, as opposed to the dishonesty of sinful men. This past week we have witnessed the strange spectacle of Rachel Dolezal, a white woman, exposed as an imposter. She was pretending for years to be a black woman, and was even hired by the NAACP.
4. Now that she has been caught, she still refuses to tell the truth.

5. Postmodernism is a term used to describe the popular philosophy that truth is irrelevant. Philosopher Daniel Dennett has said that postmodernism is the school of thought that proclaimed "There are no truths, only interpretations."
6. He said this philosophy has "left behind a generation of academics in the humanities disabled by their distrust of the very idea of truth and their disrespect for evidence, settling for 'conversations' in which nobody is wrong and nothing can be confirmed, only asserted with whatever style you can muster."
7. Rachel Dolezal is just the latest in an endless parade of postmodern liars. Bruce Jenner insists he is a woman, and the news media goes along with his delusion.
8. Massachusetts senator Elizabeth Warren for years falsely claimed that she was a Native American. Her fabricated ancestry helped get her teaching jobs at Harvard and the University of Pennsylvania. When pressed about her fake Indian heritage during her 2012 campaign, the Harvard law professor denied any deliberate misrepresentation.
9. "Let God be true, but every man a liar" (3:4).
10. The true God, the God of the Bible, is "a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He" (Deuteronomy 32:4).
11. "The truth of God" (Romans 3:7) "teaches us the absolute accuracy and correctness of the divine will as opposed to human error and untruth" (Griffith Thomas).
12. Nowhere in Scripture is it ever taught that evil is to be done so that some good may come out of it. Paul said that those who teach this are justly condemned -- "whose damnation is just" (3:8b).
13. "The end justifies the means" is a Jesuit doctrine, not a Bible doctrine.
14. The expression, "little white lie," is unscriptural. God hates all lying.
15. James Denney wrote, "The doctrine that righteousness is a gift of God, not to be won by works of law, but by faith in Jesus Christ, can always be misrepresented as immoral: 'sin the more, it will only the more magnify grace.' Paul does not stoop to discuss it. The judgment that comes on those who by such perversions of reason and conscience seek to evade all judgment is just. This is all he has to say" (*The Expositor's Greek Testament*).

## **CONCLUSION :**

This concludes Paul's section on Jewish objections to the Gospel (cf. 3:9, 10).