



Romans 13 - Cultural Nomism Destroyed

Dr. Leon L. Sanders

Romans 3:1-8

Epilogue: Number Eight

- Bible uses the number eight to introduce the concept of *new beginning* to include *resurrection*
 - Eighth day heralds a *new* start; creation completed (Ge 2:1-3)
 - Eighth day begins *new* week; Sabbath is rest for flesh
 - Eight persons in the Ark; *new* start for mankind (1Pe 3:18-20)
 - Male child was to be circumcised on eighth day (Ge 17:12-13)
 - Christ rose on the eighth day after presenting Himself as the Paschal Lamb and sin sacrifice: *Bought New Covenant*

Epilogue: Circumcision

- Physical circumcision was a *sign*, metaphor, for coming *New Covenant* contained in Abrahamic Covenant
(Ge 15:4-6; 17:1-14)
 - Bloody flesh removed and thrown away (Ex 4:24-26; 2Co 5:17)
 - Christ died in His flesh and made alive in Spirit with a new body; we also in due time (1Co 15:42-49; 1Pe 3:18-22)
 - Circumcision limited metaphor, throwing away flesh; baptism replaces metaphor: Death, Burial, Resurrection
(Col 2:9-14; 1Pe 3:21-4:2)

Epilogue: Two Jewish Beginnings

- Jews have two beginnings: People then Nation
 - *People* – Began much earlier with the Abrahamic Covenant; circumcision was the *sign* of this covenant (Ge 17:9-14)
 - *Nation* – Acceptance of the Law, civil and ceremonial, as the basis of their theocracy (Ex 24:1-11)
 - Paul proved New Covenant salvation also for Gentiles AEB works of faith that met the Ten Words; no Law

Paul Explains Why Jews Existed

- Paul destroyed Judaism as an automatic pathway to salvation; now Paul explains why the Jews existed
 - Jews remained *stuck* in the past thinking their adherence to the *hyperliteral* aspects of the Law secured special status concerning salvation
 - However, God gave His people special promises when as a people they turn and accept His *New Covenant*
(Ze10:6-12; 12:10)

God *Separated* Jews from Others

- Purpose of God in calling out the Hebrews to be Jews, His Chosen People; the civil/ceremonial laws separated Jews from all others preparing earth for Jesus' coming
 - Mandatory circumcision of all males, even Gentiles
 - Long forelocks with rules about hair and beards
 - Dietary rules separating them from all other nations
 - Even had rules on materials to use for clothing

Jews Testimony of Living God

- God spoke and wrote His moral code, Ten Words, then gave His legal and ceremonial system through Moses, Pentateuch; essence of God - Light to Gentiles
- Cultures in contact to Jews were exposed to God's words - Example: Queen of Sheba came to Solomon (1Ki 10:1-9)
- During Axial Age nations shifted from cultural nomism to personal moral responsibility - Ex: Zoroastrianism

Contradiction of Judaism

- Many Jews clung to cultural nomism which led to ignoring Law at times and worship other gods (2Ch 34:14-21)
- Jews preserved God's words containing God's essence {λόγια}; yet, a few did live by faith (1Ki 19:14-18; He 3:15-19)
- Those who lived by faith did not receive New Covenant salvation but looked forward to Christ's coming (Je 31:31-34; He 11:13-16, 39-40)
- Prophets did not clearly understand all God spoke through them; yet, they believed (1Pe 1:10-12; 2Pe 1:20-21)

Cultural Nomism's Error

- Paul asks the question that cultural nomism demands:
Did Jewish unfaithfulness nullify God's faithfulness?
- Theodicy seeks to make God responsible for sin
- Jews were unfaithful following God's directions, thus missing salvation; then was God unfaithful in giving a law too hard to follow?
- Then how can God judge sinners if He failed?

μὴ γένοιτο – Never!

- Paul emphatically cries out, “Never!”
 - Bible starts from the position that God is truthful and all people are sinners, thus liars at heart
 - Paul quotes David in his repentance who, though he tried to hide his sin for nearly a year, acknowledged God as righteous in charging David as guilty (Ps 51:4)
 - God asks Job if he would annul God’s judgments and condemn God so he could appear justified (Job 40:8)

Testing of God to Justify Self

- Jews long history of testing God showed that as a people they were no more righteous than Gentiles
 - Called out of Egypt to Horeb, Jews had no water and *tested* God's faithfulness rather than praying to Him
(He 3:7-11)
 - Jews saw God's power when they crossed over the dry bed of the Reed Sea but Pharaoh's army was destroyed

Testing in this sense means they judged God and found Him inadequate to meet their needs As they perceived. They rarely prayed but often criticized God; they had no fear of the Lord

Example: Jews Tested God

- When majority of Jews rebelled against God, God rebuked them through Moses; some were faithful
(De 6:16-19)
 - Moses was to *strike* the rock and water would flow out symbolizing Christ dying on stauros for new covenant
(Ex 17:1-7; Jo 7:37-39)
 - Thus, this rock named Massah, testing, as a rebuke
 - This became a pattern resulting in the vast majority of people dying in the wilderness due to their unbelief
(He 3:15-19)

Does Sin Show Righteousness?

- Next charge from a sinful mind is that sin is necessary to demonstrate God's faithfulness; therefore, God needs sin and cannot judge sinners.
 - First, God had already shown His faithfulness by His signs in Egypt and the death of the first born in all houses that did not have blood on the door frames
 - Second, sin does not demonstrate God's righteousness; it only shows our utter sinfulness against God {David}

Make God Unworthy to Judge

- Paul makes clear this is man's way of thinking; God is innately righteous and faithful apart from sinful man
 - God revealed Job's motive in condemning God; to show himself righteous so he could escape God's judgment
 - Satan tested Christ to seek his own escape from his already pronounced judgment; Christ rebuked him for testing and not worshiping God {Him} (Mt 4:5-10)

Logic of Cultural Nomism

- If sin reveals God's faithfulness, righteousness, then:
 - Is God unrighteous to judge sinners?
 - Why does God condemn sinners?
 - Why not sin so God's righteousness can be revealed?
- Logic of cultural nomism depends on false dilemma, logical fallacy, question phrased to elicit predetermined answer; i.e., God is guilty, man cannot be judged

Cultural Nomism's Motive

- Paul reveals the true motive of those who teach a gospel he adamantly rejects
 - Show God as unworthy of judgment since He *needs* sin to demonstrate His righteousness
 - Promote the necessity of personal sin to illumine the faithfulness of God; i.e., justification of sin
 - Paul writes that such an attitude requires judgment; many false teachers claim Paul taught this doctrine

Sinner's False Refuge

- To escape judgment, Satan and all sinners, must prove God guilty of being the author of sin
 - Purpose of all cultural nomisms: Fleshly righteousness (1Co 1:29)
 - Jews who justified their sin by keeping the law were unfaithful AEB killing the prophets God sent (Lk 11:49-51)
 - Sinners reveling in their sin drive some to repentance showing God's faithfulness {Unintended Consequences}

Repentance Admits One's Sin

- Repentance acknowledges one's sin while admitting God's righteousness
 - David prayer of repentance admitted his sin and acknowledged God's righteous judgment (Ps 51:4)
 - Every moral being shall confess God's judgment as righteous : saved now, lost later (Is 45:23; Ro 14:11-12; Ph 2:9-11)
 - True revelation of God's righteousness: undeserving grace, salvation, given freely to repentant sinners (Ti 2:11-14)

Epilogue: Cultural Nomism Dead

- Jewish culture did not provide automatic salvation based on possessing the essence of God in the Bible
 - Jews jealously reproduced the Bible even though most missed the Gospel contained therein
 - It was their sinfulness in rejecting faith that condemned them; however, this did not nullify God's faithfulness
 - Today's cultural nomism also rejects Gospel - Churches

Epilogue: False Dilemma

- Lost rely on the False Dilemma logical fallacy
 - God created moral beings who sinned: Angels, Man
 - Sinfulness of Satan and Man show God's faithfulness
 - Therefore, God, author of sin, is unworthy to judge sin
 - Thrust of attack against God, Christ, Bible, salvation and believers; if true, there is no hope (1Co 15:19)
 - Paul says God cannot be charged; He remains faithful

Epilogue: Sinner's Logic Refuted

- Every person who repents acknowledges they are worthy of God's righteous judgment (Ro 5:6)
 - Sin is rebellion, judging God as lacking rather than man
 - Sin is the opportunity by which God shows His grace, unasked and unwanted by the lost (Ro 3:10-18)
 - Grace is realizing one's total dependence on God for life
 - Salvation confesses this truth to everyone (Ro 10:9-13)