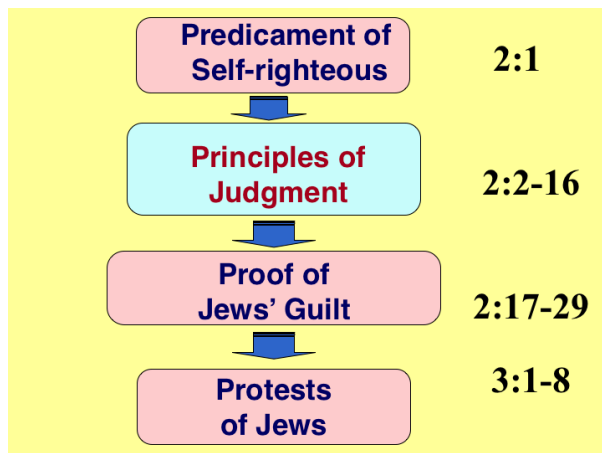


Romans 2.25-3.8 Circumcision, True Jews & Protests, Objections &
Supersessionism, Last Two Protests 039-042
Ray Mondragon

[Romans 2.25-27 Problem in Circumcision 039]

A specific problem dealt with the nation of Israel and the Jewish people. But the broader problem is pertinent to people of all times. This is initially, for the Jews, an issue of Israel. This letter was written to the biggest city in the Roman empire and there were a lot of house churches with small groups of believers. Paul may have had an audience of Jews among these believers, but the issue of their self-righteousness is applicable to the gentiles as well.



- I. Introduction 1.1-17
- II. Provision of God's Righteousness 1.18-8.39
 - A. Condemnation 1.18-3.20
 - 1. Guilt of Humanity 1.18-32
 - 2. Guilt of Jews 2.1-3.8
 - a. Predicament of Self-Righteous 2.1

It's the attitude of trying to please God on your own efforts. If you try to do this for salvation you are in a predicament. The Jews were doing this—and therefore in danger of God's judgment, even though they thought they were immune to any judgment. Here he is going to drive it home directly—and he does mention the Jews in verse 17.

- b. Principles of God's Judgment 2.2-16
- c. Proof of the Jews' Guilt 2.17-29

In verses 17-24 we saw that the Jews were inconsistent and did not perform in accordance with their privileges.

1) Failure of Inconsistency 2.17-24

Now he is going to deal with another area that the Jews would have thought 'Maybe we are a little inconsistent, but we are sealed because of circumcision', the ritual that they went through as little boys. And Paul is going to show that this will not avail.

2) Failure in Circumcision 2.25-29

And now he is going to deal with circumcision because they do not have a Biblical perspective on the purpose, significance or even what the Bible teaches concerning it.

a) Complaint 2.25

(1) Value of Circumcision

Paul is issuing a complaint in 2.25:

2.25 For indeed circumcision is of value if you practice the Law; but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.

A shorter sentence, easier to understand and break down. The 'For' at the beginning is not introducing a dependent clause as in some cases but here he is tying it to the inconsistency with the law. The independent clauses are: *circumcision is of value* and *your circumcision has become uncircumcision* (separated by a semi-colon). Obviously the main topic is circumcision but he has two ideas here. It has value but also there is an issue with it: it can be lost (an odd concept).

Then there are two dependent clauses that are conditional: if you practice the Law, then circumcision has value and, if you are a transgressor of the Law, then you can almost 'undo' it.

2.25 For indeed circumcision is of value if you practice the Law; but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.

We will focus on four things; three of them we will spend some time on, and then will look at the fourth one.

First, we look at the importance of circumcision, which explains why it was valuable in the nation of Israel. It still had some significance in the first century and great value, but the Jews, in *their* thinking had some misconceptions about it. So Paul has to deal with this in order to convince them that they stand guilty and therefore need Jesus Christ who claimed to be their Messiah.

So he is dealing with this broad issue of man trying to do something to please God. Or, the broad issue 'grace versus works': can

we do anything that puts us in a right relationship with God? And the answer is ‘No, because a holy God would require perfection, and no one can meet that standard.’ The main good work that the Jewish community looked to was circumcision. Do we totally throw it out? But it does some value. So we look at why it is valuable and why it is important.

2.25 For indeed circumcision is of value if you practice the Law; but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.

Circumcision

1. Importance - Genesis 17.10-14 *10 This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: every male among you shall be circumcised... 13 thus shall My covenant be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. 14 “But an uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.”*

This concept was introduced to Abraham and he, you remember, is the father, the originator, the first Jew you could say, the first individual that God called to Himself and made promises. These promises can be considered an outline or the parameters of all of the rest of world history. Very, very significant.

In fact God was going to evaluate all of the nations based on those promises that God made to Abraham in Genesis 12. We have seen it worked out in history and today, and we will see it worked out in the future though it is not going to find its ultimate fulfillment until the Millennial Kingdom.

Not only are these *promises* made to Israel, but God made it long-standing, official, even legal: He entered into a *covenant*. God does not need to enter into covenant with man; a covenant is a contract. In fact, if you substitute the word ‘contract’ it is the same thing. The Hebrew word is ‘berit’.

‘berit’

- > A Legally Binding Contract
- > An Agreement, Pact, Treaty
- > Specifies behavior to be complied with

God entered into a legally binding contract. Not much different than a mortgage or a loan, and in Malachi even marriage is mentioned as a legal contract. God does not have to do that, but for extra insurance, for all of the ages people will see that God obligates Himself to fulfill the

stipulations of the Abrahamic covenant. One of the characteristics is that they have stipulations.

Abrahamic Covenant

- > Parties - God, Abraham & descendants
- > Stipulations

It can be between two parties, two individuals (there are examples in Genesis and elsewhere in the Bible). It can be between two tribes, (there are examples of that); it can be between nations which we call a treaty. It was very common all the way back to Noah because in the Bible we have the first covenant that a God makes is with Noah, the Noahic Covenant.

The second is the Abrahamic, in Genesis 15, and then in chapter 17 it is reiterated, or re-emphasized because it is so important. All of the parameters of world history are set forth in this covenant. It specifies behavior to be complied with. That is the ‘fine print’; you read your contract with the bank—you are obligated to do certain things. You are obligated to pay a specific, exact amount. You **cannot** go to the bank and say you are going to interpret it a little metaphorically, changing the amount to a lesser one.

The bank is obligated to give you a sum of money and they do that up front, but there are other behaviors, eg, they cannot go to your child and demand payment. Only you signed it. So it specifies behavior to be complied with. God is under no obligation to do anything for mankind. It’s all by grace. God is the one who puts Himself under contract and what we have been seeing in history is that God has been faithfully fulfilling that contract throughout history.

So when Germany fell as a result of persecuting the Jews, God was acting to preserve the nation of Israel because He obligated Himself in the Abrahamic Covenant. And God promised that He would bless those who blessed the nation of Israel. One of the reasons that our country has flourished is that we have been a supporter of Israel from our founding, and it would be the reason for our downfall if we ceased to do that. God will keep that Abrahamic Covenant. It measures behavior to be complied with and the main party is God Himself; and history demonstrates God’s faithfulness to Abraham and the nation of Israel. In fact, God promises to bring about the nation of Israel. That is the first stipulation: that Abraham will have descendant—it’s called a seed.

Covenant

- > Seed
- > Land
- > Blessing

In Genesis 15 and 17 there are parties: God, Abraham and the nation of Israel. In fact, God promises to bring about the nation of Israel. That is the first stipulation: that Abraham will have a descendant—it's called a *seed*. From that he will be the father of the nation of Israel. What do you have to have to have a 'nation'? A common people—that is the descendants. Also you have to have a common *land*; that also is part of the Abrahamic Covenant.

In a contract you have specifics; in Genesis 15 it gives the extent of the land. From the Euphrates River you have boundaries all the way to the river of Egypt, probably not the Nile, but it has a large area of land. Israel has never occupied the full extent, which means that God, in the future, is going to fulfill what He promised in Genesis 15. In Genesis 17 it is reiterated.

The third stipulation is the blessing--in terms of the nation and the whole purpose of the nation. God is going to use them to bless the nations. And they have fulfilled that partially as well.

Abrahamic Covenant

- > Parties - God, Abraham & descendants
- > Stipulations
- > Signing - unconditional
- > Sign - circumcision

In chapter 17 there is a ceremony and God is the only party that goes through the sacrifices indicating that this is an unconditional covenant. It is not dependent on what man does. Man has a participation, at least Israel, and in chapter 17, beginning in verse ten God gives a sign to show that Israel recognizes this unconditional Covenant and the sign is ***circumcision***. So throughout Israel's history this has been the **sign of the Abrahamic Covenant** which is crucial to all of world history. But, who are the parties? God, Abraham and his descendants or the nation of Israel. The sign is binding to them; so it was very important in the nation of Israel.

Paul then introduces another idea: it has value and has had value ever since Abraham and ever since the instituting of the Abrahamic Covenant. But it has value if you practice the Law. That is, it is simply a sign that is supposed to reflect a deeper meaning which, from man's

perspective is obedience and in this case the Law given by God with specifications in it. And if they fail in that then there are other issues that are introduced here.

But there was a problem then in the first century; the Jews had this idea of circumcision that distorted it and added another significance that was never there in the first place. They needed a proper understanding of that ritual that God had called them to enter into.

2.25 For indeed circumcision is of value if you practice the Law; but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.

But if you practice the Law that is where the value is, so it has spiritual significance. They, however, were attaching too much value. So he is going to talk about the *inability* of circumcision.

- c. Proof of the Jews' Guilt 2.17-29
 - 1) Failure of Inconsistency 2.17-24
 - 2) Failure in Circumcision 2.25-29
 - a) Complaint
 - (1) Value of Circumcision
 - (2) Inability of Circumcision

2.25 For indeed circumcision is of value if you practice the Law; but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.

So he is transitioning: 'but if you are a transgressor of the Law' rather than practicing the Law, then they had a problem.

Circumci3n

- 1. Importance - Genesis 17.10-14
- 2. Jewish misconception

The Jewish misconception was that they elevated circumcision to the point that they viewed it this way: if they were obedient to this outward ritual then that guaranteed everything else. That was never the intention. It was to be a ***sign*** of ***something inward***, internal, of something that God had done for them and in them, and they had appropriated that, but that was not just a ritualistic work that you could perform and think that *that* guaranteed everything else. Some of the misconceptions are seen in these quotations: they equated circumcision with salvation or regeneration.

Quotes

- √ “Circumcision saves from hell” -Jalkut Rubeni
- √ God swore to Abraham, that no one who was circumcised should be sent to hell” -Medrasch Tillim

So they thought of it as salvation. What is a common ritual that people do in the church sometimes conveying this same misconception? Infant baptism among Catholics and Protestants. The same principle applies: it is supposed to indicate some inward action or condition, and it is only the outward sign. Everything that we talk about in this context has a direct application to us in terms rituals that we look to as well.

Here is an interesting statement in the last part of 2.25: ‘your circumcision has become uncircumcision.’ How do you ‘unbaptize’? or ‘uncircumcise? It cannot be done! But this already implies that it is not simply a physical act.

2.25 For indeed circumcision is of value if you practice the Law; but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.

Law Obedience

- > Perfection is required: to have a right standing before a holy God, perfection would be required. We can’t do it. In fact, later on Paul points out that the purpose of the Law is to show that *we can’t keep the Law*; or that we are sinful creatures in need of God’s grace, in need of *God* doing something on our behalf. And when Jesus died on the cross, the NT is crystal clear that that is the means by which we enter into a relationship—not because of anything we do, such as a ritual. Perfection is required.
- > Sacrifices reminded: And the whole sacrificial system reminded them weekly and sometimes daily that they were failing to keep the Law, because you had to atone for your sins to return to a right relationship with God. Every sacrifice implied that. ‘I am failing,’ because if they weren’t failing there was no need for sacrifice, the shedding of blood, or for a substitute to die on their behalf. So **sacrifices were to maintain the relationship, not for salvation.** And it was a reminder that God demanded perfection in observance of the Law.
- > Commentary - Galatians 5.3 *And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law.*

This is in the context of ‘living the life’. He has already dealt with salvation; there is nothing we can do to please God or to attain a right standing before Him. But now, as believers there is still

nothing we can do to please God apart what this verse, Galatians 5.3 tells us. Perfection, keep the whole Law.

James 2.10 *For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.*

Perfection: you keep the whole Law, but stumble at one point, what happens? You are guilty of the whole Law. **The Law just points us to the fact that we can’t do it.**

4.17 *Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.*

It is not just the things that we *do*, it’s the good things that we know we should do but we *don’t do* them. That probably condemns everyone! Shouldn’t you be witnessing and sharing the gospel with people every day, serving one another virtually every day? We sin every day and we know it; perfection is required. That’s why **grace** is so important. That is why simply trusting in what Christ has done is adequate. Both for **salvation** and for **sanctification**.

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|-----------------------------------|---------|
| c. Proof of the Jews’ Guilt | 2.17-29 |
| 1) Failure of Inconsistency | 2.17-24 |
| 2) Failure in Circumcision | 2.25-29 |
| a) Complaint | 2.25 |
| b) Condemnation | 2.26-27 |
| (1) Circumcision of Uncircumcised | 2.26 |

Paul has already mentioned their inconsistency, so they should already know what is in these Galatians and James passages (James is also written to a Jewish audience as well). But they should get it from the Old Testament, too. He is going to really ‘twist the knife’ in them by saying that the *uncircumcised* are going to condemn them.

2.26 So if the uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?

Is the gentile able to keep the Law? No, no one is. So he speaks hypothetically, if there is a gentile who can do better than you and keep the Law, then what will happen?

2.26 So if the uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?

Will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision—from God’s perspective? God could view him as better than you a Jew? This really strikes home if you are from that background—or it should. He has basically slapped them in the face. Those despised, deprived Gentiles, if there were *one* of them that could live a better life than you,

what does that mean? That means their *uncircumcision* could be regarded as circumcision!

Now we look at the next point about circumcision: First it is not intended for salvation.

Circumcisi3n

1. Importance - Genesis 17.10-14
2. Jewish misconception
3. Spiritual significance

Significance

> Not intended for salvation

Is Abraham saved in Genesis 17, when God issued circumcision? In Genesis 15 what did Abraham do? He believed God and it 'was credited to His account' as righteousness—not because of anything that he did, but because he believed what God had said. In other words, it is by faith and faith alone. So he is talking to a man that knows the Lord and has communicated to his family, so it is after salvation; it is not the basis of it. The Jews got it 'backward', out of place. It is not for salvation; he is dealing with a group that are already saved. The assumption is that they are a people that are regenerate. It implies that regeneration precedes it:

> Physical act with spiritual point - sign of regeneration - Again the analogy with baptism. What is baptism? An outward act that tells the world that something has happened inwardly; it is a visible display that I have died to myself by trusting in Jesus Christ and now, coming out of the water, I am alive to Him. And I want to live my life with that relationship. An infant cannot do that. That was true of circumcision as well. It was a sign of regeneration:

Deuteronomy 10.16 *"So circumcise your heart, and stiffen your neck no longer.*

Cutting away from the old life. This is Deuteronomy—even before they were a nation. This is the children of Israel in the wilderness. A people with a constitution but still lacking the third element: the land. Circumcision is not an outward act; an inward, regenerating reality must precede it.

> Return to land - Leviticus 26.41 *I also was acting with hostility against them, to bring them into the land of their enemies--or if their uncircumcised heart becomes humbled so that they then make amends for their iniquity,*

Leviticus was given, written, even before they went into the wilderness. It is predicting their history and a lot of it has worked itself out. They had an uncircumcised heart—just as Paul is talking about in Romans. Circumcised externally but

uncircumcised spiritually. They practiced idolatry and God was going to bring them back which is future even to our time.

Deuteronomy 30.6 *"Moreover the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live.*

Prophetic, even before they were a nation. He describes regeneration, in the future, the New Covenant—in Ezekiel and Jeremiah.

> Prophets - Ezekiel 44.10 *"But the Levites who went far from Me when Israel went astray, who went astray from Me after their idols, shall bear the punishment for their iniquity.*

The sign. Even if they had circumcision, they were 'undoing' it.

>NT - Galatians 6.15 *For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.*

This relates to the body of Christ. For a Jewish person who has trusted in Christ, it is insignificant.

Colossians 2.11 *and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; 12 having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.*

An inward change made by Christ.

Philippians 3.3 *for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh,*

In this context he is speaking about Christians: who have the **true** circumcision which is a **spiritual reality** behind the external act. The Jews of the first century and all through their history missed the concept even from Deuteronomy. This turned the Jew's world upside down—making the gentile more acceptable than the Jews in the eyes of God!

c. Proof of the Jews' Guilt 2.17-29

1) Failure of Inconsistency 2.17-24

2) Failure in Circumcision 2.25-29

a) Complaint 2.25

b) Condemnation 2.26-27

(1) Circumcision of Uncircumcised 2.26

(2) Condemnation of Circumcised 2.27

2.27 And he who is physically uncircumcised, if he keeps the Law, will he not judge you who though having the letter of the Law and circumcision are a transgressor of the Law?

Referring to the gentile...

2.27 And he who is physically uncircumcised, if he keeps the Law, will he not judge you who though having the letter of the Law and circumcision are a transgressor of the Law?

The gentile, if he keeps the Law (hipotético: if he were able to do it), **will he not judge you?** Even those despised gentiles will judge you who, having the letter of the Law and circumcision are a transgressor of the Law. So **they are condemning the Jews**. This is why he is proving to them that they need the Messiah.

Rituals have value but not for salvation!!!

[Romans 2.28-3.2 True Jews & Protests of Jews 040]

- c. Proof of the Jews' Guilt 2.17-29
 - 1) Failure of Inconsistency 2.17-24
 - 2) Failure in Circumcision 2.25-29
 - a) Complaint 2.25
 - b) Condemnation 2.26-27
 - (1) Circumcision of Uncircumcised 2.26
 - (2) Condemnation of Circumcised 2.27
 - c) Conclusion 2.28-29
 - (1) Contradictory Jew 2.28

2.28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh.

He explains what a true Jew is. The externals are contradicting the internals. So a contradictory Jew, in verse 28, 'he is not a Jew who is one outwardly'. It is not the sign that is the most important; it is the internal change. It is the internal belief that leads to transformation.

Human nature likes the externals, eg, to be seen in church, to go through baptism, because we think that by doing the externals at least we appear spiritual to those around us and somehow, in our minds that makes us spiritual. But that is not the case today and it was not the case ever, even in the OT. Moses speaks of spiritual circumcision in Deuteronomy, before Israel was even a nation. The internal relationship with God is what is key.

2.28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh.

'He is not a Jew who is one outwardly'. 'Nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh.' That is just a sign, or an external indication of something internal. Our nature is such that as we depend on the external and try to cover over or omit the internal.

He is like fools gold—looks like it, feels like it, but is only fools gold! That is what Paul is saying: If he looks like a Jew, goes through all the ritual of Judaism, circumcision being the focus here, that does not make him a true Jew.

Today, similarly, there are a lot of people who go to church, appear to be Christians, they live in what was supposedly at one time a Christian nation. They say the Christian words, they go through the Christian ritual, but a lot of them are not what Jesus identifies in John three, born again, i.e., they are not regenerated. They have the externals but not the reality; so also the Jews in the first century.

- c. Proof of the Jews' Guilt 2.17-29
 - 1) Failure of Inconsistency 2.17-24
 - 2) Failure in Circumcision 2.25-29
 - a) Complaint 2.25
 - b) Condemnation 2.26-27
 - (1) Circumcision of Uncircumcised 2.26
 - (2) Condemnation of Circumcised 2.27
 - c) Conclusion 2.28-29
 - (1) Contradictory Jew 2.28
 - (2) Correct Jew 2.29

In verse 29, he describes a True Jew, or a 'Correct' one:

2.29 But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.

A Jew is one 'who is one inwardly'. Is it possible for a gentile to be a Jew in the eyes of God? Well, the prior verses seem to indicate that: yes if he is circumcised in his heart, that is, if he has an inward relationship and trust in the Messiah, or, in the OT, an inward trust in the promise of Messiah, then he is a Jew who is one inwardly.

Now he is addressing this primarily to the Jews who externally appear that way and then he expands....

2.29 But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.

‘Circumcision is that which is of the heart’. We saw this in Deuteronomy, Leviticus, the prophets and in the Psalms that speak of circumcision inwardly or of the heart. That is true circumcision...

2.29 But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.

And, he adds, it is ‘by the Spirit’; it is spiritual—which you cannot see. The external is just a public acknowledgement or testimony that should indicate the inward.

2.29 But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.

And ‘his praise is not from men’ who can say ‘yes, you are Jewish: you look it, you do the rituals, you are circumcised, but I can’t see your heart.’ God sees the heart, so his praise is not from men but from God who sees the heart. This is going to leave the Jew condemned: you are not even Jewish, even with the blood and the ritual, but in reality you are no different than a gentile.

Circumcision

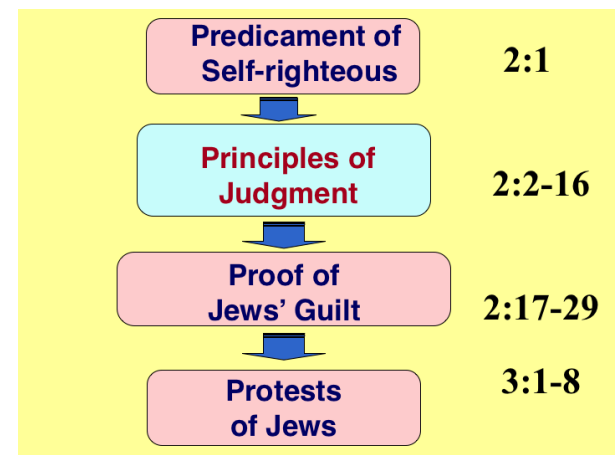
1. Importance - Genesis 17.10-14
2. Jewish misconception
3. Spiritual significance
4. NT analogy

Today, in terms of application, you can substitute in this passage the word ‘baptism’ for the word ‘circumcision’. Circumcision was on the eighth day. Baptism is sometimes done as an infant but probably better not because it has to involve the heart attitude. Baptism is supposed to be an external testimony that the individual being baptized is proclaiming publicly that he has experienced an inward change, regeneration. ‘Biblical regeneration’ is not a Biblical doctrine; it is a false concept. Some think the very act regenerates or somehow causes an inward change, but that is not the case Biblically. This is explained in the NT; we will see it in Romans 6.

This is why we have to be careful in understanding the Scriptures because they are the final authority in what we do, what

we believe and hold to. Some of the denominations, like the Presbyterians and the Methodists, have abandoned the Bible and even some Bible churches are departing from it as well. This is the tendency of human nature. This is why this Book is alive today: it speaks to the human heart and our tendencies. We drift away from the word, as individuals, as well. We are regenerated once, but then God sanctifies us because we still need transformation.

Jesus, of course, is unique. His baptism is not an outward sign of regeneration (He is sinless, so not needed); it is an identification with us, in His humanity. And that is what baptism is: an identification with the community of those that are regenerated. And it is a commandment.



- c. Proof of the Jews' Guilt 2.17-29
- d. Protests of the Jews 3.1-8
 - 1) 1st Objection 3.1-2
 - a) Issue 3.1

Having seen proof of the Jew's guilt, we look at the Objections, or Protests, of the Jews. In these eight verses, there is a pattern over and over: first an issue is raised which is in the mind of Jewish thinking, and for this issue there is also a quotation appropriate here:

“Does this Jewish Christian, this ‘completed Jew,’ to use contemporary language, think that the God-oriented distinction between Jew and Gentile has been obliterated? Is the OT, so full of the promises of earthly spiritual blessing for Israel and so beautifully expressed that it

often appears that the psalmists and the prophets dipped their pens in a rainbow to proclaim them, really a gigantic collection of false hopes?...
 ...Or, can it be that the Christians think their God is unwilling, or better, unable to carry out this grand scheme of a program for the nations and the ages, as well as a program of personal, individual spiritual life?"

—SL Johnson

Essentially he is saying: has God done away with those promises of the OT that deal with the nation of Israel? Is that distinction between Jew and gentile totally obliterated? Paul is going to say, 'Emphatically No.' First, a list of the issues that would be in the mind of the Jewish person:

Issues

1. Is it a disadvantage to be a Jew? It would be better not to be one; we don't want to be under judgement by a gentile—we don't want to be less than a gentile! We don't want to even be equal with them. Paul has said, 'you are not circumcised if you don't have circumcision of the heart'.
2. Is a Jew reduced to a Gentile?
3. Is the OT a false witness? SL Johnson is asking this.
4. Is the Abrahamic Covenant broken? Circumcision is the sign of the Abrahamic Covenant and Paul is basically saying (or, misinterpreted as saying), 'circumcision is of no value.' So is the Abrahamic Covenant broken? No. It is an *unconditional* covenant, so it is not broken because God keeps His Covenants.
5. Is God unfaithful? Paul will answer that objection.

3.1 Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision?

So if the Jew is reduced to a gentile, then there are no advantages.

3.1 Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision?

And he asks the issue: what is the benefit of circumcision? They would be focusing on the external. They would do it to undermine Paul, taking him to Genesis and to the Law that specifies it, and say that he is a false teacher, so he is going to answer that question to avoid that charge.

- c. Proof of the Jews' Guilt 2.17-29
- d. Protests of the Jews 3.1-8

- 1) 1st Objection 3.1-2
- a) Issue 3.1
- b) Answer 3.2

3.1 Then 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.

He answers about the benefit of being Jewish and of circumcision: great in every respect, i.e., there is value.

3.1 Then 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.

He begins with 'First of all', which implies that there are other values as well. You could translate it: The priory or main advantage. Paul is just giving a summary here; he is going to elaborate later in chapters 9, 10 and 11. There you can study his answer to what the advantage of the Jew is. Replacement theology deals with the issue, in fact it answers the issue. (This is reform theology which has gone to several other denominations as well.) The idea is that, because Israel rejected the Messiah, Israel is basically 'done away with' and the church has replaced Israel.

According to this theology, all of the promises of Israel are now for the church; all the passages in the OT that pertain to Israel have been transferred to the church. There are issues with regard to eschatology, but basically the church has replaced Israel. That is NOT the Biblical teaching. There remains a distinction between Israel and the church. They are different and distinct entities. All of the promises in this passage are going to deal a little bit with that. God will eventually fulfill every one of the promises for Israel. All of the covenants.

God is the primary party with Israel—and that includes the New Covenant which is between the nation of Israel and Judah (they were divided) and God, not the church. It is a legal document and can't be changed. Now we benefit from the New Covenant because we are related to the ultimate Jew, the Messiah. We 'kind of' come in through the back door; we experience the benefits of the New Covenant, but we are not parties to it. That means that God will fulfill the covenant with those who are parties to it—which is future to our day. Israel, one day, will be prominent over all the other nations. That is in the Millennial Kingdom.

First of all, he is going to imply the answer to the question we just answered.

Implications

1. Many advantages - There are many advantages; Paul will say more in chapters 9-11.
2. Israel still instrument - God is still using the nation and particularly the word that came from the nation of Israel. This book was written by Jewish people. Some argue that even Luke, though a gentile, had some Jewish blood. If that is the case, every book in the Bible was written by a Jewish person and it is still alive and applicable.

3.1 Then 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.

‘They were entrusted with the oracles of God.’ Very fundamental and a very important advantage. Notice the word *entrusted*; we will see it again. It is of the word group of ‘faith’, that is, ‘to believe’ in something. The word can be, as in this context, that He has believed in Israel and given them the responsibility of His word. So it might be better translated ‘entrusted’. It is basically ‘to believe’ something, the word for ‘faith’, so in this context it is translated ‘entrusted’ with the oracles of God.

Oracles of God

1. Lexicon - sayings, utterances. *λογία* which is similar to *λόγος* which is common in the NT and related to the idea of the word, or, per the lexicon, is ‘sayings’ when speaking of something outside of the Bible, or ‘utterances’ when speaking of pagan gods. But in the Bible is the sayings of the one true God.
2. Usage - only 4 times in NT. Here in 3.2, referring to some special disclosures or sayings of God, according to some, but we think that God entrusted more than that to Israel. Some would limit it to the Law and that would certainly be the sayings of God where He spoke directly on Mount Sinai. And most commonly some say it would refer to the whole OT, but in this context, especially in the book of Romans, when he is going to develop this idea of Jesus as Messiah and refer to a lot of passages in the OT, it seems, more specifically, the Messianic promises to Israel. They were entrusted with these. These Messianic promises also pertain to them.
3. Views on reference
 - > Special disclosures of God
 - > Law
 - > Whole OT
 - > Messianic promises to Israel

Further implications:

Implications

1. Many advantages
2. Israel still instrument
3. Church age yet has advantages - The church age is still in existence; he is writing to the church, the church at Rome, referring to the nation of Israel who still have advantages today, we could say.
In the first century the Jews had advantages; God is preserving Jewish people and it has been in the last 70+ years that He has reestablished them in the land, as a nation because He will eventually, perhaps soon, fulfill those promises including the New Covenant. It seems past due in terms of the time frame.
So they today have the word and are responsible to preach and teach the oracles of God. This is part of His condemning them; they aren’t doing it. They are omitting, in fact denying, the Messiah.
4. Still Church/Israel distinction - There is still a church/Israel distinction. Don’t mix the two; it is not Biblical.
5. Not ownership but entrusted - They do not *own* the OT and the promises and oracles but they are *stewards* of the word; it belongs to God Himself, is His word. They initially were given the word; they protected it through time but they have failed in the last aspect of proclaiming it. They thought they were the owners, possessors, but in fact God says they were entrusted with it.
6. Ministry a great privilege - It doesn’t belong to us; whatever ministry or gifts He has given us, that gifting is an entrustment or stewardship. We will be responsible for whatever spiritual gift we have. We have access to those oracles and more, like Romans in the NT.

We are entrusted with God’s Word!!!
Study it, learn it, live it, teach it!!!

[Romans 3.1-4 Two Jewish Objections & Supersessionism 041]

Knowing well the perfections of God prevents us from getting taken in by false doctrines. The Jews had a faulty understanding of the nature and perfections of God. Paul probably encountered objections as he ministered in Jerusalem. He wasn’t able to go to Rome when he had planned but the book of Romans contains what he would have taught had he gone at that time—and probably what he taught in other cities. So he writes to demonstrate that a Jewish mindset needs the Messiah just as much as any lost gentile.

Implications

1. Many advantages
2. Israel still instrument
3. Church age yet has advantages
4. Still Church/Israel distinction

We want to study more about the Church-Israel distinction. This is a false doctrine: that the church has replaced the Israel of the Old Testament, that is, the church is the Israel of the OT, and the church in the NT is the NT Israel. There are a few verses that could be taken to support that possibility, but taken together, in light particularly of the covenants, the promises and clear prophetic statements, one cannot hold to that idea/doctrine. There is a distinction: Israel is distinct and God has a plan for them. The church is different, is not Israel, is a distinct entity and not a *national* entity: we don't have a land, a distinct people and covenants/contracts; a *nation* has these.

This idea came very early in church history, even among some of the church fathers. The nation Israel had rejected her Messiah and crucified Him. But it was not necessarily a universal thing; in fact, all the early Christians were Jewish: all of the disciples and apostles—until later in the Book of Acts. Gentiles began to come in later, with Cornelius, the Ethiopian eunuch, etc. As the church became more and more gentile, this idea became more prominent, especially after 70 AD, when the nation, I believe, was actually judged—it was destroyed and they were scattered; it was no longer a nation. After this, the church was still predominantly Jewish, some within the nation having trusted in the Messiah.

Supersessionism begins with this idea of Replacement Theology. It is not only unbiblical but it is dangerous because from that has stemmed another step, *antisemitism*. So if God has rejected Israel, has judged them and replaced Israel with the church, then from that the church has persecuted the nation of Israel—or persecuted Jewish people. This is definitely wrong; it goes against the Abrahamic covenant. And it puts those that mistreat Jews in jeopardy of God judging them. And when nations have taken that stand, God has brought down every one that has done that historically.

So it began in early church history; it has persisted throughout church history and exists today and is growing. This idea is growing within the broader church; so you should be aware of this major view today. Much of this antisemitism within churches, or within church settings, comes from this theology. The church has a bad history in dealing with the nation of Israel—not those that are called dispensational, not those that have what I believe a biblical view.

Hitler used Martin Luther, who became anti-semitic later in his ministry, and part of the justification of Hitler came from this idea. So this is a dreadful concept, because it is present today and it is a false doctrine.

Supersessionism

1. Israel rejected Messiah & judged
2. Began early in church history
3. Has persisted through church history
4. Is majority view of church
5. Has led to anti-Semitism
6. Used by Hitler during WWII
7. Is a false doctrine

Some of the implications: The Jews have many advantages. The distortion that they had is being addressed by Paul: they felt that had ownership of God's word. Yes, He gave it to them, but it was not to be owned by them in the sense that 'it is ours and no one can partake of it.' They are entrusted with it to share it with the world.

We can apply this by saying that ministry is a great privilege for us. Your spiritual gift is not your possession. It is given to you so that you use it to share in ministering to others. That's our privilege.

Implications

1. Many advantages
2. Israel still instrument
3. Church age yet has advantages
4. Still Church/Israel distinction
5. Not ownership but entrusted with the Word
6. Ministry is a great privilege

The second objection kind of follows the same pattern: an issue followed by an answer.

c.	Proof of the Jews' Guilt	2.17-29
d.	Protests of the Jews	3.1-8
	1) 1st Objection	3.1-2
	2) 2nd Objection	3.3-4
	a) Issue	3.3

3.3 What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it?

There is a series of questions, more than ten in this portion of Scripture. In verse three he is looking back to the first objection—Do

Jews have an advantage? Is circumcision of benefit? He answers, 'Yes, great in every respect. Well, if that is true, 'What then? If some did not believe, i.e., they are not really true Jews, they are 'uncircumcised', does this deal with the rest of the nation as well? Will their unbelief nullify the faithfulness of God? How is this related to all those promises? If we have believers and unbelievers sharing in these promises, does that unbelief nullify it?

Interesting in this passage: He is going to emphasize the word 'faith', or, we also use the word 'believe'. Does believing that something is true mean that you put confidence in it? In verse two, he uses the word 'entrusted'; in other words God put faith in the nation of Israel such that He gave them or trusted them with the oracles of God.

3.2 ...they were entrusted with the oracles of God.

It is the same root word as for 'faith' or 'faithfulness'. They *were believed* with the oracles of God. The better translation: God entrusted the oracles to them.

3.3 What then? If some did not believe, (ἀπιστέω ah-pees-táy-o) their unbelief (ἀπιστία ah-pees-teé-ah) will not nullify the faithfulness (πίστις peés-tees) of God, will it?

But if some 'did not believe, their unbelief'—again, in Greek the 'a' preceding the word gives you the opposite, like in English the 'un' put on a word negates it, the 'a' means 'not', ἀπιστία ah-pees-teé-ah, did not believe. This is the noun form of 'belief'.

Then, at the end of verse three: their unbelief will not nullify the 'pistis' of God, translated 'faithfulness'. You could translate it 'the believing aspect' of God, ie, God's *trueness*, or *reality*. 'Faithfulness' is a good translation.

And, if you do this you could also translate 'unbelief' as 'unfaithfulness', the opposite of πίστις peés-tees. Their unfaithfulness will not nullify the faithfulness of God. It is probably a deliberate word play. Paul is playing on that word and using it four times in that context: the verb form, the noun form and the negation of both.

3.3 What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it?

That is the objection that they would raise. Paul answers it in verse four.

- c. Proof of the Jews' Guilt 2.17-29
- d. Protests of the Jews 3.1-8

- 1) 1st Objection 3.1-2
- 2) 2nd Objection 3.3-4
 - a) Issue 3.3
 - b) Answer 3.4

3.3-4 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."

He says, 'May it never be'. This is a very common little phrase that Paul uses elsewhere also. It is the strongest way, in the Greek language, to negate something. **μη γένοιτο** (may gé-noee-to). We have a lot of translations of it in English:

- μη γένοιτο** (may guéh-noee-to)
- √ 'away with the thought' √ 'perish the idea'
 - √ 'banish the thought' √ 'be it not so'
 - √ 'let not such a thing be considered' √ 'impossible'
 - √ 'let it not be conceived of' √ 'you are crazy'
 - √ 'absolutely not' √ 'good heavens no'

This idea is so ridiculous, we ought to get rid of it immediately!

3.3 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."

Rather... correcting it: this is a true understanding of the nature of God. 'Let God be found true.' In other words, 'God is always truthful, true, reality, absolute truth. God is true; it doesn't matter what we think, but we need to adjust our thinking such that we cast out the wrong ideas and settle it in our minds that we are going to let God be true in our mind, no matter what. I'm the loser if I take a different viewpoint.

3.3 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."

So, let God be found true, though ‘every man be found a liar.’ In this context, talking to the Jewish people he is saying, ‘Your concepts are lies.’ They are misrepresentations. These protests go against the very nature of who God is. We have a contrast in this passage of what man is like as opposed to what God is like. We could develop the concept: they are the thoughts or ideas of man which are classified sometimes as evil, sometimes rebellious, etc. That is the nature of man, implying the nature of this objection because he rejects it so strongly; it is a lie, an unbiblical concept. Let God be true even though every man be a liar.

We remind ourselves of the faithfulness of God:

God’s Faithfulness

1. Does not lie - Numbers 23.19 *“God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?”*

It almost appears that Paul is summarizing this passage in Numbers. God is not like a man who lies. And what he says, he said, he has done; he has a record.

2. OT - Deuteronomy 32.4 *“The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He.”*

This is the Biblical concept of God: a faithful God that does what he says—‘to the letter’ and beyond, in contrast to man.

Psalm 33.4 *For the word of the LORD is upright, And all His work is done in faithfulness.*

Psalm 89.2 *For I have said, “Lovingkindness will be built up forever; In the heavens You will establish Your faithfulness.”*

8 *O LORD God of hosts, who is like You, O mighty LORD? Your faithfulness also surrounds You.*

33 *“But I will not break off My lovingkindness from him, Nor deal falsely in My faithfulness.”*

There are literally hundreds of passages that have the idea of God as faithful. History has proven that everything He has said has so far come to fulfillment, with some yet to be filled.

3. NT - 1Corinthians 1.9 *God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.*

2Timothy 2.13 *If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.*

Hebrews 10.23 *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;*

1Peter 4.19 *Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.*

So, the idea that God is not faithful is a demonic idea that is not supported anywhere in the Bible. God is utterly faithful. And in this context He is faithful to Israel.

3.3 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.”

Now he goes to the OT—the first quotation in this section. ‘As it is written’.

3.3 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.”

‘That you may be judged...’ That comes from Psalm 51, which David wrote after the sin with Bathsheba:

Psalm 51

1. David after sin with Bathsheba
2. Mercy based on grace of God - 51.1 [A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.] *Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions.*
He did not deserve God’s mercy, but he receives it because of grace. David deserves judgment; he acknowledges it himself. In verse 2:
3. Request for restoration - 51.2 *Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity And cleanse me from my sin.*
He requests restoration, not based on himself, simply based on God’s grace.
4. Confession of sin - 51.3-4 *For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me. 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.*
He confesses his sin, acknowledging that, even though it was against Bathsheba, ultimately all sin is against God Himself, the integrity and person of God Himself.
5. God justified in judgment - 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.*

At the end of verse 4: the quotation—that God is justified in judging. He has every right to bring every judgment upon David; He would be perfectly righteous in *not* forgiving David. He would be perfectly righteous in removing David as king if He so chose, but because of His goodness and righteousness God forgives.

6. 1st direct quote of OT Romans 3.4 “THAT YOU MAY BE JUSTIFIED IN YOUR WORDS, AND PREVAIL [vindicated or victorious] WHEN YOU ARE JUDGED.”

The first direct quote from the OT—in this context to refute the Jewish objection. God is perfectly justified, or has every right and when He speaks is blameless, that is, vindicated or victorious when He judges. (Psalm 51). But Paul says, under inspiration, that when the nation of Israel is judged, it will be demonstrated that He will be vindicated in His judgment and He is just.

God is faithful today and will be faithful to everything He has said concerning the nation of Israel, every promise, every covenant. And Israel has a great future, the fulfillment in the Millennium. The church, meanwhile, is a parenthesis reaching gentiles as well.

Faithful to Israel

1. Supersessionism a false doctrine: the idea that the church has replaced Israel which resulted in anti-semitism
2. Faithful to all His promises
3. Legally bound to His Covenants
4. Israel has a great future
5. Fulfillment in the Millennium
6. Church as parenthesis

The next two objections will also continue to give a proper view of God’s nature, correcting false doctrines.

[Romans 3.5-8 Last Two Jewish Protests 042]

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| c. Proof of the Jews’ Guilt | 2.17-29 |
| d. Protests of the Jews | 3.1-8 |
| 1) 1st Objection | 3.1-2 |
| 2) 2nd Objection | 3.3-4 |
| 3) 3rd Objection | 3.5-6 |
| a) Issue | 3.5 |

3.5 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.)

Does our unrighteousness or sinfulness demonstrate the righteousness of God? Then it is an advantage to God; it makes God look good! It elevates God!

3.5 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.)

If that is the case, what shall we say? The God who inflicts wrath is not unrighteous, is He? If He benefits from our unrighteousness it is unfair for Him to judge us! This is a little twisted, but it is the argument an unbelieving mind comes up with, especially the self-righteous mind. How can God benefit from my unrighteousness? I should benefit as well.

But God’s righteousness is crystal clear in all the Scriptures. Paul is going to expand this in answer. We can look up several passages that emphasize it. In Isaiah it is in the context of judging. When God judges, His judgment is righteous. There is no unfairness even though, yes, God does benefit by contrast.

God’s Righteousness

1. Isaiah 5.16 *But the LORD of hosts will be exalted in judgment, And the holy God will show Himself holy in righteousness.*
45.19 *“I have not spoken in secret, In some dark land; I did not say to the offspring of Jacob, ‘Seek Me in a waste place’; I, the LORD, speak righteousness, Declaring things that are upright.”*
21 *“Declare and set forth your case; Indeed, let them consult together. Who has announced this from of old? Who has long since declared it? Is it not I, the LORD? And there is no other God besides Me, A righteous God and a Savior; There is none except Me.”*
23-24 *“I have sworn by Myself, The word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness And will not turn back, That to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear allegiance. 24 “They will say of Me, ‘Only in the LORD are righteousness and strength.’” Men will come to Him, And all who were angry at Him will be put to shame.*

This is almost a description of what David is saying in Psalm 51. Paul may have both of these passages in mind in quoting Psalm 51, looking at God’s vindication of His righteousness.

2. Main theme of book

This is what holds the whole book of Romans together: God’s righteousness. In fact, the key word is the word righteousness. It occurs over 55 times in Romans. Every section of the book deals with the righteousness of God.

3. In condemning sinners

In this section, Paul is explaining that man is condemned because of the righteousness of God. So, in condemning sinners, God demonstrates Himself righteous.

4. In justifying believers

God is going to demonstrate His righteousness in that He does punish sin—in chapter three, a very key passage in the book. So, by justifying believers, this demonstrates His righteousness.

5. In sanctifying believers

And, once a person is a believer—in the next chapters, six through eight—we see that God sanctifies believers and He can do it in righteousness also on the basis of what Christ has done. Thus, His righteousness is displayed in sanctifying believers.

This is an outline of the book of Romans: #3 is the first major section, condemning sinners. The next section, chapter 3.21 through five is a section dealing with justification and God is just in justifying. And then the next section, chapters six through eight, God is righteous in sanctifying.

6. In restoring Israel

And He is righteous in restoring Israel, chapters nine through eleven. This is a huge doctrine, a huge concept of God.

3.5 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.)

He adds that this is a human thing. ‘I’m speaking in human terms.’ In other words, he is denigrating this whole argument. This is what comes from a mind that is twisted by sin, a lost mentality. This is not reality, not the thinking of God, not righteous thinking; it is defective thinking. It is human logic that ends up illogical. So he is going to give an answer in verse six of chapter three.

c. Proof of the Jews’ Guilt	2.17-29
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3) 3rd Objection	3.5-6
a) Issue	3.5
b) Answer	3.6

3.5. 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! For otherwise, how will God judge the world?

‘May it never be! This is impossible, ridiculous, totally out of line.’

3.5 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! For otherwise, how will God judge the world?

And the world would raise this issue of God judging the world. When the Jew thought about this he thought of God’s judging the gentiles and they would throw it out. But Paul kind of broadens it using the word ‘cosmos’, the whole world, not just the gentiles, including the world of the Jewish people as well.

So they would not argue with this. God has every right. In fact there is a yearning within Judaism for God to enter in to judgment of those Romans. ‘Judge the Roman Empire; release us! Bring our day, bring our Messiah. Judge them, God!’ But they don’t realize that they are calling Him to judge *them* as well.

God as Judge is another major theme of Scripture.

God as Judge

Genesis 18.23 *Abraham came near and said, “Will You indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? ...25 Far be it from You to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are treated alike. Far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?”*

This is Abraham himself speaking, interceding for his relatives at Sodom because God has already announced that He is going to *judge* Sodom. This is kind of what Paul is saying: the righteous God will be just, His judgment will be just. But it seems unfair to judge the believers, or righteous, there in Sodom along with the *unrighteous*. So God says: I’ll be merciful on the whole city if there are 50...10...but apparently Abraham couldn’t find ten. God is righteous and just—and He spared the believers. This is a good illustration of salvation: God pulls out of a corrupt culture those that believe.

Deuteronomy 32.4 *“The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He.*

Hebrews 6.2 *of instruction about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.*

This is a fundamental doctrine: God as judge. The Jews would have said the same thing. Actually, Hebrews is written to a Jewish audience.

Acts 17.31 *because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.*”

This is to the intellectuals of the day in Athens. That ‘Man’ is Jesus. God has appointed a day of judgment and the Jew would not contest any of this.

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| c. Proof of the Jews’ Guilt | 2.17-29 |
| d. Protests of the Jews | 3.1-8 |
| 1) 1st Objection | 3.1-2 |
| 2) 2nd Objection | 3.3-4 |
| 3) 3rd Objection | 3.5-6 |
| 4) 4th Objection | 3.7-8 |
| a) Issue | 3.7-8a |

The fourth objection stems from what he said in verses five and six.

3.7 But if through my lie the truth of God abounded to His glory, why am I also still being judged as a sinner?

A repeat of a similar argument. God is glorified. It is like the contrast where you go to a jewelry store when they display diamonds: have you noticed what they put behind the diamond? The darkest velvet you can find because that dark background brings out the brightness of the diamond, emphasizes it, makes it bigger and enticing. This is the argument he is using: my lie kind of makes God look good, glorifies Him, abounds to His glory....

3.7 But if through my lie the truth of God abounded to His glory, why am I also still being judged as a sinner?

...If that is the case and God is benefiting, why am I still being judged as a sinner? There seems to be an inequity here, an unfairness.

3.7 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.

Verse eight: ‘And why not say, “Let us do evil that good may come?” Because the more evil we do, the more glory God gets!’ Taking that logic to its logical conclusion, the darker the velvet is, the brighter the diamond looks.

3.7 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.

There is a parenthetical statement in there which indicates, as we mentioned earlier, ‘as we are slanderously reported as some claim that we say.’ This is probably an objection that was raised when Paul, for example, at Galatia or Corinth or wherever, brought the same doctrine—the doctrine of grace that man cannot do anything to earn righteousness. And, in fact, that concept of God getting all of the glory gets twisted in the process; and those that speak of grace oftentimes confused—‘let us do evil that good may come’.

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|-----------------------------|---------|
| c. Proof of the Jews’ Guilt | 2.17-29 |
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| 1) 1st Objection | 3.1-2 |
| 2) 2nd Objection | 3.3-4 |
| 3) 3rd Objection | 3.5-6 |
| 4) 4th Objection | 3.7-8 |
| a) Issue | 3.7-8a |
| b) Answer | 3.8b |

3.7 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.

For this objection he doesn’t give an explanation. All he answers with is that ‘their condemnation is just.’ In other words, they are so out of tune with what God says, with God’s word, with spiritual concepts, and with the nature of God that their condemnation is just. That is the only answer he gives.

By the way, apologetics has to get to the point that if you sense that a person is just raising issues and is not really interested in the answers, their condemnation is just. If people are sincerely desiring an answer, if they sincerely have obstacles they need to overcome for then to understand and see clearly the gospel message, then continue to give answers. Paul deals with four objections here, but the bottom line is that if that Jewish heart is hardened and they are just going to keep going on, trying to keep putting obstacles in the way, and their heart is resistant and not really interested in the truth, Paul ends it. That is as far as he is going to go.

This is a key to doing good apologetics: always take it back to the nature of God. That is, if a person has a distorted view of God, everything else is going to be distorted. And this is what Paul does, first, in verse two:

Based on Nature of God

1. Oracles of God - 2
He is talking about the oracles or revelation of God. In other words, he answers a question relating to God, what He has done, who He is: the main advantage is that they have the oracles, the revelation of God.
2. Faithfulness of God - 3
He answers their second objection with the *faithfulness* of God. The God of the Bible remains faithful, is a faithful God.
3. Righteousness of God - 5
The God of the Bible is a righteous God; He is going to do everything according to His standards.
4. Judgment of God - 6-7
There is a judgment and God is judge.
5. Truth of God - 7
He contrasts the lie of man with the truth of God. God is true.
6. Glory of God - 7
Also, the glory of God is part of His nature.

A good corrective to false doctrine is to look at those ideas from the perspective of the nature of God. In some way they will be taking away from the true nature of God.

There is a growing movement called Open Theism amongst evangelicals. It elevates man to a point where the decisions of man can override the plans of God. The future is a little indefinite. The idea is that if we pray enough we can almost move God in such a way that He does what we want. So, Open Theism basically violates the sovereignty of God and the plan that God has set forth. It also violates the omniscience of God; God knows all things and, in some cases He has told us what He is going to do. It doesn't matter what we pray and what we think, He is going to accomplish His goals. Open Theism makes all those somewhat tentative.

Also the cults are blatantly denying the Trinity.

The point here is that we need to go back to the nature of God, and if something affects the nature of God it in fact can be corrected by a Biblical understanding of it. This is what Paul does in this passage, verses two through eight: He goes back to *who God is*, and it answers all of those issues.

A proper view of God's nature corrects most faulty doctrines!!!