

# **Romans 3:1-20**

## **What About the Jews?**

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**“What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit *is there* of circumcision? 2 Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God. 3 For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? 4 God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged. 5 But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? *Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance?* (I speak as a man) 6 God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world? 7 For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner? 8 And not *rather*, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just. 9 What then, are we better *than they*? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both the Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; 10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable: there is none that doeth good, no, not one. 13 Their throat *is* an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps *is* under their lips: 14 whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness: 15 their feet *are* swift to shed blood: 16 destruction and misery *are* in their ways: 17 and the way of peace have they not known: 18 there is no fear of God before their eyes. 19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is the knowledge of sin.*” (Romans 3:1-20, KJV)**

***Romans 3:1-4, "What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision? Much in every way! First of all, they have been entrusted with the very words of God. What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God's faithfulness? Not at all! Let God be***

**true, and every man a liar. As it is written: 'So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge.' (Psalm 51:4)**

But if our unrighteousness brings out God's righteousness more clearly, what shall we say? That God is unjust in bringing his wrath on us? (I am using a human argument.) Certainly not! If that were so, how could God judge the world? Someone might argue, 'If my falsehood enhances his glory, why am I still condemned as a sinner?' Why not say--as we are slanderously reported as saying and as some claim that we say--'Let us do evil that good may result'? Their condemnation is deserved.

### *No One Is Righteous*

**Verses 9-20, "What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. As it is written:**

*'There is no one righteous,*

**not even one;**

**there is no one who understands,**

**no one who seeks God.**

**All have turned away, they have together become worthless;**

*There is no one who does good, not even one.' (Psalm 14:1-3; 53:1-3)*

*'Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit.' (Psalm 5:9)*

*'The poison of vipers is on their lips.' (Psalm 140:3)*

*'Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.' (Psalm 10:7)*

**'Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of peace they do not know.'**  
(Isaiah 59:7-8)

***'There is no fear of God before their eyes.'*** (Psalm 36:1)

**Now we know that whatsoever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.** [NIV] Or, the King James renders this last sentence as **"For by the law is the knowledge of sin."** [I.e. the law is our spiritual mirror that shows where the dirt is. It doesn't clean the dirt, just shows where it is.]

### *Introduction: Paul Paints A Dark Picture Of The Human Race*

"This morning I would like us to open our Bibles to Romans chapter 3. I've entitled my message "What About the Jews?" You hang in there with me, because you're going to see the awesome faithfulness of God. I just pray this knocks us over spiritually. That we really see how much God loves us and cares for us. But let us to pick up in Romans 3, verse 9, and we'll go back and pick up the first eight verses in a minute. ***Paul's whole point of the first three chapters is now evident in verse 9, as he has been painting this dark picture of the human race. Showing us of our great need of a savior and of salvation.*** You know, unless you know you're a sinner, you don't need a savior, unless you're drowning, you don't reach for the life-preserver. Unless you know that you have a sickness, you don't reach for the cure, so that's what he's been working on. And now in **verse 9** he says, **"Then are we better than they?"** In other words, ***'Are we Jews any better than the pagans out in the world? Not at all. For we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin.'*** Now have you ever had accident, and they've totaled out your car? Doesn't take much today, does it, to have your car totaled? These cars today are made out of the same stuff that pop cans are made out of. Leslie was shutting the door, her wrists are so bad with arthritis that she sort

of uses her whole body to do things like shut the door, and she was shutting the door and I said, "Oh, be careful honey, you might dent the car, you know." She's a light thing herself, but it doesn't take much, because they're made out of such cheap stuff, you know. And I've seen cars that just had a couple of dings in them, but because everything's all tied together [unibody construction], they've totaled the car. And of course you always lose money, generally when they total out your car. It's better not to have your car totaled. I made my way through college with this car that just kept getting hit. I had this old Ford Galaxy 500, weighed about 500 tons and every time I went to school break to Oregon somebody would hit me. And it was never my fault. And I just never repaired anything, and used the money to go to college. Things would get real bad [financially] and I'd start driving, you know, OK Lord [laughter]. But God provides in mysterious ways, doesn't he. Never got a whip-lash or anything, they were always nice accidents. ***But anyway, cars will be written off as a total loss. We say 'they were totaled.' Well God estimates the damage done to the human race by sin, and God says in verses 9 through 20 that it is a total loss. Mankind has been "totaled" by sins' impact. "As it has been written," verse 10 says, "there is none righteous, not even one. There is none who understands. There is none who seeks for God. All have turned aside, together they've become useless."*** The word "useless" could be translated "sour milk". Ooh. ***'All together, the human race, he says, they stink.'*** ***'There's none that does good, not even one.'*** ***"their throat is an open grave."*** That's a real bad breath problem, isn't it. ***"And with their tongues, they keep deceiving. The poison of asps is under their lips, whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in their paths. And the path of peace they have not known. There's no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know whatever the law says, speaks to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be closed (or shut up). And all the world may become accountable to God, because, by the works of the law no flesh will be justified in his sight. Through the law comes the knowledge of sin."*** And so the grand climax of humanity's problem being given to us in Paul's great letter here to the Romans, and he's telling us, ***'Come on, cut the baloney, stop fooling around, nobody is good enough to be saved. By the deeds of the law, nobody can be declared not guilty in God's sight. Cut it out. Get real. The world is going to hell-unless there is intervention by the gospel of God through Jesus Christ.'*** That's the whole point, that's why we're here, because we believe there's no way to get to [into the kingdom of] heaven, but by Jesus Christ. And we believe that because we know we've got a problem. I know that if I die apart from Christ, I won't go to heaven.

I know that if I die apart from Christ, I'll have a load of guilt I'm going to have to answer to God for someday. Understand that it is appointed unto man once to die, and after that the judgment. Because I know that and understand that I'm less than perfect, I know I need a savior and I know I need Jesus.

### *What About The Jews?*

As Paul is presenting this great defense of the gospel and presentation of God's grace, he anticipates some arguments from his Jewish brothers. He knows that they're not going to just swallow this, they have some concerns and some questions, and so in the first 8 verses he tries to answer those questions, he anticipates their arguments. In *verse 1*, the first argument is **'Well, what about the Jews?' 'Are you saying, Paul, that there are no advantages to being Jewish? What's the use, Paul, of me being a Jew if we're all sinners? If I'm just like this Gentile, then what difference does it make if I'm one of God's chosen people? And Paul, you just said in verse 29 of chapter 2 (or 28), that an uncircumcised Gentile could be more acceptable to God than a circumcised Jew(?). Well, if that's true, then why waste our time? It's been a total waste. The Jews were never God's chosen people.'** And Paul responds in *verse 2*, **'Hey, there's great advantage in having that Jewish background. There are great advantages to having this Jewish heritage.'**

### *God Gave Us The Bible Through The Jews*

First of all, he says, "**They were entrusted with the oracles of God.**" That means God chose the Jewish prophets to communicate his Divine will and revelation. In other words, there were certain things that God could not communicate to us by [us] looking at a sunset, or by looking at creation, looking at his power in nature--things that we would never know if he didn't tell us. We could never seek these things out for ourselves and find them. God had to reveal them to us, because he's infinitely greater than we. And so he chose to do that, and he took Jewish prophets, Jewish kings, Jewish

leaders, and finally Jewish apostles to communicate his will, his Word, his grace, to the world. **So we're greatly indebted to the Jewish people for giving us our Bible.** If it wasn't for them we wouldn't have the written Word of God. God communicated it through them. Oh, the Jewish people even to this day, the Orthodox, hold the Word of God in such awe and reverence, they love God's Word. Childs E. Feinberg relates an incident that occurred in Brooklyn, New York years ago that illustrates this point. He said, *"A member of The Love of Moses congregation, a synagogue, upon opening the Ark of the scrolls, to conduct the rites of the Passover service, found to his dismay that one of the scrolls had been stolen. A search began, and in a vacant alley, in a vacant lot not far from the synagogue, they found the scroll that had been desecrated, partially burned. They lovingly picked up the scroll. They took it back to the synagogue, and the people began to mourn. They cleaned up the scroll the best they could. They wrapped it in a prayer shawl, they prepared a pine casket for it, and they conducted a regular funeral service, just like they would have conducted had a human being died, for that Scripture portion. And then the whole congregation fasted an entire week, mourning the loss of that Scripture."* I don't think we appreciate the Word of God like that. I mean, many of you have lost your Bibles. And they're in 'lost & found'. And we haven't had any funeral services around here. You haven't called, *'Where's my Bible, I've lost the most precious thing to me!--Aah, we've got ten at home, it's just one.'* But oh, how they [the Jews] love the Word of God. And we've lost something there. Feinberg goes on to say, *"I can remember my father and grandfather on Sabbath eve, as they would read the portion of the Scripture for that Sabbath, and as they would close the book, they would kiss it over and over again,"* kissing the Law [Torah], kissing the Word of God, showing the respect for the Word of God. We don't have that. **"O how I love thy law."** David would say, he meant the Torah, the Bible they had. **"The Law of the Lord, the Word of God, it's perfect, converting the soul, the testimonies of the Lord are sure, enlightening the eyes, more to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold. And sweeter also than honey in the honeycomb."** As I was raised as a little boy, I remember, and to this day, it's my practice, I was trained, *'You never put anything on top of your Bible. Never put any other book on your Bible. You never do that, because this is God's Word.'* And I'm not into Bible worship and superstition and all of that, but it put in my heart as a little kid this awe and reverence for the book I didn't understand yet, and would some day grow to love, and swear my allegiance to. Do you realize that held in your hand right now is the only thing besides your soul that's leaving this world with you. You know the Word of God is the only thing of this world

that's going to go on forever. The Word of God and human life [resurrected to immortal human life] that's the only thing that's going to live forever. And we have it in our hands right now, a piece of eternity right here. Isn't it awesome. I think it's neat to think about. David Hocking told a group of us pastors a few years ago that when he prepares his sermons he gets down on his knees, he places his Bible on his chair and he gets down on his knees and he just falls down in front of the Word of God, and he says, "Lord, you show me, this is your holy Word Lord, I want to approach it with fear and trembling. Oh God, don't let me mishandle it. Give me an awe and reverence for it--this is your Word, these are your commands, this is your gospel." How neat, that there are men of God like that, that love the Word of God. Being Jewish had many advantages, they had the Bible, they had the Word of God.

### *The Messiah Was Going To Come Through The Jews*

Secondly, Messiah was going to come through them, they were the channel through which Messiah would come. It was their lineage, David's lineage through which the Messiah would come. [There is a huge misconception that the Jews have suffered down through history because they helped kill Jesus, the Messiah. This is totally false. If anything, the Romans killed the Messiah, the Italians. No, the Jews have suffered down through history because Satan hates them. Why? Because the Messiah, the one who would crush Satan, would come through the Jews, the lineage of David. The Jews were suffering long before Messiah was born, for this very reason. Satan was trying to kill off the Jews long before Messiah's birth. Read the Book of Esther, also Josephus writing about Antiochus Euphianes IV. Satan's hatred of the Jews is intense, and that's the chief source of anti-Semitism. Coach Bill McCartney brings this out in his recent book *Blind Spots* (log onto <https://UNITYINCHRIST.COM/messianicmovement/BlindSpots.htm>.)] They have many advantages.

### *What About God's Promises To Israel?*

Paul realized that there were other arguments that people would raise against the gospel. Verse 3, Paul knew that someone objects to the gospel by accusing of him that God is not going to keep his word to Israel. In other words, the Jews believe that they, God had made certain promises to them that were irrevocable and unbreakable. *'And Paul, you come in here with this church and stuff. Are you saying that God isn't going to fulfill his promises, are you saying that God is a promise-breaking God?'* **Verse 3, "What then, if some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it?" Paul responds, "May it never be. Rather let God be found true, though every man be found a liar, as it is written, that thou mightest be justified in thy word, and mightest prevail when thou art judged."** Some are reasoning that if God cannot break his word, then how could it be that any Jew would be lost? *'We don't have to believe in your Jesus, we're Jews. And God promised to save Israel.'* And Paul showed them, ***'Wait a minute, you've got the wrong idea. God has made irrevocable promises to the nation Israel, but to the individuals that make up that nation, each one of them must be saved individually and personally. And now that Messiah has come, they must be saved by putting their faith in Him.'*** The Old Testament talks the same way.

### *What Is Salvation?*

God didn't save Jews differently than he saved anybody else. But they were operating under the false assumption that just because they were ethnically Jewish or had gone through some kind of a ritual, ceremony, a rite, that they were safe. I told you last week, they, the teaching of the rabbi's at the time of Jesus and the time of Paul was that *'not one circumcised Jew would ever enter into hell.'* *'All you need to have is the rite, the ceremony performed, and you'll go to heaven.'* Sadly, a lot of religious people are that way today, aren't they. *'I've been baptized.'* What makes you so sure you're going to heaven? *'Well, I've been baptized.'* So what. *'I was confirmed.'* Well, have you confirmed your reservation? Confirmed into what? *'Into the church.'* Well, do you think church membership will save you? Did church membership die on the cross for you? *'Well, I'm a Catholic.'* So what. *'I'm a Mormon.'* So what. *'Well, I can trace my lineage back to Joseph Smith.'* So can millions of other people. So what. It's not salvation by pedigree. It's salvation by

personal relationship with Jesus Christ--faith in his blood atonement for your sins. The point Paul has been making is that just being born a Jew doesn't save anybody. God made this very clear to his people [the Jews] in **Isaiah 55**, the Lord said **“seek the Lord while he may be found. Call upon him while he's near. Let the wicked forsake his way”**-- that means repent -- **“and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return to the Lord, and he will have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”** You see, salvation is always for the individual, in Israel, has always been the same--repentance, turning from your sins, and accepting the gift of God, the gift of his grace. **Salvation has never changed, it wasn't different before the cross and after the cross** [look at king David's life, first of faith in the Lord, then sinning, then of repentance, and ultimately his salvation]. **It's always been by grace through faith.** Before the cross it was faith in what would come, the Lamb to come. After the cross it is faith in the Lamb that has come. And so individuals in Israel had to be saved by repenting and turning from sins and believing. But the nation, as a nation, is safe and secure. God will never, ever, get rid of the nation of Israel.

### *Some Say God's Done With The Jews: A Short History Of The Jews*

Some say 'Well, wait a minute, isn't it true, that because the Jews rejected Jesus, they were scattered and forsaken by God?' Well, there are those who teach today, that because the Jews rejected Jesus, God is finished with them. The teaching is that they no longer have a right to the special promises that God made to Israel. But you know, Israel's rejection of God and rejection of Messiah, Jesus (Yeshua), was no surprise to God. God didn't see that they were rejecting his son and go "Oh no! I can't believe it, I killed these people and they're doing this?! Oh boy, did this one catch me off guard! Well, we'd better come up with a plan, quick. Ahhh, let's see, A, B, C-church! That's what we'll do. We'll make a church. We'll build my church, that's what I'll." He knew. He knew when he made the promise to Abraham, that they would reject his son, nothing catches God off guard--God is all-knowing, right? He knows the future, the past, it's all right now to him. In fact, hundreds of years before Jesus was even crucified, Isaiah the prophet under the inspiration of God's Spirit declared that the Messiah would be

rejected, despised of men, and he would be pierced through for our transgressions, that he would be numbered with transgressors, that he would die, and he would rise again. God knew. The prophet Zechariah predicted that they would pierce him, and some day after he was pierced [at his 2<sup>nd</sup> coming, literally, Zechariah 12:10] they would look upon him whom they have pierced, and mourn. But it would be years after. You know, nothing catches God off-guard. He knew his people would reject his son and he knew that he would have to discipline them because of that. Do you know that before they even got off the runway as a nation, God predicted that they would be scattered? Look at Deuteronomy chapter 4. You say, 'Mark, what does this have to do with you, do you know what I'm going through, and we're talking about Israel, we're talking about the Jews.' Well, obviously you're not Jewish, but if you hang with me, you're going to see that this has a whole lot to do with you right now today. It has a whole lot to do with you. Hang in there. **Deuteronomy chapter 4**, we'll look at **verse 27**. They're not even in the Promised Land yet. They haven't even walked on the real estate yet, and God's telling them **'You're gonna get scattered.'** **Verse 27, "And the Lord will scatter you among the peoples, and you shall be left few in number among the nations where the Lord shall drive you."** Look at chapter 28, **Deuteronomy 28, verse 64**. Man, is this ever prophetic. Same guy writing under the inspiration of God, Moses is still writing. They still haven't even gotten into the Promised Land yet. **"Moreover the Lord will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth, and there you shall serve other gods, wood and stone, which you and your fathers have not known. And among those nations you shall find no rest. And there shall be no resting place for the soul of your foot. But there the Lord will give you a trembling heart, failing eyes, and despair of soul."** And if you know anything about the history of the Jewish people, you will know that after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD right up until just the late 1940s this was a picture of those people. They had no rest, they'd removed out to Alexandria, Egypt, they've moved to Rome, they've moved to Spain. And then persecution would hit them and they'd have no rest, they could never put down any kind of roots. They'd go to Spain, the Muslims take over Spain, persecute them there. They would finally let up and then the Crusaders pushed the Muslims out and the Crusaders (Catholic motivated and instigated) set up the Inquisitions and began to spread vicious lies about the Jews, blaming the Black Plague on the Jews because they didn't get the plague. The only reason they didn't get the plague is because they practiced the Mosaic health laws, they washed their hands, and so they didn't get it. But since they didn't have it, they thought they started it. And the Roman Catholic authorities said

“OK, if you don't convert, you burn” and they burned Jews at the stake by the millions. [And is it any wonder why Jews who are now coming to a knowledge that Jesus is the Messiah want nothing to do with Gentile Christianity, even once or twice removed, like the various Protestant or evangelical persuasions, who still hold predominantly Catholic eschatological doctrines such as amillennialism and replacement theology.] They'd flee to Germany, and then in Germany Luther and his gang advocated that they ought to be wiped out, hunted down [this also happened in pre-Luther days, as you'll soon read]. You know, it's amazing how a reformer can be used so awesomely by God and have such big blind spots too. And then finally we know what happened in Germany in World War II, where six million Jews were murdered, exterminated. Is this prophetic or something? It goes on to say in **verse 66**, **“Your life shall hang in doubt before you. And you shall be in dread night and day, and shall have no assurance of your life. In the morning you shall say 'I would that it were evening', and in evening you shall say, 'wow, I wish it were the morning', because of the dread of your heart which you dread, and for the sight of your eyes which you shall see.”** All of the horrors that this race of people have seen. **“And the Lord will bring you back to Egypt in ships by the way about which I spoke to you, you will never see it again, and there you shall offer yourself for sale to your enemies as male and female slaves, but there will be no buyer.”** That will happen during the tribulation. [And some of this happened during WWII as well.] [transcript of a connective expository sermon on Romans 3:1-20(page1), given by Pastor J. Mark Martin, Calvary Community Church, PO Box 39607, Phoenix, Arizona 85069]

### *A Short History Of The Jews*

Just to back up what Pastor J. Mark Martin is saying here, I found parts of the European history of the Jews in "A History of The Jews, From Earliest Times Through The Six Day War" by Cecil Roth (which I have on my bookshelf). It is from pages 209-217 and is a part of a section titled "Diaspora 425-1492". Diaspora means "dispersion", "a scattering". Historian Cecil Roth says: "Closest akin to the Jews of England in culture, in condition, and in history, were those of France. Here, ever since the outbreaks which had accomplished the second Crusade, they had lived a chequered existence. From the close of the twelfth century, the ruling house of Capet had developed

an anti-Jewish attitude which, for sheer unreasonableness and brutality of execution, was perhaps unparalleled in Europe as a dynastic policy. At the outset, owing to the encroachments of feudalism, the royal authority was restricted to a small area in the immediate neighborhood of Paris. Outside this district its influence was little more than nominal. Hence the hostility of the Crown did not affect the Jews much more than that of any major baron would have done. The history of the Jews in France is therefore to be understood only in relation to the extension of royal authority over the whole country, which, in the end, spelled for them utter disaster.

With Louis IX (1226-1270), better remembered as "Saint" Louis, religious zeal reinforced ancestral prejudices in an unusual measure. The prescriptions of the Lateran Councils were enforced with the utmost severity. A personal interest was taken in securing converts. It was under the royal auspices that the famous Disputation was held at Paris between Nicholas Donin and Rabbi Jehiel, and the Talmud was condemned to the flames. Finally, before setting out on his first Crusade in 1249, the King decreed the expulsion of the Jews from his realm, though the order, it appears, was not carried out.

The sufferings of French Jewry reached their climax under Philip the Fair (1285-1314), St. Louis' grandson. From the moment of his accession, he showed that he considered the Jews merely as a source of gold. Spoliation succeeded spoliation, wholesale imprisonment being resorted to periodically in order to prevent evasion. The climax came in 1306, when, the treasury being once more empty, the policy of Edward I of England was imitated, with significant differences. On July 22<sup>nd</sup>, all the Jews of the country were simultaneously arrested, in obedience to instructions secretly issued some time before. In prison they were informed that, for some unspecified wrongdoing, they had been condemned to exile, and must leave the realm within one month, the whole of their property being confiscated to the crown. By this time, owing to the vigorous and unfortunate policy of the French in recent years, its authority extended over the majority of France proper, including Languedoc and Champagne, where the schools of rabbinic learning had especially flourished. The banishment spelled accordingly the end of the ancient and glorious traditions of French Jewry.]