



# Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



## The Letter of St. Paul to the Romans

### Chapter 3

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# Introduction

- In this chapter St. Paul answers the questions about the advantage of the Jews and the profits of Circumcision
- This does not mean that they do not need salvation as proven by the Scriptures
- Then he discusses God's plan for salvation
- This plan fulfilled His justice and mercy
- Also this plan met the requirements of the law



# The Jewish Advantage (3:1-2)

- St. Paul made it clear that the law cannot save
- But it is God who gave the Law to the Jewish nation
- So what is the profit of the law and is there any advantage for the Jews because they were the only nation who received the law?
- St. Paul affirms that the advantages and the profits are much in every way (except the ability to save)



# The Jewish Advantage (3:1-8)

- It is a big advantage that the Jews were the only people who were entrusted with the oracles of God
- The oracles of God have the plan for salvation, the promises, the warnings...etc
- Although some of them became unfaithful and did not believe, but God fulfilled His plan as it is written in the law
- If a person dares to judge God, God will overcome (Ps 51: 4)



# The Jewish Advantage (3:1-8)

- Some people may say, but it is my unrighteousness that demonstrated God's righteousness (in contrast), so is it fair that God inflicts wrath on me?
- Far from truth is such a thought; for that would strike down all future judgment
- Though sin might increase God's righteousness and give Him glory, people will still be judged for their sins



# The Jewish Advantage (3:1-8)

- Since St. Paul was preaching that the works of the law cannot save us, some people twisted his preaching and made it sound like “let us do evil that good may come” because we are saved anyway by the grace of God
- St. Paul affirms that those slanderers will be condemned justly
- Salvation by Grace does not mean ignoring good works because we will not be saved without good works



# The Jews' Need Of Salvation (3:9-20)



- Although the Jews were at an advantage, yet they are not better because they and the gentiles are under sin
- Even the Scriptures say the same thing (Ecc 7: 20, Ps 14: 1-3, 53: 1-3)
- Lack of understanding → not seeking God → unrighteousness
- So, the first step in repentance is the renewal of mind (Romans 12: 2)

# The Jews' Need Of Salvation (3:9-20)



- Turning away from God → corruption and doing evil
- If the grave is opened, corruption is manifest
- So corruption comes from the throats of men when they speak
- The poison of asps: the venom of falsehood, as deadly as the deadly serpent



# The Jews' Need Of Salvation (3:9-20)



- That mouth which should be 'most sweet' (So 5:16), being 'set on fire of hell' (Jas 3:6), is filled with burning wrath against those whom it should only bless
- Those feet, which should 'run the way of God's commandments' (Ps 119:32), are employed to the deeds of darkest crime
- They scatter mischief and misery in their path, instead of that peace which, as strangers to it themselves, they cannot diffuse

# The Jews' Need Of Salvation (3:9-20)



- When the fear of God is not there, a person can do anything
- So the Law itself stops the mouth of the prideful Jews who argue that the Law is sufficient
- The Law was given to show that all the world is guilty before God and all need salvation
- The Law helped the Jews to know their sinfulness without being able to justify them since nobody was able to fulfill the whole Law

# God's Righteousness (3:21-26)



- Apart from the Law:
  - ❖ We receive the righteousness of God through faith and baptism
  - ❖ The law is for the Jews but the righteousness of God is for all
- Even the law and the prophets witnessed for the righteousness of God
- The gate into this righteousness, which is for all, is to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ

# God's Righteousness (3:21-26)



- It is for all because all have sinned and lost the glory of God
- This justification is a free gift by the grace of God
- It is free because the price was paid by the Lord Jesus Christ who died and redeemed us
- It is free because nobody can afford this price
- It is free because God has loved us that much

# God's Righteousness (3:21-26)



- Before Christ, God was not remitting sins but only forbearing to pass them by, till an adequate atonement for them is made
- By not punishing the sins immediately, God's righteousness was not manifested
- When God "set forth" Christ as a "propitiation by His blood" for the believers, His righteousness became manifest in bypassing the sins of believers before, and in now remitting them

# God's Righteousness (3:21-26)



- He covered us by His Blood. Thus His righteousness was manifested in punishing sins through death
- Also His Holiness was manifested by fulfilling His promises
- His Mercy was manifested by redeeming us and giving us Eternal Life
- His love for all and justice was manifested by redeeming the believers in every time and place



# Implications of God's Righteousness (3:27-31)



1. Boasting on man's part is excluded
2. Justification is based on faith, not deeds of law
  - ❖ We boast in the Cross of Christ
  - ❖ Faith has a law, it is not theoretical but practical
3. God is the God of the Jews and Gentiles, for He justifies both by faith not by the law which was given to the Jews only

# Implications of God's Righteousness (3:27-31)



4. This does not void the need for the law, but rather meets the requirements of the law because:
  - ❖ The law revealed our sins and our need to be justified
  - ❖ The law guided us to believe in Christ
  - ❖ By faith the goal of the law which is our justification, is fulfilled
  - ❖ By faith the transgressions against the law were forgiven



# Conclusion

- What advantage was there in being a Jew?
- What comes through the law?
- What came apart from the law?
- Who has sinned?
- What is the gift of God's Grace?
- How is God appeased for our sins?
- How does man receive justification from God?
- How does "justification by faith" relate to the principle of law?