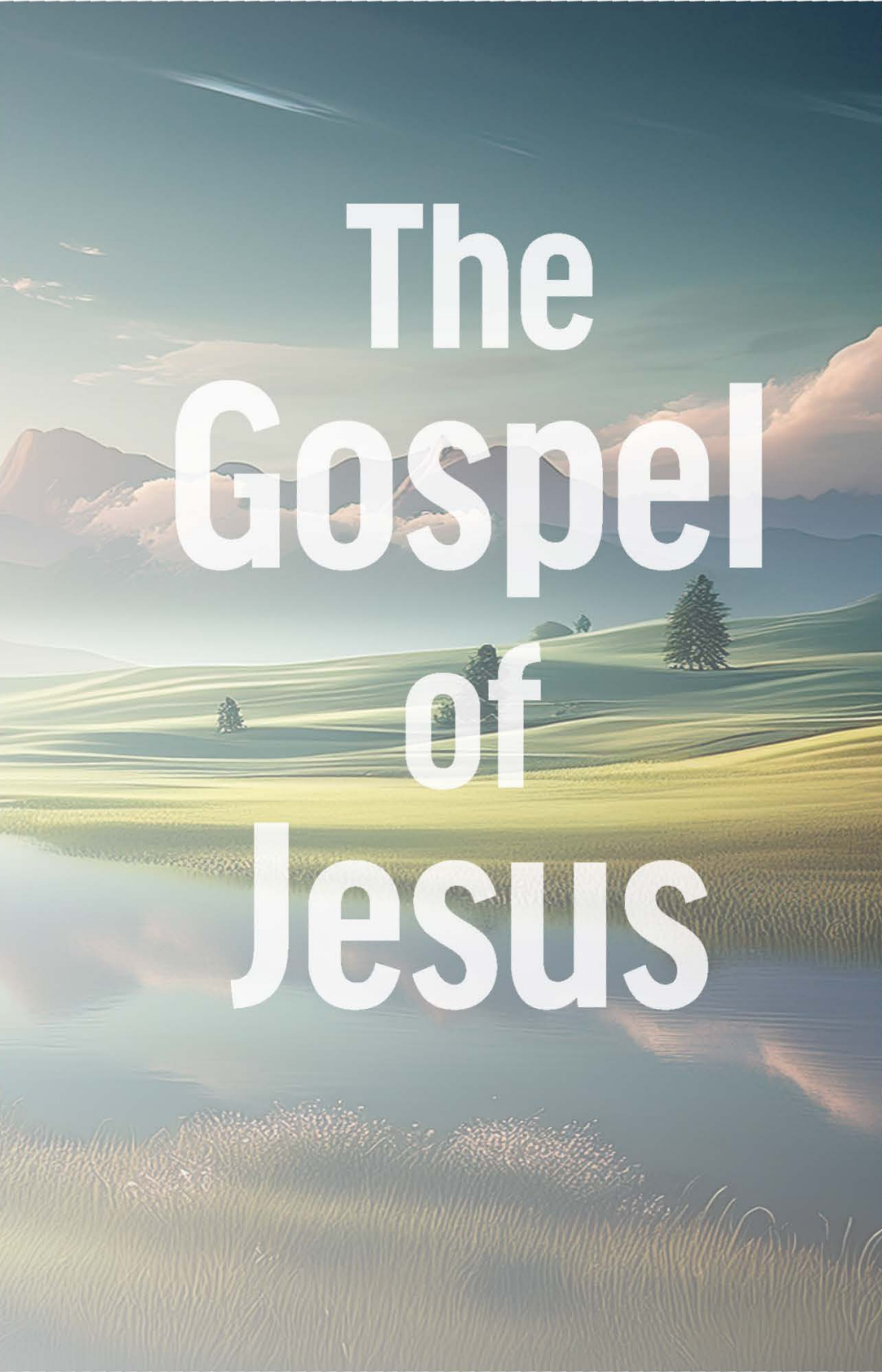




The Gospel of Jesus

The Gospel of Jesus

There is one question that is, perhaps, the most dangerous in the world—one that has been asked by many, and which often leads people to wrestle with life's most profound issues. People like Saint Augustine, Martin Luther, and John Wesley have all asked the question. For Augustine, it was in his immorality; for Luther, it was in understanding the true nature of God; and for Wesley, it was while trying to reconcile his religious upbringing with the depth of his own spiritual needs.

Like people today, these men wrestled with BIG questions: *“Where can hope be found?” “How can I find meaning?” “Where can I turn to be freed from guilt, fear, and shame?” “How do I experience forgiveness?”* All of these figures, in their search for answers, found themselves drawn to the book of Romans, where the Apostle Paul lays out the meaning and message of the Gospel. These struggles led many to their most consequential moment: the moment of salvation.

AUGUSTINE

In the midst of his rebellion, intellectual pursuits, and sexual trysts, Augustine picked up the Bible and continued reading where he had left off in the book of Romans at Romans 13:13–14: *“Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.”*

He later wrote in his *Confessions*: *“I neither wished nor needed to read further. At once, with the last words of this sentence, it was as if a light of relief from all anxiety flooded into my heart. All the shadows of doubt were dispelled.”*

MARTIN LUTHER

Martin Luther, a university professor, had his own crisis in 1515. Brought up to

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fear God, death, hell, and judgment, Luther thought the best way to avoid these was to become a monk. So, at age 21, he entered the service of the Catholic Church. Despite his religious fervor—his fasting, prayer, and service—Luther felt an anguish in his soul. But while a professor at Wittenberg University, as he expounded on the Psalms and then Romans (1515–1516), he grew frustrated with what he thought was God’s “holy terror.” That is, until he encountered Romans 1:17: “...*For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.’*”

Luther later wrote: “*I had greatly longed to understand Paul’s letter to the Romans, and nothing stood in the way but that one expression ‘the righteousness of God,’ because I took it to mean that righteousness whereby God is righteous and acts righteously in punishing the unrighteous... Night and day I pondered until... I grasped the truth that the righteousness of God is that righteousness whereby, through grace and sheer mercy, He justifies us by faith. Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise. The whole of Scripture took on a new meaning, and whereas before ‘the righteousness of God’ had filled me with hate, now it became to me inexpressibly sweet in greater love. This passage of Paul became to me a gateway into heaven.*”

JOHN WESLEY

Some 200 years later, John Wesley, while reading Luther’s insights into justification by grace through faith, experienced his own spiritual illumination. Having struggled as a preacher and missionary (even in the plantations of Georgia), Wesley found himself wrestling with the meaning of salvation. But one night, while someone was reading Luther’s commentary on Romans, he later wrote: “*I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust Christ, Christ alone, for my salvation, and an assurance was given me that He had taken my sins away, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.*”

MY OWN MINISTRY EXPERIENCE

In my own ministry (Rob), I’ve witnessed similar transformative moments. While preaching through the book of Romans at my church in Atlanta, the man chairing the church planting team’s leadership council shared that he had never truly trusted in Jesus. Despite growing up in church and being religious all his life, he hadn’t experienced saving faith. However, in that moment, in the pastor’s study, after I shared the Roman Road of Salvation, he repented of his sin of unbelief and placed his trust in Jesus alone for salvation. I have always been amazed at the power and beauty of the

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gospel. In this chapter, we are going to explore the question, “*What is the Gospel?*” Our goal will be to look at the facets of the gospel and grow in our understanding and appreciation of it.

I want to acknowledge a deep expression of appreciation to Dr. John Stott, Dr. John MacArthur, and Dr. William Hendrickson for walking beside me for more than 30 years as I have studied and meditated upon the truths they have taught me. There is not a single word in this chapter that is not drawn from the well of the truths they have taught me through their commentaries.^{3, 4, 5}

THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST

Every Christian, at one time or another, has wrestled with the question: *What is the Gospel of Jesus Christ?* This is an essential question we must be clear about when sharing the good news of salvation with others. The clearest and most exhaustive biblical explanation of the Gospel is found in Romans 1–3. In these chapters, Paul provides a three-chapter oration against sin, concluding the first section with the radiant light of the hope of the Gospel.

Context

Let’s begin our study of Romans by remembering the context of the book within the larger New Testament story. Paul is returning to Jerusalem to present the offering from the Asian churches to the Jerusalem church. Though Paul has a heart to visit the Roman church, he is once again delayed and thus writes them to describe his Gospel and his plans for advancing it in partnership with them. Paul hoped that, by explaining his ministry and message, the Roman believers would welcome him. He also envisioned the church in Rome becoming a home base for Gospel expansion into Western Europe, much like Antioch had served as a base of support for ministry in Western Asia and Eastern Europe.

Paul doesn’t address every nuance of the Gospel in Romans, but he speaks more exhaustively and robustly about his message here than anywhere else. Paul was always a practitioner of the Gospel, not merely a philosopher. For Paul, theology was not to remain in the laboratory—it belonged in the marketplace. Paul was eager to share the Gospel, for it was to be the rallying point for the entire church.

Paul’s Explanation of the Gospel

Paul introduces the book of Romans by describing humanity’s sinful condition and how God’s righteousness has fully and finally appeared in the person of Jesus Christ.

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This gift of salvation is not something to be achieved but received, as God justifies sinners by grace alone.

The revelation of God's righteousness in the Gospel is necessary because of the revelation of God's wrath against unrighteousness (Romans 1:18). The wrath of God is His pure and perfect opposition to evil, directed at all who deliberately suppress the truth and choose to go their own way.

Everyone has some knowledge of God and of goodness, either through the created world (Romans 1:19–20), conscience (Romans 2:14–15), the moral law written on human hearts (Romans 2:12–16), or the law of Moses given to the Jews (Romans 2:17–24). Paul divides humanity into three groups: the immoral sinner (Romans 1:18–32), the moral person (Romans 2:1–16), and the religious person (Romans 2:17–3:8). He then concludes that the entire human race is guilty of sin (Romans 3:9–20).

The argument is consistent: no one lives up to the knowledge they have of God, and therefore all are guilty of sin and in need of salvation. Even the special privileges of the Jews do not exempt them from divine judgment. All people, Jews and Gentiles alike, are under sin (Romans 3:9). There is no favoritism with God (Romans 2:11). As Martin Luther describes it, the picture is one of “unrelievable darkness.”

The Gospel's Bright Light

But then, in Romans 3:21, we encounter the turning point: “But now...” Into the darkness of human sin and guilt, the light of the Gospel shines. Paul again speaks of the righteousness of God (Romans 1:17)—the righteousness by which God justifies the unjust.

This is made possible only through the cross, in which God demonstrates both His justice (Romans 3:25) and His love (Romans 5:8). This righteousness is available to “all who believe” (Romans 3:22), whether Jews or Gentiles.

Paul uses key words such as propitiation, redemption, and justification to explain the cross. And, in responding to Jewish objections (Romans 3:27–31), he emphasizes justification is by faith alone, and thus there can be no boasting before God, no distinction between Jews and Gentiles, and no disregard for the law.

PAUL'S EXPLANATION OF OUR PROBLEM AND SOLUTION: ROMANS 1:18–3:31

Paul outlines the origin, scope, and goal of the Gospel in Romans 1:1–17. The Gospel comes from God, as revealed in Scripture, and all of Scripture points to the coming Messiah, the Son of David (Romans 1:2–3). This Gospel is for all of creation and includes the Gentiles (Romans 1:5–6), with the goal of glorifying God by declaring His love,

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grace, and peace (Romans 1:7). Paul marveled at this work of God, feeling privileged to be part of it, and prayed for its global proclamation (Romans 1:8–12).

Paul was eager to visit the Romans to share this Gospel with them (Romans 1:14–15), and he boldly declared neither he nor the church should be ashamed of the Gospel. Although it may seem foolish to some and a stumbling block to others, it is the righteousness of God revealed (Romans 1:17).

In his opening section, Paul presents the Gospel of Jesus Christ as the revelation of God's righteousness.

This righteousness is revealed in three primary ways:

1. Righteousness as an attribute of God.
2. Righteousness as the saving activity of God on behalf of people.
3. Righteousness as the divine achievement that Jesus accomplished on the cross.

Righteousness, in this sense, refers to God's initiative to make sinners right with Him—not by their own deeds, but by bestowing His righteousness upon them. This is the great exchange: the righteous for the unrighteous. Jesus, the righteous one, dies for the unrighteous, offering them a way to be declared righteous before God.

Paul's Indictment of the Unrighteous

Paul next directs his attention to three groups of people he wants to understand are counted among the unrighteous. The first group is the obvious one: the immoral sinners. In Romans 1:18–32, Paul addresses the shamelessly immoral and confronts them in their rebellion and sin.

THE DEPRAVED GENTILE SOCIETY ROMANS 1:18–32

Paul begins by aiming his Gospel “guns” at the depraved Gentile society. He intentionally structures his indictment of these sinful people by first highlighting their idolatry and immorality, then providing concrete examples of sinful behavior. Rather than merely accusing, Paul marshals evidence to prove their guilt before God. But interestingly, Paul provides the solution before he fully articulates the problem—an act

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of mercy that declares there is hope in the Gospel even before the indictment is read.

Paul understands that before people can see the Gospel as good news, they must first see their need for salvation. This principle remains true today. We must help people recognize their need for the Gospel before it can be fully embraced as the life-changing good news it is.

The Wrath of God

Paul begins by introducing the wrath of God, writing: “...*the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness*” (Romans 1:18).

Wrath becomes the theme of this section. The very mention of God’s wrath makes many uncomfortable today. People often ask, “*How can God be angry?*” However, God’s anger is not like ours. His anger is righteous and necessary. Without it, God would not be truly great or good. The wrath of God occurs when the sinfulness of man collides with the holiness of God. It is God’s holy hostility toward evil, as He refuses to condone it in any form.

Human anger often arises when our pride is wounded, but God’s anger is always justified—it is an expression of His unchangeable character. He is not neutral about evil; rather, He is intensely opposed to it. God acts out of His divine nature, not out of personal offense, but because evil is an affront to His perfect holiness. His wrath is directed at godlessness, which seeks to exclude God from our lives entirely.

Knowledge of God Through Creation

Paul further explains that knowledge of God has been made known to all through the natural world: “*For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse*” (Romans 1:20).

How has this knowledge been revealed? Through creation, Paul says. The God who is invisible and unknowable has disclosed Himself in and through the world He made. Just as an artist reveals something of themselves through their art, God has revealed Himself through the beauty, order, and complexity of the universe.

The offense, however, is that even though this knowledge of God is available, people have made a conscious decision to live as if there is no God, choosing instead to live for themselves. This is where the breakdown happens: “*Although they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks to Him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened*” (Romans 1:21).

Spiritual Blindness and Foolishness

Paul asserts that although people had some knowledge of God within themselves, whether through creation or through the order of the world, they chose to ignore it. Instead of exploring what God has revealed, they suppressed the truth, thinking they were wise—but in reality, they became fools (Romans 1:22). Their minds became darkened, leading them further away from the truth.

The problem, as Paul sees it, is we are spiritual beings. But when we reject the light of God's revelation, we turn to things that should never be gods. Paul identifies two key temptations: **idolatry** and **immorality**.

Idolatry and Immorality

Idolatry occurs when we elevate something—whether a person, a possession, or an idea—to the status of God or a god. This is a direct violation of God's command to have no other gods before Him. But the result of idolatry is not only spiritual death; it leads to immorality. Paul writes: *"They exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen"* (Romans 1:25).

When people exchange the truth for lies, they inevitably become more twisted in their thinking. In their immorality, they rebel against God's divine design. Paul emphasizes this in Romans 1:26–27, where he points out the unnatural sexual behavior that results from rejecting God's order. These behaviors are a sign of the deeper spiritual blindness that has taken over their minds.

Paul explains: *"Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way, the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another"* (Romans 1:26–27).

The Result of Rejecting God

The natural result of this exchange—this rejection of God's truth—is people's minds become more twisted and confused. They begin to adopt false beliefs that lead them further into moral degradation. This process, according to Paul, is a vicious cycle. People suppress the truth about God, and in doing so, they exchange the natural order for chaos, making gods out of created things and indulging in behaviors that go against God's design.

Paul's words in this passage are meant to reveal the depths of humanity's rebellion against God. By listing idolatry and immorality as two primary results of rejecting God's revelation, he shows that turning away from God leads not

only to spiritual darkness but also to the distortion of every part of life—mental, emotional, and physical. This grim picture highlights the dire need for the Gospel. But Paul’s aim is not to condemn without hope—rather, he is preparing the ground for the Gospel, the only solution to the darkness sin has brought into the world.

Paul’s Diagnosis of Human Sinfulness

Paul’s powerful argument in Romans culminates in a twenty-one-fold expression of sin. He meticulously categorizes human depravity into specific forms, painting a vivid picture of the moral decay that plagues both Gentiles and Jews.

Here is the breakdown of this catalog:

- 1. Four General Sins**

Filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, and evil.

- 2. Five Sins Describing Broken Relationships**

Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, and malice.

- 3. Two Sins of the Tongue**

Gossips and slanderers.

- 4. Four Sins of Pride**

Haters of God, insolent, arrogant, and boastful.

- 5. Two Sins Related to Invention**

Inventors of evil and disobedient to parents.

- 6. Four Negative Results of Sin**

Without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, and unmerciful.

Paul then concludes his indictment of humanity in Romans 1 with a sobering statement of human perversity: “*Although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same but also give hearty approval to those who practice them*” (Romans 1:32).

This three-fold progression describes humanity’s rebellion:

- 1. Knowledge of God**

People know God’s law and His demands.

2. Willful Disregard

Despite knowing the truth, they intentionally ignore it.

3. Active Participation and Approval

Not only do they participate in evil, but they also encourage and approve of others doing the same.

With this final revelation, Paul has completed his thorough assault against the unrighteous, revealing the depth of their rebellion and the inevitability of divine wrath and destruction.

When considering the *Next Step Evangelism* method, you will note from Paul's writing in Romans the extent in which he underscores the separation between God and man.

THE SELF-RIGHTEOUS PERSON: ROMANS 2:1-16

Paul now turns his attention to a different category of sinner: the moralistic, self-righteous individual. This person may not engage in overt sin but harbors a sense of moral superiority. In Romans 2:1-16, Paul addresses this person, often referred to as the self-conscious moralizer.

This section is written in the form of a diatribe, a rhetorical device where an imaginary objector is confronted. Though many believe Paul is addressing the Jews here, he does not specifically address them until Romans 2:17. The target audience seems to be those who are morally self-assured, potentially influenced by Greek philosophy—figures like Plato, Aristotle, and Stoic philosophers such as Seneca, who were prominent during this period.

The Theme: Judgment

Paul's theme in this section is judgment.

He outlines three key points about God's judgment:

1. The Judgment is Inescapable (v.1-4)

We are often critical of others while excusing our own faults. Paul points out the hypocrisy in this double standard, warning that God's judgment is inescapable.

2. The Judgment is Righteous (v.5-11)

Judgment will be based on deeds, and it is entirely fair and

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just. Paul emphasizes salvation comes to those who seek God's glory and honor through good works.

3. The Judgment is Impartial (v.12–16)

Whether Jew or Gentile, all will be judged by the same standard. It's not enough to hear the law; we must obey it.

Whether we have access to special revelation or only general revelation, all are guilty of sin and stand condemned before God.

Here we are granted a look at what happens if a person continues to live in sin. Their death will be the doorway to eternal judgment, eternal separation from God in a real place called hell. Again, when sharing Jesus using the “*Next Step*” tool it is vital to share the repercussions of rejecting God.

The Hypocrisy of Self-Righteous Judgment

Paul begins by confronting the tendency to judge others harshly while excusing oneself. We often set higher standards for others while relaxing the rules for ourselves. Paul's message is clear: God's kindness, patience, and tolerance toward us should encourage us to extend the same to others, knowing God will judge all people in His perfect time.

TO THE JEW WHO RECEIVED THE LAW IN CIRCUMCISION: ROMANS 2:17–29

In verses 17–29, Paul shifts focus to the Jew, who may believe their covenant status (marked by circumcision and adherence to the law) grants them special immunity from judgment. Paul counters this belief by exposing their hypocrisy: though they boast in the law, they fail to live by it.

He uses five rhetorical questions to make his point:

1. You who teach another, do you not teach yourself?
2. You who preach that one shall not steal, do you steal?
3. You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery?
4. You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?

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5. You who boast in the Law, do you dishonor God by breaking the Law?

Paul's message here is clear: if you teach or judge others, you must first examine your own life. His goal is to show that, Jew or Gentile, everyone is guilty before God.

Circumcision: A Symbol of the Heart

In Romans 2:25–29, Paul addresses circumcision—the physical sign of the covenant between God and the Jews. He asserts circumcision, in itself, does not guarantee righteousness.

He writes:

1. **Circumcision is only valid if you obey the law** (Romans 2:25).
2. **A Gentile who obeys the law is considered as having been circumcised in the heart** (Romans 2:26).

Circumcision was never meant as an insurance policy against judgment. It was a symbol of an inward reality: a heart that is obedient to God. In these verses, Paul challenges the Jews' presumption that external rituals ensure righteousness, while teaching that the true circumcision is a matter of the heart—spiritual, not merely physical.

Objections from the Jews: Romans 3:1–8

Paul anticipates several objections from the Jews to his argument. These objections are rooted in their belief that their special relationship with God somehow grants them immunity from judgment.

In Romans 3:1–8, Paul responds to four specific challenges:

1. **Objection 1: What advantage is there in being Jewish?**
Paul answers that while Jews have privileges, such as the law and the covenant, these privileges do not exempt them from judgment. Their special status comes with responsibility, not security.

2. Objection 2: Does our unfaithfulness nullify God's faithfulness?

Paul vehemently rejects this idea, emphasizing God remains faithful even when humans fail. He cites Psalm 51:4 to demonstrate God's righteousness is not compromised by human sin.

3. Objection 3: Does God's glory increase when we sin?

Some might argue if our sin highlights God's grace, then we should sin more to magnify His glory. Paul rejects this absurd reasoning, reaffirming that God is holy and just, and He will not tolerate sin.

4. Objection 4: Does sin glorify God?

Paul also responds to an accusation that his teaching encourages sin for the sake of glorifying God. He dismisses this with a strong rebuke, affirming evil cannot promote God's glory.

THE UNIVERSALITY OF SIN: ROMANS 3:9-20

Finally, Paul presents his most comprehensive argument: **all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God** (Romans 3:23). He sums up the evidence of human depravity by quoting from the Psalms and showing that no one—whether Jew or Gentile—can escape the judgment of God. Sin affects every part of our being: our minds, emotions, wills, and actions. No one can claim moral superiority before God. We are all separated from God. Sinners by nature and sinners by choice.

How Can We Be Made Right with God?

With this sobering diagnosis of the human condition, Paul introduces the solution: God's righteousness revealed through Jesus Christ (Romans 3:21-26). This is the heart of the Gospel, where Paul begins to develop the theme of justification by faith, which will be the central message of the letter. There is no hope in the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ, we are made right with God. Paul's letter, which begins with the bad news of human sin, now begins to turn toward the good news of God's grace.

Paul's argument in the opening chapters of Romans is not just a theological statement—it is a profound, courtroom-like case against humanity. He systematically condemns the whole human race, showing both the immoral, the self-righteous,

teous, and the religious are all guilty before God. This sets the stage for the glorious revelation of the Gospel in the latter parts of the letter.

You can imagine when sharing Jesus using the “*Next Step*” tool, Paul introducing the third object that represents Christ. Jesus did for us what we could not do for ourselves. He lived the perfect life. He died the substitutionary death to pay for our sins. He raised from the dead offering forgiveness, hope, and relationship with the one true and living God. Let’s continue to see how Paul reveals Jesus.

The Gospel of Salvation

But now, in stark contrast to the defeat and despair of humanity’s sin, something new has broken in—God is the source of our salvation. In Romans 3:21–26, Paul writes about justification by faith. **Justification** is a legal term used in the courts, and in Christian theology, it refers to God’s judicial verdict on one’s eternal status. It is God the Father who took the initiative to accomplish salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Righteousness (3:22) is not just an attribute of God; it is the activity of God’s saving initiative and the achievement of God’s grace, revealed apart from the law. While the law and the prophets pointed forward to God’s work of salvation, now, through Jesus, it has been fully accomplished.

Jesus’ death and resurrection are the means by which we are saved from sin. But how did God accomplish this salvation? It is through the person and work of Jesus Christ, most especially through His work on the cross. The guilty person is found guilty, and the innocent person is innocent, but we are all guilty and lack the means to make ourselves innocent. What are we to do? **The Gospel is good news** because God accomplishes our righteousness for us through Jesus. God justifies us through the redemption that comes through Jesus Christ (3:24).

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (3:23), but the gift of God is **redemption and propitiation**.

- **Redemption**

(3:24, Greek: *apolytrolos*) is a commercial term used to describe the freeing of slaves. It was also used in reference to Israel’s liberation from Egypt. We, too, are enslaved to sin and its bondage, but Christ redeems us and sets us free.

- **Propitiation**

(3:25, Greek: *hilasterion*) refers to the turning away of God’s wrath. While this concept might seem foreign to us, it is crucial to understand it is not a pagan appeasement but a biblical reality. God is not unprincipled and unpredictable. He

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is perfect, unchanging, and holy. Our sins must be addressed, and God dealt with them Himself, through the death of Jesus Christ.

In the Old Testament, the **mercy seat** (Hebrew: the *hilasterion*) was the place where the high priest sprinkled blood on the Day of Atonement to atone for the sins of Israel. Now, in the New Testament, Jesus Himself becomes the mercy seat. As both the high priest and the sacrifice, He sprinkles His blood on the altar once and for all, providing a perfect and final sacrifice for our sins. This was publicly displayed and recorded in Scripture.

Therefore, God demonstrates Himself to be both **Just** and the **Justifier**. He remains just by not compromising His holiness, and He justifies us by His unfathomable love. In His forbearance, God passed over the sins committed previously (3:25)—not because of injustice, but knowing He would justify those sins through the death of His Son. **Both justice and justification** are accomplished through the cross. One can only marvel at the wisdom, beauty, and love of God in this great act of salvation.

Salvation Through Faith

Paul concludes his explanation of the Gospel with a clear statement about how one receives salvation: **through faith**.

- **V22:** “For all who believe”
- **V25:** “Through faith”
- **V26:** “Who has faith in Jesus”

Paul is unequivocal: God’s salvation is received by faith alone. Martin Luther wrote, “*Faith is the eye that looks to God, the hand that receives His free gift, the mouth that drinks the living water. Faith...appends nothing else but the precious jewel, Christ Jesus.*”

Richard Hooker, a 16th-century Anglican pastor, clarified that even our faith is not a work that earns salvation. He wrote, “*God justifies the believer—not because of the worthiness of his belief, but because of Christ’s worthiness, who is believed in.*”

John Stott emphasized the uniqueness of Christianity, saying, “*Justification (its source: God and His grace; its ground: Christ and His cross; its means: faith alone, apart from works) is the heart of the Gospel and unique to Christianity. No other system, ideology, or religion proclaims a free forgiveness and a new life to those who have done nothing to deserve it but a lot to deserve judgment instead. On the contrary, all other systems teach some form of self-salvation through good works, religion, righteousness, or philanthropy. Christianity, by contrast, is not*

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in its essence a religion at all; it is a Gospel—the Gospel, good news that God's grace has turned away His wrath, that God's Son has died our death and borne our judgment, that God has mercy on the undeserving, and that there is nothing left for us to do, or even contribute. Faith's only function is to receive what grace offers.”

Paul knew when human guilt meets the holiness of God, people discover the prison they are in. It is the Gospel that frees us from this bondage to sin. We are born in slavery, and Jesus comes to set us free—free from the holy wrath of God upon all ungodliness, free from alienation into reconciliation, free from condemnation under God's law, free from the dark dungeon of our egos, free from the fear of death, free from the groaning of the decay of creation, and free from conflict with family and others.

Therefore, those who are lost in their sin can find peace with God by surrendering themselves to Him and receiving His righteousness by grace through faith. Christians should worship God for His magnificent work of redemption, revealed in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They should be empowered by the Gospel to live a life worthy of the calling they have in Christ. The Church should glory in the Gospel and make it known far and wide, sharing the good news locally and globally—that God can and does save us from our sin and condemnation.

As you share using the “*Next Step*” process, there must be an encouragement to repent and trust in Jesus. This is the act of encouraging someone to turn from their sin and put their trust in Jesus. While using the three objects to share Jesus, this is when the object representing the person walks across the object representing Jesus and is granted a relationship with God.

NEXT STEPS

1. How has this chapter deepened your understanding of the Gospel?
 2. When seeking to share the Gospel with someone, why do some disregard the call to repentance?
 3. How does knowledge of the Gospel elevate your worship?
 4. Why is the doctrine of justification considered the heart of the Gospel?
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CITATIONS

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- Note: “*The Gospel of Jesus*” is nearly a complete excerpt from Chapter 4 of “*Welcome to Witness*” by Dr. Levi Skipper and Dr. Rob Peters.

About the Author



DR. ROB PETERS

Rob was born in Virginia, grew up in Tennessee, attended seminary in Texas and again in North Carolina, and lived many years in South Florida. Today, Rob and his wife, Wendy, along with their three children, reside in Peachtree City, Georgia.

Rob was an honors graduate in accounting from Tennessee Tech and worked with the accounting firms Deloitte and Ernst & Young. Following the call of God, Rob attended Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, TX. He earned the coveted Brister Pastoral Ministry Leadership Award and Scholarship given by the faculty of the seminary and graduated with honors in Theology and Biblical Languages. Rob completed his Doctor of Ministry degree from Southeastern Seminary in 2001. He has served as the senior pastor at three growing churches of varying sizes over his 30+ years in ministry. His first church was a church plant that grew to 300 in active attendance. The second church grew from 250 to 3,000 members, and the third had 9,000 members.

Today, Rob is the founder and president of Corpus, Inc., a global church revitalization and leadership ministry operating on five continents, in seven languages, and across 17 different denominations. Corpus helps church leaders by teaching the biblical leadership skills of the Overseer. Rob helps churches experience renewal and revitalization through the six-step process called *ReFocus*. Rob's newest books include *The Overseer: The Missing Jewel in the Crown of Glory* and *Welcome to Witness: Next Step Evangelism*. Rob serves as a Transitional and Revitalization Pastor in various churches in the metro Atlanta area. Rob's newest endeavor is as a member of the teaching faculty of Metro Atlanta Seminary, where he teaches in the Doctor of Ministry studies.