

## Romans 3

Written by K B Napier  
Monday, 10 August 2009 11:27

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Paul makes his case very plainly. No human being ever been born is worthy to enter heaven. No-one will want to find God nor want to be sinless. This is because each of us is born as a sinner. The mere fact that we are 'conceived in sin' means we are bound for hell, before we are born.

This chapter also deals with the 'order' of salvation... we were chosen by God, individually, and this means we cannot accept or reject our salvation once it is given. We must be 'born again' or regenerated in spirit before we can listen to, and obey, the call to salvation. Then we repent and we are saved, instantly... no lengthy period of middle-ground. After that we 'work out' our own salvation – that is, we prove we are saved by our behaviour, beliefs and words. Then, after being judged before God's throne we will be able at last to enter heaven. This is the Gospel and it is amazing!

So many Christians live as if their salvation was meaningless. They cannot be distinguished from the unsaved and, to their shame, they do the same things. In some way or another we are all guilty of this, at some time in our lives, so none of us can think himself superior.

Can those who so easily spoil the name of God by their sins thereby damage God Himself, or His message of reconciliation? No, thankfully they cannot. Today, many who call themselves Christians act like those around them. They damage themselves and cannot know the freedom in Christ; they get drunk, take drugs and are sexually permissive. God help them, in their unbelief! And God help us for not saying anything.

### Verses 1 - 4

1.

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?

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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.

Paul told his readers that the Gentiles blasphemed God because of the way Jews themselves derogated Him. The Jews broke the Law constantly, and so their mark of being a Jew – circumcision – was to no avail. Now, he asks if there is any point in being a Jew at all, given the corrupt state of Judaism.

Why be a Jew? Why be circumcised? Is there any advantage to these things? The answer will probably annoy those Christians who have been led to believe the Jews are of no consequence nowadays. Yes, there are people called 'Zionists' – but we are not part of that movement. What I say in these studies is from scripture, not from the newsletters of Zionists, who we do not in any way associate with.

Paul says there is 'much' advantage 'in every way' to being a Jew. In the book of Acts, written previously, he spoke against Judaistic rites and practices, as ways to salvation. So, what does he mean in this book and chapter? Is he going back on what he said, as recorded by Luke?

The 'advantage' was that the Jews knew the existing scriptures (what we call the Old Testament) back to front. They memorized texts. They spoke about them and sat under rabbis, who quizzed them. They attended synagogue every week. They were given the very "oracles of God". This is the main reason why being a Jew was an advantage. Do not be confused by that. Paul is simply saying that people born as Jews had the distinct benefit of learning and being taught God's word in great depth. They knew the prophecies and doctrine. They knew the Law of Almighty God. When Christ came to earth, He built upon this spiritual basis, and the Jews understood. He came to the Jews first, because they were God's chosen people, and already had the law in their hearts. That is what Paul was referring to.

Then, he went on to explain that though "some did not believe" this did not, in any way, affect the faith of God. That is, just because some teach wrongly, it does not replace holiness, just as teaching evil and lies does not replace the truth. The truth remains the truth no matter what men

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do, whether they promote it or reject it.

Today, the Church of England and all other Protestant denominations, have marred the Gospel and God's word with varying degrees of lies, deception and wicked teaching. Yet, they cannot alter God's word itself, which remains fixed and true. Do their errors and refusals to be holy reflect on God's word? No, what men do cannot ever affect God's word.

Even in ordinary churches, many of which are independent, Christians believe whatever they wish, with poor regard for God's word. Are these less of a Christian than I am? No, of course not. They are certainly sinful and certainly in error, but they are my brethren nevertheless. Yes, they should and must obey the Lord and what He says, but I have no right to think I am superior because they do not believe as I do. I am in the same state as they are. And this is what Paul says!

Then, Paul gives us a profound statement, still well-known today: "Let God be true, but every man a liar"! Today, no matter what churchmen or the unchurched say, God is supreme, to be believed. Though science rejects and scorns Christian beliefs, and presents its own evil beliefs as truth – Darwinism, homosexuality, and so on, Christians have a duty to believe only God, not man. We are told plainly that God made everything in six literal days, and that must be accepted as truth. Science cannot disprove this fact, nor can we prove it by reason. But, God says it, and we must believe it.

This means we must reject Darwinism/evolution. We are told that homosexuality is an abomination, and that is what our belief must be. Even where science supposedly gives a seemingly impenetrable answer to the contrary (which it does not), we must only accept what God says in His word, regardless of the consequences. Let God be true and every man a liar!

Surely this is blindness, or stupidity? No, it is faith in what God says. We either believe Him implicitly, or we succumb to lies and the devil, proving our unbelief. I can assure you that science cannot sustain its teachings against God. It is all propaganda and deception, based on the unbelief of some scientists. "For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?" No! As Paul continues: we will be justified in our statements of belief, and will overcome those who judge us badly. Do not fall to their lies, and so tarnish God's name. Stand firm and let God do the fighting.

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Conversely, if you let fear of the words of mere men rule your thinking, and the scorn they can heap on you, well, count your blessings and turn away from the fear. Fear of God is edifying and is wisdom; fear of man is harmful and leads to a life of anxiety and unbelief. Remember - when we stand firm, both God and those whom He loves are justified and are able to withstand judgment by men. Thus, faith transcends human legal requirements and demands of men.

Both Jew and Gentile are alike in their sins. Even so, the Jews were chosen by God and *remain* chosen in a special sense, though the nation as a whole is spiritually defunct. Spiritually, they have no privileges, because they deny the salvation given by Christ, and deny that the Messiah has already come. Yet, they were chosen and will again be an instrument in His hands.

### Verses 5 - 8

1.

But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man)

2.

God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?

3.

For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?

4.

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.

Even when we are sinning and act unrighteously, we commend the righteousness of God. His holiness is made all the more clear by our disobedience, just as darkness is made all the more black by the presence of light. We are sinners trying to outdo and outclass our Creator, by blaming Him for things we ourselves are guilty of.

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We try to say God is unrighteous if He takes vengeance. But, is He? Paul says he speaks as a man, meaning that he speaks rhetorically, not from God. Can God ever be unrighteous? Of course not – God forbid! *Everything* God does is righteous. That some men disagree with that is irrelevant, for God is true no matter who says what.

Again, Paul uses rhetoric: if what men do highlights God's holiness, how can God then judge us? If His glory is shown to be greater by the very sins we commit, how can He condemn us?

Paul then refers to a lie spread at the time, that Christians, because they were saved and justified, claimed to be able to sin without condemnation. A similar lie is spread today, and it is still a lie, a deception. Sects have arisen that say they can sin abundantly so that every sin will promote the glory of God. This is not so. Sin is vile in God's eyes and must be punished. Only those who are unsaved can claim their sins are beneficial to God! It is fact that such men will perish and be judged to hell for bringing the Lord into disrepute by their sins, because they are unsaved to begin with.

### Verses 9 - 12

1.

What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;

2.

As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

3.

There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

4.

They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

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Are we better than these people, because we know the truth and attempt to live by it? No. We are not better. Whatever we have, whether physical benefits or spiritual, they are all gifts of God and are not from within our own hearts or behaviour. We sin just as the most rank sinner sins. The only difference is that we have been saved by Jesus Christ for His own ends, and may not boast about it. We would be equally condemned if we were not thus saved.

As Paul concludes, “we... are all under sin” and so “There is none righteous, no, not one.” We, too, were just like that until God accepted us through the sacrifice of His own Son. We did not earn our salvation, nor did we seek it; it is all a gift of God. “There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.” This is why I teach that Arminianism is a Satanic lie.

No-one can come to Christ by intellectual search or by emotion, or by any spiritual means, for we are all dead in sins until the Holy Spirit regenerates our spirits. Until that moment, we cannot understand God or His ways, nor can we come to Him... indeed, none of us wishes to seek after Him anyway.

All – including us before our salvation – are “gone out of the way” and are “unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.” To be ‘unprofitable’ is to be useless and unqualified to be of service to God. And what is useless is worthless and ready for the trash heap. We were all useless until the Spirit made us alive in Christ. So, in essence, we may not be proud of our salvation and new status, for whatever we have by way of salvation is a free gift, not based on anything in us, or on any merit we think we may have. We were all just as useless in God’s mind. Only Christ made the difference and only He deserves all praise and commendation.

In my ministry, then, I will commend the righteous, and condemn what is unrighteous. But, I may not condemn the people who act sinfully. I can only condemn what they do. I may even judge them as being sinners, because that is what their actions demand. But, I cannot claim to be better or more qualified for heaven than they, because whatever benefits I have are direct from God.

### Verses 13 - 18

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1.

Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips:

2.

Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:

3.

Their feet are swift to shed blood:

4.

Destruction and misery are in their ways:

5.

And the way of peace have they not known:

6.

There is no fear of God before their eyes.

Following this line of reasoning, given in the text, we can say with Paul that such wicked men have throats that are like “an open sepulcher”, because what they say is sinful and deceitful, smelling as foul as the dead; and the “poison of asps is under their lips”... their words are fatal to all who listen unless they are quickly removed from their minds. These people cannot be trusted and are bound for hell, if they do not repent. Even so, we are like them in every way, except that we are saved by Christ and attempt to live by a righteous code, given by God.

The unsaved curse, and what they think and say is bitter. That is, they curse and wish ill for people, and they are filled with cruel bitterness, foul to those around them. Think this is not what ordinary folks are like? Then look at them through God’s eyes!

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What is not clean is rotten; what is not light is darkness; what is not saved, reeks of hellfire. We are seeing this wickedness coming out in a variety of ways today, especially in anti-Christian laws and preference for laws espousing and promoting evil and moral filth.

We cannot deny that violence is escalating in all societies, both civil and 'official'. In every town and village we are seeing young men and women easily killing and maiming others. Abortion is just a simple killing of a 'foetus', and such killing is abundant, often without remorse. Viciousness is now a way of life for many, without excuse or apology from those who commit such evils.

This is the result of Christian laxity and the way all of society has allowed sin to rule life in general, from music designed to excite passions, to advertising nudity, to acceptance of sexual deviations and their glorification. We have allowed politicians to take over the rule of countries, instead of being servants of the people. We promote what is godless and the result is a fast growth in all kinds of sin. Foul language is heard everywhere. Scorn of Christians and God is manifest and obvious.

"Destruction and misery (are) in their ways." Such people do not care about their lives, or about others. Compassion is something emerging from self-interest, not from genuine care. People in general speed headlong towards the destruction of themselves and their own way of life, as current voting proves, where socialistic Marxism has become a favoured evil. Misery always ensues and peace is not even on their agenda. This is because they do not fear God and so have no wisdom.

Some might object, saying that the unsaved can be civil and good and need not fear God. This is a lie. The fear of God is the mark of wisdom, and wisdom is the beginning of all human acts. If it is not, the acts are evil and godless. There is no alternative to godliness, except wickedness. This is why we may not tolerate evil people, at least not in our presence. It is why God Himself tells us not to have any part in the works of darkness, or in the people who practice them. God help us all in these wicked days.

### **Verses 19 & 20**

1.

Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that

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every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

2.

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.

Paul continues to teach the truth about law and grace. He says that the law applies to all who are under the law – and everyone in every age is under the same law, making every person ever born guilty, because no man can keep the law: “there shall no flesh be justified in his sight”. Not even the Jews, with their special status before God.

The law is there to prove and to show our guilt; it is the ‘schoolmaster’. No man can enter heaven by the law alone, for the purpose of the law is to show us our inability to keep the law and to be accepted by God. Thus, the law gives us knowledge to drive us towards God by faith. Having knowledge that we are sinners is of no use, if there is no way to relieve our sinful status! But who would seek God without the harsh reality of the law? No-one!

### **Verses 21 - 26**

1.

But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

2.

Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

3.

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

4.

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Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

5.

Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

6.

To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

Under the terms of the first promise or testament, God gave salvation to those who were elect and who obeyed His commands based on the law. But, not just those who obeyed automatically – only those who also had faith.

“Now,” says Paul, “the righteousness of God without the law is manifested.” He is referring to the new testament or promise, based entirely on God’s grace – His free favour. The new testament was prophesied by the prophets and the law, so it was not a sudden or fresh idea, but the outcome of God’s word, uttered long ago.

The new promise meant men were accounted to be righteous, or accepted by God, “without the law”. That is, outside the law. Now, something else enabled men to be accepted by God, apart from the law. In verse 22 we see that it is the “faith of Jesus Christ”. In this text ‘of’ is the same as ‘in’: “faith in Jesus Christ”.

So as not to open this text out to Arminian abuse, it does NOT mean we are saved by our own trust in God. We cannot and will not trust in Him on our own merit, or by our own thinking. It is impossible, because as unsaved people we are ‘dead in sins’ and are unable, and unwilling, to seek Him (as the texts above tell us).

We are “justified freely by his grace”, that is, without any reference to any merit we think we

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have; it is a free gift. This gift is reliant on the sacrifice of Jesus the Christ that redeemed or bought people for God (verse 24). All have sinned and so no man may approach God in any way. Only those who believe (verse 22) can have saving faith.

Belief is a gift of God, and is given only to those who are regenerated, or made spiritually alive. And who is regenerated? Only those who were chosen before the world was made – a fixed number elected by God in eternity, and so cannot be added to, nor depleted.

**To repeat what has already been taught in other studies, the order of salvation is thus:**

- People predestinated by the election of God, in eternity.
- Those people are shown their salvation in their lifetime.
- They can neither accept nor reject salvation, because the choice has already been made in eternity, by God and He never changes His mind.
- Therefore, no man can choose salvation by his own volition – he can only respond. It occurs in this manner:
  - Before he is saved, his spirit is regenerated or made alive. Only then can he respond to godly influence and preaching.
  - The time lapsing between regeneration and actual salvation in his lifetime, is different in every case, but once regenerated the man will be saved.
  - A point comes when the man is saved on this earth, following his repentance. It is a point without any break or time lapse, because, at no time can a man's soul be 'in between' saved or unsaved. It has to be either. Therefore, the actual 'point' of salvation on earth is known only in eternity, and must be instant.
  - Once saved, the man begins to 'work out' his own salvation, meaning that he will prove his salvation by works and by obedient, spiritual living, all tending towards what is good and holy. Any sins will be repented of, to restore holiness.
  - On death, he will be 'finally' saved. That is, the final part of his salvation will become evident by his entry into heaven, following a time spent in paradise, then judgment. At no time can a saved man lose his salvation.

None of this upholds an Arminian frame of kind! Rather, it proves beyond doubt that God alone can save, and that mankind can do nothing at all to bring it about himself. It is God the Father Who "set forth" Jesus the Christ to be the "propitiation through faith in his blood". Salvation begins and ends with God, not man.

'Propitiation' means to appease or expiate (pay the penalty). Christ/the Messiah did this through

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His voluntary sacrifice on the cross. The historical meaning of this is bound up with the Ark of God in the Holiest of Holies (known in the Hebrew as the 'House of the Kapporeth').

'Expiation' (or, 'the Propitiatory'; kapporeth – 'the cover') referred to the cover of the ark of the covenant, or 'Mercy Seat' ('lid of expiation'). It was sprinkled with the blood of the 'expiatory victim' (a spotless lamb) on the annual Day of Atonement, where the blood of the victim was used to indicate that God accepted the sacrifice in order to give them new life. Their sins only merited condemnation, but the spilt blood 'covered' or removed their sins. And so God was appeased. It was an arrangement given solely by God and not devised by man.

The Mercy Seat, with the Ark, was known also as the 'footstool' of God. The Greek in the text is hilastērion; coupled with the Greek translation of kapporeth, epithema. After a while, hilastērion alone was used to refer to expiation. With this historical and ancient meaning as a background, Christ became the sacrificial lamb whose blood satisfied God at His Mercy Seat. As you can see, the words in verse 25, "(to be) a propitiation" is filled with ancient promise and meaning, bridging old and new testaments.

The sacrifice alone is without meaning to human beings, unless those human beings have faith or trust in the God Who gave the sacrifice, and in the Christ Who was the sacrifice. And to have that faith one has to be predestinated and elected to salvation, and made alive by regeneration through the office of the Holy Spirit, by the gift of God.

The point of the whole thing is that God wished to show that salvation is only possible through His own choice and holiness, by His being appeased by the sacrifice of His Son. It was all due to the Father's "forebearance" or toleration. It has the meaning of 'holding back' His anger at our sins and so to delay eternal punishment, which must be exercised if a person is not repentant and saved. This refers to sins past. At the point of salvation in this life, a man's past sins are dealt with along with the *principle* of Sin in his life. All future sins are covered by repentance, but these sins do not affect the man's entry into heaven, which is assured.

Longsuffering shows us God's restraint even though provoked by our sin. Remember that 'sin' includes not just the actions that are called 'sins' but also the very core or heart of sin, the Sin we are all born with, the heritage we all have of 'original Sin'. Salvation eradicates guilt for that 'original' or inborn Sin. Repentance after salvation deals with all other sins committed because we still have the 'old man' within that tries to get us to obey the 'original' state we were in before we were saved. The texts, then, are filled with immense spiritual truths!

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Verse 26 repeats these amazing truths, that salvation makes plain the holiness and power of God, showing Him to be 'just'. Those who think God is unjust to send people to Hell, only prove their own sinful ignorance and blasphemy, for God is always just, regardless of our ability to understand what He does, or why. If God says it, then it is true! That we may not understand it is irrelevant.

In dealing with men, God is always 'just' and observes His own divine laws. It means that everything He does is lawful and correct, flawless. God is wholly conformed to His own laws. Only the just can deal justly with others. Only God, through Jesus Christ, can be a 'justifier' – One Who alone can render a man just before God, righteous before the Almighty Lord. And who is justified in this manner? Only "him which believeth in Jesus". As belief in Jesus is a gift of God, and is rooted in being predestinated, such belief is predetermined. Again – no man can choose his salvation.

### Verses 27 - 31

1.

Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.

2.

Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

3.

Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also:

4.

Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.

5.

Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

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The fact of predestination and the impossibility of man choosing his own salvation, explains the meaning of “Where is boasting then?” If man has only a very small part in his own salvation, then he could boast about it; that is why “it is excluded”. As salvation is brought about only by God through grace, there is no way man can boast about any part of his relationship with God. Hence the query by Paul, which is, of course, rhetorical.

As he says (with one eye on predestination): How can a man boast – because of the law, or by his own works or actions? No. He is saved by the “law of faith.” This is the new covenant. It says that salvation no longer depends on keeping the old law, but is entirely based on God’s grace and His gift of trust (faith) to the saved. Faith is not separate from grace but is a result of it, so even faith is not of man.

“Therefore,” says verse 28, “we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law”. That is, by God’s free gift and not by the keeping of Jewish rites and ceremonies. Or, to put it another way, not by works of any kind.

This teaching is very much out of vogue today, as more and more churches preach Arminian error. But it does not matter, for those who are ordained to life will receive salvation, whether or not Arminianism is taught to them! They will be saved and come away from the error, because that is the desire of the Holy Spirit. We may, then, be justly cautious of men who remain in heresy or within heretical movements and churches, after they claim to be saved.

Paul goes on to ask another rhetorical question (he is famous for his use of rhetoric): Is God the God only of Jews? Is He not also God of the Gentiles? He is God of us all. As I have said elsewhere, whether we are saved or not, we are still under the direct commands of God and must obey Him. There is no logic in asking why anyone who is unsaved should obey God, especially if they do not know who will be saved. Scripture says we must ALL obey, and that is the end of the matter. None of us knows whom God will save, and that is why the saved must preach to all.

Because there is only one God who justifies men, whether they are Jew (the circumcision) or Gentile (the uncircumcision – everybody else!), do we thus abandon the law, because faith is now the new covenant? The answer will surprise or annoy Arminians and the untaught reformed alike... “God forbid”. No, the law does not just remain – it is strengthened or established.

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Christians, then, are not free of God's law, but are constrained by it. Those who claim we have nothing to do with law are wrong. Faith, a gift of God, merely underlines the fact that God's law cannot be kept, but that God gives us strength to work towards it. The law does not save us, but salvation is always coupled to faith and law. Salvation itself is a law! This is what this text tells us, so fighting against it is not just useless, it is sinful.

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