

Romans

Chapters 3-4

Romans 3:1-8

- Use of diatribe
- Presence of an imaginary interlocutor
- Opening question follows from Romans 2, and anticipates an objection that a Jew well versed in the OT would raise.
- Note the set of 5 questions followed by answer in 3:1-9.

1st set of questions (3:1)	Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision?
Answer (3:2)	Much in every way. To begin with, the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God.
2nd set of questions (3:3)	What if some were unfaithful? Does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God?
Answer (3:4)	By no means! Let God be true though every one were a liar, as it is written, "That you may be justified in your words, and prevail when you are judged."
3rd set of questions (3:5)	But if our unrighteousness serves to show the righteousness of God, what shall we say? That God is unrighteous to inflict wrath on us?
Answer (3:6)	By no means! For then how could God judge the world?
4th set of questions (3:7-8a)	But if through my lie God's truth abounds to his glory, why am I still being condemned as a sinner? And why not do evil that good may come?
Answer (3:8)	Their condemnation is just.
5th set of questions (3:9)	What then? Are we Jews any better off?
Answer (3:10)	No, not at all

- 1st set of questions
 - In what ways would Jews have advantage?
 - Many! See Romans 9:3-5; Phil 3:3-6
 - But Paul's answer does not provide the anticipated response.
 - Only 1 item - ἐπιστεύθησαν τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ. (entrusted with the oracles of God)

• 2nd set of questions

- What does Paul mean by ἠπίστησάν (were unfaithful)?
- Note the emphasis of the unfaithfulness of Israel and the faithfulness of God in 3:1-8

Passage	Israel	God
3:3	ἠπίστησάν were unfaithful; ἀπιστία αὐτῶν their unfaithfulness	τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ the faithfulness of God
3:4	ἅς δὲ ἄνθρωπος ψεύστης, every human a liar	γινέσθω δὲ ὁ θεὸς ἀληθής, let God be true
3:5	ἡ ἀδικία ἡμῶν our unrighteousness/injustice	θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην righteousness/justice of God
3:7	ἐμῶ ψεύσματι my lie	ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ θεοῦ the truthfulness of God

- Does the unfaithfulness nullify God's faithfulness? *μὴ γένοιτο* "by no means"
- the first of *μὴ γίνεσθε* (by no means) appears here in Romans (most concentrated in Romans. Total 15x in NT, and 10x in Romans)
- In what context does Paul use this strong phrase, *μὴ γένοιτό* (by no means)?

- 3rd and 4th set of questions

Romans 3:9-20

- 5th set of questions
 - Deals with superior advantage of Jews
 - Paul's answer – NO, followed by series of OT quotations

Now that we know the Jews have advantage, so are we any better?

NO

For we have already charged all people, both Jews and Gentiles to be under the power of sin

That both Jews and gentiles are under the power of sin is confirmed by Scripture:

None is righteous

All have turned away from God

All have sins in their speech

All have injured fellow human beings

Because they do not fear God

(note the progression...throat → tongue → lips → mouth → feet → eyes)

(note singular nouns and plural pronouns)

Conclusion: No one is right before God, even those who have the law

- How to make sense of *προεχόμεθα* ? passive or middle?
 - If passive – to be in a prominent position, to excel.
 - If middle → hold something before oneself for protection, making an excuse → Am I protecting myself? Am I making excuses? Have we an advantage?

- The meaning of *οὐ πάντως* ?
- The meaning of under sin *ὑφ' ἁμαρτίαν*

- OT quotations:
 - 3:10-12 → Ps 14:1-3 (13:1-3 LXX); Eccles 7:20;
 - 3:13 → Ps 5:9 (LXX 5:10)
 - 3:14 → Ps 140:3 (LXX 139:4)
 - 3:15-17 → Isa 59:7-8
 - 3:18 → Ps 36:1 (LXX 35:2)
- note the structure

- Rom 3:19-20
- What is the meaning of “works of the law” - *ἔργα νόμου*
- 8x in Paul – Rom 3:20, 28; Gal 2:16 (3x); 3:2, 5, 10.
- Reference to:
 - Torah?
 - Portions of the law erecting barriers between Jews and gentiles?

Romans 3:21-26

- What does Paul mean by the righteousness of God *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ* in 3:21-22; 25-26?
- What is the meaning of *πίστις Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ* in 3:22, 25, 26?
 - Faith in Jesus? (objective genitive)
 - Faithfulness of Jesus? (subjective genitive)

- What is the meaning of *ἀπολύτρωσις* (redemption)?
- The *λύτ-* word group from the word *ἀπολύτρωσις* is used in various contexts:
 - Deliverance of a group from any form of captivity
 - Ransoming captives by paying the price of exchange
 - Freeing a slave either by legal writ of manumission or by purchase
 - Theological concept of salvation through forgiveness of sins

- Liberation of Israel from Egypt (Deut 7:8; 9:26; 15:15; 24:18).
- Liberation of individuals from their plight (Ps 25:22; 26:11; 31:5; 32:7)
- New exodus (Isa 41:14; 43:1, 14; 44:22-24; 51:11; 52:3; 62:12; 63:9).
- Does Paul have the exodus deliverance in mind when he uses this word?
- If so – the 2nd exodus is completed in Christ??
- Does the *λύτ-* word group involve payment of a price?

- What is the meaning of *ἱλαστήριον* (propitiation)?
- What then is the background of the word *ἱλαστήριον* (propitiation)?
- Is it cultic or martyrological?

- The cultic terminology taken from Lev 16 – mercy seat and day of atonement
- How many animals involved?
- Which animal involved transfer of sin?

- But in Christian doctrine – there seems to be a conjoined imagery – the sacrificial animal is BOTH the sin carrier and penalty bearer.
- See: 1 Cor 5:7; 2 Cor 5:21; John 1:29; Gal 3:11-14; Rom 6:8; 8:3
- So how does this conjoined imagery develop if it is alien in the OT?

- **4 Maccabees 17:20-22** 20 These, then, who have been consecrated for the sake of God,¹ are honored, not only with this honor, but also by the fact that because of them our enemies did not rule over our nation, 21 the tyrant was punished, and the homeland purified -- they having become, as it were, a ransom for the sin of our nation. 22 And through the blood of those devout ones and their death as an atoning sacrifice, divine Providence preserved Israel that previously had been mistreated. (17:22 - καὶ διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τῶν εὐσεβῶν ἐκείνων καὶ τοῦ ἱλαστηρίου τοῦ θανάτου αὐτῶν ἡ θεία πρόνοια τὸν Ἰσραὴλ προκακωθέντα δίδωσεν]

Romans 3:27-31

- 1. Boasting is excluded
 - Boasting is part of Greco-Roman culture. Read *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* – The Deeds of the Divine Augustus.
 - Why boasting is excluded?
 - Note Paul's answer – ἐξεκλείσθη. it is excluded! Literally it means the door is shut on one's face.

- What does boasting here refer to?
 - Boasting about the works of the law?
 - Boundary markers?
 - Boasting about the mosaic law?

- Uphold the law?
 - Is Paul not being consistent here? If consistent, he would have said: "the law is abolished."

Romans 4

- Flow:
 - 4:1-8 → Abraham was righteous by faith
 - 4:9-16 → righteousness by faith applies to both Jews and gentiles
 - 4:17-22 → returns to Abraham – the kind of faith exhibited in Abraham
 - 4:23-25 → for Paul's readers, this faith involves belief in Jesus' death and resurrection for the forgiveness of sins

Problems in 4:1

- One question or 2 questions?
- Most translations: 1 question:
 - What shall we say that Abraham our forefather has found according to the flesh?

- Hays suggests 2 questions:
 - What shall we say? Is Abraham found our forefathers according to the flesh?

*Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν
εὐρηκέναι Ἀβραάμ τὸν προπάτορα ἡμῶν
κατὰ σάρκα;*

Issue: How to make sense of *κατὰ σάρκα;*

- What then shall we say was discovered by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? OR
- What then shall we say was discovered according to the flesh by Abraham, our forefather?

- ESV: What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh?
- KJV: What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?
- NAS: What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found?
- NIV: What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter?
- NRSV: What then are we to say was gained by Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh?
- NET: What then shall we say that Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh, has discovered regarding this matter?

- Makes better sense to connect *κατὰ σάρκα;* to *εὐρηκέναι*
- What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, has found according to the flesh?
- Answer NOTHING!

- No boasting in the flesh:
- Cf. Jewish writings:
- *Ps Sol 9:8*: “For you chose the descendants of Abraham above all the nations, and you put your name upon us, Lord, and it will not cease forever.”

- **Sirach 44:19-21** : Abraham was the great father of a multitude of nations, and no one has been found like him in glory. He kept the law of the Most High, and entered into a covenant with him; he certified the covenant in his flesh, and when he was tested he proved faithful. Therefore the Lord assured him with an oath that the nations would be blessed through his offspring.”

- Jubilee 21:1-3: “Behold, I am 175 years old, and throughout all f the days of my life I have been remembering the Lord, and sought with all my heart to do his will and walk uprightly in all his ways...I have offered my heart and spirit so that I ight be careful to do the will of the one who created me.”

- Paul’ s point: Based on Jewish writings, Abraham has a basis to boast legitimately in the flesh. But all human beings fallen short of God’ s glory

- Ps 32 in 4:6
- See also the Talmud *Pesiqta 45*:
- “On the Day of Atonement God cleanses Israel and atones for its guilt, as it is written, ‘For on this day shall atonement be made for you, to cleanse you’ (Lev 16:30). And if you would say, ‘Another nation too [he cleanses, know that] it is not so, but it is only Israel, for so spoke the prophet Micah (7:18): ‘Who is a God like unto you, who pardons iniquity, and passes by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage?’ It is only Israel that he forgives. When David saw how God forgives the sins of the Israelites and has mercy upon them, he began to pronounce them blessed and to glorify them: ‘Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven (Ps 33:1)’”

Romans 4:9-16

- The issue here: who then are the children of Abraham? Does one need to be circumcised to be part of Abraham’s family?
- 4:10 – Paul adds a chronological argument – when was Abraham counted as righteous before God? Before or after circumcision?

- If righteousness is possible without circumcision, then why did God institute circumcision at all?

- 4:11-12 – 2 purpose clauses relating to Jews and gentiles
- 4:13 – Abraham father to both Jews and gentiles.

- 4:17-22: The nature of Abraham's faith