

## Romans Chapter III

Notations by Metropolitan Demetrios Trakatellis

*3:1 Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision? 2 Much in every way. To begin with, the Jews are entrusted with the oracles of God. 3 What if some were unfaithful? Does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God? 4 By no means! Let God be true though every man be false, as it is written, "That thou mayest be justified in thy words, and prevail when thou art judged." 5 But if our wickedness serves to show the justice of God, what shall we say? That God is unjust to inflict wrath on us? (I speak in a human way.) 6 By no means! For then how could God judge the world? 7 But if through my falsehood God's truthfulness abounds to his glory, why am I still being condemned as a sinner? 8 And why not do evil that good may come? -- as some people slanderously charge us with saying. Their condemnation is just.*

### **Value of Circumcision: Chrysostom**

"... why was the nation called and why was circumcision given? How does Paul solve this problem? By the same means as he did before: he speaks not of their praises but of the benefits of God."

Entrusted (v.2) = episteuhsan = "The believed in"

### **Chrysostom:**

"It means, that they had the law put into their hands because He held them to be of so much account that He entrusted to them oracles which came down from heaven."

Unfaithful (v.3)= apistw = unbelieving/ Did not trust. The unbelief is that the Jews did not accept Christ.

By no means! (v.4) ( mh genoito) is used 14 times by Paul it is used 127 times in reaction to a misunderstanding of Paul.

### **Chrysostom: Faithlessness**

"That not only does their unbelief not leave the soil of complaint upon God, but even shows His honor and love of man to be greater, in that He is seen to have bestowed honor upon one who would dishonor Him."

### **Q. Is this any different today with the church?**

#### **1. How come the Jews rejected the message of Christ?**

This torments Paul in his dialogue (v.5) Thousands of years of covenants, yet they are blind. (Met. T) As Paul repeats in Romans 9:1-5.

9:1 I am speaking the truth in Christ, I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit, 2 that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. 3 For I

could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen by race. 4 They are Israelites, and to them belong the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; 5 to them belong the patriarchs, and of their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ. God who is over all be blessed for ever. Amen.

## 2. Psalm 50: even David doesn't escape sinfulness.

David was allowed to sin so that no man can say he has never sinned. Then - David is not being fairly treated by God, thus God is unjust?

a.) There is an inescapable judgment at the end of time

- God is just
- All men are responsible and accountable

b.) In proving the guilt of the entire world, Paul brings the witness of three forms of divine revelation: (Scofield Study Bible)

- The witness of Creation (Rm 1:19-20) {Pagans}
- The witness of Conscience (Rm 2:15) {All humanity}
- The witness of Scripture: the Law & the Prophets. {Jews}

v.8. Some were saying that Paul had abolished the Law . 'Lets sin in order to attract more grace'. Paul answers that - it is so by the mercy of God, how in spite of us God shows His love.

*9 What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all; for I have already charged that all men, both Jews and Greeks, are under the power of sin, 10 as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; (Psalms 14:1-3, 53:1-3; Eccles. 7:20) 11 no one understands, no one seeks for God.12 All have turned aside, together they have gone wrong; no one does good, not even one."*

1. All humanity is under sin and judgement

- Seeking God
- Universal Language

2. Verses 10-18 are quoted as indicated.

v. 9. sin- amartia = missing the mark. A failure to meet a divine standard. First time it appears in Romans. Universal language.

*13 "Their throat is an open grave, they use their tongues to deceive." "The venom of asps is under their lips." (Psalm 5:9, Psalm 140:3)*

## v. 13 The throat is an open grave & tongues deceive

". . . these people are called on open grave because they had their uncleanness

and impurity on display, and they are so accustomed to evil that . . . whenever they open their mouth instead of speaking the word of God, the word of life, they open their throat and speak the word of death, the word of the devil, not from the heart but from the grave. Whenever you see a man cursing and swearing, you may be sure that he is one of this type." (Origen)

"He had committed no sin, and there was no deceit in His mouth" (Isa. 53:9)  
The venom of asps (small poisonous snake)

"Even a bite of a poisonous word may kill the soul by deception. This may be applied both to those who surround others with slanderous remarks and those who, by heretical teaching tainted with the poison of the devil, deceive the souls of the simple." (Origen)

*14 "Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness." ( Psalm 10:7) 15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood, (Isa. 59:7,8) 16 in their paths are ruin and misery, 17 and the way of peace they do not know." 18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes." (Psalm 36:1) 19 Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. 20 For no human being will be justified in his sight by works of the law, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.*

### **"Feet"**

"Feet in this passage refers to the way we live our life, as the prophet says: Mt feet had almost stumbled (Ps 73:1)

### **Peace:**

Christ is our peace. Therefore the way of peace is the way of Christ, which sinners do not know."

### **On the Fear of God:**

"If someone is always thinking of what will please or displease God, then it can be said that the fear of God is always before his eyes." (Origen)

- Natural Law of sin accuses the entire world
- The Law does not justify. The law manifests sin

*21 But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it, 22 the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction;*

v. 22. Faith in Jesus Christ = Faith of Jesus Christ

Righteousness of God renders the sinner righteous. (It does not justifies)

*23 since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus,*

### **"Ransom" & "Redemption" Legalistic Terms of Relational?**

"The loving self-offering of Christ is a "ransom" for the "redemption" of every human death. . . But in the Church with these same concepts intends to indicate the sacrificial love of God for man, the restoration of the created to the life-giving relationship with the un-created. . ." (Yannaras, Elements of Faith p. 111)

apolutrwsēwV = (Redemption i.e. liberation from the Yoke of an enemy, Lk 24:21. We are redeemed from the power of death and the power of sin.)

"It may be noted that in none of the New Testament passages is the idea of an actual "ransom" expressly present. The closest is in Romans 3:24, but in 3:25 the thought is cultic rather than commercial, and if justification is a legal concept in 3:24, the law does not demand payment for release from a penalty." (Kittel, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged, p. 547)

*25 whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed (Paresin) over former sins; 26 it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies him who has faith in Jesus.*

### **Righteousness of God**

". . . the declaring of His righteousness not only that He is Himself righteous, but that He does make them that are filled with the putrefying sores of sin suddenly righteous. And it is to explain this, viz. what is "declaring" that he has added, 'That He might be just, and the justifier of Him who believes in Jesus.' Doubt not then: for it is not of works, but of faith&ldots;(Chrysostom)"

### **Expiation (atonement) of blood:**

*"For if the sacrifices of things without reason (OT), he means, cleared from sin, much more would this blood. An he does not say barely lutrwsēwV but apolutrwsēwV, entire redemption, to show that we should come no more into such slavery. And for this same reason he calls it a expiation, to show that if the type (OT) had such force, much more would the reality display the same." (Chrysostom)*

ilasthrion = (forgiveness or covering of sins or mercy seat)

### **Mercy Seat (Offering) in the LXX (OT)**

a.) In the OT the golden lid over the ark. God meets Moses there (Ex 25:2) . The high priest burns incense before it on the day of atonement (Lev 16:13) and then sprinkles blood on and before it. (Kittel)

b.) Hebrews 9:5 "above it (the Ark) were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat { ilasthrion} ."

Paul: uses the term to indicate the sacrifice of Christ upon the Cross. He came on was made the "Lamb" of God who takes away the sin of the world.

"The mercy seat was gold-plated and placed on top of the ark. . . When the High Priest approached it, the holy kindness of God was revealed. (Ex 25:22,30:6) The apostle teaches us that Christ is the true mercy seat, of which the one in the Old Testament was a type. . . It (OT mercy seat) could only receive the drops of blood pouring from the sacrificial victims. But the Lord Christ is both God and the mercy seat, both the priest and the lamb, and he performed the work of salvation by his blood&ldots;" (Theodoret of Cyr)

Paresin = a letting go- letting sin run its course.

"For there was no longer any hope of recovering health, but as the paralyzed body needed the hand from above, so does the soul which had been deadened." (Chrysostom)

*27 Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On the principle of works? No, but on the principle of faith.28 For we hold that a man is justified by faith apart from works of law. 29 Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also,30 since God is one; and he will justify the circumcised on the ground of their faith and the uncircumcised through their faith.31 Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law.*

#### **Faith Perfects the law:**

The Lord himself said: I have come not to abolish the law but to fulfill it ( Mt 5:17). None of the saints nor even the Lord Himself has destroyed the law. Rather its glory, which is temporal and transient, has been destroyed and replaced by a glory which is eternal and permanent." (Origen)

#### **Faith without works:**

Some misinterpret this verse in order to do away with the works of righteousness, saying that faith by itself is enough. . . these are the works of circumcision, the Sabbath and so on, and not the works of righteousness about which St. James says: Faith without works is dead. (Jm 2:26) . . . Paul is saying that there are also works of grace which believers ought to perform." (Pelagius)