



## World Christian Fellowship

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### Romans 41

#### Is there a Privilege of being a Jew? Part 02

**Romans 3:1-8**, *What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision?*<sup>2</sup> *Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God.*<sup>3</sup> *For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect?*<sup>4</sup> *Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar. As it is written: "That You may be justified in Your words, And may overcome when You are judged."*<sup>5</sup> *But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unjust who inflicts wrath? (I speak as a man.)*<sup>6</sup> *Certainly not! For then how will God judge the world?*

<sup>7</sup>*For if the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner?*<sup>8</sup> *And why not say, "Let us do evil that good may come"—as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say. Their condemnation is just.*

**What advantage then hath the Jew?**

From the historical perspective the answer would be no advantage.

But Paul is not really dealing in terms of history.

**Look at it to spiritual advantage?**

Do they have a spiritual advantage?

There is no advantage historically.

There is no advantage spiritually.

So, we are right where we want to be then in chapter 3 and let us ask the question again.

What advantage then hath the Jew?

What profit is there in circumcision?

Is there any advantage at all?

Remember that Romans presents the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ.

The first part of the good news is bad news!

Then Paul presents the good news.

The bad news is that man is a sinner and man is condemned by God for his sin. That is the theme of chapters 1, 2 and 3.

The good news begins in the middle of chapter 3 and stretches on really for the remainder of the epistle. But before you hear the good news, you must understand the bad news.

It is like you cannot take the cure sickness until you realize you have got the disease.

Apostle Paul points out that man is sinful and therefore under condemnation.

**Romans 1:18-32**, he condemned the immoral, irreligious, pagan individual who just lives the wild and free and loose kind of lifestyle with little regard for law and order in a moral way or God or anything else.

**Romans 2:1-16**, he began to talk about the moral man who is ethical, who may even be religious. Paul shows how that man is condemned because by his morality and by his religion he cannot attain the perfect standard of God.

**Romans 2:17-29**, the Jew who not only was moral and religious but even had the right religion.

- You are condemned if you are irreligious.
- You can be condemned if you are even religious if you are depending on your religion to save you.
- You can even be condemned if you have the right religion if you are still depending only on its form rather than the knowledge of God.

Paul has condemned the pagan.

Paul has condemned the moralist.

Paul has condemned the Jew.

Paul has destroyed all of men's securities and their convenient hiding places. He has ripped off the covers and left them naked and condemned.

After having done all this argument Paul knows that the Jew is going to ask some very hard questions.

Precisely what we have in verses 1 through 8.

Paul has torn all the securities and confidences apart and the Jewish person who reads this letter or who hears his message is going to then say, "Paul, if this is true, if being the seed of Abraham and possessing the law of God and having the sign of the covenant circumcision, if that does not secure me, then what advantage is it to be Jewish?"

If it does not mean anything that I am a child of Abraham and I have received the law, and I have been circumcised, then what good is it to be Jewish?

Now he knows that is the question they are going to ask because he has had personal experience at it. When he wrote the epistle to the Romans, he was saying things that he had preached this message many times. He should have had gotten these reactions many times as well.

Paul gives three reactions.

1. **God's people.**
2. **God's promise.**
3. **God's purity.**

They accuse Paul of attacking God.

**Acts 21:28**, *crying out, "Men of Israel, help! This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against the people, the law, and this place; and furthermore he also brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place."*

### **What did they say?**

Paul speaks against the people, against the law, against the holy place.

That was the kind of accusation that Paul had endured repeatedly. Whenever he would say no, your Jewishness will not save you any more than my being in a church necessarily saves me, or you are being a Presbyterian or a Baptist or an Episcopalian or a Catholic or anything else saves you. It is not what you identify with externally.

So, when he would come and say all of this means nothing unless there is a change in your heart, they would say to him,

"You are speaking against the law and against the people and against the holy place."

The people, the law, and his holiness, because those are the same three issues Paul brings up here.

### **3. God's Purity/Holiness**

They say that Paul is pestilent, a ringleader of an unacceptable and heretical sect and has gone about to profane or desecrate the holy place.

**Acts 24:5-6**, *For we have found this man a plague, a creator of dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. <sup>6</sup>He even tried to profane the temple, and we seized him, <sup>6</sup>and wanted to judge him according to our law.*

Paul's rendering of his testimony to Agrippa that Paul himself admits to some of this conflict.

**Acts 26:19-21**, *"Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, <sup>20</sup>but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance. <sup>21</sup>For these reasons the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me.*

It was because he told them they were sinners, it was because he confronted them with a need to repent, which in effect was saying your heritage and your tradition and your worship does not save you. You are lost and you must repent, and you must turn to God, and you must do works that manifest repentance, and for this because they caught me in the temple and set about to kill me.

So, this was a very common element in Paul's life. He created antagonism instantaneously among the Jews.

When we read the book of Acts from place to place, he went he stirred up an uproar among the Jews. He would go, first, to their synagogue when he went into a new city, and he would preach. There some would believe, and some would become infuriated with him.

Stephen gives us a good insight into the kind of response that the preachers of the gospel received in these early years.

**Acts 6:9**, *Then there arose some from what is called the Synagogue of the Freedmen (Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and those from Cilicia and Asia), disputing with Stephen.*

Now Stephen was going again and preaching the same message Paul was preaching, he was preaching the gospel of

grace, of liberty, freedom, and so forth. The Jews in the synagogues of all these different places began to argue with Stephen. They could not accept the fact that their heritage and their law and their circumcision did not save them. They could not accept the fact that their sacrificial observances could not redeem them, did not obligate God to bring them salvation.

**Acts 6:10-11**, *And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke. <sup>11</sup>Then they secretly induced men to say, “We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.”*

Now here is the epitome of their accusation: He is speaking against Moses and, since God is behind the Mosaic Law and the temple and the ceremonies and the sacrifices and circumcision and the Abrahamic promise, they are speaking against God.

They stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes and came upon him and caught him and brought him to the council. They set up false witnesses, they rigged his trial. It was strictly a rigged situation.

**Acts 6:12-15**, *And they stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes; and they came upon him, seized him, and brought him to the council. <sup>13</sup>They also set up false witnesses*

*who said, "This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law; <sup>14</sup>for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered to us."<sup>15</sup> And all who sat in the council, looking steadfastly at him, saw his face as the face of an angel.*

Before it was all over, they murdered him. They stoned him to death. One of the people who was there watching the stoning and perhaps was involved was one named Saul, who later became Paul and who would have suffered the very same fate that Stephen did.

Now this is not to be surprising to us because our Lord endured the very same thing as well. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself spoke against the Jews.

**John 8:44,** *You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.*

**John 5:39,** *You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.*

Whether Jesus or Stephen or Paul, it was the very nature of the gospel that it went against the grain of traditional Judaism.

The Jews could not stand any attack on their Abrahamic security. They could not stand any attack on their perverted legalism because in their own minds they had affirmed their salvation based on their heritage and their legalism and their circumcision.

Jesus, Stephen, Paul, and the rest of the apostolic messengers were blowing that security to bits. So, they were very enraged. They murdered Jesus, Stephen, and eventually even the apostle Paul lost his life and many, many others of the apostles, just as prior to our Lord they had murdered the prophets who came before Him. They never wanted to hear the truth. When they were confronted about the inadequacy of these things, they were infuriated.

God is glorified in spite of the sins of Israel.

Their unfaithfulness does not make God unfaithful.

In fact, by contrast it will reveal His great faithfulness.

God will be glorified even in the midst of their unbelief and in the midst of their sin.

God, it says at the end of verse 4, will overcome, even when He is condemned...or when He is impugned. God will be justified.

- In the midst of the sinfulness of men and the unbelief of Israel, God will still be glorified.
- In the midst of men's unfaithfulness, His faithfulness will stand out by contrast.

Men are unfaithful but God is not.

This is the thinking then of the antagonist.

If Israel's sin does not void God's promise but only makes God's faithfulness more glorious by contrast, you contrast unfaithfulness with faithfulness and faithfulness looks good.

When you go into a jewellery store to buy a ring or a necklace and they take it out of the cabinet and they bring it up to place it so that you can see it on top of that glass counter, have you ever noticed what they put the gold upon?

**What is it they put it on?**

Velvet.

**What colour?**

Black.

## Why?

Because it makes the gold look so much more beautiful. If they put it on a white background or a beige background or a gold background, it would not make the point. But always on a black one.

In a very real sense that is exactly what is going on here. The argument is going to be, " if our black velvet unfaithfulness gives greater glory to God's faithfulness, then our sin gives God glory. If that is true, then Paul, you have just spoken against the purity of God."

This was the heart and soul of the message of grace. That in our sin God forgives us and gains glory because of His forgiveness. So, they would accuse Paul of saying that if sin gives God glory, then you are violating God's pure nature."

If our sin makes His holiness stand out by contrast, makes His righteousness stand out by contrast, then you are saying sin glorifies God and you have attacked the holy nature of God.

**V 5, *But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unjust who inflicts wrath? (I speak as a man.)***

*"I speak as a man."*

Now what Paul is doing here is saying, I am giving a typical human logic. I am reasoning as men might reason.

Paul puts that in just so nobody will think this is good reasoning. This is typically depraved human thinking.

A man would argue like this, but it is such a blasphemous argument that Paul wants no one to think in any way it reflects righteous reasoning. So, this is just basic human reason, the empty reasoning of an evil man.

If the unfaithfulness of Israel only by contrast shows the faithfulness of God, then how can God ever punish me for giving Him such a wonderful opportunity to show His glory?

*V 5, But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unjust who inflicts wrath? (I speak as a man.)*

**Would it be fair for God to take vengeance on people who give Him an opportunity to display His glory?**

I can understand why a man would reason like that because typically men want to justify their sin anyway.

- I sin because when I sin God forgives and when God forgives, He gets glory because forgiveness manifests His glory.
- Or when I sin it gives God a marvellous opportunity to demonstrate His grace.
- When I sin, it gives God a marvellous opportunity to show His love and His mercy.

Therefore, I sin so God can put Himself on display.

How could God take vengeance on someone who had such a good purpose?

Typical human rationalization.

Paul, you are taking a direct attack at the holiness of God by making sin a way to glorify God and thus creating antinomianism, which means an anti-law view. They were legalists. They were hard-lined legalist like a Pharisee, never.

For someone to come along and talk about grace, forgiveness, mercy, and freedom, naturally they are going to respond saying that is antinomianism. That is lawlessness.

Where you are saying that no, your unfaithfulness just gives God's faithfulness that much more grandeur, they are going to accuse you of attacking the purity of God.

**V 7,** *For if the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner?*

If I lie (as an illustration) but by contrast to my lie the truthfulness of God stands out.

- Haven't I done a good thing?
- Haven't I done a wonderful thing?
- What are you going to judge me as a sinner for?

In other words, Paul, you are saying there are no sinners because the worse you are the better the contrast. Did you ever think these thoughts through?

This is their reasoning. How can I be seen as a sinner when I am just doing such a good thing for God?

### **What's Paul's response?**

**V 6,** *Certainly not! For then how will God judge the world?*

Impossible, you cannot have that kind of thinking, it just cannot be.

**V 8,** *And why not say, "Let us do evil that good may come"—as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say. Their condemnation is just.*

They are saying, "Paul, if I follow your theology then all my sin just gives glory to God and so my model for life is going to be, 'Let us do evil that good may come.'"

Let us really put God on display!

- The more wretched we are, the more lovely He looks.
- The more sinful we are, the more gracious He appears.
- The more faithless we are, the more faithful He will be.
- The more we lie, the more His truthfulness will be made clear.

So, our motto for life is, "Let us do evil that good may come."

This is not a hypothetical accusation, but it is a real one.

**V 8**, *And why not say, "Let us do evil that good may come"?—as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say. Their condemnation is just.*

They had actually accused him of this. They have said your gospel of grace, mercy, forgiveness, and of freedom is license to sin. It speaks against the holiness of God.

Of course, we would expect legalists to attack the gospel of grace!

So, Paul's imaginary Jewish accuser says he is attacking the purity and the holiness of God by saying sin only manifests God's holiness by contrast.

This teaches then that sin is a way to bring God glory. If sin is another way to bring God glory, then there is no such thing as sin. If there is no such thing as sin, then how can I be judged a sinner?

**Romans 5:20-21**, *Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more,<sup>21</sup> so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

When the law came in, we knew we were breaking the rules. The law made it abundantly clear that we were sinful. But where sin abounded grace did much more abound. Now in order to have grace you have to have sin. You do not need grace if there is no sin, right?

So, wherever sin abounded, grace abounded. Isn't that a wonderful thing? But that would just literally infuriate a Jew. The more sin, the more grace. So immediately Paul picks out that response.

**Romans 6:1**, *What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?*

**What is the answer?**

**Romans 6:2**, *Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?*

**Why?**

**Romans 6:3-4**, *Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? <sup>4</sup>Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

**Romans 4:5**, *But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness,*

Paul says that God justifies the ungodly. God does it with delight. If that is true, if my sin manifests God's glory, if God delights in justifying the ungodly, if the more sin, the more grace, then let us do evil that good may come, ungodliness then becomes a virtue.

Now this kind of thinking would put a high premium on sin and that is exactly what they accuse Paul of doing.

Probably had some reason to accuse Paul because there may have been some people under the name of Christianity who were doing this.

There were some contemporaries of Paul who had taken this teaching of grace and pushed it to license.

**Illustration:**

**Jude 1:4**, *For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.*

In other words, they are already doomed. Their doom has been predicted.

They are ungodly men.

They lack holiness.

They lack reverence for God,

They lack purity, even though they may appear in a preacher's robe and use Scripture.

What do they do?

**Jude 1:4**, *For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men,*

*who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.*

They turn grace into license!

The reason they accuse Paul of this may have been even intensified by the fact that there were some who abused this reality. There were those who turned grace into immorality in the name of Christianity.

What they were really doing is that they were denying the lordship of Christ.

When you become a Christian, that is not licensed to sin and be forgiven. When you become a Christian, you come under the lordship of Christ, and you become desirous above all things of obeying His lordship. So, these were guilty of twisting, turning grace into gross immorality. There were antinomians, there were libertines.

They may be in 1 Corinthians 5 where you have the people in the church there. In one case a man having sexual relationship with his father's wife, and you have all the rotten filth of the Corinthian assembly. They may have been infiltrated by these who turned grace into lewdness. Some Gnostics who held a dualistic view did that.

There are some people today in our contemporary society who teach what is called the two natures of you, that you as a Christian have an old nature and a new nature.

Your old nature fights against your new nature. That is not a New Testament view, as we shall see when we get later into Romans. You are really one new person, but some teach you are two people. This is common.

There were these people who denied the lordship. The word "Lord" as it first appears in **Jude 1:4** is *despotes*. They were denying the absolute sovereignty of Christ in their life calling them to holiness, and they turned grace into lewdness.

So, Paul, if you teach this kind of thing that when we do not believe and when we are unfaithful, God remains faithful and God is even seen as more faithful by contrast, then you are making our sin glorify God and you are striking a blow at His holiness by saying sin glorifies God.

Paul's answer now.

**V 6**, "No, no."

Why?

*"For then how shall God judge the world?"*

Now there is one thing a Jew knew. If he did not know anything else, he knew this. God would judge the world.

**Genesis 18:25**, *Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?*

**Psalm 94:2**, *Rise up, O Judge of the earth; Render punishment to the proud.*

**Psalm 50:6**, *Let the heavens declare His righteousness, For God Himself is Judge. Selah*

**Psalm 58:11**, *"So that men will say, "Surely there is a reward for the righteous; Surely He is God who judges in the earth."*

They knew one thing that God would be the judge.

But, if all sin glorified God, then there would be nothing for God to judge.

So, Paul is saying it cannot be that because that would make God not God, for God is the judge.

If there is nothing to judge, then God has nothing to do. All morality, order, justice, right & wrong and all religion would be annihilated.

But God said He would be the judge so there is sin and there is righteousness. So, Paul says I am not advocating an abolition of all sin, which would strike a blow at the holiness of God.

Second reason:

**V 8**, *And why not say, "Let us do evil that good may come"—as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say. Their condemnation is just.*

There are some people who deserve to get judged.

### **Who are they?**

They are the people who say, "*Let us do evil that good may come.*"

Paul says that not only do I believe that there is sin which God will judge because He is the judge, and if He is the judge, He must have something to judge, but I believe one of the very sins He will judge is the sin of lawlessness. So not only do I not teach it, but I think that is one that God Himself will judge.

- Apostle Paul has taken care of their arguments and he does not speak against the people. They have a great advantage in the law of God.
- He does not speak against the promises. God will be faithful if all the world is unfaithful.

- He is not speaking against the holiness of God, the purity of God when he speaks of grace, forgiveness, mercy, and freedom, because God must judge because He is the judge. He will judge is that attitude that says I will sin because it glorifies God.

All men are rendered guilty. All arguments are silenced.

The pagan man, Paul finished him off in chapter 1.

The moral man, in the first part of chapter 2.

The Jew in the last of chapter 2.

Now Paul answers all his arguments.

God's people have a great advantage, they have the Scriptures.

God's promises are valid. The character of God demands it.

God's purity is intact. The function of God's judgment and the evil sin of man reveals it.

Paul is not speaking against God.

## **Conclusion:**

God sets a whole nation of people before the tribunal, as it were, in Romans 2 and 3, the Jews.

And he says all your religious accessories, activities, artifacts, ceremonies, customs, and traditions add up to nothing if it is not in your heart.

**Romans 2:29**, *but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.*

Circumcision must be in your heart.

That is the single most important issue facing the church in the world today.

You must know God intimately, personally through Christ in your own heart. The churches around the world and the religions of the world are jammed full of people who are counting on the system to be their salvation. It is not.

It will damn them to a deeper damnation because many of them sit in the place where they have the advantage of the Scripture, and they reject it. If you are depending on anything other than a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, you are lost.

All the church can offer you is the word of God. It cannot redeem you by its organization or its ceremony.

The saddest example of wasted privilege was Israel.  
The parallel is today, the people who sit in the church lost!

It is a crime against privilege and against opportunity.

If you are one of them, would you repent in your heart and accept the Lordship of Jesus Christ?