

Romans 3:1-8

¹ What, then, is the advantage of being a Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision?

² Much in every way. First of all, they have been entrusted with the very words of God.

³ What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God's faithfulness?

⁴ Certainly not! Let God be true and every man a liar. As it is written:

“So that You may be proved right when You speak and victorious when You judge.”

⁵ But if our unrighteousness highlights the righteousness of God, what shall we say? That God is unjust to inflict His wrath on us? I am speaking in human terms.

⁶ Certainly not! In that case, how could God judge the world?

⁷ However, if my falsehood accentuates God's truthfulness, to the increase of His glory, why am I still condemned as a sinner?

⁸ Why not say, as some slanderously claim that we say, “Let us do evil that good may result?”

Their condemnation is deserved!

Berean Study Bible

1

Consult the book of rules. Romans 3:1-8

Knowing the Bible means knowing God is right. 3:1-2 “very words of God” 2b

The Bible reveals truth we could not know. (Creation, prophecy)

The Bible confirms truth we do already know. (Right, wrong)

Disobeying the Bible does not make God wrong. 3:3-4 “lack of faith” 3

God is consistently reliable when He teaches. 3b “God's faithfulness”

God is consistently reliable when He judges. 4b “when You judge”

Disobeying the Bible does prove God is right. 3:5-8 “righteousness of God” 5a

The Bible warns sinners will be facing condemnation. 7b “condemned as a sinner”

The Bible warns sinners will be justly condemned. 8b “condemnation is deserved”

2

Spiritual abuse. Romans 3:1-8

Spiritual abuse of history. 1-2

Spiritual abuse of the Word of God. 3

Spiritual abuse of Truth. 4

Spiritual abuse of Righteousness. 5

Spiritual abuse of judgement. 6

Spiritual abuse of glory. 7

Spiritual abuse of good. 8

3

Great start, poor finish. Romans 3:1-8

Guard the Scripture in my hands. 3:1-2

Helpful heritage. 1 "advantage... value"

Relevant ritual. 2 "entrusted with"

Guard against unbelief in my heart. 3:3-4

Faithless vs. faithful. 3 "lack of faith... God's faithfulness"

Lies vs. truth. 4 "God be true and every man a liar"

Guard against lies on my lips. 3:5-8

Different may be disastrous. 5 "our unrighteousness... inflict His wrath on us"

Justice demands judgement. 8 "condemnation is deserved"

4

Avoid the downward spiral. Romans 3:1-8

Downward starts at the top. 3:1-2

Generational heritage. 1 "advantage... value"

Spiritual resources. 2 "entrusted with"

Downward is easy. 3:3-4

No faith. No truth. 3-4 "lack of faith... God be true"

No truth. No salvation. 4 "You may be proved right... You judge"

Downward ends poorly. 3:5-8

Righteousness includes wrath. 5 "righteousness of God... inflict His wrath"

Truth includes judgement. 7-8 "God's truthfulness... condemnation deserved"

5

Advantage: receiver. Romans 3:1-8

Tennis theme.

Every advantage. 3:1-2

Church people have external advantages. 1 "advantage... value"

Church people have internal advantages. 2 "entrusted with"

Ignoring advantage. 3:3-4

Church people may neglect the judgement. 3 "not have faith... lack of faith"

Church people must face the judgement. 4 "victorious when You judge"

No advantage. 3:5-8

God's judgment is from righteousness. 5-6 "righteousness of God... God judge"

God's judgment is from truth. 7-8 "God's truthfulness... condemnation deserved"

6

God always has the answer. Romans 3:1-8

God's people have God's Word. 3:1-2

God's people have privileges. 2 "they have been entrusted"

God's people have responsibilities. 2 "the very words of God"

God's purity means God's judgment. 3:4-5

God is faithful to His Word. 3-4 "nullify God's faithfulness? 4Certainly not!"

God is faithful to Himself. 4b "be proved right when You speak"

God's position displays God's integrity. 3:6-8

Everything about God is true. 7 "accentuates God's truthfulness"

Everything about God is great. 7 "to the increase of His glory"

7

God's great expectations. Romans 3:1-8

Great expectations by Charles Dickens is a classic work of Victorian literature.

When I am complacent, I need to be reminded of God's kindness. 3:1-2

God expects me to be trustworthy. 2 "have been entrusted"

God expects me to be diligent. 2b "the very words of God"

When I am unfaithful, I need to be reminded of God's integrity. 3:4-5

God expects me to be as faithful as Him. 3b "lack of faith... God's faithfulness"

God expects me to respond to Him. 4b "when You speak... when You judge"

When I am sinful, I need to be reminded of God's justice. 3:6-8

God expects self-discipline, or discipline. 5 "God is just to inflict His wrath on us"

God expects His own vindication. 7 "God's truthfulness, to the increase of His glory"

Other possible titles

It is time to lift my game

Stop the rot

What are you passing on to the next generation?

Be a better role model

Get off the slippery slope and start climbing up

Textual observations

Ten descriptors of God

- Words of God. 2 “the very words of God”
- Faithfulness of God. 3 “God’s faithfulness”
- Truth of God. 4a “Let God be true”
- Vindication of God. 4b “proved right when You speak”
- Victory of God. 4c “victorious when You judge”
- Judgement of God. 4c “when You judge” 6 “God judge the world”
- Righteousness of God. 5a “righteousness of God”
- Wrath of God. 5b “His wrath”
- Truthfulness of God. 7a “God’s truthfulness”
- Glory of God. 7b “to the increase of His glory”

Five warnings against the coming judgement

- 4b “victorious when You judge”
- 5b “inflict His wrath on us”
- 6b “God judge the world”
- 7b “condemned as a sinner”
- 8b “condemnation is deserved”

Greek lexicon, cross-references, quotes, and illustrations

What, then, is the advantage of being a... 1a

We need to be aware of, and to guard against, the Third Generation Syndrome. This problem is wide-spread and well documented. It is most often seen financially. In its simplest terms, the First Generation earns the money, the Second Generation enjoys the money, and the Third Generation squanders the money.

One obvious Biblical example is King David. He is the First Generation. He survived the internal struggles against crazy King Saul. He fought and defeated the Philistines. David built the Kingdom. David’s son, King Solomon, enjoyed all the advantages that had been handed to him on a platter. He had wealth. He had respect. He had brains. He had women. But his comfort made him complacent and he slid into spiritual decline. Solomon’s son, King Rehoboam was handed privileges he did not have to earn, so he had no respect for them. He listened more to his peers than to his elders. His focus was more on physical things rather than spiritual. He squandered all his advantages, and he was single-handedly responsible for losing half of the kingdom which his grandfather, David, had built.

The same principle is often seen in the spiritual realm of today. The First Generation are aware of their sinfulness and so they get born again. They are well aware of their past so they are clear about repentance, and they have a hunger to know God’s Word. The Second Generation have the privilege of being raised in a Christian home. They are comfortable going to church, they tithe, they pray. They know more about the Bible than their parents, but they lack that edge that their parents had. The Third

Generation are also raised going to church, but while their Second Generation parents were comfortable in church, this Third Generation is complacent about church. They easily find excuses not to attend worship. Their lives are so busy with all the demands on their lives. The real Third Generation problem is failure to see themselves in the Big Picture, so they fail to take responsibility for their poor choices and thus fail to offer the best care for the next generation.

The one and only solution to this perpetual dilemma is that every generation needs to become another First Generation, being acutely aware of our own sinfulness, and of God's amazing grace. Whatever your heritage; wherever you fall in your generational structure; choose to become a First Generation believer. Admit to your sinfulness, and cry out for the grace of God. Commit your whole life to Him.

they have been entrusted with the very words of God. 2b

The English word "entrusted" is the Greek Aorist Indicative Passive form of the Verb πιστεύω [Strong's 4100] (pronounced pis-tyou-oh) which is most often translated as 'believe'. The cognate noun πίστις means 'faith, belief'.

The root of both the verb and the noun is πείθω [Strong's 3982] (pronounced pay-thoh) meaning 'have confidence in, be persuaded, to be convinced'.

Hence, to believe (verb), or to have faith (noun), means to be persuaded by the evidence, to have confidence in the logic, to be convinced by the facts, to trust in the reliability of the witnesses'.

However, here in Romans 3:2, it is God who is placing His faith in us. He trusts us enough, to entrust to us, His written revelations. Our responsibility to God's trust in us is for us to be trustworthy in keeping His Word, and living faithfully by it.

⁷For what nation is great enough to have a god as near to them as the LORD our God is to us whenever we call on Him? ⁸And what nation is great enough to have righteous statutes and ordinances like this entire law I set before you today? Deuteronomy 4:7-8

¹⁹He declares His word to Jacob, His statutes and judgments to Israel. ²⁰He has done this for no other nation; they do not know His judgments. Psalm 147:19-20

³⁹You pore over the Scriptures because you presume that by them you possess eternal life. These are the very words that testify about Me, ⁴⁰yet you refuse to come to Me to have life. John 5:39-40

sound teaching ¹¹agrees with the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted. 1 Timothy 1:10b-11

¹⁵From infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷so that God's person may be complete, fully equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:15-17

What if some did not have faith? 3a

¹¹He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. ¹²But to all who did receive Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God. John 1:11-12

Therefore, I tell you that the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. Matthew 21:43

Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: "It was necessary to speak the Word of God to you first. But since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles. Acts 13:46

³⁰What then will we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is **by faith**; ³¹but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. ³²Why not? Because their pursuit was not **by faith**, but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone. Romans 9:30-32

¹⁶But not all of them welcomed the good news. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has **believed** our message?" ¹⁷Consequently, **faith** comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ. Romans 10:16-17

God's faithfulness, 3b

He is the Rock, His work is perfect; all His ways are just. A God of faithfulness without injustice, righteous and upright is He. Deuteronomy 32:4

For the LORD is good, and His loving devotion endures forever; His faithfulness continues to all generations. Psalm 100:5

Your faithfulness continues through all generations; Psalm 119:90a

If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself. 2 Timothy 2:13

Let us hold resolutely to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful. Hebrews 10:23

As it is written, 4

Romans 3:4	Psalm 51:4
Let God be true and every man a liar. As it is written: "So that You may be proved right when You speak and victorious when You judge."	Against You, You only, have I sinned and done what is evil in Your sight, so that You may be proved right when You speak and blameless when You judge.

Romans 3:4, written in Ancient Greek, cites Psalm 51:4, written in Ancient Hebrew.

God is not a human, that He should lie, Numbers 23:19a

¹Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ for the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness, ²in the hope of eternal life,

which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began. ³In His own time He has made His Word evident in the proclamation entrusted to me by the command of God our Saviour. Titus 1:1-3

¹⁷So when God wanted to make the unchanging nature of His purpose very clear to the heirs of the promise, He guaranteed it with an oath. ¹⁸Thus by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be strongly encouraged. ¹⁹We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, Hebrews 6:17-19a

⁹Even if we accept human testimony, the testimony of God is greater. For this is the testimony that God has given about His Son. ¹⁰Whoever believes in the Son of God has this testimony within him; whoever does not believe God has made Him out to be a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given about His Son. ¹¹And this is that testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 1 John 5:9-11

our unrighteousness, 5a

Against You, You only, have I sinned and done what is evil in Your sight, so that You may be proved right when You speak and blameless when You judge. Psalm 51:4

the righteousness of God, 5a

He is the Rock, His work is perfect; all His ways are just. A God of faithfulness without injustice, righteous and upright is He. Deuteronomy 32:4

Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; loving devotion and faithfulness go before You. Psalm 89:14

There is no other God but Me, a righteous God and Savior; there is none but Me. Isaiah 45:21b

¹⁵But just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do, ¹⁶for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy." ¹⁷Since you call on a Father who judges each one's work impartially, conduct yourselves in reverent fear during your stay as foreigners. 1 Peter 1:15-17

Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them, You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy. Leviticus 19:2

I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted; and the train of His robe filled the temple. ²Above Him stood seraphim... ³And they were calling out to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of Hosts; all the earth is full of His glory." Isaiah 6:1-3

His wrath, 5b

But because of your hard and unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the Day of Wrath, when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. Romans 2:5

The bow of God's wrath is bent, and the arrow made ready on the string, and justice bends the arrow at your heart, and strains the bow, and it is nothing but the mere pleasure of God, and that of an angry God, without any promise or obligation at all, that keeps the arrow one moment from being made drunk with your blood.

Jonathan Edwards, Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God

It is like angry children misinterpreting their loving parents' affectionate advances as threats. They project their own hate onto their parents' love and experience love as an enemy—which it is: an enemy to their egotistic defenses against joy. Peter Kreeft

The wrath of God is never an evil wrath. God gets angry because he loves people, like a mother would love her child if someone were to harm it. There is something wrong if the mother never gets angry. Criss Jami

how could God judge the world, 6b

Will not the Judge of all the earth do what is right?" Genesis 18:25b

He judges the world with justice; He governs the people with equity. Psalm 9:8

⁸Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy ⁹before the LORD, for He comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with equity. Psalm 98:8-9

¹²Let the fields exult, and all that is in them. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy ¹³before the LORD, for He is coming— He is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in His faithfulness. Psalm 96:13

For He has set a day when He will judge the world with justice by the Man He has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising Him from the dead. Acts 17:31

¹⁵So they show that the work of the Law is written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts either accusing or defending them ¹⁶on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Christ Jesus, as proclaimed by my Gospel. Romans 2:15-16

⁴That is why we boast among God's churches about your perseverance and faith in the face of all the persecution and affliction you are enduring. ⁵All this is clear evidence of God's righteous judgment. And so you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering. ⁶After all, it is only right for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, 2 Thessalonians 1:4-6

Then I saw Heaven standing open, and there before me was a white horse. And its rider is called Faithful and True. With righteousness He judges and wages war. Revelation 19:11

God's truthfulness, 7

The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son from the Father, full of Grace and Truth. John 1:14

³¹So He said to the Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My Word, you are truly My disciples. ³²Then you will know the Truth, and the Truth will set you free.”
John 8:31-32

Jesus answered, “I am The Way, and The Truth, and The Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. John 14:6

Sanctify them by the Truth; Your Word is Truth. John 17:17

He chose to give us birth through the Word of Truth, that we would be a kind of first-fruits of His creation. James 1:18

Since you have purified your souls by obedience to the Truth so that you have a genuine love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from a pure heart. 1 Peter 1:22

And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true—in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. 1 John 5:20

His glory, 7

The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His **glory**, the **glory** of the one and only Son from the Father, full of Grace and Truth. John 1:14

¹Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the **glory** of God. Romans 5:1-2

God is most glorified when you are most satisfied in Him. John Piper

Rejoice in knowing your ultimate purpose for praying is not to glorify yourself, but to bring glory to God. Bobby Gene Redding

Yesterday, I was clever so I took the glory for me. Today, He makes me wise so I give back the glory to Him. (unknown)

Their condemnation is deserved! 8b

Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who turn darkness to light and light to darkness, who replace bitter with sweet and sweet with bitter. Isaiah 5:20

People debate over whether or not there is a literal Hell, in the literal sense often described as fire and eternal torture, which, to many, seems to be too harsh a punishment. If men really want to fear something, they should be fearing separation from God, the supposedly more comforting alternative to a literal Hell. For separation from the authorship of love, mercy, and goodness is the ultimate torture. If you think a literal Hell sounds too bad, you are very much underestimating the pain of being absolutely, wholly separated from the goodness while exposed to the reality of the holiness of God. Criss Jami

Service suggestions

Theme

Human unfaithfulness or sinfulness does not nullify God's faithfulness, righteousness, or judgment. Even though Jewish privileges (such as receiving the Law) were significant, these privileges do not nullify sin; rather, God remains true and just in judging sin, even if human unrighteousness brings Him glory, because and his truth is upheld even when humans are sinners.

Call to worship

⁸⁹Your Word, O LORD, is everlasting;
it is firmly fixed in the heavens.
⁹⁰Your faithfulness continues through all generations;
You established the Earth, and it endures.
⁹¹Your ordinances stand to this day,
for all things are servants to You.
⁹²If Your Law had not been my delight,
then I would have perished in my affliction.
⁹³I will never forget Your precepts,
for by them You have revived me.
⁹⁴I am Yours; save me,
for I have sought Your precepts.
⁹⁵The wicked wait to destroy me,
but I will ponder Your testimonies.
⁹⁶I have seen a limit to all perfection,
but Your commandment is without limit. Psalm 119:89-96

Music and songs

Songs about the very words of God. 2b

Ancient words, Ot 94
Continue, continue, continue in His Word... know the Truth
Every promise of Your Word (Getty-Townend)
Firm foundation... I put my hope in Your holy Word, MP 999
Red letters (D C Talk)
So many books (Michael Card), Ot 81
The Book (Michael Card)

Songs about God's faithfulness, 3b

Be exalted, O God | Thy faithfulness to the clouds! SiS 396
By faith | those who prove His faithfulness (Getty)

Depending on Your righteousness | I'm believing in Your faithfulness (Rob Smith)
Great is Thy faithfulness O God my Father, H
The steadfast love of the Lord... Great is Thy faithfulness, 414
Unchanging | Great is Your faithfulness, Ot 10

Songs that mention the righteousness of God, 5a

And can it be that I should gain... clothed in righteousness divine, H 377
Hosanna... Here to reign in righteousness (M W Smith) Ot 110
In Christ alone... This gift of love and righteousness, Ot 4
In the likeness of You... Resurrected by Your righteousness (Petra)
Live for the Kingdom... Seeking His righteousness, Ot 15
My heart is filled with thankfulness... His law of righteousness (Getty), Ot 97
My hope is built on... Jesus' blood and righteousness, H 717
Nothing but the blood... This is all my righteousness, H 705
Now is the time... risen in His righteousness (Bullock)
Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, And His righteousness, SiS 96
Sing unto the Lord a new song... glory and righteousness, Ot 37
The earth is the Lord's... the ones who know His righteousness (Batstone)
This Kingdom... Jesus, God's righteousness revealed, Ot 47
We rejoice in the grace of God... clothed us with His righteousness (Cook)
You rescued me... A life transformed in righteousness, Ot 45

Songs about how could God judge the world, 6b

Lo, He comes with clouds, descending, H 200
O sinner man, where you gonna run to
When He rolls up His sleeves... Our God is an awesome God,

Songs about God's truthfulness, 7

A mighty Fortress is our God... His Truth to triumph through us, H 84
Continue... Truth shall set you free. FE 109
Hear O Lord and answer... I will walk in Your Truth (Howard), Psalm 86
I love You Lord, My Shepherd King... In You I've found this truth profound, 726
I'm forgiven... to the truth that I found in You (Hockensmith)
In a world full of broken dreams, Where the truth is hard to find... Be the one, Ot 67
Jesus, what a beautiful Name, Truth revealed (Tanya Riches) 777
Let the flame burn brighter... We'll walk for Truth, Ot 44
Let the Spirit in... to show God's Truth and Light, 88
Love incarnate - With a prayer... I will stand up for the truth
O church, arise... With shield of faith and belt of truth, Ot 68
Open my eyes, that I may see glimpses of truth You have for me, H 680
Rejoice, the Lord is King... The God of truth and love, H 181
Shine Jesus shine... Set us free by the truth You now bring us, 580
Speak, O Lord... Take Your truth, plant it deep in us, Ot 55
We limit not the Truth of God, H
We've a story to tell... Might come to the truth of God, H 353
Where else have we to go... Words of truth passed down, 6

Who is on the Lord's side? ...For His Truth unchanging, H 750

Songs about His glory, 7

Glorious things of thee are spoken

Glory (Go Fish), Ot 59

Glory Jesus glory, You do the fighting for me (Susie Wilson)

Heaven came down and glory filled my soul, CWH 46

The power and the glory of Your name, Ot 24

Thine be the glory, risen conquering Son, H 169

To God be the glory, H 741

Thought starters for personal reflection or group discussion.

1. Why would being the only country in the world to have God's Word be an advantage, v1-2, and a disadvantage?
 2. When people who say they are believers, live like unbelievers, v3-8, who are the winners, and who are the losers; and why?
 3. What is wrong with this logic, v3-8? "God should thank me for sinning, because it gives Him an opportunity to be merciful."
 4. Can you find the statements about God's judgement in v4b, 5b, 6b, 7b, and 8b? Now, combined what you just learned about God's judgement into a single sentence.
 5. Why do you think most people are not afraid of being thrown into Hell?
 6. In what ways does the privilege of v2 prepare us for both life and death?
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