

OBJECTIONS TO THE GOSPEL

Romans 3:1-8

By Andy Manning

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Romans is all about the gospel of Jesus Christ (see Rm 1:16-17 for the theme verse of Romans).
2. And the gospel is offensive.
3. If the gospel means good news, how can it be offensive? Because the gospel begins with bad news.
4. The gospel says
 - i. you are a sinner;
 - ii. your sins are so grievous that you deserve eternal punishment;
 - iii. there's nothing you can do to save yourself;
 - iv. and Jesus is the only way to be saved.
5. And many nonbelievers get hung up on the bad news. They don't like to hear that they are sinners; they don't like to hear that they deserve to go to hell; they don't like to hear that they can't do anything to work their way to heaven.
6. As a result, they often raise objections to the gospel. They argue with the gospel. "I'm not a sinner. I'm not that bad. I don't deserve to go to hell. I'm good enough to go to heaven. How could a loving God send people to hell?"
7. That's what we find our passage today. In Romans 2:17-29, Paul was speaking specifically to Jews and explaining why they need a savior. Paul said that Jews needed a Savior as much as the Gentiles because, even though they were Jewish, they too were sinners and deserved eternal punishment. The only way to be saved was to put their faith in Jesus.
8. After saying this, Paul anticipated that the Jews would raise objections. He knew some of them be offended. So, in 3:1-8, Paul deals with three objections to the gospel that he anticipated getting from the Jews. These are objections he has likely heard and dealt with before.

II. TEXT: Romans 3:1-8

1 So what advantage does the Jew have? Or what is the benefit of circumcision? 2 Considerable in every way. First, they were entrusted with

the very words of God. 3 What then? If some were unfaithful, will their unfaithfulness nullify God's faithfulness? 4 Absolutely not! Let God be true, even though everyone is a liar, as it is written:

That you may be justified in your words
and triumph when you judge.,

5 But if our unrighteousness highlights God's righteousness, what are we to say? I am using a human argument: Is God unrighteous to inflict wrath?

6 Absolutely not! Otherwise, how will God judge the world? 7 But if by my lie God's truth abounds to his glory, why am I also still being judged as a sinner? 8 And why not say, just as some people slanderously claim we say, "Let us do what is evil so that good may come"? Their condemnation is deserved!

III. **THREE OBJECTIONS TO THE GOSPEL**

1. **What is the advantage of being a Jew?**

- i. The first objection is made in verse 1.
- ii. **Romans 3:1** So what advantage does the Jew have? Or what is the benefit of circumcision?
- iii. In Romans 2:17-29, Paul said that being a Jew can't save you. It doesn't matter if you are related to Abraham; it doesn't matter if you know the law backwards and forwards; and it doesn't matter if you have been circumcised. The only way to be saved is through Jesus.
- iv. That would be like me saying to you, "Just because your parents are wealthy, that doesn't mean you will get an inheritance?" You might object, "What's the benefit of having parents?"
- v. The Jews objected. They said, "If being Jewish won't get us to heaven, then what's the advantage of being Jewish?"
- vi. Paul's answer is found in Romans 3:2.
- vii. **Romans 3:2** Considerable in every way. First, they were entrusted with the very words of God.
- viii. Paul said that there's a huge benefit to being a Jew. God gave the Jews His word – the Old Testament – and through His word they could have a relationship with Him.

- ix. It would be like me saying, “There’s a huge benefit to having rich parents. You get to have parents, and you get to have a relationship with them.”
- x. But notice that Paul used the word “entrusted.” The Jews were entrusted with the very words of God. That word implies responsibility. God didn’t just give the Jews the privilege of His word, but the responsibility of keeping His word. But if they failed to keep His word, they would be punished.
- xi. It would be like me saying to you, “Just because you have rich parents doesn’t mean that you will get a big inheritance. You must honor your parents. If you spend your life neglecting and dishonoring your parents, then they don’t have to leave you anything.”
- xii. In other words, Paul said that the advantage of being Jewish is you get the law. But to go to heaven you have to keep the law. And since the Jews haven’t kept the law, then their only hope for salvation is Jesus.
- xiii. Romans 6:23 makes this point very clearly.
- xiv. **Romans 6:23** For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- xv. In this verse Paul is saying that the wages of sin – the results, the consequences – is death – spiritual death, or eternal separation from God. And this doesn’t only apply to Gentiles. Whether you are a Jew or a Gentile, if you have sinned and disobeyed God’s word, then you deserve death. But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus. God has made a way to be saved, but it through Jesus, not through being Jewish.
- xvi. Let me be clear. Just as being Jewish won’t get you to heaven, neither will being Baptist, or Catholic, or Presbyterian, or Methodist, or Mormon, or Jehovah’s Witness, etc. You are a sinner, and you deserve divine judgment. Your only hope is Jesus Christ, who died for your sins.

2. If all the Jews are not saved, isn’t God being unfaithful?

- i. The second objection is raised in verse 3.

- ii. **Romans 3:3** What then? If some were unfaithful, will their unfaithfulness nullify God's faithfulness?
- iii. The Jews assumed that God promised that all the Jews would go to heaven. So, if the gospel says that only the Jews who believe in Jesus will be saved, isn't the gospel nullifying God's faithfulness? Isn't the gospel saying that God is unfaithful?
- iv. Paul's answer is found in verse 4.
- v. **Romans 3:4** Absolutely not! Let God be true, even though everyone is a liar, as it is written:
That you may be justified in your words
and triumph when you judge.
- vi. First, Paul affirms his belief in God's faithfulness. He says, "I'm not saying God is unfaithful. Let God be true, even though everyone is a liar." That simply means that all humans are unfaithful, but God always keeps His word. God always keeps His promises.
- vii. But how can you say that God always keeps His promises if He doesn't save all the Jews?
- viii. Any time you doubt God's faithfulness, it's because you have claimed a false promise. There are things that God has not promised, but some people think that He has promised them. For example, some Christians believe that God has promised health, wealth, and prosperity; a happy marriage; obedient children, etc., when God has not promised any of these things. And when they lack these things, they get angry with God for His unfaithfulness. But the problem is not God's unfaithfulness, but your misunderstanding of God's word. God always keeps His word, not your word. God always keeps His promises, not your promises, or the promises that you want Him to make.
- ix. Paul is implying that God is faithful even though He doesn't save all the Jews because He hasn't promised to save all the Jews. He never promised that all the Jews would go to heaven.
- x. But there is something He has promised.
- xi. Look at the rest of Paul's response.

- xii. **Romans 3:4** Absolutely not! Let God be true, even though everyone is a liar, as it is written:
That you may be justified in your words and triumph when you judge.
- xiii. Notice the words, “That you may be justified in your words and triumph when you judge.” That is a quotation of Psalm 51:4, written by King David after he committed adultery with Bathsheba and then murdered her husband Uriah. God had promised to give David rest from all of his enemies (2 Sam 7:11). But then David sinned, and as a result God punished him and said that the sword would never leave his house (2 Sam 12:10). In Psalm 51, David confessed his sin to God, and in verse 4 he said that God was right to punish him for his sin. The point of that verse is that God has the right to punish sin.
- xiv. Pau’s point is this. How is God faithful if He doesn’t save all the Jews? God hasn’t promised to save all the Jews. But He has promised to punish all those who do evil. And He will be faithful to do that.
- xv. This is why, whether you are a Jew or a Gentile, you need a Savior. Judgment Day is coming. Nothing can stop it. Only one thing can save you. Jesus Christ paid for your sins on the cross, and now you must repent and turn to Jesus.

3. If the Jews’ sin glorifies God, is it right for God to punish the Jews?

- i. The third objection to the gospel is worded in two different ways (Rm 3:5, 7) and answered in two different ways (Rm 3:6, 8). Let’s look at the objections in verses 5 and 7.
- ii. **Romans 3:5** But if our unrighteousness highlights God’s righteousness, what are we to say? I am using a human argument: Is God unrighteous to inflict wrath?
- iii. **Romans 3:7** But if by my lie God’s truth abounds to his glory, why am I also still being judged as a sinner?
- iv. Both of these mean the same thing. If the sins of the Jews glorify God, then how is it right for God to punish them?
- v. How do the sins of the Jews glorify God?

- vi. According to Paul, the gospel is God's response to man's sin, and the gospel glorifies God. So, since the Jews' sin glorifies God, God unrighteous for punishing them?
- vii. Paul answers the objection in two ways – verses 6 and 8. Let's look at each answer.
- viii. **Romans 3:6** Absolutely not! Otherwise, how will God judge the world?
- ix. By "world" Paul is referring to the human race, both Jews and Gentiles. The Jews believed that God was going to condemn Gentile sinners at the last judgment. So, Paul's answer is this: If it's not right for God to punish the Jews for their sin, then it's not right for God to judge the Gentiles either. If the Jews' sin glorifies God, then so does the sin of the Gentiles.
- x. In other words, there will obviously be a final judgment. And obviously God is going to punish the Gentiles for their sins. And if God is going to punish the Gentiles for their sins, then God must also punish the Jews for their sins, for God does not show favoritism (Rm 2:11). Once again, this is why the Jews need a Savior.
- xi. Paul answers this third objection a second way in verse 8.
- xii. Remember the objection. If the Jews' sin glorifies God, is it right for God to punish the Jews?
- xiii. **Romans 3:8** And why not say, just as some people slanderously claim we say, "Let us do what is evil so that good may come"? Their condemnation is deserved!
- xiv. Paul's second answer is this: If sin glorifies God, then you may as well say that God wants you to sin as much as possible. And anyone who says that obviously deserves condemnation.
- xv. Let's be clear about something sin does not glorify God. God is able to get the glory from sin, because is big enough to use even the bad for good. But sin does not glorify God. God hates sin, and He demands that we hate it is as well. The gospel is not that sin is good, but that God is good. That gospel is not that God encourages sin, but that God saves from sin.

IV. CONCLUSION

1. Once again, the gospel is offensive. It says (1) you are a sinner; (2) your sins are so grievous that you deserve eternal punishment; (3) there's nothing you can do to save yourself. There's nothing you can do to earn salvation; (4) and Jesus is the only way to be saved.
2. So people raise objections:
 - i. "The punishment doesn't fit the crime. I may be a sinner, but I don't deserve eternal hell." When you sin against an infinite God, you have to pay an infinite penalty.
 - ii. "How could a loving God send people to hell?" God doesn't want anyone to go to hell, and He has made a way for salvation. People only go to hell if they refuse God's plan of salvation.
 - iii. "Who are you to say there's only one way to be saved?" I didn't say it. The Bible says it. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me (Jn 14:6)."
 - iv. In the end, no matter what you say, all of man's objections to the gospel will be overruled.
3. You have to remember that there's more to the gospel than the bad news. The gospel begins with bad news, but then it gets really good. The gospel goes on to say that:
 - i. Even though you are a sinner, God still loves you.
 - ii. You deserve hell, but God has made a way for your rescue.
 - iii. There's nothing you can do to save yourself, but God has done everything necessary for your salvation. He sent Jesus to die for your sins.
 - iv. Jesus is the only way to salvation, but the good news is that there is a way to salvation. All you have to do is to believe in Jesus, and you can be forgiven of your sins and receive eternal life.
4. Today, instead of objecting to the gospel, instead of arguing with it, instead of criticizing it, my hope and prayer is that you will accept.
5. If you died today, are you sure that you would go to heaven? Are you sure that you are saved? If not, you can be saved right now and have the guarantee of heaven. It's as simple as A-B-C.
 - i. A – Admit you are a sinner in need of a Savior.

- ii. B – Believe that Jesus is the Savior, and that He died and rose again for your sins.
- iii. C – Call on Jesus to be your Lord and Savior. Ask for forgiveness. Commit your life to Him. Ask Him to save you and to make you into a new person.