

Romans 3:1-20

Paul's letter:

First, Paul is speaking to the historic **Israelites** in Rome who were proud of their physical circumcision which spoke of their heritage to Abraham, and Jacob/Israel. He addresses those circumcised Israelites, or Jews, in Romans 1 & 2, and issues a strong rebuke for exalting themselves above those non-Israelites who were not circumcised. He sounds as though those who were circumcised were outside of the faith. In his strong rebuke, he calls for the unity around the Christian faith.

Second, Paul points out that though they are the physical circumcised Israelite, their circumcision meant nothing within God's scheme of redemption.

Third, Paul goes on in chapter 3 telling them that by being the children of the ones to whom the law was committed, they are more accountable before God.

The Israelites were the descendants of those who came out of Egypt under Moses. The area where the tribe of Judah settled, which included Jerusalem, was identified as Judea, and the inhabitants became known as Jews. After the Babylonian captivity, all who resettle in land of Judah became known as Jews, regardless of what tribe they were from. Paul, a Benjamite, identified himself as a Jew.

The promise in Gen 12:1-5 was to Abraham, and circumcision was a sign of that promise. The promise was passed down through Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel. Of the twelve sons, Judah inherited from his father, Jacob, the promise, which was the promise of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was a Jew because he was born of the tribe of Judah.

V. 1, *the Jew?*

Jew here is an all-inclusive word, referring to all the Israelites of his day, particularly those in Rome. Their pride over being circumcised sons of Abraham and of being the recipients of the law at the Mount caused them to look down on all non-Israelites, or Gentiles.

Vv. 1-8

Typical of Paul's writing, he answers questions many times before they are asked. Knowing the Hebrew mind, for he was a Hebrew, he now answers a question that he knows is there.

V. 1, 2. *What advantage* is circumcision, or in being an Israelite?

V. 2, Paul answers this question before it is asked, as he lists the advantage.

The advantage for the Israelites over the non-Israelites is spelled out several times in the Hebrew scriptures. They had been entrusted with the oracles of God.

Deuteronomy 4:1-8

The law in Deuteronomy 4 is what is known as "Covenant-Law."

As with all covenants, there was and is a major **condition attached to the promised blessings, Deuteronomy**

4:6.

Condition?

Advantage...

The oracles of God, Acts 7:38-40

Problem:

Matthew 3:9

According to the 1906 Jewish Encyclopedia: "In the world to come Abraham sits at the gate of Gehenna, permitting none to enter who bears the seal of the covenant"

They were confident in their traditions, 1 Peter 1:18

Application

3:1 *What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? 2 Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.*

The American Covenant with God as recorded in the Mayflower Compact is being fulfilled.

Luke 12:48 (& Mat 25)

First, "What advantage have we by being in what was once known as a Christian nation?"

Much in every way. This nation was founded on the word of God as found in the Reformation Bible, which was the Geneva Bible. This nation was patterned after the civil and moral laws as given to ancient Israel.

As this nation took that privilege and responsibility seriously, God brought great blessings upon this nation. We sent Christian missionaries around the world. There was such a shortage of Bibles that in 1777, Congress financed the printing of the KJV Bible for the people.

God blessed this nation beyond anything the founders could have imagined. But with the covenant blessings, comes tremendous responsibility, and judgment.

Luke 12:48 (Matt 25)

Second, "What advantage has the New Covenant Nation established by and through faith in Christ, that nation

being the New Israel of God?”

Much in every way. To the Gospel Church has been committed all the *oracles of God*. (Matt 28:19, 20, 1 Corinthians 15:25, 25, Psalms 110:1, Mat 22:44, Mark 12:36 Heb 1:31, 10:12, 13.)

Third, “What advantage have we as individuals?”

Much in every way. We have been given all of the *oracles of God* for our good.

Deuteronomy 6:24 *And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as it is at this day. 10:13 To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?*

Fourth, “What advantage have we over the unsaved?”

Ps 73:5,

Ps 119:70,

Ps 73:7, 9, 14,

Ps 37:12.

What advantage?

Much in every way.

Isaiah 57:20 *But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.*

Psalms 73:18

“What advantage have the redeemed over the unsaved?”

Much in every way.

Adoption. Romans 8:17 Gal 4:7, Heb 1:2)

Justified. Romans 5:1

Purged conscience. Hebrews 9:14

Romans 3:1 What advantage hath those with the circumcised heart have over the uncircumcised who have great prosperity in this world?

1 Corinthians 2:9 *But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*

Romans 3:3-8.

V. 3. *What if... shall their unbelief...*

V. 4, *let God be true, but every man a liar...* Though the whole world, even those who profess the Christian faith, depart from faithfulness to his word, his word will still be true.

God must be found true, though every man be false to whatever God entrusts to him, the oracles, or the word of God.

To prove his point, Paul refers back to King David:

It is written... Paul quoted Psalms 51:4 (vv. 1-4, 1 « *To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba. » Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. 3 For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. 4 **Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.***

In 2 Samuel 7:15, 16, David received the promise of an everlasting kingdom

15 But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. 16 And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.

After the promise to King David:

In 2 Samuel 11

In 2 Samuel 12, Nathan confronts David with his sin.

In Psalms 51

In Romans 3:4

Psalms 51:4 *Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.*

“(e) When you give sentence against sinners, they must confess you to be just, and themselves sinners.” (Geneva)