

Let God Be True!

Romans 3:1-8

“No truth is so plain and evident but wicked wits and corrupt carnal hearts will have something to say against it; but divine truths must be cleared from cavil.” -- *Matthew Henry*

Examples of “plain and evident” truths and the rebuttals of “wicked wits and corrupt carnal hearts”:

God is love.

Then why did my daughter die? Then why are there wars? Then why is there a hell?

God is just.

Then why do sinners flourish and the righteous suffer? Then why did those people get so many advantages and these, so few?

God is mighty.

Then why are His people so weak? Why can I not find victory over temptation?

This tendency of man to resist and rebut Scriptural truth is featured in Romans 3. Man, like a mouse in a room, spares no effort not to be caught. Paul anticipates man's questions/accusations in verses 1, 3, and 5 and answers them one-by-one.

:1 – The argument is that Paul appears to be running down Jews and the rites which distinguish them. Are Jews not God's peculiar treasure, the apple of His eye, and the seed of Abraham His friend? What of texts such as Deut. 4:7-8 or Ps. 147:19-20? Is Paul saying what Jews have observed and cherished is insignificant and fruitless?”

:2 – Paul answers that he is teaching no such thing. Rather, the Jews are immensely privileged every way. (Compare Rom. 9:4-5.) Principally, the Jews were entrusted with that sacred treasure of the Scriptures for their benefit and for the advantage of the world. No greater honor could be conferred.

:3 – The second inquiry is: if some Jews are condemned, doesn't this loss reflect poorly on God who committed to saving *all* Jews? Is God unfaithful or unable to keep His promises?

:4 – Paul answers, “May it never be.” He shudders at this very possibility of impugning God and says let God be esteemed true, whatever implications follow for man. He then references Ps. 51:4, where David confesses the rightness of God's judgment of him, though in so doing he confirms himself to be an adulterer and murderer. Paul's shock at the wrongness of this inquiry is alone given to refute the error without him even going into the obvious answer that God never said every Jew is automatically redeemed. First, the Jews' covenant with God was *conditional*. Second, that covenant concerned primarily *temporal* blessings. Third, soul salvation has always been individual. (See Rom. 9:6ff.)

:5, 7, 8 – Now the third anticipated reaction: Is sin so bad if the effect is to highlight the purity of God (as is taught by David)? The more faithless we are, the more faithful appears our God. And if God comes out looking good, should sinners still be punished? Let us do evil that good may come!

:6 – Again, Paul says, may it NEVER be! Then *everybody* gets off! But every Jew was well taught and convinced that God would judge the world. See: “For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.” (Ecc. 12:14)) Besides, sins will be judged for their crime not primarily for their impact. Maxim: it is never right to do wrong to do right.

Summary of charges against God (and note, that is exactly what contentions are):

1. We can not trust the **provisions** of God. (“He gave us standards to save us that don't save us.”)
2. We can not trust the **promises** of God. (“He promised He'd be good to us, not *judge* us.”)
3. We can not trust the **procedure** of God. (“We are to glorify Him; we do by sin, yet still fail.”)

I. But friends, we *can* trust God's provisions, promises, and procedures. God IS faithful, however this truth reflects on man! Oh, what a different world this would be if man would regard this as a fixed principle: that God is true!

- A. Some people say you can't trust anything or anybody.
- B. Some people see nature – dogs, land, mountains – as the one thing to be counted on.
- C. Some people put their trust in a writer, poet, musician, teacher, or family member.
- D. Some people put their trust in a philosophy, tradition, or religion.
- E. But the Scriptures say, Let God be true, but every man a liar.
 1. These other sources of truth are as miniature shrubs over which God rises as a mighty sequoia as high as the heavens.
 2. If one were to examine the purity of God's truth in parts per trillion, there would not be one part anywhere ever found to be in error.
 3. If a line of absolute truth stretched to the end of the universe and God's declaration of that truth were drawn along side it, the two lines would run parallel the entire length.
- F. “Let God be true!”
 1. “He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.” (Deut. 32:4)
 2. “For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.” (Ps. 100:5)
 3. “The truth of the Lord endureth for ever.” (Ps. 117:2)

II. Surely we can do better than compare the truthfulness of God unto that of fallen nature, man, or institutions of man, for God not only is true . . . He is *truth!*

- A. We speak here of the essence of God.
 1. God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.
 2. God's knowledge and declarations eternally conform with the reality of who He is.
 3. “In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.” (Tit. 1:2)

B. So every word of God is true.

1. "Thy word is true from the beginning." (Ps. 119:160)
2. "Every word of God is pure." (Prov. 30:5)

C. Thus, when the Scriptures assert that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, the verse can be prefaced with "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance." (I Tim. 1:15)

D. When Paul writes that godliness is profitable in all things in this life and the one to come, again he can say, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance." (I Tim. 4:9)

E. So in the Book of Revelations, 21:5, when the Lord says, "Behold, I make all things new," He can add, "These words are true and faithful."

F. So when the Lord confirms that in eternity in heaven there shall be a river of the water of life, the Lamb of God, no curse, and no night, He can conclude, "These sayings are faithful and true."
(Rev. 22:6)

III. Successful people are those who took God at His word.

A. Whether the message is unprecedented . . .

1. Noah, warned of God to build an ark
2. Abraham and Sarah, told they would conceive
3. Moses, directed to lift his staff and the sea would divide
4. Snake-bitten Israel, instructed to look to a brass serpent on a staff and be healed
5. Joshua, commanded to march about a city seven times
6. Gideon, told that 300 soldiers could be victorious over myriads
7. Elisha, led to cast a stick into water to make an iron ax head float
8. Widow of Zeraphath, requested to give away her son's last meal
9. Disciples, charged to feed 5,000 people with a couple fish and loaves.
10. Peter, invited to walk on water

B. Or whether the message is personal . . .

1. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee."
(Jer. 31:3) *This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance.*

2. “But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.” (Isa. 59:2) *This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance.*
3. “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Rom. 5:8) *This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance.*
4. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” (Acts 16:31)
This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance.
5. “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.” (Ps. 103:12)
This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance.
6. “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” (I John 3:2)
This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance.
7. “And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” (Rev. 22:12) *This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance.*

Let everyone esteem God as true. Surrender all apprehensions and doubts. Questioning or contradicting the teachings of Holy Scripture, rightly presented, is questioning or contradicting GOD. It is God with whom we have to do. He and His truth are inseparable. Believe. Receive.

DISCUSSION

1. Give other examples of “plain and evident” truths about God and reactions of people against them.
2. Paul argues that the Jews are a privileged people. Do you consider yourself privileged? Explain.
3. Discuss this idea: “Let us do evil that good may come.” Can you illustrate? Is it ever right?
4. When has it been hard to take God at His Word? When easy? Testify about things you have learned.