

Studies in Romans

Questions and Answers (3:1-9)

Context

- **1:1-17 Introduction**
 - 1:1-5 Paul's greeting and a summary of the gospel
 - 1:6-15 Paul's relationship with the Romans
 - 1:16-17 Paul's thesis: God's gospel is powerful to save all who believe
- **1:18-4:25 The problem and God's solution**
 - 1:18-3:20 The problem: God's wrath at our unrighteousness
 - 1:18-32 Mankind is facing God's wrath, both now and, ultimately, in the future, because we have all rebelled against Him
 - 2:1-3:20 There are no exceptions and no excuses; even the Jews are sinners who face God's wrath

Romans chapter 3 - Paul is still preparing the ground for the rest of the letter by explaining *the problem* that faces all mankind...*which is what?* Paul has been logically and exhaustively explaining that there are no exceptions – all stand guilty before God and are deserving of His wrath – both Gentiles and Jews. See Paul's statements in **3:9** and **3:19**. So, Paul has dealt with the sins of the depraved pagan world (**1:18-32**) and he's dealt with the sins of the "respectable" religious world, especially the world of Judaism (**2:1-29**).

Now Paul wants to do a number of things.

1. He wants to answer some questions. Note the questions in **3:1-2**, **3-4**, **5-6**, **7-8**, and **9**.
2. He wants to show that the Old Testament Scriptures accused Israel of the very same sins he has mentioned (**3:10-18**). Paul's last question in **v. 9** flows into this point.
3. He wants to bring this section of his letter to a close (**3:19-20**).

The questions

First question: 3:1-2:

Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision?

Can you put it into your own words?

Are there any parallels in our current situation?

What's Paul's answer? See v. 2.

Note that Paul could have mentioned all kinds of things, but he focuses on this one blessing. The Jewish people were given the Word of God.

What's the benefit in having the written Word of God?

Second question: 3:3-4:

What's the question?

What about God's promises? Had God been unfaithful to Israel? Is having the Law such a great advantage? How is it an advantage when some Jews don't come to faith?

Which attribute of God is this question attacking?

What is Paul's answer?

Note that it's a common human practice when things are going wrong to put the blame on God...

In **verse 4**, Paul quotes from **Psalm 51:4**. *What is the significance of this? Why does Paul include this quotation?*

The next two questions: 3:5-6 and 7-8.

Basically Paul is asking: "Is God fair? Is God really just?"

How does Paul answer these questions?

What's the objection in vv. 7-8?

Last question: 3:9:

This is the question that Paul then goes on to develop in the following verses. *What is it?*

Paul's conclusion: 3:9-19

Paul now concludes the discussion that began way back in **chapter 2** (whether the Jews are any better off than the Gentiles) and he pulls together his argument that *all* mankind falls justly under the wrath of God.

Unanswered questions

- If everyone is rightly under God's condemnation, is there any hope for us?
- If God is completely just and faithful, how could He righteously save anyone?

For further discussion

- *Why do the questions in vv. 1-8 matter? What aspects of God's character are at stake at the end of chapter 2?*
- *How do professing Christian people persuade themselves it would not be fair for God to be angry with them, even if they will not repent (applying vv. 1-8)?*
- *What does Paul mean by God's faithfulness (v. 3)? If, when you pray, you thank God for His faithfulness, what do you mean?*
- *Paul says that everyone is guilty, and that includes us. In what ways do we show that we forget this? How can we remember this truth?*
- **Praise God...for His faithfulness and that He is "true, though every man a liar" (v. 4).**
- **Pray...for a deeper conviction of sin, and for a stronger understanding that we cannot save ourselves.**