

Bible Study Romans 3:9-31

1. Why do all people need to hear the gospel? How would you explain this to someone who doesn't believe in the existence of God?

2. **Read Rom 3:9-20.** This concludes the part of the argument that started in 2:1, that Jews as well as Gentiles are under God's wrath. Here Paul quotes from several OT passages – (in order) Ps 14:1-3, 5:9, 140:3, 10:7; Isa 59:7-8a & Ps 36:1b. Why do you think Paul quotes so much Old Testament?

To show that this is not a new idea. These passages are referring to God's people, not the Gentiles, so the OT testifies to the Jews as being deserving of judgement, not just Gentiles.

3. Have a closer look at the descriptions of vv 10-18. Why has Paul chosen these quotations? What are his major points here?

Notice the repetition of "all" – these verses tell of the universality of "total depravity" – that all people are equally, and totally, fallen from God's glory.

*Vv11-12 Show that we are both **unwilling** and **unable** to seek God.*

*So all are **culpable** before God – or v19 will be held accountable.*

By their words (vv13-14) and their actions (vv15-17) they express their rebellion. In every aspect of their being is affected and engaged in rebellion.

4. **Read Rom 3:21-26.** There are a few key words here. "Righteousness" = "justice". For God is it his right and morally perfect character. For us it is right standing before God. "Righteous" = "just" same root. "Justified" (same root word again) = "declared righteous".

"Faith" (noun) = "believe" (verb) (same root) means trust or rely on.

If you only had 2 minutes to explain the gospel to someone, using this passage, what would you say? Try to write a simple summary for yourself, or work out one as a group.

5. God freely justifies sinners. But he is also perfectly just. How can both be true? Do you tend to focus more on his justification or his justice? What is the result if/when you do?

When God justifies sinners, it's not by ignoring their sin. He deals justly with them – by punishing them in Christ – his righteous Son. Jesus is not an "innocent third party", God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself (2 Cor 5:19)

6. Why is it important that it is God who presented Jesus as the "sacrifice of atonement" (lit "propitiation" – that which turns away wrath)?

*To show that salvation is **all** of God – only he was willing and able to do something, only he could turn his anger aside, only if he takes the wrath on himself could it be just.*

7. **Read Rom 3:27-31.** Reflecting on what Paul had just written, what is the place of faith in salvation, and why can't the person who has faith boast in it?

Faith is essential for applying the work of Christ on the cross to any individual. But faith is only a response, receiving the benefits of the work done by God in Christ. It is not something we "do" and so we cannot boast in it as though it's something special about ourselves.

8. So is the Law (or the whole Old Testament) irrelevant now for Christians?

No! It was always right and good and still is. Not as a means of salvation, but of expressing God's righteous character and demands, in exposing our sin and need for his grace and forgiveness. The gospel now frees us up to pursue obedience to God's word.

9. What is it about the gospel that most moves you to praise God? Spend some time now praising God specifically for that thing.