

Romans Refresh

The Gospel of God

1

Indictment of Humanity Under Sin (1:18-3:20)

- God has a “lawsuit” against fallen human beings who have all turned aside to idolatry
- God’s retributive justice is the essential context of His saving righteousness (“salvation through judgment”)

2

Indictment of Humanity Under Sin (1:18-3:20)

- a. God’s wrath against idolatry (1:18-32)
- b. God’s wrath against the self-righteous judge (2:1-16)
- c. God’s wrath against those who rely on the Law (2:17-3:20)

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¹⁷ But if you bear the name “Jew” and rely upon the Law and boast in God,¹⁸ and know *His* will and approve the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law,¹⁹ and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness,²⁰ a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, having in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth,²¹ you, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that one shall not steal, do you steal?²² You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?²³ You who boast in the Law, through your breaking the Law, do you dishonor God?²⁴ For “THE NAME OF GOD IS BLASPHEMED AMONG THE GENTILES BECAUSE OF YOU,” just as it is written.

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²⁵ For indeed circumcision is of value if you practice the Law; but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.²⁶ So if the uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?²⁷ And he who is physically uncircumcised, if he keeps the Law, will he not judge you who though having the letter *of the Law* and circumcision are a transgressor of the Law?²⁸ For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh.²⁹ But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.

(Romans 2:17-29)

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Relying Upon the Law

1. No advantage in possessing the Law (2:17-29)

- those who know and teach the Law break the Law themselves—the Law cannot impart the obedience it demands
- the external work of the Law (“letter”) is contrasted with the internal, effective work of the Spirit

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Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision? ² Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God. ³ What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it? ⁴ May it never be! Rather, let God be true, and every man a liar, as it is written, "THAT YOU MAY BE JUSTIFIED IN YOUR WORDS, AND TRIUMPH WHEN YOU JUDGE."
⁵ But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? The God who inflicts wrath is not unrighteous, is He? (I am speaking in human terms.) ⁶ May it never be! For otherwise, how will God judge the world? ⁷ But if through my lie the truth of God abounded to His glory, why am I also still being judged as a sinner? ⁸ And why not say (as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say), "Let us do evil that good may come"? Their condemnation is just.

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Relying Upon the Law

2. The justification of God in Israel's failure (3:1-8)

- Israel's reliance on the Law resulted in their unbelief in the divine word concerning sin and salvation
- all human beings shall be made "liars" that God might be "justified" (vindicated) as God

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⁹ What then? Do we have an excuse? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; ¹⁰ as it is written,
 11 THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE;
 11 THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS,
 THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD;
 12 ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS;
 THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD,
 THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE.
 13 THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE,
 WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING,
 THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS;
 14 WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS;
 15 THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD,
 16 DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS,
 17 AND THE PATH OF PEACE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN.
 18 THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES.

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¹⁹ Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God; ²⁰ because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.

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Relying Upon the Law

3. All the world guilty before God (3:9-20)

- the divine charge is that every person is held captive to sin's power under God's righteous judgment
- the purpose of the Law is not justification or moral improvement but the demonstration of human guilt in the court of God

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Relying Upon the Law

- The first demand of the gospel is to believe and confess God's just judgment against us – we are without excuse

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