



OBJECTIONS

Romans 3:1-8

Introduction

- o End of Rom 2 concludes that Jews have no advantage over Gentiles *relative to justification b/c all Jews have sinned*. Rom 3:9-20 will end the long “all have sinned” section (Rom 1:18-3:20) by summarizing / concluding that all (Gentiles and Jews) have sinned.
 - Rom 3:1-8 is somewhat of a parenthesis dealing w/ objections and misunderstandings concerning Paul’s argument that Jews have no advantage relative to justification.
- o Are these objections theoretical? That is, Paul has surmised that these are possible Jewish objections given Paul’s understanding of their skewed logic OR are these actual objections that Paul has heard from Jews?
 - Rom 3:8 indicates that at least the objection in vv 7-8 was an actual real-life objection.
- o Probably, the remainder of the objections are real life, but whether they are or not, makes little difference.

I. **Objection # 1: By Paul’s logic of justification, there is no advantage to being a Jew. Rom 3:1-2**

- o Wrong, there is an advantage; the Jews had the “oracles of God.”
- o Rom 9:4-5 gives an expanded list beyond oracles.
- o “Oracles” w/ no context means spoken words. Here, probably means OT Scripture, God’s speaking in covenants, and Christ and NT Apostles’ spoken words.
 - Rom 3:3-4 will pick up on God’s spoken words. Note, that God’s spoken words will be equated w/ Scripture.
- o Modern Meaning: The Triune God is a speaking God. Being in a Bible preaching/reading Church is an advantage!!!—even if it is true that hearing the Bible does not automatically make one a Xn.

II. **Objection # 2: Paul said all Jews are not saved; therefore, God is unfaithful if all Jews are not saved. Rom 3:3-4**

- o Wrong, God never promised that he would save all Jews and never promised not to call sin as sin. God is still faithful to his word and truthful even when Jews sin. Read the OT.
- Paul quotes Ps 51:4 in Rom 3:4. David's confession of sin assumes that God has said that David was a sinner. God's statement of David's sin proves that God was faithful to truth and his covenants.
 - Interestingly, in context of Ps 51, God calls David's sin as sin, but also shows covenant mercy to David as David was a true believer. Paul does not explicitly use that aspect of Ps 51 here. But it is another proof of God's true faithfulness, which is to have mercy on true believers.
 - Ps 116:11 may also be in the background here.
- o In Rom 9-11, similar questions will come up about God's faithfulness of his word to Israel. Part of the answer there is to point out that "not all Israel is Israel" (Rom 9:6) and there is a "remnant" (Rom 11:5). Paul goes through many OT verses to show both Gentiles and true Israel were/are part of God's faithful plan.
- o Modern Meaning: Everyone who says she was/is a Xn was/is not necessarily a Xn. When God and God's true representatives call her sin of unfaithfulness a sin, it ultimately proves God true as the "fake" Xn is shown to be a liar.

III. Objection # 3: OK, if our sin actually helps show God's faithfulness/truthfulness, we should not be punished for our faithlessness b/c we actually helped God. Rom 3:5-8

- o Wrong, this "logic" involves two absurdities: (A) God could then judge no one (Rom 3:5-6), and (B) Doing evil would be a good thing to do (Rom 3:7-8).
- o Concerning (A), using a rhetorical question, Paul notes what the OT and NT state often, God will judge the world. In fact, the Ps 51:4 quote already partially proves this.
- o Concerning (B), Paul simply assumes that God has not designed the world that so that humans from their own perspective are to purposely to do evil so that good may come. (Of course, from God's providential-control perspective, humans may intend evil, but God brings good out of it [Gen 50:20].)
- o Although not exactly the same, a similar objection is brought out in Rom 6:1. The "answer" takes a different tact.
- o Modern Meaning (A): God will judge those who are ultimately unrepentant. This truth dovetails with the larger argument that all are sinners and need the Gospel. Why? Because unrepentant sinners will be judged with wrath. At what level do our non-Xn neighbors believe in a final judgment?
- o Modern Meaning (B): Paul's statement is a refutation of the "ethical" principle that "the ends justify the means."

Discussion Groups

1. What non-redemptive advantages exist for those that attend a Bible-believing church? (Related to Objection # 1.)

2. For many different types of issues, in what ways can you winsomely tell your non-Xn neighbor and the secular culture that they are liars and God is truthful. If applicable, what is hindering you from even attempting this? (Related to Objection # 2.)

3. What issues / life-situations tempt you to use the principle that the ends justify the means? (Related to Objection # 3.)
