

## **“OBJECTIONS OVERRULED.”**

**Rev. Robert T. Woodyard**

**First Christian Reformed Church**

**June 18, 2023, 10:30 AM**

**Scripture Texts: Romans 2:29 – 3:9**

### **Introduction.**

We have been using a courtroom scene to describe how Paul addressed the serious issue of sin. As the spiritual prosecuting attorney he has brought charges against not just two people but two races of people, both the Gentiles and the Jews, both are under sin.

As we saw last week Paul said some very controversial things to the proud Jews. It should come as no surprise that there would be some pushback, someone saying, “Objection, your honor.”

This text reads like there is an unseen defense attorney raising objections and Paul is answering them. We will hear three objections.

Objection #1 What about God’s People? Vss. 1-2.

Objection #2 What about God’s Promises? Vss. 3-4.

Objection #3 What about God’s Purity? Vss. 5-8.

### **Objection #1 What about God’s People? Vss. 3:1-2**

The objection starts with the word then, which implies there is an if. If what you say is true, Paul, if being of the chosen people of God from among all the nations of the earth and if being children of Abraham doesn’t save us, if all the countless privileges God bestowed on us, if circumcision by itself is of no benefit, then what is the advantage of being a Jew?

Isn’t what God did for the past two thousand years of some value? Didn’t God make them His people and lavish on them blessing upon blessings? Was all that for nothing? Hasn’t God been fulfilling His good purposes through the Jews? If as you say, Paul, a true Jew is only one who is a Jew inwardly, in the heart, then what is the value of being a Jew outwardly?

If being Abraham’s descendants doesn’t save us then what’s the point? If circumcision doesn’t save us then why bother to be circumcised?

Whenever you hear the word circumcised you need to think baptism. What is the value of your baptism? What is the value of being a child of the covenant? If it doesn’t save you then what’s the point? What benefit is there to being called a Christian and observing what God commands, if it doesn’t save us?

We would expect Paul’s answer to be, no value at all. But Paul surprises us and says, of course there is value. The Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God, the Holy Scriptures.

Paul starts with the greatest reason for the superiority of the Jews, they have been entrusted with the oracles of God. God gave His Holy Word to the Jews to keep safe and to be stewards of it for generations to come.

### ***The Oracles of God.***

Every week I declare to you what you are about to hear is the eternally true, trustworthy, faithful, inerrant Word of the living God. There is nothing else in the world even close to it. This is from heaven, it is holy, it is living and active and sharper than any double-edged sword.

God has revealed Himself to us. We have a written description of God's eternal nature, His character, who He is and what He is like.

We also have a written description of His will and His commands, of His purpose and plan for us. We are created to know God, to love God and to love each other.

In chapter 2 Paul spoke of the law of God given to the Jews. When Paul says oracles of God here, yes, in one sense he means the whole OT, but he means something more specific.

**II Timothy 3:15** The sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

The sacred writings, the oracles of God are entrusted to us to make us wise for salvation. The oracles of God contain the great promises of God concerning the coming of the Messiah.

Everything the Jews needed to know for their salvation, was entrusted to them, but instead of trusting it, they rejected it.

The Jews rejected Jesus because of their preconceived notions of what a Messiah would look like and do. And in so doing they really rejected the oracles of God, and removed their advantage. But we are the people of God they say, we are the children of Abraham. And John the Baptist told the Pharisees, "God is able to turn stones into children of Abraham." And so He did, they are called Gentiles, turning hearts of stone into hearts of flesh.

The same oracles of God have been entrusted now to the church of Jesus Christ, to us. If God has given such a great gift, our greatest advantage, what will happen if we neglect or reject it? The Jews have lost it. Don't be like them. Open your Bible, read it, listen to it, obey it, let it convict you of your sin. Love it, protect it from attack, defend it. Where our culture hates it, there love it, be thankful for the truth. Where our culture is dulling it, sharpen it.

It is the job of the church and of Christians to protect, defend, and uphold the Word of God. Without this benefit and advantage all the others are of no help to us.

## **Objection #2 What about God's Promises? Vss. 3:3-4**

Now comes the second, objection, your honor. Objection Paul.

What about God's promises? Hasn't God made promises and isn't God faithful to all His promises? Can God keep His promises and pour out His wrath on His covenant people at the same time? If God judges His people, doesn't that make Him unfaithful to His promises?

Again Paul surprises us, and says, in the strongest terms, by no means! May it never be! God forbid!

Does that sound like an answer to their objection to you? They are making an argument and Paul just says by no means! Paul doesn't enter into long debates with these objections. He knows the authority with which he speaks, and he knows when not to dignify ridiculous accusations with a response.

You parents know the value of this. You have given some instructions to your child and your child says, "why?" And maybe you explain yourself a couple of times and they still say "why?" And that's when you rise up with your full God-given authority and you utter those four words, "because I said so!"

I know some child raising experts say you shouldn't do that, but they are wrong. Parents are given to children to be like God to them, to show them what God is like. You care for them, provide for them, teach and instruct them, and discipline and correct and rebuke them. They learn what God is like from that. And when you say, "because I said so" they learn God's authority, God is God and He is not to be argued with, but to be obeyed.

Can the Jews infidelity, can their rejection of the Messiah, can the unbelief of those who to whom such great privileges were given, can they take away the glory of God and His promises and His covenant? No, it is an offensive thing to say God's faithfulness is dependent on the sinfulness of man.

Even if all the Jews are unfaithful to the covenant, in fact, even if every man is a liar, even if God judged them all, He would not and could not be untrue to His promises and His covenant. Their lack of faith doesn't make null and void God's faithfulness.

Even if all men are liars, God remains faithful and true. Do you know what all men are liars, and all women too? Do you know that? Do you believe that?

All men and all women are liars. All husbands, all wives, all fathers, all mothers, all kids. Hold on to your hat, all elders and deacons, all pastors.

We promote falsehood and shun the truth.

We cover up our sin so we can look better than we are, we hide the truth about ourselves.

We all lie about countless numbers of things, big and small, day in and day out.

It is impossible for us not to lie. We twist the truth, we use guile, we exaggerate, we understate. We spin the truth in our favor, or to gain favor from others, or protect our pride.

This is a central truth of Christianity. All men are sinners, all hearts are desperately wicked and full of sin and full of deceit.

Even the greatest king of Israel, King David, was a liar and Paul uses him as his example when he quotes him. God is faithful even when His anointed king sins.

Psalms 51 was written by David after the prophet Nathan rebuked the king for his sin with Bathsheba. David immediately flies off the handle, denounces Nathan saying how dare you come in here and confront the king of Israel and call me a sinner. Who do you think you are? And what about your own sins, what about that? Now get out of here before I have you killed.

No, David makes no claim on his Jewishness or being a child of Abraham or God's chosen king.

**Psalm 51:3-5** For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.  
4 Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight,  
so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.  
5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

God is God. I have sinned against God and God is just and justified to judge me and cast me off.

David immediately submits, immediately confesses the truth about his sin. He confesses that he has no merit, no standing before God, no way of deserving anything but judgment. He acknowledges God would be completely just and justified to wash His hands of David, to remove him, to send him straight to hell. God will be a just and righteous judge whatever He decides to do.

Paul's point is the Jews had been given exceedingly great benefits and advantages by God, like King David, and in return they sinned and rebelled and rejected God and His oracles and His Messiah. Therefore, as David acknowledged, God is completely just and righteous and justified to pronounce judgment, and doing so doesn't make God unfaithful to His promises.

The greatest covenant king in history had no problem confessing that he was a sinner from the very beginning. The greatest of the apostles had no problem confessing he was a sinner, in fact the worst of all sinners.

**I John 1:8-10** If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

This is Christianity, this is the mark of the Christian, hypocrites don't repent, humble Christians do.

### **Objection #3 What about God's Purity? Vss. 3:5-8**

Now comes the third objection. The objectors think they really have Paul cornered now. They have him trapped in a huge contradiction.

What about God's purity, God's righteousness?

Paul had to deal with absurd arguments, the same kind of arguments unbelievers like to make up and throw at Christian evangelists and Christian apologists and Christian pastors. They try to trap God into being unfair, mean, not a nice God.

If our sin has the effect of revealing God's righteousness and His great grace and mercy toward sinners, then isn't it unjust for God to punish our sin when it has a good effect?

If our unrighteousness makes God look righteous, then why does God judge or punish us? If all men are liars and I am a liar, and my lie glorifies God, then why does He judge me as a sinner?

If God does this He is being unrighteous and therefore He can't rightly judge those whom He used to make Himself look righteous, to enhance His glory.

So they slanderously charge, why not do evil so God is glorified? Let's sin so grace abounds. Let's let the end justify the means.

God forbid! What utter arrogance, they have no fear of God.

Don't you know who you are talking to, don't you know who God is? You are trying to act like you are the judge and jury of God. You are trying to put God on the witness stand and make Him answer you. This is backwards.

God is judge and God can judge anyone He wants, and when He does, He will be completely just and justified. That is what David humbly confessed and acknowledged and submitted to.

But the Jews didn't learn anything from David, they are proud. Only proud people argue with God. Only proud people call God mean or unfair. Only proud people question God's righteousness and purity and holiness and perfection.

Can the *clay judge the potter*? Where does the clay get off telling the potter what to do, or suggesting the potter isn't doing it right. Can the creature judge the Creator?

God is God, God is the judge and God's judgments are always true, right and just. He cannot be unjust. His wrath is pure, holy, justified and righteous.

Paul dismissed this utterly foolish nonsense, he doesn't dignify such perverse thinking with an answer. He simply dismisses it with their condemnation is just. Their damnation is justified.

### **Implications and application.**

Now let me apply this to us. Remember the Jews were complacent and presumptuous, they were safe, because they were God's people after all. We do the same. We think:

I am baptized, I go to church, I go to a Christian school, I live in a Christian town, I live in a Christian country, I know my Bible, I have made profession of faith, I give money, I help at church, I volunteer, I don't swear (well not very much). I am not like those other hypocrites. I hang out with good people. We are safe, we are saved.

I said all those things to God when I was a freshman and sophomore in high school. I could not imagine God not letting me in heaven. I wasn't a bad person, I wasn't a big sinner. How could a loving, good and fair God not let me in heaven?

I didn't see my sin as all that big a deal, why would God make a big deal out of it? The real problem was I didn't know the true God and I didn't fear God. I only knew a God I had invented, made up according to how I thought He should be.

I didn't know His purity, His righteousness. He didn't have my heart, my repentance.

There are Jews who aren't Jews, there are Christians who aren't Christians. There are those who say "Lord, Lord" and Jesus says, "I don't know you." God has no problem judging and punishing and disciplining His people, whether they are Jews or Christians.

Don't dare to presume on God, humble yourself, repent of your sin, acknowledge your need for a changed heart. Christianity is a matter of the heart, not outward rituals or behavior.

They are not your justification, they are the sign you are justified. They are the fruit from a tree that is inwardly good. They are the walls of a house built on the rock of Jesus Christ.

Abandon all your trust in yourself and in anything you do, abandon all trust in anything you are trusting in that is not the saving righteousness of Jesus Christ on the cross. Put no confidence in the flesh, boast in nothing but Jesus and His righteousness.

Surrender to God, submit to the Word of God, humble yourselves to the oracles of God. Fear God, glorify God. Love Jesus, boast in His Gospel. May your praise be from God and not from man.