

Romans 3

Read Romans 3:1-20: Paul continues to disassemble the arguments of men. He has broken down the Jews as being culpable, and not being good representations of God. They pulled a Forrest Gump and missed the call entirely. It would be easy to take a fatalistic view of man's sin dilemma, and not even try to connect with God. Why even try this impossible thing? Is it pointless to try to live a holy life, knowing that we are self-defeating and hypocrites? Paul is emphatically opposing this cowardly view.

Understanding Fatalism

Fatalism is the belief that all events are predetermined and that human actions have no influence on future outcomes. This perspective often leads to a sense of resignation, where individuals feel powerless to change their circumstances.

Flaws in the Fatalistic View

The fatalistic argument is criticized for several reasons:

- **Inaction:** Fatalism suggests that since the future is fixed, there is no point in taking action. This can lead to a lack of motivation and effort.
- **Ignoring Influence:** It overlooks the fact that actions can indeed influence outcomes. For example, making decisions or taking precautions can change the course of events.
- **Irrationality:** Believing that one's actions are futile is considered irrational. It dismisses the reality that effort can lead to different results.

The Consequences of Fatalism

The fatalistic mindset can have negative effects on individuals, including:

- **Resignation:** A belief that nothing can be changed may lead to a passive approach to life.
- **Mental Health Risks:** This attitude can contribute to feelings of depression and hopelessness, particularly among those who already face challenges.

Fatalism is laziness and quitting. It is like the angry teenager who rages at their *perfect* parents. His failure breeds contempt, rather than to carefully consider the best path forward.

God knew our life's decisions before the world began, and he still made his offers to us...so there is hope. Otherwise, there would be no reason for the offer. Chapter 2 broke down any pride the Jew might have. Does that mean that there is no hope for the wayward Jews? Not at all. Let's do the math: God has chosen them for a special work. He gave them his living word. They will rise again in the end.

Is the whole exercise of starting with Abram, Isaac and Jacob a waste? Not at all. The Jews were supposed to be lights to the whole world, collectively. Instead, they just became a limited delivery system. It was not a pretty handoff, but it worked.

¹¹ Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. ¹² But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their full inclusion bring! ¹³ I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I take pride in my ministry ¹⁴ in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them. ¹⁵ For if their rejection brought reconciliation to the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? ¹⁶ If the part of the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; if the root is holy, so are the branches. ¹⁷ If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, ¹⁸ do not consider yourself to be superior to those other branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you. ¹⁹ You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in." ²⁰ Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but tremble. ²¹ For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either. (Romans 11)

The Gentile church ran with it. The good thing about God's word is that it is like a lion. Just let it out, and stand back and watch it do its work. In the near term, the Jews failed...but God will make them succeed in the end.

"Sing, barren woman, you who never bore a child; burst into song, shout for joy, you who were never in labor; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband," says the Lord. ² "Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back; lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes. (Isaiah 54)

Secondly, the end-game idea is to glorify God for his goodness...not keep finding a path to make ourselves look good or worthy. That is an exhausting and pointless exercise. You would literally have to re-write history.

Redemption is a great characteristic of God. He fixes broken people and re-purposes us. He can do great things with average (or less) people. He puts a Holy Spirit power pack in us; which changes everything that now becomes possible.



God does not want us to think that it is all about us. He also does not want us to throw up our hands and declare any effort to be pointless. Like anything repurposed or recycled, we need to be broken down before we can be rebuilt. This is called total repentance. The act of baptism is a symbolic drowning of the old self, and the emergence of the new God-powered man.

God will accept us for who we truly are, if we accept him for who he truly is.

Now that Paul has established that nobody has a leg to stand on in God's presence, he offers a path forward to the abundant and blessed life. We have to completely buy in to the Mosaic Law; and see that we are utterly covered in sin. Next, we have to understand that God's power and holiness is unlimited. We cannot do anything to help our cause...but God can. He has a redemption plan for those humble enough to submit themselves to it. We have to be careful to not stop short of God's salvation process by thinking that we can just become a better person. In God's eyes, we just don't cut it at all....unless we are willing to ask for help.

We greatly misunderstand what happened in the Garden of Eden. The fruit did not make Adam sin. Adam was a sinner, without defining rules or evidence...until God put the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in it. It was like adding a CHP radar to highway travelers who did not know they were sinning. The Jews failed to carry out the Law; but they launched it. God always wins. Always. In this sense, I have seen how God has allowed me to fail-forward in my faith.

Read Romans 3:21-31: Now that everyone is broken down; and hopefully repenting...we can open the door of hope for the way out of this dilemma. There is no gospel (good news) if there is no bad news. It is a huge disservice not to convince all men that they are sinners. They would have no reason to consider a solution or subject themselves to the remedy. They would otherwise perish to hell without knowing they need to alter their course.

God has an alternative righteousness that has nothing to do with living a perfect and sinless life. God has said that if we believe everything about God, that is a form righteousness and God-alignment in itself. Agreeing with God and trusting in his promises is a right thing. Jesus is the sum-total of God's promises to men. The name, *Jesus* means, Jehovah is salvation.

⁹ Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? ¹⁰ Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. ¹¹ Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. (John 14)

Key Names of Jehovah

Name	Meaning	Biblical Reference
Jehovah Jireh	The Lord Will Provide	Genesis 22
Jehovah Rapha	The Lord Who Heals	Exodus 15
Jehovah Nissi	The Lord, My Banner	Exodus 17
Jehovah Shalom	The Lord, My Peace	Judges 6
Jehovah M'Kaddesh	The Lord Who Sanctifies	Exodus 31
Jehovah Sabaoth	The Lord of Hosts	1 Samuel 1
Jehovah Tsidkenu	The Lord Our Righteousness	Jeremiah 23
Jehovah Shammah	The Lord Is There	Ezekiel 48

Additional Insights

- **Jehovah Shalom:** This name emphasizes that God is the embodiment of peace, offering completeness and tranquility beyond worldly understanding.
- **Jehovah Jireh:** This name signifies God's provision, illustrating His ability to meet the needs of His people.
- **Jehovah Rapha:** This name highlights God's healing power, assuring believers of His ability to restore health and wholeness.

Each name serves as a reminder of God's nature and His relationship with humanity, providing comfort and assurance in various aspects of life.

If I believe that God is my peace and righteousness; how does that practically transpire? Jesus paid for my sins on the cross. He erased all of my traffic tickets, lustful thoughts, lies, hatred and living in inconsiderate ways. In other words, it is like a memory wipe. I know that I have sinned every day of my life...but we have all just agreed to erase that from our memories, because Jesus kept satisfying the penalty.

When Moses had proclaimed every command of the law to all the people, he took the blood of calves, together with water, scarlet wool and branches of hyssop, and sprinkled the scroll and all the people. ²⁰ He said, "This is the blood of the covenant, which God has commanded you to keep." ²¹ In the same way, he sprinkled with the blood both the tabernacle and everything used in its ceremonies. ²² In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. (Hebrews 9)

Does this sin amnesty plan in Christ mean that the Mosaic Law was pointless? No. God will not overlook sin. It is terrible. At the same time, God loves us, and he found a way to make us his wife. The price that Jesus paid is so hard that we will never understand how bad and hard it was. That is not just the humanity on the cross. That was being rejected by his father and going to hell. Like a woman in labor; he was able to look past it.