



PASSION FOR TRUTH

WHERE NEW LIFE BEGINS

Decoding Romans Chapter 3 - What Are The Works Of The Law? - Jim Staley 2025 - Transcript

0:00:00 If you have never studied the book of Romans from the original **Hebraic** Jewish backdrop, man, are you missing out! We've been reading into the Scriptures what we denominationally believe, rather than pulling out of the Scriptures exactly what Rabbi Paul is talking about. For instance, the "works of the law" that he talks about in Chapter Three are completely different from actually keeping the **Torah**. If you don't know that, you're going to read into it what you already believe. So we're going to talk about the difference between the law of God, the Oral Law, the **halakha** of the Jews, and how it relates to God's message through Paul to the church at Rome. And we're going to do it right after this.

0:00:45 Hello everyone, and welcome to this week's broadcast. I'm Jim Staley with Passion for Truth Ministries, and this week's broadcast is going to definitely pick up where last week's broadcast in Romans, Chapter Two, left off. We're going to get into more controversy as we discover that the gap between traditional Western Christian theology and interpretation of Romans widens as we uncover the ancient Hebraic understanding and backdrop from which Romans was written. Paul was a Jew. His name was never changed from Saul to Paul. **Sha'ul** was his Hebrew name; **Paulos** was his Roman name. Many people had multiple names in that culture with multiple languages. Paul was not a Gentile. He was a rabbi at the highest level, studying under the greatest rabbi of the first century, the president of the **Sanhedrin, Gamliel**. He had to have the whole Torah memorized, word for word. This guy was an unbelievable scholar—**Ivy League** level.

0:01:45 Before we walk into Romans, will you do us a favor? If you want to learn the depth of God's Word, verse by verse, here at [Passion for Truth](#), and if this kind of stuff excites you, and you want to learn more about the foundations of what you believe, I'm telling you, it's going to challenge everything that you've believed so far. But really, if your motivation is to get back to the truth—the whole truth, and nothing but the truth—then this channel is for you. So if that's what you're looking for, then hit [subscribe](#) right now and turn on your notification bell, and we'll make sure that you know every single time a

broadcast gets released, every single week, on Saturday, on **Shabbat**, at 11 a.m. Central Standard Time. That's when our broadcast will be released, and we're excited to bring this week's broadcast to you.

0:02:30 So before we dive into Romans, Chapter Three—which has great sentimental value for me, because all the way back in 2007, this was the chapter that changed my life—let's do a quick review of Chapters One and Two, so we can all be on the same page. First of all, Paul did not start these churches in Rome. This is about 10 years later that these churches existed. Paul's getting rumors of things that are happening inside the local **ecclesia**, the assembly of that day, and so he's wanting to establish his authority as the apostle to the Gentiles and begin to instruct them on exactly what the gospel was, because they were polluting the gospel. The gospel was being challenged and threatened by the current theology and **halakha**, or the tradition of the elders of Judaism, that were coming into Christianity—or the sect of Judaism called "The Way"—and it was threatening the entire foundation of the gospel. So Paul had to do something about it.

0:03:34 Chapter One is written mainly to the Gentile believers in Rome, and he's talking to them and saying: "Look, you have to come out of your paganism. You can't be judging the Jews for how they're judging you if you're doing some of the things that the Gentiles are doing—like fornicating, being angry, and all these things. You can't do those things." Chapter Two, he switches the conversation and is mainly addressing the Jewish community of believers that had this false notion that just because they were Jewish and they grew up with the Torah, somehow that made them in right standing with God. They believed God wasn't going to judge them. And that's an important distinction that you, as a Bible student, need to understand. Jewish culture in the first century believed they were not going to be judged because they were the promised people. They were the people of God. They were Israel. They had the Torah. They were better than everybody else. They believed that it was the Gentiles—those that were out of covenant with the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—they were the ones that were going to be judged, not them. Paul's like, "Hey, slow down. That's not true." And he begins to quote prophet after prophet after prophet to show that the whole world is going to be judged, and **you** are going to be judged first. Why? Because you have the **Torah**. You know better. You have the written instructions, but you're using it wrong. But what he's trying to convey is that everyone is going to be judged by the same law. Period. The Gentiles don't have a separate law that they're going to be judged by. The Jews don't have their own separate law. God has one law. He's judging the entire world by it. That's how we have the definition of sin. [1 John 3:4](#) says that sin is the transgression of the law. So, the law defines what sin is, and when we break it, we become condemned by it. Therefore, there's no way out of it. We deserve death. [Romans 3:23](#), which we're going to discover, says: "The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life"—that we'll find in [Romans 6:23](#).

You guys know this. The Romans wrote: all of salvation depends on there being a law to break. And so, in traditional Christian theology in the West—one that does not understand Middle Eastern, biblical, Hebraic, Jewish theology of the first century—we begin to create an antinomianistic view. What does that mean? It's an anti-law perspective and, by extension, an anti-Semitic and anti-Jewish perspective.

0:06:08 So, our 21st-century Western Christian replacement theology has really created a disadvantage for Christians in the West, and really across the globe, because we begin to look at the Scriptures from our own denominational bias that is anti-law. Why? Because we don't understand the players in the first century. That's what we're doing here. We're trying to understand: What are the arguments? What did Paul believe? What did Judaism believe? What was the problem between the believing Jew and the believing Gentile? So, we can accurately know what Paul is trying to say. As we get into Chapter Three, we're going to discuss more of the conversation that Paul is having in Chapter Two. Chapter Three should not even exist. There should be no separation between Chapter Two and Chapter Three—it's the same exact thought. As a matter of fact, he starts the chapter with a question that's all about everything he just said in Chapter Two. Remember, there are no chapter breaks and no verse breaks in the original manuscripts. These were just simple letters. Okay? As we go through this review, a couple of other things come to mind that are important for us to address.

0:07:24 Number one: the Oral Law versus the Written Law, and the **halakah** (or the tradition of the elders of the first century). The Written Law was called the **Torah**. That's a Hebrew word that doesn't even mean "law." It means "instructions." All right? And so, everybody has instructions. My wife has instructions for me. I have instructions for my children. If you have a boss, your boss has instructions for you. All of that was called **Torah**. God wrote it down on Mount Sinai. So, the Torah is not just the Ten Commandments, as we've been told in traditional Christian thought. We know that we say the Law of God has been done away with, but we're really uncomfortable getting rid of the Ten Commandments. So, we keep the Ten Commandments—but we only keep nine because we don't really keep the Fourth Commandment, which is "Honor the Sabbath on the seventh day." That got moved to the first day of the week by Rome in the fourth century. I know this is a lot for some of you, but we kept the Ten Commandments. Yet, that's not the Torah. The Ten Commandments were called the "Ten Words" in Hebrew, and those Ten Words are basically the categories of the rest of the law.

0:08:32 On top of that were the golden commandments: "Love God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength," and "Love your neighbor as yourself." Like Jesus said, the rest of the commandments hang off of those. So, the entire overarching purpose of the law is **love**. Then there are the Ten

Commandments, which are like the chapter headings. Underneath them are the rest of the 613 traditional commandments in the Scriptures. All of that is called the Written Torah. Then, you have what is considered the Oral Law in the first century, which is really comprised of the rabbinical interpretation of the Written Law of God and what they believed. God gave Moses the law orally, but Moses didn't write it down. What he did write down became the Torah. What he didn't write down, they say, is the Oral Law, and they conveniently get to be the ones to determine what God told him, saying that nobody would know except for Moses.

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At the end of the day, what happened was that they created a different law in the first century, called Rabbinic Law—the tradition and doctrine of men that Paul talks about, the tradition of the elders that Jesus talks about—and that trumped the written law. So all of it together—the written law, the Oral Law, the tradition of the elders—they considered that, quote, “The Law.” This is where it gets confusing as we read some of these letters by a Jewish rabbi called Paul, who is fighting other Jewish rabbis and religious Jews that are infiltrating the church into this Yeshua movement. They were accepting Christ. They got that Yeshua was the Messiah, but they were bringing along all of this baggage of a belief system that was false and mixed, like the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Paul was trying to unravel it because the Jewish believers began to teach the Gentiles in the early church this doctrine of what it really meant to be saved. What they didn't realize was that they were teaching false doctrine that was threatening the gospel of Yeshua. This is what's going on. Some of the Jews that were coming to Christ still had this mindset, like I said, and so Paul has to step in and correct them. That's what these letters really abundantly are—from Ephesians to Galatians to Romans to Colossians. Most of it is correcting doctrine that's coming down from the Jewish believers who are getting saved, or the Jews, I should say, that are coming to Christ. He's trying to unravel all of this, and that's what's going on.

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To give you an example of what this might look like today, let me give you an analogy of a plane. The Jews are inside of a plane. They're flying high. The plane is the **Torah**—in their mind, it's what's causing them to ride above the clouds of the Gentiles, of the nations. They were so focused on the plane and all the seats, the first-class meal, and all the rules of TSA—which can be crazy, like, “Why in the world are we taking our shoes off today when that's not even an issue at all?” We've got all the scanners, all these crazy rules—you can't have more than three ounces of this or that. All of these rules—they were so focused on the man-made rules that they had no idea, or what they had forgotten, I should say, is that the one causing them to fly is the pilot. It's God Himself, who is literally Yeshua manifested. God manifested His entire righteousness, His salvation power to get them off the ground, is the Messiah, who is behind the door, behind the Holy of Holies' veil—that high priest is Yeshua, Jesus of the Melchizedek priesthood. That is the one who's causing

them to ride above the clouds. They didn't see it. So these Jews were coming into what we would call Christianity today. In Christianity in the first century, this new Yeshua movement, they were bringing the TSA rules with them. And Paul is saying, "No, these rules are not okay. My Father did not give us these rules. It is the pilot that's causing us to fly, not the rules." I hope that analogy makes sense to you, because this is the backdrop of the book of Romans.

0:13:13 This is what's going to bring us into Romans chapter three, as Paul finishes in Romans chapter two the idea of, "Hey, nobody can judge anybody." You Jews need to stop judging the Gentiles for them being under you and not having the Torah, because you all are going to be judged. I know you didn't learn that in Rabbi school in the synagogue every week, but I'm here to tell you, says Paul, that the prophets and the Torah make it very clear: the whole world is guilty, and they're going to be judged by God's law. You need to stop judging the Gentiles because you're going to be judged as well. As a matter of fact, you're going to be judged first because you know better. You have the law. You should know what it says, and you're breaking it, and therefore you will be judged more strictly. [James 3:1](#) says the same thing: don't be a teacher, he says, or be careful if you are, because you're going to be judged more strictly because you have the law, the instruction manual, in front of you.

0:14:16 Okay, before we go any further, I want to address a particular comment that keeps reoccurring, and that is that as we move through this verse-by-verse study through the book of Romans, it becomes clear that there's definitely a gap between what modern-day Christianity believes Paul is saying and what Paul was actually saying. When you put him back in his original Hebraic Jewish context, any academic could see it. It's very, very, very clear. When you understand that the law of God in the Jewish mind was both the written law and the tradition of the elders, Paul's trying to delineate or separate the two and say, "No, the written law is what we live our life by. It's what defines sin, but there will be no righteousness that saves you from all of these extra works that you're doing that have nothing to do with the Word of God. They're just traditions and doctrines of men." So, what we're seeing is people making comments like, "Oh, you're saying that we should reinstitute the sacrificial system." I don't think so, and therefore they're throwing out the entire baby with the bathwater.

0:15:12 Imagine, as a father, you leave the house for the day and you leave a list of 10 instructions written down on a piece of paper on the countertop for your teenager, and one of them is that he has to watch an hour-long documentary on a particular subject that has to do with his school. All of a sudden, the electricity goes out, and the teenager cannot watch that documentary. So, the teenager decides, "Hey, I'm not going to keep any of the law because I can't keep this law." That's exactly what we are doing today, and that is ludicrous. A parent would be upset if the teenager decides to disregard the other nine commandments because he can't do one. In the same way, if Paul is

advocating for the early church—and therefore for us today—to see value in the commandments that God has given us and the instructions that define what blessings and curses are and what sin actually is, then if there’s anything that we can’t keep, we can’t keep it. That doesn’t mean that we don’t keep the rest of the commandments.

0:16:09 Okay? For instance, in a crazy, extreme example, it says, “You shall not commit adultery,” right? That’s the Seventh Commandment. Well, let’s just say that there’s only men left on the earth, and there’s no way for anybody to commit adultery because it’s only men. Does that mean that we can break the rest of the commandments because we can’t keep the seventh? No. So again, I hope you see this. Let’s make sure that as we’re moving through here, we answer the main question, which is: What is Paul trying to say? At the end of this entire Romans series, we’ll get into the practical application of what Paul is saying. But for now, we’re just doing an academic overview, verse by verse. What is Paul trying to get his early converts to understand? It seems that he is doing a great job of that, but he’s also doing a great job of going in the face—or pushing in the face—of traditional Christian theology of the 21st century. So, let’s not get mad at the law of God and say, “Oh, that’s crazy. We can’t keep it.” Don’t interpret the law as if you understand it. Let’s just let Paul say what he wants to say, and then we’ll ask the Holy Spirit, “How do we practically apply these things today?”

0:17:18 All right, let’s get to Romans Chapter Three. All right, read it with me here. **Romans Chapter Three, verse one.** He is continuing, like I said, from Chapter Two. After he just obliterates the idea that these false ideas from Judaism should be creeping into salvation, he says: *“¹ What advantage then has the Jew? Or what is the profit of circumcision? ² Much in every way.”* Now, look, we can stop right there, because in traditional Western Christian thought, there is no advantage to being a Jew. There is no advantage to circumcision. There is no advantage to following the law of God or following the **Torah**. There’s no advantage at all, because we’ve been taught that Christ is better, Christians are better. And now, crazily, in reverse, it used to be that the Jews in the first century looked down on the Gentile believers. Now, the Gentile believers are looking down on the Jews because, “Oh, you’re keeping that law. You don’t need to do that anymore,” and so on and so forth.

0:18:22 But Paul says completely the opposite. He says there is a huge advantage to following the **Torah**. There’s a huge advantage to growing up in Judaism in the first century. And he’s going to explain why, and here’s what he says. He says, *“**Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God.**”* In other words, the oracles of God—he’s talking about the **Tanakh**, the **Torah**, the **Nevi’im**, and the **Ketuvim**—meaning the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings (the Psalms, Proverbs, and so on). So he’s like, “Look, they’ve got the Scriptures. They have the instruction manual. That is a massive advantage. If

you know the rules, you can win the game faster. If you know the game of chess, but you have no idea how to move the pieces, it's going to be extraordinarily difficult for you to beat anyone in a game of chess. But if you know the rules and you know how the pieces move, there's a much higher probability that you will grow in your skill set. It's the same thing. That's what he's talking about here.

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The Jews have the instruction manual. That is a massive advantage. You Gentiles are just learning things.” As a matter of fact, let's go over to **Acts chapter 15** real quick and review something that we talked about in our Acts series. In **verse 20**, James makes his final statement, and he says, *“²⁰ But we write to you to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood.”* Many people have interpreted that as, “That's the only thing that James, the pastor of the entire early church in the first century, wanted them to do.” But we forget what **verse 21** says. Read it with me. It says, *“²¹ For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath.”* What's he saying? “Hey, focus on these top four things. They can't be saved if they do these four things. And by the way, guys, relax. They'll learn the rest when they come to church every Saturday, when they come to Shabbat service at the synagogue. Moses, or the Torah, is being read—they're going to learn the rest of the law. But these four things they can't do if they're going to stay in fellowship with us.” So, we see the motivation and the original intent of even James in the book of Acts here. It is not that the Gentiles don't need an instruction manual or that they're their own instruction manual. No, they will learn it as they go along.

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All right, now let's go back to **Romans chapter 3** here, and let's discover exactly what Paul is trying to say in this opening monologue, which is really a continuation of chapter 2, as we discussed: *“³ For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? ⁴ Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true, but every man a liar.”* And then he goes on to quote an Old Testament scripture here as proof. Again, over and over and over again, this top rabbi, Paul, is using the Scriptures—what we call the Old Testament, but what he called the Scriptures (because there was no New Testament when this was written, so there was no concept of New Testament Scriptures). Paul is using the Scriptures—the Old Testament—as his foundational evidence for everything he says. And what is he saying here? He's saying, “Look, don't get the idea that just because some of the Jews don't believe in Christ, and they're faithless, that God is going to throw away the law of God, throw away His own instruction manual, throw away the Jews, or throw away His promises because of their faithlessness. Absolutely not! May it never be. God's faithfulness is not determined by our faithfulness.”

- 0:22:14 **Second Timothy, chapter 2, verse 13**, says it best. Read it with me. It says: ***“If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.”*** In other words, He gives us promises. Those promises cannot be revoked because they’re made in His name. That’s why, in chapter 3 here in Romans, he’s making the point that, “Look, there is an advantage to being Jewish in the first century because they have the Torah. They have the oracles of God. They’ve got the instruction manual. And just because they don’t believe in Christ, or just because they’re faithless, doesn’t mean that God breaks His promises.”
- 0:22:52 Okay? In the same way today, we cannot say that the Jews who are alive today, living in the land of Israel or all over the world, that just because they don’t believe in Christ, God is going to deny them the promises that are irrevocable in the previous covenants. So, when God promises them a land covenant, just because they might be secular, just because the government might be secular, or just because there might be Jews who don’t believe what they should believe, or they don’t believe in the Messiah, **Yeshua**, it doesn’t mean that God doesn’t keep His promises. That’s the amazing part about the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—He keeps His word regardless of whether we keep our word, and that’s a good time-out message for all of us today.
- 0:23:35 How many of us have given our word and broken it because someone else broke their word? “Oh, well, if they’re going to break their word, I’m going to break mine.” That is not how a child of God operates. A child of God, as an ambassador and a slave—as we discovered in previous broadcasts—doesn’t have a will. So, just because someone else breaks their word doesn’t give us the right to break our word. Just because you might get in an argument with your spouse, and they curse at you or do something wrong, it doesn’t give you the right to break faith with your God and do something wrong. All right, so it’s a great little lesson that we can learn there from what Paul is saying.
- 0:24:15 All right, let’s continue and move to **verse five**: ***“⁵ But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unjust who inflicts wrath? (I speak as a man.) ⁶ Certainly not! For then, how will God judge the world?”*** Verse five and verse six here—what is Paul trying to say? Before we unpack this, it’s important for you to know that there is a rumor he is responding to in the first person. It’s called a diatribe. He’s setting up a straw man, acting like he is the person that is believing this rumor, and then he’s going to knock it down. What is that rumor? That rumor is the false doctrine that “the more I sin, the more it makes God look good.” It’s this contrast—the darker it is, the brighter the light. So, why shouldn’t I sin more? “I want God to look brighter, so I’ll be darker.” Believe it or not, some of them had this idea in their minds. And so Paul is saying, “Look, if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God—if that’s what we believe, and that’s what you’re saying—then is God unjust for inflicting wrath?” In other words, he says, “I’m

speaking as a man," meaning, "I'm speaking in the flesh. I'm speaking sarcastically."

0:25:32 If you believe that God's righteousness is made brighter because of your unrighteousness, then it would be unfair for Him to judge you because you're helping Him out—you're making Him look righteous. So, why would He judge you? If you're right in your theology, then He should thank you for making Him look more righteous! He said, "No, absolutely not. How in the world would God judge the world?" That's what he's saying: "How will God judge the world? If you're right, and we just sin to make God look better, then He can't judge the world, because the world, by default—on your false doctrine—would be making Him look better." And that's why he's going through these false theologies.

0:26:15 So, let's continue here: **"⁷ For if the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory, why am I still judged as a sinner? ⁸ And why not say, 'Let us do evil that good may come'—as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say? Their condemnation is just."** Now, why is Paul saying that? Some people are saying that Paul is the one who's lying—that Paul believes you should just be a sinner because the Jews are hearing his belief system about the difference between the written law and the oral tradition of the elders, the **halakha**, the interpretation of the elders. Paul is separating the two. Traditional Judaism never did. So, in the mind of the Jew, Paul is against the law of God because all of it is considered the law of God in the first century. If Paul starts talking about how "you guys do all kinds of dumb things," like Jesus said in [Mark chapter seven](#)—"you're washing your hands a certain way, and God never said any of that"—and he remotely talks against rabbinic tradition, to them, that's talking against the law of God because they equalized it—they made it the same. So, he says, "Look, their condemnation is just. I'm not lying, and I'm not saying that we should sin like they're accusing me of. I'm not against the law of God. I'm against the rabbinic traditions that go against the law of God."

0:27:43 All right, this is when we get to some of these famous passages here where he's going to start quoting Scripture to make his point. So, let's go back to the Scripture. And in **verse nine**, it says this: **"⁹ What then? Are we better than they (talking about the Jews)? No, not at all. For we've all previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they're all under sin."** This is another way of saying what he's going to say in **verse 23**: that **all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God**. He's saying, "Look, nobody's better than anybody. Everyone is under sin. They've broken God's law." And he says: **"¹⁰ There is none righteous, no, not even one. ¹¹ There's no one who understands. There's none who seeks after God. ¹² They've all turned aside. They've together become unprofitable. There is none who does good, no, not even one. ¹³ Their throat is an open tomb; with their tongues, they have practiced deceit. 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 ways. ¹⁷ And the way of peace they have not known. ¹⁸ There is no fear of God before their eyes."

0:28:55 Now, what's incredible, my friends, is that he is not just quoting a single Scripture here. He is quoting, in verses 10 through 12, [Psalms 14:1–3](#) and [53:1–3](#). Verse 13 quotes [Psalms 5:10](#) and [Psalms 140:4](#). In verse 14, he's quoting [Psalm 10:7](#). Verses 15 through 17 quote [Isaiah 59:7–8](#) and [Proverbs 1:16](#). Finally, in verse 18, he's quoting [Psalm 36:2](#). Paul is a rabbi. He literally pulled this off the top of his head—all these different Scriptures—and put them together to make his point: **"Every one of you are liars. All of us are sinners. Every one of us is sitting at the feet of the cross, begging for God to forgive us, or we should be."** And this is why the high priest performs his **Yom Kippur** sacrifice every single year: because we've all sinned. How do you guys not see this? We practice this in the **Torah** every single month of the year. We have a festival, a feast day, that's designed to remind us. Why isn't it reminding us? Because the rabbis have squashed and choked out the beautiful feast days and festivals that are all forecasting the first and second coming of the Messiah. They've truncated the **Torah**, and out came something completely different.

0:30:30 So, let's continue in Paul's thought. Here in **verse 19**, it says this—and this is an important verse. Okay, so if you're taking notes, get ready: **"¹⁹ Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may become guilty before God."** Now, this is a really important verse because it's been mistranslated. If you have (now this is the **New King James Version with Strong's**), but if you have a version that says "under the law," it's an incorrect version. That word there is not **hypos** (the Greek word for "under"). This is the Greek word **en**, which literally means **"in," "within," or "inside of."** So, what it should have been rendered as is: **"Whatever the law says, it says to those who are in the law,"** meaning, if you are inside of the law, if you are in the **Torah**, if you grew up with the **Torah**, the law is talking to you, that every mouth in all the world may be guilty before God. Now, what does this mean? This is so important, you guys, that we get this right, because massive amounts of Christian doctrine are totally dependent on how these types of verses are interpreted. Paul is saying, in context—and you know this if you've watched the first few episodes—that in context, the Jews are literally believing that the Gentiles are "less than" and that the Gentiles are going to be judged, but they (the Jews) are not going to be judged. And Paul is saying, "All of us have fallen short of God's glory. Every one of us is going to be judged." And he says, "The Jew first, and then the Gentile."

0:32:14 So, yes, salvation came to the Jew first and then the Gentile, but judgment comes to the Jew first and then the Gentile—because they have the instruction manual. If the instruction manual didn't matter, then they could never be judged

by the law. If the law didn't matter and was of no relevance for today—because, look, if Paul is in the first century, then his doctrine works for today. It's not written **to** us, but it is written **for** us. So, Paul's doctrine that he's giving his churches is the doctrine that we should be living by today. That's basic Christian 101. Unfortunately, we've changed Paul's doctrine from what he meant. It's changing how we believe and how we operate in the 21st century versus the first century. So when Paul says, in context, "Whatever the law says, it says to those that grew up with the Torah or who have the Torah, that every mouth may be stopped," his point is the same point he's been trying to make for two and a half chapters now, which is: You Jews think that you're not going to be judged, but whatever the law says, it's talking to you so that every mouth—Jew and Gentile—will be shut. In other words, no one can boast, no one can brag. Everybody falls on their face before God. And then he makes this incredible statement: Not only is the believing Jew going to be judged by the law and the believing Gentile going to be judged by the law, but he says, **the whole world**.

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Let's go back to the text so you can see it: **"the whole world will become guilty before God."** That means the entire world is subject to God's law. If it weren't so, they could never become guilty—because you can only become guilty if you break a law. So, the million-dollar question, of course, some of you are already going to be asking is: **What is the law?** If we're supposed to keep the law, and the law is for today—and we're not even three chapters into this—and this is what it seems like Paul is saying to his churches (which has affected our church today, which is influencing and should be relevant to us today), then what does that look like? Well, that's for a different broadcast. What we're trying to discover is: What does the text say? How we apply the text is a different conversation that we can have later—and we will have later—but right now, we just want to know: What did Paul really say? And then, compare that to what traditional, mainstream Christian theology says that Paul says, and see if there's a difference. And as you can see, if we are intellectually honest with the text, and we keep the text inside of the Jewish context that it's written in, the gap is very wide.

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All right, so now that we can see that the entire world is made guilty before God, because everyone is under the jurisdiction of the law, we can go to verse 20, and we can better understand what Paul is trying to say. Verses 19 and 20 are some of the most misunderstood verses in all of Paul's writings. Let's read it: ¹²⁰**Therefore, by the deeds of the law, no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.**" All right, now, the reason why this is so important is because this deeds of the law here—it really is—the right word is works of the law. This term, works of the law, is an idiomatic expression that does not mean keeping the Torah properly. He's not talking about the works of the law—no flesh will be justified—meaning, if you're keeping the law of God, you know you're not going to be righteous. Because he already said in the previous chapter that you—a hearer of the word—is not someone that's going

to be righteous, but a doer of the law is going to be righteous. So, he's already said that you can have a righteousness that comes from the law—it's just not salvation righteousness. It's when you're doing the right thing, you're pleasing God, and He accredits it to you for righteousness, just like Abraham: "His faith was accredited to him for righteousness because he heard God, believed God, and then did what God told him to do." That's righteous.

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Okay, so, but what he's talking about here—this is a dead giveaway if you understand first-century idioms and their expressions—the **works of the law** are the **halakhot**. It's the false belief that if you are doing all the traditions of the elders, like the elders say, you're going to be in right standing with God—that your righteousness is going to come from keeping all the tradition of the elders. And Paul is saying, No, the tradition of the elders—the works of the law—are not going to make you righteous. That's why, if there's any other interpretation—if you have the other interpretation, which is: Keeping the law will not make you righteous—then Paul is absolutely contradicting himself. Because he's already told us in the previous chapters that it's not those who hear the law that are made righteous—it's those who do the law that are made righteous. So, if he's saying that righteousness can't come from the law, then we have a massive contradiction in what Paul's saying. But because he's Jewish, because he's talking to Jews, he's using this phrase: works of the law.

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They know exactly what he's talking about. He's talking about the **Halakhot**. He says, **Look, the Halakhot are not going to make you righteous**. He said—now he switches it and talks about the Torah—"**By the law,**" not works of the law. It's **by the Torah** is the knowledge of sin. It's not the works of the law that make you righteous, but the law of God is the knowledge of sin. **By the Torah is the knowledge of sin**. Now, if I stop right here, forget about if you grew up in Christianity and you've believed your whole life that God's law has no relevance in a Christian's life today—which is just crazy—because the law is the knowledge of sin. If you read this, and this is the only verse that you read, that Paul says the law's value is, it tells us what sin is, there's no way that you could come to a conclusion that God's law has no value. Because to say that it has no value in the life of a believer today is to remove the definition of sin. So, there arises the contradiction and the gap that we're trying to fill.

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All right, let's continue in the text. In **verse 21**, it says: ***"²¹ But now the righteousness of God, apart from the law, is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, ²² even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe."*** Now, what's he saying here? Again, the righteousness of God is the salvation power of God. It's God's ability to save. It's His saving power. We call it His saving grace. It's His saving power. The Jews of that day were not ready, nor did they understand or even believe that they needed a Messiah, because they didn't believe that they were going to be judged. They had the Torah. All they had to do was keep it, and all would be

well. So this was a brand-new righteousness of God that Paul is introducing. They believed that the saving power of God came from God coming and helping them get rid of their enemies—from the Exodus, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, and so on and so forth. But today, in this text, Paul is saying: **I'm going to introduce you to a brand-new righteousness of God.**

0:39:33 In other words, the entire epitome of what the righteousness of God is all about *is the saving power of Jesus Christ*—Yeshua, His Son. That is the righteousness of God. And he says that is found apart from the law. Now, he's not saying that the law of God has no value, obviously, because he says in other places that there is a righteousness that comes from the law. In other words, we already defined that there's God's righteousness, right? Then there's man's righteousness—that when you keep God's law and you keep His commandments, that's a good thing, and it's credited to you as righteousness. That's how God's going to judge you: least and greatest in the Kingdom. [Matthew chapter five, verses 17 through 21](#), right? He says, ***"If you keep My commandments, you'll be great in the Kingdom. Those who don't keep the commandments will be least in the Kingdom."*** So your hierarchy and your rewards are based on how you obey God. And the definition of obeying God, according to Paul in the Bible and Jesus Himself, is keeping His commandments—doing what He said, right? Same thing with parents today. We know our kids love us because they do what we ask them to do.

0:40:39 In this context, he's saying: Look, I know that you guys are familiar with the righteousness that comes from the law, but this is a righteousness that's found outside of that because you can't do enough law—you cannot become righteous enough to obtain salvation, which you need, because everyone's going to be judged. That's the point of the first three chapters here: Every single one of you is going to be judged. You'll stop judging each other, and you all need a Savior, because the law of God is going to judge you. It's going to condemn you when you break it, which means you're going to need a Savior. And that Savior is Jesus—Yeshua, the Messiah. That's what he's saying—that you guys are so focused on your righteousness through the law, you're missing what the law is saying: You're all condemned to death, but you need a Savior, and that Savior is going to be the high priest from the Melchizedek priesthood.

0:41:29 All right, let's get back to the text here, as we're almost done. And that comes to this place right here, the pinnacle of almost the entire chapter—first three chapters, I should say—is Paul is saying: Look, you Jews, stop judging the Gentiles. Gentiles, stop judging the Jews. And here's why: ***"because all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God."*** Every one of you has fallen short. And that's why he says, ²⁴ ***Being justified freely by His grace, justified meaning saved, being saved freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,*** ²⁵ ***whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith."***

0:42:14 So let's stop right now, because I need to share something with you that is absolutely amazing as we wrap up Romans chapter three here. He's saying, Look, you cannot be saved by what you do. It doesn't matter what you do. If you believe that the works of the law, meaning the tradition of the elders, is going to save you, you're never going to get any righteousness from that. But if you believe that you get righteousness from keeping the Torah, that's fine. That's absolutely true, but it can't save you, because everyone is condemned and has fallen short of God's glory. He says, **But the free gift of God**, right, is through Jesus Christ; He's going to redeem you. And then he uses this incredible word, this theological term, that we all know, we've heard, but what in the world is it? It says He's become a **propitiation**. All right, God set forth as a propitiation by His blood. **What's a propitiation? This word should not be propitiation. This word is the Hebrew word and the Greek word for mercy seat.** It's the **mercy seat**. Look what it says right here. The Greek word actually for propitiation is the lid of the ark in the temple. It's the **mercy seat**. This is beautiful because this is describing the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies. When the high priest sprinkled the blood on the mercy seat, you had the Torah, the commandments, and the law of God, the instructions that are inside of the Ark of the Covenant. But what's on top—the lid—what's keeping that in check from killing everybody is the **mercy seat**. And Paul is saying, **Jesus, Yeshua, is the mercy seat**. He's the one that is now sitting on that throne, and no longer does the law have the capability of having jurisdiction or authority to invoke ultimate justice, which is death on everybody that deserves it for breaking God's law. But now there's a real person that has the ability to pardon. The law has never had the ability to pardon. The law just is what it is: if you break it, you get a ticket, period.

0:44:19 If robots were running all the police stations, when you went over by one mile an hour, they would pull you over. You'd get a ticket. When there's a real person in blue that's behind the law, they have the ability to come up to the vehicle, assess the situation, and find out that you're on the way to the hospital, your wife is in labor, and they can absolutely pardon you for breaking the law. And, as a matter of fact, they can escort you to the hospital. And that is what's going on here in Paul's mind. He's saying Jesus is the one who's the mercy seat. He now, for the first time in thousands of years, we have someone who's advocating to give us mercy. We deserve death, not obliterate and get rid of the law. No, incorporate a new sheriff in town, which is **mercy**. That is what's going on. And we'll talk a lot more about that when we get to the book of Galatians.

0:45:14 All right, almost finished here. ***"As propitiation by His blood, through faith, it's our faith in Him to demonstrate His saving power, because in His forbearance, God had passed over the sins that were previously committed²⁶ to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, His saving power, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Christ."*** Now, what's amazing here is He's saying, **Look, all the**

people that sinned before that were righteous in the fact that they were seeking God, He looked over and He put a pause on their punishment because He wanted to demonstrate His own saving power. They deserved death, but He was going to save them through the blood of the Lamb, and that is what the gospel is all about. They were looking at the law as being in the club, and God was saying, **No, it is the Christ that is going to give you mercy, not the law. And that's why we say, Hey, "where is the boasting then? Is it by... is it by the... by what law? What Torah? No, of the works,** meaning He's showing you the two different laws right here: ***Is it boasting in the Torah? Is it boasting in the tradition of the elders, which was called the works of the law? No, but by the law of faith. Therefore, we conclude***"—here we go. Finally, we're going to conclude chapter three, the whole argument of the first three chapters. ***"Therefore, we conclude that a man is saved or made righteous by faith, apart from what? Apart from the works of the law,"*** apart from the tradition of the elders, because that's exactly what he's referring to: the tradition of the elders. Can we prove that? Absolutely!

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We go to the Qumran scrolls, over to the Essenes, who use this exact same phrase to tell us what the works of the flesh are. Let's go over there. If we go to the *Dead Sea Scrolls, document 4Q, MMT*, Paul's usage of the Greek **Ergon Nomu** and the Hebrew equivalent, which is **ma'aseh haTorah**, appears in the Dead Sea Scrolls exactly like this. It says this: *"Now we have written to you some of the works of the law, those which we determined would be beneficial for you and for your people, because we have seen that you possess insight and knowledge of the law."* Now, what he's saying here is that they noticed that these particular people in this group have a zeal for God's Torah, the written law. So they're going to let them go further and give them their own rabbinic interpretation of how to live that out in real life. That was called the works of the law. That was just their phrase. It's what it meant. We can't change it to mean "keep the Torah." That's not what it's saying. It's saying the works of the elders, meaning the traditions and doctrines of men. So we can see, that's what Paul is saying.

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Now, let's go back to the text and finish up the chapter. So he's saying here, very simply, there's no boasting. You can't boast in the Torah. You can't boast in the tradition of the elders. He says, We conclude a man's justified apart from both of those. So he says, Is He God, the God of the Jews only, or is He the God of the Gentiles as well? He can't be a god of one and give certain rules there and then give a separate set of rules to the Gentiles. May it never be. That's why it says in [Exodus chapter 12, verse 49](#), **let's read it**. It says, ***"One law shall be for the native born and for the stranger who dwells among you."*** And this is when they came out of Egypt, the Exodus. There were Gentiles and Egyptians that came along with them, and they wanted to join Israel—smarter than their counterparts that stayed in Egypt. And Moses brought the problem to God, and God said, **Look, if they want to be part of My**

people, they have to be circumcised. They've got to keep My commandments. There's one law going to be. I'm not having two laws. It's one people, one law, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. That's how it works here in America, and we got it straight from the Torah. You cannot have—imagine having two separate laws for different individual people groups inside of one nation. It would be nothing but chaos.

0:49:19 Then, at the very end, Paul takes everything that he has said in the last three chapters about whether or not the Jew should be judging the Gentile, the Gentiles should be judging the Jew, that the Jew is going to be subject to the same judgment that the Gentile is, all under the law of God, by the standard of the law of God, and that means death, because everybody's broken it. And that's why we need a Savior. And he answers his own diatribe question. He knows what they're thinking. These Jews are thinking that, Paul, you seem to be against the law of God, which they're defining as both oral, written, and the tradition of the elders. So they're having frustration with this because they've never, ever, ever been taught that God's written law is separate from the tradition of the elders and that it's higher. He's going to address their thoughts. And their thought is, Paul, are you against the law of God? Are you saying that you're against the law of God? And this is his response, and he finalizes the entire argument: ***"Do we then make void the law through our faith, faith in who? Christ? Certainly not. On the contrary, we establish the law."***

0:50:29 Ladies and gentlemen, do you hear what he just said? He knows what they're thinking. Because he's so against keeping the works of the law, the tradition of the elders for salvation, or even keeping the Torah for salvation, he's saying, **Look, am I saying that there's no value in the Torah at all, that it's been made completely null and void, and it's been done away with because Christ came? May it never be.** And this Greek phrase, by the way, **certainly not** means, **let you be cursed if you think this. If you think that that's what I'm saying, may you be cursed.** He says, **on the contrary**, the complete opposite is what I'm trying to say. We uphold the law; we establish the law of God. *This* is the power of what Paul is trying to say for the first three chapters. And he's been misunderstood—so misunderstood that in the book of Acts, I believe it's in chapter 20, he was falsely accused of teaching against the law of God. So much so that James, the bishop, pastor, president of the early Messianic church, had to say, Paul, we've got a problem here. I know that you're not teaching against the Torah. You're teaching against the works of the law, the tradition of the elders, but they think that you are. So you need to do such and such and such and such so you can prove that you are in alignment with keeping the Torah. And he did, because he did support keeping the Torah. It was the instruction manual for life in the first century. And I'm going to suggest, if it is written for us today, that it's for us today. We'll talk about that topic a little bit later.

0:52:02 All right, so I hope this makes sense to you. Chapter three, again, I know for a fact this is going to rub a lot of feathers, especially in the higher academic community. Although, if you are intellectually honest and just let the text say what it is—and this is important—and you have a heart to serve God and to love God, beyond your own emotional traditions and your own religious bias, then the Holy Spirit will reveal to you something super exciting as God begins to open up how to do Bible things in Bible ways in today's world. And put aside the same traditions and doctrines of men that existed in the first century, except today, our traditions and doctrines are just different. But it's in the same category. We are putting aside the commandment of God to keep our own traditions because we don't understand the commandment of God. It's been demonized from the pulpit by a satanic agenda, because he knows that if he can get God's people to break the law of God, they will, by default, at the very least, be removed from blessing. They'll miss blessing, and worst case, they'll bring curses on their life that they will never even connect to their disobedience. And remember, you can disobey even if you don't know it. You did it long before you came to Christ.

0:53:24 All right, my friends, I'm Jim Staley. Thank you so much for spending this time with us. I know that these are a little bit longer than what I wanted them to be, but we want you to understand the text so you can apply it to your life. Please do us a favor. Hit the like button right now. Hit subscribe if you're not already [subscribed to this channel](#), and please do us a favor and share this with everyone that you meet. This, I believe, is exactly what Christianity says: it's a systematic foundation for our theology, and it's time to bridge that gap, my friends. In the meantime, I'm Jim Staley with Passion for Truth Ministries. Don't forget to visit us at our website at passionfortruth.com. I'll see you in the next video.

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