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## No Excuse

By Johnny Caruso January 30, 2024

### TODAY'S READING: Romans 3

Paul just dismantled three prevailing excuses people use to show they are not sinners.

1. "There is no God." This leads to depravity.
2. "Well, I'm not as bad as other people; I'm a good person."
3. "I'm saved because I'm a church member" or "I've been baptized." This person is a believer in name only--a legalistic or religious person.

Paul has been preaching now for about 20 years. He has made these same arguments before and he knew how people were going to respond. If he were saying these things in person, there is no doubt someone would have stood up and objected to what Paul was saying.

Paul again uses a triplet to counter arguments he knew were now in the minds of his readers. He used four objections to make his point. He may even have been reconstructing actual arguments he had heard or even some of his own objections before he was a believer.

Paul argued that circumcision of the heart was what mattered (2:28–29) and addressed the question of the value of physical circumcision. Paul made the point that Jews had the advantage of being given the promises of God (v. 2). However, this advantage did not prevent God from judging them for faithlessness (vv. 5–6). As we see later in the chapter, Paul pointed out that both Jews and Gentiles were under sin (vv. 9–20) and that our only hope is to be found in Jesus, because God Himself provided justification apart from the Law in Jesus Christ (vv. 21–31).

Paul's point here is that God is faithful, even when mankind is not. When His own chosen people, the Jews, are not; everyone stands guilty before God. No one will be exempt from God's judgment of sin. We can shake our fist at God, but until we come to the realization that we alone are sinful and condemned before God, there is really no hope for us. Our hope cannot be found in rituals, no matter how religious and symbolic they may be, or in our efforts to keep the Law, the very words of God. In fact, the Law only condemns us; it shows us just how far we are from God's righteousness.

Paul wanted his readers to know that the Law is not to be the basis of our hope. Instead, it is God Himself that gives us hope; He is the one we are to place our hope in. He alone offers us eternal life. We receive salvation not through the Law, but through faith in Jesus Christ. His point is that we cannot earn it; all we can do is accept it as a gift from God. This is the good news of the gospel.

**PRAYER:** Lord, thank You for the gift of Your Son, and continue to remind us that those around us have no excuse, so we will continue to pray and tell them about the sacrifice of Your Son on the cross.

**TOMORROW'S READING:** Romans 7

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