

## CHAPTER 3

### INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS 3

In this chapter are an answer to several objections which follow one upon another, relating to what the apostle had said concerning the equality of the Gentiles with the Jews; and various proofs out of the Psalms and Prophets, showing the general depravity and corruption of mankind, of the Jews as well as of the Gentiles; and the conclusion from all this, that there is no justification by the works of the law, but by the righteousness of God received by faith, of which a large and clear account is given. The first objection is in (~~<FRU>~~Romans 3:1), and is taken from the unprofitableness of being a Jew and a circumcised person, if that is true which is asserted in the preceding chapter; to which an answer is given, (~~<FRD>~~Romans 3:2), showing that though many things might be instanced in, in which the Jew had the advantage of the Gentile in external things; this might be mentioned as one for all, and taken sufficient answer, that the Jews had the oracles or word of God committed to their trust, by which they became acquainted with the will of God. The apostle foreseeing that another objection would arise upon this; what signifies their having the oracles of God, when these are not believed by them? prevents it by observing, (~~<FRB>~~Romans 3:3), that though some did not believe, some did, and as for the unbelief of others, the truth and faithfulness of God in his word were not made void by it; however false and deceitful men are, God is always true to his word, (~~<FRB>~~Romans 3:4), and which is confirmed by a passage of Scripture, cited out of (~~<PSO4>~~Psalms 51:4), hence arises another objection, that if the righteousness of God is commended and illustrated by the unrighteousness of man, then it would be unjust in God to take vengeance on men for their sins, (~~<FRB>~~Romans 3:5), which is removed with abhorrence, and answered by observing, that if there was any truth in it, the world could not be judged by God, as it certainly will, (~~<FRB>~~Romans 3:6), but still the objection is continued and strengthened, (~~<FRD>~~Romans 3:7), that if God is glorified through the sins of men, not only men ought not to be punished for them, but they should not be reckoned sinners, or as doers of evil things, but of good things, and be indulged in them; to which is replied, that this was the common calumny cast upon the doctrine of the apostle, and persons of

such principles and practices are deserving of damnation, (~~⋈~~Romans 3:8). Having removed these objections, the apostle reassumes his former assertion, and supports it, that a carnal circumcised Jew is no better than a carnal uncircumcised Gentile; it being already sufficiently made to appear, that they are both under the power and guilt of sin; and as a further evidence of it, he produces several passages out of the book of Psalms, and out of the prophecies of Isaiah, which fully express the sad corruption of human nature, and especially of the Jews; and this account begins in (~~⋈~~Romans 3:10), and ends in (~~⋈~~Romans 3:18), and which account he suggests, (~~⋈~~Romans 3:19), carries in it such a full conviction of the truth of what he had said, that all men are under sin, that no one would be able to open his mouth in his own defence, but all must acknowledge themselves guilty before God: and then he proceeds to the conclusion he meant to draw from all this, that there is no justification of any before God by the deeds of the law; giving this as a reason for it, because the law discovered sin, but not a justifying righteousness, (~~⋈~~Romans 3:20), that is revealed in another way, by the Gospel, and not the law, though both law and prophets bear a testimony to it, (~~⋈~~Romans 3:21), which righteousness is described by the author of it, God; by the means through which it comes to the use and comfort of men, the faith of Christ; and by the subjects of it, them that believe; in the justification of which there is no difference, (~~⋈~~Romans 3:22), of which a reason is given, (~~⋈~~Romans 3:23), taken from the general state of men, as sinners, and bereaved of the image of God: the several causes, ways, means, and end of the justification of such persons are suggested; the moving cause is the free grace of God, the meritorious or procuring cause the redemption that is in Christ, (~~⋈~~Romans 3:24), and his propitiatory sacrifice, (~~⋈~~Romans 3:25), which is owing to the eternal purpose of God, whose end in it was to declare his purity, holiness, and justice; which end is repeated and enlarged on, in (~~⋈~~Romans 3:26), upon which the apostle asks, (~~⋈~~Romans 3:27), what is become of boasting in the creature? and answers himself by saying, it was excluded, not by the doctrine of works, but by the doctrine of faith, and particularly the doctrine of justification by faith in the righteousness of Christ; wherefore the conclusion stands firm and just, from the premises, that justification is by faith without the works of the law, (~~⋈~~Romans 3:28), and it is further confirmed, that Jews and Gentiles, with respect to their state and condition God-ward, are on a level; he is the God of the one, as well as of the other, (~~⋈~~Romans 3:29), and this appears by his justifying both in one and the same way, through faith in the righteousness

of this Son, (<sup><818></sup>Romans 3:30), and the chapter is concluded by obviating an objection that might be made, that through this doctrine of justification by faith the law is made void, and is of no use, (<sup><818></sup>Romans 3:31), to which the apostle answers, that this is so far from being fact, that the law is established by it.

**Ver 1.** *What advantage then hath the Jew?* etc..] If he is not properly a Jew, who is born of Jewish parents, and brought up in the customs, rites, and religion of the Jewish nation, but anyone of whatsoever nation, that is born again of water, and of the Spirit; where is the superior excellency of the Jew to the Gentile? A man may as well be born and brought up a Heathen as a Jew; the one has no more advantages than the other by his birth and education: it may be rendered, “what hath the Jew more?” or “what has he superfluous” or “abundant?” the phrase answers to the Hebrew  $\mu\delta\alpha\lambda \hat{w}rty \text{ hm}$  in (<sup><2008></sup>Ecclesiastes 1:3), which is rendered, “what profit hath a man?” and in (<sup><2008></sup>Ecclesiastes 6:8),  $\mu kj \text{ I } rtwy \text{ hm}$ , “what hath a wise man more”, etc.. and in (<sup><818></sup>Romans 3:11),  $\mu\delta\alpha\lambda \text{ rty } \text{ hm}$ , “what is a man better?” the first of these passages the Septuagint render by  $\tau\iota\varsigma \text{ περισσεια}$ , “what abundance?” and the last by  $\tau\iota \text{ περισσον}$ , “what more”, or “superfluous”, or “abundant?” the phrase used by the apostle here:

*or what profit is there of circumcision?* since that which is outward in the flesh profits not unless the law is kept, otherwise circumcision is no circumcision; and if an uncircumcised Gentile keeps the law, he is a better man than a circumcised Jew; yea, he judges and condemns him; for the only true circumcision is internal, spiritual, and in the heart. To this the apostle answers in the (<sup><818></sup>Romans 3:2).

**Ver. 2.** *Much every way*, etc..] The circumcised Jew has greatly the advantage of the uncircumcised Gentile,  $\mu\gamma\eta\eta\text{p I km}$ , “in all respects”,  $\delta\chi \text{ I k I } [$ , “on every side”, as the Rabbins speak; phrases to which this in the text answers:

*chiefly*; more especially, particularly, and in the first place;

*because that unto them were committed the oracles of God*; by which are meant the law of Moses, and the writings of the prophets, the institutions of the ceremonial law, and the prophecies of the Messiah and the Gospel church state; and in a word, all the books of the Old Testament, and

whatsoever is contained in them; which are called so, because they are of divine inspiration, contain the mind and will of God, and are infallible and authoritative: and it was the privilege and profit of the Jews that they were intrusted with them, when other nations were not, and so had the advantage of them; they had them for their own use; for hereby they had a more clear and distinct knowledge of God than the Gentiles could have by the light of nature; and besides, became acquainted with the doctrines of a trinity of persons in the Godhead, of the sonship and deity of the Messiah, of the sacrifice, satisfaction, and righteousness of the Redeemer, and of salvation by him; and also with the manner of worshipping of God according to his will; all which the Gentiles were ignorant of. Moreover, they had the honour of being the keepers of these sacred books, these divine oracles, and of transmitting them to posterity, for the use of others.

**Ver. 3.** *For what if some did not believe?* etc.] It is suggested, that though the Jews enjoyed such a privilege, some of them did not believe; which is an aggravation of their sin, that they should have such means of light, knowledge, and faith, such clear and full evidences of things, and yet be incredulous: though it should be observed that this was the case only of some, not of all; and must be understood, not of their disbelief of the Scriptures being the word of God, for these were always received as such by them all, and were constantly read, heard, and attended to; but either of their disobedience to the commands of God required in the law, or of their disregard to the promises of God, and prophecies of the Messiah, and of their disbelief in the Messiah himself when he came; but now this was no objection to the advantage they had of the Gentiles, since this was not owing to want of evidence in the word of God, but to the darkness and unbelief of their minds: and,

*shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?* no, their unbelief could not, and did not make void the veracity and faithfulness of God in his promises concerning the Messiah, recorded in the oracles of God, which they had committed to them; for notwithstanding this, God raised up the Messiah from among them, which is another advantage the Jews had of, the Gentiles; inasmuch as “of” them, “as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is God over all, blessed for evermore”, (<sup>610B</sup>Romans 9:5), and he sent him to them, to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, as a prophet and minister; he sent his Gospel to them first, and called out by it from among them his elect, nor did he take it from them until he had done this: and he took it away only; until “the fulness of the Gentiles”, (<sup>611B</sup>Romans 11:25),

is brought in; and then the Gospel shall come to them again with power, and “all Israel shall be saved” ((<sup><5126></sup>Romans 11:26)).

**Ver. 4.** *God forbid, yea, let God be true, but every man a liar*, etc..] Let no such thing ever enter into the minds of any, that the truth of God can be, or will be made of none effect by the want of faith in man; let it be always asserted and abode by; that God is true, faithful to his word, constant in his promises, and will always fulfil his purposes; though “every man is a liar”, vain, fallacious, and inconstant: referring to (<sup><5111></sup>Psalm 116:11);

*as it is written*, (<sup><5104></sup>Psalm 51:4);

*that thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.* This is a proof that God is true, and stands to his word, though men are fallacious, inconstant, and wicked. God made a promise to David, that of the fruit of his body he would set upon his throne; that the Messiah should spring from him; that he would of his seed raise up unto Israel a Saviour. Now David sinned greatly in the case of Bathsheba, (<sup><3018></sup>2 Samuel 11:3,4 <sup><5101></sup>Psalm 51:1) (title), but his sin did not make of no effect the truth and faithfulness of God: though David showed himself to be a weak sinful man, yet God appeared true and faithful to every word of promise which he had sworn in truth to him; and therefore when he was brought to a sense of his evil, and at the same time to observe the invariable truth and faithfulness of God, said, “I acknowledge my transgression, etc.. against thee, thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight”, (<sup><5103></sup>Psalm 51:3,4), which confession of sin I make, “that thou mightest be justified in thy sayings”; or “when thou speakest”, (<sup><5104></sup>Psalm 51:4), which is all one; that is, that thou mightest appear to be just, and faithful, and true in all thy promises, in every word that is gone out of thy mouth, which shall not be recalled and made void, on account of my sins; for though I have sinned, thou abidest faithful; and this also I declare with shame to myself, and with adoring views of thine unchangeable truth and goodness: “that thou mightest overcome”; that is, put to silence all such cavils and charges, as if the faith of God could be made void by the unfaithfulness of men: “when thou art judged”; when men will be so bold and daring to arraign thy truth and faithfulness, and contend with thee about them. This now is brought as a full proof, and is a full proof of this truth, that God is always true to his word, though men fail in theirs, and fall into sin. God kept his word with David concerning the stability of his

kingdom, his successor, and the Messiah that should spring from him, though he acted a bad part against God. There is some little difference between these words as they stand in the Hebrew text of (~~15104~~ Psalm 51:4); and as they are cited and rendered by the apostle, in the last clause of them; in the former it is, “that thou mightest be clear”; in the latter, “that thou mightest overcome”. Now to vindicate the apostle’s version, let it be observed, that the Hebrew word **h<sup>k</sup>z** signifies to “overcome”, as well as to “be clear”; of which instances may be given out of the Jewish writings. Says <sup>f34</sup> Rabba; concerning an argument used by R. Chanina, in a controversy with other Rabbins, by this R. Chanina ben Antigonus, **wh<sup>n</sup>kz**, “hath overcome” them: and in another place <sup>f35</sup>, whosoever **yk<sup>z</sup>d**, “overcomes” a king, they cast him into an empty ditch; where the gloss upon it is, **j x<sup>w</sup>n**, he that overcomes a king by words, that is, by disputing with him, which is a disgrace to a king. So the word is used in the Syriac language in (~~4163~~ John 16:33 ~~2112~~ Luke 11:22 ~~45121~~ Romans 12:21 ~~48113~~ Hebrews 11:33 ~~41213~~ 1 John 2:13, 14 4:4 5:4). Moreover, the sense is the same, be it rendered either way; for as a man, when he overcomes his adversary, and carries his point against him, is clear of his charges and cavils, so God, when he overcomes in judgment, is clear of the imputations of wicked men. Another difference in the citation is, that what in the psalm is rendered “when thou judgest”, is by the apostle, “when thou art judged”, (~~15104~~ Psalm 51:4), the word, which is used by the Psalmist, **Æj pçb**, may be rendered either way; either “when thou judgest”, as a word of the same form is rendered, when “thou speakest”, in (~~15104~~ Psalm 51:4); or “when anyone judges of thee”, or “when thou art judged”: a like instance is in (~~19412~~ Psalm 46:2); and so it is rendered by the Septuagint, and followed by the apostle, though the word he uses may be considered in the middle voice, and may have an active signification in it; and the phrase, **εν τω κρινεσψαι σε**, may be rendered, “when thou judgest”, and then both agree.

**Ver. 5.** *But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God,* etc..] Hence it appears, that the unrighteousness of men commends the righteousness, or faithfulness of God; and yet all unrighteousness is sin; the wrath of God is revealed against it; and would exclude from heaven, were it not for pardon through the blood of Christ; and besides, the one is contrary to the other, and of itself, of its own nature, cannot influence and affect the other: wherefore this can only be understood of the manifestation and illustration of, the righteousness of God by it; which is covered and

commended, in punishing the unrighteousness of men; in setting forth Christ to be a propitiation for sin; and in fulfilling his promises, notwithstanding the failings of his people, of which the case of David is a pregnant proof; just as the love of God is illustrated and commended, by the consideration of the sins of men, for whom Christ died, and his grace and mercy in the conversion of them: but if this be true,

*what shall we say?* shall we allow the following question to be put? this answers to **rmymI akya yam**, “what is there to say”, or “to be said?” a way of speaking, often used by the Talmudists<sup>f36</sup>:

*is God unrighteous, who taketh vengeance?* if the premises are true, this is a just consequence of them; whereas God does take vengeance on men for their unrighteousness, both here and hereafter, it must be a piece of unrighteousness in him so to do; since that for which he takes vengeance on them commends his own righteousness; but that you may know as well by what follows, that this is not an inference of his own, but another's, he adds,

*I speak as a man;* **µda ynb ʿwçl k**, “according to the language of the children of men”, a phrase often used by the Jewish doctors<sup>f37</sup>. The apostle did not speak the sentiments of his own mind, he represented another man, and spoke in the language of an adversary.

**Ver. 6.** *God forbid, for then how shall God judge the world?*] **hl yl j**, “far be it”; such a notion is detestable and abominable, nor can it be fairly deduced from what is asserted; for it is the unrighteousness of his own people, on whom he takes no vengeance personally, and not the unrighteousness of others, on whom he does take vengeance, which commends his righteousness; and supposing it was that of others, God cannot be unrighteous in performing his threatenings, in a way of righteousness: moreover, unrighteousness is sin, and does not of itself but by accident, illustrate the righteousness of God; wherefore God is not unjust in punishing it; for how should God “judge the world?” whereas nothing is more certain than that he will do it, and that this will be done in righteousness; which could not be, was he unrighteous in taking vengeance; which will be one considerable part of that righteous judgment.

**Ver. 7.** *For if the truth of God*, etc..] The “truth of God” is the same with “the righteousness of God”, (<sup>f38</sup>Romans 3:5), and means his faithfulness; of which it is hypothetically said, it

*hath more abounded*; or has been more illustrated,

*through my lie to his glory*: nothing is more opposite to truth than a lie; a lie of itself can never be of any advantage to truth, or to the God of truth; nothing is more contrary to the nature of God, and more abominable to him; a lie is of the devil, and punishable with eternal death; wherefore it may seem strange, that the truth of God should abound through it to his glory: now let it be observed, that the apostle is not speaking of himself, nor of his lie of unbelief, in his state of unregeneracy; but in the person of a sinful man, “for every man is a liar”, (~~☞~~Romans 3:4), as he says, “I speak as a man”, (~~☞~~Romans 3:5); representing a wicked man, who from what was before said, might collect this as the sense of it, that the truth of God is illustrated by the lies of men: and so much may be owned as the apostle's sense, that the truth of God is commended, illustrated, and made to abound, when it is asserted, that he is true and faithful, and every man is a liar, fallacious, and deceitful; “let God be true, and every man a liar”, (~~☞~~Romans 3:4): moreover, the truth of God may be allowed to abound through the lies of men, in a comparative sense, the one being set against the other; and so as contraries do, illustrate each other: this may be assented to, as that sometimes a lie has been overruled by God, for the accomplishing of his purposes and promises, in which his truth and faithfulness have been displayed, as in the cases of Jacob and the Egyptian midwives; but then this does not arise from its nature and tendency, but from the overruling wisdom and providence of God, and therefore not to be excused hereby from sin; and consequently the inference from it is not just, that therefore “no man can, or ought to be, judged as a sinner”; since his sin turns to such account, as to make for the glory of God, which is intimated in the question:

*why yet am I also judged as a sinner?* if this be the case, I ought not to be reckoned a sinner, or to be treated as such here, or judged and condemned as one hereafter, which is a most wicked, as well as weak consequence; for though God is true and faithful to his promises, notwithstanding the sins of his people, which are as a foil, to set off the lustre of his truth the more, yet their sins are nevertheless sins, and are taken notice of by him as such, and they are corrected for them; and however God may overrule, in a providential way, the sins of others for his glory, this is no excuse for their sins, nor will it be an exemption of them from punishment. This is the sense of the passage; unless by “the truth of God” should be meant, the Gospel, the word of truth, which is of God; and which through the apostle's “lie”,



as the Jews might call his ministration of it, “abounded to” the “glory” of God; being spread far and near, and made useful for the conversion of sinners, for turning men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; and for the planting of churches in the Gentile world, as well as in Judea; which much conduced to the honour of God, and the interest of true religion: and then the meaning of the last clause is, “why yet am I also judged as a sinner?” why am I accounted and condemned as an heretic? as an apostate from the faith? as he was by the Jews, and who are used to call heretics sinners: so “the sinner” in (~~2075~~ Ecclesiastes 7:26) is thus interpreted <sup>f38</sup>, *μυνυμῆσι* *ἄσιν* “these are the heretics”: and elsewhere it <sup>f39</sup> is observed, that concerning the heretics it is said, (~~2007~~ Proverbs 10:7), “the name of the wicked shall rot”: and I very much suspect this to be the sense of the word in (~~4024~~ John 9:24), “we know that this man is a sinner”; an heretic, a man of bad principles; and in (~~4031~~ John 9:31); “now we know that God heareth not sinners”; men of corrupt minds; since this character stands opposed to a worshipper of the God of Israel.

**Ver. 8.** *And not rather, as we be slanderously reported*, etc..] These are the apostle's own words, in answer to the objector he represented; and it is as if he should say, why do not you go on? why do you stop here? “and not rather” say, as we are evil spoken of, and our doctrine is blasphemed:

*and as some affirm*; ignorantly and audaciously enough:

*that we say*; and teach:

*let us do evil that good may come*; a slander cast upon the apostle's doctrine of unconditional election, free justification, and of God's overruling the sins of men for good; and is the same which is cast on ours now, and is no small proof of the likeness and sameness of doctrines:

*whose damnation is just*; whose judgment would have been right, and their censure of our doctrines just, had it been true that we held such a principle, taught such a doctrine, or encouraged such a practice: or their condemnation is just, for aspersing our principles and practices in so vile a manner; and all such persons are deserving of damnation, who teach such things, or practise after this sort.

**Ver. 9.** *What then? are we better than they?* etc..] The apostle returns to what he was treating of in the beginning of the chapter, and suggests, that though the Jew has the advantage of the Gentile, with respect to some

external privileges, yet not with regard to their state and condition Godward, and as in his sight; “are we [Jews] better than they [Gentiles]?”

*no, in no wise*; upon no consideration whatever, neither as men, nor as Jews; which is directly opposite to a notion that people have of themselves:

“in mankind (they say <sup>f40</sup>) there are high degrees, one higher than another, and the Israelites  $\mu\delta\alpha \hat{\gamma}m \mid km \mid hl \mid [ml]$ , “are above all mankind”; they are the head, and the nations of the world are the tail, and are like to a serpent, for they come from the filth of the old serpent.”

Again, they say <sup>f41</sup>,

“worthy are the Israelites, for the holy blessed God hath given to them holy souls, from an holy place, “above all the rest of the people”, that they may do the commandments, and delight in the law.”

And elsewhere <sup>f42</sup> it is observed on those words, (~~Gen~~Genesis 1:24), “the living creature”, or “the soul of the living creature”, by R. Aba:

“these are the Israelites, for they are the children of the holy blessed God, and their holy souls come from him; the souls of the rest of the people, from what place are they? says R. Eleazar, from the side of the left hand, which is defiled; for they have polluted souls, and therefore they are all defiled, and defile whoever comes nigh them:”

but they are no better, especially with regard to their estate by nature:

*for we have before proved*; in the preceding chapters, by full instances to a demonstration; and if that cannot be thought sufficient, he goes on to give more proof in the following “verses”:

*that both Jews and Gentiles are under sin*; under the power and guilt of sin, and a sentence of condemnation for it; which is equally true of the Jews, who were no better than the Gentiles, for being Abraham's seed, for being circumcised, for having the ceremonial law, and other outward privileges; for they were equally born in sin, and by practice sinners, as the Gentiles: and this is true of God's elect in all nations, who are no better by nature, by birth, than others; as deserving of the wrath of God as the rest; no better in their tempers and, dispositions, or in the endowments of their

minds, or outward circumstances of life; nor better qualified to receive and improve the grace of God bestowed on them, than others.

**Ver. 10.** *As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one.*] The several passages cited here, and in some following verses, are taken out of the Psalms and Isaiah; and are brought to prove, not only that the Jews are no better than the Gentiles, being equally corrupt and depraved as they; but also to show the corrupt state and condition of mankind in general: and the words are not always literally expressed, but the sense is attended to, as in this passage; for in the original text of (<sup><914D></sup>Psalm 14:1), it is, “there is none that doth good”; from whence the apostle rightly infers, “there is none righteous”; for he that does not do good, is not righteous; and therefore if there is none on earth that does good and does not sin, there is none righteous upon earth, “no, not one” single person. The Jews allegorizing that passage in (<sup><019B></sup>Genesis 19:31), “there is not a man in the earth to come into us”, remark <sup>f43</sup> on it thus,

“*Ḥab qydx çya ʿya*, “there is not a righteous man in the earth”; and there is not a man that rules over his imagination.”

There is none righteous as Adam was, in a state of innocence; for all have sinned, and are filled with unrighteousness, and are enemies to righteousness; none are righteous by their obedience to the law of works; nor are there any righteous in the sight of God, upon the foot of their own righteousness, however they may appear in their own eyes, and in the sight of others; nor are any inherently righteous, for there is none without sin, sanctification is imperfect; nor is it, either in whole or in part, a saint's justifying righteousness; indeed there is none righteous, no, not one, but those who are justified by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them.

**Ver. 11.** *There is none that understandeth*, etc..] This is rightly concluded, from what the Psalmist says, (<sup><914D></sup>Psalm 14:2), “The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men”, on all the children of men, Jews and Gentiles, “to see if there were any that did understand”; and it appears, upon this survey of them, there was not one understanding person among them: man thinks himself a very wise and understanding creature, though he is born a very ignorant one: true indeed, he has not lost by sin the natural faculty of the understanding, so as to become like the horse and mule, which are without any; and it must be allowed, that natural men have some understanding of things natural, civil, and moral; though there is none

that understands even these, as Adam did: but then they have no understanding of things spiritual; no spiritual knowledge of God; no true sense of themselves, their sin and misery; nor do they truly know the way of salvation by Christ; nor have they any experience of the work of the Spirit of God upon their souls; nor any experimental knowledge of the doctrines of the Gospel: no man can understand these of himself, by the mere strength of reason, and light of nature; nor can even a spiritual man fully understand them in this life; in consequence of this account and character of men it follows, that

*there is none that seeketh after God*; that worships him in Spirit and in truth, or prays to him with the Spirit, and with the understanding; who seek him chiefly, and in the first place, with their whole hearts, earnestly, diligently, and constantly; who seek him in Christ, and under the assistance of the Spirit; who seek after the knowledge of God in Christ, communion with him through the Mediator, or his honour and glory.

**Ver. 12.** *They are all gone out of the way*, etc..] In (<sup>394B</sup>Psalm 14:3); it is said, “they are all gone aside”; as persons in debt: man had a considerable stock of righteousness, holiness, knowledge, etc.. but he has run through all, has contracted large and numerous debts, has been obliged to hide himself, has been used as a bankrupt, and turned out of house and home: Christ indeed has undertook to pay, and he has paid all the debts of his people; and has put them into a better state than ever Adam was in: in (<sup>451B</sup>Psalm 53:3), it is rendered, “everyone of them is gone back”; that is, from God; from his commands, and from their former state and condition: here the phrase is rendered by the apostle, “they are all gone out of the way”: that is, out of the way of God and his precepts, out of the way of holiness and righteousness, of light and life; into their own ways, the ways of sin, Satan, and the world of darkness, and of death: so Aben Ezra explains it, “out of the right way”; Kimchi and Ben Melech paraphrase it, “out of the good way: and so”

*they are together become unprofitable*; the word **wj l an**, in (<sup>394B</sup>Psalm 14:3) and (<sup>451B</sup>Psalm 53:3); is translated, “they are become filthy”; which R. Aben Ezra interprets by **wtj ʕn**, “they are corrupt”; and R. Solomon Jarchi by **l wql ql wkphn**, “they are turned to corruption”; the metaphor is taken from stinking flesh, which is tainted and corrupted, and so good for nothing, hence here rendered “unprofitable”; for so men being corrupted by sin, are of no use, service, and advantage to God, to men, or to themselves;

but, on the contrary, nauseous to God, and to all that are good, and hurtful to themselves and others: for

*there is none that does good, no, not one*; and therefore must be unprofitable. There is none that can do good in a spiritual manner, without the grace of God, strength from Christ, and the assistance of the Spirit; and there is not even a spiritual man, that can do good perfectly, and without sin.

**Ver. 13.** *Their throat is an open sepulchre*, etc..] The several vices of the instruments of speech are here, and in the following verse, exposed: “the throat” is said to “be an open sepulchre”, as in (<sup><HB></sup>Psalm 5:9), so called, for its voracity and insatiableness; both as an instrument of speech, for the words of the wicked are devouring ones; and as an instrument of swallowing, and so may denote the sinner's eager desire after sin, the delight and pleasure he takes in it, the abundance of it he takes in, and his insatiable greediness for it; likewise for its filthy stench, the communication of evil men being corrupt; and because, as by an open grave, persons may fall unawares to their hurt, so the evil communications of wicked men, as they corrupt good manners, are dangerous and hurtful: R. Aben Ezra explains it by *dym ʿwsa*, “immediate destruction”, or sudden death:

*with their tongues they have used deceit*; which may design the sin of flattery, for the words in (<sup><HB></sup>Psalm 5:9); the place referred to, are, “they flatter with their tongue”; either God or men, themselves or others, their princes or their neighbour; for there are flatterers in things sacred and civil, there are self-flatterers, court flatterers, and flattering preachers, and all abominable and mischievous; or the phrase may design the sin of lying, either politically, officiously, perniciously, and religiously; and in this latter way, either with respect to doctrine or practice:

*the poison of asps is under their lips*; or as in (<sup><HB></sup>Psalm 140:3), “adders' poison is under their lips”. The asp is but a small creature, and so is the tongue, (<sup><HB></sup>James 3:5), but there is a world of mischief in it, signified by poison; which, as that, is latent and secret, is under it; and as that stupefies and kills insensibly, so an evil tongue does, and that in a deadly and incurable manner: oftentimes the Jews speak of the evil imagination, or corruption of nature entering into persons, and operating in them, *sw[ kb srak* “as poison in an angry serpent”<sup>f44</sup>.

**Ver. 14.** *Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.*] These words are taken from (<sup>1907</sup>Psalm 10:7), by cursing is meant, cursing of God, which is sometimes internal with the heart, and sometimes external with the mouth, as here; and of all good men, though without cause, and to no purpose with respect to the persons they curse, since God has blessed them, and they are blessed, and greatly to their own detriment, for, in the issue, their curses will be turned against themselves. There is also a cursing of superiors, as parents, masters, magistrates, kings, and governors; which is a sore evil, and attended with bad consequences; likewise of themselves, and their fellow creatures: and “the mouth [being] full [of it]”, denotes the frequency of the sin; scarce anything else comes out of it but cursing; which discovers the sad corruption of the heart; “for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh”, (<sup>4123</sup>Matthew 12:34 <sup>4165</sup>Luke 6:45). By “bitterness” is meant, either sin in general, which is “an evil and bitter [thing]”, (<sup>2179</sup>Jeremiah 2:19), in its nature and effects; or sinful words, such as oaths, curses, imprecations, all wrathful and deceitful words.

**Ver. 15.** *Their feet are swift to shed blood.*] The sins of the heart and mouth are before described, and now the sins of action are taken notice of; for “the feet” are the instruments of motion and action: and when these are said to be “swift to shed blood”, it denotes the readiness and eagerness of men, to murder innocent creatures; which shows the dreadful malice and hatred that is in them. The words are cited from (<sup>2807</sup>Isaiah 59:7), and seem to point at the times of Manasseh, who shed so much innocent blood, as to fill Jerusalem with it from one end to the other.

**Ver. 16.** *Destruction and misery are in their ways.*] This passage also is to be found in (<sup>2807</sup>Isaiah 59:7), and may be understood either actively thus: all the ways they take, and methods they pursue, are to make their fellow creatures miserable, to ruin and destroy them; or passively, that by their sinful ways and vicious course of life, they themselves are brought to destruction and misery: the way they are walking in is, “the broad way, that leadeth to destruction”, (<sup>4173</sup>Matthew 7:13); the end of it, what it issues in, is eternal death, the destruction of the body and soul in hell, which will be attended with endless and inexpressible misery.

**Ver. 17.** *And the way of peace have they not known.*] This is a citation from (<sup>2808</sup>Isaiah 59:8), and expresses the ignorance of mankind, with regard to true peace, and the way unto it: men are naturally ignorant of the way of peace with God; of the first step which God took towards it; of the

council and covenant of peace, in which the scheme of it was drawn, and the method fixed; of Christ the peacemaker, and of the way in which he has made it; and of the Gospel, which reveals and publishes it. They are ignorant of the true way of enjoying peace of conscience; they have no true peace of mind, their consciences are often tortured; and though they may have a stupid and secure peace, yet nothing that is true, real, and solid; for they are without the Spirit, whose fruit is peace; and without faith in Christ, by which true peace only is enjoyed; nor are they spiritually minded, which is life and peace; nor have they any knowledge of the way to have it; they are ready to think it must be had by doing something of their own, and not that it is to be had only in Christ, in his blood and righteousness. They are ignorant of the paths of wisdom, which are peace; peace is enjoyed in them, they lead unto it, and issue in it: they know not the way to eternal peace; they imagine something done by the creature is the way; and are ignorant that Christ is the only way of salvation, the true way to eternal life, everlasting peace and happiness: yea, they know not the way of peace among men, and one another; nor will they do that which is just and right, in order to support and maintain it, but are unjust, deceitful, and quarrelsome; they do not study peace, but rather contention, which they like and approve of. The Jews talk <sup>f45</sup> much of their good nature, affability, and condescension, and of their doing this and that, and the other thing, **μwl ç ykrd ynpm**, “because of the ways of peace”.

**Ver. 18.** *There is no fear of God before their eyes.*] The place referred to is (<sup>1801E</sup> Psalm 36:1), by the “fear of God”, is not meant a fear of God’s wrath, of hell and damnation; nor a fearful distrust of his presence, power, providence, and grace; much less an hypocritical fear; but a reverential affection for God, and which is peculiar to the children of God, which springs from a sense of divine goodness, is attended with holiness of heart and life, is consistent with faith, even full assurance of it, and with spiritual joy in its highest degree; it stands opposed to pride and haughtiness, and is a blessing of the covenant of grace: now this is not to be found in unregenerate men, for this springs from grace, and not nature, and is only implanted in the heart in conversion; it appears from the whole life and conversation of unconverted men, that the fear of God is not in their hearts, nor before their eyes.

**Ver. 19.** *Now we know that what things soever the law saith,* etc..] By “the law” is meant, not the law of nature, nor the civil law of nations, nor the ceremonial law of the Jews, nor barely the five books of Moses, nor the

book of Psalms, of the Prophets, or the writings of the whole Old Testament; but the moral law, as it appears in the whole word of God, which every man is bound to observe, of which all are transgressors, by which is the knowledge of sin, which no man can be justified by, and which Christ was made under, and came to fulfil. This law is represented as a person speaking, and saying many things, some of which are here mentioned; so, **hrwt hrma**, “the law says” so and so, is an usual phrase with Jewish writers <sup>f46</sup>. The persons it speaks to, are

*them that are under the law*; the Jews were in a peculiar sense under it, as it was given to them by Moses; all mankind are under it, as to the matter of it; they are under obligation to obedience to it, and, through disobedience, come under its sentence of condemnation. The elect of God themselves were, and are in some sense under it; not indeed as a covenant of works, or as in the hands of Moses, nor as a yoke of bondage; nor are they obliged to seek for justification by it, and are entirely delivered from the curse and condemnation of it by Christ. They were under it, and that as a covenant of works, as in Adam, the federal head and representative of all mankind; and came under its sentence of condemnation and death, for his sin, and their own actual transgressions; which is consistent with the everlasting love of God to them in Christ, the covenant of grace made with them in him, as their head and surety, and their justification by him: and they are now under it, as in the hands of Christ; and look upon themselves as obliged, by the love of Christ, to yield a cheerful obedience to it: here it means such as are transgressors of the law, and so under obligation to punishment, without any regard to Jew or Gentile, or any distinction God has made in his own breast: and the things it says to such are, it charges them with sin, and convicts them of it, both of its pollution and guilt: so

*that every mouth may be stopped*; and have nothing to say of the purity of their nature, which appears to be so sadly stained; nor of their works of righteousness, which are so few, and so very imperfect. The law makes such a representation of things to them, that their mouths are stopped from glorying in themselves, and in their works, which are far from being adequate to the demands of the law; and from complaining against the righteous judgment of God, should he proceed against them in the most rigorous manner:

*and all the world may become guilty before God*; Jews and Gentiles; all the individuals of mankind are guilty before God, and will be found to be so,



sooner or later: some read it, “subject to God”, and understand it of a subjection to his grace, being brought to see their need of it, and of salvation by it; but this is not the case of all the world, rather *υποδικος*, signifies a subjection to that justice, vengeance, and wrath of God, to which all men are liable in their own persons; since they are all found guilty by the law, and will appear to be so, and therefore can never be justified by their obedience to it; which is what the apostle is aiming at in all he here says, as appears from what follows; all which “we know” to be true, and are fully assured of, who know the nature and spirituality of the law, and to whom it has come with light and power.

**Ver. 20.** *Therefore by the deeds of the law*, etc..] Hence it most clearly appears, that there can be no justification before God by the law, since it stops the mouths of men, and pronounces them guilty: by “the deeds of the law” are meant, works done in obedience to it, as performed by sinful men, which are very imperfect; not as performed by Adam in innocence or by Christ in our nature whose works were perfect; but as performed by sinful men and of themselves, and not as performed in and by Christ for them who is the fulfilling end of the law for righteousness to all believers: now by such works as these whether wrought before or after conversion, with or without the strength and grace of Christ,

*there shall no flesh be justified in his sight*: that is, no one person: “flesh” designs men, and men as corrupt and carnal, in opposition to God, who is a Spirit pure and holy; and may have respect to the vain opinion of Jews and Gentiles, who were vainly puffed up in their fleshly mind; the one on account of their wisdom and learning, the other on account of their righteousness; and includes all the individuals of human nature: the word “justified”, does not signify being made righteous by the infusion of righteousness, for the infusion of a righteousness, or holiness, is sanctification, which is a work of the Spirit of God, is internal, and imperfect, and so not justifying; but it is a forensic word, or legal term, and stands opposed to a being condemned; and signifies to be acquitted, discharged, and made righteous in a legal sense, which can never be done by an imperfect obedience to the law: men may be justified hereby in their own sight, and in the sight of others, but not in “his sight”; in the sight of God, who is omniscient, and sees not as man seeth; who is pure, holy, and righteous, and whose judgment is according to truth: this is said in direct contradiction to the Jews<sup>147</sup>, who say,

“a man is not justified for ever, but by the words of the law:”

but in his sight none can be justified, but by the perfect obedience and righteousness of Christ. The reason for it is,

*for by the law is the knowledge of sin*; it discovers to a man, by the light of the Spirit of God, and as under his influence, and attended with his power, the sins both of his heart and life; and so he is convinced by it as a transgressor and finds himself guilty, and liable to condemnation and death; wherefore he can never hope for and expect justification by it. The Jews ascribe such an use as this to the law, which they suppose it performs in a very gentle manner;

“he that rises in the night (say they <sup>f48</sup>), and studies in the law, **hbwj hyl a[dwm aq atyrwa**, “the law makes known to him his sin”, but not in a way of judgment, but as a mother makes known to her son in tender language:”

but this is generally done in a rougher way, for the law works wrath.

**Ver. 21.** *But now the righteousness of God*, etc.] The apostle having proved that all men are unrighteous, and that no man can be justified in the sight of God by his obedience, either to the law of nature or of Moses, proceeds to give an account of that righteousness, which does justify before God; and so returns to his former subject, (<sup><B17></sup>Romans 1:17), concerning “the righteousness of God”, the revelation of which he makes to be peculiar to the Gospel, as he does here; since he says, that it

*without the law is manifested*: meaning, either that this righteousness is without the law, and the deeds of it, as performed by sinful men; or that the manifestation of it is without the law, either of nature or of Moses; for the law discovers sin, but not a righteousness which justifies from sin; it shows what righteousness is, but does not direct the sinner where there is one to be had, that will make him righteous in the sight of God: this is made known without the law, and only in the Gospel:

*being witnessed by the law and the prophets*; a testimony is borne to the justifying righteousness of Christ both “by the law”, particularly in the five books of Moses; which testify of Christ, of his obedience, sufferings, and death, by which he brought in life and righteousness; (see <sup><B15></sup>Genesis 3:15), compared with (<sup><2024></sup>Daniel 9:24); and (<sup><0156></sup>Genesis 15:6) with (<sup><B10></sup>Romans 4:9,10,22-25); and (<sup><0228></sup>Genesis 22:18) with (<sup><B88></sup>Galatians

3:8,9,14); and (<sup>4501b</sup>Deuteronomy 30:11-14) with (<sup>4505b</sup>Romans 10:5-10). And the prophets; Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, and others; (see <sup>2322b</sup>Isaiah 42:21) (<sup>2353b</sup>Isaiah 45:24,25 46:12,13 51:5,6,8 53:11 <sup>2426b</sup>Jeremiah 23:6 <sup>2702d</sup>Daniel 9:24).

**Ver. 22.** *Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ,* etc..] A further account is given of this righteousness: why it is called “the righteousness of God”, and in what sense revealed and manifested, (see Gill on “<sup>4507b</sup>Romans 1:17”); Here it is said to be “by faith of Jesus Christ”; not by that faith which Christ himself had as man, but by that faith, of which he the author and object: the Alexandrian copy reads, “by faith in Jesus Christ”; and not by that as the cause of justification; for faith is neither the efficient, nor the moving, nor meritorious cause of it; no, nor the instrumental cause of it on the part of God or Christ: nor is faith the matter of a justifying righteousness; for faith is a part of sanctification, is itself imperfect, is a man's own, as it is implanted in him, and exercised by him; is here and elsewhere distinguished from righteousness; something else, and not that, as the obedience and blood of Christ, are said to be what men are made righteous and justified by: but faith is a means of apprehending and receiving righteousness; it views the excellency of Christ's righteousness; it owns the sufficiency of it; the soul by it renounces its own righteousness, submits to Christ's, rejoices in it, and gives him the glory of it: now this is by, or through faith,

*unto all, and upon all:* not all men, for all have not faith, nor are all justified and saved: but

*all that believe;* which must be understood, not of believing any thing, nor of any sort of believing; but of such, who truly and with the heart believe in Christ for salvation; and who are here opposed to the wise philosophers among the Gentiles, had to all self-righteous persons among the Jews. Though this character does not design any cause or condition of justification, but is only descriptive of the persons, who are declaratively interested in a justifying righteousness, which is said to be “unto”, and “upon them”; that is, it is appointed, provided, and wrought out for them, and directed and applied unto them, and put upon them as a garment, and that upon all of them:

*for there is no difference;* of nation, age, or sex, or of state and condition; no respect is had to persons or works; nor is there any difference with respect to weak or strong believers; the righteousness is equally applied to

one as to another, and one is as much justified by it in the sight of God as another.

**Ver. 23.** *For all have sinned*, etc..] This is the general character of all mankind; all have sinned in Adam, are guilty by his sin, polluted with it, and condemned for it; all are sinners in themselves, and by their own actual transgressions; this is the case of the whole world, and of all the men in it; not only of the Gentiles, but of the Jews, and the more righteous among them: hence there is no difference in the state and condition of men by nature; nor is there any reason from and in themselves, why God saves one and not another; nor any room to despair of the grace and righteousness of Christ, on account of persons being, in their own view, the worst of sinners:

*and* hence it is, that they are all

*come short of the glory of God*; either of glorifying of God; man was made for this purpose, and was capable of it, though now through sin incapable; and it is only by the grace of God that he is enabled to do it: or of glorying: before him; sin has made him infamous, and is his shame; by it he has forfeited all external favours, and has nothing of his own to glory in; his moral righteousness is no foundation for boasting, especially before God: or of having glory from God; the most pure and perfect creature does not of itself deserve any glory and praise from God; good men, in a way of grace, will have praise of God; but sinners can never expect any on their own account: or of the glorious grace of God, as sanctifying and pardoning grace, and particularly the grace of a justifying righteousness; man has no righteousness, nor can he work out one; nor will his own avail, he wants a better than that: or of eternal glory; which may be called the glory of God, because it is of his preparing, what he calls persons to by his grace, and which of his own free grace he bestows upon them, and will chiefly lie in the enjoyment of him; now this is represented sometimes as a prize, which is run for, and pressed after; but men, through sinning, come short of it, and must of themselves do so for ever: or rather of the image of God in man, who is called “the image and glory of God”, (<sup>45107</sup>1 Corinthians 11:7), which consisted externally in government over the creatures; internally, in righteousness and holiness, in wisdom and knowledge, in the bias of his mind to that which is good, and in power to perform it; of all which he is come short, or deprived by sinning.

**Ver. 24.** *Being justified freely by his grace,* etc..] The matter of justification is before expressed, and the persons that share in this blessing are described; here the several causes of it are mentioned. The moving cause of it is the free grace of God; for by “the grace of God” here, is not meant the Gospel, or what some men call the terms of the Gospel, and the constitution of it; nor the grace of God infused into the heart; but the free love and favour of God, as it is in his heart; which is wonderfully displayed in the business of a sinner's justification before him: it appears in his resolving upon the justification of his chosen ones in Christ; in fixing on the method of doing it; in setting forth and pre-ordaining Christ to be the ransom; in calling Christ to engage herein; in Christ's engaging as a surety for his people, and in the Father's sending him to bring in everlasting righteousness; in Christ's coming to do it, and in the gracious manner in which he wrought it out; in the Father's gracious acceptance, imputation, and donation of it; in the free gift of the grace of faith, to apprehend and receive it; and in the persons that partake of it, who are of themselves sinners and ungodly. The meritorious cause of justification is,

*the redemption that is in Jesus Christ:* redemption supposes a former state of captivity to sin, Satan, and the law, in which God's elect were by nature, and is a deliverance from it; it is of a spiritual nature, chiefly respects the soul, and is plenteous, complete, and eternal: this is in and by Christ; he was called unto it, was sent to effect it, had a right unto it, as being the near kinsman; and was every way fit for it, being both God and man; and has by his sufferings and death obtained it: now, as all the blessings of grace come through redemption by Christ, so does this of justification, and after this manner; Christ, as a Redeemer, had the sins of his people laid on him, and they were bore by him, and took away; the sentence of the law's condemnation was executed on him, as standing in their legal place and stead; and satisfaction was made by him for all offences committed by them, which was necessary, that God might appear to be just, in justifying all them that believe: nor is this any objection or contradiction to the free grace of God, in a sinner's justification; since it was grace in God to provide, send, and part with his Son as a Redeemer, and to work out righteousness; it was grace in Christ, to come and give himself a sacrifice, and obtain salvation and righteousness, not for angels, but for men, and for some of them, and not all; and whatever this righteousness, salvation, and redemption cost Christ, they are all free to men.

**Ver. 25.** *Whom God had set forth to be a propitiation*, etc..] Redemption by Christ is here further explained, by his being “a propitiation”: which word may design either Christ the propitiator, the author of peace and reconciliation; or the propitiatory sacrifice, by which he is so; and both in allusion to the mercy seat, which was a type of him as such. The apostle here uses the same word, which the Septuagint often render **τρπκ** “the mercy seat”, by; and Philo the Jew calls it by the same name, and says it was a symbol, **της ιλεω του ψευδ δυναμεως** “of the propitious power of God”<sup>f49</sup>. Christ is the propitiation to God for sin; which must be understood of his making satisfaction to divine justice, for the sins of his people; these were imputed to him, and being found on him, the law and justice of God made demands on him for them; which he answered to satisfaction, by his obedience and sacrifice; and which, as it could not be done by any other, nor in any other way, is expressed by “reconciliation”, and “atonement”: whence God may be said to be pacified, or made propitious; not but that he always loved his people, and never hated them; nor is there, nor can there be any change in God, from hatred to love, any more than from love to hatred: Christ has not, by his sacrifice and death, procured the love and favour of God, but has removed the obstructions which lay in the way of love's appearing and breaking forth; there was, a law broken, and justice provoked, which were to be attended to, and Christ by his sacrifice has satisfied both; so that neither the wrath of God, nor any of the effects of it, can fall upon the persons Christ is the propitiation for, even according to justice itself; so that it is not love, but justice that is made propitious: for this is all owing to the grace and goodness of God, who “hath set him forth”, for this intent, in his eternal purposes and decrees; in the promises of the Old Testament, in the types, shadows, and sacrifices of the old law; by the exhibition of him in our nature, and in the ministration of the Gospel; and this is said to be

*through faith in his blood.* The “blood” of Christ is that, by which Christ is the propitiation; for without the shedding of that blood, there is no redemption, no peace, no reconciliation, or remission of sin; and “faith” in his blood is the means by which persons become partakers of the benefits of his propitiation; such as peace, pardon, atonement, justification, and adoption: and the end of Christ's being set forth as a propitiation, on the part of God's people, is,

*for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God:* by “sins that are past”, are meant, not sins before baptism, nor the sins of a

man's life only, but the sins of Old Testament saints, who lived before the incarnation of Christ, and the oblation of his sacrifice; and though this is not to be restrained to them only, for Christ's blood was shed for the remission of all his people's sins, past, present, and to come; yet the sins of the saints before the coming of Christ, seem to be particularly designed; which shows the insufficiency of legal sacrifices, sets forth the efficacy of Christ's blood and sacrifice, demonstrates him to be a perfect Saviour, and gives us reason under the present dispensation to hope for pardon, since reconciliation is completely made: "remission" of sin does not design that weakness which sin has brought upon, and left in human nature, whereby it is so enfeebled, that it cannot help itself, and therefore Christ was set forth, and sent forth, to be a propitiation; but rather God's passing by, or overlooking sin, and not punishing for it, under the former dispensation; or else the forgiveness of it now, and redemption from it by the blood of Christ, "through the forbearance of God"; in deferring the execution of justice, till he sent his Son, and in expecting satisfaction of his Son; which shows the grace and goodness of God to his people, and the trust and confidence he put in his Son: the other end on the part of God, in setting forth Christ to be a propitiation, was

*to declare his righteousness* (<sup>1922b</sup> Psalm 22:31); meaning either the righteousness of Christ, which was before hid, but now manifested; or rather the righteousness of God the Father, his faithfulness in his promises relating to Christ, his grace and goodness in the mission of his Son, the holiness and purity of his nature, and his vindictive justice, in avenging sin in his own Son, as the surety of his people: the execution of this was threatened from the beginning; the types and sacrifices of the old law prefigured it; the prophecies of the Old Testament express it; and the sufferings and death of Christ openly declare it, since God spared not his own Son, but sheathed the sword of justice in him.

**Ver. 26.** *To declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness*, etc..] This end is further explained, it being to declare the righteousness of God "at this time", under the Gospel dispensation; in which there was such a display of the grace, mercy, and goodness of God:

*that he might be just*; that is, appear to be so: God is naturally and essentially just in himself; and he is evidentially so in all his works, particularly in redemption by Christ; and when and while he is

*the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus:* Jesus, the Saviour, is the object of faith, as he is the Lord our righteousness; the believer in Jesus is a real, and not a nominal one; God is the justifier of such in a declarative way, and God only, though not to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit; and which sentence of justification is pronounced by him on the foot of a perfect righteousness, which neither law nor justice can find fault with, but entirely approve of; and so he appears just and righteous, even though he justifies the sinner and the ungodly.

**Ver. 27.** *Where is boasting then?* etc..] There is no room nor reason for it, either in Jews or Gentiles: not in the Jews, who were very apt to boast of their being Abraham's seed; of their circumcision; of their being Israelites; of their having and keeping the law; of God being their God; and of their knowledge of him: nor in the Gentiles, who were ready to boast of their philosophy, wisdom, and learning; of their self-sufficiency, freewill, and of the things they had in their own power.

*It is excluded;* it is shut out of doors; the key is turned upon it; it is not allowed of; it is entirely exploded:

*by what law? of works? nay;* for, that establishes boasting when men seek life, righteousness, and salvation by the works of it, and fancy they shall be able to attain them this way:

*but by the law of faith:* not by a law requiring faith; nor as if the Gospel was a law, a new law, a remedial law, a law of milder terms; but the word “law” here answers to the Hebrew word **hrwt**, which signifies any “doctrine” or “instruction”, and oftentimes the doctrine of the Gospel, as in (<sup>2MB</sup>Isaiah 2:3 42:4), and here particularly, the doctrine of a sinner's justification by faith in the righteousness of Christ; according to which doctrine the most unlikely persons are justified, even ungodly persons, the worst and vilest of sinners; and that without any consideration of works, by faith only, which is freely given them; and by faith in Christ's righteousness only: so that there is not the least room for boasting in the creature, but all their boasting is in Christ, who is made unto them righteousness, and by whom they are justified.

**Ver. 28.** *Therefore we conclude,* etc..] This is the conclusion from the premises, the sum total of the whole account:



*that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.* The subject of justification is, “man”, not in opposition to angels; nor does it design the Jew against the Gentile, though some have so thought; but the apostle names neither Jew nor Gentile, but “man”, to show that Christ's righteousness is unto all, and every man, that believes, be he who he will; and is to be understood indefinitely, that every man that is justified is justified by faith. The means is “by faith”, not habitually or actually considered; that is, either as an habit and principle infused into us, or as an act performed by us; but either organically, as it is a means of receiving Christ's righteousness; or objectively, as it denotes Christ the object of it: and all this is done “without works”, of any sort; not by a faith which is without works, for such a faith is dead, and of no avail; but by faith without works joined to it, in the affair of justification; or by the righteousness of Christ imputed by God the Father, without any consideration of them, and received by faith, and relied upon by the believer, without any regard unto them.

**Ver. 29.** *Is he the God of the Jews only?* etc..] The Jews made their boast of him as such, and would not allow the Gentiles any interest in him: but

*is he not also of the Gentiles? yes, of the Gentiles also:* God is the God both of Jews and Gentiles; not only as the Creator, preserver, and Governor of them, or as he has a right to demand worship and service of them, but as he is their covenant God; not by virtue of the covenant of circumcision, or by the Sinai Covenant, but by the covenant of grace; as appears by his loving them in Christ, choosing them in him, putting them into his hands, providing blessings of grace for them in him, and sending his Son to redeem them; by calling them by his grace; by their sanctification, adoption, pardon, and justification; by taking out of them a people for his name with whom he dwells, and of whom he takes care; and will never leave nor forsake: all which may lead us to observe the distinguishing grace of God, the happiness of our state and condition, and what encouragement we have for faith and hope in God.

**Ver. 30.** *Seeing it is one God,* etc..] God is one in nature and essence, though there are three persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; whence it appears, that he that is the God of the Jews, is also the God of the Gentiles, or there would be more gods than one; and that these are justified in one and the same manner, or God must be divided; for God,

as he is one in nature, so he is one in will, in his promises, and in the methods of his grace:

*which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.* The objects of justification are “the circumcision”, the circumcised Jews, and “the uncircumcision”, the uncircumcised Gentiles; the circumcision of the one does not forward, and the uncircumcision of the other does not hinder, nor neither of them effect the grace of justification: the justifier of them is one and the same, who is God; and the matter of their justification is the same, which is the righteousness of Christ; and the manner of it, or the means of their comfortable apprehension of it, is the same; for those phrases, “by faith”, and “through faith”, mean one and the same thing; (see <sup><sup>3100></sup>Philippians 3:9).

**Ver. 31.** *Do we then make void the law through faith?* etc..] Which question is answered by way of detestation,

*God forbid!* and by asserting the contrary,

*yea, we establish the law.* The law is not made void, neither by the grace nor doctrine of faith: not by the grace of faith; for that faith is not right which is not attended with works of righteousness; and those works are not right which do not flow from filth. Such a connection there is between faith and works; and so much do the one depend upon the other. Moreover, none but believers are capable of performing good works aright, and they do them, and they ought to do them: besides, faith, as a grace, looks to Christ, as the end of the law for righteousness, and therefore do not make it void. Nor is it made void by the doctrine of faith, and by the particular doctrine of a sinner's justification by faith in Christ's righteousness, which is here more especially intended; for though it is made void by it, as to any use of it for justification by the deeds thereof; yet its use in other respects is not set aside, such as to inform us of the mind and will of God, to discover and convince of sin, to show believers their deformity and imperfection, to render Christ and his righteousness more valuable, and to be a rule of walk and conversation to them; and it still remains a cursing and condemning law to Christless sinners, though justified ones are delivered from it as such: yea, the law is so far from being made void, that it is established by this doctrine; for by it the perpetuity of it is asserted, the spirituality of it is acknowledged, the perfect righteousness of it is secured: according to this doctrine all its demands are answered; whatever it requires it has, such as holiness of nature, perfect

obedience to its precepts, and its full penalty borne: it is placed in the best hands, where it will ever remain; and a regard to it is enforced under the best influence, by the best of motives, and from the best of principles. It is indeed abolished as a covenant of works, and in this sense is made void to believers; and it is done away as to the form of administration of it by Moses; and it is destroyed as a yoke of bondage; and the people of God are free from the malediction of it, and condemnation by it, and so from its terror; yet it remains unalterable and unchangeable in the hands of Christ; the matter of it is always the same, and ever obligatory on believers, who, though they are freed from the curse of it, are not exempted from obedience to it: wherefore the law is not made void, so as to be destroyed and abolished in every sense, or to be rendered idle, inactive, useless, and insignificant; but, on the contrary, is made to stand, is placed on a sure basis and firm foundation, as the words used signify.