

BIBLE & BAGEL

Romans – Our Common Faith

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“Torah” is a Hebrew word that technically describes the first five books of the Bible, however today it is also used to refer to the whole “Old Testament”. There is another Hebrew word that actually covers what we call the “Old Testament” it is the word “Tanakh” which is derived from Torah – teachings, Nevhim – prophets and Ketuvim – writings i.e. Psalms, Proverbs etc.

Romans 3:1-4

1 What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? 2 Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God. 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. As it is written: "That You may be justified in Your words, and may overcome when You are judged." NKJV

After saying that physical circumcision is not enough and that a person needs to be circumcised in his heart, Apostle Paul anticipates that the Gentiles would ask “so what’s so special about circumcision then and what’s so special in being a Jew? He says there is much advantage in being Jewish the main thing is that they were entrusted with the Word of God, the Tanakh. And some Gentiles may point to the unbelief of many Jews, the Apostle questions whether the unbelief of the Jews makes God unrighteous or does it make Him unfaithful and untrustworthy, he answers himself and says “certainly not”. Man can lie but God cannot and at the end God’s words will be proven true and His judgment proven to be just.

People outside the church often say that they don’t like Christianity because Christians are hypocrites, and it is true there are hypocrites in the church, but does the hypocrisy of people make the Word of God untrue. No the Word remains the same; at the end of the age when God judges the world He will be proven right. Isaiah 40 says that the Word of God remains forever. Thus we can trust in God’s Word especially His covenants. We must not focus on the actions of people but build our lives on the Word of God.

Romans 3:5-8

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? 7 For if the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory, why am I also 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. NKJV

Some people were using the argument that their sin proved God’s righteousness that is to say that when God forgives them of their sin it proved that God was merciful. By this reasoning they said that God should not judge them since they were proving Him righteous. Some who were against Paul were also accusing him of preaching such a doctrine, these people deserved to be condemned (by God).

Mankind always seeks ways to justify their sin that is part of the sinful nature, we can’t argue with the Word of God and we can’t justify our sin with any kind of human argument.



Romans 3:9-20

9 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. 10 As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; 11 There is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God. 12 They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not 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." 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 all the world may become guilty before God. 20 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. NKJV

The Apostle asks a rhetorical question; is one party better than the other and he answers no because both Jew and Gentile are sinners. He quotes a list of scriptures from Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Isaiah to prove his point, this especially to the Jews who had the Tanakh, to show them that they were just as guilty as the Gentiles. He says we can't be justified by keeping the Tanakh, indeed we were never meant to, but it was given to help us know what sin is.

Before we learn how we can be saved we must first know that we need saving, none of us cannot justify ourselves by our own works.

Some people use the Bible simply to find encouragement and make them feel good about themselves, indeed much of Christian preaching these days is like that. But the Bible is called "The Good Book" not "the feel good book". It is good because it gives us good news but before we get the good news we must know the bad news, that we are all sinners and acknowledge our need for God's salvation.

