

## Faithfulness of God in Judging

Can God judge and remain faithful? Yes. He has to judge sin in order to remain faithful to His essence.

**Romans 3:3 What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it?**

**Romans 3:4 May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man be found a liar, as it is written, “That You may be justified in Your words, And prevail when You are judged.”**

Like previous passages in the book of Romans, this is packed with threads of the fabric of Scripture.

Constable identifies four rhetorical questions asked by Paul in verses 1-8:

Four Rhetorical Questions (quoted from Constable’s commentary on Romans in which he paraphrases the questions:

1. (3:1) If Jews and Gentiles are both guilty before God, then what advantage is there in being a Jew?
2. (3:2) God will not forsake His promises to bless the nation because some of the Israelites proved unfaithful will He?
3. (3:5) Since the Jews' failings set off God's righteousness more sharply by contrast—as was true in David's case—might not God deal more graciously with the Jews in His judgment of them?
4. (3:7) If my lying, for example, glorifies God by showing Him to be the only perfectly truthful person, why does God punish me for lying?

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Robby Dean identifies ten questions. Where Thomas Constable combined questions into topics, Robby Dean identifies the specific questions:

1. What advantage has the Jew? (3:1a)
2. What is the profit of circumcision? (3:1b)
3. What if some did not believe? (3:3a)
4. Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God void? (3:3b)
5. What shall we say? (3:5a)
6. Is God unjust who inflicts wrath? (3:5b)
7. For then how will God judge the world? (3:6b)
8. If the truth of God increased through my lie, why am I judged a sinner? (3:7)
9. Why not say, “let us do evil that good may come”? (3:8)
10. What then? Are we better than they? (3:9)

Last week we dealt with the advantage of the Jew in the possession of the canon of the Old Testament. That was the answer to the first two of the rhetorical questions. The next questions, this week’s topic, is more complicated to unpack.

Here are topics to be covered this week:

1. What does “Jew” mean. Robby Dean explains that it means different things in different contexts when used by different New Testament writers.

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2. There is a relationship that needs to be explored among: God's character, in particular, His righteousness, man's unfaithfulness. Does man's unfaithfulness nullify God's righteousness.
3. This takes us to the book of Job that asks questions about man's righteousness and God's righteousness.

Let me answer these questions in reverse order.

Let us look at a couple of Job's questions concerning righteousness.

There are questions asked in the Old Testament that are not immediately answered. Take for instance the question at the end of Genesis chapter 34. In that chapter, Jacob's children cause havoc on the local community. To start with, Dinah, the daughter, wanders into the town of Shechem and has sex with one of the residence. It is a common accusation that she was raped. That may be the case. Others suggest that she was just naive. In either case, the sex was wrong, especially when considered in the light of Jew versus non-Jew. This chapter, Genesis chapter 34, was previously taught in the guest speaker section of the website. The irritating question comes at the end of the chapter.

**Genesis 34:30 Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have brought trouble on me by making me odious among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites; and my men being few in number, they will gather together against me and attack me and I will be destroyed, I and my household."**

**Genesis 34:31 But they said, "Should he treat our sister as a harlot?"**

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In the entire chapter, it would be hard to find anything done by anyone that was right. Everything was wrong. The issue being raised is what should everyone in that episode of the life of Jacob and his children have done. In the lesson on John chapter 4, there is a correspondence between all the individuals in Genesis chapter 34. Jacob's sons required the men of Shechem to be circumcised as if it were the gospel and would save them. Instead, Simeon and Levi took swords and killed everyone in the city of Schechem when the men were recovering from circumcision. Death instead of life. The answer in John chapter 4 is the gospel. Life instead of death. Jesus' actions and dialogue with the woman at the well answer the questions raised in Genesis chapter 34.

So we come to questions of righteousness in the book of Job that have answers in the book of Romans. These questions are first asked in the book of Job. A couple of the pertinent questions of the "Ten Questions of Job" that Herman often taught are included here for reference.

**Job 4:17 (#1) 'Can mankind be just (righteous) before God? (#2) Can a man be pure before his Maker?**

Paul says something similar from a different perspective:

**Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,**

Can a man be pure before his Maker? This assumes what Paul stated. All have sinned. No one is pure. As Paul continues in the book of Romans, he explains how God actually cleans a person.

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**Job 8:3 (#3) “Does God pervert justice? (#4)  
Or does the Almighty pervert what is right  
(righteous)?**

The key word here for our study is “pervert.” If God just made someone righteous without paying the eternal penalty for sin, He would pervert His righteousness. God’s righteousness demands judgment on sin. If there is no judgment, then God cannot impute righteousness to anyone and keep His essence intact. An attack on one of God’s essences is an attack on all of them.

In Romans 3:3-4, God must bless as promised, but He must also judge as He promised. Keep in mind that there is judgment of sin on the cross. That is judging for the penalty of sin. In time, the believer is disciplined for sin for the purpose of getting him or her back into fellowship. It is judgment. We saw that in the study of the book of Judges.

Remember the phases of salvation<sup>1</sup>

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Justification</b>	<b><u>Sanctification</u></b>	<b>Glorification</b>
<b>Tense</b>	<b>Past</b>	<b><u>Present</u></b>	<b>Future</b>
<b>Saved from sin’s:</b>	<b>Penalty</b>	<b><u>Power</u></b>	<b>Presence</b>
<b>Scripture</b>	<b>Eph 2:8-9; Titus 3:5</b>	<b><u>Philip 2:12</u></b>	<b>Rom 5:10</b>

In Phase 1 salvation, or justification, the believer is saved from the penalty of sin because Jesus was judged on the cross. In Phase 2 salvation, the believer is saved from the power or domination of sin as a result of the circumcision of the heart. The believer has a choice to be

<sup>1</sup> [https://cdn.slbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/13092856/SLBC-001\\_Soteriology-01\\_06\\_2016.pptx](https://cdn.slbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/13092856/SLBC-001_Soteriology-01_06_2016.pptx)

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filled with the Holy Spirit by faith dependence or allowing the sin nature to rule the life. If the latter in which sin takes over the life, then God at some point will judge the believer imposing divine discipline. That is a demonstration of God's faithfulness.

Paul quotes from Psalm 51 to document the answer he gives to the question.

The superscription which is part of the text in the Psalm is important here. It explains the context in which David wrote the Psalm. He had sinned. Nathan provided a story to David which caused David to condemn the man in the story. Then Nathan told David, you are that man. That was enough for David to realize how deeply in sin he was. Hence, this Psalm.

**For the choir director. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.**

So David had sinned. He acknowledged that sin.

**Psalm 51:1 Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions.**

There is nothing David can do but depend upon God in humility. The eternal penalty of sin is wiped out on the cross. Discipline based on God's justice seeks to return David to fellowship. David knows all he has to do is just trust God.

**Psalm 51:2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity And cleanse me from my sin.**

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Echos of Job. Who can make the clean out of the unclean. God can and does.

**Psalm 51:3 For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me.**

**Psalm 51:4 Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight, So that You are justified when You speak And blameless when You judge.**

David recognizes that he has sinned, and that sin is against God's essence. God must judge the sin. God must judge sin in order to not pervert His righteousness. He has to be faithful to His essence.

Summary statement: God is faithful to fulfill His promises in faith-rest. He is required by His essence to judge sin in time through discipline of the believer to resume fellowship.

Let's move on to the topic of Judaism.

What is a Jew or who is a Jew? It depends on the context. King David was a Jew. The Apostle Paul was a Jew. Einstein was a Jew. Henry Kissinger was a Jew. Pharisees and Saducees were Jews. Jesus Christ was a Jew.

Here is an introduction to the subject from Robby Dean:

“What does Paul mean when he uses the term “Jew”? What is a Jew? If we go through the New Testament, the term “Jew” is used with several different meanings and it is important to understand the different senses and the different meanings that we find. Here are several terms that are used in the Scripture that are used of the Jewish people. They are referred to as Hebrews, as Israelites, and as a Jew—Ioudaios. The term

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IOUDAIOS in the Greek has its etymological derivation from the name of the founder of the tribe of Judah. Judah was one of Jacob's twelve sons. Because it is the largest tribe in the south it becomes identified with the southern kingdom after the division of the kingdom. In the period of the united kingdom the nation is referred to as Israel. In the divided kingdom Judah was the southern kingdom and Israel was the northern kingdom. After the demise of the northern kingdom in 722 BC the term "Israel" is used a few times to refer to the southern kingdom but it is still referred to primarily as Judah, and then in the Roman period of the New Testament it is referred to by its Roman credential name of Judea. The term "Jew" comes from the first syllable of the word Judah and was applied by the Jewish people to themselves as a common term that was used as a reference to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.<sup>2</sup>

In today's world, there are several versions of Judaism: Reformed, Conservative and Orthodox. These are the main divisions of Judaism.

"Major sources of difference between these groups are their approaches to *halakha* (Jewish law), the authority of the rabbinic tradition, and the significance of the State of Israel. Orthodox Judaism maintains that the Torah and *halakha* are divine in origin, eternal and unalterable, and that they should be strictly followed. Conservative and Reform Judaism are more liberal, with Conservative Judaism generally promoting a more traditionalist interpretation of Judaism's requirements than Reform Judaism."

"**Reform Judaism**, also known as Liberal Judaism or Progressive Judaism, is a major Jewish denomination that emphasizes the evolving nature of Judaism, the superiority of its ethical aspects to its ceremonial ones, and belief in a continuous revelation which is closely intertwined with human reason and not limited to the Theophany at Mount Sinai. A highly liberal strand of Judaism, it is characterized by little stress on

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<sup>2</sup> <https://deanbible.org/new-testament-menuitem/romans-menuitem/message/2010-romans-026b/read>



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ritual and personal observance, regarding Jewish law as non-binding and the individual Jew as autonomous, and by a great openness to external influences and progressive values.”

“The origins of Reform Judaism lie in mid-19th-century Germany, where Rabbi Abraham Geiger and his associates formulated its early principles, attempting to harmonize Jewish tradition with modern sensibilities in the age of emancipation. Brought to America by German-trained rabbis, the denomination gained prominence in the United States, flourishing from the 1860s to the 1930s in an era known as "Classical Reform". Since the 1970s, the movement has adopted a policy of inclusiveness and acceptance, inviting as many as possible to partake in its communities rather than adhering to strict theoretical clarity. It is strongly identified with progressive and liberal agendas in political and social terms, mainly under the traditional Jewish rubric *tikkun olam* ("repairing of the world"). *Tikkun olam* is a central motto of Reform Judaism, and acting in its name is one of the main channels for adherents to express their affiliation. The movement's most significant center today is in North America.<sup>3</sup>”

“**Conservative Judaism**, also known as Masorti Judaism (Hebrew: יהדות מסורתית, romanized: Yahadut Masortit), is a Jewish religious movement that regards the authority of Jewish law and tradition as emanating primarily from the assent of the people through the generations, more than from divine revelation. It therefore views Jewish law, or *Halakha*, as both binding and subject to historical development. The conservative rabbinate employs modern historical-critical research, rather than only traditional methods and sources, and lends great weight to its constituency, when determining its stance on matters of practice. The movement considers its approach as the authentic and most appropriate continuation of *Halakhic* discourse, maintaining both fealty to received forms and flexibility in their interpretation. It also eschews strict

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<sup>3</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reform\\_Judaism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reform_Judaism)

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theological definitions, lacking a consensus in matters of faith and allowing great pluralism.<sup>4</sup>”

“**Orthodox Judaism** is the collective term for the traditionalist branches of contemporary Judaism. Theologically, it is chiefly defined by regarding the Torah, both Written and Oral, as revealed by God to Moses on Mount Sinai and faithfully transmitted ever since.”

“Orthodox Judaism, therefore, advocates a strict observance of Jewish law, or *halakha*, which is supposed to be exclusively interpreted and determined according to traditional methods and it is supposed to be adhered to according to the continuum of precedents which have been received through the ages. It regards the entire *halakhic* system as a system of law which is ultimately grounded in immutable revelation, essentially beyond external influence. Key practices are observing the Sabbath, eating kosher, and Torah study. Key doctrines include a future Messiah who will restore Jewish practice by building the temple in Jerusalem and gathering all the Jews to Israel, belief in a future bodily resurrection of the dead, divine reward and punishment for the righteous and the sinners.<sup>5</sup>”

When the “third” temple is built, Orthodox jews may have an “I told you so moment.”

That is all well and good for today. But what about the Bible. There are different uses of the term by the writers of the New Testament.

You must first understand that the Babylonian exile had an existential impact on Judaism. In Babylon there was no temple. In Jerusalem the temple had been destroyed. The rebuilt temple after the return from exile was no match for the temple of Solomon. Herod the Great renovated and

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4 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conservative\\_Judaism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conservative_Judaism)

5 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orthodox\\_Judaism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orthodox_Judaism)

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expanded the temple.<sup>6</sup> Today, again there is no temple. The normal function of Biblical Judaism cannot be accomplished. As a result, during the past almost 2,000 years, Jewish worship has had to adapt.

Now look at just a couple of uses of the term “Jew” in the New Testament.

Ethnic:

**Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.**

**Matthew 2:1 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying,**

**Matthew 2:2 “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.”**

**John 2:6 Now there were six stone waterpots set there for the Jewish custom of purification, containing twenty or thirty gallons each.**

**John 5:1 After these things there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.**

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<sup>6</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple\\_in\\_Jerusalem](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple_in_Jerusalem)

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Religious:

**Romans 2:17** But if you bear the name “Jew and rely upon the Law and boast in God,

**Romans 2:18** and know His will and approve the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law,

John/Religious Leadership:

**John 1:19** This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?”