

What Advantage Then Hath the Jew?

(Romans 3:1)

- A. Definitions.
1. advantage: Benefit; enhancement, improvement; increased well-being or convenience; resulting benefit. *to one's advantage*: to one's benefit, beneficial to one.
 2. profit: The advantage or benefit (of a person, community, or thing); use, interest; the gain, good, well-being. Formerly sometimes *pl.* when referring to several persons.
- B. Much of Paul's epistle to the Romans was aimed at Jews (specifically Jewish Christians), to urge them from Moses and their own misconceptions unto Jesus Christ and grace.
ROM 2:17; 4:1; 7:1.
- C. **ROM 3:1** is a predicted objection that Jews might have to Paul's arguments in the preceding chapters.
1. **ROM 1** sets forth the general corruption of mankind which turned away from God unto idols and reprobate thinking/behavior, of which the Jews also were frequently guilty throughout their history.
 2. **ROM 2** sets forth the impartial judgments of God for both good works and bad works.
 - a. The disobedient Jew could not hide behind his Jewishness, circumcision or possession of the law. **ROM 2:1-3, 23, 25.**
 - b. The obedient Gentile without circumcision or the law was justified before God and condemned the disobedient Jew. **ROM 2:13-15, 26-27.**
 - c. True Jewishness and circumcision are inward. **ROM 2:28-29.**
 3. "So what's the point of being Jewish or circumcised, Paul? Your teaching promotes the idea that there is no advantage to these things."
 4. "Paul, you withdrew from the Jews' religion in which you once profited, per **GAL 1:14**, and you seem to be affirming that all of our history and code means nothing!"
 5. "Paul, where is the significance of Jewishness if uncircumcised Gentiles are on equal footing with us in the church?"
 6. NOTE: There must be some kind of advantage to a restrictive system deemed to be of divine authority or one might as well live it up. **1CO 15:32.**
- D. So, where was the profit in Jewishness and circumcision?
1. Their chief advantage was not material wealth or political power but rather the scriptures. **ROM 3:2.**
 2. They also historically had benefits of relationship to God that no other people had, including the service of God and the promise of Messiah through them. **ROM 9:3-5.**
 - a. Non-Mosaic religion was misguided devil-worship. **1CO 10:20.**
 - b. Salvation was of the Jews. **JOH 4:22.**
 - c. Jewish religion was admittedly shadows (**COL 2:16-17; HEB 8:5**) but Gentile religion was utter darkness. **ACT 26:18.**
 - d. They had the adoption. **EXO 4:22.**
 - e. They had the glory, God's presence at the ark. **1SAM 4:21.**
 - f. They had the covenants of Abraham, Sinai and David (**GEN 15:18; EXO 24:7-8; PSA 89:3-4**) and the promised new covenant (**JER 31:33**), all of which indicated the everlasting covenant of salvation. **HEB 13:20.**
 - g. They had the promises. **ACT 13:32-33.**
 3. Because of their unique and special relationship with God, Israel was actually held to greater accountability. **AMO 3:1-2.**
- E. Jewishness, circumcision and the Law were only profitable on a qualified basis. **ROM 2:25-26.**
1. Righteousness was reckoned by *doing*, not just having the law. **DEU 6:25.**

2. Relying upon law for justification was not profit but debt. **GAL 5:2-3.**
 3. Circumcision was a seal of faith, not a charm or sign of righteousness before God. **ROM 4:11.**
 4. Abraham's descent was no profit to Ishmael, Esau or the unrepentant. **ROM 9:6-16; MAT 3:7-9.**
 5. The Jew was not a whit better than a Gentile by nature. **ROM 3:9.**
 6. The gospel did not actually alter the playing field for favor with God: it merely revealed how level the playing field was for all men. All are sinners by nature who have no hope outside of Jesus Christ and grace, and all men are called therefore to repent in submission to Him. **ACT 17:30; 20:21.**
- F. Circumcision profited in various ways.
1. It taught obedience based upon revelation from God at a point in time long after many had been reckoned righteous. **ROM 4:11; HEB 11:4-7.**
 2. Because it had to be repeated in the offspring, and because circumcised men were still judged for sin, it taught that it did not change the nature or guilt of man before God.
 3. It gave men the right to approach God in sacrifice and worship. **EZE 44:9.**
 4. It exposed them as Jews should they attempt to participate in lewd Gentile rituals or basic fornication with those with whom they would otherwise have no dealings. **JOH 4:9; ACT 10:28.**
 5. It gave them a shadowy preparation for the only cutting off which would satisfy God's displeasure with sinners: Jesus Christ. **ISA 53:8 c/w COL 2:11.**
 6. It certainly didn't profit Philistines. **1SAM 18:27.**
- G. Paul had a great desire for the salvation of Israel. **ROM 10:1.**
1. He knew he couldn't alter the elective purpose of God to only deem the children of the promise as the seed of Abraham. **ROM 9:1-29 c/w JUDE 1:7.**
 2. He rather earnestly desired the conversion of the elect among Israel to the knowledge of salvation through the righteousness of One: Jesus Christ. **ROM 10:2-4; 5:17-19.**
 3. There remained an elect remnant "Israel of God" (**GAL 6:16**) that needed that salvation of knowledge and faith as much as any elect among the Gentiles. **2TI 2:10.**
 4. Paul emphasized that God had not cast away His foreknown in Israel. **ROM 11:1-5.**
 5. Paul and other apostles spent considerable energy to encourage believing Jews that God had not dismissed the Jew outrightly. **ROM 11:23-29; 2PE 3:9.**
 6. But there was a "sea change" in the divine program that the elect Jew could see happening before his eyes: what about all those years of devotion to Moses, the Law and circumcision? Where was the favor of God towards Israel in the midst of all this?
- H. Jesus Christ addressed the Jews about concerns of profit and advantage.
1. The parable of the vineyard laborers taught against griping to God about a seeming lack of equity in view of equal reward despite longer labors. **MAT 20:1-16.**
 2. He taught them to think of themselves as unworthy and unprofitable servants for doing what God expected of them. **LUK 17:7-10.**
 3. He taught His disciple against jockeying for position in His kingdom. **LUK 22:24-27.**
 4. He reproved Peter for concerns about equity in labors. **JOH 21:20-22.**
- I. James exhorted Jewish saints to remember Job who, in frustration, griped about there being no profit in obeying God. **JAM 5:11 c/w JOB 34:7-9; 35:2-3.**
- J. Paul warned Hebrew Christians against the quitter, Esau. **HEB 12:15-16 c/w GEN 25:32.**
- K. There was/is great profit and advantage to the Jewish believer.
1. It was Jewish disciples who first saw the promises' fruition. **MAT 13:16-17.**
 2. Messiah was a Davidic Jew sent to the circumcision. **ROM 15:8.**
 3. Salvation is of the Jews. **JOH 4:22.**

4. Jewish saints were the first to experience resurrection from the grave, the hope of Israel. **MAT 27:52-53 c/w ACT 24:14-15.**
 5. The resurrected Jesus appeared unto Jews who interacted with Him. **1CO 15:5-8; LUK 24:39 c/w 1JO 1:1.**
 6. The new order of the kingdom (gospel church) was built upon Jews. **EPH 2:20.**
 7. The gospel was first to the Jew. **LUK 24:47; ACT 3:25-26; ROM 1:16.**
 8. They were the first to receive the Spirit. **ACT 2:1-5.**
 9. They had 2000 years of history and prophecy to boost them into Christ. If anyone should have been able to tie the pieces together, it was them.
 10. They were the natural olive tree into which Gentile believers were grafted. **ROM 11:16-17 c/w EPH 2:12.**
 - a. God is able to graft them back into their own tree again if they believe. **ROM 11:21-24.**
 - b. This was not said of the Gentile church. The loss of kingdom identity should not be sneezed at.
 11. Israel and even the world is ruled by Jews who declared Christ. **MAT 19:28.**
 - a. The apostles' testimony is the standard of truth. **1JO 4:6.**
 - b. The apostles' testimony turned the world upside down and cannot be eradicated. **ACT 17:6; MAT 24:35.**
 - c. A Jewish apostle's gospel will judge the secrets of men. **ROM 2:16.**
 - d. The Gentiles are actually under Jewish rule!
 - e. Satan's power is overcome by a Jewish king and Jewish instruction!
 - f. This is a pretty big award to a nation that made much of world dominion.
 12. There was/is great profit and advantage to the Jew, to the circumcision, through Jesus Christ.
 - a. The key is looking for the right kind of profit or advantage.
 - b. It is the honour that comes from God that matters. **JOH 5:44.**
- L. There is an analogy fitting to the Christian who has been made a priest to God through Christ. **1PE 2:5.**
1. God forbid that a believer with a lively hope of resurrection unto eternal life (and the gospel which proclaims the same) should adopt the attitude of the priests in **MAL 3:14.**
 2. God forbid that we should think our spiritual inheritance to be guaranteed in spite of unbelief and sin. **EPH 5:1-5.**
 3. God forbid that we should conclude God is not dealing fairly or squarely with us if He doesn't give us what we want when we want it and on our terms when we ought to be thankful that it is as well with us as it is: we aren't appointed to eternal wrath. **1TH 1:10.**
 4. God forbid that we should trivialize the fact that virtue is its own reward since doing what is right pleases God. **LUK 17:10 c/w PSA 40:8.**