

## 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 5:3.**
  3. Circumcision was a seal of faith, not a charm or sign of righteousness before God. **ROM 4:11.**
  4. Abrahamic 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.**