

# Romans 3:8

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/rom/rom-3/romans-38/>

*The competing Jewish “authorities” continue their argument opposing Paul, which Paul calls slander. Paul says that their condemnation (judgment) from God is just for making an untrue assertion.*

Paul cites many questions likely being asked by the competing Jewish “authorities” in his letter to the Romans, many of which are immediately followed by the phrase “May it never be!” But Paul singles out this particular question and calls it slander (*as we are slanderously reported and as some claim that we say* (v 8).

Slander is an untrue report about someone. In this case, the reported slander is that Paul is saying “*Let us do evil that good may come.*” The “authorities” are claiming Paul is teaching that “We ought to *do evil* because *good comes of it.*” Of this slander, Paul states *Their condemnation is just.* Paul does not say how the competing Jewish “authorities” will be condemned, but he does assert that it will be deserved.

*And why not say we ought to do evil that good may come?* Why would someone claim Paul is teaching that? Clearly, that is a ridiculous statement that no right-thinking person could accept. But that is precisely why Paul’s detractors wish to pin the position on Paul, to destroy the legitimacy of Paul’s gospel message. His ministry partners, Priscilla and Aquila, host a church at their house in Rome, and teach the same gospel message as Paul (Romans 16:3). It is probable these slanderers have spoken out against Priscilla and Aquila as well, and this letter to the Roman believers is meant to bolster Priscilla and Aquila’s efforts to teach the gospel of grace.

The very best slander has a basis in truth, and the competing Jewish “authorities” have a basis for their slander. If there was no basis, Paul would not have bothered to answer the charge with such an elaborate letter as this one to the Roman believers (whose faith is being “proclaimed throughout the world,” Romans 1:8). What is the basis for their slander?

It is the statement of Peter in Acts 15:

“We believe that we [Jews] are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they [Gentiles] also are.”  
(Acts 15:11)

Paul makes the same statement repeatedly in Romans, including this quite direct statement:

“The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more.”  
(Romans 5:20)

Paul is quite clear that one man (the God-man, Jesus Christ) is responsible for overcoming the sins of the world. No amount of law-keeping on the part of any person adds anything whatsoever

to the work of that one man, who is also God. Jesus died for all sins: past, present, and future, so that when anyone sins God's grace only gets greater.

So, these Jewish "authorities," perhaps from the same group of Pharisees in Acts 15:5, believed in Jesus, but continued to advocate that faith alone was insufficient, that Gentiles must be circumcised and obey the law of Moses to be saved.

They want to overturn Paul's teaching of grace. So they make a logical connection to Paul's teaching that righteousness before God comes by grace alone, and they state that if this is true, and grace abounds when we sin, then that means we ought to sin a lot so that God's grace will be even bigger. If that is true, then, of course, God would not be able to judge sin because we are just doing Him a favor. In making this argument, they seek to overturn Paul's teaching of grace.

People may argue against proclaiming the freely-given grace of God by saying "We can't say that or people will understand their liberty in Jesus and choose to sin." Paul will answer that argument very soon.

We know the Jewish "authorities'" argument was persuasive in Paul's era because the church he planted in Galatia fell for it. Paul's letter to the Galatians makes the same basic refutation as this letter to the Romans.

But what these competing Jewish "authorities" are missing is the holistic picture. Jesus gives us His resurrection power to overcome sin in our daily walk, but that is exercised through faith (Romans 1:16-17). And sin is not a desirable thing, but a detestable thing; even though we can sin and God's grace will cover it, that is clearly not in our best interest (as Paul will make abundantly clear in chapters 6 through 8, asserting that sin leads to slavery and death).

### **Biblical Text**

**8 And why not say (as we are slanderously reported and as some claim that we say), "Let us do evil that good may come"? Their condemnation is just.**