

Dear Friends and Family,

Tomorrow there will be a fake spider hiding under my pillow. Also, quite possibly, green milk in the fridge. And my shoes may be “missing”. I have already been told that school is cancelled solely because of tomorrow. AJ delights in the silly. He has been actively and loudly planning tricks, asking very not discreetly, “Is it April yet?” His expectations this year are big, and he plans on taking us completely by surprise.

Even though there is no clear and definitive historical evidence for April Fools' Day, it continues to be celebrated by creative pranksters and dreaded by parents on an annual basis. A number of different sources for the holiday's development are speculated, but History.com features a particularly interesting theory. In 1582, France changed calendars, abandoning the Julian and switching to the Gregorian.

Why would this be a big deal? Well, according to Julian dates, the year began at the Spring Equinox which was celebrated the last week of March, leading up to April 1st. New Year's Eve would be a big event on April 1! However, the New Year was moved to January 1st according to Gregorian dates and now suddenly, those ready to celebrate in April, were no longer in the “know” and labeled as “April Fools”. If a simple date change could trick people, just think what a few pranks could do. And so April Fool's was born.

Comical silliness can bring some laughter to a serious world. AJ's fake spiders and silly jokes will punctuate most of the day tomorrow. However, when we study Scripture, there is a serious truth to be understood about living as a fool. Romans 3 is perhaps one of the most theologically important and profound chapters regarding the case for the foolishness of those who reject Christ for the sake of the Law.

### **Pastor's Point of View**

The big idea: **May it never be!**

#### **Day 1 - READ Romans 3:1-4**

1. According to verse 1 & 2, who had been entrusted with the Word of God?
2. What comparison can we draw between the April fools who did not get the date change and the Jews who had (and should have known, been living and sharing the good news) the law?
3. What does verse 3 say they did with the law? Who is faithful in this passage? Who is unfaithful?
4. Why does Paul say “May it never be” in verse 4?

5. What is Paul confirming about the free will of individuals to choose not to believe, yet God's faithfulness in judgement?

### **Day 2 - READ Romans 3:5-20**

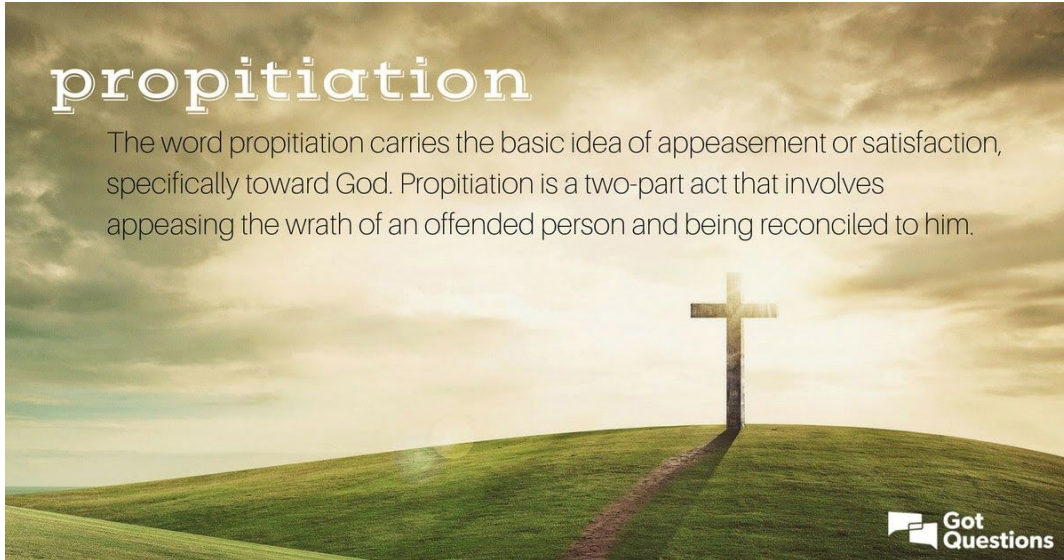
1. This is a lengthy passage. Take time to summarize it in your own words. Pay close attention to what Paul is saying and how he is saying it.
2. Why does Paul once again use the phrase "May it never be" in verse 6?
3. In verses 7 and 8, Paul is justifying the truth of his claims. What is so ingenious about how he does this?
  - a. Consider Paul's conditional statement: *God can't lie. We can't be lying if what we say about God is true, and we can't be telling the truth about God if we are lying.*
4. Paul follows up with an immediate statement in verse 9 which connects him back to his readers. He is no better than his readers, he too is a sinner.
5. Look up the Old Testament references for verse 10-18. Where is this found?
6. Paul closes this section with absolute authority. Whom does he claim will be accountable to the Law?

### **Day 3 - READ Romans 3:21-26**

1. Take the time to praise the Lord for this moving passage of scripture. Read it and read it again. Memorize verse 25b-26.
2. Why do you think Paul says the righteousness of God was manifest apart from the Law?
  - a. What does that mean?
  - b. What does it mean to be manifest?
  - c. Why is this included in this passage?
3. Verse 23 answers this question for us. This verse is probably well known to you as it is often quoted. We did not deserve the manifestation of God's righteousness because of our sin, yet he still (verse 24) gave it to us as the free gift of His grace.
4. Jesus came to shed His blood as the propitiation for our sins.

# propitiation

The word propitiation carries the basic idea of appeasement or satisfaction, specifically toward God. Propitiation is a two-part act that involves appeasing the wrath of an offended person and being reconciled to him.



## **Day 4 - READ Romans 3:27-31**

1. We see another “May it never be” statement in this section, why is Paul making this exclamation once again?
2. What a masterful close to a chapter. Consider how Paul ends this.
3. There is no room for boasting because works of the law don’t save you.
4. There is no room for throwing the law out because faith begets obedience to the law. (READ Matthew 5:17)
5. Only God can perfectly balance two topics that seem like opposites.
6. What encouragement does Paul give to us, as Gentiles, in this passage?
7. Take a moment to reflect on your salvation.
  - a. Remember that God is a righteous judge.
  - b. Repent, for we are all sinners, incapable of justifying ourselves through the law.
  - c. Thank God for Jesus, God’s free gift of grace.
  - d. Believe, for by faith in Him alone we can have propitiation for our sins.

### **May it never be!**

That you and I be found fools as it pertains to so great a salvation.

### **Romans 3:25b-25**

*This was* to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; for the demonstration, *I say*, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Hopefully tomorrow will bring some lighthearted laughs your way. During this time of uncertainty in the world, it is refreshing to see the innocence of my children and delight in their ability to be silly. But it is also with a heavy heart that I look at the world and wonder how many

people reject the truth that Jesus Christ is Lord? Especially during this time, let us not be fools, missing our opportunity to share the hope of Christ. Instead, let us be a light into the world, sharing our eternal hope and the truth that God is in control.

Walking in Faith,

Pastor Matt

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*Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us **RUN** with endurance the race that is set before us -- Hebrews 12:1*