

Our Security In Christ

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*The following article is the Second in a series of
Discussions on the subject of "Our Security In Christ"*

Question: *What does Romans 3: 9-20 reveal to the Christian concerning his security in Christ?*
(See also Gal 5:19-26)

Reference: Romans 3:9-20

9) "What then? Are we better *than they*? No, in no wise: *for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin*; 10) **as it is written***, *There is none righteous, no not one*: 11) There is none that understandeth, *there is none that seeketh after God*. 12) They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; *there is none that doeth good, no, not one*. 13) Their throat is an open sepulcher; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps *is* under their lips: 14) Whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness: 15) Their feet are swift to shed blood: 16) Destruction and misery *are* in their ways: 17) And the way of peace have they not known: 18) There is no fear of God before their eyes. 19) Now we know that what thingssoever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 20) Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the saw is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:9-20; *Psalm 14:1-3; *Psalm 53:1-3; Galatians 3:22).

Background

The book of Romans is Paul's most theological, most influential letter. From research, I have found the likelihood that neither Paul, nor any other apostle founded the Church at Rome. The possibility exists that one or more of Paul's converts from Macedonia and Asia, or Jews and other proselytes who were saved on the day of Pentecost may have established the Church at Rome (Acts 2:10). Paul never considered Rome as the ministry of any other apostle (15:20), which explains why he felt the responsibility to the Roman Church to visit Rome but was hindered from coming (1:13-15; 15:22).

Condemnation

In this age of higher learning and intellectual enlightenment, there is a tendency to minimize the exceeding sinfulness of sin and look upon it, rather, as a misfortune. It is popular to camouflage the exceeding deadliness of sin, its vile character and its corrupting, damning influence upon the sinner, by using such high-sounding phrases as, "Sin is a psychological complex . . . a temperamental lapse . . . a shadow." But as we study Paul's epistles, we will find no such camouflage. Paul fearlessly exposes sin, takes off its mask, and presents it naked and deadly. He pictures sin as it IS, without any frills or sugar-coating. And then in clear, understandable terms he presents God's perfect remedy for sin.

The Character of Sin

In Romans 1:18 through 3:20 Paul paints the true picture of sin, a terrible picture of the natural man without Christ. According to the inspired Gospel of Paul, sin is man's open rebellion against a holy God, his opposition to God's commands, his insurrection against God the Creator; and he clearly points out that the character of sin is the deliberate breaking of God's divine law. In this passage from Romans, Paul is in perfect agreement with Isaiah 53:6:

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

All men are guilty: In Romans 1:18-32 Paul points out the fact that the Gentile is guilty of sin, and stands condemned before God: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against ALL ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness" (Rom. 1:18).

Ungodliness is the root that bears the fruit of unrighteousness — one is the cause, the other is the effect. Ungodly men live unrighteous lives. A life of unrighteousness is the product of sin in the heart. Sin is "the transgression of the law" — the exclusion of God from the heart and life of the individual. One who is ungodly has banished God from his life, lives in open rebellion against God, and automatically lives unrighteously.

The Jew is guilty before God: If you will carefully study Romans 2:17-29 you will see the Jew, knowing the law of God, is *condemned BY the law*. The Jews were fanatical concerning the law and its practices, but the very law they knew and pretended to practice *condemned* them.

"Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?" (Rom. 2:23). Israel was the chosen nation, the elect of God, up to their final rejection of the Gospel of grace. Then God turned to the Gentiles and anointed Paul as minister to the Gentiles. Because of their election and special privilege as God's chosen people, it was usual for the Jews to boast of their superior position and the fact they were the children of the covenant. They majored on their religious feasts, festivals, and assemblies. But the Apostle Paul plainly points out to them that because of their inconsistencies in daily living, their practices of religious rituals were of no value and their religious ceremonies were meaningless as having to do with forgiveness of sin and holiness unto the Lord.

Paul makes it clear that his own people, the Jews, were much greater sinners than were the Gentiles, because the Gentiles had sinned without the law (the law was not given to them); but the Jews to whom the law was given had sinned *in spite of the law*. They boasted much about the law, but in breaking the law they had dishonored God exceedingly. They could have been teachers and guides to the Gentiles who were without God, without hope, aliens to the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants; but instead of teaching and guiding, the Jews had caused the Gentiles to blaspheme God, as Paul points out in Romans 2:19-24. The Jew had trampled underfoot the law he valued and prized so highly, and because the Gentile had observed this inconsistency on the part of the Jew, he blasphemed instead of worshipping the Lord God Almighty. Thus, the Jew was more guilty before God than was the Gentile, because he had more light than did those who were strangers to the covenants.

The whole world is guilty before God: "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; *that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God*" (Rom. 3:19).

Notice the stages that lead to ungodliness, and finally cause God to give up men:

First: "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not AS God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an

image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. WHEREFORE, God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves" (Rom. 1:21-24).

Second: They "changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever, Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections. . ." (Rom. 1:25, 26).

Third: "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient . . . who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them " (Rom. 1:28, 32).

Paul clearly points out that these people knew God, but they refused to glorify Him. They changed the truth of God into a lie. When we tamper with the Word of God we destroy the truth, and what we say becomes a lie. The Bible says, "*Let God be true, but every man a liar*" (Rom. 3:4); but today men are saying, "Let our religionists re-write the Bible," and in so doing, they make God a liar.

These people of whom Paul speaks did not like to retain God in their knowledge. They removed Him from their thinking; they outlawed worship of the one true God. Because of this, God gave them up. First, He gave up the body; second, He gave up the soul (to vile affections); and third, He gave up the mind (because they did not like to retain God in their knowledge).

Beloved, when God gives up an individual — body, soul, and mind — that individual is destined for an eternity in the fires of hell because there is no way for the Spirit to reach him, and no man can come to God unless he be drawn by the convicting power of the Holy Spirit.

Yes, man knew God — but refused to glorify Him, changed God's truth into a lie, and removed God from his thinking. Therefore, we hear these solemn words: ". . . THOU ART INEXCUSABLE, O MAN . . . and thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?" (Rom. 2:1, 3).

Sin is not a vague shadow, it is not to be minimized, it cannot be neutral. SIN IS DEFINITE — and when man deliberately crosses God's will, when man assumes himself to be wiser than the God who created him, THAT IS SIN!

Sin is self-will, whether on the part of an individual or a nation. It was that which caused the mob to cry out in Luke 19:14, "We will not have this Man to reign over us," and the mass of mankind today is still proclaiming, "We will not have this Man to reign over us!"

There are but few individuals on earth today who are willing to allow God to dictate their plan of life and their rules for living. Few indeed are willing to pray in the words of Jesus, "not as I will, but as *thou* wilt!" The mass of humanity today is self-willed, demonstrating the spirit of the prodigal son of Luke 15, who demanded his inheritance and took his journey into a far-away country, refusing the protection, love, and instruction his father would so gladly have given.

Man classifies sin as "little, medium, or big." But there is no such thing as "a *little* sin" against a holy God. Sin is big, ugly, loathsome, black as the walls of hell. Sin brings condemnation, and Paul says in Romans 3:9, ". . . *We have . . . proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are ALL UNDER SIN.*" Thus is set forth the divine verdict of the Holy Judge, the Lord God Almighty, and that verdict concerns the whole human race.

Let us notice the words of the Apostle Paul in Romans 3:10-18; "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes."

Now compare the passage just quoted with these words from the Psalmist: "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good. The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people as they eat bread, and call not upon the Lord. There were they in great fear: for God is in the generation of the righteous. Ye have shamed the counsel of the poor, because the Lord is his refuge. Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! when the Lord bringeth back the captivity of His people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad" (Psalm 14).

Three things are pointed out in both of these passages:

1. Man without God *has a degraded will*: "There is none righteous, no, not one." Man is not willing to live in righteousness until God works a miracle in his stubborn will and **MAKES** him willing to serve God and allow the Holy Spirit to dictate his practices of daily living.

2. Man without God *has a blinded intelligence*: "There is none that understandeth." It is utterly impossible for the natural man to understand the things of God: ". . . The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (I Cor. 2:14). "But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (II Cor. 4:3, 4).

3. Man without God *has deadened emotions*: "There is none that seeketh after God." Emotionally, the unregenerate is dead to spiritual things. The person who has never been born again does not hunger and thirst after righteousness.

Thus we see that the natural man is not willing to follow God and serve Him until God works a miracle in his heart. Paul and the Psalmist agree that "they are ALL gone out of the way, there is NONE righteous."

Not only are all men under sin, all men are under the condemnation of the curse: "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Gal. 3:10).

Here the Holy Spirit is showing us that because man is under the curse, he is in desperate need of salvation. The law was not given to save. God did not give the law to prevent sin or transgression, but to bring men under a more strict accountability and a more plainly expressed curse: . . . *By the law is the knowledge of sin*" (Rom. 3:20).

"The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ . . ." (Gal. 3:24). "Schoolmaster" here refers to the trusted servant whose responsibility was to care for a boy until he reached the age when he was no longer under a tutor or schoolmaster. Thus the schoolmaster's duty was to keep the boy from physical or moral evil, and to train and prepare him for future life and manhood.

In the same way, the law was given to warn against evil, to place before us God's standards and show us how far we fall short of those standards. The law shows us that we are all condemned, we are all under the curse; and seeing our condition, we feel our need of a Saviour and look to the Lord Jesus Christ who was made a curse for us (Gal. 3:13).

. . . The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). I re-emphasize the Bible fact that the law was not given to save. No one but Jesus *ever kept* God's law perfectly. To His disciples Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matt. 5:17).

The law states the demands and commands of God — and what God demands, it is a divine necessity that God provide. *In Jesus* God provided One who was able to keep every jot and tittle of the law. *In Jesus* WE are lawkeepers in the sight of God — but out of Christ no one can stand before God, *righteous and fit for the kingdom of heaven*.

All are under judgment: Since all are under sin, it stands to reason that all are under the judgment of Almighty God (Rom. 3:19). But the preaching that is popular today among the masses is not that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" and are therefore under the curse and must face judgment. The popular message today talks of the loving God, the gracious, tender God, Father of all mankind — not Almighty God, the Holy Judge.

Today men are invited to unite with the church, follow Christ in baptism by one method or another (depending upon the denomination or the cult); they are invited to do the best they can, live a good life, and perform charitable works. But Paul thunders out in plain language that *apart from Christ*, ALL are hopelessly lost and stand guilty and hell-deserving before a holy God! *IN Christ Jesus* we are delivered from condemnation. In HIM we will not be judged as hopeless sinners — we will be received by God the Father as a son.

Man is a trinity — body, soul, and spirit. The Scriptures clearly testify to this. There is no such thing as being "partially good" or "partially bad." Man without God is totally corrupt, entirely depraved; but *in Christ Jesus* man is totally righteous.

Sin touches every part of man: Sin kills the spirit, darkens the soul, blights the body. It not only brings condemnation before God, but it works within the sinner utterly to corrupt his whole being. Paul makes this very clear in his epistles.

The *spirit* of the unregenerate man is dead, although in the Scriptures death does not signify *termination*: it signifies separation. Physically, Adam lived for 930 years, but spiritually he died the moment he ate the forbidden fruit. When he disobeyed God, fellowship between himself and God was broken. His act of disobedience separated him from God.

The *soul* of the unregenerate man is darkened, alienated, unclean and greedy. Paul describes this condition in Ephesians 4:18, 19: "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness."

The *body* of unregenerate man is desecrated, perverted, unholy, profane, unfit to be the temple of God. Sin cripples, curses, blights the body — a body which was created for God, to be in-dwelt by God. But the body of *natural* man *is unfit* to be the dwelling place of God.

Romans 3:13-18 paints the terrible picture of man as God sees him outside of Christ. These words were given to the Apostle Paul and he penned them down for our instruction. It is plain to see Paul did not believe or teach that there is a spark of Divinity in every man! Such teaching is of the devil, for until man is born again through the power of the Word and the Holy Spirit, made new by the miracle of God in his heart, there is no divinity about him nor in him. Man without Christ as Saviour is depraved, corrupted in his affections, alienated from God and given over to lasciviousness, uncleanness, and greed. There "no fear of God before his eyes."

But when the natural man comes to know God in regeneration and becomes a new creation in Christ Jesus, he DOES fear God: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge . . ." (Prov. 1:7). "The fear of the Lord is clean . . ." (Psalm 19:9).

In the Garden of Eden God promised a Saviour for the soul (Gen. 3:15) and in the fulness of time Jesus came, as promised (Gal. 4:4, 5), but He made no provision to redeem the body. To Adam God said, ". . . Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. 3:19). Because of Adam's sin, the body which was meant to be the dwelling place of the most high God was declared of no use to God, and was destined to return to dust; but in the first resurrection the saints of God will receive a NEW body like unto the resurrection body of Jesus (I John 3:1-3; I Cor. 15:42-45, 51-53).

Therefore...

...Let it be settled forever. This has been wrongfully attributed to a doctrine of "Calvinism" long enough. This is not a doctrine a man invented several hundred years ago; this is a doctrine of the Word of God. Man is by nature a child of wrath, a depraved creature, an accursed thing, unclean, and free from true righteousness – so the Word of God describes him. He cannot please God. Nothing he does can please God. There is not a single *unregenerate* man that does good, no, not one! Sovereign grace must regenerate his heart and make him a new creature, created anew in the image of God, imparting faith to believe into his very soul that he may see Christ and be saved, and then after being converted he will certainly bring forth good fruit.

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