

[Romans 3:5 – 22]

~ Our Spiritual Safari examined what is perhaps the most difficult section of doctrine in the entire Word of God in our previous report. We considered the Biblical advantage of the Jew. We evaluated why, if circumcision didn't mean anything, God spent all those years taking His people through such a bloody and offensive ritual? If you have not read our last report, I suggest you go back and do so before reading this one. In order for Paul to answer their question, he had to counter tremendous multi-faceted arguments that were being hurled from all directions against him. So, as we begin this report, we back up to verse five of chapter three. Our last report was lengthy, but we didn't quite exhaust our subject completely....

5 But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man)

~ Many people assert a subtle sophistry that attempts to reason as follows: since the unbelief of a man merely puts in contrast the faithfulness of God, then God is not just to punish that which brings greater glory to Himself. The better translation is an interrogative: *is God unjust if He visiteth with wrath?* This is definitely the most severe criticism Paul faced when attempting to teach the grace of God. Most people would assume that if God uses sin to bring glory to Himself, then He should not punish the sinner. Of course, this is only used by unbelievers as an excuse for sinning; and we'll revisit that theory in chapter six at verse one. Paul forms the question in the Greek in such a way as to demand a negative answer. Just because Paul says he speaks as a man doesn't mean he isn't writing in the Spirit of God; but it means he is presenting this question from the finite and human viewpoint....

6 God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?

~ In our previous report, a categorical and emphatic denial of any such premise that God is *IN ANY WAY* unjust was clearly stated. The argument is that if any sin enhances and magnifies the glory and grace of God, then *ALL* sin should do the same; therefore, God does not have any grounds to judge the world; but would abdicate His throne as the judge of all the earth! Every single one of you dear readers who are honest will acknowledge there are some people in this world who must be judged. Only a specious argument forbids judgment. However, any right-thinking person realizes a thief, murderer and child rapist must needs be judged....

7 For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?

~ Of course, a lie is moral falsehood. The argument we are examining would allow all individuals to claim an exemption based on a premise that their sin had advanced the glory and grace of God. So, Paul drives his argument to its only logical and untenable conclusion. What we have here is an *“argumentative ad absurdum.”* If sin magnifies the glory of God, then the more we sin the more glory we bring Him. These people were falsely accusing Paul of teaching such a preposterous curriculum. The accusation was perfect nonsense because it was Paul who was vehemently professing God will judge sin! As surely as there is sin there must – *MUST* – and *will* be judgment! This fallacious argument Paul is combating renders the criminal a saint in the name of utilitarianism. This is where man forms the erroneous conclusion that the ends justify the means....

8 And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just.

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:

~ This brings us to the accusation of guilt by God against all – *ALL* – of mankind. The word *“proved”* in verse nine is a bad translation because Paul is not attempting to prove mankind is a sinner; the fact that man is a sinner

is an undisputable and non-negotiable self-evident axiom of truth. Man is a sinner simply by his natural acts. Also, man is a sinner by nature. Man doesn't become a sinner by sinning; man sins because he is a natural born sinner! Man is a sinner by imputation, too; and we'll get to that later on safari. The estate of man is under sin because that is the state we are in! The conclusion is that we are *ALL* under sin!

Verse ten is unmistakable in stating there are *none* who are righteous. Jesus said, "*none are good but God.*" To be righteous means to be right! The *ONLY* way we can ever be right is with God. If we're going to be right with God, it is different than being right with our fellow man. When we have differences among men, either party may be in error; and compromise is usually the only amicable solution. However, if we're going to be right with God, we have to realize He is always right – and we're going to have to accept His rules and precepts and apply His premises to our understanding. God isn't going to compromise with us on anything – ever.

God never compromises with man. Salvation is a "*take it or leave it*" proposition to a lost and dying world. God never forces anyone to accept Christ as their Savior. Anyone can reject God's salvation at will. Even so, we're living on His earth, drinking His water, using His sunshine and rain and eating His food. The plan of salvation is true to His character, and it is according to His plan and purpose – and that's the way it is going to be carried out, friends. God has offered that salvation; have you accepted it? Accepting His plan and His purpose is the *ONLY* way to be right with God.

Many professors of sociology take great joy in presenting the question "*... what is right?*" A secular student on the wrong path in life will equally delight in the ensuing debate. The sin in one's life is always revealed by those engaging in that type of religious philosophy. All we have to do is listen. The question "*what is right*" is a ball that can be batted around a classroom all day long, and no one ever gets tired of it. Of course, it's never resolved because they refuse to believe God; but the argument and controversy are licked up by dogs like the vomit they just regurgitated.

Another glib but common question is "*who makes the rules?*" Well, I know university professors don't make the rules; that's for sure. I also know that I

don't make the rules – and neither do *YOU!* Friends, God makes His rules, and we have no vote on them. God isn't seeking our approval for His laws and ordinances. When God says "*none are righteous*" then – that's that! There are *NONE* who does good according to God's standard and methods – do you accept that – or not? When God takes the bench as the judge, that is the number one statement out of His mouth.

Paul is stressing the fact that God judges sin, my beloved! Paul is going to sum up this entire section on sin by bringing all of mankind before the judge of all the earth. The verdict by God against every member of the human race is: *GUILTY!* That includes both Jew and Gentile – black and white – rich and poor – simple and wise – good and bad – male and female; it makes no difference who you are this applies to *YOU!* Thankfully, after this, Paul will drop us off at the spiritual clinic where we can be seen by the Great Physician! Of course, most people want to associate the "*Great Physician*" aspect of Christ's ministry with *PHYSICAL* healing – but that's not the proper use of the term. See, the disease of mankind is *S-I-N*, friends. God *MIGHT* heal you physically, but He might not. Will you trust Him if He doesn't heal the flesh? We're talking about spiritual healing in this passage – which He will do *EVERY* time one comes to Him in a sincere and faithful way – *HIS* way. Not your way. His way; or no way....

11 *There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.*

~ This means there are *none* who are acting on the knowledge they have. That's quite an indictment on this poor Bible teacher! No man who is honest can say they are the person they would like to be. None seek after God, but God isn't concealed. God is out in the open. He's only as far away as your Bible. He's only as hidden as your refusal to open it and read it. In fact, God is telling man right *NOW* that man is a sinner. Further, God is offering salvation; and all of that is very clear to any honest mind and open heart that is willing to be healed of their sin! The anthologies of religion say man is looking and searching for God. How fallacious that theory is.

As a side note, Theistic Evolution claims religion is man's search for God! Actually, that might be partially true when talking about religion – but Christianity is *NOT* religion – and man hasn't discovered much about God

through the effort, obviously. Man will never advance in his “*search for God*” because man is going the wrong way! Man is moving *AWAY* from God. See, the natural man does not agree with God that he is a sinner to begin with. Until we get the sin question settled, we’re going nowhere with God; and He’s going nowhere with you, either. Make a note. The lost sinner who continues to reject Christ after having the Gospel presented to them reveals they love their sin and refuse to give it up. It’s that simple – but just that complicated, too....

12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

~ See, man has left the way that he *KNOWS* to be right. Most, if not all, ancient tribes and civilizations have a remembrance and a tradition that includes the Living and True God. There is someone reading this report who *KNOWS* they are not doing what they ought to do in their lives at this time. They have also resolved that they are not going to do it God’s way. They are the ones being spoken of here that have “*gone out of the way!*”

“*Unprofitable*” in verse twelve refers to over-ripe fruits. Over-ripe fruit is a spoiled and sour fruit. We sure have a lot of people with rotting, overly-ripe fruit today. Now, I can prepare a wonderful guacamole dish and I love it; but if you let that avocado sit just one day too long, you have something that is not very nice, friends. Lush fruit can change to corrupt fruit overnight. Let’s all be cognizant of that.

The third charge in verse twelve is a *triple negative*; as it says there is none that are good, no, not one! Mankind is like a group of travelers who have completely lost their way and are now going in the opposite direction from the right direction; and not one of them can help the other become oriented. The Lord Jesus said to the religious leaders of His day, “*you are blind leaders of the blind!*” That’s the picture of mankind, friends. That’s what the judge of all the earth says about you and me and about everyone who is a part of the human race. So, with that, the apostle Paul transfers us to the spiritual clinic and has placed us in the hands of our Great Physician Who has made the following diagnosis: we are spiritually sick unto death....

13 Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips:

~ A simple throat examination immediately reveals if we are healthy or sick. God says our throat is decaying flesh. When God looks down from heaven upon us, He doesn't see sweet and fine little Sunday school boys and girls. Mel Trotter used to say, "... if we could see ourselves as God sees us, we wouldn't be able to stand ourselves!" That's exactly what God means when He has Paul tell us "... with their tongues they use deceit." God hates it, friends. Hates it.

Make no mistake; the poison of asps is under our lips. There is a poisonous snake exhibit at a local zoo I visited several years ago. When I saw those deadly snakes, I thought of the poison in those fangs. If you will stop reading, go examine yourself in the mirror and open your mouth, and stick out your tongue, you will see a lump of flesh that is more deadly and dangerous than any snakes known to man. A reptile can't hurt a reputation or break a heart; it can only kill a body. We, however, via the tongue, hold the power to speak spiritual life or death. Most people run around biting others all day long. James has quite a bit to add when he examine his epistle.

The proper combination of words can and will ruin the respected name of any man or woman. The gossip in some of our churches is the most vicious slander on the face of this earth! It always seems to be the so-called "spiritual" crowd who maliciously slaughter the reputation of fine people. They are always dangerously pious spiritual apostates. For example, some claim we need to learn to speak in tongues. Well, if they meant the kind of tongue that doesn't hurt another person's reputation, then I would agree. Others assert the Bible is not the inspired and inerrant Word of God; because they have sin in their life they refuse to relinquish. Unfortunately, the tongue and spirit people always turn out to be the meanest people in the church. Interestingly, they always appear as the sweetest saints; until you speak with them. As soon as you open yourself and get too close to them, it's too late. The poison is already dripping from their mouths....

14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:

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~ The spiritual x-ray our Great Physician is showing us of ourselves gets worse and worse as we go along. Man is prone to cursing. If you don't think so, then just visit your local bar for a glass of water. You'll quickly find out what's in the vocabulary of modern man. From the ditch digger to the college professor, their mouths are full of cursing. Most people use profanity as simple adjectives....

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.

~ It is a bleak picture of mankind that God presents in His Word. Men's feet are swift to shed blood. Man has absolutely *NO CLUE* how to achieve peace on this earth. After thousands of years, man is still talking about peace, but the wars are more pervasive than ever before! Who do you think is right: God, who says man does not know peace; or mankind who says there will be peace? When Paul says there is no fear of God, he is summing this section up in nine words. This is the picture of mankind right now as I type this report and you read it. This world does not fear God, and they live as though He does not exist. Actually, man defies God at every turn of his life! This is an ugly picture of the truthful reality of mankind....

19 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.

~ There are those today who say they don't eat certain meats and they say they tithe to the penny. Well, even if they *COULD* keep the law – which they don't – but if they *COULD* keep the law, God says that won't attain righteousness; and God says He isn't accepting it anyways. You can grab at the law all day long, but it won't help you. Keeping the law doesn't lift man up, either. Actually, to hold onto the law does the polar opposite. Trying to

keep the law is like jumping out of an airplane, but instead of taking a parachute, you take a sack of cement. The law will unequivocally drag you down. The law never justified man – the law condemns man! The law is a ministration of death....

20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

~ Now, I challenge anyone who insists we keep the law to explain verse twenty to me. I am looking forward to that conversation! By the law, there is no salvation. Man cannot meet God's standard by keeping the law. It is simply impossible, my beloved readers.

Alright, this brings us to the end of a tremendous section of doctrine; and we arrive at the Grand Canyon of the Bible. Paul now begins to speak of God's salvation. We'll move out of the dark night of sin and into the refining light of healing from said sin! As we move forward in our Spiritual Safari, justification by faith comes before us in the remainder of this chapter. After all we have just learned, we now learn about the availability of righteousness from God for a guilty, lost and dying world....

21 But now a righteousness from God apart from the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

~ The correct translation is not "THE" righteousness of God – this is "A" righteousness of God; because God doesn't share His attributes with anyone. God has clearly told us that He will not share His glory with any man. So, this is not the attribute of God, and it is not a righteousness of man; because God has already said man has no righteousness. Man's righteousness is filthy rags and God isn't in the laundry business. What we have is God's provided righteousness – the Lord Jesus Christ. Both the law and the prophets testified of Him. This is righteousness apart from the law. You can't get it by doing something or not doing something or keeping some ritual. There is absolutely no way we can keep God's law....

1 Corinthians 1:30 *But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption ~*

2 Corinthians 5:21 *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him ~*

All of us are sinners and the only righteousness we'll ever have is Christ. The only way we'll ever be complete is in Him. We are totally saved in Christ, and we are absolutely lost out of Christ. Where are you today? There is no such thing as middle-ground in this. Jesus saith, "*you're either for Me or against Me.*" There is no sense in trying to come to God any other way. It won't work. I hope you'll continue with us and read this all very, very carefully; because we are in a *CRITICAL* learning phase concerning the sound doctrine of the apostles in this expedition through the entire Word of God. In our next report, we're coming out of the thick and tangled underbrush of the jungle into a wide-open savannah with beautiful streams of crystal-clear waters. Living Waters! I hope you'll drink with us ~