

NO ONE IS RIGHTEOUS

Romans 3:9-20

The first eight verses of the third chapter of Romans list the advantages that the Jews enjoyed as the chosen people of God. Those verses also tell us how the Jews spurned God's gifts and wallowed in self-righteousness instead.

But, then, Romans 3:9 warns us against feeling superior. "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;"

We are all guilty. Evil people are destined for Hell and the Lake of Fire. So-called good people are destined for Hell and the Lake of Fire. Even apparently religious people are destined for Hell and the Lake of Fire. ALL people are destined for Hell and the Lake of Fire. Romans 3:10-18 is God's universal indictment against all of mankind:

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 sepulchre; 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."

Thank God that the book of Romans doesn't end here! If it did, it would be our undoing! We must never think that we, as christians, are somehow better than anyone else. We, of all people, should be more clearly aware than anyone else that all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.

No man comes to God except through Jesus Christ! The reason that is so, is that everything must pass through the cleansing of Jesus' blood before God is capable of looking upon it. As christians, even our prayers for God's cleansing from

sin must go through the cleansing of Christ's blood before they get to God the Father.

Even our cleanest, most God glorifying prayers are too filthy for God to examine without being first washed by Christ's blood. Thank God that He has provided this method of cleansing and this method of access for us to Him!

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Man stands before God today like a little child who swears, with crying and tears, that he has not been anywhere near the jam jar. With an outraged innocence, he pleads the justice of his position, in total ignorance of the fact that a good spoonful of the jam has fallen on his shirt under his chin, and is plainly visible to all but himself!

Thus saith the Lord: Stop your arguing! You are a sinner by nature! You are a sinner by deliberate choice! And I, the Lord God Almighty, now issue a divine proclamation declaring that you are a sinner in my sight, and that I will deal with you as such, without argument!

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Sin is falling short of God's target. If you have ever participated in the sport of archery, you have known the experience of pulling the bow back with all your strength, and watching as the arrow fell to the ground short of the target. God has set His target of perfection so far away from our beings and natures that no bowman can reach it. All come short of the glory of God!

Sin is also overstepping the boundary. It is the wilful, perverted desire to have one's own way. It is the act of the child who, when told to stay in her room, is found downstairs watching television.

Sin also means falling down instead of standing. It is also being ignorant instead of knowing, when God commands us to know Him. It is also diminishing that which should be rendered in full.

There are twelve separate Hebrew and Greek words which are translated into the English word "sin" in our Bibles. Each one adds a different clarifying viewpoint into the nature of sin. Together, they provide a picture of human nature which leaves no choice but to conclude that ALL men are sinners! There is NONE righteous, NO NOT ONE!

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We say, "All men are sinners." This is the extensive view of human sin. It extends to all men. But, the intensive view is also valid. We also say, "All of man is sinful." For each individual human being, it is valid to intensively conclude that the entire individual is sinful by his or her very nature. At the close of God's universal indictment are the nine damning descriptive words of Romans 3:18, "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

I am truly and deeply awed by the terrible accuracy and applicability of this verse to men today. What shall be done to a generation of men who tremble in terror before the spectre of nuclear energy, who fear the invisible rays of radioactivity, who would gladly sacrifice all of life's comforts to tear down the horrifying nuclear power plants, but who have no fear of the invisible God before their eyes?

Some may argue that they have seen the results of the burns on the men and women of Hiroshima, but no-one has yet seen the results of the burns of the Lake of Fire. They are greater fools than those who deny the existence of God!

There are many people, myself included, who have never seen one person who has been afflicted with radiation sickness. But I believe that such sickness exists, and I have a normal fear of it.

I do not go down to the Zion Nuclear Power Plant and ask them to place some uranium in my hand so that I can determine whether or not such sickness really exists! I wouldn't do that any more than I would eat a pound of rat poison just to see if it were really lethal! I rely on the testimony of others to the fact that it is!

And I also know that God exists because Romans 1:20 says, "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:"

Many men will tell you that they believe in God, but almost all men act as though He did not exist. With their eyes they see the universe of God, but there is no fear of God before their eyes.

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The indictment is complete and true! The whole world is guilty before God! Evil people are destined for Hell and the Lake of Fire. So-called good people are destined for Hell and the Lake of Fire. Even apparently religious people are destined for Hell and the Lake of Fire. All men are sinners. All of man is sinful. The whole world is guilty before God! There is none righteous, no not one!

Suppose that after the service this morning, you and I step out of this building, and some wild idiot comes roaring and weaving through the parking lot in his car, runs up on the sidewalk, and kills the two of us. In the next moment, we would be what men call dead! And the next moment, you and I would be standing before God.

And God would ask, "What right" (and note my emphasis on that word) "What right do you have to come into my Heaven?" How would you reply? What would be your answer? What right do you have to enter God's Heaven?

So far as I know, there are only three possible answers to that question. They may have several variations in detail, and they might be said in different ways, but, basically, they all boil down to just three answers.

The first answer is a variation on the theme of presenting your life and works to the scrutiny of God, of pointing out that you have done the best that you could. Surely God would not be too hard on a sincere person who has managed to get through life ~~w~~ without causing much harm.

As a matter of fact, you've really done a lot of good, you're really a fine person, you've attended church regularly, and you've always lived by the golden rule. You've never been guilty of murder or any of the other really gross sins.

What this is, is claiming to be "good enough" to get into Heaven. God won't buy that argument! Nobody is good enough to get into Heaven on their own merits. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

The second answer is that of Romans 3:19 & 20:

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."

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."

The second answer is to just stand there and state, "I have nothing to say." It is to declare to God that you do not have any right to enter His Heaven!

It is to cry out, "It was all true, God. I was wrong. I knew I was wrong when I made my excuses. But I hated righteousness by the blood of Christ, and I still hate it! I hate you! I want Heaven, but I want it without you! Get down off that throne! I want to sit on the throne of Heaven!"

"I want my own way, not yours. I hate christians! I only called myself a christian and went to church because of what it could get me in the way of good things on Earth. I knew the christians were right and I hated them for it. And I hate them now because they belong to you."

"You're sending me to eternal torment, to a place of desire without fulfillment, of lust without satisfaction, of wanting without having, of wishing but never getting, of looking but never seeing. I hate you, God! I hate you because I want my own way! I hate you because you won't let me have my own way! I hate you! I hate you!"

And the voice will fade and drift off into outer darkness.

I have given you two possible answers to the question. But I said there were three. What would your answer be? If it is one of these first two, you are not going to Heaven! You are going to Hell and the Lake of Fire, where there will be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth for all eternity.

I know that my answer, today and forever, would be, "JESUS CHRIST is my right to enter Heaven, because He has become my righteousness!"

The Wrath of God is revealed from Heaven. The Wrath is revealed. But so is God's solution, JESUS CHRIST!

Hallelujah! Amen!

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