

"The Doctrine of Condemnation"

Romans 1:18-3:20

Part 3

Introduction: In our study of Romans we are currently looking at the Doctrine of Condemnation in which Paul is showing why man needs the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Last week we were looking at the Rational sinner listed in Romans 1:18-32. In Paul's teaching of the Doctrine of Condemnation he lists 3 different sinners.

1. The Rational Sinner
2. The Reformed Sinner
3. The Religious Sinner

The Rational Sinner is a person who has the knowledge that God exists but chooses to reject the Light given to him and to live as though God does not exist. This suppression of the Truth/Light places the Rational Sinner on a direct collision course with the wrath of God.

I. The Rational Sinner and the Wrath of God

Part 3

Notice Romans 1:18-20

We looked at these verses the past two weeks and we need to keep them in mind for they are the context of what we are going to look at tonight. The Rational Sinner is guilty of suppressing the Truth which God has given to him. He knows that God exists but he WILLINGLY rejects that Truth and he therefore lives his life as if God does not exist. When this person experiences the goodness of God in their lives they refuse to give God the glory or the praise.

Notice Romans 1:21a

The Rational Sinner believes that his success and all he has is the result of his ability, skills, intelligence, and decisions. He refuses to see that his abilities, skills, mind and his decisions were the result of God's goodness in his life. If you listen closely to this person when they speak you will hear them use the word "I" frequently. You may hear statements like, "I have made this", "I have done this", "I made the decision to go here" and so on. They are the center of their world and it is all about them because they have a sin nature and they are of their father the devil. They are WILLINGLY following Satan's lead.

Isaiah 14:12-14

12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:

14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

Last week we looked at the Biblical example of this.

Daniel 4:28-30

28 All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar.

29 At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon.

30 The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?

Nebuchadnezzar eventually came to his senses and I personally believe he was saved. But at this time in his life he was guilty of suppressing the Truth and for that reason he collided with the wrath of God.

Notice Romans 1:21b

The suppression of the Truth causes the Rational collide with the wrath of God and the wrath of God is seen in two ways in this verse.

1. They become "vain in their imaginations". The word "VAIN" means "EMPTY". The Rational Sinner creates an emptiness within himself when he rejects the Light and this then sets him or her up to fall into idolatry. This we shall see as we continue.
2. Their foolish heart becomes darkened. This means the Rational Sinner sinks deeper into spiritual darkness. This we shall see as we continue also.

Notice Romans 1:22

The Rational Sinner in his human reasoning sees himself as a very wise individual but God sees him as a fool. The Rational Sinner holds tightly to the wisdom of this world and he boasts in such wisdom. Notice the words of William Newell:

"The silliness of these "modern" shallow-pan days! How men are rushing back to the old pagan pit out of which God's Word and His gospel would have delivered them! They suck up sin; they welter in wickedness; they profess to be wise! They sit at the feet of "professors" whose breath is spiritual cyanide. They idolize the hog-sty doctrines of a

*rotten Freud: and count themselves "wise"! They say, "God is not a person; men evolved from monkeys; morals are mere old habits; self-enjoyment, self-expression, indulgence of all desires—this, " they say, "is the path of wisdom." It is the path of those who go quickly down to the pit and on to judgment! The very morals of Sodom, as our Lord foretold, are rushing fast upon us, and God will bring again the awful doom of Sodom. This is a strange introduction to the gospel of God's grace, we answer, It lies here before us, this awful indictment of Romans One, and cannot be evaded! Moreover, until man knows his state of sin, he wants no grace. Shall pardon be spoken of before the sinner is proved a sinner? While the evidence is being brought in, the whole attention of the court is upon that. If the evidence of guilt be insufficient or inconclusive, there is no necessity for a pardon! Preachers and teachers have soft pedaled sin, until the fear Of God is vanishing away. **McCheyne** used to Say, "A holy minister is an awful weapon in the hands of God" A preacher who avoids telling men the truth about their sin as here revealed, is the best tool of the devil.*

Let me remind us of what God has said about human wisdom.

1 Corinthians 1:19-21

¹⁹ For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

²⁰ Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

²¹ For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

1 Corinthians 3:18-20

¹⁸ Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.

¹⁹ For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.

²⁰ And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.

Those who reject God's Light and suppress the Truth are fools in the eyes of God.

Psalms 14:1

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.

Notice Romans 1:23

Here we see the results of the darkening of the heart. Under the wrath of God, the Rational Sinner continues in a downward spiritual spiral. This verse shows us that when man rejects God he will then find himself in idolatry. Last week I reminded you that man has been created to worship God and if God is rejected man then creates within himself an emptiness and he will then worship SOMETHING or SOMEBODY in an attempt to fill the emptiness.

The word "CHANGED" here means "TO CAUSE ONE THING TO CEASE AND ANOTHER TO TAKE ITS PLACE". The idea here is the Rational Sinner has taken God off the throne in his life and he has replaced him with his own created god.

This verse clearly shows the downward spiral of man in his spiritual darkness which continues to ever increase. The idolatry starts by worshipping man and then declines to animals and then to insects. I want to show you the words of Ironside on this verse:

"Observe the downward steps on the toboggan-slide of idolatry: God first thought of as an idealized man, then likened to the birds that soar into the heavens, next to the beasts that prowl over the earth, and finally to serpents and other detestable creeping things, whether reptilian or insectivorous. Even the Egyptian worshiped the serpent and the BEETLE! And yet back of all Egyptian mythology is hidden the original revelation of one true and living God. What degradation does this imply on the part of one of the most enlightened nations of greatness! And other empires bear similar marks of declension and deterioration."

Let me show you just how far man can fall in idolatry when he suppresses God's Truth/Light.

Ezekiel 8:3, 6-18

³ And he put forth the form of an hand, and took me by a lock of mine head; and the spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the inner gate that looketh toward the north; where was the seat of the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy.

⁶ He said furthermore unto me, Son of man, seest thou what they do? even the great abominations that the house of Israel committeth here, that I should go far off from my sanctuary? but turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations.

⁷ And he brought me to the door of the court; and when I looked, behold a hole in the wall.

⁸ Then said he unto me, Son of man, dig now in the wall: and when I had digged in the wall, behold a door.

⁹ And he said unto me, Go in, and behold the wicked abominations that they do here.

¹⁰ So I went in and saw; and behold every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, pourtrayed upon the wall round about.

¹¹ And there stood before them seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel, and in the midst of them stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan, with every man his censer in his hand; and a thick cloud of incense went up.

¹² Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, the LORD seeth us not; the LORD hath forsaken the earth.

¹³ He said also unto me, Turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations that they do. (This shows the downward spiral into the spiritual darkness)

¹⁴ Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the LORD's house which was toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz. (A Babylonian god)

¹⁵ Then said he unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations than these.

¹⁶ And he brought me into the inner court of the LORD's house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east.

¹⁷ Then he said unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here? for they have filled the land with violence, and have returned to provoke me to anger: and, lo, they put the branch to their nose.

¹⁸ Therefore will I also deal in fury: mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them.

These people had rejected God and they were therefore trying to fill within themselves the emptiness which they created when they rejected God.

Exodus 20:2-5

² *I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.*

³ *Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*

⁴ *Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.*

⁵ *Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;*

Here are the first 2 of the Ten Commandments and many tend to believe that to violate these Commandments man must have a carved image in his house or on his property. But it goes far beyond the graven image. It is also a violation when man creates within his own mind a god that he believes rules the universe. He may see him as a loving god who would never send anyone to hell but instead he will accept all people someday. They see mankind as one large family who all belong to god. This is idolatry for this person has created within their own mind a god that does not exist. Those who do this create a good in their own CORRUPT image.

Man does this because he does not want to face the fact that one day he will stand before a Holy and a Righteous God and be held accountable for his sin. He feels much more comfortable when he creates a god in his own image who shares in his own corruption.

Now before we move on there is something which I need to point out here that is vital in understanding this passage. As we continue in the verses that shall follow we will see that as the Rational Sinner continues on the path of idolatry God will then GIVE HIM UP/OVER. In verses 24-32 we shall see that God will lift the moral restraints and He will allow man to sink lower and lower in his depravity. In our world today, we can see that the moral restraints have been lifted and the actions of people are the evidence of the sinful wicked heart within him.

Now when we are told that God gives them up and over we are not to think they are too far gone to be saved nor are we to think that God has given up on them.

2 Peter 3:7-9

⁷ *But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.*

⁸ *But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*

⁹ *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

God will one day judge all men on the earth but that day is not yet come because God longs to see all men come to repentance. That is even the people who are Rational Sinners who have given their lives to idolatry. It means that God loves the worse sinner we can even imagine within our minds. He longs for all to come to repentance and be saved.

The problem within the church today is that we often look at people and conclude that they are too far gone. Just in case you believe that someone can go beyond grace let me remind you of the theme of this letter.

Romans 1:16-17

¹⁶ *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*

¹⁷ *For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.*

The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to EVERYONE who will accept it. That even means the vilest of sinners.

Conclusion:

Let me ask a question in closing, "Why does God allow the Rational Sinner to continue in the spiritual spiral?" It is for the very reason why the Doctrine of Condemnation is before the Doctrine of Justification. Man MUST come to hate his sin before he will ever see his need of a Savior! God MUST allow some to hit the bottom in life before they will ever look up. There are people who will never look to God until they come to the end of themselves. This spiritual spiral is God's wrath on the Rational Sinner and it is administered in God's love. The constant decline in a person's life is designed to open their eyes to their True spiritual condition.

Let us praise God for our salvation for if it wasn't for His GRACE every one of us could be sinking in the spiritual spiral.

