

"The Doctrine of Condemnation"

Romans 1:18-3:20

Part 10

Introduction: Tonight, as we continue our study of Romans we are returning to our study of the Doctrine of Condemnation and the Religious Sinner. We have looked previously at the Rational Sinner and the Reformed Sinner. The Religious Sinner is different from the previous two because this person sees themselves as righteous because of their "religious lifestyle". In Romans 2 Paul addressed the Religious Sinner as a Jew because Paul is thinking about the Religious Leaders of his day namely the Scribes and the Pharisees.

Notice Romans 2:17-18

The Religious Jews of Paul's day rested in the Law. The Law had been given to them and they believed in their own deceptive hearts they were able to keep the Law. The Truth was they were not able to keep the Law and they refused to allow the Law to do what it was supposed to do which was reveal their true sinfulness and lead them to Christ. They were guilty of twisting the Law to fit their own lives. Let me give you two examples of how they did this.

Matthew 5:33-41

³³ Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:

³⁴ But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:

³⁵ Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.

³⁶ Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

³⁷ But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

³⁸ Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:

³⁹ But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

40 And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.

41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

The Religious leaders taught that if they entered an oath and did not swear by the Lord's name they were then not bound to the oath. They would swear by the Temple, earth, and by Jerusalem and because they did not swear on God's name they believed they were not bound to the oath.

They also took the Law and taught revenge was justified. They taught that it was an eye for an eye but this was never given to justify revenge. It was given to be sure in the court of law that the penalty did not exceed the crime.

These are just two of the ways they twisted the Law to justify their sin. They were so self-righteous they saw themselves as teachers and instructors to the Gentiles.

Notice Romans 2:19-20

They believed they were the spiritually elite but they were wrong. Paul's rebuke would have been a real shock to them.

Notice Romans 2:21-23

They were guilty of dishonoring God with their hypocrisy. They claimed to be righteous but the Truth was they were as guilty and more so than those who they desired to teach.

Notice Romans 2:24

They were guilty of leading the Gentiles to blaspheme God. They claimed to be God's representatives and so they should have been living their lives the vert way God would have if He were on the earth. As God's representatives they were turning people away from God with their lifestyles.

Matthew 23:13-15

13 But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

14 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.

¹⁵ Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.

David was guilty of the very same thing because of his sin with Bathsheba. Notice the words of Nathan as spoken to David.

2 Samuel 12:9-14

⁹ Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.

¹⁰ Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.

¹¹ Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun.

¹² For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.

¹³ And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.

¹⁴ Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die.

Let me show you the words of MacDonald on being a representative of God.

"This combination of high talk and low walk caused the Gentiles to blaspheme the name of God. They judged the Lord, as men always do, by those who professed to be His followers. It was true in Isaiah's day and it is still true today." Each of us should ask:

*"If of Jesus Christ their only view
May be what they see of Him in you,
(Insert your name), what do they see?"*

Let us notice what is said concerning those of Isaiah's day.

Isaiah 52:5

⁵ Now therefore, what have I here, saith the LORD, that my people is taken away for nought? they that rule over them make them to howl, saith the LORD; and my name continually every day is blasphemed.

I. The Religious Sinner
Part 2
Romans 2:17-3:8

Notice Romans 2:25

The Jews gloried in their circumcision. They were so caught up in their religious activities. They trusted in their ceremonies and their rituals. But here in this verse we see that circumcision was of NO profit if they did not keep the Law. In other words, their circumcision would mean absolutely nothing if they died in their sins for on judgment day they would stand with all other pagans.

In the section before us Paul is destroying the second Jewish pillar which the Jews held tightly to and that was circumcision. The first pillar was the Law. Paul needed to destroy these pillars if these people were going to see their need of Jesus Christ. There is much more behind this verse that will help us to better understand what it is that Paul is saying to the Religious Sinner.

Circumcision had special meaning to the Jew. Circumcision was a symbol of God's covenant, His blessings, His goodness, and His protection of His chosen people. God instituted the practice of circumcision 500 years before the Law was given to Moses. Circumcision however became a physical sign and reminder to the Jews that they were God's covenant people. But there was something they were forgetting.

Exodus 19:3-6

³ *And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel:*

⁴ *Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.*

⁵ *Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:*

⁶ *And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.*

They were forgetting that the Old Covenant was conditional. It depended upon the faithfulness of the people and therefore if there was not complete obedience to the Law

then circumcision was nothing. That is exactly what Paul is saying in Romans 2:25. The Jew rested in the Law and in circumcision but without complete obedience to the Law the Jew was no different than the pagan or the Rational Sinner.

Notice Romans 2:26

Before we look at what Paul is saying in this verse let me first of all explain what circumcision was all about. It was the physical cutting away of the flesh. It was a physical mark to define God's Covenant people. But there was a much deeper meaning which many of the Jews had missed. Circumcision was a picture of what was to happen within the heart. The heart of the Jews was to be separated from the "lusts of the flesh". In a sense the flesh was to be cut away from the heart. Circumcision was an outward illustration of what was to happen to the heart of the Jew who professed to be a follower of God. If the heart was not separated from the flesh then the outward cutting away of the flesh meant absolutely nothing.

Notice Romans 2:26 again.

Paul's point here is to show the Religious Sinner he is guilty before God. He points out that his outward circumcision does not make him righteous. He will be judged based upon his deeds and his obedience to the Law. If a Gentile who is not circumcised physically walks in obedience to the Law his obedience will be counted as circumcision which means he will be reckoned as righteous.

The entire point which Paul is making here is that a man will not be judged by the ceremonies, rituals and the ordinances which he participates in but he will be judged by his deeds.

Romans 2:6-9

⁶ Who will render to every man according to his deeds:

⁷ To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:

⁸ But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,

⁹ *Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;*

Notice Romans 2:27

This verse would have been very sharp and cutting to the Religious Jew. Paul tells them if the Gentiles who by nature are not circumcised walked in obedience to the Law then the lifestyle of the Gentile would judge and condemn the Religious Jew. For the Gentiles were not given the Mosaic Law but the Jews were and they rested in the Law but the Gentile who lived in obedience would prove to be righteous and the Jew condemned. Let me show you the words from a commentary on this thought.

"A Gentile's humble obedience to the law should serve as a stern rebuke to a Jew who, in spite of his great advantages, lives in disobedience. Circumcision (or baptism - or any ritual in itself) doesn't save anyone; Egyptians circumcised their boys, and Ishmael, the son of the flesh, was circumcised

Paul is not saying that uncircumcised Gentiles can keep the Law, but rather that if they do they will be reckoned as "circumcised" in a spiritual sense. Moreover, they then could be called to bear witness in judgment against the circumcised who have transgressed the Law. Paul's argument was devastating! One of the greatest insults in Judaism was to call another Jew "an uncircumcised one," and this is what Paul had done in no uncertain terms. Circumcision alone does not justify a man. His actions must be in keeping with his profession of faith."

Notice Romans 2:28-29

Here Paul makes it very clear that the outward practices of ceremonies and rituals means nothing if there is not an inward change of the heart. A true spiritual Jew is someone who is not Religious on the outside but whose heart has been changed from the inside.

Let me show you what is said about the true believer.

Colossians 2:10-14

¹⁰ *And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:*

¹¹ *In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:*

¹² Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

¹³ And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

¹⁴ Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

Notice the words of MacDonald on the "circumcision made without hands";

*"This circumcision speaks of death to the fleshly nature. It is true **positionally** of every believer (the moment we receive Jesus as Lord and Savior), but should be followed by a practical mortifying of the sinful deeds of the flesh. The apostle speaks of believers as the true circumcision (Phil. 3:3), in contrast to a party of Jewish legalists known as "the circumcision"*

Conclusion:

The bottom line in this text is that salvation has nothing to do with rites, rituals or ceremonies. Salvation is the work of the Spirit within the heart of the person who accepts Jesus Christ as his or her personal Savior. There will be many religious people who die in their sins because they have relied upon church membership, baptism, catechism, family tradition and many other "RELIGIOUS" practices.

Matthew 7:13-14, 21-23

¹³ Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

¹⁴ Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

²¹ Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

²² Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

²³ And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

