

**"The Doctrine of Condemnation"**

**Romans 1:18-3:20**

**Part 11**

**Introduction:** In our study of Romans we are currently looking at Paul's words to the Religious Sinner. In the past two weeks we have looked at Romans 2:17-29 and it is in these verses that Paul addresses the Religious Jew. In these verses Paul pointed out two pillars which the Jew leaned upon for their righteousness.

**1. The Law**

**Notice Romans 2:17-18**

The Jews rested in the Law to for their righteousness. They had been given the Law by God through Moses and instead of allowing the Law to do what it was designed to do which was to reveal their own sinfulness and to lead them to Christ, they took the Law and twisted it to fit their own lives and therefore lived in spiritual deception. The Law was Light which was given to the Jews and they refused to see what it was that the Light revealed. They instead twisted the Light in an attempt to justify the sin in their lives.

**2. Circumcision**

Circumcision was given some 500 years before the Law but over the years circumcision had become that which identified the Jewish people as Covenant people. 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 2:28-29**

The Jews were to be God's representatives in the world but because of their hypocrisy they were turning people away from Him instead of pointing people to Him. They rested in the Law which was never given for the purpose of rest and they were resting in circumcision which was nothing more than a physical cutting away of the flesh. They were sinners and the Law could not save them and circumcision could not save them. They

needed to know that just because they were Jews they were not exempt from the judgment of God. They did not get a special privilege or an easy pass into heaven. They were sinners and they needed to know that Truth if they were going to be saved.

Now Paul knew that the Jews who would hear the words of Romans 2:17-29 would push back against his teaching. So, as we step into Romans 3:1-8 Paul will address the Jews who would resist his teaching in the previous verses.

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

**Notice Romans 3:1**

The two questions which Paul raises in this verse would have been questions the resisting Jews would have raised. Paul has just kicked out from under them the two pillars of security, the Law and circumcision. Therefore, the Jew would then ask the question, "What advantage is there then in being a Jew?" If they did not get special privileges granted by God which would allow them to escape the judgment then the question was and is, "What was the advantage of being a Jew?"

**Notice Romans 3:2**

Paul reminds the Jew here that he has many advantages but the chief advantage was that God had committed to him the ORACLES. The word "Oracles" refers to the Word of God and in the case here it seems to point to the promises of God given to the Nation of Israel. Let me show you several promises of great importance given to the Jews.

**Genesis 12:1-3**

*Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:*

*<sup>2</sup> And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing;*

*<sup>3</sup> And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.*

When God called Abram, He promised to him that he would become a great nation and that through him the earth would be blessed. The meaning is that through Abram the promise

of Jesus Christ as Redeemer would be fulfilled and through Christ salvation would be made available to all. In Isaiah we see another great promise given to Israel.

**Isaiah 9:6-7**

*<sup>6</sup> For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.*

*<sup>7</sup> Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.*

Here we see that Israel was promised the Kingdom and Jesus Christ would rule in the Kingdom.

So, Israel was promised that through the Nation would come the Messiah, they would possess the Land, and they would have a Kingdom on this earth. There are many other promises but these help us to understand Paul's point when he reminds them they were given the Oracles of God. But I believe there is more.

With all the promises given to them there was also given much Light for they were also given the Law which included the Ten Commandments. As God's representatives they were to be a light unto the world around them. You see, it was through the Law that God's righteousness was revealed and His character was made known. It was through the Law that they came to know the consequences of breaking God's moral Law. Therefore, they were to use the Light given to them to lead others. They failed miserably at this. Let me show you the illustration given by Ray Stedman concerning the Light given to Israel.

*"Just imagine, for instance, an island in darkness, populated with people. There is only one way to escape the island, a narrow bridge over a deep chasm, but the darkness is so great that only a few find their way over that bridge. Everybody on that island has been provided with a little penlight that enables them to dimly illuminate a small space around them, barely enough to avoid the more obvious obstacles in their path. But a certain group of people is given a powerful searchlight that can shine thousands of yards into the darkness. It is given to them not only so that they can find the bridge, but also so they can show others the way out. Yet these people, who have so much more light than the others, spend their time utilizing this powerful searchlight to look for needles in a haystack. They*

turn that searchlight on a mound of hay and search for needles. That, in essence, was what the Jews were doing.

The rabbis were arguing constantly over very small theological differences. Jesus called this "straining at a gnat, but swallowing a camel," (Matthew 23:24). They argued over how many steps constituted a violation of the Sabbath and whether spitting on a rock is permissible on the Sabbath, or whether spitting on mud is a violation. One would be right, and the other wrong. This is what they used the Law for. Though the Jews had a tremendous advantage in having the Law, Paul says, they failed to use it properly."

The bottom line was the Jews had an advantage with the Light of the Oracles but they failed to use it in the way in which God intended. They used it to examine the lives of others instead of examining their own lives. Jesus pointed out this sin in the Sermon on the Mount.

**Matthew 7:1-5**

*Judge not, that ye be not judged.*

<sup>2</sup> *For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.*

<sup>3</sup> *And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?*

<sup>4</sup> *Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?*

<sup>5</sup> *Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.*

**Notice Romans 3:3**

Now the resisting Jew raises another question. The question is, "What if some of the Jews were not faithful?" Paul knows that many were not and some of the examples would be those who refused to enter Canaan at Kadesh Barnea under the leadership of Moses. So, the resisting Jew was asking, "Does the unfaithfulness of some of the Jews completely erase the promises which God had made to the Nation?" In other words, the resisting Jew might say, "I know there were some who were not faithful (I will agree to that) but does that mean God has completely abandon His promises made to the Jews?" It could be

worded this way, "Since some of us do not quite meet all the standards of the Law, are you telling me that God will cast away the entire Nation?"

**Notice Romans 3:4**

Paul makes it very clear here that God's Word is absolute Truth and every man is a liar. We must understand what Paul's thought is here in this verse. The idea here is that if God made a promise and then did not see it through then He would be a failure. Paul uses the strongest language in the Greek to make it clear that God is True to His promises. Just because some of the Jews did not walk in faithfulness it would not stop the promises of God. If the unfaithfulness of a few did stop the promises of God then the resisting Jew would declare that it was God's fault. He would be saying that God made promises but never followed through with them.

So, in this verse Paul quotes David from Psalm 51. In Psalm 51 we find David's confession of his sin with Bathsheba and Uriah. For over a year David hid the sin until God sent Nathan.

**Psalm 51:3-4**

<sup>3</sup> *For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.*

<sup>4</sup> *Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.*

David was saying, "God, it is not your fault. I have sinned against you and you have every right to bring judgment into my life."

This is the exact place Paul wants the Religious Sinner to arrive at. David lived in hypocrisy for over a year as he hid his sin but after his time with Nathan he confessed and acknowledged that God was justified in judging him. He was the King of Israel and he was a man after God's own heart but he had sinned against a righteous God who had every right to put him to death if He chose to.

In the same way the Religious Jews were living in hypocrisy pretending to be someone they were not. Paul wanted them to see that just because they had been given the Law and practiced the rite of circumcision they were not exempt from the judgment of God. It would not be God's fault if they perished. God was not to blame. They had sinned and they needed to repent and turn to Christ.

It has always been man's desire to blame someone else when there are problems within our lives.

**Genesis 3:9-12**

<sup>9</sup> *And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?*

<sup>10</sup> *And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.*

<sup>11</sup> *And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?*

<sup>12</sup> *And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.*

Here in Genesis Adam blamed God because God had given him the woman. If the Religious Jews missed the blessings of God it would not be God's fault but it would theirs. They had sinned and they needed to be forgiven. God is true and every man is a liar and if every Jew perished God would still fulfill His promises. How?

**Matthew 3:9**

<sup>9</sup> *And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.*

God has unlimited resources to see that His promises are fulfilled. If the Religious Jews failed to be faithful and they died in their sins God could judge every one of them and still keep His promises to the Nation.

**Notice Romans 3:5**

Here is the next supposed objection raised by the Religious Jew. They were claiming that their sin created the perfect backdrop so that God's love and forgiveness could be seen by the rest of the world.

**Illustration:**

If you go to a jewelry store and ask to look at their diamonds they will often pull them out and place them against a small piece of black or red velvet. The reason is because the black or the red velvet causes the facets of the diamond to stand out brighter. This is the very idea some people have concerning their sin.

They believe sin is "good" because it magnifies the forgiveness and the love of God. Therefore, they have deceived themselves into believing that God approves of sin because

it becomes the black back drop against which His love and His forgiveness is better seen by the world.

Paul will now go on to show how ridiculous that reasoning is.

**Notice Romans 3:6**

If that reasoning was true then God would not be able to judge any sin. This kind of logic would remove God from His throne. It would justify sin and would lead the world into destruction for that is what sin does, it destroys. It destroys families, personal lives, churches, friendships and the list goes on and on. If this reasoning were true then God could judge no sin.

**Galatians 6:8-9**

<sup>8</sup> *For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.*

<sup>9</sup> *And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.*

**Notice Romans 3:7**

Paul makes it very clear here that God is not glorified by sin! The thought of sin bringing glory to God makes absolutely no Biblical sense. Sin has been judged ever since it entered into the world in Genesis 3. If sin brought glory to God then the question is, "Why are we then judged as sinners?" If sin brought glory to God we should be commended for sin.

**Notice Romans 3:8**

Paul is stating here that if sin brings glory to God then would it not just be better to give ourselves over to sin so that good would be the end result? That is a ridiculous thought! But there were people in Paul's day who believed this reasoning to be true and there are people in our day that believe the same. If this were the Truth the entire world would fall into an abyss of immorality.

The ending statement here is very important. Paul says those who live in such a way are heading for damnation and it is justified.

**Conclusion:**

Here is what we can gather from all of this: It makes no difference who we are sin will be judged. We can belong to a church, sing in the choir, teach a class, be baptized in the Jordan, read our Bibles every day, but none of these things will save us from the judgment

of God. We are sinners and we need to be forgiven. The Religious Jews had the Law, practiced circumcision and followed many other rituals of the Old Testament. But apart from Jesus Christ they were lost.