

## **ROMANS: RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH FROM START TO FINISH**

### **IV. The Need For God's Righteousness In Man's Condemnation, Romans 1:18-3:20**

#### **D. Man's Helplessness At God's Condemnation**

**(Romans 3:9-20)**

#### **I. Introduction**

- A. The theme of the epistle to the Romans is that God's righteousness is available to man by faith from start to finish (Romans 1:16-17; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 441).
- B. This belief is often not accepted in Christendom: Some claim that one must have faith plus works to be justified, and others say that though we are justified by faith, we cannot righteously live a godly life by faith.
- C. In establishing the fact that all have sinned, that pagan man (Romans 1:18-32), moral man (Romans 2:1-16) and religious man (Romans 2:17-3:8) stand condemned in themselves before God, Paul summarily exposed man's helplessness at God's condemnation in Romans 3:9-20 (as follows):

#### **II. Man's Helplessness At God's Condemnation, Romans 3:9-20.**

- A. God's wrath is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men because they are "suppressing" (*katechonton*, lit. "holding down") the truth in unrighteousness, Romans 1:18; *Ibid.*, p. 442; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Romans 1:18. God's wrath is expressed against man's **sin**, *not* against **man himself** at this time due to the gracious work of Christ on the cross, cf. 2 Corinthians 5:19.
- B. Having taught that God condemns pagan, moral, and religious men in Romans 1:18-3:8, Paul exposed man's helplessness before God's condemnation in Romans 3:9-20 (Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 449-450):
  1. The whole human race is under the penalty of sin, Romans 3:9-18:
    - a. Paul stated that all people, be they Hebrews or Gentiles, are under the penalty of sin, Romans 3:9.
    - b. He then validated this claim with Scripture, Romans 3:10-12: Referring to Psalm 14:1-3, Paul in Romans 3:10-12 wrote that all mankind is unrighteous, no man understands God, no man seeks after God, all have turned away from Him, all are worthless, no man does what is good, not even one! (*Ibid.*, p. 449)
    - c. Furthermore, citing Old Testament Scripture, Paul described the vileness in all mankind that is expressed with various parts of the human body, Romans 3:13-18 (*Ibid.*, p. 449-450):
      - i. Citing Psalm 5:9, Paul taught that man's speech is corrupt like an open grave, Romans 3:13a.
      - ii. Citing Psalm 140:3, Paul taught that man's speech is dishonest, Romans 3:13b.
      - iii. Citing Psalm 10:7, Paul taught that man's mouth is full of cursing and bitterness, Romans 3:14.
      - iv. Citing Isaiah 59:7-8, Paul taught that man's feet are swift to murder so that they and others "are destroyed materially and spiritually, are miserable, and know no inner peace," Rom. 3:15-17; *Ibid.*
      - v. Paul added that mankind lacks a reverence for the Lord, what would be the height of sin and folly to fellow Hebrew readers of Paul's epistle, Romans 3:18; *Ibid.*, p. 450.
  2. As a result, all men are conscious of sin and are helpless in their condemned state, Romans 3:19-20:
    - a. The purpose of God's institution of the Mosaic Law thus becomes apparent to all mankind, be they Hebrews or Gentiles, for all that the Mosaic Law's standard reveals is that is mankind is unable to keep God's standard, leaving the entire human race helplessly condemned before God, Romans 3:19. [Note how this statement matches the claim by the Apostle Peter in Acts 15:10-11 that neither his generation of Hebrews nor their forefathers could keep the Mosaic Law!]
    - b. Since the Mosaic Law can only condemn all mankind as being sinful, it logically follows that by the deeds of the Mosaic Law can no member of the human race be pronounced righteous by God, for by the Law is the knowledge of sin, Romans 3:20. This statement discredits every religion among mankind that asserts that man's merit or meritorious works can somehow contribute to his being justified by God!

**Lesson:** *Not only does pagan man, moral man and religious man stand condemned before God, the entire human race is utterly helpless in its state of condemnation before God so that no human merit or meritorious works can possibly lead to God's pronouncement of "righteous" for any human being.*

**Application:** *(1) May we realize that any charitable work we do or any religious ritual or sacrament we perform cannot in any way contribute to our being pronounced "righteous" by God, for God's Law reveals a standard of righteousness that is so high, it can only expose the status of condemnation that all men in themselves have in God's eyes. (2) Based upon this insight, may we reject every form of teaching that credits to human effort any merit toward the justification of man's soul and cleave only to the unmerited favor of God for our justification!*