

ROMANS: RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH FROM START TO FINISH

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

B. God's Condemnation Of Moral Man

(Romans 2:1-16)

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 and are helplessly lost, and after demonstrating the condemnation of pagan man in Romans 1:18-32, Paul showed how the moral man is also condemned in Romans 2:1-16.
- D. We view this passage for our insight and application (as follows):

II. God's Condemnation Of Moral Man, Romans 2:1-16.

- 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. One might agree that pagan man suppresses the truth about God that is revealed in creation, but that many morally upright people in cultured realms of the world are not condemned by God. The Apostle Paul takes issue with that claim, revealing how even moral men also stand condemned before God in Romans 2:1-16:
 1. Though there "are differences of frequency, extent, and degree," every human being "has turned away from God and commits sins," Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 444; Romans 2:1. Any moral person who views a pagan as standing eternally condemned before God only inexcusably condemns himself, for though he is more cultured, his own sin is still sin, making him unacceptable before God, Romans 2:1. [For example, a moral man might not carve an idol and worship it, but many moral men make evolution a god, claiming evolution is the creative force of the universe in place of the Creator God of the Bible!]
 2. God judges according to the standard of absolute truth (Romans 2:2), so if a moral person judges a pagan man as being condemned by God, he cannot escape the judgment of God himself, Romans 2:3.
 3. Moral man must realize that he is just as needy as pagan man of the grace of God that leads him to repent instead of continuing in his wicked ways, building up the wrath of God against his own sin, Romans 2:4-5.
 4. In the end, God will judge all men by their deeds, be they pagan or moral, Romans 2:6-10.
 5. Also, there is no favoritism with Almighty God: As many as have sinned apart from law such as pagan man will perish without the law based on their accountability before God from what they observed about God in creation, and as many as have sinned in the law of God will be judged by it, Romans 2:11-13.
 6. Furthermore, the consciences of men, although imperfect due to man's depravity, nevertheless work to reveal basic right and wrong activities even to moral men, what will either accuse or excuse them in the final judgment when God judges the secrets of men's hearts, Romans 2:14-16.

Lesson: *Though moral people are more cultured and sophisticated in how they think and act, they cannot look down at pagan man in his flagrant idolatry without condemning themselves, for they also commit sins in turning from God and wronging God and others! If God judges according to the absolute standard of truth, both pagan and moral men must realize they alike are at the mercy of God and must repent, for God will show no favoritism in punishing men in the end. Also, moral man has a conscience, however imperfect due to his depravity, and it still often clarifies what is right and wrong, what God will also use to judge people in the end.*

Application: *(1) May we realize that the only difference between a pagan and a moral man is the issue of culture, not the issue of sin! (2) To illustrate, (a) a pagan "steals" while a moral man "misappropriates"; (b) a pagan "lies" while a moral man "promotes a narrative"; (c) a pagan "slanders" while a moral man is "journalistically biased"; (d) a pagan "robs the poor" while a moral man "inflates the national debt, creating inflation"; (e) a pagan "falsely predicts the end of the world" while a moral man "calls for the end of fossil fuel use due to an alleged, world-ending climate change catastrophe;" (f) a pagan commits "adultery" while a moral man "practices liberated love;" (g) a pagan commits "murder" while a moral man "gets an abortion;" (h) a pagan "persecutes Christians" while a moral man "tolerates all religions but Christianity due to the separation of church and state."*