

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Romans: Charter Of God's Salvation Grace
Part II: Exposing The NEED For God's Salvation Of Sinful Man, Romans 1:18-3:20
C. Religious Man's NEED For God's Salvation From Sin
(Romans 2:17-3:8)

I. Introduction

- A. Many religious folk assume that since they hold to a religion, they will gain eternal life in the end.
- B. However, the most religious man cannot thus justify himself before an infinitely righteous God:

II. Religious Man's NEED For God's Salvation From Sin, Romans 2:17-3:8.

- A. Following the indictment of the pagan (Romans 1:18-32) and the self-righteous moralist (Romans 2:1-16), the devout Jew, a religious man who considered his eternal welfare secured due to his heritage and devotion to the oracles of God, stood in need of being informed on his condemnation before a holy God!
- B. In thus addressing the Jew, Paul's words find application to devoutly religious men in general who claim to adhere to a religious system in their own effort to obtain eternal life (as follows), Romans 2:17-29:
 - 1. Paul addressed the devoutly religious Jew who rested in the Law given by God to Israel under Moses in the nation's wilderness journey from Egypt toward the Promised Land, Romans 2:17.
 - 2. He addressed the devoutly religious Jew who knew and thus approved of God's ways as revealed in that Law, being convinced he was a spiritual guide to the lost Gentile world, Romans 2:18-20.
 - 3. Yet, such a devoutly religious man who taught against stealing, committing adultery, abhorring idols himself did these things, leaving him equally condemned before a holy God, Romans 2:21-23:
 - a. Paul revealed that religious Jews disobeyed their own Law's stipulations against theft (Rom. 2:21), adultery (2:22a) and abhorring idols (2:22b) [the questions in Romans 2:21-22 are given with the indicative negative particle, *ou* with the verb(s) in the indicative, meaning they are rhetorical questions that expect a positive answer like, "Sure, I steal, etc.!" (U. B. S. Greek N. T., 1966 ed., p. 534; J. Gresham Machan, N. T. Greek For Beginners, 1966, p. 197, paragraphs #478 and 479)].
 - b. In boasting about honoring God, their sin caused the religious Jew to dishonor Him, leading pagan man eventually to slander God due to the sin and judgment of His people, Rom. 2:23-24; Isa. 52:5.
 - c. [The same kind of sin occurs even with evangelicals today, leading ungodly secularists to question their credibility: (1) ". . . in 1995, Newsweek magazine asked churches why sin and forgiveness have been thrown overboard for more psychological and 'seeker-sensitive' themes; Time reminded us of the Resurrection and asked us why it is no longer central (or, for that matter, believed by all who call themselves Christians)." (Michael S. Horton, "Recovering the Plumb Line," in John H. Armstrong's book, The Coming Evangelical Crisis, 1996, p. 245)]
 - 4. Paul concluded if the religious man (like the Jew) failed to keep his own religion, he stood condemned in God's eyes, for the truly devout man had to be true to God in his *heart*, Romans 2:25-29!
- C. In condemning the religious Jew, Paul knew he would deny such a condemnation, and counter with arguments to discredit that condemnation. Key objections by fellow Jews are handled in Romans 3:1-8:
 - 1. To the objection that Paul's condemnation of the Jew by the Law meant Paul felt there was no value in being a Jew (Rom. 3:1), Paul replied that it was invaluable for the Jew to have the oracles of God, 3:2.
 - 2. To the objection that Paul's condemnation of the Jew by the Law meant God's faithfulness in making promises to Jews was nullified by their sin (3:3), Paul replied that man lies, but God is true, Rom. 3:4.
 - 3. To the objection that Paul's condemnation of the Jew by the Law only serves to uphold God's contrasting righteousness, making it unjust for God then to condemn the Jew (3:5, 7-8a), Paul replied that were that true, God could not justly judge the Gentiles [as Scripture teaches He will (3:6)], so such an argument that implies doing evil itself extols God's righteousness is itself evil, Romans 3:8b.

Lesson: *The devoutly religious man stands just as condemned before a holy God as is the pagan or moral man, for he is not true to God in heart, and fails to keep the very beliefs he claims to be upright!*

Application: *(1) If we are devoutly religious, but see we stand condemned for failing to live what we know is right, may we trust in Christ for salvation, John 3:1-16. (2) May we evangelize the religious!*