

**ROMANS: CHARTER OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH**  
**"Part IV: The Condemnation And Salvation Of Moral Men"**  
**(Romans 2:1-16; 3:21-26)**

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Bible teaches about the eternal destiny of *moral* people, and common opinion today:

(a) On the one hand, we all know some very decent, upstanding, community-service minded people who would find it quite impossible to believe that hell would be their eternal destiny.

(b) However, John's Gospel records *Jesus'* words that say: "He that believeth on him [the Son of God] is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (John 3:18)

**Well, HOW can an upstanding, community-service minded citizen who has not believed in Jesus Christ be said to be on his way to eternal damnation unless he puts his faith in Christ?**

(2) This issue becomes huge when faced in *real life* situations:

(a) Rich Ainsworth, pastor of the Wintonbury Baptist Church in Bloomfield, Connecticut once asked a man, "If you were to die now, and you were to wind up at heaven's pearly gates, and Jesus were to ask you, Why should I let you enter these gates?" what would you tell him?"

The man responded in a way that took Rich off guard, declaring, "I've been a volunteer fireman for seventeen years!"

(b) Years ago a young family asked to talk with me in a Sunday School classroom off of our Church's Fellowship Hall. They had been impressed with the Church's ministries and Bible teaching, and wanted to know what it would take to become church members.

I explained we accept into membership those who have put their faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior from *SIN*.

When I mentioned the "sin" word, the wife and mother looked appalled, and said, "But *we're* not *sinners* -- we don't *do* bad things!"

I tried to explain the Scripture on the matter, that all have sinned and fallen short of God's glory, citing Romans 3:23, but she refused to accept the idea. The family stopped coming to our Church.

Well, CAN God send someone to hell who has lived a very decent, community-minded life JUST BECAUSE he hasn't put his faith in Jesus? HOW can we say God can DO that and be JUST?

(We turn to the sermon "Need" section . . .)

***Need: "I can comprehend God's sending a pagan' who practices human sacrifice to hell! Yet, for upstanding, community-minded folk who don't believe in Christ as Savior -- how can one say THEY are not going to heaven for their not believing in Him?!"***

- I. **After Paul revealed the PAGAN'S OBVIOUS need for salvation from sin, he ANTICIPATED the REACTION of a MORAL person who might say, "But I am GOOD unlike the PAGAN, Paul, so GOD can NOT condemn ME to hell like HIM!" (Romans 2:1)**
- II. **Hence, Paul wrote to reply to this MORALIST'S view as follows:**
  - A. Paul noted the moralist who does not **express** evil *flagrantly* like the pagan views himself to be more upright than the pagan, Rom.2:1a, b.
  - B. Yet, though **not** doing **all** of the **acts** as the pagan, the moral man practices the same **kinds** of evil in **God's** view, Romans 2:1d, 14-15:
    1. Paul charges the moral man with doing the same things as the pagan man in Romans 2:1d KJV, NIV.
    2. This charge needs an explanation: the moral man would object to Paul's charge here, stating that he is not a homosexual, a lesbian or an abusive party described extensively in Romans 1:26-32!
    3. To explain his charge, Paul exposes the moral man's condemnation before a holy God as follows (Romans 2:3-15):
      - a. The moral man relies on **conscience** for moral perception, 2:14.
      - b. **Though** a man's conscience can be **misused** (Titus 1:15; 1 Tim. 4:2), it is **generally** a Biblically *acceptable* guide (Acts 24:16).
      - c. However, the **moral** man **VIOLATES** his **CONSCIENCE**, revealing he **also** is a **rebel** against **God** like the **pagan** whose rebellion is described in Romans 1:18a, cf. Rom. 2:4-5, 14-15.
      - d. Also, **though** the **moral** man does **not exchange** God's glory for idols and be turned over by God to **express** his **rebellion** in **perverted** ways as the pagan, he **refuses** to **accept** his state of **rebellion** by refusing to repent & judging the pagan, (2:1, 4a,b).

- e. In doing so, the moral man **suppresses** the **truth** about his **rebellion** by **denying** it exists akin to the **suppression** of God's truth by the pagan in Romans 1:18, cf. Romans 2:1, 14-15!
- C. In response to the moral man's rebellion and suppression of the truth of his own lost condition, God's attributes lead Him to respond by **condemning** the moral man along with the pagan, Romans 2:1c, 2-16:
  - 1. God's **truthfulness** makes Him determine pagans and moralists **alike** are **EQUALLY guilty** of **REBELLION** against Him:
    - a. God's judgment is based on **absolute truth**, Romans 2:2.
    - b. Since in **reality** both the pagan and the moral man **practice rebellion** against God, the moralist must stand as **guilty** of his **rebellion** for willfully violating his conscience as the rebellious pagan he condemns, Romans 2:2-3.
  - 2. God's **righteousness** makes Him **condemn both** to **damnation**:
    - a. God's righteousness demands He judge men **impartially**, 2:11.
    - b. Thus, a **moralist's rebellion and suppression of truth** must elicit God's **wrath just like** the **pagan's rebellion** and suppression of God's truth draws His **wrath**, 2:6-15; 1:18a,b.
- D. Thus, if left to themselves, God's character demands He condemn **both** pagans and moralists to **eternal damnation**, Romans 2:16!
- III. **However, in GRACE, God offers salvation from sin by faith in Christ's work on the cross to the MORALIST and the PAGAN:**
  - A. God's righteousness is available for **any** human -- pagan **or** moralist, by his expressing faith alone in Christ's atonement, Rom. 3:21-22b.
  - B. This is available since, in God's perfect view, there is no real difference between the **condemnation** of the pagan or the moralist: both men fall short of God's righteousness in their rebellion and subsequent acts to suppress the truth, Romans 2:23.
  - C. Hence, by putting faith in Christ's substitutionary death for **all** sin on the cross, the moralist, like the pagan, is graciously pronounced righteous by a perfectly loving **and** holy God, Romans 3:24-26.

**Application:** (1) *If we view ourselves as "better" than more OBVIOUS sinners, we ourselves need of God's forgiveness for rebellion against our consciences and for our suppression of the truth regarding our conscience violations.* (2) *We must believe on Christ for salvation, Rom. 3:23; John 3:16.* (3) *Once we do so, we must lean upon GOD so HE might live HIS perfectly RIGHTEOUS life through us by the Holy Spirit's power, Galatians 2:20; 5:16-23.*

**Lesson:** (1) *The ONLY difference between the PAGAN and the MORALIST is the WAY one EXPRESSES his rebellion against God, for BOTH men WILLFULLY VIOLATE and SUPPRESS what they KNOW to be right.* (2) *Thus, BOTH stand GUILTY of eternal hell before a holy God.* (3) *Nevertheless, God has GRACIOUSLY paved the way for the MORALIST, like the PAGAN, to be justified by God through faith in Christ's substitutionary atonement for all sin on the cross, John 3:16.*

**Conclusion:** (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . . )

A time-tested way to reach a moral party who believes God "grades on the curve" for who enters heaven is as follows:

(1) First, we might ask if they feel the likes of an Adolph Hitler would qualify for heaven based on the alleged "curve" of God regarding his life's actions. The answer is generally, "Oh, NO!"

(2) Second, we might ask if some of Hitler's followers like Adolph Eichman, Himmler, etc. could have made God's "curve" and enter heaven. Generally, the response is, "No, they wouldn't be able to make the curve, either, for they carried out Hitler's evil plans!"

(3) Third, we might ask if a regular SS officer in Hitler's regime would have been able to make it. By now, the party usually gets suspicious that we are about to corner them. They see that they are going to have to draw a line **somewhere** between one party and another who are very close on their alleged "grading" scale, and that they will have no just cause to see the slightly more wicked sent to hell while the slightly less wicked enter heaven!

(4) Fourth, when the party is at this point, we can reply, "You see, God cannot "grade on the curve" and be **completely** impartial and hence lovingly righteous: either He has to condemn everybody to hell or let everybody, including the likes of Adolph Hitler into His holy heaven if He is going to be **impartial** while grading on the "curve!"

(5) Fifth, to show how God is perfectly loving **and** just, we might use Romans 11:32 as a text: "For God hath concluded them **all** in **unbelief**, that he might have **mercy** upon **all**." As a **starting** point, God condemns **all** men -- the worst of sinners along with the moralists -- as **justly** deserving of **hell**. Then, He offers His Son, Jesus Christ as the **Solution** to that condition so that all men, wretches and moralists **alike** might be justified by God through trusting in the substitutionary atonement of Christ. (Romans 3:23-24)

That is the **only** way God can be loving **and** just when it comes to decisions on sending people to heaven or hell, something Revelation 20:13-15 reveals will be the determining factor in that final judgment.