

# The Downward Spiral of Man; God's Remedy!

## Romans 3

July 5, 2015

### DAY 1: Man's attempts to excuse his sin (Romans 3:1-8)

1. The Jewish people had been derelict in their responsibility to reflect God well to the rest of the world. This raised questions among the Jewish leaders. Paul gives some short answers.

*Rom. 3:1 What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision? <sup>2</sup> Much in every way! First of all, they have been entrusted with the very words of God.*

*Romans 3:3 What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God's faithfulness? <sup>4</sup> Not at all! Let God be true, and every man a liar. As it is written: "So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge."*

*Romans 3:5 But if our unrighteousness brings out God's righteousness more clearly, what shall we say? That God is unjust in bringing his wrath on us? (I am using a human argument.)*

*<sup>6</sup> Certainly not! If that were so, how could God judge the world?*

*Romans 3:7 Someone might argue, "If my falsehood enhances God's truthfulness and so increases his glory, why am I still condemned as a sinner?"*

*<sup>8</sup> Why not say--as we are being slanderously reported as saying and as some claim that we say-- "Let us do evil that good may result"? Their condemnation is deserved.*

2. Paul goes on to say that the problem of sin is much graver and more deeply embedded than we know. Our sin nature affects our values, beliefs, and perspective. Our sin nature touches everything we think, speak, do, and even in how we relate!

3. In Rom. 3:9-11, underline every word or phrase that indicates that everyone is guilty of sin.

*Romans 3:9 What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. (10) As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; (11) ... there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God...."*

2. You may wonder, just how does sinful man ever get right with God? If we won't even seek Him, what chance do we have of ever being made right with Him?" How would you answer?

3. God must seek the sinner!

*Luke 19:10 "For the Son of Man (Jesus) came to seek and to save what was lost."*

4. Re-read Romans 3:9-11. What strikes you about our human nature or about God?

## DAY 2: Man's lost condition (3:12-18)

1. Today's scripture is a thorough look at the depth and breadth of our sin nature.

*Romans 3:12a All have turned away, they have together become worthless;....*

2. What does Paul say is the effect on man of his turning away from God?

3. The Hebrew word translated "worthless" means "useless." It is used to describe milk that has soured or gone bad. What areas of our lives are affected by turning away from God and becoming worthless? Check every one you think is affected:

- Our ability to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind
- Our ability to love our neighbor as we love ourselves
- Our ability to be more concerned about the interests of others than even our own
- Our self-worth, self-esteem, insecurity, "touchiness," defensiveness, etc.
- Our perspective on life; seeing life from God's point of view.
- Satisfying the human hunger and thirst of the human heart.

*Romans 3:12b " ...there is no one who does good, not even one."*

4. Few verses in the bible anger secular man more than this one. Of course, the verse hinges on what "good" means!

- a. How do you think secular man defines "good?" \_\_\_\_\_
- b. How do you think God defines "good?" (If you need a hint, look at the items in question 3)

*Romans 3:13 "Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." "The poison of vipers is on their lips." <sup>14</sup> "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness."*

5. Perhaps secular man cannot see into his own heart, but he should be able to hear his own words! Which of the five illustrations of our words strikes you the most? \_\_\_\_\_

*Romans 3:15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood;*

6. Paul uses an image with feet: they take ME wherever I go. Perhaps you think, "Well, I don't shed blood!" Jesus explained that the sixth commandment was far deeper than homicide. "He who hates his brother is a murderer." Envy, malice, resentment all lead to hatred.

*Romans 3:16 ... ruin and misery mark their ways, ...*

*Romans 3:17 ... and the way of peace they do not know."*

*Romans 3:18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes."*

7. What struck you most from today's verses?

### **DAY 3: The reality of final judgment and God's remedy (3:19-20)**

*Romans 3:19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God.*

1. Secular man may scoff at the idea of God, God's law and final judgment. He can scoff all he wants. What matters, though, is not what he thinks but what God thinks. It won't matter what secular man imagines will happen. What will matter is what will happen!

2. Secular man assumes that as long as "he doesn't hurt anybody," he can do what he wants. He also assumes that whatever he does is not bad enough to warrant any kind of punishment, let alone judgment. He is badly mistaken. The following are the words of Jesus on this subject...

*Matthew 12:36 But I tell you that **men will have to give account** on the day of judgment **for every careless word** they have spoken.*

3. Imagine yourself on that day. How do you see yourself responding in the face of such evidence from your own life?

4. This is what Paul calls, "*so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world (everyone--no exceptions) held accountable.*" It may not be until that horrifying moment that humility and justice will finally make a dent in proud secular man.

*Romans 3:20 Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.*

5. Secular man's morality may have been any of the following: "good enough morality," "I'm not an ax-murderer," "I know I'm not perfect, but I'm better than most" morality, or his own brand of relative morality--whatever fits his own desires. No matter what morality secular man thought was good enough, he was not good enough!

6. What he'll discover is that he was wrong all along. His proud claims of not needing a savior, not needing salvation, not needing any of that "bible stuff" will haunt him for all eternity.

7. He will have proved the truth of God and God's word, even if that proof was done in the negative.

8. As you think about God's final judgment, where does your mind go with that? What will you say? What will be important at that time?

## DAY 4 How does God justify us in His sight? (3:21-36)

1. After reading a long list of sins in both Romans 1 and 3, plus a scathing rebuke about our critical and proud hearts in Romans 2, you may be wondering how ANYONE can pass through God's righteous judgment! Let's look at how God Himself made that very thing possible!

*Romans 3:21 But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. <sup>22</sup> This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference,*

2. We've look at God's righteousness in many different forms, but here is a different kind of righteousness! Note the three underlined explanations of this righteousness.

*Romans 3:23 ... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.*

3. Romans 3:23 reminds us of our hopeless condition, but on the heels of those depressing words come words that are unimaginable in 3:24!!!! How does Paul say we are justified in God's eyes?

4. You might wonder, "Do you mean to tell me I won't have to pay for my own sin?!" Correct! "But what happened to the penalty that our sin deserved?" That penalty for your sin will be paid out but not by you!

*Romans 3:25 God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished--*

5. Who is the "him" in 3:25? \_\_\_\_\_

6. "Sacrifice of atonement" is a reference to Jesus' sacrificial death that made atonement ("at-one-ment") with God possible. It is based on the Old Testament practice described in Leviticus 16. A goat was slain and its blood was taken into the Holy of Holies and sprinkled on the mercy seat, the golden cover on the ark of the Covenant, which covered the two tables of the Law.

*Romans 3:26 He did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.*

7. Here is where the mystery and wonder of the gospel finds its apex. Next to each of these phrases, fill in your thoughts

God demonstrated his justice--

God was just regarding our sin--

He justifies those who have faith in Jesus--

8. What strikes you from today's devotional?

## DAY 5: Justification by faith. (3:21-31)

1. Paul finishes this section of scripture by answering a few questions people might have.

*Romans 3:27 Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith.*

<sup>28</sup> *For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.*

1. Secular man loves to boast that "his good deeds outweigh his bad ones." How does that belief measure up against what will really happen?

*Romans 3:29 Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too,<sup>30</sup> since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith.*

<sup>31</sup> *Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.*

2. Paul compares the Gentiles who had no outward spiritual "privileges" versus the Jewish people who had a boatload of spiritual privileges. Does religious background, past privileges, religious knowledge gain us anything of lasting value?

3. Let's do some review from Romans 3...

a. Justification by faith is God's act of declaring the believing sinner righteous in Christ on the basis of the finished work of Christ on the cross.

- It is an act, not a process.
- Justification is something *God does*, not humans.
- Declares—God does not *make* us righteous. Justification is a legal matter: *Christ's* righteousness goes on *our* record! Nobody can change that legal record. (Sanctification is God making us righteous, little-by-little. That *is* a process!)

b. The Wonder of the Gospel: God is just, and somehow, in that incredible and miraculous grace that Jesus came to bring to me, He accepts the sinner, not as a criminal, but as a son whom He still loves.

c. Salvation is

- offered to everyone!
- Done by grace--unmerited favor!
- Simply accepted by faith, as a gift.
- Won at a great cost--the death of Jesus Christ.

4. what's your biggest take away from today's devotional?