



Chapter Three

INTRODUCTION

NOTE: In this chapter, Paul focuses on the “Judeans” in the ecclesia in Rome. By “Judeans,” (also called “the Circumcision”) Paul means those who were still clinging to Judean tradition.

Thus, Paul’s indictment of Judeans applies to churchgoers today who cling to false tradition.

– Because of the length of this lesson, and the formatting and space limitations, there was no room for questions and comments. The main text attempts to address all possible objections or questions.

–editor

IN THESE early chapters in Romans, Paul is aggressive, even caustic, in his statements to the ecclesians in Rome. He reminds them that their forefathers were often idolaters. I guess you could say Paul is insulting them, but his accusations are true! Further, he insinuates that they – at least some of them – are still given to idolatry. He refers to the destructive behavior of their ancestors, then he sternly warns them about the ramifications of such behavior in their generation.

In chapter three, Paul continues to aggressively confront them, focusing upon a particularly odious sin: namely, the taking of God’s name in vain. As you’ll discover, Paul was not warning them against “cursing” (or what’s usually called “cursing”: i.e., using the word “God” in a profane expression). The actual taking of God’s name in vain is something else ... something that people do daily without even knowing it. They do not realize they are doing it because they don’t know what it means. They have been “dumbed down” by the churches and the public schools. Most people today assume that “taking the Lord’s name in vain” means to speak a profanity ... using the word “God.” But that is not what Yahweh meant when He commanded us, “You shall not take my name in vain.”

In order to “take the Lord’s name in vain” you must first receive His name (i.e., accept His authority and consider yourself a son). Then you must disregard His name (authority), as if it is of no value. Thus, you have assumed his name (his authority), but treated it as worthless (vain).

Sons (heirs of the Kingdom) are expected to act like heirs ... to take personal interest in the Father’s name, and to genuinely represent the Father’s interests. To take his name, but not take his interests to heart, is taking his name in vain.

5. Hear you, my beloved brethren. Did not God choose the world’s poor, and rich in faith, heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to them that love him?

6. But you have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?

7. Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by which you are called?

Jms. 2:5-7

James accuses certain men of not taking their inheritance seriously. They were heirs of the kingdom, but hadn’t upheld the name by which they were called. If God was their Father, and they his sons, that means they were family. To be a son is to

have joint interest in, and genuine love for, the Father's name and estate. A son takes the family name, and is proud of it. A son takes personal interest in the estate of his father, partly because he loves it, and partly because it is his own inheritance. To devalue his name, dishonor it, or to treat the estate as though it were worthless is to "take it in vain." Apparently, Paul suspected this sin was there among the ecclesiastics in Rome, or he wouldn't have spent so much time explaining it to them.

In his explanation, Paul warned them against dishonoring God's name by claiming to be his children and then acting as if they were above judgment and not answerable to the law. In essence, Paul was warning them against the hypocrisies of the Judaistic Scribes and Pharisees who ignored their own sins while decrying the sins of others.

Paul tells them that all men are liars ... including them. He tells them that God judges all people ... including them. No man is righteous by the law ... including them. And all

men have sinned and come short of the glory of God ... including them.

Paul was directing these comments primarily to those who still harbored Judaistic tendencies carried over from their Babylonian religious background. He told them that Judaism was wrong, and they should not assume that they are God's exclusive interest on Earth. God is interested in ALL of his creation. But those who followed the religion of Judaism, like modern church people, had a religious problem and an attitude problem. They assumed that they were exempted from God's judgment by reason of their nation and religion. Paul told them plainly that Judaism's god was not the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and that God's judgment applies to all people ... including them. No people, whether religious or not, are exempt from judgment. Wrong is wrong, and right is right ... whether dealing with sons, those falsely claiming to be sons, or others.

ROMANS 3:1-2 ADVANTAGE – BUT NOT LICENSE

What more then has the Judean? Or what is the benefit of the circumcision?

Much in every way; chiefly because they were entrusted with God's words.

THE term "Judean" is here equated with "the Circumcision." It refers to citizens of Judea, as well as those who affiliated themselves with that country's religion (Judaism) for religious/political purposes. The term "the Circumcision" was meant both literally and figuratively, as it applied to both men and women – males who were literally circumcised, as well as females who were members of the culture.

Paul was addressing those of the ecclesia who were unduly influenced by Judean tradition (Judaism). Paul asks, "Is there benefit to being a Judean, and if so what is it?"

Jerusalem was known for its historical association with God's words. The manuscripts and scrolls were enshrined in Jerusalem. Jerusalem had been called "the Holy place." The Old Covenant Writings (the Law and the Prophets) were connected with Jerusalem ... in the nation of Judea. Thus, Judea was associated with Jerusalem, and Jerusalem, in the past, had been associated with God's words.

Judeans who moved to other lands carried that association with them ... even to Rome. Remember, a Judean was a citizen of Judea, or anyone affiliated with Judean religion (Judaism) or Judean culture, even if he did not live

in Judea. "Judean" signified culture/religion – not race. "Judean" was not synonymous with "Israelite," as churches have taught. There were Israelites, Edomites, Canaanites, and people of other nationalities living in Judea ... and all were called "Judeans." Being a Judean did not signify a particular race, but rather a culture and/or a residence. It was much like being a Catholic. Catholicism is centered in the Vatican in Rome, but non-Romans can become Catholics and affiliate themselves with the Vatican. Also, anyone affiliated with the Vatican can live in any country and still be called a Catholic.

Judeans lived in a land that had historical association with the Law and the Prophets. God's word came to Jerusalem, and Jerusalem was in Judea. Paul told them that being in contact with God's word was a benefit to them. But Judeans were claiming more than mere association. They were claiming that they were untouchable because they had special status. They figured they were above judgment. Their twisted Babylonish religion claimed to give them a status like that of a child whose parents indulge him and will not punish him even when he is naughty. In their minds, they were the special children, and God was the indulgent parent. Like modern politicians, their laws did not pertain to them ... only to others.

Paul's warnings to the Judaists in Rome are applicable to anyone who thinks he can sin with impunity because of his perceived status. Paul told them they were hypocrites to point to the sins of others while ignoring their own sins. Their Pharisaic mind-set still lives today in the synagogues. Modern-day Jews seem to think that God indulges them and judges non-Jews. Some things never change.

This Jewish mind-set is found in others as well. In the past few decades more and more people of White Euro-

pean descent are discovering that modern Jews are not Israelites, and that centuries before Christ most Israelites migrated out of their captor nations north of old Israel and settled in Europe and Asia Minor. Thus, the Sephardic (Mediterranean) and Ashkenazi (Khazar) Jews are NOT Israelites. Racially they have no connection to Jacob Israel. The true Israelites migrated northward through the Caucasus region of Asia Minor, became known as Caucasians, and settled mostly in Europe.

When Churchgoers of European descent learn that they are the racial Israelites of the Bible many of them take it wrongly. They don't know what to think about the Jews ... because the churches wrongly call them "Israel." Churchgoers also wonder how this new information might change their own standing before God. All too often the Churchgoer, armed with his new-found identity, starts thinking of himself in the same wrong way he had formerly thought of Jews. He mentally bumps the Jews out of their presumed privileged status, and assumes the status himself. He turns himself into a pseudo Jew.

Instead of using this newly-learned truth in a positive and responsible way, some just adopted the Jewish mentality ... and begin thinking they are now above judgment. Such people are rightly called "White Supremacists," and are patterning themselves after the example of Jewish Supremacists. They say, "We are The Chosen!" "We are special!" "Righteousness is defined in us ... by whatever we choose to do."

Well, this is the very thing Paul warns the Romans about. He tells them that they are not above judgment, and that they had better rethink their Jewish-influenced mind-set.

When Paul asks "What more has the Judean?" "What benefit is there in the circumcision?" He is merely asking the same question twice. He uses the terms "the Judean" and "the Circumcision" as synonyms. Then he says that Judeans have certain advantages, in that they have access to God's words. Jerusalem was the hub from

where God's words were published. And even after Jerusalem turned against God and became a culture of devils, the Scriptures were still enshrined there. Jerusalem and Judea had the benefit of centuries of exposure to God's words ... an advantage which they abused.

In Luke 12:48 we are told that more is demanded from those to whom more is given. Jerusalem was given more. Thus, more was expected from her. And when she abandoned God, her judgment was harsh.

There it is! The Judeans' benefit was that they had the words of God. It was not that they had a special status; not their nationality; not their race (actually, Judeans were multiracial). **THE BENEFIT WAS THAT THEY HAD GOD'S WORDS.** Any people exposed to God's words have an advantage above people who don't. Western culture has had this advantage because it has historically been exposed to God's words (the Bible). Since the printing press was invented, the word of God spread throughout the West (Europe, England, America). And, like Jerusalem of old, the West flourished when God's words were heeded. But now the West is rejecting His words ... and we are falling.

"Western culture," as it is loosely called, has enjoyed a great heritage due to our exposure to God's word ... and God's Son. Western culture has led in technology, in industry, in inventions, in general education, in learning and advancement upon the Earth ... and at times (although not at this present time) we had a high standard of morality. We were able to do this because we had God's words.

The advantage enjoyed by western culture is not our innate intelligence as a race ... although Europeans (we) have tended to be more capable than most other races. The fact is, intelligence alone is not enough to make a race prosper. It takes more. It takes goodness! Intelligence alone does not produce goodness. Many intelligent devils have sprung from our race.

Western culture rises and falls in direct proportion to its goodness and

morality. Historically we prospered when God caused us to have, to read, and to believe His Word. Our love of his word made us good. The Word of God benefited us and gave us an advantage; it changed the mental and spiritual level of western man. It made us healthier, more moral, more sensible, and more progressive. Without God's word, western man would not have enjoyed the cultural advances that we enjoyed. In fact, without general belief in God's word, western culture would have been slavish and backward ... as it is becoming today since it has abandoned God and his word.

Today western culture is on a downhill skid and picking up speed. The west is going backward and downward. America is losing the glory that it had before. As the Word of God is removed from us, so are our blessings, our prosperity, and our honor.

This is Paul's message to the Romans. He says "You have an advantage. It's called God's word. But if you ignore God's word, and rely on your perceived special status, you'll lose that advantage." God's word can raise man up. It can give man strength and clarity, and the ability to make sense of his world. By the same token, God's word can judge and condemn.

Incidentally, "God's word" means more than mere verbal or written symbols. The term "the Word" as it appears in English Bibles, is the Greek term "the logos." It means "the communication." "The logos" is not just words written or spoken, but words and/or thoughts that are actually perceived and understood. It means that true communication has been achieved. God's "logos" to man (his "communication") lifts man out of ignorance and blindness, and it changes him. Jesus was called "the living Logos" because Jesus communicated Yahweh's truths to man. Remember, man without God is just man ... and man by himself is lost. Only when man has God can he rise up and become more than just man.

God called Israel to rise above and to become an example to the nations of the Earth.

ROMANS 3:3-4 JUDEANS ERRED, NOT GOD

For what if some (Judeans) did not believe? Shall their unbelief void the faithfulness of God?

It cannot be! Yea, let God be true but every man a liar, as it is written; that you might be justified in your sayings, and might overcome when you are judged.

THIS was Paul's way of saying that God was not to blame for the mistakes of the Judeans. Judean unbelief did not reflect the faith of God. Judaism's failure did not diminish God's credibility, since Judaism was based upon Babylonian religion ... not upon God's words. The religion of the Judeans was NOT from God, nor was it from Israel. It came from several heathen sources, and was most closely associated with Babylonianism.

The Judeans' religion (Judaism) was/is a hybrid mixture with a pinch of Old Testament and whole lot of Babylonianism. Thus, to assume that the failure of Judaism reflected upon God in anyway whatsoever ... or upon Israel for that matter, was a non-sequitur (it does not follow). Judaism did not reflect the faith of God. Neither did it reflect the faith of Israel or the law of Moses. This fact explains why the religious establishment in Jerusalem was hostile to Jesus. They were at enmity from the beginning because they were children of Babylon, and Jesus was the Son of God.

There are basic differences between God and man. Two of these differences are: 1. God is faithful and man isn't; 2. God is truthful and man isn't. In order to learn history and scripture man must first accept these two premises. This is the starting point. Inability to accept these two premises indicates a lack of faith which will prevent you from going forward. If you start with any other premise you will go sideways.

It is natural to get discouraged when things don't turn out the way we expect ... especially if we are following a prescribed agenda to reach an assumed goal. When the promised results do not follow, it causes us to question the promise. Negative reversals in our lives can cause our faith to waver. Too often, when we face failure our first response is to assume that God let us down, or that He cannot be trusted. This happens to Churchgoers all the time. When the assumed results don't come to pass, people become disillusioned. They wonder if they have misplaced their faith in God's words.

However, if we begin with the premise that God does not fail, then when things go wrong for us we know it is always due to man's own failures ... not God's. When we find ourselves in a failure, or in an unexpected problem, it is folly to look for fault with God. We should question ourselves. We should question Man to find the cause. It may be that we've adopted a wrong agenda in the first place ... an agenda sold to us by a serpent preacher. That would be our fault, not God's.

For example, as a child I spent five days-a-week immersed in the Public Education System (Public School). The system indoctrinated me to have pride in American institutions. I was taught that the government was Christian, fair, and honorable. The serpents (agents) of the system were selling me an agenda ... much like the serpent in Eden sold Eve an agenda. But when I grew up and gained some wisdom I looked around at American culture and had to admit that things weren't quite like I'd been told. So, I had to make a choice: believe what I'd been told, or believe what I could see for myself.

I had to admit that something is dreadfully wrong in America! And if America was based upon Christian ideals, it meant that I must question Christianity. But eventually I had to admit that America's problems were the fault of us and our parents.

It is easier to blame others ... perhaps even God himself. We don't like to admit that we've been foolish, that we've accepted wrong agendas and wrong religions ... and that we've gullibly assumed that these agendas and religions were from God. Nonetheless we have. This is true in political circles and in religious circles. It is the swan song of American culture.

Americans are told that the U.S. Government upholds freedom for its citizens. We are told that our "Founding Fathers" were Christians, and that they employed Christian ideals in the making of government. **NOTHING COULD BE FARTHER FROM THE TRUTH!** The Founding Fathers were Masons, and the U.S. Government was founded on Masonic principles, not Biblical principles. Where Freemasonry flourishes the faith of Christ is not allowed. Modern patriots who constantly refer to the "faith of the founding fathers" and to the Christian nature of the Constitution, have no idea what the actual faiths of Washington, Jefferson, Franklin, Adams, Hamilton, etc. were. So-called "Christian Patriots" don't have a clue. They act as if the founders believed the same as we do today. They didn't ... and patriots today might be shocked and disillusioned to know how the founders actually believed. Anyone who cannot see that Freemasonry is anti-Christian is either blind or dishonest.

American churchgoers are told that their particular churches are, each one, the one true church ... and that their agendas will create righteousness. American's belief systems are based upon these two institutions: church and state. Americans have faith in these institutions.

But when people look carefully at church, or government, and begin to realize that things are wrong ... instead of questioning their own meth-

ods, too often they begin questioning God and His word. It is easier to find fault with the Bible than with yourself.

When people find corruption in church hierarchy or in church doctrine ... rather than go back to square one and restart their quest for truth upon better ground, it is easier to just blame God and the Bible, and throw the baby out with the bath water.

By the same token, when corruption is uncovered in government ... when we learn that the government is corrupt in its very nature – even since its inception, we suddenly begin to lose that warm, fuzzy feeling of being on “the right side.” We may look around and see more and more wrongs ... and the wrongs we see are inherent in the very institutions that we equate with America. Church is wrong! Government is wrong! WE are wrong!

How did we get to this point? What caused us to believe in, and do, wrong things? It must have been THE DEVIL! No wonder it is easier to believe in a DEVIL nowadays than it is to believe in God.

We begin thinking we’ve been tricked into believing myths! My beliefs are all myths.”

Then we may begin to suspect that God might have tricked us. We question whether He really exists at all. If his Word has failed us, how can we believe in Him? We subscribed to God’s agenda (or what we thought was his agenda) and it failed us! Christ must also be a myth, and the Bible must be counterfeit ... otherwise our beliefs would not have failed. And so on, and so forth.

This is what we typically do when things go sour for us ... and it indicates, on the face of it, our own deficiency of faith in God. Unfortunately this applies to a large portion of American society: people with too much faith in church, or government, and not enough faith in God. And, when their institutions fail them, they have nothing left to believe in. When we equate failure of these institutions with failure of God, we basically give ourselves a death sentence, because all of man’s

institutions WILL fail. Only God’s Kingdom is fail proof.

We should be careful that we don’t place our faith in the wrong things. We should not look to men, or to organizations of men, for our faith. Organizations and men may be sources for information, but not sources for faith. We must always remember that men are liars. Man’s organizations are based upon lies. Reread verse four. Men are liars! It is a blunt way of saying that men make mistakes ... sometimes great mistakes. And when this happens, if our faith is based in men, or in a man, then we are left destitute. Faithless.

But, God does not fail men! Men fail men. We fail ourselves.

Learn from your teachers, but never build your faith upon them, because when they fail you need something bigger to fall back on. It is good to be a teacher ... and it is good to have teachers. But we must allow teachers to be mortal, and to be wrong now and then. Of course, if they make a regular habit of being wrong we may want to find better teachers. Nonetheless, we need teachers, and we must allow them to make a mistake now and then. In fact, we must expect it. If a teacher teaches something that later proves to be a mistake you should not assume that God tricked you, or that God made a mistake. You should simply admit that your teacher is mortal, and that you fell for a wrong agenda.

It does no good to wring your hands and proclaim that the pagans must have been right, that God is a myth, or that He is dead. You see, it’s man who tells the lies, not God. Men, and man’s institutions, are often wrong, but not God. Man’s faults do not impugn God’s reputation.

In verse four Paul says “let God be true, but every man a liar.” When things don’t work out the way you were told they should work, don’t blame God. Blame yourself for listening to wrong teachers. Just go back, regroup your thoughts, and revise your agenda, or your doctrine ... knowing that the truth is there if you look in the right places. Truth, knowledge, and

wisdom are all around us, and we can find them if God has opened our eyes.

20. Wisdom cries without; she utters her voice in the streets:

21. She cries in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she utters her words, saying,

22. How long, you simple ones, will you love simplicity? and the scornors delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?

Prov. 1:20-22

God’s Word is true. When we find a contradiction, or what appears to be a contradiction, we must have enough faith in God to assume the contradiction came from man’s input ... not because God slipped up. Contradictions and failures are not the fault of Scripture. Rather they are man’s erroneous attempts to interpret Scripture. It may be the fault of interpreters; it may be the fault of translators; it may be the fault of our own prejudices or it may be all of the above. But it is not the fault of Scripture, and it is not God’s fault. Man must be able to start with this much faith just to begin his walk with God.

PONDER THIS: God’s ways are not Man’s ways. Man tries something; it doesn’t work, so He tries something else. When men assume that God does the same it leads to great confusion.

God is consistent in his standards of judgment; He does not revise His Law periodically because of unforeseen problems; God’s law is never outdated or obsoleted by the “advances” of modern man. God is never surprised by His creation or out of touch with it.

ROMANS 3:5-8 ONE RIGHTEOUS STANDARD

But if our unrighteousness brings out the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous in taking vengeance? (I speak as a man.)

It cannot be! For then how shall God judge the world?

For if through my lie the truth of God has abounded into His glory, why then am I also judged as a sinner?

And why is it not as some (whose judgment is deserved) have irreverently asserted that we say, "Let us do bad things so that good things may come"?

IN VERSE FIVE Paul asks "can your wrongs be called righteous?" He throws this in their faces in a satirical way. He accuses them of thinking that because of who they were even their wrongs were used for good. They were aware of their wrongs, yet they had the audacity to claim that their wrongs were helping God. Paul asks, "What shall we say? If God ignores your wrongs, how can He judge others?"

Paul's contention is that if God turns a blind eye to Judean unrighteousness, how could He judge anybody ... seeing that his judgment would not be fair?

In verse six Paul answers by saying, "It cannot be!" In other words, the Judean's claim was bogus. Their sins were wrong the same as anyone else's sins. God does not ignore the sins of one people, and condemn the sins of another. Wrong is wrong, and truth is truth. And, if that is not the case, then how shall God judge the nations and the world system?

The Judeans had inherited a cultural situation much like the one in modern America. The Judeans of Paul's day, as well as Americans today, had/have a hypocritical approach to God's word. The Judean system came from Babylon, but they pretended it came from Moses and old Israel. By the same token, today's American system came from Babylon and Rome, but church-going Americans pretend it came from God.

After many years of pretending and brainwashing, a nation eventually comes to believe the pretend stories as if they were factual. Thus, in modern America as it was in Judea, the people assume that their system is something it really is not. The Judeans assumed they could do no wrong; that they were the standard for righteousness and Godliness. Modern Americans assume the U.S. system is above reproach, and that it is the standard for freedom and Godliness. And, just like the Judeans, modern Americans borrow words and terms from the Bible, and twist them to fit man-made doctrine. The result is that they pervert the words of God and make them useless. Worse than that, God's words get used by unscrupulous religions and governments to support institutionalized terror, evil, and corruption ... and even justify war upon the innocent.

Paul addresses the subject from the Judean's point of view. He asks, "But, if our sins make God look more righteous, then why does He begrudge us our sins?" The insinuation here is that Judeans think so little of God that they assume He justifies his existence by accepting the task of covering up for them, and that He exists only to polish the Jewish world image.

Judeans had the gall and the arrogance to act as if their sins, their transgressions, were justified because they gave God a reason to exist, and thus they

claimed that their evil produced good. In other words, they acted as if it all glorified God. This they presumed because their Babylonian "tradition of the elders" proclaimed it. Paul says that those who think this way are damned, and their damnation is just.

It makes you think of the Catholic and Anglican priests in the churches and monasteries doing strange, perverted, and abominable things while enjoying complete unaccountability. They consider themselves immune to judgment because they claim to speak and/or act for God. Such people are profane and evil. They destroy decency in culture. They are reprobates, thinking they are above judgment and unaccountable because of their office or rank.

This evil was also seen in the historical claim of Kings. They called it "the divine right to rule." Kings and queens have claimed this "right," and it is inherited by their children. This so-called "right" supposedly gave them and their offspring a special status whereby they were considered "rulers" by birth, regardless of capability or merit. The British Crown still carries on the tradition to this day. Thus, since the kings or queens occupied their status due to birth, and not due to capability or merit, they could do whatever they wanted without fear of losing their position. They could not lose their status ... because they were not elected or appointed, but were born to it.

King James, for instance, was unimpeachable as England's king. He enjoyed total exemption from judgment or accountability, claiming to be not only a Christian, but the HEAD of the Church ... while he was openly an effeminate sodomite, a ruthless murderer, and known by those around him to be insane. He remained King and in power, unaccountable for his lifestyle and deeds, until his death. James even presumed to have the right to "authorize" the English version of the Bible ... and even to this day most church-goers assume that James was a moral man and a Christian ... and they are proud of his "Authorized Version" of the Bible: The King James Version.

Who but a king with “the divine right to rule,” like King Henry VIII, could justify executing his wives because they could not bear him sons? He was forced to it since the church forbade divorce. Divorce could not be covered up, but murder could. Who but such kings could remain unquestioned while persecuting, torturing, and executing men of God ... such men as William Tyndale, John Wycliff, and William Coverdale whose “crime” was the translating of God’s Words into English so the common people could read it. Such kings, all the while, were unquestionable “Christian” heads of the Church and the nation.

This unaccountable claim to power, and abuse, was practiced by the many kings and queens that preceded James ... torturing and murdering men of God, enslaving, degrading, slaughtering and mistreating the common people. A recount of the horrendous crimes and abuses sanctioned by this historical aberration would fill a large book, and is sickening to say the least.

It is factual history. And in spite of these devils’ open blasphemy and abuse, they never were held accountable, nor did they ever lose their public status as “Christians” and leaders of the Church.

The divine right to rule was, in effect, similar to the type of status the Judeans claimed – unaccountability due to their cultural/religious affiliation.

Today in America, the average man has been brainwashed to think that this “divine right to rule” has been passed down to every citizen. Now it is called “God-given rights,” which are exercised by voting one’s choice of lawmakers (gods) into government. Citizens are thus, by proxy, lawmakers (gods) themselves. Gods make law. Lawmakers are gods, and voting citizens are ALL GODS ... since they vote laws into being by proxy of politicians.

Americans enjoy pretending that they each are gods, making and unmaking law, assuming sovereign power over other people, creating God in their own images. This unique way

of life is called “Republic,” “Representative Government,” and “Democracy.” Americans are proud of their status as co-gods of a nation of gods, and are unlikely to give it up without a fight. In fact, for several decades now so-called patriots have been complaining and fighting over their perceived constitutional powers as “citizens” (“co-gods”) of the United States of America. You can hear it at every patriotic meeting, or read it in every patriotic publication. “We have rights!” “We will not give up our rights without a fight!” It seems this generation has been spoiled to think they, as gods, deserve their divine right to rule.

This, then, was the state of mind of the Judeans. And by this time in Paul’s letter he has alienated the trouble makers in the ecclesia in Rome. He has polarized them and culled them. The ones not alienated would be receptive and interested in hearing truth. The rest of this letter to the Romans will be heard only by those who are “alive.” The dead will not hear.

ROMANS 3:9-19 HUMILITY AND FEAR OF GOD

What then? Are we placing ourselves ahead others? Not at all! For we previously charged both Judeans and Greeks all under sin.

As it has been written: “None is righteous, no, not one;

No one is comprehending; not one is seeking after God.

They have all turned away together; they became useless; not one is doing good, not even one.

Their throat is an open grave; with their tongues they deceived; the poison of asps is under their lips,

Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.

Their feet are sharp to shed blood;
Ruin and misery are in their ways,

And the way of peace they knew not.

The fear of God is not before their eyes.

Now we know that whatsoever things the law says, it says to those who are in the law, that every mouth may be stopped and all the world should come under judgment to God.

IN

THIS question Paul includes himself, by asking, “Are we placing ourselves ahead of others?” And then he answers it by stating that all men, Judeans and Greeks alike, are found to be sinners. He says that all of them are guilty of sin and all of them need the grace of Christ.

Within the ecclesia in Rome there were some tainted souls: Judeans who had been either transplanted or proselytized. They had brought with them the Babylonian mind-set of superiority, and were claiming special status, holding themselves out as righteous, as if God had given them license to sin with impunity. Then Paul insults them by stating that **NONE OF THEM ARE COMPREHENDING, NONE ARE RIGHTEOUS, NONE ARE SEEKING GOD.** It was a personal and institutional insult.

Paul says, in essence, “Not only are you not righteous, as you assume ... your sins and hypocrisy smell to high heaven.” Yes, it was an insult. He intended it to be. He was attacking their haughty spirit. Those who had a soft heart would listen and learn, and those who had a stony heart ... well, he wanted them to get out of the way. They wouldn’t listen anyway.

In verse 19 Paul speaks of “those who are in the law.” Here he refers to those who read the law and make their claim based upon law. These are the ones to whom the law speaks, because they are the ones who look to it and listen to it. It is only logical that these people would be the ones to reap the blessings and curses of that law. The law covers all creation, but not all are aware or pay attention to it. To those who aren’t listening, the law will judge them as well, without their consent or knowledge. Paul’s point is this: it doesn’t make sense to claim to be “the people of the law” and then claim that the law applies to others and not to you.

Those who are “in the law” are naturally subject to its judgment. Those receiving Paul’s letter considered themselves “in the law.” Therefore, their mouths should be stopped

because they are subject to judgment. This, too, held specific implications. All people, especially Israel, have sinned, and have broken God’s law. Law defines sin. The law therefore condemns Israel, as it does all people.

The nations observed God’s judgment upon Israel after she broke her marriage covenant with Him. Israel went under judgment, and into slavery under foreign governments for about 700 years – starting at the time of the Assyrian captivity. Actually, judgment fell upon her before that, even from the time of Samuel when she rejected Yahweh (I Sam. 8) and opted to form

a man-made government “like the other nations.” Eventually God was forced to divorce Israel, and allow her to go into national captivity under foreign conquest.

By seeing that God had dealt righteously with Israel, the nations of the Earth saw that God is just. They watched Israel sin, they watched God judge Israel; they watched Israel digress into slavery ... until a remnant repented through Jesus. Thus the nations could see that the God of Israel is true and just. The people of the Earth could see that God is faithful to do what He says, and keep his word to the faithful.

ROMANS 3:20-31 JUSTIFICATION AND FORGIVENESS

Therefore no flesh is justified in His sight by means of the works of law, for by law sin is defined.

But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from law, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,

Even the righteousness of God through the faith of Jesus Christ, in all them who are believing, for there is no distinction.

For all have sinned and are coming short of the glory of God,

And are being justified as a gift of his grace through the redemption in Christ Jesus.

Whom God set forth as good will, through faith in his blood, to show his own righteousness through the remission of past sins.

Through the forbearance of God, so as to show his righteousness in the present time, that He might be righteous and justify man by the faith of Jesus.

Where, then, is the boasting? It was shut out. Through what law? Of works? No, but through the law of faith.

For we reckon that man is being justified through faith without works of law.

Or is He the God of the Judeans only? Is He not also of the nations? Yes, of the nations also,

If God is One, who shall justify the Circumcision by faith, and Uncircumcision through faith.

Are we therefore doing away with the law through faith? It cannot be! Rather, we establish the law.

NO MAN can be justified through the works of the Law. Law was never for that purpose. It was only for the purpose of defining and exposing sin. Those who think that man was required to keep the law perfectly fail to understand the true purpose of law. They also fail to understand the heart of our Heavenly Father ... the Giver of the law.

The purpose of law is not to justify or forgive, but to provide knowledge of sin; of right and wrong. Then, with that knowledge, man's conscience must inhibit him from doing what he knows to be wrong. The law tells man what not to do ("Thou shalt not ...!"). Therefore, law, working through man's conscience, can deter sin ... providing that the conscience and the will is working properly. Without it, man does not avoid sin. In deed, man forgets how to identify sin.

With correct conscience and will (i.e., "heart") a man can perceive law, recognize sin, and thus law can help man avoid sin. But law can only deter Future sins. It has no power to justify sinners or do away with past sins.

In verse 21, Paul sets forth a condition. The churches have interpreted Paul as teaching that law was done away. But that is NOT what Paul taught. Rather, he refers to an action that occurs outside the purview of law. Justification occurs, not through law, but aside from it.

Justification comes by faith (i.e., forgiveness by grace) and is absolutely necessary. Sin requires a remedy. The only remedy for past sin is grace (forgiveness).

Law identifies sin, but only the gift of grace can bring justification, and thus remedy for sin. This is the ONLY remedy for sin and man's condition.

In verse 22, "The faith of Jesus Christ" does not mean faith

IN Jesus Christ. Rather, it means the faith OF Jesus. In other words, we aren't justified by our faith. If we were, it would be a work WE accomplish on our own. But we've already established the fact that man cannot justify himself, nor can he earn grace. Grace is a gift, not a payment for work. Thus, it is Jesus' faith and work that changes us. The faith of Jesus Christ is what makes the difference. If it depended upon OUR own faith, we'd be in trouble.

10. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son as good will concerning our sins.

1 John 4:10

God sent Jesus to rescue his lost children. That is love, not anger! God endured the suffering of his own Son, the most painful experience for a parent, in order to reach his family and reconcile them back to Himself. He sent his First Born to them at the cost of pain and death. Then He raised his crucified Son and made Him King. God did all this to reach, forgive, and lift his lost children. This was family. God did this, not because law required it, but because LOVE required it. It was not contrary to law, but neither was it prescribed by law. It was beyond law.

Justification by faith is aside from law. Man never keeps the law perfectly. If perfect obedience were the criteria, no one could ever meet that criteria. No one could ever be justified.

Yet the churches teach that God gave his law and required perfect obedience. It kind of makes you wonder, doesn't it, how church theologians could assume that God demands per-

fection from man who is inherently incapable of it ... especially since God was the One who created man this way? Such a god as the churches portray would be cruel and sadistic, demanding from us that which he made us incapable of doing.

But, what if the churches are wrong? What if God DOESN'T demand perfection? What if He never did? What if God knowingly created man incapable of perfection, and never expected it from us? What if churches are selling God short to suggest that He didn't have the foresight to know that his creation would be unable to keep the law perfectly? And besides, if God knew this, why then would He demand that we do what He knew we could not ... and then pretend to be disappointed and angry when we couldn't do it? Do you see something wrong with this picture?

I know, I know ... you were taught in church (as was I) that man's failure to keep God's law perfectly was the reason God told Israel to sacrifice animals. You were also told that man's inability to keep the law perfectly was the reason Jesus had to be sacrificed ... so that God's sense of justice could be satisfied by blood. That is the story we learned in church, isn't it?

An interesting phenomenon can be seen here. After we hear a saying, or a story, for many years it slowly becomes believable ... even if it makes no sense. How many children, when they first heard this Sunday School story about Jesus, shook their heads because it didn't make sense? And how many, after years of hearing it, stopped expecting it to make sense and just learned to believe it anyway? It would seem that most, if not all, churchgoers have learned to accept it even though it doesn't make sense. No wonder people don't expect the Bible to make sense.

God NEVER required man to keep the law perfectly. Why would He? He made us the way we are! Israel was never perfect ... even when God was pleased with her. Israel was not rejected for breaking God's law.

God divorced Israel because she abandoned Him and stopped loving Him, not because she was imperfect (see Jer. 5:6-8). God had loved Israel with her imperfections! In fact, she had been whoring after other gods for ages before He finally put her away (see I Sam. 8). He would have taken her back to Himself at any time if she would have repented and returned his love ... even in her shameful, imperfect state. He never demanded perfection, only love.

If God does not require perfection from man, what then does He require? Understand the answer to this question and you will have the key to the whole Bible, and you will understand the purpose of man. Understand this one thing and the weight of religious confusion and ignorance will float up and off your shoulders. Understand this one thing, and your idea about God will change, and your perception will clear ... and it will all make sense.

Here is the answer!

GOD REQUIRES THAT WE LOVE HIM. He wants us to love Him, love his law, and love his Kingdom. That's what He has always wanted from us! He knows that if we love Him we'll also love his law, and we'll look to Him for direction.

13. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Respect God (love Him), and heed his commandments (honor them): for this is the whole duty of man.

Ecc. 12:13

Read it again, and commit it to memory. God does not require perfection. He requires LOVE! He wants the same thing from man that we want from our own children. LOVE! He wants us to love Him, and love his law. That's what is meant when Jesus told us to "Seek the kingdom first, then all other things will follow." In other words, if we love God, love his law, and love his kingdom, we will automatically find ourselves in greater obedience to Him, and we will avoid the pitfalls of following men and their religions. Not that our love toward God purchases our justification. But God

wants us to love Him freely in response to his love for us. Thus, He has freely justified us in Christ.

What was it that Jesus did for mankind through His passion, death, and raising? If Jesus wasn't appeasing and pacifying an angry God, what then was He doing?

Quite simply, Jesus was showing man how to LOVE GOD! In doing this He also showed us how to avoid the gods and religions of the world. When you love God, you love his law! When you love his law you realize that law benefits us ... it guides us and teaches us the meaning of freedom.

God knew that Jesus would die ... but not because God demanded blood, as the churches teach. They have made God out to be a merciless tyrant with an obsession for death and blood. They teach that God needed to be appeased ... and death was the only thing that would appease Him, and that He cannot look upon imperfection.

But on the face of it, this scenario does not fit the image of a loving Father. How could Yahweh be appeased by the murder of his Son? Think about it. If a bunch of people cruelly murdered your son, would you tend to be appeased by it?

Jesus did not use blood to bargain with God. Jesus was crucified at the hand of man ... not his Father! Think about it! It was MAN who demanded Jesus' blood – not God! His killers hated Him because He was not of their system. They refused to live with Jesus. Why couldn't they live with Him? Because Jesus loved God, and they didn't ... and they didn't want to admit it. So they killed God's Messenger. They killed God's Son in an attempt to remove the one thing that convicted them of their sin. And in killing Jesus they confirmed their own death. In killing God's Son, mankind killed itself. It was the pivotal point in history when all became centered upon one thing. All time, and all history is marked from that date. Man, at that point, died! They died "in Christ." They hit bottom and were forced to realize they were sinners. There was no justification for what they had done and what they had

become. Nothing was left for man ... except God's grace, and a new life!

14. ... one died for all, therefore all died.

2 Cor. 5:14

Thus, Jesus arose on the third day ... proving that his Father was more powerful than death, and proving that His God was THE TRUE GOD. He taught forgiveness, and He gave new life to a people who were dead. And in teaching forgiveness, He taught LOVE. Forgiveness is an act of love. He forgave his debtors, and taught us to forgive our debtors. This time people listened. They were raised from death and given new life. Jesus spoke with the authority of a KING! He convinced his disciples that there was something more powerful than sin; more powerful than law; more powerful than death. It was LOVE! It was God's love for us. This was family! We are God's children. Family is God's plan for man.

Paul was going point by point. He explained that if law was all we had, man could NEVER be justified; no one could ever please God. Never! However, if the thing that God really wants is love ... then yes, we CAN please God ... by loving Him.

This wasn't a new teaching. Paul was just projecting it through a better lens. The law is only for one thing: it defines and exposes sin as that which hurts man (Rm 7:13). But forgiveness and justification has always come by grace ... for grace is the only remedy for past sins.

Except for grace there is no remedy for sin. Law does not provide justification. It simply defines sin. To be "justified" means to be declared not guilty. If you wanted to justify yourself by the law you would have to turn time back and undo the wrong you'd done ... which is impossible. Law can be broken, but once broken it cannot be unbroken. Once broken, it is like Humpty Dumpty ... all the king's horses and all the king's men cannot put it together again ... at least not by means of the law itself. Paul says it is impossible. Man can repent and make restitution, but he can never undo that which is

already done. And, so, the only justification possible for sinful man is God's grace and forgiveness: remission for sins. A new life!

Verse 25 has a particularly interesting term in reference to Jesus. The King James translators rendered it "propitiation." The actual Greek word is a form of *ἱλαος* (*hilaos*) or *ἱλαροσ* (*hilaros*). Churches have translated it "propitiation," and defined it as "appeasement or pacification." Thus, church theologians have told us that Jesus was "The Propitiator" (i.e., "The Appeaser; The Pacifier") who acted on man's behalf to appease and pacify God. They conclude that Jesus appeased and pacified God by dying on the cross. They reason that in offering himself Jesus bargained with God, using his own blood as a payment to let man off the hook. They call Jesus our "Advocate" ... apparently between us and God.

This widely-held view is a church holdover from old Greek and Roman religions whose gods were cruel, moody, capricious, and required regular appeasement and bribery to evoke their good will. The error of the church world is that they have portrayed Yahweh with the same temperament as the old Greek and Roman gods: moody, self-centered and unwilling to help without appeasement. Church theologians have Jesus going to his Father to negotiate on behalf of mankind ... to coax an unwilling tyrant to be merciful. This view assumes that the Father was otherwise unwilling to accept man's repentance. In the churches, Jesus is always portrayed as our friend, but Yahweh is portrayed as hard and implacable.

This common church teaching gives a twisted view of a Father's heart. Fathers love their children and naturally have their welfare at heart. A father sacrifices for his children, and doesn't require bribery to help a child that has gone astray. The only thing that can stand between a father and his child is the child's attitude. The only thing that can prevent the father from helping or blessing his child is if his child refuses to allow it, or if the child

gets so confused he forgets who his father is. The remedy for this is not to appease the father, but to persuade the child that he is on the wrong path, and that he should return to the Father who loves him. In Luke 15, the parables of the "ninety and nine" and the "prodigal son" accurately portray the heart of a father. Our Heavenly Father has always sought after his lost sheep. He happily receives back a repentant child. He requires no appeasement!

Much of the confusion can be cleared up by understanding the Greek term "hilaos" or "hilaros" in Rom. 3:25. The churches have twisted the meaning to make it fit pagan doctrine. This Greek term appears ten times, in six different forms, in the Greek New Testament (Mtt. 16:22, Lk. 18:13, Rom. 3:25, Rom. 12:8, 2 Cor. 9:7, Heb. 2:17, Heb. 8:12, Heb. 9:5, 1 Jn. 2:2, 1 Jn. 4:10). The various forms come from the same Greek word meaning "affable," "cheerful," or "gracious." The Greek word is the basis of the English "hilarious," or "hilarity." In our day "hilarious" is associated with rollicking humor, but in fact it originally meant "gladness" or "cheerfulness." It signifies friendliness and good will. In terms of God's good will toward us, it means "graciousness" or "mercy."

Another English form of the word is "exhilarate," which means "to enliven," or "to cheer."

God sent his Right-hand Man — his Firstborn — as a gesture of mercy and good will to his lost sheep. The presence of Jesus brought comfort and joy ("hilaos"). Jesus "exhilarated" (enlivened) us and rescued those who were lost and dead. In II Cor. 5:19, we are told that God, through Jesus, was reconciling us unto Himself. Jesus was God's token of his love and good will toward us. This was not the act of an angry god who required pacification or appeasement. This was the act of a loving God rescuing his children at great personal cost to Himself.

In Luke 2:14 Jesus' birth is described as God sending "... peace on Earth, good will ("hilaos") toward man." That "peace" and "good will" was Jesus ... the One who could reac-

quaint us with our Heavenly Father. The news of this gesture of good will from God was called "glad tidings."

Thus, when Paul refers to Jesus as "the Hilaos," (the Good Will) he means that Jesus brought God's good will, love and grace to Man.

Jesus did shed his precious blood for his family, and He is called "our Passover" and "the Lamb of God" — but not in the sense that God or the law REQUIRED his death. Rather, it was in the sense that Jesus willingly gave his life to reach our hearts. With the power of LOVE He broke through into the inner most recesses of our hearts — the "holy of holies" — and caused our hearts to break, and repent, and love the Father. Jesus' death was NOT a requirement of law! It was a requirement of LOVE!

4. Who gave his soul (Gk. "psuche") for our sins, that he might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of God and our Father:

Gal. 1:4

The Bible also says that Jesus gave himself as "a ransom" for us. The churches interpreted this to mean that God demanded his Son's death as a payment (a ransom) to purchase his good will. This phrase appears three times: Mtt. 20:28, Mk. 10:45, Tim. 2:6. "Ransom" was translated from the Greek word "*luo*" which means "to set loose," or "to set free." The word "ransom" may not be the best translation of "*luo*," but it is true that Jesus paid a price to set us free. But from what did He set us free? And why is it assumed by the churches that the ransom price (Jesus' soul — Mk. 10:45) was paid to God? A great price was paid to be sure. But to whom?

In a ransom scenario, the price (the ransom) is paid to whoever is holding the captive. If the captives were us, who then was holding us? From whom did Jesus rescue us? The churches seem to think that we were being held captive by God, and that Jesus ransomed us from Him. But the Bible tells us that Jesus rescues us from "the present evil age." If He ransomed us

from the age, and if we had been held hostage by the sins of that age ... then the ransom would have been paid to that age (i.e., the people of that age): – US! Not to God. It was that evil age, not God, that *required* the ransom to turn us around.

14. For your sin will not have dominion: for you are not obliged to law, but obliged to grace.

Rom 6:14

3. Because the law lacked power, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

Rom. 8:3

Jesus “gave his soul” (i.e., his all) to “rescue Israel from that present evil age” (Gal. 1:4). They were ransomed from that evil age, and from sin - not from God. The law was powerless to free them. Thus, the price (the ransom) was paid to “that age” to redeem Israel from it.

Again, the death of Jesus - His blood - was not to appease God, but to display God’s love for Israel ... to break men’s hearts and turn them back to Him. Paul did not portray Jesus as merely a blood sacrifice to an angry God.

Think about it. This is an important concept because it affects our basic perception of our God. His Son was not a blood sacrifice to Him. Rather, Jesus was God’s goodwill (hilasmos) to man. In obeying the Father, Jesus put his own life on the line for family. Yahweh loved his lost children enough to send his Firstborn to change us.

Man was not seeking God. God was seeking man! Jesus was not commissioned by man to find God. Rather, He was commissioned by God to find man.

16. For God so loved the world that He gave his only-begotten Son, that all who believe in Him might not be destroyed, but have eonian life.

Jn. 3:16

38. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, nor messengers, nor

governments, nor things already established, nor things being established, nor powers,

39. Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Rom. 8:38-39

4. But God, who is rich in mercy through his great love which He loved us,

5. He made us alive together with Christ when we were dead in trespasses; by grace you are saved.

Eph. 2:4-5

8. He that does not love does not know God, because God is love.

9. Thus was God’s love manifest in us, because God sent his only-begotten Son into the world so that we might have life through Him.

10. Herein is the love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent his Son as good will (“hilasmon”) concerning our sins.

I Jn. 4:8-10

It is a father’s nature to be gracious, merciful and forgiving. This is true with our Heavenly Father. Grace and forgiveness were not newly invented by Jesus, as church theologians seem to think. Yahweh has always been a loving and saving God. He has ALWAYS justified sinners by grace. The whole Bible is about God’s grace and salvation to man. His graciousness and salvation is well documented in the Old Testament.

8. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

Gen. 6:8

30. Thus Yahweh saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; ...

Ex. 14:30

17. ... but you are a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and you forsook them not.

Neh. 9:17

Furthermore, God is fair and just. So when He forgives He is not ignoring law, or sin, or covering it up. Rather, He is recognizing the sin, denouncing it, and then forgiving it ... like a debt. He does not ignore sin ... like politicians do when they cover up crime. God points to the law, defines the sin, and then graciously forgives it ... admonishing us to “go and sin no more.” The Bible calls it “the grace of God.”

Paul asks, “If people are justified through grace, then why are you boasting?” Did they have a boast because they kept the Law perfectly? No. The only thing they could possibly boast of was faith ... the faith of Jesus, not their own.

If they could have justified themselves by keeping the Law then it would have been by works ... which the Bible tells us is impossible. As we have seen, law cannot justify anyone. Justification (forgiveness) is not by law. Justification (reconciliation) is by love and grace - not our faith, but God’s, and upon that premise we build faith.

A logical question is posed in verse 30: does justification by faith annul the law? Does the fact that God forgives us make the law of none effect?

Paul says, “NO!” Justification by faith does NOT annul the law. Rather, it establishes it. It verifies law, acknowledges sin, and offers a remedy. Faith in God includes faith in His law.

If God had given the law so that man could earn justification through works (as churches wrongly teach) then it would have been inconsistent. If the law had a way to justify us, and then if God gave Jesus to nullify the law (as churches wrongly teach), what good was it? That is the question Paul poses.

Only when the purpose of law is fully understood can we see how law and grace work together. Sin is the breaking of law, and grace is the remedy for sin. Grace is pointless without law. The churches have taught that Jesus abolished law - that grace replaced it. But sin cannot exist without law to define it ... and grace is the only remedy for it.