

Part Six – Romans 3:1-31

We finished last time in **Romans 2:28-29** where Paul is defining a “*Spiritual Jew*”.

Just because we are a Christian **doesn’t** make us a Spiritual Jew.

It is those of Judah who have embraced the promise, acknowledge Christ as the Messiah, and entered into the blessings of the New Covenant who are spiritual Jews.

Romans 3:1-2 [NIV] *“What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision? Much in every way! First of all, they have been entrusted with the very words of God.”*

In this passage it makes it easier to understand if we remember that Paul is carrying on an argument with an imaginary objector.

Also remember to apply this to Christians for we are also the ones with the “*oracles of God*” today.

Romans 3:3 [NIV] *“What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God’s faithfulness?”*

“*Have faith*” Remember the Greek word means more than what we believe; it includes our commitment to God (our faithfulness to God).

God always remains faithful, even when we are unfaithful.

Romans 3:4 [NIV] *“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.”*

“*Not at all!*” – I feel a better rendering of this Hebrewism that Paul uses is “*perish the thought*”.

The last part of the verse is a quotation from **Psalms 51:4** which is preceded in the Psalm with the words “*against you, you only, have I sinned and done evil in your sight*”.

Quite a statement after David had murdered a man and committed adultery with his wife.

Only the Holy Spirit can help us to realise that however much our sins may affect other people.

The terrible thing about our sins is how they affect God.

True repentance is **not** reached when we **only consider the effect our sins have on other people** but when we get this vision of what our sins have done to God who looks on us as His Child!!

How we betray God’s Trust in us, one who has been called to be “*salt and light*” to this world [**Matthew 5:13-16**].

David in **Psalms 51:4** then finishes the thought by saying “*in the light of this God whatever you say is true and when you enter into judgement with us your judgement is just and fair*”.

We all need to come to the place when we realise this, that whatever God says or does is always right and true.

How many times are we tempted to think, even if we do not say it out loud, that we do **not** trust the way God is handling a certain situation, whether it is in our personal lives or the body of Christ, the church as a whole?

Revelation 4:11 [NIV] *“You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.”*

“will” [thelema – purpose, desire or pleasure] were they created.

The best reason for anything is that God wants it the way it is, there is no higher reason that can ever exist.

Psalms 145:17 [NIV] *“The LORD is righteous in all his ways and loving towards all he has made.”*

Psalms 119:137 [NIV] *“Righteous are you, O LORD, and your laws are right.”*

God has never done anything unrighteous.

I hope that as a result of the study of Romans we can all come to this conclusion, having a new picture of the total righteousness of God.

To do this we have to humble ourselves.

We may not have committed the same sins as David but we have all done things which are abominable in the sight and presence of the Holy, Righteous and Perfect Creator God.

Romans 3:5 [NIV] *“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.)”*

Paul continues to state, then counter the anticipated objection of his fellow Jew (Christian).

This verse shows the amazing ingenuity of a sinner to justify his own sin; this is a twisted argument yet one used by other faiths against the Christian belief in God’s Mercy.

The argument was that sin gives God a chance to show His Mercy, therefore sin is a good thing, because it produces good results.

Same argument could say it is good to break a person’s heart by your selfish actions because it gives that person a chance to show how much they love you.

This is a callous and insensitive argument, selfish and completely lacking in shame and the humility that God seeks in us to help us live a fulfilled and happy life.

Romans 3:6 [NIV] *“Certainly not! If that were so, how could God judge the world?”*

Paul’s answer *“perish the thought”*.

Romans 3:7 [NIV] *“Someone might argue, “If my falsehood enhances God’s truthfulness and so increases his glory, why am I still condemned as a sinner?”*

Similar argument *“if my lie brings into focus God’s truthfulness, why am I judged as a sinner when I lie?”*

Romans 3:8 [NIV] *“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.”*

This is a perversion of the Gospel message telling of God’s Great Mercy.

It misrepresents the Christian Gospel as *“doing what we want and getting away with it”*.

All legalistic faiths (Jews, Moslems, etc.) look on Christianity in this way.

Paul's final judgement on such people is "their condemnation is deserved" they have heard the truth of the Gospel but have rejected it)

Romans 3:9 [NIV] *"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."*

Are we [Jews/Christians] better because of the revealed knowledge we have?

NO WAY – we have already seen **all** have sinned.

[Greek word "hamartia" – failed to hit the mark – either commission or omission in thought, deed or word].

NOTE This same word is used in connection with the sin offering mentioned in **Hebrews 10:6, 8, 18** and **Hebrews 13:11**.

We have **all** missed the purpose of our existence to glorify God our Creator and Master.

Romans 9:14-24 [NIV] *"What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: "I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden. One of you will say to me: "Then why does God still blame us? For who resists his will?" But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? "Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?'" **Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use?** What if God, choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath — prepared for destruction? What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory — even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles?"*

God is moulding us into a being that will be to **His Praise and Glory**.

Jeremiah 18:1-6 [NIV] *"This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: "Go down to the potter's house, and there I will give you my message." So I went down to the potter's house, and I saw him working at the wheel. But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him. Then the word of the LORD came to me: "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter does?" declares the LORD. "Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel."*

As long as we remain pliable in God's Hands He can re-make us when we fall short of the perfection (maturity) God seeks to create in us.

Psalms 37:4-5 [NIV] *"Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this:"*

"Delight" – Hebrew "anag" – [aw-nag] to be soft or pliable in a feminine way.

Psalms 37:5 [NIV] *"Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this:"*

"Commit" – to roll over to – seek occasion to trust.

"Trust" – be confident in – find refuge in – place hope and security in.

Such a response to God takes humility and faith.

The hardest thing for anyone to see is that we are sinners and without any righteousness in God's Eyes.

Romans 3:10-18 [NIV] *“As it is written: **“There is no-one righteous, not even one; there is no-one who understands, no-one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no-one who does good, not even one.” “Their throats are open graves; their tongues practise deceit.” “The poison of vipers is on their lips.” “Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.” “Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of peace they do not know.” “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”**”*

Quote from **Psalms 14:1-3** and **Psalms 53:1-2** which begin with *“the fool has said in his heart there is no God.”*

The verses are added proof that we have **all** sinned.

Psalms 14:2 [NIV] *“The LORD looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God.”*

“Children of men” – Hebrew *“sons of Adam”*.

The Bible **only** deals with Adam and his descendants – some Bible commentators believe that there were other races on the earth but they are **not** dealt with in the Bible.

This is important for refusing to acknowledge this can lead us into a great deal of misunderstanding.

There is no-one in their natural condition who seeks after God.

It is **not** in the human mind to do so.

Romans 8:7 [NIV] *“the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.”*

Natural mind is hostile to God.

None of us sought the truth (God) until God put it into our minds to do so.

So we cannot take any credit for seeking God.

Romans 3:13 [**Psalms 5:9**]

Romans 3:14 [**Psalms 10:7**]

Romans 3:15-17 [**Isaiah 59:7-8**]

Romans 3:18 [**Psalms 36:1**]

NOTE The first four statements are about what we do with our mouth.

James 3:1-13 [NIV] *“Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check. When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. **Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts.** Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless*

*evil, full of deadly poison. With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. **Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing.** My brothers, this should not be. Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? My brothers, can a fig-tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water. Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom."*

No-one can control their own tongue.

It is safer to be a light [silent] by works than an evangelist with words!!

Romans 3:19 [NIV] *"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."*

Jews [Christians] are being told this from "*our own book*" – the Bible.

Paul has used the typical Rabbinic method of teaching; to string together a long list of scriptures all pointing towards one thing, in this case, the sin of man.

Bringing the listener or reader to a position where they are desiring an answer, to the question prompted in their minds by these scriptures.

Paul then states the major reason why God gave mankind His Law, to expose sin as the evil it is in God's Eyes.

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

"Therefore" no law God or man made can make us righteous in God's Eyes.

This is the conclusion that Paul has been painstakingly working towards.

Romans 3:21 [NIV] *"But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify."*

Paul follows directly with the **only solution and answer to their question: How then do I become righteous in God's Sight?**

The law we tried to use to become righteous only points towards this one solution.

Romans 3:22 [NIV] *"This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference,"*

Faith in what God has done through Jesus Christ.

"No difference" – Jew [Christian] with law, or Gentile [non-Christian] without law, but with *"working of law"* in their mind **Romans 2:14-15.**

Romans 3:23 [NIV] *"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,"*

All have sinned [missed the mark] come short of the Glory of God.

"Glory" Greek word *Doxa* [Dox-ah] wide application – mainly to express the meaning of its base verb *doko* [dok-o] – to think to seem – to be accounted – **hence reputation** and the honour that results from the good reputation expressed in a way of life.

God's Glory is manifested particularly in the person of Christ.

Hebrews 1:1-4 [NIV] *“In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but **in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son**, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. **The Son is the radiance of God’s glory** and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.”*

Jesus is all of these.

John 17: 10, 22 [NIV] *“All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them.” ... “I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one.”*

“I am glorified in them” [King James Bible].

If we claim to be Christians, our reputation should be a reflection of the Glory of God expressed through the life we live **now**.

Glorification is **not** just something we are given in the future but is expressed in the way we live **now**

2 Corinthians 3:12-18 [NIV] *“Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. **We are not like Moses**, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away. But their minds were made dull, **for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord** [Christ], **the veil is taken away.** Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s [Christ’s] glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord [Christ], who is the Spirit.”*

This scripture is in the context of the Glory of the New Covenant.

2 Corinthians 4:1-11 [NIV] *“Therefore, since through God’s mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who said, **“Let light shine out of darkness”, made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.** But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, **so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.** For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body. So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.”*

This is what sin does – it hinders God being able to reflect His Glory (His Mind and way of life) in us, to be a light to this darkened world.

John 15:8 [NIV] *“This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”*

Romans 3:31 [NIV] *“Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.”*

Uphold the law [Ten Commandments] by using it in the way it was designed to be used.

1 Timothy 1:8-11 [NIV] *“We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. We also know that law is **made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers — and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me.**”*

The law is for this group of people among whom we should **not** be, we should be “*in Christ*”.