

The Human Condition

Romans, Part XVI

Romans 1:18-3:20

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I. Introduction

II. The Human Condition

A. Under Privilege

First, human beings are “*under privilege*.” We are all recipients of myriad blessings and graces from a good and loving God. These privileges are evidence of God’s _____ *grace* – His kindness to all men generally (Mt 5:45).

- Those outside the visible Church - Common Grace
 - Know God and His attributes – 1:19, 20, 21
 - Know God’s truth – 1:25 (cf. 1:18)
 - About God Himself and folly of idolatry – 1:25b; 1:28a
 - About what is “natural” – 26-27
 - Know the righteous judgment of God – 1:32, 2:2
 - Know God’s moral laws through their conscience – 2:14-15
- Those inside the visible Church - Covenant Grace
 - Called by God’s Name and have access to His law – 2:17-20
 - Have physical circumcision (a sacrament) which highlights the need for personal conversion – 2:25ff
 - Entrusted with God’s oracles – 3:1-2

B. Under Sin (1:21-23; 2:12-15; 3:9-20)

- Those outside the visible Church routinely –
 - Respond to privileges with idolatry & ingratitude (1:20-23).
 - Exchange the truth for a lie (1:24-25).
 - Exchange sexual honor for vile passions (1:26, 27).
 - Practice and praise unrighteousness (1:32).
 - Act hypocritically (2:1,3).
 - Respond to God’s patience with *hardness and impenitence* (2:5).
 - Violate their consciences (2:14-15).
- Those inside the visible Church routinely –
 - Violate the very law that they have received (2:21-24).
 - Miss the central message of the sacraments (2:28-29).
 - Fail to believe God’s word (3:3).

⁹What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. ¹⁰As it is written: “There is none righteous, no, not one; ¹¹There is none who

An Outline of Romans

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understands; There is none who seeks after God. ¹²They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one.” ¹³“Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit”; “The poison of asps is under their lips”; ¹⁴“Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.” ¹⁵“Their feet are swift to shed blood; ¹⁶Destruction and misery are in their ways; ¹⁷And the way of peace they have not known.” ¹⁸“There is no fear of God before their eyes.” ¹⁹Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are [in] the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. ²⁰Therefore by the deeds of the law [by moral rules] no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

God’s moral precepts – whether found in our consciences or in His law – cannot, in themselves, reconcile us to God. All they do is highlight the routine way that we fall short of God’s righteousness and goodness, that we are born “*under _____.*”

C. Under Wrath (1:18)

All human beings are, by nature, “*under _____.*” As Paul writes, “*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men...*” (1:18).

- In this life (1:20, 24, 26, 28, 32)

God’s righteous judgment on sin is the proliferation of sin. If sin is not dealt with – forgiven through faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ – then it will multiply and grow. When we rebel against God, when we worship idols and refuse to give thanks to God, then God *hands us over* to *sexual immorality* (cf. Pr 22:14). If we refuse to repent, hardening ourselves in that sexual sin, then God *hands us over* to even more degrading *same-sex sexuality*. If we continue to refuse to repent, then God *hands us over* to *societal decay and death*. *The punishment of _____ is more _____.*

- In the day of judgment (2:5-11, 16; 3:4-6)

Those who remain in rebellion against God, who refuse to repent and turn in faith to Jesus for forgiveness, will be judged, while those who repent, who seek God’s forgiveness, and who begin to walk righteously by grace, will be rewarded:

⁵But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, ⁶who “will render to each one according to his deeds”: ⁷eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; ⁸but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, ⁹tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; ¹⁰but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹¹For there is no partiality with God... ¹⁶in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.

III. Our Good, Forbearing, and Longsuffering God (Rom 2:4)

“*Or do you despise the riches of [God’s] goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?*” At any moment, God may summon you to His righteous judgment. “*For it is appointed unto men to die once and after this comes the judgment*” (Heb 9:27).

IV. Conclusion