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Searching the Scriptures

“Search the Scriptures...They are they which testify of Me.” Joun 5:39

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Commentary on Romans

Chapter 3

I prefer to skip over verses 1 through 9 as we begin the study of Chapter 3. It is primary discussing the relationship of the Jew, the result of circumcision and their accountability having received the oracles from God directly verses the Gentile. Verse 9 concludes with Paul stating that both Jew and Gentile are all under sin.

Verses 10 thru 18 actually provided us with a better starting point for our subject which is the Righteousness of God. Vs. 10—18: *“As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulcher; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes.”*

These 9 verses describe the 13 depraved conditions of fallen man in the eyes of God. 1) There is none righteous, no, not one. 2) There is none that understandeth. 3) There is none that seeketh after God. 4) They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable. 5) There is none that doeth good, no, not one. 6) Their throat is an open sepulcher. 7) With their tongues they have used deceith. 8) The poison of asps is under their lips. 9) Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. 10) Their feet are swift to shed blood. 11) Destruction and misery are in their ways. 12) And the way of peace have they not known. 13) There is no fear of God before their eyes.

What a sad state man finds himself in before God. And God is not talking about just the ungodly. Let’s read verses 19 & 20; *“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”* It is all those who place themselves under the law that cannot be justified. Thus we see that all the world may become guilty before God who trust in the law. As we see in these verses by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified because by the law is the knowledge of

sin. Without the law, we would not know what sin is. This was the mistake of the nation of Israel after being delivered by Moses from Egyptian bondage. They sought the law so that they would know how to worship God. God provided them the law, thereby identifying sin and they could not live up to it. We must understand that prior to Moses there was no law. The above passage is pointing out that as the Jew had the law they were expected to meet its demands. Now enters the Gentiles who knew not the law, but tried to conform to the law; this was imputed unto them as righteousness. The Gentile was not under the mandate to live by the law because they did not know the law. The Jew on the other hand knew the law but obeyed it not. Only Jesus Christ could fulfill the demands of the law. Jesus said; “I come not to destroy (the law) but to fulfill. Matt. 5: 17 This begs the question how can man be justified before God?

Verses 21—26: *“But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference: For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God: Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation (sacrifice) through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”*

We are justified by faith in Jesus Christ. Our justification by faith is an inward expression. Our justification by works is an external expression. We must have both. James 2: 21—26 *“Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the alter? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”*

One must recall that the Jews, as they came out from under the sufferings of Egyptian bondage, sought the law, so that they would know how to worship God. God then provided them the law, through Moses, and thus, the law, identified sin. Here, we see Paul underscoring this knowledge, by making the statement that, *“by the law is the knowledge of sin”*. We must understand that prior to Moses, there was no “law”. Paul is attempting to make the point, that as the Jew now had the law and the Gentiles did not, that if the Gentile conformed to the law, without knowing the law, it was imputed unto them as righteousness. The Gentile was not under the mandate from God to live by the law, because they did not know the law. The Jew of the day was aware of the law, but obeyed it not.

Paul is teaching us that Faith in Jesus Christ reaches beyond the law and the prophets to justify us before God the Father. Both Jew and Gentile must accept that Jesus is our redeemer, he paid the price by the shedding of his blood. The New Testament records the fulfillment of all the Old Testaments types and prophecies of redemption through the sacrifice of Christ. This is the basic doctrine of the New Testament and the Gospel. Everything hinged upon Jesus the Son of God.

Verses 27—30: “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God: Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation (sacrifice) through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God: To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what, law? Of works? Nay: but by the law of faith”

Again, this is so simple, but so many stumble. Paul it is telling us that it is not by keeping the law, nor by doing good works, that we find our way into heaven, but by our faith, in Jesus Christ our Lord. “Faith” is the key, to all Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation. Works alone will not suffice. Faith must come first; then good works. Without faith, works are meaningless. “Why we miss it I do not understand. All of Scripture is so simple that we look right over it, yet do not get it.

Verse 28--31: “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision (Jews) by faith, and the uncircumcision (Gentiles) through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.”

The message is that man, whether Jew or Gentile, is found guilty before God because of sin. You may ask what is the definition of sin? The definition of sin is the transgression or an overstepping of the law, the divine boundary between good and evil; an act inherently wrong, whether expressed or not; a departure from right; missing the mark, a failure to meet the divine standard; the intrusion of self-will into the sphere of divine authority; lawlessness, or spiritual anarchy; unbelief, or an insult to the divine veracity of God. Sin originated with Satan; entered the world through Adam and is universal. Christ is the lone exception. And has no remedy but in the sacrificial death of Christ, availed of by faith. Sin is summarized as threefold: an act, the violation of, or want of obedience to the revealed will of God: a state, absent of righteousness, and a nature of enmity toward God. (I attribute the last, to Dr. C.I. Scofield)