

Romans 3:1-9

Sunday 6/1/2008

SEC: The New Testament and the Book of Romans

When we started the Book of Romans, I showed you how that you come out of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, for the most part, up to the resurrection, are still dealing under the Old Testament situation where God is dealing with Israel. We saw when we started this book how that in the Book of Hebrews it tells us that the Testament does not come into effect until the death of the testator.

So, technically speaking, even though in your Bible Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are located in what we commonly call the New Testament, as far as time is concerned and as far as God is concerned, all of those books up to the death and resurrection of Christ are still under the Old Testament. That is why He is dealing strictly with the nation of Israel. The Church is not in effect yet; the Church does not come into effect until the Day of Pentecost. It is important to understand how the New Testament lays itself out.

Then we get into the Book of Acts. What the Book of Acts does for you is it acts as a bridge. The Book of Acts transitions you from what has been going on in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John under the Old Testament scenario with the nation of Israel, bringing you in through the Church Age, which has now come into effect after Christ's death. That is why you will find the Book of Acts in Acts chapter one takes place after His resurrection, and everything there is laid out for you.

Basically, the Book of Acts is another great book in time you are going to have to learn because it shows you how that transition unfolds itself, and it puts the New Testament into effect for you. Then we come to the Book of Romans, which is what we started. The Book of Romans is a book that we now know that once we get through Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, once we move through the transition of Acts, we come into the Book of Romans.

The Book of Romans is, and you have heard me say this many, many times, I really like the saying and the phrase that goes, "The Book of Romans is really the Constitution of our Christianity." It is like what the Declaration of Independence or the Bill of Rights or our own Constitution is to this country. It lays down and sets down the parameters by which the New Testament is now going to run.

SEC: Review of Romans Chapters 1 and 2

It starts out in a transition itself. We looked in chapter one when we studied it, and it showed how that the Gentiles are really all messed up. It showed that they got messed up because they live in unrighteousness, and we looked at that in great detail. Then we got to chapter two, and we find out in chapter two that Paul takes an enormous amount of time there to lay out that the Jews are in the same mess. They got in their mess because of their self-righteousness.

We saw that the Jews had set themselves up. In fact, the last time we were in the Book of Romans, we closed out chapter two, and we saw how the Jews had set themselves up above the

Gentiles because they felt like they had God's favor in so many areas. And they did. They had so many things that God had given them that they were superior over the Gentiles.

In fact, in chapter two, the last thing we looked at, if you remember in Romans 2:25-29, was the fact that they had taken the physical act of circumcision. Remember when we talked about that, I showed you how that in the Old Testament with Abraham, God gave the sign of circumcision to the nation of Israel through Abraham. That had nothing to do with their salvation. It had nothing to do with them as far as anything spiritually. But it was a sign that God had separated them from the rest of the world, and it was a sign of that covenant.

You will remember that we took two weeks to go through all the circumcision in the Bible. There are three of them. I showed you how that there was a circumcision of the Jew, and what the Jew has done with their physical circumcision. They have elevated it to such a degree in Romans chapter two that they think that it is on the equivalent of their salvation, that if you are circumcised, you are going to heaven, and if you are not, you are not. Paul tells them that is not what God ever intended for it to be. It was never given as a sign of their salvation; it was given as a sign that God had separated them from the world.

Then we talked about the circumcision that deals with the Gentiles, and that circumcision of their heart based on God dealing with their conscience. Then, if you remember, we took a Sunday, and I laid out the third circumcision, which has to do with you and me as the Church. We went to Colossians chapter two. I told you that Sunday morning that if you understand the circumcision for the Church, spiritual circumcision, the circumcision of Christ, that doctrine is so vitally important that it is the reason why I am here.

It is the reason why so many of God's people doubt their salvation today. It is the reason why so many people struggle with really knowing for sure that they are saved, or they get saved and then they go through life and they have some problems and some issues. So they think that because they have lost their fellowship with God, they have lost their salvation with God. I showed you that Sunday that very truly, based on the doctrine of the Bible and the circumcision of Christ, if you have truly been saved, if there was a true time in your life where you have asked the Lord Jesus Christ to come into your heart and save you, then what transpired at that exact moment was what the Bible talks about.

We laid it out in great detail that Sunday morning with what the Bible calls an operation of God made without hands, putting off the body of your flesh from your soul. Then God seals that. From that point on, that is what makes you God's child. I went through the whole process that Sunday of why God had to do it that way. The only way God could dwell inside you and I, who are sinners, the only way that God could really do anything in our lives as sinners, He had to do it that way. So you should understand that now.

I think that when we come through Chapter one and Chapter two, the overall theme or the overall concept that God is trying to get across to you and me, whether you are a Jew or a Gentile, is that a relationship with God will always be based on your heart attitude, not something that you do. I think that in itself is a misunderstood doctrine today. We have a lot of God's people out there that think they get some kind of favor with God by what they do. We know now from our Bible and

for many, many years of teaching the Bible that you do not get any favor from God from what you do. You get favor with God with a relationship you build with Him one on one, and your spiritual relationship.

SEC: Introduction to Romans Chapters 3-5: The Righteousness of God

Today we are going to begin Chapter three, and we are going to see our lessons and our teaching progressing as we move on through these chapters. In Chapter three, four, and five, another set of doctrines begins for us. There is one main doctrinal theme that it follows, but there are so many doctrines in it that we are going to take a lot of time and go through it because I want you to understand it.

You remember, and I said this already, not to repeat myself, but to help you put it in perspective. I told you in Chapter one, just a few moments ago, that Paul writes Chapter one to show you and I how the Gentiles think and how they have got themselves into the mess they are in because of their unrighteousness and the way they live. In Chapter two, he comes back and he shows us that the Jew, even though they are God's chosen people and even though God had given them all of the things that they have had, they have taken that and raised it up to the point where they have become self-righteous. Now they find themselves in the same mess. Unrighteousness, self-righteousness, all ends at the same street, and it is called Dead End Street as far as God is concerned.

Now in Chapter three, four, and five, God begins another great study of a doctrine, and this doctrine is called the doctrine of the righteousness of God. We have seen now that man, whether he is a Jew or a Gentile, by his own works, by the things that he tries to do, has no righteousness with God. We also all know now that the only way we can have a relationship with God is through our attitude of heart that we develop with Him.

What we find now in Chapter three, four, and five is the beginning of the great doctrine that the only way the Jew and the Gentile can solve the problem that they have—one has a problem of unrighteousness, the other one has a problem of self-righteousness—is for both people groups to get the righteousness of God in their lives. That is what you and I needed before we got saved. That was our problem. Before we were saved, for most of us, we were Gentiles. Because we were Gentiles, we lived an unrighteous life. The only way you got saved is you got God's righteousness.

I could probably start at this end and work through, and 99.9% of you would say, if I ask you the question, "Do you have God's righteousness?" probably everybody in this room would say, "Yes, I do." But if I turn the question around and I ask you the question, "How did you get God's righteousness?" I dare say probably not too many of you could explain the process by which you went through to get it. You know you have it, but you are not sure how you got it. This is what Romans chapter 3, 4, and 5 begins to do. It not only shows you and me that we need to get God's righteousness to solve the problems in our life, but Paul begins to show you the process by which you get it. This is crucial in the Book of Romans. This is why the Book of Romans started out the way that it did, and now it is coming to the point where almost chapter by chapter, he is

going to break this thing down where you can grasp it and understand it, and we can make the applications to it.

SEC: Navigating Difficult Passages: Romans 3:1-9

I have to tell you this again, and here again, this is nothing new. In chapter 3, especially in the first part, the first nine verses, we have another really tough passage here. It is not tough because of what is in it; it is tough because it is hard to read it. I told you before, if you ever tried to sit down and read the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution or the Bill of Rights, you know how complicated the language is because of the legal style by which they write it. Paul does the exact same thing. Watch for yourself here. Let me read it for you.

Romans 3:1-8

What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?

Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.

For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?

God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man)

God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?

For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?

And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just.

You see what I mean? I do not know how many times you probably, and I, have read that passage. I have to be honest with you, it probably took me five years to get Romans down, and I had to work it. I am slower than the average person anyhow, and I had to really work it. I had to take it apart almost bolt by bolt, nut by nut. But finally I got it, and once I got it, I saw how easy it really is.

The two toughest books in your Bible, as far as I am concerned, are the Book of Romans and the Book of Revelation. But they are tough for different reasons. Revelation is not a hard book to read, but what makes Revelation so tough is that it is a hard book to believe. There is a lot of weird stuff going on in Revelation. Most people today, most pastors, most churches teach you that the Book of Revelation is allegorical. Allegorical is a fifty-dollar word that does not mean anything, or you can make it mean whatever you want it to mean. Revelation is not allegorical. Revelation means exactly what it says, where it says it, and where you find it. I do not know if any passage in Revelation is allegorical. It has all got a doctrinal truth, but it is not hard to read, but it is hard to believe when you read it.

Romans is just the opposite. Romans is not hard to believe, but Romans is really hard to read. What you have to do is you have to find a key to it. For me, when I get into a tough passage like this, and maybe this will help you in your own personal Bible study, most of God's people, when they study the Bible today, they do not really have a process by which they do it. The average Christian reads a passage like that, they do not get it, so they give up on it. Or they will try to dig around a little bit, and when they cannot get it, they will move on.

You have to learn how to dissect passages of the Bible. Part of learning how to study the Bible is taking a tough passage and breaking it down. For instance, when I look at this passage here in the first nine verses, which are admittedly tough to read. I remember the first time I read it, I just scratched my head and said, "What the heck, I will just move on to something I can get." I will go back to the 10 spiritual laws, or the story of Zacchaeus, something I can get my hands around. But when you get into Romans chapter three, you are in a passage that is written from a tough aspect.

For me, when I get into those tough passages, and I am no different than you are, I may just follow a little different procedure. What I do is I begin to take those passages and break them down. In Romans chapter three, in the first nine verses, I have three different sets of questions. That is the first thing you do. You have to divide it out and find out you have three different questions being asked, or three different sets of questions being asked. That is the first thing you have to do. You have to break it down where you see, because it is like trying to eat a whole pie. When I go get a pizza, people try to just eat the whole thing. When I order a pizza, I have the guy cut it in six pieces because I can eat six pieces. That is how I do it. That is what you have to do with the Bible. You have to break it down. You cannot just eat the whole thing in one sitting.

So when I look at a tough passage, it may be in Isaiah, it might be in Revelation, it might be in Romans 3. What I have to do, and what you have to learn to do, is look at that passage and then break it down in the fashion or the format that it goes. When I take this, admittedly, a tough passage and break it down into three sets of questions, then it becomes easy to understand. You will see that it is pretty.

The first thing I notice in Romans 3:1 is that what we are reading here is a continuation of what he said in chapter two. That is very important. You always want to check the beginning of the chapters. If you have a "moreover," if you have a "therefore," that is always a good key for you. If you have a question at the beginning of the chapter, it is usually a question that is being asked on what he just said in the last chapter. That is vital. That develops a context for you. I now know that chapter three, however tough it is, however it may seem to be a good question, however it may seem to be hard, I now know it is tied back to chapter two in some form or the other.

Look what he says in Romans 3:1: "What advantage then," see, "then," based on what he just said, "what advantage then hath the Jew?" That question is based on what he said back in chapter two. This tough passage is easy to understand when you break it down, as I said, around the three questions or really the three series of questions. Let me give you the questions first, and then we are going to come back because you will want to begin to break down Romans 3 in your Bible, and you should be following along in your notes as we are breaking it down.

If you ever want to get Romans, I am telling you, if you stay with me every week, and I am not giving you that much that you cannot do it. If you stay with Romans every week and note it out, get the CD, sit down and then go back and thoroughly understand what I said and see it, and then put it in your Bible as your notes. We will knock off a major book in the Bible that you may not have everything in it, but you will have a commentary of it that details out for you as you come through the tough passages. There are lots of places in the Bible that are really hard for me that what I did is I found somebody who understood it, broke it down, and then I got it in my understanding and then wrote it in there. So every time I would read that passage, I had my little commentary on the side, which told me what I am dealing with because you forget. I forget. We all forget, especially when you have a book as big as the Bible and on a scale and a magnitude of the Word of God.

Here is the first question. The first question is found in Romans 3:1. There are two parts to this question or two questions to this section.

1. What advantage then hath the Jew?
2. Or what profit is there of circumcision?

That is your first set of questions. In Romans 3:3, you have the second set of questions.

For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?

That is your second set of questions. Now, the third set of questions is found in Romans 3:5-7, and it gets a little more complicated here, but it is okay. We will work it all out. It is not that hard. We just take it.

But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man) God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world? For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?

That is your third set of questions. Basically, what he is saying in this question, what he is asking, somebody is asking this question. He is saying, "Hey, look, if God gets honor and glory out of everything, and my sinning, God gets even honor and glory out of that, then how can God judge me at the Great White Throne Judgment if He got honor and glory out of the wrong that I did?" That is what he is asking. These questions, once you break it down and you see it, and you separate the simple from the complex, then you begin to have a better way of grasping it and understanding it. Now that I gave you those three, I am going to come back and give you the commentary on them, and we are going to look at it, and then you can understand it and get it into your Bible because you want to get chapter three down here in these first nine verses.

SEC: Analysis of Question 1: The Advantage of the Jew (Romans 3:1-2)

Now we are going to break them down around the three series of questions. Question number one: "What advantage then hath the Jew?" That was a question. "Or what profit is there of circumcision?" That is the second question or part of the first series of questions. This question, we already know now, has arisen because of what he said in the last chapter. So that is our first

key. We are not left clueless here what he is talking about. So what we have to do basically is go back and look at what he said in the last chapter, and here is the question.

The question has arisen on the basis of what he is saying: "There is no difference between," in chapter two, he said, "there is no difference between the Jew and the Gentile." Somebody is asking, "Well, if only a real Jew is one that is a Jew inwardly and has nothing to do with the law, then what good is the law or the feast or the circumcision? How does that make us any different or any better than the Gentiles?" Of course, the question they are asking here is, "If we are better than the Gentiles and we both get to God the same way, then what makes us better? What advantage hath the Jew?" is what he is asking. "What advantage do I have if we are all the same, and we are supposed to be God's chosen people, then what advantage do we have as a child of God?" That is a great question. Within each one of these questions, you find a great doctrine being laid out.

The answer to this in the simplest form, and then I will give you the answer from the Bible here in a second, but the answer in the simple form is: the nation of Israel is not better than the Gentiles, but the nation of Israel is different than the Gentiles. The key to this, chapter two, and what the question is in chapter three, it is not that the Jews are any better, it is just the fact that the Jews are different.

You know what that brings up? That brings up one of the great doctrinal teachings in the Bible about the difference between God's view of the nation of Israel and God's view of the Body of Christ and God's view of the Gentiles. You realize in your Bible you have three basic people groups. You have the Jews, you have the Gentiles, and then you have the Christians or the Body of Christ, the Church. You have three distinct groups. In the Book of Romans so far, we have seen two of those groups defined: the Jews in chapter two, the Gentile in chapter one, and now we are getting into dealing with the third group, which are the Gentiles.

God's plan, and I do not fully understand all of God's plan, God's plan from Genesis chapter one to Revelation chapter 22, where eternity starts and then off into eternity, God's plan, whatever it may be, is certainly built around those three people groups. It is built around the Jew, it is built around the Gentile, and it is built around the Church. The reason I know that is because God has three things that He ascribes to them: new heavens, new earth, new Jerusalem. The new earth goes to the Jew. The new heavens goes to the Gentiles, and the new Jerusalem goes to the Church. He has created a place in the eternal sense for all those three people groups.

I do not want to confuse you with that because I know right now a million questions if you do not have a graph of what I am talking about and have something we can flesh out on Thursday night, or you can come over and see me, and I will help you understand it. But for right now, just understand this: God has a plan. That plan starts in Genesis, and that plan ends in Revelation chapter 22 as far as earth is concerned. Once we get to Revelation chapter 22, if you know anything about your Bible at all, you know you are out into eternity. When you are out into eternity, and all through your Bible, your Bible and all the plan of God is built around the three people groups that are found in the Bible: the Jew, the Gentile, and the Church. Now there is not one of them any better than the other, but they are different as far as they relate to the plan of

God and what He is doing. That is what the person here that is asking this question has failed to see.

You realize that, and you probably know this, you realize that if we are the Church and you are saved this morning and you are part of the Church and you are a Christian, you know another term for that Church is called the Bride of Christ. You realize that you and I as the Church are Christ's impending Bride, that He is the Bridegroom. When you get married and some pastor opens up Ephesians chapter 5 there and they start reading that down through there, I never go to Ephesians chapter 5 for weddings. I always go to Ephesians chapter 6 because if you are going to get married, you need to put on the whole armor of God. You guys sing these funny songs that they sing out there, "Where thou goest." And they look at each other. I like to sing, "The fight is on." That works. That is why I do not do many weddings.

But you are called the Bride of Christ, and someday your Bride is going to come. And the Bridegroom is going to come, the Lord Jesus Christ. When He comes back, He is going to take you in a spiritual union. You are going to have what is a type of it on planet earth in the physical union between a man and a woman as a husband and wife. Of course, we know that Ephesians 5, when he lays out marriage, he says, "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church." So you and I as the Church are Christ's Bride.

Most people do not understand that God, they understand that concept that we are Christ's Bride, but they do not understand that the Old Testament nation of Israel is likened to God's wife. When you go back to the Old Testament in places, the Book of Hosea is a good place. Places in Ezekiel, you are going to find that just like the Church is a reference to Christ's Bride, the nation of Israel is likened to God's wife. So when we get out into eternity, everybody is happy. God has His relationship with Israel. Christ has His relationship with the Church. And the Gentiles get the best of both worlds because they have to get in all that through the program that God has. Everybody lives, as the old story goes, everybody lives happily ever after. That is God's plan.

So whoever is asking this question here does not understand that, as most of God's people do not today. They are saying, "Hey, if the only Jew is really a real Jew who is an inward Jew, and Gentiles have to have an inward relationship, then what advantage do we have as the Jew?" Of course, the question is, you do not have an advantage, but you are different as far as God dealing with you.

Let us list some ways that God decided to use the nation of Israel differently than everything else. If there is an advantage, here it is. But there is no way it makes them better; it makes them different.

- 1.) Oracles of God

The first thing he says there is you have the oracles of God. That means the Word of God. If you know anything about the Bible at all, you know that way back in Genesis, God looked around Genesis 11, Genesis 12, and He was in His mind, He wanted to bring out a nation. That nation was going to become the nation of Israel. That nation, God wanted them to be under Him like a wife. He wanted to nourish that nation. He wanted to take care of that nation. He wanted to give

that nation all the blessings. He wanted to procure all the good things to them and watch over them. Like a husband should be with his wife and take care of her and protect her and feed her and nourish her and cherish her. That is why you find all those attributes; you should find them in a marriage relationship.

Of course, God chose the nation of Israel because He found a man named Abraham. He found in Abraham what He was looking for, and that was a man who would be faithful, first of all, with his house and then with the house of God, the nation of Israel. So He calls Abraham out. He says, "Abraham, the first thing I have to do is separate you from the world physically, because there is a lot of ungodliness going on down there." So He sends Abraham out from the Ur of the Chaldees, that modern-day Babylon or Iraq today as we know it. He takes him out of Iraq and He sends him to the Promised Land. It takes Abraham a while to get there, but he finally gets there.

When he gets into the Promised Land, God tells him some things, or in the process of getting there, He tells him some things. He says to Abraham, "You know what, in you and the nation that is going to come out of your seed," talking about Israel, He says, "all the nations of the world are going to be blessed." Every blessing on this planet is going to come through you. In fact, the Savior is going to come through you. As Paul told the Jew here, "You want to know what is different about you than the Gentiles that gives you an advantage, as far as if you are looking for an advantage? First of all, God gave you the Word of God, and everybody on this planet, if they are going to get the words of God, have to get it from the nation of Israel."

You have a Bible in your hand today, and most of you have the King James 1611 Authorized Version. We know that as a translation of the Gentiles. We know that it comes either from Cambridge or Oxford in its original editions. You find a lot of Americans come up after that. But the bottom line is this: it may be a Gentile Bible, and you may have a Gentile New Testament that the Jew does not accept, but it came through the nation of Israel. You have an Old Testament. It is not the same order of books that the Jews have, but they are the same book. You know why? Because the oracles of God, "oracle" meaning oral, out of God's mouth, the oracles of God came through the nation of Israel.

- 2.) Salvation is of the Jew

The next thing, if you want to put it down, you are going to find that salvation. John 4:22 says, "Salvation is of the Jew." God chose the nation of Israel above all other nations, not only to give the Word of God to the world, but to give salvation to the world. That is why what He was talking about with Abraham back there when He said, "In thee will all the nations of the earth be blessed." God brought it through the nation of Israel, and in fact, it was the nation of Israel that produced the seed of the woman that was the Lord Jesus Christ that brought salvation to this world.

- 3.) Eternity is built around Israel

Of course, when you get on a little bit later on in Isaiah chapter 9, Revelation chapter 21 and 22, you are going to find that eternity is built around the nation of Israel. He has got everything set up. So when the Jew asks the question, "What is the advantage?" it is not the question that the

Jew is better. The Jew is not better, but the Jew is different, and it forces us to look at those three people groups that you can better understand what God is doing.

In eternity, the job of the nation of Israel, and I am not going to get into this this morning because it will take us until next Sunday to get it all laid out, but in eternity, the job for the nation of Israel is not the same as the job of the Church. The job of the Church is not the same as the job of the Gentiles, nor the job of the nation of Israel. In eternity, all three of them have three distinctly different functions, and they are completely separate, yet they come together much like this church. We have 150 individual personalities, people, temperaments, and everything that goes along with it. But the Church is supposed to blend into one in Christ.

In eternity, you are going to have the Jew, the Gentile, and the Church, three different identities, but they are all going to be one in God's kingdom. But it comes through the nation of Israel. So when somebody asks the question there, "What advantage has the Jew?" if there is any advantage at all, and this advantage, as I said, does not make them better, but it helps you understand the difference of why God chose the nation of Israel. Very frankly, why God is putting up with the nation of Israel right now.

Let me just say this to you so I will give you the whole picture. You look at God calling out the nation of Israel, and God calls out the nation of Israel, and God brings them out and takes care of them. He does everything He is supposed to do. Then in the Bible, in the Book of Hosea, you are going to find that Israel, she goes after other gods. She gets into Baal worship. So all the things that are out there, and God takes that and uses the example of a man and a woman that are married, and a woman steps out on her husband and goes out with another man. Therefore, what happened was this: God, the Bible says, put Israel away. In other words, gave her a bill of divorcement. God separated Himself from the nation of Israel, much like we have many times in a marriage where they get separated, and it unfortunately leads to divorce.

In this case, even though God is separated from the nation of Israel, God also understands the number one theme of the Bible in everything that we do is restoration. So God, at some point, is going to restore the nation of Israel back to Himself. That is what happens when Israel goes through the Tribulation period. Right now, the nation of Israel has no consciousness of God in the biblical sense. It is going to take going through the most horrendous time in the history of this planet to wake them up, much like some of God's people. Some of you are saved on your way to heaven, and many of God's people are saved on their way to heaven, and many of God's people get so far out of touch with God. The only way God can ring their bell is to literally come down and ding-dong, ring their bell. It is that kind of wake-up call that many of us have to have that we get our act together.

Think of that same process with a nation. God comes down and rings your bell because you are His bride. He does not want you hanging out with something or somebody else. God comes down and rings Israel's bell because she is His wife, and He wants her restored. So once Israel goes through that terrible period of time called the Tribulation period for seven years, then God restores the nation of Israel. Christ gets His Bride, and like every nice story, then we live happily ever after. It is a love story come true. Of course, that is what is taking place here. So what you

are seeing here, and you need to understand, is that there is no advantage in the sense of being better, but an advantage in the sense of what God is doing with the different people groups. That is a great doctrine unto itself.

SEC: Analysis of Question 2: The Effect of Unbelief (Romans 3:3-4)

Let us look at question number two then. I like this one. This second question is really simple. It basically is asking this: If somebody quits believing in God or the Bible, does that change anything? I love this. People have the wildest imagination. They get bigger than themselves sometimes. A guy said to me one time, "I do not believe the Bible anymore." Like that changed anything. Like God was saying, "Oh no, now what are we going to do? Oh, so-and-so does not believe the Bible anymore." God could not care less whether you do or you do not. It is your choice to take that position if that is what you want. I would not recommend the choice, but it is your choice.

The Bible is absolute. Always has been, always will be. Thank God the Bible does not take me or you believing it for it to work. God gave it as an absolute book. The Bible is the anvil that all the hammers of religion have been broken on. All the hammers down through history of philosophy. All the hammers of all the religions. All the hammers of science have been pounded on and broken on that anvil: the Word of God. It is the absolute truth of God, and it stands, it stands, and it will always stand.

Men said some time, "Well, I do not believe it anymore." Like it meant something. Back in the 1800s, we had when the great German minds had destroyed everything in Europe after the Reformation. By 1800, Europe had raised up what we know today as the humanists, the great humanists, David Hume and Voltaire and all these great guys. It was around the middle of the late 1800s that a guy by the name of a good old German guy by the name of Friedrich Nietzsche, he gave a great declaration to the world. When he got up in front of all the great humanists and all the great minds and all the great German rationalists that had literally taken God from Europe and the Bible out of people's hands. That is why Europe is the way it is today. Europe is absolutely amoral. It has got the biggest churches in the world. Some of those churches are bigger than three or four football fields, been built in 900 AD, and yet on Sunday morning, three people will be in that place. They are museums. Nobody goes to church in Europe. Nobody believes in God in Europe anymore. Europe is amoral, and it is because of what happened when they let the Bible be out of their hands, and guys, the great minds, gave a humanistic philosophy, much like what is happening in America. America runs about 100 years behind Europe.

Friedrich Nietzsche got up. One of his great meetings came to the pulpit, and everybody was all excited about the great Nietzsche and what he had to say, how he was going to tell them all the great truths of the human mind. Nietzsche got up and made one of the greatest statements in the history of the world. He got up and he declared to everybody in that place that God had died. "God was dead," he said. The place applauded and cheered, and the crowd was high. He got up like he said some great statement. He got up there and he made the declaration that based on his analysis, based on his investigation, based on his reason and intelligence, that he was coming to the known world and telling everybody, "Hey folks, God is dead."

I bet up in heaven they just about split a gut. I bet you when he got up, when that thing resounded up there, I bet you, Michael the Archangel, the angel looking over there, hanging out, checking that thing out, witnessing, and then Nietzsche comes up to the podium and he says, "Come here guys, come here." I mean, here He is on the throne. The Ancient of Days, the eyes of a burning fire, the One that has spent all through the time that no man on earth, no army, no nation, no government could ever stand before Him. He split the Red Sea. He stopped the sun in Joshua and all the things that He did. Now Nietzsche steps up, and this is where in the Bible it says there was silence in heaven in the space of a half an hour. Heaven was quiet, and this little pipsqueak with a PhD, the post-hole digger. He took his education and piled it higher and deeper. Finally gave him a PhD, piled higher and deeper, PhD for you slow folks. He comes up to that podium with all the assembled, with God on the throne and everybody singing hallelujah, everybody praising God, and God, the great power of the universe. This little pipsqueak comes up to the podium and says, "God is dead." I bet you heaven just went into a spasm. I bet you there were angels throwing their crowns up in the light years ahead and hanging off the banners of the heavens, just splitting a gut that a little pipsqueak guy had come to the conclusion that God had died. And there He is sitting on the throne. Boy, Nietzsche is going to get a revelation of the Great White Throne Judgment.

The story goes, I do not know if it is true or not. Back that time there were a lot of radical Christians. Although we are in a Baptist and some of those Baptists, we are pretty radical. So he goes at some point in his life, Nietzsche died. They buried him down there in the cemetery. A couple of his pious friends came out about two or three days later to put some flowers on his grave. Some, and I believe it was probably some old Bible-believing Baptist, he got over there with a paintbrush and he wrote on that tombstone, "Nietzsche is dead, signed God."

The second question, "For what if some do not believe?" So what? Back in the 80s, a little charismatic song, they can never get it exactly right. It is all based on how they feel. A little song that everybody was saying had a great time. It went like this: "God said it, I believe it. That settles it for me." Let me tell you something. God said it. That settles it. It does not matter whether you believe it or not. Take that verse out of your song. What do you mean? Because you believe it, that settles it. The fact that God said it, it is all that matters. You and I believing does not change the impact of that absolute book. We get the blessings when we do. But it is your choice.

Then Romans 3:4, this is my favorite verse in the Bible. "God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar." There it is. Let God be true, but every man a liar. I do not believe anything anybody tells me unless it bases to that book. That is why when you believe the book is your final authority, then the book becomes your final authority. We have a lot of lip service with God's people today about God and the Bible. "Well, I believe the Bible is the final authority." Yes? You just cannot go anywhere in it to find out how to make it authoritative when you hear something you do not understand. You have the head knowledge, but you do not understand how to use it the way God intended for it to be used.

Let me tell you something. That book will answer every question you find yourself in, in any situation you have in life. The principles are there. We are a bunch of Baptist Charismatics. We

get a problem, so we pray to God, "Oh God, deliver me from this problem. Help me with this. I will do better." Then we go down the road, and what we expect, we expect an F-84 from Whiteman Air Force Base to fly over there, go into the Royals game for the Star Spangled Banner, and God to take over the controls. Hit His smoke burners and then write in the sky, "Dear Bob, here is my answer." That is not how God does it. God answers you through this book. No other way. Now He may use other people in your life to get you to the book, but at the end of the day, if it is not in here, you are wasting your time. You can say it is the absolute authority of your life. We just do not live our lives and use it like we believe it.

You know why we do not in most cases? Because we really do not want to hear what it says anyhow. We just want to whine because of the problems we are in. We do not want to fix them. We do not want to change it. Oh no, we may have to make too many hard-line decisions. We just want to whine about it. God, come down and fix it and then do what we want to do. I have said for years and years and years, everybody looks at the Bible, and it is like a menu at a restaurant. You go in and pick what you want, pick what you are hungry for, and then tell the waiter, "Bring me this food." That is what we do with the Bible. We look at the Bible like we look at a Cabela's magazine. Get it in the mail, you go through it, and then you order what you want.

I am going to tell you something. The closest thing you will ever get to understand the Bible is going down to the City Union Mission. The closest you will ever get of understanding how this book works is going down to the City Union Mission. How does that help me figure out? They do not get to pick what they eat. They walk in there, they are not going around and saying, "What would you like to have today? What would you like to have? Would you like your toast toasted? What would you like to have?" They have one thing, and it is not very good. They probably feed them for 35 cents a person. We might start eating there on Sundays ourselves when we go down there. That is almost a quarter of a gallon of gas. You walk down there, they do not get to pick. Somebody in the back is fixing what they are going to eat. Now, you sit down there, "Are you hungry?" "Yes, I am." "Here is some food." "Well, that is not what I want." "Are you hungry?" "Yes, I am." "Here is the food." "Well, can I have my..." "Are you hungry?" "Yes, I am." "Then there is the food. Eat it or do not eat it." That is the greatest example you have of the Bible, except it is got a lot better food. You do not get to pick and choose on this menu what you want.

When I go certain places, I always ask them a question: "Are your french fries seasoned?" I hate seasoned french fries. I know there is a verse in the Bible someplace that says, "Thou shalt not eat seasoned." Why do you want to take good french fries and put seasoning on them? What are you trying to prove? I will ask them, "Are these french fries seasoned?" "Yes, they are." "Could you leave them off?" "Yes, we will." "Thank you." "By the way, your tip depends on whether they are off or not." Now, I have that right at Shoney's or I have that right at Applebee's or I have that right wherever you go to eat, Fuddruckers, wherever. You do not have that right. The fries are seasoned here. The seasoning is put on there, but it is not seasoned. The seasoning is put on there for your benefit. You say, "Whoa, that is hot." You need hot. "What? Burn my mouth." Well, some of the things you have been saying are burning God's ears, how about it? See how it works?

I love this verse: "Let God be true, but every man a liar." Read the next verse. The next verse is great. "As it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged." You know where that is from? That is from Psalms 51:4. You know what that thing is saying? It is saying that "thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged." You know what that is saying? That is saying all you smart intellectual people that think God is dead or you are smarter than God, or you have got the answer. You know what it is saying? When you are judged at the Great White Throne Judgment, God is going to give you your chance to show everybody in the universe how smart, smarter you are than God.

We think the Great White Throne Judgment, we talked about this Thursday night, we think the Great White Throne Judgment is just where somebody comes up and they have got a big lever up there, when you push the lever and you are down, they go, "Oh no, no, no, no, no." No, all your life you have been shooting your mouth off about how much you know more about it than God does. All your life you have been blowing hot air about God is this, God is that, and this is not the way to do it, and God is this, and God is that, and religion is this, and Christianity is this. At the Great White Throne Judgment, you are going to get to prove your point. What a day that is going to be.

I told you in the Bible Thursday night that there are four laughs in the Bible. There is a laughter of sinful merriment. There is a laughter of skepticism. There is a laughter in the Bible for the victory of the Christian. And then there is a laughter of God. The Bible makes it very clear that the Great White Throne Judgment is the last laugh, and we all know the phrase, "He who laughs last, laughs best." You who laughed at God and made fun of God all your life, He is going to return the favor. You are going to give Him your shot. He is just not going to come up there and dump you off without you putting out the hot air. He is going to let you stand there. "You have all the time in the world. It is eternity now. Nobody is in a hurry. You can lay out everything you wanted to say. Prove your thesis that God is dead. Prove your thesis that that Bible is worthless. Prove your thesis that your lifestyle is better than what God had for you." Get your shot at it. You better study Zechariah chapter 3, verses 1 through 5, before you do. That is not called the Great White Throne Judgment for nothing. It is a courtroom. It is a courtroom. You are going to stand before the judge at a great white throne, and you are going to be your own eternity. Up against you is going to be a prosecuting attorney that is the most absolute mind the world has ever seen, Satan himself. Read it over there. Read it in Zechariah chapter 3, the picture of somebody coming up before God with filthy rags on him, and Satan standing at his right hand to persecute him and to accuse him. Why do you think he is called the accuser of the brethren? You are going to be up against not only God, but you are going to be up against a man who used you, that you yielded yourself to, that knows everything about you, that knew every motive about you. When you try to open your mouth and justify yourself, he is going to open his book, and he is going to nail your hide. At the end of that court, you are going to have nothing to say. You are going to say, "So be it." And down the hill you go. The last thing you are going to hear as you tumble down to that lake of fire is a roaring laughter of a hundred billion saints with the voice of Almighty God. You know why? Because he who laughs last, laughs best. Have at it. He is

coming. When He shows up, He is going to come like a hungry giant coming home for lunch. He is going to tear this place apart.

SEC: Analysis of Question 3: Slander and God's Judgment (Romans 3:5-8)

Question number three. Here we get into some good stuff here. Let me read Romans 3:5-9 again.

Romans 3:5-8

But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man)

God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?

For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?

And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just.

Here is the situation here. The key to understanding this third set of questions is found in Romans 3:8, the next verse. "And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,)" This next question has to do with an accusation that has come up against Paul. It is a slander. Slander is when somebody says you said something you did not say. Or slander is when somebody wants to slander your character, take half-truths, take the truth, take no truth, and build a premise around it.

Let me just stop here for a minute. We have some young men and young ladies that, certainly in years to come, will, if not here, certainly someplace else, be involved in ministry to the place where you will head up maybe a ministry here, or you will be responsible for preaching up here or teaching at some point. You are working with people right now; that is only going to get better as time goes on. But let me just say this to you. If you are ever contemplating going into the ministry, if you are ever contemplating where someday you want to be in charge of people, you need to write it down someplace right now and just keep it someplace close to you. Put it in your wallet. Put it someplace. But mark this down: If you are ever going to preach the Bible, you will be slandered. It is just a matter of time when.

Paul faced it all of his time. He is over there when he writes to the church at Corinth, who was in a big mess. He gets them all straightened out, and he starts to help them, and then in the church at Corinth, there are some people who do not appreciate what Paul is doing, and they try to slander him. He makes reference to it all the time about somebody teaching, taking his teaching or false teaching or lying about what he is saying. I am going to tell you, as long as there will be time and as long as there will be human beings, and as long as there is absolute truth, the devil is going to use people to slander the truth. That is one of the ways he works. It is just that simple.

Now, you do not need to get mad about it. You do not need to, when it happens, you do not need to get frustrated about it. I have learned over the years, the greatest defense against slander, ladies and gentlemen, is the truth. What do you care what somebody says you said or you did not

say, or a half-truth of what you said, because it goes back to that old concept that I have told you, when nothing else tells, time tells. It is just that simple.

There is a guy running around town here. I do not ever see him anymore, but he came to one Bible study years ago, and somebody asked a question on abortion. I laid the question out from the Bible standpoint and took that thing through the Bible and laid it all out. Ever since that night, that guy has been going around this town, and everybody he runs into that knows me, he says, "Oh, your pastor teaches that it is okay to get an abortion." That is not what I said that night. That has been shown 15, 20 years ago. It was about six months ago, a couple was coming over, and he goes to their church now. He said, "Well, this guy found out that you, we were going over you. He just railed on you, railed on you about your terrible teaching on abortion and all that stuff." I said, "You know what you need to tell him to do? Tell him to come on over next Thursday night. I will give him the first half hour. I will not interrupt him. Give him a free board. I will give him the first half hour. No, I will give him the first 40 minutes. If I tell my people, we will extend that thing for three hours that night. I will give him an hour and a half. I will give him an hour and a half, then I will take a second hour and a half. I guarantee you, at the end of that night, there will not be anybody's mind who knows what they are talking about when it comes to the book. I guarantee you, go back and tell him that." He went back and told him that. That has been six months ago. Has anybody seen him on Thursday night? If I was out there after somebody was teaching heresy the other night, told him it did, and then somebody offered me the same deal, I would be there with bells on.

Somebody says to me, "Well, I am a predestination guy. I believe in Calvinism," or "I am a Jehovah's Witness," or "I am an atheist." "Why do not you come to our Bible study, and I will give you..." I would be there so fast your head would swim. That guy, if you gave him a Bible, he could not show you the definitive verse on where life starts and the definitive verse on where life ends if his life depended on it. You give him a Bible and open it up, he would be like a blind bat backing in backwards. I love my favorite new expression: he would not know the truth if I crawled up in his lap and called him Mama.

The book stands for itself. People are going to slander you. That is the way it goes. You can probably go back there or get Jan. Jan, how many years of my material do you have on tape? 88. How many years was that? That is nine years ago. Oh no, that is not right. You were born in 88? Oh, that makes us feel old. She was born in 88. My wife goes back farther than that. She is in 87. You go back 30 years on me. Pull out what I was preaching back then. If you find anything different, I may know it better now. You find one thing that I preached different now than I had 30 years ago, I will buy you the biggest steak in this town. You know why I can say that? Because you will not find it. I may preach it better. I believe now what I believed the day I got saved. Because the men that taught me were men who knew doctrine. They taught me right. My job was to teach you right. Some little whimsical pipsqueak comes around and says, "Well, this or this or this or that." All right, come on, big boy, put your guns on. It is that simple. Do not shoot your mouth off. Here I am. Come get some of me. It will be the worst day of your life when it comes to the Word of God.

A guy said to me one time, "Well, you think you know the Bible better than anybody in the world?" I said, "No, that is not true. But I do know it better than you do." "You do not think so? Come on." It is that simple. But get used to it. It is going to happen. You cannot let it get you off track. You cannot let it worry you. If you have got the truth, that takes care of it. Truth always takes care of it. Simple as that.

Paul is being slandered. That is the approach Paul took. The approach Paul took was the fact that he never got upset about it. He comes down through there, and he simply says, "That is not true." Now, here is what they are saying. They have twisted what he said. Look at Romans 3:7: "If the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?" Look at Romans 3:5: "But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance?"

In other words, he is saying this, and we know this is true: God gets honor and glory out of everything. If you are out of fellowship this morning and you are not living right, God is going to get the honor and glory out of that one way or the other. Now, He would prefer to get the honor and glory out of you living right. But He demands, because of who He is, He demands the honor and glory of everything on planet earth. It is His creation. He made it. There is no other God like Him. He demands honor and glory from everything He created. He will get it from you or me one way or the other.

This guy is saying this. He is saying, "Hey, if my lie, if my ungodliness, if God gets the honor and glory out of that, then how is God going to judge me someday if He got honor and glory out of my sin?" See what they are saying? That is what they are coming at. Somebody is twisting his teaching and saying, "If God gets honor and glory out of everything and my unrighteousness, He gets honor and glory out of that because it lends itself to Him." Well, that is what he says. Romans 3:6 says, "Then how shall God judge the world?" Romans 3:8 says, "Let us do evil, that good may come." People are always trying to get around the thing, are they not?

I had a guy one time, a smart kid, educated beyond his intelligence. He said to me years ago, he came to a Bible study and he came back and came in to see me, and he says, "Well, I have a question for you." He says, "I am an unsaved man." I said, "Well, I am sorry about that. I hope someday you get saved." He said, "Well, I do not think I am going to get saved." I said, "Well, I am sorry to hear that." He says, "Yeah, you want to know why?" I said, "Not particularly, but if you want to tell me, go ahead." He said, "Well, let me ask you a question then." He said, "Now this is a philosophical question." I said, "Oh, that will be good. That always fits in well with the Bible." He said, "Did God allow sin to come into the world? Yes or no?" I said, "Yes." "Then basically, God is responsible for sin coming into the world? Yes or no?" He was really big in this yes or no stuff. He did not have to tell me. I knew the answer. "Yes." He said, "Well, let me ask you a question then. If God allowed sin to come into the world and God permitted sin to come into the world, and I was born a sinner after God allowed sin to come into the world, why do I have to get saved? How is a righteous God who always does right going to judge me a sinner when He made me a sinner in the first place by allowing sin to come in?" I said, "Oh, I thought you had a tough one to ask me. That is really easy. But you are not going to like the answer. The same God that allowed sin to come into the world and did bring sin in is the same God that came

down Himself and paid the price to take it out, therefore, exonerating Himself of any responsibility. Your move." You know where his move was? Up and out. They are coming to the point where they are accusing Paul. They are slandering Paul.

Proverbs 13:13

Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed: but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded.

The answer to this is really simple.

3. God demands honor and glory from all His creation.

Do you ever notice about all the things that God creates? Do you ever notice that everything God created obeys what God tells them to do? Do you ever notice animals leaving other animals of their species to mate out of species with another animal? Do you ever notice a mother dog that ever just abandoned her little puppy dogs unless there was some circumstance that she had no... But in a natural sense, that is not the way it works. Everything, even the wind, even the sea, obeyed His voice. In all of God's creation, the only thing that ceases to obey God in every turn of events is you and me. God has everything else obey Him because He gets the honor and the glory out of everything that He created. The person who asked this question has not understood the great principles taught in 2 Timothy chapter 2 and a little bit later on in Romans chapter 9.

2 Timothy 2:20-21

But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour.

If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

Romans 9:17-21

For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.

Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?

Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?

Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another vessel unto dishonour?

You know what it is saying? It is saying the second thing you better understand, that God has vessels of honor and God has vessels of dishonor.

4. You get to choose which one you are going to be.

He comes down there in Romans 9, he is talking about Pharaoh. What a great example. Somebody says, "Well, God hardened Pharaoh's heart." The Bible says, you better read the Bible. The Bible says, God hardened Pharaoh's heart five times before the Bible says, God hardened Pharaoh's heart. The Bible says Pharaoh hardened his heart. You know what God did? He just took the hardened heart Pharaoh already had and used it. You know why? Because there are vessels of honor and vessels of dishonor. You know what he said? He says, "For the Pharaoh, for the same reason have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee." Well, Pharaoh was against the children of Israel all day long. Never did he relent. At the end, he tried to wipe them out and finally got killed in the Red Sea.

You know what God did? He said, "I want you to have in a big house, there are vessels of honor and there are vessels of dishonor. There are some of silver and gold and there are some of wooden clay. You get to choose." Pharaoh went out there and tried to stop God's plan. What a hero Pharaoh would have been if he had stepped up there and said, "Let my people go." I think there are some great, great chances in history where men could have stood up and said the right thing if they had the courage that it would have just shocked and changed the course of history. How about old Pilate, Pontius Pilate? When he brought Christ out there before the judgment and he brought Him out there and he said, "Shall I crucify your king?" What if old Pilate would have walked out there and took his royal robe off, put it on Christ, took his miter off and put it on His head, looked at that howling crowd of Jews and said, "There is your king, crucify me." There would be more books written about him than anybody in the history of the world. He was in the right place to do the right thing, to be a vessel of honor, and he chose to be a vessel of dishonor.

Pharaoh down there would not let them go. Pharaoh should have stood up and said, "They are God's people, we are wrong, they are right, give them everything they want. Let us help them on their way." He could not do it. God would have got honor and glory out of that, but he did not do it. He tried to stiffen his heart and harden his head and give all those things against God. Finally God got the honor and glory anyhow. When God drowned them out, brought all those plagues to finally go across the Red Sea, God drowns them all out. You realize that they are going down through their next 40 years of wandering down there. There are nations that were against God. There are nations that hated God, hated God's people. When they come up to their borders, their king came out and said, "Hey, you Israelites, you are the ones that come out of Pharaoh in Egypt?" "Yes, that is right." "Come on through. Anything you need?" Moses and Joshua said, "Well, are we going to fight?" He said, "No, sir. I heard what your God did to Pharaoh. I do not want your God messing with me. I do not believe Him. Do not want anything to do with Him, but I do not want Him doing anything with me either. You are His people? I saw. We heard what He did to Pharaoh. Mine is yours. Come on through." God got the honor and glory. He always does. He is going to get the honor and glory at everything in your life. You get to decide whether you are going to be a vessel of honor or a vessel of dishonor.

Somebody here is slandering Paul. They are turning around and saying, "Hey, if living an ungodly life, God has got honor and glory out of it. How is God going to judge me? How do I live my ungodly life, not change my ways? And God will..." No, you are wrong. God will judge you. He will judge you because anybody who despises the Word of God will be destroyed. He

will judge you because He is going to get honor and glory out of it one way or the other. But you get to choose. You get to choose. You get to choose.

You give your life to Him, and He will use it for His honor and glory. You keep it for yourself, and He will whack you as an object lesson, and everybody will know, "Do not go where that kid went." There is a lot of grace today. I told somebody in the last Ruth class we had, I told someone the story how years ago, a kid came in to see me, a nice, sharp kid. For me, he was not going to do what was right with God. He got messed up in the world, and he came in to tell me that he would not come back to church. I tried to reason with him, and he said, "You know what?" He said, "I do not need it." I tried to tell him, and one of the things he said to me shocked me, and it bothered me for a long time. He said, "You know what? I tried to say, 'God is not going to let you get away with this.'" He said, "Oh, Bob, come on." He said, "I know people in your church, I hang out with them right now that are living like hell, and they are saved people. And they get away with it. I will get away with it." Now, how would you like to have that blood on your hand at the Judgment Seat of Christ?

About six months later, down in the Lake of the Ozarks, water skiing, having a great time, probably had too many beers to drink. The guy driving the boat had too many beers, got him going too fast, cut too short, went into one of those shadow areas, flipped over in an area that had a stump about that under the water, and God just crushed his cranium on a big stump. I preached his funeral. You know what I told them? I said, "There is a great object lesson before you here today, boys and girls." It was not a popular funeral. I do not preach funerals unless I can tell the truth. All this kumbaya stuff, holding hands, saying, "Well, so-and-so is a great person," and we know that they, we all know they are living like hell. I cannot go there. I have been asked to preach funerals, and I cannot do it. I just have to pass on it. I said, "Pay the funeral home 150 bucks, have some guy come in and do everything you wanted to do." I cannot do that. I get up there, and I told his mom and dad before I preached, "This is what I am going to do." They said, "You know what? If somebody else gets spared by this because of his life and what he did, then do it." You know what? God got honor and glory out of that kid, but not the way God wanted to do it. You know what God does? A lot of grace, but sometimes God comes down and just picks somebody and whacks them and says, "They need an object lesson." That is what He does. You know why? Because I do not know who you think you are. He is the Potter. You are the clay. What are you telling Him what you are going to do? "Shall the thing formed tell Him that formed it where to come in and where to get out?" You are out of your mind. You do not get saved and just live your life the way you want to. There is a price tag that comes with that. God is going to get honor and glory out of your life one way or the other, but you get to choose how it happens.

I preached it. I told them. I said, "This kid right here, bless his heart, I love him. I won him to Christ. I am the one who won him to Christ. I am the one who preached at his funeral. I brought him into this world spiritually. Now I am going to send him out spiritually. I want to be honest with you. He did not have to be here today. He chose that route." I told them the whole story. The place was crying, people weeping, people hanging all over the place. About nine kids got saved that day. You know what? God got honor and glory out of his life. But it was the hard way. You

want to go that way? I must confess, I am not sure it is worth it when you do that. But it is hard, however the dice roll.

You better learn three things about God. He is omnipresent. That means He is everywhere. He is omniscient. That means He is all-knowing. He is omnipotent. That means He is all-powerful. He is worthy of all the honor and the glory that we can give Him. The greatest joke that the devil ever played on the world is for God's people to think they can get saved and live their life the way they want to live it. The greatest joke, and it is evident of what Paul is dealing with here. Somebody is doing exactly in his day what God's people do today. They are listening what the man says. The man preached the truth. And then they slander what he says, change what he says, because they have got their own personal agenda, and they want to make him the price tag so they can do what they want to do. Well, you may slander Paul, and you might slander me, but there is one bigger than both of us that you will not slander: God. He who laughs last, laughs best.

Philippians 2:10-12

That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

You know what that verse means? "Work out your own salvation." It means after you get saved, you have to decide: vessel of honor or vessel of dishonor, you work it out. I have already worked out mine. It is not talking about working out to get saved. It means after you are saved, you work out. You decide. You and God, you come to that time when Him and life and you are between you and Him where you say, "I am going to do what You want me to do," or "I am going to do what I want to do." It does not matter. You know why God does not get upset about that? You know why we get upset much more about it than God does? You know why God, you never see God in a panic that way? Because first of all, God allows you to choose. No, I am not saying you do not grieve Him. I am not saying He does not want you to do what is right. But let us face it, at the end of the day, He let them take whatever fruit they wanted off that tree. He did not stop and say, "Oh, time out, you are being deceived." No, He told them what they were to do and not to do, and that is where He left it. He has told you what you should do, how you should live, and that is where He leaves it. You know why? Because He is going to get honor and glory out of it either way.

You read that verse in Philippians 2, did you see what it said? I know the idea is you think you can get saved and live your life the way you want to. That is whoever Paul is dealing with here. There is an element there that are slandering his teaching, saying, "Well, Paul, if He gets honor and glory out of everything, then why do I have to do what is right? I will just let Him get honor and glory out of my sin and just keep on having a good old time." The answer is, you do not want God getting that kind of glory out of your life. That verse says, "That at the name of Jesus

every knee should bow, of things in heaven, things in the earth, things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

You better learn one thing today and one thing well. Because somebody gets the idea that it is a matter of whether you will or whether you will not accept Him as your Lord. I am not talking about salvation now. I am talking about after you are saved. That is what Philippians 2 is talking about. He needs to be Lord of your life. He wants to get honor and glory. He wants you to be a vessel of honor, not a vessel of dishonor, but it is your choice. But if you think for a split second that you are not going to bow your knee and confess your tongue and make Him Lord of your life, you are dead wrong. You will either do it now under a love and a grace where He can use you as a vessel of honor, or you will do it then when you lose everything and God has to take you home or wherever He whacks you, but you will do it one place or the other. It is not a matter of whether you will or you will not. You will. You want to stiffen your neck. You want to make your back strong, and you think you can go against Him. I tried that route for the first 19 years of my life. As a 20, 21-year-old man, as tough as I was, as I thought I was, and everything I had going on in my life, I just bowed that knee and I bowed that head and I confessed that Jesus Christ would be my Lord. You know what reality I came to? If I did not do it then, I was going to do it over there. But I was going to do it one way or the other. I opted to take Him as a God of love, not as a God of wrath. I opted to take Him as a God that I could serve. I wanted to be used as unworthy as I am, and as many times did I fail Him. I want to be and wanted to be and still want to be a vessel of honor.

Some of God's people, you are just hell-bent on being a vessel of dishonor. You think you are going to cut out. You think you are going to escape it. You think you are going to sidestep it. You think you are the exception to the rule. You think because God does not come down and whack you now that you skated. He lost your name off His clipboard, did He? You slipped through the cracks, did you? You think when you get to the Judgment Seat of Christ, you just say, "Everybody is going to be there. There is going to be so many people." You just kind of go like this and go on in. Are you insane? We get the idea because God does not come down and whack us today. We made it. You have not made nothing. That Bible says that every knee will bend. Every tongue will confess. Every head will bow. You are going to accept Him as the Lord of your life either now, as a vessel of honor, or in that day as a vessel of dishonor. But you will do it. That is what you have in this third question.

Christians, people are always the same. It never changes. You had people back there trying to slander what Paul was saying so they could do what they want to do, justify themselves, put it off on him. People walking around saying, "Well, how is God going to judge me? I will just live like hell, do what I want to do. How is the righteous God going to judge me?" He will judge you. He will judge you because this book is absolute. At the end of the day, when you hear everybody out there that tells you what they want to tell you, and you are stupid enough to believe it, let me just give you a little bit of advice. At the end of the day, "Let God be true, but every man a liar." Just stick with that. Somebody teaches you or tries to get you to believe something in this book, you need to go drop-kicking through the goalposts of life. Stand for truth. That is the job of the Church. Stand for truth. God's people are weak today. They are afraid today.

An unsaved man, Edmund Burke, back in the 1800s, early 1900s, made one of the greatest statements that an unsaved man ever made that fits into the Bible. He says, "All it takes for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing." That is as true a statement as there ever was. It is all it takes. All it takes is for God's people to get complacent, lose their militancy. The book is absolute. "Let God be true, but every man a liar."

SEC: Conclusion: All Are Under Sin

Finally in Romans 3:9, he says this: "What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin." Paul just answered three of the questions of the arguments that have come up once he laid out the Jew and the Gentile. It is obvious that back then, just like today, there are people that understand what God was doing. The Jews are not better, they are just different. What does it matter that if somebody leaves this church and says, "I do not believe it anymore?" Let me tell you something. "Let God be true, but every man a liar." This church either stands on the book or it does not. Let me tell you something. You have an inkling, you have an inkling, even an itchy twitchy that I am not teaching that book the way it needs to be, do two things. First, come over, sit down and show me where I am wrong. Second of all, if I am wrong, get out of here so fast you would not know what hit you. That is my advice to you. That is the bottom line. The book is the book. It is what it is. God wants you to be a vessel of honor, not a vessel of dishonor.

Paul just answered all the arguments. Now he has set the scene for understanding the great New Testament doctrine and principle about God's righteousness. He showed us that the Jews are all messed up. The Gentiles are all messed up. He showed us that following the law, following your conscience, fails to solve that mess. He has went through the Jews and showed them how their self-righteousness does not cut anything with God. Now he has answered the arguments before he gets into the doctrine of what people were bringing up and trying to twist the teaching or legitimate things that they were asking because they did not understand how it all laid out. Acts is a book that brings you through and it brings you into Romans. Now you are on bedrock, and he is teaching the New Testament doctrine that is going to make the Church what it is.

I suggest you do this: outline these first nine verses through those three sets of questions. You do not have to get in all the illustrations and the things that I put in there. Condense it down that you understand and break this tough passage down. It was tough when I read it. See how easy it is when you just start to take it apart. You look at that tough passage, you say, "I have nine verses, nine verses, and it does not make any sense to me, nine verses." Then you start to see, "Whoa, there is a set of questions here, a different set of questions here, a different set of questions here." Break it down. Look at Romans 3:1, "What then?" No, it is going on to what he said in the last chapter. Get it into context, break it down. Now you have the basic stuff now to go down and put those things in and break that thing down into those three sets of questions that Romans chapter three, one of the toughest passages in the Bible as far as the read, should have your answers. Next week we will get into the next section of it and go on down through here, and we will get into another great doctrine.