

“Grace & Peace to You”

A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF ROMANS

Voice of China and Asia

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ROMANS-14 WHERE DO WE STAND? – PT1

In our previous Lesson we studied the phrase, “*the righteousness of God.*” In that context Paul is not referring to an element of God’s “*character*” but to the “*activity by which He has made a way for ‘mankind’ to be made righteous.*” Righteousness is the result of God having judged the individuals and brought them into “*right-standing*” with Him. HE made them “*Just / Justified.*” And the way He has accomplished this is through the operation of “*faith...*” (ROM 1:17)

- Believing His Word / His Promise to Save...
- Believing in His “Way” to Salvation ...
- Believing in His Son, Jesus Christ and His Death, and Resurrection.

God’s “*Way of Righteousness*” has been declared from the beginning... **It Has NOT Been Secret.** In fact, EVERY *religion, philosophy,* and every “*man-made way*” to avoid it **leads to FAILURE.**

GOD’S ETERNAL WITNESS:

PSALM 19:1 *The Heavens declare the glory of God, and the Sky above proclaims his handiwork.*

JER 5:21 20 *Declare this in the house of Jacob; proclaim it in Judah:*

²¹ *“Hear this, O foolish and senseless people, who have eyes, but see not, who have ears, but hear not.*

²² *“Do you not fear me?” declares the LORD. “Do you not tremble before me?”*

I placed the sand as the boundary for the sea, a perpetual barrier that it cannot pass; though the waves toss, they cannot prevail; though they roar, they cannot pass over it.

²³ *But this people has a stubborn and rebellious heart; they have turned aside and gone away. ²⁴ They do not say in their hearts, “Let us fear the LORD our God... who gives the rain in its season, the autumn rain and the spring rain, and keeps for us the weeks appointed for the harvest.”*

ROM 2:14-15 *For when Gentiles, who do not have THE LAW, by nature do what THE LAW requires, they are “A LAW” to themselves, even though they do not have THE LAW. ¹⁵ They show that the work of THE LAW is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them...*

ACTS 14:15-17 *“Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men, of like nature with you, and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them. ¹⁶ In past generations he allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways. ¹⁷ Yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.”*

ACTS 17:24-27 The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, ²⁵ nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. ²⁶ And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, ²⁷ that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us...

JER 23:23-24 “Am I a God at hand, declares the LORD, and not a God far away? ²⁴ Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the LORD. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the LORD.

ECC 3:11 He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, He has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.

'Eternity', fits the context perfectly, for this whole passage has been concerned with God's scheme of 'times'. Yet HIS actions endure forever (14). The **"eternity in man's heart"** must be connected with the **'eternity'** of v. 14. **'Eternity'** was important in Israel's heritage.

- An **ETERNAL LIFE** had been lost (GEN. 3:22),
- An **'Eternal Covenant'** inaugurated (GEN. 9:16)
- By an **Eternal God** (Ps. 90:2).
- An **Eternal Priesthood** (EXOD. 40:15) and
- An **Eternal Kingdom** (2 SAM. 7:13) were bestowed
- By a God **Eternally Merciful** (Ps. 111:5),
- Giving his people **Eternal Joy** (ISA. 35:10).

The **Eternity** of God's dealings with mankind corresponds to **something inside us: we have a capacity for eternal things, are concerned about the future, want to understand 'from the beginning to the end', and have a sense of something which transcends our 'temporal' situation.**

ROMANS-14 WHERE DO WE STAND? – PT2

THE PATH TO RIGHT STANDING WITH GOD...

This **"Eternal Longing"** – that **"something" inside of us that seeks to be filled** – is the **"spirit that God Breathed into every man and woman"** ... **BUT: it has been separated from God since the Fall.** It is what we often call, **"spiritual death."**

Paul presents that humanity has attempted to fill that **"emptiness"** by 4 major responses... trying to find **"Right-Standing with GOD."**

HEDONISM: I Don't Need It OR Want It... I Don't Even Care... I Am Enjoying MY WAY

ROM 1:18-32

Hedonism is a word derived from the Greek word, **"(h)edone** – **sensual pleasure, gratification, lustful desire – often translated "passions" but it is always of a physical desire to fill one's life with pleasure in order to distract from what is needed."**

JAMES 4:1-3 *What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your **passions** are at war within you? ² You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask.*

³ *You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your **passions**.*

LUKE 8:14 *And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and **pleasures** of life, and their fruit does not mature.*

In Paul's **LETTER TO THE ROMANS**, he introduces these **"4-paths to Right-Standing"** with the one which is an absolute rejection of God's **"revealed plan"** for restoring a relationship with God.

This path would be glaringly obvious to ANYONE in ROME ... **This WAS Roman Culture!**

AND every Temple to their 'gods' was a celebration of **"Hedonism."**

Paul states it fully in **ROM 1:18-32** but here is the **"heart of the matter."**

ROM 1:21-24 *For although **they** knew God, **they** did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but **they** became futile in their thinking, and **their** foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Claiming to be wise, **they** became fools, ²³ and **exchanged the glory of the immortal God** for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. ²⁴ **Therefore God gave them up...***

MORALISM: I Do Good Things... That's Enough... Surely God Knows I'm NOT Like THEM...

ROM 2:1-16

The **"Sin of Cain"** – **doing good is GOOD enough**. Moralism sits at the base of every "religion of man."

Moralists pride themselves with personal adherence to the rules THEY choose to be vital, and then look with disdain on any OTHER way.

They reject GOD'S demand for **"absolute adherence to HIS Holiness."** Then accepting "some" of God's revealed truth they make other rules by which THEY can live.

They willingly give ascent to SOME Biblical principles (and enforce them) but also change / adapt / re-interpret / omit / enhance others so that their "religion / philosophy is the MEASURE for all

They are viciously intolerant of ANY who oppose their "created religion"

Paul encountered this "PATH" often:

ACTS 14:8-18 Paul & Barnabas in Lystra

ACTS 16:16-24 Paul & Silas and girl with the spirit of divination

ACTS 17: 1-9 Paul & Silas "turning the world upside down"

ACTS 17:22-34 Paul and the Council of the Areopagus

ACTS 19:23-41 Paul and the riot in Ephesus over the 'goddess Artemis'

As Paul will expose in **CHAPTER 3:9-18** **"There is NO fear of God before their eyes (vs18)."**

THEIR 'god' matches their expectations, and the ones they consider "truly guilty" are those who do NOT accept their way... **especially those who claim that the Bible has revealed the only true way to God.**

ROM 2:1-4 *Therefore **you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things.** ² We know that the*

judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things.

³ *Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God?*

⁴ *Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?*