

“The Verdict”
Romans 3:9-20
Dr. Jerry Nelson

Ponder this carefully: We **exist** for the glory of God!

God said in Isaiah 43:7 “Everyone who is called by my name...I created for my glory.”

1 Corinthians 10:31 “Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

All other purposes in life must be subservient to that overarching purpose or those other purposes are idolatrous – they have usurped the place that belongs to God alone.

We easily become very human-centered in our thinking, as if humanity and earth were the center of the universe.

But before humanity or any other thing existed God had always been. And in the future, after all that we know is gone, only God and those he chooses will exist.

Yes there are some who theorize that matter is eternal - that it has always been and always will be.

But when Jesus rose from the dead he created credibility for himself that makes the theories of all others irrelevant.

And with that resurrection credibility Jesus corroborated a worldview that places God at the center of all.

So again I ask you to consider this carefully: We EXIST for the glory of God; humanity’s reason for existence is the glory of God!

A thousand years before Jesus was on earth, Isaiah reports God’s declaration: Isaiah 66:19-20 " I will send some (of my people) to the distant islands that have not heard of **my fame or seen my glory**. They will proclaim my glory among the nations. And they will bring all your brothers, from all the nations, to my holy mountain in Jerusalem...”

A thousand years later the Apostle John wrote what God revealed to him about that New Jerusalem that will appear at the end of time:

Revelation 21:22-23 “I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for **the glory of God** gives it light...”

The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 1:5 “Through Jesus and **for his name's sake (for his glory)**, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to **the obedience** that comes from faith.”

Called to live for the glory of God.

The Westminster catechism reflects this biblical worldview: The chief end of man, man’s **primary purpose** is to glorify God and to enjoy **him** forever.

In the book of *Romans* the Apostle Paul begins by setting forth the central theme of his letter to the church in Rome: Romans 1:16-17 “I am not ashamed of the gospel, because (the Gospel) is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed...”

Given that Paul has a worldview based on the Bible, it is no wonder then that he turns his attention quickly to **why** it is that salvation is needed.

In 1:18 Paul begins a long section explaining the human condition. Romans 1:18-20 “The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, ¹⁹ since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. ²⁰ For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.”

Paul declares that everyone, whether they have ever seen a Bible or not, whether they have ever heard of Jesus or not, has some knowledge of the glory, the worthiness, of God.

But what do all people do with that knowledge of God's glory? Romans 1:21-23 "For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools ²³ and **exchanged the glory of the immortal God** for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles."

Now as then they may worship stone images as in some cultures, or as in our culture they may worship and serve themselves.

But in all cases they don't live for the glory of God; they live for their own glory.

Romans 1:25 "They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator --who is forever praised. Amen."

The point is that they have violated the very person of God and have perverted the very purpose of God.

Although created in the image of God for the purpose of reflecting the glory of God AND "Although (verse 32) they know God's righteous decree that those who do (what ought not to be done) deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them."

In chapter 2 God's indictment extends beyond those who have never had the Scriptures to those who have.

In those verses Paul in essence says that not only is the **glory** of God not reflected in your lives but worse yet, Romans 2:24 "God's name is **blasphemed** among the Gentiles because of you."

Is it any wonder that "The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men...?"

A fatal malignancy pervades the human race and God must and will change it.

That's why Paul wrote in Romans 1:16-17 "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for

the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed..."

God is in the business of restoring his creation so that his glory may be reflected.

2 Corinthians 3:18 "We, who...reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord..."

But before telling us how that is possible Paul summarizes God's indictment of all people, Jew, Gentile, Pagan or religious.

Romans 3:9-20 "What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin.

¹⁰ As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; ¹¹ there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. ¹² All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." ¹³ "Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." "The poison of vipers is on their lips." ¹⁴ "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness." ¹⁵ "Their feet are swift to shed blood; ¹⁶ ruin and misery mark their ways, ¹⁷ and the way of peace they do not know." ¹⁸ "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

¹⁹ Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. ²⁰ Therefore no one will be declared righteous in (God's) sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

The indictment is here summarized in three English words: "all under sin."

The verses that follow (10-18) are Scriptural corroboration of this indictment.

But here in v9 the human condition is stated so succinctly: "all under sin."

In Galatians 3:22 Paul said it this way, "But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin..."

The Bible says that all people are under the influence of sin, they are captive to it, they are controlled by it and they operate in the sphere of sin.

We all want to believe that people are free not to sin, that they can do what is worthy of merit with God.

But remember anything or anyone is only as free as they are capable.

A fish is free but not free to fly.

You would, I'm certain, agree that God is completely free to act but yet you would quickly admit he is not free to sin.

In fact, he is unable to sin and yet we say he is free.

Conversely, humans, being "under sin" are able only to sin.

Later God will say through Paul, Romans 8:7-8 "the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, **nor can it do so**. Those controlled by the sinful nature **cannot please God.**"

Quoting from the OT Paul will make that point this way:

Romans 3:10-12 "As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."

We read those words and something inside of us says, "That's not true! I know people who do good."

Martin Luther correctly stated that **this entire passage must be understood from God's perspective rather than our own.**

This passage describes how God see us, not how we see ourselves or others. (Luther, *Lectures on Romans*, 86)

We compare ourselves to each other and declare ourselves good or bad.

God compares even our best deeds to himself and declares us guilty.

Isaiah 64:6 "all our **righteous acts** are like filthy rags."

The late James Boice, pastor of Tenth Presbyterian in Philadelphia, tells the apocryphal story of soldiers in a prison camp who barter for food and other things.

One day a package arrives with a Monopoly game in it.

The prisoners take the Monopoly money and dole it out and begin to use it in dealing with one another.

One shrewd soldier manages to collect most of the money.

When he is finally set free and returns home he takes the money to his American bank to deposit it. *Romans Vol.1, 292-3*

Foolish, right?

His “money” may have had relative value among the prisoners, but it has no absolute value.

Likewise our “good deeds” may have relative value among us but they have no absolute or real value with God.

Why not?

Hebrews 11:6 “Without faith it is impossible to please God...”

Romans 14:23 “Everything that does not come from faith is sin.”

This is where my introduction comes back into focus.

Do you remember when I said, “We exist for the glory of God”?

Or as Paul said it in 1 Corinthians 10:31 “Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”

Jesus said in Matthew 22:37 “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment.

The Reformers called the good people naturally do, “civic virtue.

Jonathan Edwards said such good was motivated by enlightened self-interest.

We do good to gain approval, to feel better about ourselves, or to avoid negative consequences.

That may in fact produce a relative good.

But unless they are done for the glory of God they are sin – they fall short of the glory of God.

John Piper wrote, “Fix this firmly in your mind, **sin is mainly a condition of rebellion against God, not mainly a condition of doing bad things to other people.** This is why it is so sad and so pointless when people argue that they are pretty good people, and so don't need the Gospel. What they mean is that they treat other people decently: they don't steal, kill, lie much, or swear much, and they give to some charities. But that is not the main question. **The main question is: Do you love God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength?** Do you love his Son, Jesus Christ? God is the most important person in the universe. It is not a mark of virtue to do nice things for people while having no love or reverence or passion for God. Sermon on Romans 3:9-18

That which is truly good in God's sight is good done out of a love for God, good done with gratitude for the resources given by God and good done for the glory of God.

The Bible says the natural man is unable to please God.

This is not because God is “picky” but because our good deeds are self-centered.

That is what God is going to change!

As John Hendryx put it, “Regeneration (enables) us, for the first time, to be pleasing to God on the basis of Christ's work. And, from this, the work of the Holy Spirit (is) renewing our affections for God, giving us understanding of and a delight in spiritual things and turning our heart of stone to a heart of flesh. From

John Hendryx “The Apparent Good in Natural Man.”

http://www.reformationtheology.com/2006/01/the_apparent_good_in_natural_m_1.php

In these verses Paul shows us the **essence** of sin – self-deification.

God is for us, at best, an after thought, not the guiding person in our lives.

We love ourselves more than God.

It is our comfort, satisfaction and safety that dominate our motivations rather than God's glory.

No one is righteous and no one does good.

That's the **essence** of sin but I want to also show you what John Stott calls the **pervasiveness** of sin. (In Stott, *Romans*, 101)

For hundreds of years it has been known as “total depravity.”

“Total depravity” does not mean that every person is as bad as they could be but it does mean every motive and every action is tainted by sin.

I remember reading once that if sin were a blue dye, every human being would simply be a different shade of blue.

In Romans 3:13-17 Paul illustrates how pervasive sin is:

“Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit.” “The poison of vipers is on their lips.” “Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.” “Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of peace they do not know.”

From our heads to our feet, every part of our being is affected by sin.

- Deceit speaks of our motives.
- The mouth, tongue and lips indicate our words.
- The feet indicate our actions.

Their words create death.

They mislead others into thinking all is okay with God when it isn't.

Their cursing (the opposite of blessing) deals death.

“Bitterness” is envy, whether it is expressed or not.

They “practice deceit;” a flattery which uses and abuses the hearer.

And their actions deal death whether physical or relational.

They destroy relationships and they don't have any desire to bring real peace.

That's the pervasiveness of sin – it has affected every motive, word and action.

And we all know it.

We sometimes refer to ourselves as having “mixed motives” as if that lessens the guilt.

And in verse 18 the **essence** of sin is referred to again: Romans 3:18
"There is no fear of God before their eyes."

In May of this year the Gallup organization polled Americans and discovered that at least 86% of Americans believe in God (another 8% think there might be a God).

77% believe there is or might be a hell.

77% believe the Bible is the Word of God.

May 10-13 Gallup Poll, 2007. N=1,003 adults nationwide. MoE ± 3
<http://www.pollingreport.com/religion.htm>

Over 200 years ago Robert Haldane wrote, "It is astonishing that men, while they acknowledge that there is a God, should act without any fear of his displeasure. Yet, this is their character. They fear (other people), but disregard the Most High... They are more afraid of man than of God – (afraid of man's) anger, his contempt, his ridicule. The fear of man prevents them from doing many things from which they are not restrained by the fear of God... They don't love (God's) character, they don't give to him the honor that is due; they don't respect His authority. Such is the state of human nature (so long as) the heart is unchanged. (Edited from Robert Huldane, *Exposition of Romans*, 121)

1600 years ago, Augustine prayed, "O Lord, what evil have we not done? Or if there is evil that we have not done, what evil is there that we have not spoken? If there is any that we have not spoken, what evil is there that we have not thought to do?

But you, O Lord, are good. You are merciful. You saw how deep we were sunk in death, and it was your power that drained dry the well of corruption in the depths of our hearts. All that You have asked of us was to deny our own wills and accept yours. Forgive us for every failure to do so and help us to follow You in every way and always, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen. Adapted from Augustine's Confessions (9.10)

The essence of sin is our failure to live for the glory of God.

The pervasiveness of sin is seen in how tainted with "self" every thought, word and deed truly is.

And now we see the **universality** of sin. (Stott, 101)

Just as back in chapter 1 where Paul makes a point of the fact that EVERY person has knowledge of God that they dismiss, so here Paul uses repetition to make his point.

Romans 3:10-12 "There is **no one** righteous, **not even one**; there is **no one** who understands, **no one** who seeks God. **All** have turned away, they have **together** become worthless; there is **no one** who does good, **not even one**."

We want to think there are truly righteous people out there but our own experience ought to confirm to us there is none righteous, not even one.

Or as Paul will say it later, "all...have fallen short of the glory of God."

Human nature – is it basically good or evil?

Are we basically good and deserving of God's reward with maybe a little mercy for our minor failings or are we all sinners deserving of God's wrath?

The Bible is abundantly clear on that point: "**All** have turned away, they have **together** become worthless

Paul ends his description of the human predicament with these words:

Romans 3:19-20 "Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God.²⁰ Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

One summer Donald Barnhouse was traveling by ship across the Atlantic and had occasion to preach on a Sunday. (*Romans Vol. 1, 270ff*)

One young woman, a professor of languages in an eastern college, was taken with what he said and came to talk to him.

Barnhouse asked this question: "If this ship should suddenly suffer some great catastrophe and sink to the bottom of the sea and we died, and if, when you appeared before God, he should ask you, 'What right do you have to come into my heaven?' what would you say?"

The woman said, "I wouldn't have a thing to say."

Barnhouse told her she was quoting Romans 3:19.

It is true; she would have nothing to say to God.

In that moment, everyone will know they are guilty before a holy God because "every mouth (will) be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God

We want to compare ourselves to others but at the end of the age, when God judges, there will be only one standard of comparison- God's holiness and glory:

Imagine that at that moment you were singled out to stand before God and he would begin to read from his law, his description of what brings him glory.

I am the Lord your God, you shall have no other gods before me.

Nothing else in your life shall have priority over God.

If God read that command aloud and you knew that he knew everything about you - knew every act you have ever done, every thought you have ever had - Would you want to stand accountable for reflecting the glory of God?

You shall not bow down to any idol.

Nothing, not you, not another human, not any thing, nothing other than God shall have your worship.

Would you want to stand accountable for that?

You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.

You shall not thoughtlessly use God's name in expressing your emotions – God's name stands for all God is and it shall not be lightly or carelessly used.

Would you want to stand accountable?

You shall remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy, not working on that day.

One day in seven is to be reserved in your life to give to the worship of God - don't violate that with your own interests.

Do you want to stand before God and make excuses?

Honor your father and your mother.

Do you want to be held accountable?

You shall not murder

Jesus said "I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment.

Do you want to try your excuses?

You shall not commit adultery

Jesus said, "I tell you anyone who looks at a person of the opposite sex with lust has already committed adultery with that person in their heart - stop it for it is better that you take drastic measures to stop it than that you go to hell.

Do you want to stand before God accountable for that reflection of the glory of God?

You shall not steal**You shall not speak maliciously of your neighbor****You shall not covet what does not belong to you.**

You have heard it said, love your neighbors and hate your enemies but I tell you Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul strength and mind, and your neighbor as yourself".

Do you want to stand accountable to God?

Barnhouse said if any words are spoken on that day they will not be excuses but they will be an acknowledgment of God's justice.

"It was all true, God. I was wrong.

I knew I was wrong when I made my excuses.

But I hated and still hate the principle of righteousness by the blood of Christ.

I must admit that those despised Christians were right who bowed before you and acknowledged their dependence on you.

I hated their songs of faith then, and I hate them now.

They were right, and I hated them because they were right and because they belonged to you.

I wanted my own way.

I want heaven with myself on the throne.

That is what I want and I do not want anything else and never, never will want anything other than heaven with myself on the throne.

I want my own way.

And now I am going to the place of desire without fulfillment,
of lust without satisfactions,
or wanting without having,
of wishing but never getting ,
of looking but never seeing,
and I hate, I hate, I hate because I want my own way.
I hate, I hate,..."

And then there will be silence.

“Every mouth will be silenced - the whole world accountable to God”

The testimony of Scripture is that, on their own, every human being is hopeless and helpless.

Romans 3:20-22 “Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

“**But now** a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.”

A man lived near the church that Donald Barnhouse pastored and Barnhouse often tried to speak to him of the gospel but the man always resisted saying that he didn't need the church he had his lodge and they were involved in doing all sorts of good things. From

Barhouse, *Romans Vol. I*, 266ff

The man would always tell Barnhouse that if he ever met God he would be all right because of his moral principles and the good things he had done.

One day word came to Barnhouse that the man was very sick with a fatal disease.

Members of the lodge were taking turns staying by his bedside because lodge rules said no man should die alone.

Barnhouse came to visit just as one member was leaving and another coming.

Realizing the situation was desperate Barnhouse decided to get right to the point.

He sat down by the man and said,

- "You don't mind my staying here and watching you for a few minutes do you?"
- "I have often wondered what it would be like for a person to die without Jesus Christ."
- "I have known you for quite a few years, and you have always said that you do not need Christ and that your lodge obligations are enough."
- "I would like to observe a person end his life with those beliefs and see what it is like."

The man was marvelously convicted and looking at Barnhouse with fear said, "You wouldn't mock a dying man would you?"

Barnhouse then said, "You are going to appear before God in a very short while. Suppose he asks you, What right do you have to come into my heaven? What will you say?"

At that great tears welled up in the man's eyes.

And while the man listened carefully Barnhouse told him how he could stand before God not in his own merit but in the merit, the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

In the next moments the man turned from trusting in his own relative goodness to trusting in Christ's absolute goodness.

Have you, will you?

Total Depravity (Inability) Verse List

<http://www.traviscarden.com/writing/total-depravity-verse-list/>

The doctrine of total depravity (or total inability) says that all men, as a consequence of the Fall, are born morally corrupt, enslaved to sin, and unable to please God or even of themselves to turn to Christ for salvation. Is it biblical?

Is man basically good or basically evil? <#>

Ecclesiastes 7:29

*"Behold, I have found only this, that God made men upright, **but** they have sought out many devices."*

Mark 10:18/Luke 18:19

*And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? **No one is good** except God alone."*

Romans 5:12,19

*through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because **all sinned**... through the one man's disobedience the many were made **sinners** c.f. [Ecclesiastes 9:3](#)*

All men? Are there any exceptions? <#>

Romans 3:23

*for **all have sinned** and fall short of the glory of God.*

Isaiah 53:6

***All of us** like sheep have gone astray, **each of us** has turned to his own way;*

Romans 3:9-12

*What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; as it is written, "There is **none** righteous, **not even one**; there is **none** who understands, there is **none** who seeks for God; **all** have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is **none** who does good, there is **not even one**."*

1 John 1:8,10

If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we say we have not sinned, we make [God] a liar and His word is not in us.

c.f. [1 Kings 8:46](#); [Psalm 53:1-3, 116:11, 130:3, 143:2](#); [Proverbs 20:9](#); [Ecclesiastes 7:20](#); [Jeremiah 2:29](#); [Micah 7:2-4](#), [Mark 10:18](#); [Luke 18:19](#); [James 3:2](#); etc., etc.

Are people good deep down? <#>

Mark 7:21-23

*"For **from within, out of the heart of men**, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed **from within** and defile the man."*

Psalm 5:9

*There is nothing reliable in what they say; **their inward part is destruction itself**. Their throat is an open grave; they flatter with their tongue.*

Are men *totally* depraved? Is any faculty of the person yet uncorrupted? <#>

Heart/Thoughts (Deceitful) <#>

Jeremiah 17:9

*"The heart is **more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick**; who can understand it?"*

Ecclesiastes 9:3

*the hearts of the sons of men are **full of evil and insanity is in their hearts** throughout their lives. Afterwards they go to the dead.*

Genesis 6:5 & 8:21

*Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that **every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually... from youth.***

Psalm 36:1-2

Transgression speaks to the ungodly within his heart; there is no fear of God before his eyes. For it flatters him in his own eyes concerning the discovery of his iniquity and the hatred of it.

Proverbs 28:26

He who trusts in his own heart is a fool

c.f. [Ecclesiastes 8:11](#); [Psalm 94:11](#); [Mark 7:21-23](#)

Mind/Understanding (Depraved)

Romans 1:28-31

*And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a **depraved mind**, to do those things which are not proper, being... **without understanding***

Titus 1:15-16

*to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but **both their mind and their conscience are defiled***

Ephesians 4:17-18

*So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the **futility of their mind**, being **darkened in their understanding**, excluded from the life of God because of the **ignorance that is in them**, because of the hardness of their heart;*

Jeremiah 10:7-8,14

*For among all the wise men of the nations and in all their kingdoms, there is none like You. But **they are altogether stupid and foolish. Every man is stupid, devoid of knowledge***

Will/Choosing (Enslaved)

John 8:34

*"Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the **slave of sin.**"*

2 Timothy 2:25-26

*if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been **held captive by him to do his will.***

Titus 3:3

*For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, **enslaved to various lusts and pleasures**, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.*

Romans 6:6

*our old self was crucified with Him... so that we would no longer be **slaves to sin**. But thanks be to God that though you were **slaves of sin**, you became obedient... and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.*

Romans 6:20

*For when you were **slaves of sin**, you were free in regard to righteousness.*

Romans 7:14

*For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, **sold into bondage to sin.***

c.f. [John 8:31-32,36](#); [Galatians 4:9](#); [2 Peter 2:19](#)

Affections/Desires (Perverted)

Romans 1:24-27

*Therefore **God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity**, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For*

this reason **God gave them over to degrading passions**; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and **burned in their desire** toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.

2 Timothy 3:2-4

For men will be **lovers of self, lovers of money**, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, **haters of good**, treacherous, reckless, conceited, **lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God**

Proverbs 21:10

The soul of the wicked **desires evil**

John 3:19

"This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men **loved the darkness** rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil."

c.f. [Genesis 3:16](#); [Psalm 4:2, 140:8](#); [Proverbs 10:23](#); [2 Peter 2:13](#)

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Titus 1:15-16

to those who are defiled and unbelieving, **nothing is pure**, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled

Romans 7:18

I know that **nothing good** dwells in me, that is, in my flesh

Isaiah 1:5-6

The whole head is sick and **the whole heart** is faint. From the sole of the foot even to the head **there is nothing sound** in it, only bruises, welts and raw wounds, not pressed out or bandaged, nor softened with oil.

Are they just misdirected? Do men "not know better?" #

Romans 1:18

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who **suppress the truth** in unrighteousness.

Romans 1:21

For **even though they knew God** they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Romans 1:32

and **although they know the ordinance of God**, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.

c.f. [Romans 2:14-15](#)

Can men still do good when they want to? #

Matthew 7:18

"A good tree **cannot** produce bad fruit, **nor can** a bad tree produce good fruit."

Romans 8:7

the mind set on the flesh... does not subject itself to the law of God, for **it is not even able to do so**

Jeremiah 13:23

Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Then you also can do good who are accustomed to doing evil.

Genesis 6:5 & 8:21

Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that **every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually... from youth.**

Titus 1:15-16

to those who are defiled and unbelieving, **nothing is pure**, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and **worthless for any good deed.**

c.f. [1 Samuel 24:13](#); [Job 14:4](#); [Matthew 12:34](#); [Romans 14:23](#)

Are men at least born pure? What about the "tabula rasa?" #

Psalm 51:5

*Behold, I was **brought forth** in iniquity, and in sin my mother **conceived** me.*

Psalm 58:3

*The wicked are estranged **from the womb**; those who speak lies go astray **from birth**.*

c.f. [Proverbs 22:15](#); [Isaiah 48:8](#)

What is the natural disposition of man toward God? #

John 3:20

*"For everyone who does evil **hates the Light**, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed."*

Romans 8:7-8

*the mind set on the flesh is **hostile toward God**; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.*

Colossians 1:21

*you were formerly **alienated and hostile in mind**, engaged in evil deeds*

James 4:4

*You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is **hostility** toward God?*

*Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an **enemy** of God.*

c.f. [Romans 1:28-30](#)

What is man's relationship to God? #

Psalm 58:3

*The wicked are **estranged** from the womb; those who speak lies go astray from birth.*

Ephesians 2:12-13

*remember that you were at that time **separate** from Christ, **excluded** from the commonwealth of Israel, and **strangers** to the covenants of promise, having no hope and **without God** in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were **far off** have been brought near by the blood of Christ.*

Ephesians 2:3

*Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were **by nature children of wrath**, even as the rest.*

c.f. [Isaiah 59:2](#)

Can man then do anything to please God? #

Proverbs 15:9

*The **way** of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord*

Proverbs 15:8/21:27

*The **sacrifice** of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord*

Proverbs 28:9

*He who turns away his ear from listening to the law, even his **prayer** is an abomination.*

Isaiah 64:6

*For all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our **righteous deeds** are like a filthy garment;*

Romans 8:7-8

*the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for **it is not even able to do so**, and those who are in the flesh **cannot please God**.*

Hebrews 11:6

*And without faith it is **impossible to please [God]***

c.f. [Psalm 50:16](#); [Proverbs 21:4](#); [Isaiah 1:10-15](#); [Amos 5:21-24](#)

Are men at least seeking God? #

John 3:20

*"For everyone who does evil **hates the Light**, and **does not come to the Light** for fear that his deeds will be exposed."*

Isaiah 65:1

"I permitted Myself to be sought by those who did not ask for Me; I permitted Myself to be found by those who did not seek Me."

Isaiah 64:7

There is no one who calls on Your name, who arouses himself to take hold of You; for You have hidden Your face from us and have delivered us into the power of our iniquities.

Romans 3:10-12

"there is none who seeks for God"

c.f. [Romans 10:20](#)

Can the natural man comprehend the gospel or come to saving knowledge of God on his own? #

1 Corinthians 2:14

But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and **he cannot understand them**, because they are spiritually appraised.

2 Corinthians 4:3-4

our gospel is veiled... to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

1 Corinthians 1:18,21-24

For the word of the cross is **foolishness** to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom **did not come to know God**, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, **to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness**

Matthew 11:27

"no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him."

c.f. [Psalm 119:18](#); [Proverbs 4:19](#); [Ephesians 4:17-19](#); [2 Corinthians 2:15-16](#); [2 Corinthians 4:3-4](#)

Can men of themselves accept God's gift of salvation? Do men choose God or come to Him on their own? #

John 3:27

John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given him from heaven."

John 14:16

"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, **whom the world cannot receive**, because it does not see Him or know Him

John 1:12-13

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood **nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God**.

John 6:44 & 64

"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him;" And He was saying, "For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father."

Romans 9:16

So then **it does not depend on the man who wills** or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.

Romans 11:35-36

Or who has first given to [the Lord] that it might be paid back to him again? **For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things**.

1 Corinthians 1:30

But **by His doing** you are in Christ Jesus

Philippians 2:13

for it is God who is at work in you, **both to will and to work** for His good pleasure.
c.f. [Jonah 2:9](#); [Zephaniah 3:9](#); [John 15:16](#); [1 Corinthians 15:10](#); [Philippians 1:6](#); [James 1:18](#)

Who supplies faith/belief/repentance? #

Romans 12:3

God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

Acts 5:31

"He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to **grant repentance** to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

Acts 11:18

When they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God, saying, "Well then, God has **granted** to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life."

Philippians 1:29

For to you it has been **granted** for Christ's sake... to believe in Him

Ephesians 2:8-9

For by grace you have been saved through faith; **and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God**; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

2 Timothy 2:25

The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, [etc.]... if perhaps God may **grant them repentance** leading to the knowledge of the truth

1 Corinthians 12:3

no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit

2 Peter 1:3

His divine power has **granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness**, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence

John 3:6 & 6:63

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit... It is the Spirit who gives life; **the flesh profits nothing**;"

c.f. [John 5:44](#); [Ephesians 6:23](#); [1 Corinthians 4:7](#); [2 Peter 1:1](#)

Can men do anything to help themselves? #

Romans 5:6

For while we were still **helpless**, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

Ephesians 2:5

even when we were **dead in our transgressions**, [God] made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)

c.f. [Psalm 49:7-9](#); [Jeremiah 2:22](#)

Who then can be saved?! #

Matthew 19:26

Jesus said to them, "With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

c.f. [Mark 10:27](#); [Luke 18:27](#)

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