**Roman Road to Salvation**

The most important question that anyone can ask is, "What must I do to be saved?" This question may be asked in other forms. For example, "How can I be sure that all my sins are forgiven?" or, "What will happen to me after I die?" But however the question is asked, the facts remain the same:

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Romans 3:23

Fortunately, the Bible has the answer to these questions and to the problem of man's sin. In Paul's letter to the church at Rome, he sets forth in a clear and logical progression God's plan to save man from sin. This explanation is in the first five chapters of Romans. Four key verses summarize the conclusions of Paul. These four verses are identified by the word "therefore." Understanding these verses leads the way to eternal life as we follow the *Roman Road to Salvation*.

**Man's problem**

Paul’s first conclusion is found at the beginning of Romans, Chapter 2.

Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. Romans 2:1

There is no excuse for man's condition. We cannot point a finger of blame at our family, friends, government, or any other outside influence as a justification for our sin. In the final analysis, every man stands guilty without excuse before a holy God. Guilt extends to every part of man's existence. Our being is totally consumed by sin.

In I Thessalonians, Paul shows that God's desire is to redeem every part of our existence.

And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. I Thessalonians 5:23

Obviously if every part of man (spirit, soul, and body) needs to be redeemed, then every part of man must *now* be under sin. The book of Genesis describes the fall of man and its consequences for each part of man.

Man is unique among God's creatures in that he was created with a spirit that allows him to have knowledge of God. When man sinned his spiritual eyes were opened and he came to know evil. Man's spirit, which was created to know only God and His righteousness, now knows the evil of sin.

And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. Genesis 3:7

Man's soul is the seat of his emotion and will. With the soul we feel affection toward others, including God. When man sinned his soul, which was created to be a friend of God, became God's enemy. As God's enemies, Adam and Eve hid from His presence rather than commune with Him as before.

And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. Genesis 3:8

Man's body was created to be the eternal dwelling place of his soul and spirit on earth. When Adam and Eve sinned, their bodies began to die and eventually they returned to the ground from which they had been taken.

In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. Genesis 3:19

From the very beginning, it is clear that every part of man is affected by sin. This truth is repeated in Romans 1 as Paul describes God's giving up of the Gentile nations. Because sin had stained every part of man, God gave up every part of man.

God gave man up to dishonor his body.

Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Romans 1:24

God gave man up to vile affections. The soul is the center of the affections of man.

For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: Romans 1:26

God gave man over to a reprobate mind. The spirit is the seat of man's intellect.

And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Romans 1:28

These facts led Paul to conclude in Romans, Chapter 2, that man is without excuse.

Some may be questioning how the sin of Adam and Eve affect our existence many thousands of years later. This question is answered in Romans 5.

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. Romans 5:12-14

The fact that all men die is evidence that the sin of Adam transferred to all of us. In Adam we stand guilty and condemned, without excuse. The sin inherited from Adam will ultimately produce acts of sin in our lives. While some believe they have never done anything "really bad", Scripture indicates that even liars will take their place with murderers and idolaters in the lake of fire. None of us can claim to have never told a lie. If we do deny it, we are guilty of committing the very sin we deny.

But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. Revelation 21:8

Man's ***problem*** is that he stands before God spiritually dead, guilty, and without excuse.

**God's Proof**

In Romans 3 Paul continues his indictment of mankind by accusing him of being totally without righteousness.

As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: Romans 3:10

To support his accusation, Paul makes a second conclusion.

Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. Romans 3:20

Most people believe the law was given as a way to become righteous. They believe that by keeping the law they can attain righteousness. In reality the law was given to prove to man that he *cannot* be righteous through his own efforts. Two of the smallest words in the English language are two of the biggest words in the law; "if" and "do".

And it shall be our righteousness, **if** we observe to **do** all these commandments before the LORD our God, as he hath commanded us. Deuteronomy 6:25

The law only made a man righteous *if* he observed to *do* all of its commandments. No one can *do* the 10 moral commandments of the law (let alone the 600 plus other commandments) perfectly all his life. Every broken law of God stands as proof of man's sinfulness.

To those who say they have only broken one or two of God's laws, and never broke one of the "big ones", James says:

For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. James 2:10

To those who say they have never broken *any*law of God, Jesus Christ says:

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. Matthew 5:27,28

No one can withstand the withering scrutiny of the law, especially as described by Jesus Christ. No one can claim absolute purity in action or in thought.

Every time we break, or even think about breaking, *one* of God's laws, we are declared guilty of breaking *all* His laws. The law condemns us by giving ***proof*** of our sinfulness.

**Christ's Propitiation**

Paul's next conclusion answers a question about his previous conclusion. If we cannot attain salvation by keeping the law, then how can we be saved?

Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Romans 3:28

Our salvation and justification come by faith. The question now is, "What is the object of our faith?" Our faith is only as good as the object in which it is placed. It is a very popular notion today to believe that all "people of faith" are saved, regardless of what God that faith is placed in. This teaching makes the act of having faith a good work and rewards man for that work. This is contrary to what Paul has already told us about man. God accepts none of our works.

Our faith must be placed in the redemption that comes through the shed blood of Christ on Calvary's cross.

Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Romans 3:24

In whom [Christ] we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Ephesians 1:7

Paul also explains in Romans 3 *why* faith in Christ is the *only* faith that is sufficient to save. Faith in Christ saves because Christ was faithful to the Father's plan of redemption; and the Father, in turn, was faithful to the sacrifice made by His son.

Paul refers to the faith *of* Christ several times.

But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: Romans 3:21,22

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. Galatians 2:16

The righteousness of God that brings salvation is available through the faith *of*Christ. The first person to believe in God's plan of redemption was Jesus Christ. His faith in what God would accomplish through the cross motivated Him to endure it. Without faith in the Father's plan, Christ would never have gone to the cross. This is why the faith *of* Christ is such an important part of our salvation. The Authorized King James Bible is the only popularly available English Bible that translates these verses about the faith *of* Christ properly – another reason to accept the King James Bible as the only Word of God for English speaking people today.

Paul also speaks of the faith of God the Father and its role in our salvation.

Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; Romans 3:25

The word "propitiation" means satisfaction. The blood of Christ is a satisfaction for sin. Who is offended by our sin? Whose justice must be satisfied? Many today are of the opinion that an action is only sinful if it hurts or offends some other human being. Therefore, as long as we are not hurting anyone, "Anything goes!" This is simply not the case. Whether or not man is offended by our actions is not the issue. Any act that offends a holy and righteous God is sin and He must be satisfied with the sacrifice offered for that sin. The sacrifice that satisfied the Father was the blood of Christ. By faith, God the Father accepted the blood of Christ as the complete and final payment for sin.

Our faith in Christ's death on the cross as payment for our sin is in agreement with the faith of Christ and the faith of the Father. We agree that Christ's blood is the ***propitiation***(satisfaction) for the penalty of sin.

**Peace with God**

Paul's final conclusion about salvation is in the fifth chapter of Romans.

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: Romans 5:1

Having received salvation as a gift of God by faith, we have peace with God. We need never worry about the condemnation and wrath of God. This guarantees the permanence of our salvation. We are eternally secure because we have peace with God.

The peace and security brought by our salvation is the result of being placed into Christ and identified completely with Him.

Our acceptance by God the Father is "in Christ".

To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved [Christ]. Ephesians 1:6

Our perfection and completeness are "in him".

For in him [Christ] dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: Colossians 2:9,10

Our position and blessing include "all things" given to us "with him".

What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Romans 8:31,32

Our position in Christ and the peace that it gives is one of the most wonderful truths in all of Scripture. God is always "for us" and never "against us". Many believers today think that God is just waiting for them to step out of line so that He can punish them. However, the truth of Scripture is that we are at "peace with God". This means that He is *not* pouring out His wrath on us. He is *not* punishing us for sin. He is *not* chastening us. We can *relax* and *rest* in who we are in Christ. Paul uses this thought to conclude the eighth chapter of Romans.

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:38,39

As with all our blessings, God's love for us is "in Christ Jesus our Lord". God loves us with the same love that he has for Jesus Christ. While it is true that God loves all men and desires them to be saved, the intimate type of relationship that he has with His Son is reserved for those who are saved. Only believers are at ***peace***with God.

**The Roman Road to Salvation**

Paul lays out a very definite course to salvation. Along the way there are some important signposts. First is the ***problem***. We are without excuse and guilty before a holy and righteous God. Paul uses the law as ***proof*** of that guilt. Every time we break God's law, it testifies of our sinfulness. Then Paul gives the ***propitiation*** of Christ as the solution to the problem. Only Christ's blood can satisfy the justice of an offended God. Finally, Paul declares the good news of the results of faith in Christ, our ***peace*** with God. We need never fear God's judgement or wrath again.

Take a trip down the *Roman Road to Salvation* today and at its end you will find redemption, forgiveness, salvation, and blessing!

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