***Man is Saveable

7LW-010***

The Bible describes several very serious consequences resulting from the sin of Adam in the Garden of Eden. These piled up to form a wall separating man from God. This barrier prevented sinful man from eternal fellowship with a holy God in Heaven. The blocks of the wall have been removed by Jesus Christ in His death upon the cross. These blocks thus far consist of the fact that all are slaves in the slave market of sin, redemption has removed that. All have moral guilt because of their sin, and that has been removed by expiation, that it has been flushed out, removed. All are guilty of spiritual death from the Old Sin Nature they have, and that's been removed by regeneration.

**Justice is Satisfied**

The block we are now looking at is the holiness of God. That constitutes two factors, the absolute righteousness of God and the justice of God. The justice of God has been removed by the propitiation of Christ. God's absolute righteousness requires absolute righteousness for man. Nobody gets into Heaven unless they have absolute righteousness. God's justice demands death for those who have violated the moral code of God. The word propitiation is used in Scripture of the lid on the oblong box called the Ark of the Covenant. We have it translated in the Book of Hebrews as the Mercy Seat. This was the place in the Old Testament Tabernacle in the Holy of Holies, which symbolized the meeting between God and man. Once a year, the high priest went into the Holy of Holies on the Great Day of Atonement. First he sprinkled blood upon that Mercy Seat lid for his own sin. Then he brought in the blood of an animal on behalf of the whole nation. And for one year, those who had believed in the coming Messiah Savior were secure in that eternal fellowship with God, receiving this assurance on credit until Christ came and actually paid for their sin and removed this wall. The satisfaction of divine justice was based symbolically upon the sprinkling of animal blood on that Mercy Seat, and therefore it was the place of propitiation. This represented the future blood of the Messiah, Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Sin is Not the Issue**

So this is the great reality. God is satisfied. That's why we say Sin is not the issue. The normal progression of human thought is my problem with God is my sin. I have to behave myself. I have to change my lifestyle. I have to prove that I am worthy. In a religious system like Mormonism, the word worthy is at the heart of the whole system. That's what it's all about, to prove yourself worthy. Well, the reality of propitiation means that unbelievers who view God as angry toward sinners are going to go in the wrong direction. That's what people think about. They think about God as someone who's very angry. Roman Catholics view Jesus Christ as a God of wrath who is extremely angry, and if it were not for the intercession of Mary they would not have a chance whatsoever to have his wrath appeased against them.

**That None Should Perish**

But the Bible does not present the picture that God's wrath must be placated by some human effort to secure salvation. That is impossible. The Bible reveals the true character of God, and that is infinite love and a desire to exercise grace. But that love is restricted until the holiness of God has been preserved. God will not violate His integrity, and therefore justice must be served and death must be paid by someone--either Christ as substitute for us, or you'll pay for it by your own eternal separation from God. God's attitude does not need to be changed toward man. That attitude is love, that attitude is grace. Scriptures are very clear that God is not willing that any should perish.

**Christ's Blood was Once for All**

Propitiation frees God to act in behalf of sinners. The body of Jesus Christ actually becomes the Mercy Seat. It becomes the place of propitiation. In the Old Testament, it was animal blood sprinkled on top of that lid of that box. In the New Testament, it is the blood of Jesus Christ which in effect was sprinkled upon the body of Christ Himself on the cross. 1 Peter 2:24, the classic verse, "and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed." His blood was sprinkled on His own body, which became our Mercy Seat. The work of propitiation by Jesus Christ is a work which never has to be repeated. It was done once for all. There is no need to do this again. Hebrews 9: 11-12 point this out, "But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; "and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption."

Hebrews 9:23-28 add this, "Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. "For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; [The Tabernacle on Earth spoke of the person and work of Jesus Christ. It was a replica of the Tabernacle condition that exists in the throne room of God in Heaven. He did not achieve our propitiation, satisfaction of divine justice, in a tabernacle on earth. That was done in Heaven.] "nor was it that He should offer Himself often as a high priest enters the holy place year by year with the blood not his own. [Every year the high priest had to do this ceremony again,] "Otherwise He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." So this points out to us a very important principle, that if you think you can lose your salvation, then Christ has to die all over again. His death covered the sins thus far, and covered all. If that can somehow be broken, that there is an exception, and you can lose your salvation, then He must die for that new sin that you have for which you have lost your salvation. That is not what the Bible teaches at all. Hebrews 9:27 continues "And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, "so Christ also, having offered once to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him." The next time we see the Lord Jesus Christ, and the next time He is on this earth is not going to be in connection with making a sacrifice for sin. That was done once for all at Calvary.

**Never Needs to be Repeated**

So propitiation is a done deed and it never has to be repeated. Therefore, any attempts to satisfy God in some other way is foolhardy, disastrous, and simply demonstrates the lack of faith in what God has done. Having said that, you must realize that the majority of the human race does not believe that God is satisfied relative to their sins. They believe most sincerely that they must do something about it. Vast denominations, like the Roman Catholic Church, which provides a huge number of that humanity that walks on that broad road into the lake of destruction, constantly teach people that they must add their own penance of suffering to that which Christ has done. They teach the work of Christ is not enough by itself. They teach that that takes care of your moral guilt but you must pay for your temporal guilt on your own. There is no Scripture for that. Nor is there any Scripture that suggests that one can perform any religious work, whether it be circumcision or water baptism or the taking of the Lord's Supper. Nothing can be added to create satisfaction with God toward His justice.

Propitiation is a great reality, and the Father's satisfaction with the Son's work was indicated by the fact that the Son is invited by the Father when He arrives in Heaven to sit down, Hebrews 1:13. That is a most significant point because what did the Aaronic priests do? They never sat down. They were always on their feet making another sacrifice and another sacrifice and another one. But Christ, our high priest, made a sacrifice once for all. Then He sat down. When He stands up to leave, it will not be to come back to earth to complete the job of meeting the just demands of God. All that has been done.

**Everyone Must Accept for Himself**

So, though, the Father's justice has been fully satisfied, a lot of people don't believe that. Therein lies the problem. Everybody has to accept this truth for himself. Everybody has to accept the fact that this part of divine holiness has been taken care of. Justice is no issue, and you must accept to be saved yourself. God cannot accept salvation for you. You cannot provide salvation for anyone else. That's why the people who practice infant baptism have such a terrible time. They have brought in from the medieval church, which brought it in from Babylonian mysticism, that an infant must be sprinkled with water in order to wash away his moral guilt. So we still have denominations who are practicing washing away a child's moral guilt by the act of water baptism. And these people, for example even in a good denomination like Lutheranism in terms of its historical background, will say that this child became a Christian when he was sprinkled in baptism.

Many times I read at a person's funeral, Sam Jones at 8 days of age was brought to the congregation and was baptized, [meaning sprinkled] and became a Christian on a certain date. What they're telling us is that salvation is by works. Isn't that odd in a denomination whose rallying cry is justification by faith? That was the banner that Luther held up, justification by faith, by faith alone, "Sola fide," in Christ alone, "Sola Christus," by faith alone in Christ alone, but in order to wash away your moral guilt, you must perform a human work - baptism. How can that be? Never, never doubt for a moment how subtle is Satan and how he can manipulate your Old Sin Nature, and thus to manipulate your mind so that you are absolutely crazy in the decisions that you make spiritually.

**Man's Way is Fool's Gold**

I never cease to marvel about people who have had the opportunity to be in a real gold mine of Bible doctrine instruction and somehow something goes askew up in their mental processes and they move over to a mine that's filled with fool's gold. They're filled with fool's gold. This afternoon at lunch, I talked with a young man who had attended church and his father has been a missionary in Mexico, and he's tied in with beliefs in the supernatural Charismatic gifts and in healing. And pointing out to him the problems with that position and the unreality of these gifts of healing, speaking in tongues, and so on, existing, he just could not cope with the Scriptures. But he simply could not believe that these things do not exist today, that the Holy Spirit is not available to enable people to do things today of this nature. What he was doing was operating on the basis of his feelings, operating on the basis of his thinking. The next thing he had was the uncertainty that you were sure you're going to go to Heaven. He thought you could be saved, but then you couldn't be.

Because so many things came in, I regretted that I didn't say one thing to summarize it. I should have said, let me leave you with this thought, that any differences of opinion on spiritual and theological matters will never be left hanging fire by God. You should be aware of that. At the Judgment Seat of Christ, these things will be resolved. At that point, either you or I will stand there on these particular issues which we discussed. And if you are right, God will say to you, well done, good and faithful servant. Here's the reward for being right. If I am wrong, then He will announce that I suffer reward. Or maybe the other way around. So when you have this kind of a very firm opinion, you want to be very careful about your experience.

Experience never leads you to the knowledge of the mind of God. If I see him again, I'm going to tell it to him that I should have added one more thing to our conversation. There are some people who will never attend Berean Memorial church anymore because they have heard me point that out, that there will not be left any unresolved issues and that at the Judgment Seat of Christ these things will be settled one way or another. It's a heavenly deck of the Battleship Missouri and peace will be established on these issues of differences. As one person said, why should I sit in church and feel guilty because I have this difference of opinion. And that's how far the mind can go astray. You would think they'd say, I really have to be sure about this, or at least I have to put it on the back burner. But the last thing on earth I should do is flee the gold mine and go to fool's gold. That could be very costly indeed.

**The Pharisee and the Tax-Gatherer**

Now, the great illustration of the work of propitiation is found in the example of the Pharisee and the tax-gatherer which Jesus related in Luke 18. Luke 18:9, " And He also told this parable to certain ones who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt." This was the parable to explain to people who knew they were righteous. How did these Jews know that they were righteous: because they kept the Mosaic Law. They were keeping the rules of the Mosaic Law, the identical basis upon which all Jews expect to go to Heaven today. That's why none of them ever make it. They reject Jesus Christ but they do believe that keeping the rules of the laws of Moses will bring them to heaven, even though they can't even keep them. They don't have a temple. They don't have a sacrificial system. But they adjust whatever they have to so long as they can do the one thing they want to do to reject Jesus Christ. So here the Lord is talking to these elitists in the religious world. They're so confident that they are saved, that God approves them, that God is pleased with them, that God is prospering them [Because some of these people had a lot of money. That's a sign of his approval, they thought.] And everybody else, they look down on them with contempt.

**The Works Way**

So Jesus illustrated it this way. Luke 18:10 "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee, and the other a tax-collector. [This tax collector in the King James Version is referred to as the publican.] "The Pharisee stood and was praying thus to himself, [Why was this mercy praying to himself? He didn't think he was praying for himself. If you are not a believer, if you are not born again, as this Pharisee was not, and you pray, God doesn't listen. You cannot pray to God because you can only get to God through Jesus Christ. Prayers are all transmitted through Christ by means of the Holy Spirit. So this Pharisee, when he prayed, the only person who was hearing him was himself. That's the point, he prayed to himself.] 'God, I thank Thee that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax-gatherer. [He nodded over at the tax gatherer standing nearby.] 'I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.' [See the rules: pay your tithes, you'll go to Heaven. Keep the moral code, go to Heaven, even though you break that code nine times out of ten. The Pharisee trusted in his own righteousness and he tried to gain eternal fellowship with God through his works. So he asked God to recognize what a superior person he was, especially in comparison to the tax-gatherer. Well, this is how unsaved people always do in order to enhance their sense of their personal value and superiority spiritually in God's eyes. It's always relative righteousness. I compare myself to somebody else. Most anybody can find somebody who's lower on the scale of quality and character than themselves.

**God's Way**

Now, in verse 13, we go over to the tax-gatherer. Luke 18:13, "But the tax-gatherer, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to Heaven, [ So humble, so humiliated, so embarrassed, so ashamed of himself, knowing what he was as a sinner,] but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!'" The word merciful is the verb form of propitiation-hilasterion. This one is hilaskomai. "Be merciful to me, the sinner." The very same word that's used in reference to the mercy seat in the Old Testament and in the Greek translation called the Septuagint. Designated by the letters LXX, the Greek Septuagint is a Greek translation of the Old Testament Hebrew. That is the word which is used for Mercy Seat, this word hilasterion. This man, therefore, is asking God to be propitiated to him. God be propitiated to me a sinner. What he was asking God to do was to look at him through the blood sprinkled Mercy Seat on the Ark of the Covenant so that God would accept him. He understood that he had no way to deal with God. He understood that he was guilty. He understood that he was condemned. He understood that the justice of God demanded his death and his eternal separation from a holy God. So what he was asking for was God, please cover me under the propitiating power symbolized by the Mercy Seat in the Holy of Holies.

So for the tax-gatherer, a judgment seat suddenly became a Mercy Seat, a throne of grace. For in Luke 18:14, Jesus said, "I tell you, this man went down to his house Justified [he went down to his house with God propitiated toward him] rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted."

**Christ's blood was Once for All**

Now this prayer on the part of the tax-gatherer would be completely unfitting for anybody to pray today. And it is quite wrong for people to be told that if they want to be saved, to turn to God and ask God to be merciful to them, because to be merciful to them, quoting this Scripture, is to be propitiated. Is God not satisfied? Has His justice not been met? Yes, it has! This is what Christ did to handle the justice of God demanded by His Holiness. He has been satisfied, and that's why we tell you that sin is not the issue. He has been satisfied relative to the death penalty paid for our moral guilt. Because if you tell people to do this, what are you asking them to do? You're asking God to be satisfied relative to their moral guilt, that His justice should be met. But it already has been. It's an insult to say that. No one is saved by coaxing mercy from God. But he is saved by believing the gospel and the door is wide open to believing the gospel. God cannot be merciful to a sinner. So don't ask Him to be merciful, because that means to ask Him to be propitiated.

**Don't Misapply the Word of God**

When that evangelists out on the West Coast a couple of decades ago used to tell people, come to God and ask him to be merciful to you a sinner, he was actually telling them to insult God because those poor people didn't even know that that meant asking God to be satisfied toward their justice. They didn't even know that God already was satisfied. They didn't have to do anything. They didn't have to be in fear. They just had to accept Christ as a savior. When this was pointed out to this man, this evangelist, he said, "Well, yes, I know that's true. But it is such a nice phrase. It makes such a big impact at the end of the service when I use it. Many people will come forward and raise their hand" and so on. So here he was using it wrong. This is just like the people in Campus Crusade. Their variation of this was to use the Revelation 3:20 passage of Jesus knocking on your heart's door. And when it was pointed out to them that in their 4 Spiritual Laws booklet when they invite people, this passage is not Christ knocking on the heart's door of an unsaved person, but in the heart's door of a Christian who's out of fellowship. This letter was written to Christians. They said, "Yes, we know that's true. But it is such a nice phrase and it does give us such a nice picture." So suddenly people who should know better, and do know better, don't mind misapplying the Word of God and asking people to do something by trickery of words.

The apostle Paul, you may remember, said when I spoke to you, I spoke under the power of God the Holy Spirit, because I spoke under the power of true truth. And I did not play games of oratory with you. I did not play words with you. I spoke that which the Word of God said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved.

So you don't have to agonize in prayer. You don't have to improve your conduct. You just have to believe the gospel promise. You don't have to come back, come up to an altar, kneel at the rail, and weep and sob in order to be saved. God is satisfied. You don't have to talk Him into it. You have nothing to offer. You can do nothing to satisfy divine justice.

So since propitiation depends on God's character alone and none on man's, God is now free to express His maximum love toward us. That's what He does all the time. The way is always open. But it's a small gate. It's a narrow road. Who is the way? Who is the door? Jesus said I am the door to the sheepfold. I am the door through the wall. Who is the way? Christ says I am the way. He is the road. Therefore, if it is not through Him, then God has nothing for which to base his propitiation, His satisfaction. His justice cannot be satisfied by anything else?

**God's Attitude Toward the Christian**

This is God's attitude toward the Christian-I am satisfied in My justice, I'm not angry at you. This is true of the sorriest Christian and the best. God says I have no problems with the worst human being and the best. God's love in eternity will never be more for the unsaved or for us than it is now. Nothing is holding back that love anymore. We are inseparable from that divine love by the grace of God through propitiation. That's why the apostle Paul could point out the magnificent statement in Romans 8:38-39, "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, "nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.", the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. There is no other love of God toward you, except that which comes through Christ Jesus our Lord. When you say, 'okay I receive that love, either God is lying or He's telling the truth,' you've got it. It has nothing else to do with anything else you may think, anything else you may feel. Nothing can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord. So what can separate you? Nothing.

**Saveable**

God has made you saveable. Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer said he used to struggle to think about words that would describe theological ideas, and he was trying to think about a word that would describe the results of propitiation. He said he used to ponder this and I couldn't really come up with a word that felt right. He said 'I was in my bed in the middle of the night, and the word saveable came to me.' And he said, 'That's it Lord.' He said, 'I was so excited. I bounced off that bed and almost hit the ceiling. Saveable, that's what propitiation does.' Now, saveable. There's no problem, no problem with God. The only problem is with man's acceptance.

**Absolute Righteousness Needs Satisfaction**

Then there's the other factor, absolute righteousness. That also has to be taken care of in order to satisfy the issue of the holiness of God. Human righteousness will never make it. This requires a righteousness which is absolute. In the Book of Psalms, Psalm 14:3, "They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one." This verse is quoted by the apostle Paul in Romans 3:10, referring to Psalm 14:3, "as it is written, 'THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE;'" Notice a change of words, in the Psalm, it was somebody good. What did he mean? What did the Psalmist mean by good? The apostle Paul used the word that makes it clear. There is none absolutely righteous, not even one. So that's what is up against every human being. Nobody has perfect righteousness. Not even one. God's perfect goodness is His absolute righteousness.

**Man's Innocence and Fall**

Before the fall into sin in the Garden of Eden, man had perfect innocence. So he was fit with fellowship for God, with God. There was no evil to separate them. Man was free to learn about anything in Eden. He was told, Sport, you're in charge, not the devil. The devil didn't have control of the earth then. He didn't have control of Adam and Eve. He didn't have control of the Garden of Eden. He was just an interloper. They had full control. Genesis 2:16-17, God said, do anything you want. Enjoy this garden. One thing you must not do. You must not learn evil. You must not learn evil by experience. So don't eat of tree of the knowledge of good and evil. That's the test. So everything went well. We don't know how long, but enough time for God to have taught Adam, and later Eve with him, an enormous amount of gospel and doctrinal information on the basis of their nightly end of the day Bible class.

But the time came when Eve, being deceived by Satan, decided that being perfectly good was to miss something. So this led mankind into the sin of learning evil by experience. Here's something for young people to be aware of. It's a very serious matter to be tempted to try something just to see what it's like. People have told you it's bad, it's wrong, it's evil, and it's dangerous. But so many people do, I'd like to try it to see if it's really that bad.

**Be Innocent in What is Evil**

This is, of course, the same principle that Paul reiterates interestingly enough, in the last chapter of the book of Romans, before he finishes. Romans 16:19, where Paul says "For the report of your obedience has reached to all; [The Romans have been very positive toward the Word of God.] therefore, I am rejoicing over you, but I want you to be wise in what is good, and innocent in what is evil." I'm glad to hear of your positive volition for doctrine. Nobody has to bug you to get out to the church services to be taught the word. Nobody has to call you and say you're coming today or not. Nobody has to treat you like some dumb, dodo, low life character who has to be a mule pulled around by the bit in your mouth and kicked around so you'll do right to be in church. You people do it, you know it, and you're terrific people because of it. But he says, I want in spite of your positive volition, I must warn you this before I close, I want you to be wise in what is good, divine righteousness, and innocent on what is evil. I do not want you to learn evil by personal experience. That is exactly what Eve violated and which Adam followed her.

Many a youth with good Christian heritage will often make the same stupid mistake that Eve made, and Adam followed her all over again. They want to try evil just to see if it's really as bad as people say. And one of the things that drives them to that is that this makes them acceptable with the world. It helps them to fit in. This is one of the things that parents hopefully can teach their children- not to want to fit in with the world. That becomes very tricky. The more you shove them into the world activities, the more they're part of that system, the world system of the world. The more terrible it is, the more they become acclimated to that system. And that evil that they see around them, they become used to it, and they don't think really it's so bad to try it. Pretty soon they're sporting the dress styles. They're sporting the mannerisms. They're sporting the attitudes that are directly designed by young people in the world's system to show that they're the enemies of Christ and that they oppose Him and His authority. The degeneracies in the public schools are so enormous now at the high school level. A high school teacher recently told me that the unbelievable now is commonplace. You walk down the halls and kids have no hesitation of cursing, obscenities, or foul language. There was a time when anybody who did that was brought up on report and was given demerits and was issued warnings and punishment for that. If we do that now, the parents can sue the school. So when they report it to the principal, the school authorities have to shrug their shoulders. What can we do?

And yet we have people who say, here's my child. I've been given this child on loan from God for the years to her, his maturity. And then I turn him loose. I have no more control, no more direction. So what do I do? Put him in the filth hole of the public school. Of course, this nice kid is going to blow all that off. She's not going to do it. Don't you kid yourself. You go out to a pig farm and you walk through all that luscious mud and all that slop that they feed pigs. And you walk through that with your Sunday clothes and your shined shoes. And see if you can even keep from being able to have it splash and get a little splatter on you. It makes a very hard job for a young person to have to walk through that and fight it all the time. It's an uphill fight. And someplace along the line, it is just possible that someone does not understand that God's righteousness is absolute. Man's righteousness, making his own rules, is imperfect, it's relative. And if they follow the world's righteousness, they will be hurt.

**God Will Judge Encouragers of Evil**

1 Peter 4:1- 5 says this, "Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because He who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, [That is, ceased from domination of the Sin Nature.] "so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God." [No longer living out your life span for satisfying the lusts of the Old Sin Nature, but to satisfy the will of God] "For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousals, drinking parties and abominable idolatries. [Paul says you've had plenty of time in your unsaved days to have done all that. That is man's righteousness. Man thinks that that is all right.] "And in all this, they are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excess of dissipation, and they malign you; "but they shall give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead."

Just remember that God is going to judge these people who are encouraging others to do evil. If you're a weak young person or a weak adult, it's very hard for you to say, no, I'm not going to play ball with evil. I'm not going to do that. You can't entice me to do evil. This is wrong. So don't ask me to do it. That's very tough because what are your friends going to do? OK, fine, we don't need you. And you'll have to walk alone. Alone? No, hand in hand with Jesus Christ. But if He is not that real to you, you'll go with the world. Your kids have to be taught that if they're in the climate of a public school system today, it is the devil's playhouse.

Romans 1:28-32 emphasize the same problem, "And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, [The previous context speaks about lesbianism and homosexuality, which is now accepted as man's standard of what is okay.] 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, [That should be a chilling Scripture for anybody who's got half a brain. Because what this says is if you associate and learn evil by experience, the voice of the Spirit of God will be phased out. You have walked out of fellowship with him. You no longer have his guidance. In effect, God will say, go. You're on your own and you will go headlong into evil. Pretty soon you'll feel just really comfortable at home in your secular surroundings and the activities of all the other people. On a college level, it's even worse. Pretty soon you're sporting the accouterments and the signs and the symbols and the language and the actions of the evil system of the world. That's the norm. God says when you start doing that, then I will step out of the way.] "being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, "slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, "without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; "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." Not only do they do these things, but they cheer on those who would join them in that kind of evil.

So it's a very terrible mistake to think that you're missing something but not be part of the world's system of activities and evil. Pretty soon that serpent will bite you and you will look back all your life and wonder, how could you have been so foolish? You will unless you understand the principle of absolute righteousness. Because men say something is okay, does not mean that it is okay. Only God's standard will determine that.

**Man's Relative Righteousness is Our Problem**

It is sin which has separated mankind from God, a god of absolute righteousness. In Isaiah 59:2, this is stated in this way, "But you're iniquities have made a separation [a wall] between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He does not hear."

Man's relative righteousness is our problem. The Bible says that man was basically evil because he was born with an Old Sin Nature. Jeremiah 17:9, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" Psalm 51:5 "in sin did my mother conceive me." Thus, God sees all sinners lacking absolute righteousness. There is none who is good, not one. All have been guilty. All have been guilty of sin. Nothing they could do about it in terms of gaining the righteousness they need.

Unbelievers usually object to the statement that man is not good inherently, and so they create their own standards to what is good. Society decides what is good, what is bad. There is no uniform opinion between nations or individuals. Some people are better than others, but no one is perfect. Relative righteousness will never get you into Heaven. Relative righteousness will never satisfy the holiness of God. So you are not qualified for Heaven.

The problem is that some of the nicest people are guilty of relative righteousness and totally lacking in absolute righteousness. Those really nice people are the ones that will trick you. They are the ones that make it so confusing, especially to an inexperienced young person to go for relative righteousness, not to understand the difference. So we need to do now is to walk you through categories of human beings that are absolutely without absolute righteousness, but have a relative righteousness while they are totally spiritually bankrupt. If you do not recognize the difference, you will be brought down.

We should look at that next time.

Dear Father, we thank you so much for Thy word. Thy word is truth. Thy word is alive and it's active and will do its good work as it has been planted in our minds this night. We thank You for the fact that it has been our opportunity here at Berean Church once more to enjoy the expository explanation of the Word of God so we may have a grasp on the deep things that are contained in Scripture. Thank you so much for our justification and the satisfaction of Thy justice. Thank you so much for our absolute righteousness received as a gift from Thee. May we go forth and live this week as those who are highly qualified in this respect? We pray in Christ's name. Amen. Dr. John E. Danish, 1999

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