

# Sin and Condemnation: The World's need to get right with God

(80)

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[Romans 1:18-3:20](#)

(Continuation from 10/22/17)

## F. God's Case Against All Men, [Romans 3:9-20](#)

[Romans 3:13-14 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>13</sup>“THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE, WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING,” “THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS”;

<sup>14</sup>“WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS.”

The apostle Paul was well aware of man's disposition to deny his sin. Therefore, from creation, from history; from reason and logic, and from conscience, Paul has already presented powerful testimony of man's sinfulness. Now he presents the ultimate testimony, the testimony of Scripture. Beginning with [verse 10](#) and continuing through [verse 18](#), Paul introduces before the court, as it were, the testimony of God's own Word as revealed in the Old Testament.

[Verses 9-20](#) summarize God's divine and perfect view of man and they continue in a trial motif: **the arraignment** ([v. 9](#)), **the indictment** ([vv. 10-17](#)), **the motive** ([v. 18](#)), and **the verdict** ([vv. 19-20](#)).

1. **The charge: all men are under sin (v.9).**
2. **The case of a sinful nature (v.10-12).**
3. **The case of a sinful tongue (v.13-14).**
4. **The case of sinful acts (v.15-18).**
5. **The case of the law (v.19-20).**

The **thirteen charges** of the indictment are presented in **three categories**—the first concerning **the character** ([vv. 10-12](#)), the second concerning **the conversation** ([vv. 13-14](#)), and the third concerning **the conduct** ([vv. 15-17](#)) of the accused.

### 4. ([Romans 3:15-18](#)) **Man, Nature: there is the case of sinful acts.**

[Romans 3:15-18 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>15</sup>“THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD,

<sup>16</sup>DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS,

<sup>17</sup>AND THE PATH OF PEACE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN.”

<sup>18</sup>“THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES.”

## The Motive

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**Romans 3:18 (NASB)**

**<sup>18</sup>“THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES.”**

The conclusion of this biblical rehearsal of God’s assessment comes down to the bottom line: **“There is no fear of God before their eyes” (v. 18).**

The scariest thing of all is that the pagan is not afraid of God. Of course, inherent in the fear Paul mentions is a sense of reverence. We are by nature irreverent people. We have no sense of awe, no desire to honor God or to glorify him as God. We are not naturally afraid of God.

God scares me to death. I know I am redeemed; I know that now there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, but I know that God is holy, so even though I am covered by the Savior, I am still frightened at times by the character of God, and with good reason.

**Romans 8:1 (NASB)**

**<sup>1</sup>“Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”**

Old Testament wisdom literature says, **“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding” (Proverbs 9:10 NASB)**. This is the incredible thing: people who do not fear God think they are smart. They think they are wise. People who have no fear of God have not an ounce of wisdom in their head or heart. **“The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God’” (Psalm 14:1; Psalm 53:1).**

**Psalm 14:1 (NASB)**

**<sup>1</sup>“The fool has said in his heart, “**There is no God.**” They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds; There is no one who does good.”**

**Psalm 53:1 (NASB)**

**<sup>1</sup>“The fool has said in his heart, “**There is no God.**” They are corrupt, and have committed abominable injustice; There is no one who does good.”**

The motive for man’s sinfulness is his built-in godlessness. The basic sinful condition of men and of their spiritual deadness is evidenced by the fact that, for the unsaved, **there is no fear of God before their eyes**. The full text of **Psalm 36:1**, from which Paul here quotes, reads:

**Psalm 36:1 (NASB)**

**<sup>1</sup>“Transgression speaks to the ungodly within his heart; There is no fear of God before his eyes.”**

Because men’s ears are attuned to the lies of sin rather than to the truth of righteousness, they have an inadequate concern about and **no fear of God**.

Fearing God has both positive and negative elements. In a positive way, every true believer has reverential fear of God—an awesome awareness of His power, His holiness, and His glory. Proper worship always includes that kind of fear of the Lord. Reverential fear of God is the beginning of spiritual wisdom (**Proverbs 9:10**).

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**Proverbs 9:10 (NASB)**

<sup>10</sup>“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.”

That kind of fear is a necessary element in one’s being led to salvation, as with Cornelius ([Acts 10:2](#)), and motivates new believers in their spiritual growth.

**Acts 10:2 (NASB)**

<sup>2</sup>“A devout man and one who feared [**phobeō**] God with all his household, and gave many alms to the *Jewish* people and prayed to God continually.”

Here the word “**phobeō**” is used in the sense of being “**in awe of**” or “**to revere.**”

The negative aspect of the **fear of God** has to do with dread and terror. Even believers should have a measure of that kind of fear, which acts as a protection from sinning. The writer of Proverbs observed, "By the fear of the Lord one keeps away from evil" ([16:6](#)).

**Proverbs 16:6 (NASB)**

<sup>6</sup>“By lovingkindness and truth iniquity is atoned for, And by the fear [**יִרְאָה yir’â**] of the LORD one keeps away from evil.”

Here the word “**יִרְאָה yir’â**” is used in the sense of “**dreadful, exceedingly, fear.**”

For the very reason they are God's children, believers are subject to His chastisement (see [Hebrews 12:5-11](#)).

**Hebrews 12:5-11 (NASB)**

<sup>5</sup>“And you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, “MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM;

<sup>6</sup>FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES.”

<sup>7</sup>It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom *his* father does not discipline?

<sup>8</sup>But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

<sup>9</sup>Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?

<sup>10</sup>For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He *disciplines us for our good*, so that we may share His holiness.

<sup>11</sup>All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.”

Sometimes His dealing with disobedient believers can be severe, as with Ananias and Sapphira, who lost their lives for lying to the Holy Spirit. God used that punishment to produce godly fear and obedience within the early church (see [Acts 5:1-11](#)).

**Acts 5:1-11 (NASB)**

<sup>1</sup>“But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property,

<sup>2</sup>and kept back *some* of the price for himself, with his wife's full knowledge, and

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bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles' feet.

<sup>3</sup> But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back *some* of the price of the land?

<sup>4</sup> "While it remained *unsold*, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."

<sup>5</sup> And as he heard these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last; and great fear came over all who heard of it.

<sup>6</sup> The young men got up and covered him up, and after carrying him out, they buried him.

<sup>7</sup> Now there elapsed an interval of about three hours, and his wife came in, not knowing what had happened.

<sup>8</sup> And Peter responded to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for such and such a price?" And she said, "Yes, that was the price."

<sup>9</sup> Then Peter *said* to her, "Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out *as well*."

<sup>10</sup> And immediately she fell at his feet and breathed her last, and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband.

<sup>11</sup> And great fear came over the whole church, and over all who heard of these things."

Some of the believers in the church at Corinth also died or became ill by the direct infliction of God's chastisement for their sin ([1 Corinthians 11:30](#)).

[1 Corinthians 11:30 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>30</sup> "For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep."

Ideally, Christians should live holy lives out of love for God and gratitude for His grace and blessings. But it often takes God-given hardship and pain to pry believers from a sin, or it takes the prospect of punishment to keep them from getting into it in the first place.

Unbelievers, however, should have a **fear of God** in its most intense and terrifying sense. The Old Testament is replete with stories of the Lord wreaking destruction and death as punishment for sins of all kinds. He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah because of their indescribable immorality and turned Lot's wife into a pillar of salt for simply looking back disobediently on that horrifying scene.

Because of its unrelenting wickedness, God destroyed the whole human race through the Flood, saving only eight people. He drowned the entire Egyptian army when it tried to capture the children of Israel and bring them back to slavery in Egypt. The Lord ordered Moses to have the Levites slay some three thousand Israelite men who had erected and worshiped a golden calf while Moses was on the mountain receiving the tablets of the law from God.

On one occasion a group of Jews asked Jesus, in effect, why God had allowed Pilate to kill some Galileans and mingle their blood with their sacrifices and why eighteen people were killed when a tower at Siloam toppled over on them. He replied that those people did not die because

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they were more wicked than others, and then proceeded to warn His inquirers, “**Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish**” ([Luke 13:1-5](#)).

[Luke 13:1-5 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>1</sup>“Now on the same occasion there were some present who reported to Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices.

<sup>2</sup>And Jesus said to them, “Do you suppose that these Galileans were *greater* sinners than all *other* Galileans because they suffered this *fate*”

<sup>3</sup>“I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.”

<sup>4</sup>“Or do you suppose that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them were *worse* culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem?”

<sup>5</sup>“I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.”

I once heard of a minister who was known for his emphasis on worship and had even written a book on the subject. One day when some members of his congregation were helping him move his office, they discovered a large box filled with pornographic magazines. One wonders if such a man could be a Christian; but it was obvious that he had little real fear of God’s righteous judgment or reverence for His honor and glory.

**Robert Haldane**, mentioned above, 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 a worm of the dust like themselves, but disregard the Most High.... They are more afraid of man than of God—of his anger, his contempt, or ridicule. The fear of man prevents them from doing many things from which they are not restrained by the fear of God.... They love not His character, not rendering to it that veneration which is due; they respect not His authority. Such is the state of human nature while the heart is unchanged. (*Exposition of Romans*, p.121)