

Salvation by Faith Alone: The Book of Romans

Adam and Jesus

Lesson #6 for November 11, 2017

Scriptures: Romans 5.

1. First of all, we must note carefully that Romans 5 begins with the word, “*Therefore....*” Paul was assuming that we have correctly understood Romans 1-4 before we proceed to look at Romans 5. So, let us review briefly. In Romans 1, Paul discussed the condition of the pagans of Rome before they came to Christ. Would you ever trust such a person? Then in Romans 2, he discussed the Jews who were critical of the Gentiles who had become Christians. They felt themselves so superior, and they were so judgmental. God declared that they were just as guilty as, and perhaps more than, the formerly-heathen Romans!
2. In Romans 3-8, we will discover that God explained how He “sets us right” if we are willing to listen and trust Him. But, we find that both the Gentiles and the Jews were worshiping false “gods.” Each group had created their own god. Are we worshiping a false god? What is our god?

No outward shrines may be visible, there may be no image for the eye to rest upon, yet we may be practicing idolatry. **It [174] is as easy to make an idol of cherished ideas or objects as to fashion gods of wood or stone. Thousands have a false conception of God and His attributes. They are as verily serving a false god as were the servants of Baal.** Are we worshiping the true God as He is revealed in His word, in Christ, in nature, or are we adoring some philosophical idol enshrined in His place?—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies*,* vol. 5, 173.4-174.0.

No outward shrine may be visible; there may be no image for the eye to rest upon; yet thousands are following after the gods of this world—after riches, fame, pleasure, and the pleasing fables that permit man to follow the inclinations of the unregenerate heart. **Multitude have a wrong conception of God and His attributes, and are as truly serving a false god as were the worshipers of Baal.** Many even of those who claim to be Christians have allied themselves with influences that are unalterably opposed to God and [178] His truth. Thus they are led to turn away from the divine and to exalt the human.—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings** 177.1-178.0. [Bold type is added.]

3. How can we make certain that we have a true and correct picture of God? (See Isaiah 40-55.) The true God can create out of nothing. The true God can predict the future far in advance. Could we be deceived by Satan’s picture? Do we believe that Jesus Christ fully, completely, and accurately represented God’s character and government? Or, do we believe that God is, in fact, arbitrary, exacting, vengeful, unforgiving, and severe as Satan has claimed? It would be foolish to trust in a god like that! But, how can we trust our God unless we get to know Him well and make sure that He is trustworthy?
4. If we are honest, each one of us will have to recognize that the God we worship is, in fact, a mental construct that we have put together from our previous life-experiences. Carefully evaluate your own picture of God. Does He ever appear arbitrary, exacting, vengeful, unforgiving, or severe?

From the beginning it has been Satan's studied plan to cause men to forget God, that he might secure them to himself. Hence he has sought to misrepresent the character of God, to lead men to cherish a false conception of Him. The Creator has been presented to their minds as clothed with the attributes of the prince of evil himself,—as arbitrary, severe, and unforgiving,—that He might be feared, shunned, and even hated by men. Satan hoped to so confuse the minds of those whom he had deceived that they would put God out of their knowledge. Then he would obliterate the divine image in man and impress his own likeness upon the soul; he would imbue men with his own spirit and make them captives according to his will.—Ellen G. White, *5T** 738.1.

How can we make sure that our picture of God is correct?

5. Look at Paul himself. Before the experience on the Damascus road as described in Acts 9, Paul believed that he was faithfully serving God. After that experience, his life was totally transformed. Had he changed his day of worship? His diet? His Bible? His clothing? No! The only thing that Paul had changed was his picture of God! Should we do that? Where should we get the correct picture of God? It must come from a careful study of the Scriptures. Paul's understanding of Scripture had to undergo a complete rethinking!
6. So, what have we learned about God in Romans 1-4? Do we believe that Jesus Christ was fully God? Did Christ correctly represent the Father? Do we believe that the Father—if He had come instead of the Son—would have acted exactly as His Son did?

Had God the Father come to our world and dwelt among us, humbling Himself, veiling His glory, that humanity might look upon Him, the history that we have of the life of Christ would not have been changed.... In every act of Jesus, in every lesson of His instruction, we are to see and hear and recognize God. In sight, in hearing, in effect, it is the voice and movements of the Father.—Ellen G. White, *Letter 83,** 1895; *That I May Know Him** 338.4; *21MR** 393.1.

7. What does the death of Jesus teach us about God? How did that death demonstrate God's own righteousness? Was He telling us the truth when He said that sin leads to death? (Genesis 2:17) Or, did He die primarily to "pay the price for sin"? (Romans 3:25-26)
8. Then, in Romans 4, Paul turned to the quintessential example of faith for the Jewish people, Abraham. Although failing in several tests in his earlier years, as time went on, he showed himself to be God's wonderful friend. (2 Chronicles 20:7; Isaiah 41:8; James 2:23) He was even jealous for God's reputation. (Genesis 18, 22; *PP* 154,155) Are we correctly defending God's reputation?
9. Read Romans 5:1. "Therefore... let us continue at peace with God...." (*NEB*) Does that peace come through a legal transaction whereby the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us? Or, does that peace come because we know God and we are beginning to understand all that He can do and has done for us?
10. What kind of peace comes with living the new life in Christ? (See Romans 5 & 6.) Notice that it is peace with God. It certainly is not peace with the world and certainly not peace with the Devil. When we choose to follow God, we are declaring ourselves to be on God's side in the great controversy, and Satan is alerted to action! Then, we will be his enemies!

If a sufficient number of us truly become Christians in the fullest sense of the word, Satan's days are numbered. It is a life or death issue for him!

11. So, how did sin come into our world? How did or how does the sin of Eve and Adam affect each of us living in the 21st century? What is *original sin*? We do not have the privilege of living in the Garden of Eden. Sin has permanently separated the sinful human race from the Garden of Eden. And what does it mean to be justified by His blood? The majority of Christians in our day who take Romans 5 seriously believe that God performs a legal exchange. They believe that the sins that we have committed are legally transferred to Jesus, and His righteousness is legally transferred to us. God then considers us righteous. Is such an exchange truly legal? Is it even possible to transfer sins? How does God get us to trust Him again? Do the troubles, the endurance, and the character that are spoken of in Romans 5:2-5 sound like something that is imputed? Or, are those real experiences?

12. What does it mean to be "justified by His blood"? Read Romans 5:9:

Since therefore we are now **justified by His blood**, much more shall we be saved by Him from the wrath of God. (RSV*)

By his blood we are now put right with God; how much more, then, will we be saved by him from God's anger! (GNB*) [Bold type is added.]

13. Sometimes, when the question is raised, "Why did Jesus have to die?" the answer is given because "without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin." (Hebrews 9:22) You might ask, "Well, why would that be necessary? What would that mean?" The reply sometimes comes: "Well, that's what the Bible says. I mean that's the way God said it had to be. If that's what He requires, then it's all right with Him. Why do I need to understand? I just want to know that it's all right with Him that He forgives us. What He had to do to feel all right about it is no business of mine."

14. It is very dangerous just to accept someone's statement—even if it is from the Bible—without asking for the meaning. That is what the ancient Jews did, and that is what the Pharisees did in Jesus day. Ellen White said:

Merely to hear or to read the word is not enough. He who desires to be profited by the Scriptures must meditate upon the truth that has been presented to him. By earnest attention and prayerful thought he must learn the meaning of the words of truth, and drink deep of the spirit of the holy oracles.

God bids us fill the mind with great thoughts, pure thoughts. He desires us to meditate upon His love and mercy, to study His wonderful work in the great plan of redemption. Then clearer and still clearer will be our perception of truth, higher, holier, our desire for purity of heart and clearness of thought. The soul dwelling in the pure atmosphere of holy thought will be transformed by communion with God through the study of Scriptures.—Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons 59.5-60.1. [Bold type is added.]**

15. Notice, too, the progression in Romans 5:3-5.

1. *Patience*. The Greek word thus translated as *hupomone* means "steadfast endurance." This is the type of endurance that tribulation develops in the one who maintains faith and who does not lose sight of the hope he or she has

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in Christ, even amid the trials and suffering that can make life so miserable at times.

2. *Experience*. The Greek word thus translated, *dokime*, means literally “the quality of being approved”; hence, “character,” or more specifically, “approved character.” The one who patiently endures trials can develop an approved character.

3. *Hope*. Endurance and approval naturally give rise to hope—the hope found in Jesus and the promise of salvation in Him. As long as we cling to Jesus in faith, repentance, and obedience, we have everything to hope for.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*,* for Sunday, November 5, 2017.

16. Read Romans 5:6-11. In what sense do we become sinners because of the sin of Adam and Eve? Is sin genetically inherited? If so, how? The Roman Catholic Church teaches that every son and daughter of Adam is born lost. In order for that condition to be rectified, s/he must be baptized as a Roman Catholic. The term used to describe that condition is *original sin*. Is original sin real? Which is more serious? The fact that we were born as sinners? Or, the fact that we vigorously sin ourselves? How does the death of Christ make us friends of God?
17. The good news, of course, is that God did not wait for us to do anything! He took action; and because of His love for us, He sent His Son—even while we were still sinners.
18. By studying the life and death of Jesus, we can learn the answers to most of the questions in the great controversy, and we can see Who has been telling us the truth all along! Would you prefer to have a Friend who tells the truth? Or, one who lies?
19. Again read Romans 5:9. What does it mean to say, “We are justified by His blood”? Or: “By His blood we are now put right with God”? And what is God’s anger or wrath?

God’s wrath, as Paul seems to describe it, is simply His turning away in loving disappointment from those who do not want Him anyway, thus leaving them to the inevitable consequences of their own rebellious choice.—A. Graham Maxwell, *I Want to be Free* 11; *You Can Trust the Bible* 75.

20. If we accept the idea that “by His blood” is a reference to His death on Calvary, how has that impacted us? Does His death take the place of our death? Does His life take the place of our life? Did we learn anything through the life and death of Christ about God and whether or not He has told us the truth about sin resulting in death? (Genesis 2:17; 3:1-4) Christ’s life and death show that God told the truth and that Satan lied about sin leading to death! Did Jesus die the death of the sinner? How was God involved?

Christ [on the cross] felt much as sinners will feel when the vials of God’s wrath shall be poured out upon them. Black despair like the pall of death will gather about their guilty souls, and then they will realize to the fullest extent the sinfulness of sin. Salvation has been purchased for them by the suffering and death of the Son of God.—Ellen G. White, *Pamphlet 169 - The Sufferings of Christ** (1869) 10.2; *Testimonies*,* vol. 2, 210.1; *ST*,* August 28, 1879, par. 1; *Maranatha** 271.3.

Christ felt the woe that sinners will feel when they awake to realize the burden of their guilt, to know that they have forever separated themselves from the joy and peace of Heaven.—Ellen G. White, *Story of*

*Jesus** 145.2.

Satan with his fierce temptations wrung the heart of Jesus. The Saviour could not see through the portals of the tomb. Hope did not present to Him His coming forth from the grave a conqueror, or tell Him of the Father's acceptance of the sacrifice. **He feared that sin was so offensive to God that Their separation was to be eternal. Christ felt the anguish which the sinner will feel when mercy shall no longer plead for the guilty race. It was the sense of sin, bringing the Father's wrath upon Him as man's substitute, that made the cup He drank so bitter, and broke the heart of the Son of God.**—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 753.2.

God's Spirit will not always be grieved. It will depart if grieved a little longer. After all has been done that God could do to save men, if they show by their lives that they slight Jesus' offered mercy, death will be their portion, and it will be dearly purchased. **It will be a dreadful death; for they will have to feel the agony that Christ felt upon the cross to purchase for them the redemption which they have refused.** And they will then realize what they have lost—eternal life and the immortal inheritance....—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church,** vol. 1, 124.1 (1855); *CCh** 41.3; *4bSG** 11.1 (1864). [Bold type and content in brackets are added.]

21. Read 1 Peter 2:21. We are to follow in His steps. Does that mean to persecution? Torture? And death? Many martyrs have died for their faith. Could one of them have been the sacrifice for our sins? Why? Or, why not? Or, was the death of Jesus different from the death of an ordinary human being? Of what did Jesus actually die? He died of separation from God. (Matthew 27:46)
22. Have we been transformed from the old sinful condition in which we feared God and loved sin into the new covenant condition in which we fear sin and love God? Are we frightened that we might not be acceptable to God? How many things do we do to try to make ourselves acceptable to God—to be saved?
23. How many things do we do every day and every week that we believe are primarily to make us more acceptable to our friends and our fellow church members? To God?
24. Read Romans 5:12. It was God's original plan that we should live forever! But, our sin has separated us from Him and from the tree of life. (Isaiah 59:2) And now, as a result, all of us are dying. Is it because of Adam's sin? Or, our own sin?
25. Martin Luther, trained as a lawyer, interpreted the book of Romans as a legal explanation of the plan of salvation. Most theologians from his day to ours have followed his example. Theology has been filled with long Latin terms which have been given very complicated legal meanings. Propitiation, expiation, justification, sanctification, etc. are thought to be the keys to salvation. *Salvation*—also from a Latin word—is derived from the Greek word *sozo* meaning "healing." So, is our salvation based on a legal transaction—in which case it would not be truly healing? Or, is it truly healing?
26. Read Romans 5:12-21. In this section Paul spelled out in somewhat complicated logic the tragedies which resulted from Adam's sin and the good news that resulted from Christ's righteousness. He noted first (Romans 5:13-14) that sin and death existed even before the law was spelled out on Mount Sinai. While there was apparently no clear carefully-worded law for a person like Abraham to follow, nevertheless, Abraham kept God's

commandments. (Genesis 26:5)

27. Does justification/pardon/forgiveness play a part in bringing peace? Have you ever been forgiven very generously by someone and, thereafter, been embarrassed to see that person because you remember how you wronged him? Does God want us to be avoiding Him for the rest of eternity because He so generously pardoned us? Mere forgiveness or pardon does not necessarily bring peace.
28. Many Christians today regard justification almost as an entitlement to salvation! It is true that God gives it as a gift. But, we certainly do not deserve it. We are not entitled to it.
29. Romans 5 has been the subject of an incredible variety of interpretations and understandings. It has been twisted to fit various theologians' understandings of the plan of salvation. It would be well for us to think of these words from Dr. E. J. Waggoner written in 1895 as an introduction to his study on the book of Romans.

In beginning this study it will be an encouragement to the reader if he will remember that it is simply a letter written to the church in Rome. We can not suppose that the congregation in Rome differed from the great body of Christians in general, and of them we read that "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called." 1 Cor. 1:26. The truest followers of Jesus have always been among "the common people." So in the church in Rome there were doubtless shopkeepers, artisans, day laborers, carpenters, gardeners, etc., and many servants in the families of wealthy citizens, together with a few who might hold some position of rank. When we consider that it was confidently expected that people of this sort would understand the letter, we may be encouraged to believe that the same class of people can understand it now.—Ellet J. Waggoner, *Signs of the Times*,* October 17, 1895; *SIT** 643.4.

30. While every Christian certainly prizes God's gift of salvation, Paul implied that for the serious Christian there are also things for us to do. The Bible suggests that we are saved by faith but judged by works. (Acts 16:31; Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; Revelation 20:12-13) How does that work? It certainly cannot mean that you must have a PhD in theology to understand this letter that Paul wrote to the ordinary people in the church at Rome.
31. All of mankind was condemned to live outside of the Garden of Eden by the one sin committed by Adam and Eve. But, that sin was nothing compared to the mass of sins that we as a race have added to that one original sin! But, God is prepared to set all of our sins aside and welcome us into eternal life with Him if we will just look to Jesus, accept His grace and His death on our behalf, believe His testimony about the Father, (John 16:25-27; Revelation 12:17) and make a daily commitment to study to show ourselves approved unto God. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
32. By beholding, we become changed and transformed into the image of the One we worship and admire. (GC 555.1) Pray that we may have an ever-improving, ever-clearer picture of the one true God.

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