

ROMANS 39 – TRUE FAITH OR FALSE FAITH?

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ROMANS 10:14-17

PROLOGUE: ZEAL WITHOUT TRUTH IS DEATH

- JEWS HAD A ZEAL FOR GOD, ESPECIALLY SINCE THEIR RETURN FROM THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY; HOWEVER, IT WAS NOT FOR GOD OF THE BIBLE BUT FOR THEIR IDEA OF GOD
 - PRIESTS CHEAPENED THE METAPHOR OF CHRIST BY OFFERING DEFILED (ἴκλ; ἁγία) SACRIFICES; THIS SIGNIFIED THAT GOD WAS SINFUL AND UNFIT TO JUDGE SIN OF OTHERS (MAL 1:4-10)
 - PRIESTS WERE TO TEACH THE PEOPLE GOD'S TRUTH BUT THEY ABDICATED THIS RESPONSIBILITY; THEIR TEACHINGS AND EXAMPLES EXCUSED SIN GIVING RISE TO UNBELIEF (MAL 2:7-9)
 - THUS, JUDAH (GENERAL POPULATION) DELIGHTED IN CALLING EVIL GOOD AND GOOD EVIL; THEIR EXCUSE, THERE IS NO JUSTICE WITH GOD—PRAGMATISTIC EXPEDIENCY; PATH OF LEAST RESISTANCE AND THE ENDS JUSTIFIES THE MEANS (MAL 3:17, 5:13-15)

PROLOGUE: ESSENCE OF SALVATION

- ESSENCE OF SALVATION IS A CHANGED HEART WHICH IS REVEALED BY ONE'S WORDS AND ACTIONS; IT IS NOT SIMPLY BASED ON BELIEF AS SATAN-DEMONS BELIEVE AND TREMBLE (JA 2:19)
 - CHANGED HEART IS AN ACT OF GOD ALONE AS OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS DEMONSTRATE
 - SINFUL INDIVIDUALS CANNOT MEANINGFULLY CALL JESUS, LORD; I.E., TRUTHFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE THAT HE IS GOD AND SUBMIT TO HIS TRUTH; THEIR WORDS AND ACTIONS BETRAY THEM (JUD 4:1-3)
 - THIS MEANS YOU BELIEVE JESUS CAME IN THE FLESH, DIED ON THE STAUIROS FOR SIN, AND RAISED BY THE FATHER; THIS IS THE ESSENCE OF SALVATION
 - BELIEF COUPLED WITH A CHANGED HEART JUSTIFIES THE SINNER BECAUSE CHRIST PAID THE SIN DEBT IMPUTING HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS TO THE REDEEMED SINNER FOR ETERNITY (JA 3:25-27)

PROLOGUE: PAUL ADDRESSES JEWS AND CHRISTIANS

- WHILE PAUL ADDRESSES WHY THE JEWS DID NOT RECEIVE THE NEW COVENANT HE ALSO IS WARNING CHRISTIANS, PRIMARILY GENTILES, TO AVOID THE SAME ERRORS OF UNBELIEF (RE 3:12-19)
 - MOSES WRITES THAT THE PERSON WHO DOES THE LAW SHALL LIVE (DE 18:2)
 - THIS IS NOT A CALL TO KEEP A SET OF RULES BUT A CALL TO SEEK UNDERSTANDING FROM GOD AND EXPLORE THE RAMIFICATIONS OF EACH STATUTE; CHRIST TAUGHT THEM OF THEIR FAILURE IN SERMON ON THE MOUNT; SEEKING TO KEEP A RULE WITHOUT A CHANGE IN NATURE YIELDS DEATH (PS 1:1-3, 119:12-16, MT 5:17-48)
 - SEEKING GOD'S UNDERSTANDING BRINGS LIFE AND LAW KEEPING IS A NATURAL CONSEQUENCE OF A NEW HEART (OT) AND NEW NATURE (NT) (ISA 1:6, ISA 13:14, 2CO 5:17, PE 1:12-16, 28-40)

PAUL COMES FULL CIRCLE

- IN TODAY'S LESSON, PAUL TIES HIS LOGIC TO SEVERAL POINTS HE STATED IN HIS OPENING STATEMENTS PRODUCING AN EXTREMELY STRONG LOGIC ARGUMENT
 - THIS IS A STRONG INDICATOR FOR THEOPNEUSTOS (ΘΕΟΠΝΕΥΣΤΟΙ), BREATHED OUT, BY GOD AND INSPIRED IN, INSPIRATION, BY PAUL PRODUCING THE VERY WORDS OF GOD THROUGH PAUL (2P 3:16-17)
 - PAUL BASES HIS DISCUSSION NOT ON HIS OWN LOGIC OR THOUGHTS BUT SOLIDLY ON GOD'S WORDS ALREADY BREATHED OUT TO OTHERS: OLD TESTAMENT
 - GOD GUARDS HIS WORD(S) AND WILL COMPLETE THEM EVEN INTO ETERNITY (DE 1:11-12, HEB 2:1-3)
 - THOSE WHO IGNORE GOD'S WORDS WILL GO INTO DESTRUCTION WITH SATAN (LEVIATHAN) (IS 27:1, RE 20:7-10)

EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD SHALL BE SAVED (RO 10:13)

- IN TODAY'S LESSON, PAUL DETAILS HOW THIS ABOVE STATEMENT OCCURS AND SHOWS HOW GOD IS THE ACTIVE AGENT, NOT MAN (1PE 1:10-12)
 - PETER WRITES THAT THE PROPHETS WHO BREATHED IN, INSPIRED, GOD'S WORDS DID NOT CLEARLY UNDERSTAND THE FULL IMPORT OF THEIR WRITINGS CONCERNING CHRIST DYING FOR SIN
 - NOR DO ANGELS UNDERSTAND THE MESSAGE OF SALVATION MAKING THEM POOR HERALDS TO THE LOST WHOM THEY WOULD RATHER ELIMINATE AS BLOTCHES AGAINST GOD'S HOLINESS
 - IT IS ONLY THROUGH THE MINISTRY OF THE INDWELLING HOLY SPIRIT (CHARISMA) THAT PEOPLE TODAY, VIA THE NEW COVENANT, CAN BRING THE MESSAGE OF HOPE TO THE LOST AND PERISHING OFFERING THEM THE SAME HOPE THE MESSENGER NOW POSSESSES VIA CHRIST

PAUL WORKS BACKWARDS

- PAUL ASKS A SERIES OF RHETORICAL QUESTIONS THAT ARE DESIGNED TO DIRECT ONE'S THINKING TO THE ONLY POSSIBLE CONCLUSION: GOD
 - JEWS: HOW CAN THEY CALL ON GOD WHOM THEY HAVE NOT BELIEVED? THEY CANNOT!
 - GENTILES: HOW CAN THEY BELIEVE IN A GOD WHOM THEY HAVE NOT HEARD? THEY CANNOT!
 - HOW CAN ANYONE HEAR UNLESS ONE COMES AND HERALDS THE GOOD NEWS? THEY CANNOT!
 - HOW CAN ANYONE BE A HERALD UNLESS ONE IS SENT? THEY CANNOT!
- THE HERALD, PREACHER, CAN ONLY BE SENT BY GOD TO CALL OUT THE MESSAGE GIVEN BY GOD WHICH IS EXACTLY WHAT CHRIST DID IN THE GOSPELS (JO 7:37-39; R 12-20)

HOW *TIMELY* ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO PREACH GOOD NEWS – GOSPEL

- THE ABOVE VERSE ORIGINALLY COMES FROM THE ISAIAH AND HAS BEEN TRADITIONALLY TRANSLATED AS BEAUTIFUL; HOWEVER, THERE IS EVIDENCE FOR AN ALTERNATIVE TRANSLATION THAT IS MORE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SCRIPTURE – TIMELY (IS 43:7)
 - GOD, VIA HABAKKUK SAID THAT HE WILL ACCOMPLISH HIS WORDS IN THEIR APPOINTED TIME; I.E., IN A TIMELY MANNER; THIS WAS ALSO REITERATED IN JEREMIAH (JAH 2:1-3; JR 1:11-12)
 - THIS WORD IS USED ONLY THREE TIMES AND IN TWO INSTANCES MEANS SUITABLE OR APPROPRIATE; THUS, TO BE AN APPROPRIATE OR SUITABLE MESSENGER ONE MUST BE TIMELY LESS THE MESSAGE COMES TOO LATE OR TOO EARLY
 - THE TRUE EMPHASIS IS THAT ONLY A SAVED SENT PERSON CAN BRING THE GOOD NEWS

SIGNS DO NOT PRODUCE SALVATION

- PAUL AGAIN QUOTES FROM ISAIAH WHO LAMENTS THAT FEW BELIEVED HIS MESSAGE FROM GOD HE HAS HERALDED (IS 53:1)
 - ISAIAH WAS INSPIRED BECAUSE HE SAW GOD'S GLORY, LIKE PAUL, BUT FEW BELIEVED HIS MESSAGE BECAUSE THEY WERE SEEKING SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS; NOT GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS (JO 13:36)
 - GOD DOES NOT REVEAL HIMSELF TO MAJORITY OF PEOPLE; THUS, THEY REMAIN IN THEIR SINFUL WORLDVIEW REJECTING ANY AND ALL TRUTH OF GOD (JO 9:19-24)
 - WHEN CHRIST CAME AND PERFORMED THE SIGNS DISCUSSED BY THE PROPHETS, MOST DID NOT BELIEVE BUT DEMANDED MORE SIGNS; MIRACLES DO NOT PRODUCE SALVATION (IS 35:4-6; MT 16:1-6)

WORD OF GOD PRODUCES SALVATION

- PAUL HARKENS BACK TO HIS EARLIER QUOTATION FROM HABAKKUK: JUSTIFIED SHALL LIVE BY FAITH (hab 2:4, RO 1:16-17)
 - PAUL BASED HIS DISCUSSION OF THE GOSPEL UPON IT BEING THE POWER OF GOD TO SAVE BOTH JEW AND GREEK AS IT REVEALS THE **RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD BY FAITH**, THUS THE RIGHTEOUS CAN ONLY LIVE BY FAITH BASED ON GOD'S WORD
 - SO FAITH WHICH LEADS TO RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUSTIFICATION COMES FROM HEARING THE WORD(S) OF CHRIST PREACHED BY ONE WHO IS ALSO SAVED AND SENT TO HERALD THE TRUTH TO OTHERS
 - IN ONE SENSE, EVERY CHRISTIAN LIVES A FAITH BEFORE OTHERS; I.E., IS A SENT ONE (mt 5:14-16)

FALSE BELIEVERS FOLLOW THE WAY OF CAIN IN BALAAM'S ERROR

- FALSE BELIEVERS, LOST, HAVE SLITHERED INTO CONGREGATIONS, MINGLING WITH THE SAVED TO PERVERT CHRIST'S SALVATION MESSAGE INTO SENSUALITIES (2CO6)
 - THESE PEOPLE RELY ON HYPNOTIC VISIONS TO DULL THE MINDS MAKING THE PLANTING OF FALSE BELIEFS EASIER WHICH LEADS TO DEFILEING OF THE FLESH, REJECTING OF AUTHORITIES AND BLASPHEMING THE GLORIOUS ONES (TRINITY) (1AC 7:33-36)
 - JUDE SAYS THEY ARE WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING; UNGODLY AND THUS UNABLE TO UNDERSTAND GOD'S TRUTHS (JO 1:18)
 - THEIR UNDERSTANDING SPRINGS FROM UNREASONING INSTINCTIVENESS LIKE ANIMALS (PS 73)
 - WITHOUT FEAR THEY ARE MALCONTENTS, SCOFFERS AND BOASTERS, UNTIL THEIR END COMES

FALSE BELIEVERS FOLLOW THE "WAY OF BALAAM"

- PETER ALSO DISCUSSES FALSE BELIEVERS WHO SECRETLY BRING IN DESTRUCTIVE HERESIES THAT DENY CHRIST AND HIS GOSPEL (2PI 2:1-9, 4:3-4, 2PI 2)
 - MANY WILL FOLLOW THEIR SENSUALITIES IN THE LAST DAYS SEEKING MYTHS AS TRUTHS BECAUSE THEY REJECT SOUND TEACHING BASED ON CHRIST'S WORDS
 - THEY HAVE AN APPEARANCE OF GODLINESS BUT DENY ITS POWER THUS PROVING THEMSELVES AS UNGODLY: LOVERS OF SELF, HEARTLESS, LIARS, WITHOUT SELF-CONTROL CONCEITED, ETC.
 - THEY INSTINCTIVELY BLASPHEMING CHRIST'S WORDS OF WHICH THEY ARE IGNORANT
 - FOLLOWING BALAAM'S WAY THEY SEEK GAIN FROM THEIR TREACHERY, PROMISING FREEDOM THEY ARE THEMSELVES SLAVES OF SIN, SEEKING TO ENSLAVE OTHERS TO THE SAME EVIL

CHURCHES ALSO FOLLOW THE WRONG WAYS

- CHURCHES ARE THE TRAINING GROUND FOR CHRISTIANS AND THUS THE BATTLEGROUND FOR DESTROYING TRUTH AND SUBSTITUTING ERROR TO KEEP SINNERS IN THEIR SIN (PT 4:11-24)
- PERGAMUM'S CHURCH ALLOWED BALAAM'S TEACHINGS TO INFILTRATE RESULTING IN IMMORALITY AND FALSE WORSHIP THAT ALLOWED GNOSTICISM TO REPLACE THE GOSPEL (RE 2:12-17)
- THYATIRA'S CHURCH ALLOWED A PROPHETESS A POSITION OF AUTHORITY AS SHE TAUGHT THE DEEP THINGS OF SATAN – IMMORALITY, SPIRITUAL AND PHYSICAL (RE 2:18-24)
- SARDIS' CHURCH WAS NEARLY DESTROYED BY FALSE BELIEFS (RE 3:1-6)
- LAODICEA'S CHURCH WAS BLIND, NAKED AND SPIRITUALLY POOR; CHRIST WAS READY TO DISCIPLINE THEM TO RETURN THEM TO THE TRUTH OF HIS WORD (RE 3:14-22)

GOD'S VOICE GOES TO ALL THE WORLD

- PAUL SAID THAT ALL PEOPLE KNEW OF GOD FOR HIS EXTERNAL WITNESS WAS PLAIN TO THEM VIA THE CREATION OF ALL THAT HAD BEEN MADE (RO 1:19-20)
- THIS SIMPLE BUT ELEGANT MESSAGE STREAMS FROM EVERY ASPECT OF CREATION (NATURE WHICH THEY PERSONIFIED AS A BLASPHEMY TO GOD) LEAVING THEM WITHOUT EXCUSE (PT 19:1-6)
- PAUL DEMONSTRATES THAT THIS WORD OF GOD WAS ENOUGH TO LEAVE EVERYONE WITHOUT EXCUSE OF KNOWING OF HIM; ESPECIALLY THE JEWS WHOSE BIBLE TOLD THEM THIS TRUTH
- UNGODLY PERSONIFY HIS CREATION, TURNING IT INTO IDOLATRY AS A BLASPHEMOUS REBUTTAL TO HIS TRUTH – EVOLUTION; COSMIC, BIOLOGICAL, GEOLOGIC, ETC.

JEWS WERE WARNED BY MOSES

- MOSES WARNED THE JEWS BEFORE THEY ENTERED THE PROMISE LAND THAT THEY WILL REJECT GOD AND RECEIVE PUNISHMENT AS THEY HAD REJECTED THE WORDS OF GOD (DE 32:14-36)
- GOD INDICATED THAT HE WOULD DRIVE THEM TO GREAT JEALOUSY BY THOSE WHO WERE NOT A NATION BECAUSE OF THEIR IDOLATRY WHICH WAS ACTUALLY WORSHIPING SATAN
- THE JEWS TOOK REFUGE IN A ROCK THAT WAS NOT GOD'S ROCK AND WHEN HE DISCIPLINED THEM THEIR ROCK FAILED; YET, MOST WOULD NOT TURN TO HIM
- FOR NEARLY 1500 YEARS THE JEWS HAD GOD'S WORDS BUT TWISTED THEM TO JUSTIFY THEIR OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS WHEN THEY HAD NO RIGHTEOUSNESS; THEY NEEDED A CHANGED HEART (DE 10:17-21)

FOUND BY THOSE WHO DID NOT SEEK ME

- PAUL CONTINUES THIS DICHOTOMY THAT CONTRASTS THE JEWS UNBELIEF WITH THE GENTILES BELIEF IN CHRIST
 - THE GENTILES DID NOT SEEK GOD UNTIL GOD BEGAN OPENING THEIR EYES IN THE AXIAL AGE THROUGH CONTACT WITH THE JEWS AND EXPOSURE TO THEIR SCRIPTURES
 - MOST OF THE GENTILES SIMPLY MADE NEW WORKS-BASED RELIGIONS BUT THOSE WHO WERE CALLED SOUGHT GOD TO BECOME GENTILE PROSELYTES AND LATER, CHRISTIANS
 - JEWS TREATED PROSELYTES AS SECOND-CLASS BELIEVERS; HOWEVER, CHRISTIANS WERE ALL EQUAL BEFORE GOD (RO 3:9-11, 34, 3:1)

PAUL LONGS FOR THE JEWS' SALVATION

- PAUL EARLIER WROTE OF HIS INTENSE DESIRE FOR THE JEWS TO ACCEPT CHRIST WHICH IS ALSO THE DESIRE OF CHRIST (MT 23:17-26, RO 9:1-5)
 - RATHER THAN RETURN TO WALKING AS HUMANS IN THE LIGHT OF GOD; THEY CHOSE TO REMAIN AS BRUTE BEASTS IN THEIR REJECTION OF GOD'S TRUTH
 - THEY CONSIDERED THE GENTILES AS BEASTS, UNWORTHY OF MERCY OR TRUTH OF GOD; YET, IT WAS TO GENTILES THAT GOD SENT HIS GOSPEL
 - THE JEWS, EVEN TODAY, DESPISE GENTILES (TALMUD) AND THEIR AIM IS TO ENSLAVE ALL GENTILES
 - THE BELIEF IN CHRIST DRIVES THEM TO GREAT ANGER AND WILL DO SO UNTIL THEIR CALLING COMES WHEN THEY WILL MOURN HIM WHOM THEY MURDERED (2T 12:10)

EPILOGUE: FALSE BELIEVERS FOLLOW THE WAY OF CAIN IN BALAAM'S ERROR

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THE WAY TO SALVATION: CHRIST'S WORD ALONE

- THE LOST HAVE MANY PATHS TO GOD SUCH THAT THE ONLY COMMONALITY IS THE UNIVERSAL GOODNESS OF MAN – ANTI-THESIS OF HOW THE BIBLE DESCRIBES SINFUL PEOPLE
- THE JEWS REJECTED MESSIAH, CHOOSING TO LIVE IN THEIR OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS, EVEN TODAY
- TODAY'S ISRAEL HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH GOD'S CALLING FORTH HIS PEOPLE: ABOMINATION
- CHURCHES SINCE TIME OF CHRIST HAVE BEEN OVERCOME BY THE WORLD OFTEN INCORPORATING THE WORLD'S PHILOSOPHIES INTO THEIR BELIEFS, WHICH CHRIST WARNED AGAINST
- CHRISTIANS OFTEN REJECT SOUND TEACHING SEEKING PLEASURES, MYTHS AND SENSUALITIES THAT SUPPORT THEIR SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS BY IGNORING REVELATION'S WARNINGS