


A PRELUDE TO *BIBLICAL* EVANGELISM



A large, ancient tree with thick, gnarled roots growing over stone ruins. The tree's roots are massive and spread out, some resting on the ground and others draped over the stone walls of an old building. The stone is weathered and mossy. The background shows more greenery and trees, suggesting a jungle or forest setting. The overall scene is one of nature reclaiming old human structures.

THE FRUIT OF
THE RIGHTEOUS IS A
TREE OF LIFE,
AND HE WHO IS WISE
WINS SOULS.

PROVERBS 11:30 NASB

PRINCIPLES FOR BIBLICAL *EVANGELISM* FOUND IN JOHN 4, “THE WOMAN AT THE WELL.”

TAKE

- TAKE THE INITIATIVE! JN. 4:6-9

OFFER

- OFFER GOD’S MERCY! JN. 4:10-14

IDENTIFY

- IDENTIFY SPIRITUAL NEEDS! JN. 4:9-10

CONFRONT

- CONFRONT SIN JN! 4:16-18

REJECT

- REJECT FALSE WORSHIP! JN. 4:19-24

REVEAL

- REVEAL CHRIST! JN. 4:25-26

CHAOS, CORRUPTION, AND THE CHRISTIAN RESPONSE

1. UPENDING GOD'S LAW
2. THE *HEART* OF THE PROBLEM IS THE *HEART*!

COMPREHENSIVE CORRUPTION

- When it comes to man's fallen nature, Scripture is clear about the depth and breadth of its **defilement**. The **APOSTLE PAUL** delivers a blunt assessment of man's sinful corruption in his epistle to the **ROMANS**.

“AS IT IS WRITTEN, “THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE; THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD; ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE.” “THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE, WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING,” “THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS”; “WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS”; “THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD, DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS, AND THE PATH OF PEACE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN.” “THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES.” (ROM. 3:10–18)

- It's worth noting that none of the condemning statements in the above passage originated with **PAUL**. With the words, ***"AS IT IS WRITTEN,"*** **PAUL** indicates that he's quoting extensively from the **OLD TESTAMENT**—specifically from the **PSALMS** and **ISAIAH**. God's Word has always been clear and consistent about the utter **defilement** of sinful mankind. In that sense, this statement is essential to our understanding of the **CHAOS** that surrounds us.
- **PAUL IS SHOWING US THE PATHOLOGY OF **SIN** AND ITS COMPREHENSIVE CORRUPTION OF THE SINNER'S **CHARACTER, CONVERSATION, AND CONDUCT.****
- Regarding man's **CHARACTER**, Paul writes, ***"THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE"*** (**ROM. 3:10**). From the perspective of heaven, all sinners stand equally guilty. No amount of good works can counterbalance the weight of our sin.

- That's why the **IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST** is crucial for our salvation. Notice (2 COR. 5:21) **"HE MADE HIM WHO KNEW NO SIN TO BE SIN ON OUR BEHALF, SO THAT WE MIGHT BECOME THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN HIM."**
- Moreover, **PAUL** says, **"THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS"** (ROM. 3:11). In his epistle to the Ephesians, Paul describes the futility of the **SINFUL MIND**—that it's **DARKENED**, **IGNORANT**, and **CALLOUS** (EPH. 4:17–19).

"NOT ONLY IS THE SINNER INCAPABLE OF **RIGHTEOUSNESS, BUT HE'S ALSO INCAPABLE OF **UNDERSTANDING IT**."**

- **PAUL** adds, **"THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD; ALL HAVE TURNED **ASIDE**"** (ROM. 3:11–12). **THIS IS A DAMNING COMMENTARY ON THE RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD.**

- **PAUL** is identifying them all as **SATANIC COUNTERFEITS**, sending men away from the truth about God. In the words of (ISA. 53:6), **“ALL OF US LIKE SHEEP HAVE GONE ASTRAY, EACH OF US HAS TURNED TO HIS OWN WAY.”** MAN’S NATURAL DISPOSITION IS TO FLEE FROM GOD, AND HE INVENTS FALSE RELIGION TO ACCOMMODATE HIS REBELLION.
- **PAUL** concludes, **“TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE”** (ROM. 3:12).

“MAN’S SIN HAS THOROUGHLY CORRUPTED HIS CHARACTER, LEAVING HIM IGNORANT, REBELLIOUS, DEVIANT, AND USELESS.”

- **THERE'S MORE.** Not only is the sinner's **CHARACTER CORRUPT**—so is his **CONVERSATION**. **PAUL** writes, **“THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE”** (V. 13).
- We all try to be conscientious about **BAD BREATH**. But in a graphic metaphor, **PAUL** says the **SPEECH** of the wicked carries the **STENCH OF DEATH**—their mouths are like **FILTHY, PUTRID, OPEN GRAVES**. He adds, **“WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING”** (V. 13). Like a baited fishhook, they deceive in order to catch and kill. Even their words are venomous and deadly—**“THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS”** (V. 13).
- In **VERSE 14**, the apostle abandons all subtleties—no disguised hooks, no sneaking poison—and says plainly that the sinner's **“MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS.”** It is little wonder that Scripture says, **“THE TONGUE IS A FIRE,” AND THAT “NO ONE CAN TAME THE TONGUE; IT IS A RESTLESS EVIL AND FULL OF DEADLY POISON”** (JAM. 3:6, 8).

- As we see almost routinely today, **THE MOUTH OF THE UNREGENERATE MAN IS CAPABLE OF GREAT DESTRUCTION.**
- **Finally, PAUL'S *Condemnation*** moves to the corruption of man's **CONDUCT**. He writes, ***"THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD, DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS, AND THE PATH OF PEACE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN"*** (VV. 15–17). Human history vividly illustrates the truth of those chilling words.
- In (JN. 8:44), **JESUS** describes the ***devil*** as ***"A MURDERER FROM THE BEGINNING."*** ***Satan*** is the archetypal murderer, and his followers are likewise ***"SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD."*** **HUMANS ARE DANGEROUS.**
- In terms of lives lost, the **six years** of **WORLD WAR II** are some of the costliest the world has ever known. As many as **85 million** people died—at least **50 million** were civilians. ***GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY, SINFUL MAN WILL ATTEMPT TO EXTERMINATE HIS ENEMIES.***

- While we don't see the same staggering death toll in wars today, man's bloodlust still rages. Since **1973**, the United States has committed its own **HOLOCAUST**, executing more than **60 MILLION BABIES** in what should be the safest place for them—their mother's womb.

“IF YOU MAKE LAWS THAT ALLOW PEOPLE TO **KILL**, THEY WILL KILL. IF YOU ALLOW THEM TO **RIOT**, THEY’LL RIOT.”

“IF YOU ALLOW THEM TO **BREAK** WINDOWS, **LOOT** BUSINESSES, **BURN** POLICE STATIONS, AND **RUN ROUGHSHOD** OVER WHOLE COMMUNITIES, THEY WILL.”

“THE **UNREDEEMED HEART** HAS NO INTEREST IN **PEACE**—PAUL SAYS IT IS BENT IN THE PURSUIT OF **BLOODSHED**, **DESTRUCTION**, AND **MISERY.**”

- The apostle concludes his condemnation with the summary statement, ***“THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES” (ROM. 3:18)***. That’s the driving reality behind the rebellion and wretchedness that surround us—this world does not fear God.
- (PROV. 16:6) says, ***“BY THE FEAR OF THE LORD ONE KEEPS AWAY FROM EVIL.”***
- WHERE THERE IS ***NO FEAR OF GOD—NO SENSE OF ETERNAL **CULPABILITY**, **GUILT**, AND **PUNISHMENT*****—THE RESTRAINTS HAVE BEEN REMOVED AND ***HUMANITY IS ABLE TO LIVE OUT ITS **CORRUPT, DESTRUCTIVE** DESIRES.***

“AND THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT WE SEE PLAYING OUT BEFORE OUR EYES TODAY.”

THE *HIGH COST* OF *REJECTING* GOD

- We rightly shudder at the eternal consequences of sin, and the perpetual punishment that awaits *UNREPENTANT SINNERS*. But we would do well to also consider the *TEMPORAL COST OF SIN*. We need to recognize how it *POLLUTES, PERVERTS*, and *CORRUPTS*—and particularly its *DESTRUCTIVE INFLUENCE* on the sinner.
- *PAUL* wrote about the *CONSEQUENCES OF REJECTING GOD* in his epistle to the Romans. *“FOR THE WRATH OF GOD IS REVEALED FROM HEAVEN AGAINST ALL UNGODLINESS AND UNRIGHTEOUSNESS OF MEN WHO SUPPRESS THE TRUTH IN UNRIGHTEOUSNESS, BECAUSE THAT WHICH IS KNOWN ABOUT GOD IS EVIDENT WITHIN THEM; FOR GOD MADE IT EVIDENT TO THEM”* (ROM. 1:18–19).