

## Romans Lesson 2

**Reading: Romans 1:18-3:23**

**Memory Verse: Romans 3:10-12**

**Definitions:**

The Law – rules and regulations given to Moses by God and recorded in the first five books of the Old Testament

Righteousness – God’s perfect goodness

Depraved – rejected, worthless

**After reading the lesson, answer the questions using the following link:**

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe4IrLXytqQH2lxqCf\\_Ob0eJnO9ya0EpFevkKudz9SIKkFh3A/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe4IrLXytqQH2lxqCf_Ob0eJnO9ya0EpFevkKudz9SIKkFh3A/viewform?usp=sf_link)

Three Brothers, Ron, Jon, and Don, were hiking to the West Coast to look for gold. One day they found themselves on the edge of a huge Canyon - The Grand Canyon. In front of them was a huge hole in the ground. As far as they could see to the left, there was a huge hole in the ground. As far as they could see to the right, there was a huge hole in the ground.

Ron turned around and looked back at the way they came.

“Hey, look,” he said. “There is no hole behind us. We can go that way.”

“But wait,” Jon said. “We do not want to go that way. We have been there already and besides; the West Coast is this way.”

“So, what should we do?” Asked Ron.

“I know,” piped up Don. “We can jump across.” Before either of his brothers could say anything, Don leaped off the cliff out into space. He went about a mile - almost all of it straight down.

## Romans Lesson 2

“That did not work too well,” said Jon. “But he never was a very good jumper. He did not even get a running start.”

John backed up about 50 feet and took off running. He sprang from the cliff with all his might and reached for the other side of the canyon. He missed by about a mile.

Ron watched as his brother plummeted downward. “Hmmm,” he said to himself. “Those two are not very bright. Now they will never find any gold. That is what they get for rushing off without making any plans.”

He pulled some tools out of his backpack, chopped down some nearby trees, and made himself a springboard. He piled up rocks and made a huge hill. He cut some huge branches and threaded them through the arms of his spare shirt to make wing-like sort of things.

Then he climbed to the top of the pile of rocks, stretched out his wings, ran down as fast as he could, jumped on the springboard, and launched himself into space...

He went about three feet farther than his brothers before joining them at the bottom of the canyon.

### **The moral of the story**

This is how a lot of people think about getting to heaven. Some suppress the reality of their inability to come to God and live life as if God did not exist. Others compare themselves with other people thinking they only need to outperform their neighbor to come to God. Still, others know a great deal about God and think they can come to God on account of their great knowledge. All these methods fail to do the one thing God tells us to do - believe in Jesus Christ. And all of them fail. They do not even come close. In fact, they have a far better chance of jumping across the Grand Canyon than making it to heaven by any of these means.

## Romans Lesson 2

We all like to think we are at least “sort of” good people. But we cannot be righteous on our own. We are all born sinners by nature. It’s just the way we are. Paul knew this.

Paul wrote a logical letter. He knew that the Romans would have to understand sin in order to understand the message of salvation by grace. So, he began his letter by describing three basic kinds of sinners.

### **Those who suppress the truth (1:18-32)**

Every person who has ever lived has had some knowledge of God. Some people and cultures have had more knowledge than others, but God has blessed everyone with a basic understanding of himself. The first kind of sinner Paul describes is the Gentile who suppresses this knowledge (1:8). To suppress means to restrain or prevent from spreading. Those who suppress the truth of God restrain the truth in themselves and work to prevent others from following the truth. Instead of worshiping the true God and creator of all things, they worship idols created by men who cannot move, see, or hear (1:23; Ps. 115:4-8). They ignore basic biology by exchanging natural marriage relationships with unnatural ones (1:26-27). Despite knowing God is righteous, they not only commit all manner of sin but encourage others to do so as well (1:32).

### **Those who are hypocrites (2:1-16)**

The second kind of sinner is the hypocrite. This is the type of person who judges other people and condemns them for the sinful things they do. Yet, this person turns around and commits the same types of sin (2:1). A hypocrite knows God well enough to see when others suppress the truth of God by living in disobedience, but they overlook the fact that they commit the same types of sin. They also fail to acknowledge that God is kind and patient with sinners, not wanting any to perish but to come to repentance (2:4; 1 Pet. 3:9).

## Romans Lesson 2

### Those who know God's law (2:17-29)

The third type of sinner is the Jew who has the fullest knowledge of God. Paul speaks of two types of laws: the law written on human hearts (2:15) and the law written on stone tablets (Ex. 31:18). The law written on human hearts is the basic truth of God that God has given to everyone. The law written on stone tablets is the special law God gave to Moses and the Israelites. The Law of Moses gave the Jews the fullest knowledge about God and offered greater privilege to them over the Gentiles. Despite having greater knowledge and privilege, this type of sinner fails to live according to God's law (1:17-23)

In God's sight, all these sinners are equally guilty. They have all sinned, and they are all separated from God because of their sin. Some of these people might claim: "We did not know we were wrong. We did not know about God." According to the Bible, that is not true. God has revealed himself to everyone.

If you think that you do not fit into any of these categories, think again. Paul states very plainly that neither Jew nor Gentile has flawlessly upheld God's laws (3:20) and the whole world stands accountable to him (3:19). Romans 3:23 says that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. All means everyone - even you (unless you have already seen your need for God and trusted in his way of salvation, the Lord Jesus Christ).

### The natural law

Earlier, this lesson said that every person who has ever lived has had some knowledge of God and this is the law written on every human heart (2:15). This is called the natural law or the natural revelation. It is called the natural revelation because it reveals truth about God through nature. What does the world know about God through nature?

1. God is the creator (Ps. 19:1-4) who alone should be worshiped (Is. 44:9-20).
2. He created men and women who are given to each other in marriage (Rom. 1:24-27).

## Romans Lesson 2

3. God is good (Acts 14:16-17) and we ought to be good like him (Rom. 2:14-15).
4. God is a righteous judge and will bring judgment on sinners (Rom. 1:32).

No matter who your audience is, whether foreign or domestic, English speaking or not, they know these basic things. In fact, missionaries have traveled to remote villages to discover tribes who believe there is a God simply because of what they know of him through the creation. Missionaries find these tribes very teachable and responsive to the gospel. This revelation is useful to us as well because contained in the natural revelation are the starting elements of the gospel. There is a creator God who is good and demands that the people he created also be good. He is a righteousness judge who will bring judgment on evil doers. It is at this point your listener will need to know that they have failed to always do good and so are subject to God's judgement. This penalty is everlasting torment. Jesus came to shed his blood to accept the penalty for our evil deeds and so we can be spared from this fate, become a disciple of Christ, and spend eternity in God's glorious kingdom.