



World Christian Fellowship

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Romans 96 Ignorance of Israel Romans 10:1-3

Romans 10:1-3, *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved.²For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.³For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.*

Romans chapter 9 is about unbelief of Israel.

Paul presenting the doctrine of justification by grace through faith in Christ, person, and work. As he presents that people are going to say, if it's so true and if it's from God why didn't the Jews, God's people, believe it?

Paul must answer that and that's why he writes 9, 10 and 11, to show how it is that the Jews have rejected.

Israel's unbelief in chapter 9 emphasized that they were unbelieving because of the sovereign elective choice of God.

God didn't choose them all. Chapter 9 is an issue of election and sovereign choice.

But the issue of chapter 10 is an issue of unbelief.

- If you have salvation, you have the sovereign election of God and you have the faith of an individual.
- If you have no salvation, the loss of hope in Christ, it is because you have sovereign choice and your unbelief. (Chapter 9)

Like an airplane to take off two things are necessary:

Thrust and lift.

If you have lift without thrust, you don't get off.

If you have thrust without lift, you don't get off.

You must have thrust with lift.

The election of God and the belief of an individual, or the rejection of God and the unbelief.

That's why Paul brings chapter 10 in to show the balance. Lest we think that God made choices independent of the choices that men made.

So, Paul wants to demonstrate then the wilful unbelief and the ignorance of Israel.

Romans chapter 9 was very offensive to a Jew.

Very offensive to find out that God hadn't elected all of them to salvation.

So how did Paul begin chapter 9 when he knew it would offend the Jews?

Paul began it very tenderly.

Romans 9:2-3, *that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. ³For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh,*

Very tender, sensitive, desiring greatly that Israel be saved, even to the point where he would abandon his own salvation if he could accomplish theirs.

Paul knows it will offend and he doesn't want them to think that he is uncaring or indifferent.

Now **chapter 10** is going to be equally offensive to them, because it's going to mark out their ignorance and unbelief.

Paul begins it the same way with the same tenderness, with the same graceful spirit, with the same heartfelt love that he expressed in chapter 9.

One of the words that appears particularly in the New Testament many times is the word, **Truth**.

John 8:32, *And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."*

Jesus called them to truth, to know truth.

John 8:45, *But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me.*

John 16:7, *Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.*

John 1:14, *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

John 14:6, *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*

John 17:17, *Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.*

John 16:13, *However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.*

John 18:37, Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."

Called the gospel the gospel of truth.

2 Corinthians 11:10, As the truth of Christ is in me, no one shall stop me from this boasting in the regions of Achaia.

2 Thessalonians 2:10, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

2 Thessalonians 2:13, But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth,

Those who believe are not damned.

Lord Jesus Christ put a premium on the truth, the knowledge of the truth.

Men must know the truth, the divine truth, the life- changing truth, the sin-cleansing truth, the salvation-giving truth, the soul-transforming truth, the heaven-opening truth.

2 Timothy 3:7, *always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

Men must know truth.

But they find it so elusive.

Pilate even said rather sarcastically, "What is truth?"

But no persons on the face of the earth ever made a more extensive, constant effort to find the truth, seemingly, than the Jews.

They occupied themselves in an effort to understand God's truth.

They pursued knowledge about God as a way of life.

If you were a child born into the Jewish religious culture, you would begin from your very early years to learn the Old Testament, to learn the tradition, to learn the commentaries on Scripture so that you might not only know.

They would be educated from their young age all their lifelong in what they believe to be the truth.

The Jewish learning process was basically led by a group of people called scribes.

They were often called "rabbi."

Matthew 23:7-8, *greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi.'* ⁸ *But you, do not be called 'Rabbi'; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren.*

- They were the key teachers, possessors of truth.
- They had completed their education.
- They had been ordained because they showed such proficiency in knowledge and teaching.
- They then took the role of teaching the people.

Their power and their influence were great, and it was directly attached to their knowledge. They supposedly knew the truth. From all over the world young Jews would migrate to Jerusalem because there were the greatest of the rabbis, scribes, and teachers.

These young Jews would stream into Jerusalem to sit at the feet of one or another of these great teachers.

The apostle Paul, when a young Jew, selected Gamaliel to be his teacher and came and sat at his feet.

Acts 22-3, *“I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers’ law, and was zealous toward God as you all are today.*

Now in the time of Jesus Jerusalem had become a citadel of knowledge, and pursuit of the truth.

- The scribes were venerated.
- The scribes were respected.
- They were honoured.
- They were dignified.

The people believed that they had a certain mystical knowledge of secret things that no one else could find and no one else could understand.

They had some way of getting behind the Scripture to some mystical meaning. They came to learn the mysteries that the rabbis could extract from behind the obvious statements of Scripture.

They also believed that these teachers had a kind of sovereignty, a kind of authority that was all wrapped up in this sort of secret knowledge.

Story in the Talmud about High Priest walking on the street and two scribes.

Those who could teach had power.

Those who could teach mystical things that no one else could see had greater power.

They were the interpreters of God's law.

When a scribe passed by, it says everyone stood, except the tradesmen who were at work. They were excused. Everyone else stood up as they came down the road.

- They were called rabbi.
- They were called teacher.
- They were called master, same as teacher really.
- They preferred was called them as father.

Important feasts or festivals or banquets were always ornamented by placing prominent, well-known and respected rabbis at key places in the feast.

They always sat in the highest places.

Tombs of rabbis were venerated with superstitious awe.

They grew to be surrounded by legends and sagas of their deeds which were always magnified.

Since the Old Testament was written in Hebrew and the people in Jesus' time and the apostles' time spoke primarily Aramaic, the scribes also had another function and that was to translate the Hebrew text into Aramaic for the people.

So, the people were very dependent on these men, who supposedly lived to know God's truth and to propagate it to others.

V 2, *"But not according to knowledge,"*

V 3, *"for they, being ignorant of God's righteousness."*

Who Apostle Paul is talking about?

Israel.

Israel does not have knowledge.

Israel is ignorant.

What an incredible statement, that these people whose very life had been bound up in the pursuit of knowledge and the pursuit of truth had no knowledge and were ignorant of the truth.

Matthew 22:29, *Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God.*

You are ignorant.

John 8:19, *Then they said to Him, "Where is Your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also."*

You don't know Me, and you don't know God either.

John 8:54, *Jesus answered, "If I honour Myself, My honour is nothing. It is My Father who honours Me, of whom you say that He is your God."*

You have not known Him.

They celebrated their knowledge, but they really didn't have it.

John 9:20-23, *His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; ²¹ but by what means he now sees we do not know, or who opened his eyes we do not know. He is of age; ask him. He will speak for himself."²² His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed already that if anyone confessed that He was Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue. ²³ Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."*

They don't know what's going on.

They are confronted by the leaders.

John 9:28-29, *Then they reviled him and said, "You are His disciple, but we are Moses' disciples. ²⁹ We know that God spoke to Moses; as for this fellow, we do not know where He is from."*

They didn't know who Christ was!

They didn't know where He was from.

They totally miscalculated.

John 9:40-41, *Then some of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words, and said to Him, "Are we blind also?" ⁴¹ Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, 'We see.' Therefore your sin remains.*

They didn't know.

They thought they knew but they didn't know.

They had no knowledge.

Acts 3:17, *"Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers.*

Through ignorance you did it. They didn't know. They thought they knew but they did not know.

They didn't know who God was,

They didn't know who Christ was.

They missed it all.

Luke 19:44, *and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation."*

This isn't a new problem.

Isaiah 5:13, *Therefore my people have gone into captivity, Because they have no knowledge; Their honourable men are famished, And their multitude dried up with thirst.*

They have no knowledge, they don't know.

But it's a sad thing that they thought they knew.

It is the toughest kind of person to reach.

It's fine if you don't know and you know you don't know. But when you don't know and you think you know, you are trapped.

Hosea 4:6, *My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.*

They were destroyed because of a lack of knowledge. It wasn't that they admitted it. It was that they wouldn't admit it.

They were bound to their ignorance in an illusion.

Romans 2:17-24, *Indeed you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God,¹⁸ and know His will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law,¹⁹ and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness,²⁰ an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law.²¹ You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal?²² You who say, "Do not commit adultery," do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?²³ You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonour God through breaking the law?²⁴ For "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you," as it is written.*

You think you know but you don't know.

Look at Paul's testimony.

1 Timothy 112:13, *And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry,¹³ although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.*

The abysmal ignorance of unbelief, that was Paul's own testimony.

Throughout the history of Israel, they had been in the ignorance of unbelief.

They thought they knew, yet they didn't know.

God was speaking through the prophets. They didn't believe it. They thought they had the truth and they missed it.

So, through their history Israel has suffered. They have walked a path of pain, turmoil, sorrow, suffering, dispossessed, judged, hated, and maligned.

It has been hard for them to understand why they suffer so much because they think they know. They don't know.

Jesus Christ came into the world to reveal truth. But Israel was ignorant of that truth.

Now Israel's ignorance becomes the theme of this chapter.

V 1, *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved.*

The tenderness of his feeling for the Jew spills over. So, he expresses the deep desire and prayed to God for the salvation of Israel.

Paul says "*brethren*,"

"*My heart's desire,*" or my delight, or my good pleasure, it's translated sometimes, or my deepest satisfaction.

The greatest joy for Paul and it says "*prayer to God,*" my greatest satisfaction and my greatest prayer that conveys the idea of begging, pleading.

My greatest desire, my greatest pleading with God is for Israel's salvation.

Don't think that Paul is indifferent spilling out data about God's sovereign election without a heart for the lost.

His desire is so deep and strong that his heart cannot rest in complacent theological indifference. It is drawn unceasingly to a beseeching, begging, supplication to God, it says, for Israel that they might be saved. They were in his heart.

Wasn't he the apostle to the Gentiles?

Yes, but it was the Jews who were his people.

Jews who were the marked people of God and it was the Jews who were captive in unbelief and forfeiting infinite, indescribable blessing and they were in his heart.

You pray for those whom you care.

So, Paul says my heart's desire and my prayer for Israel.

Paul's prayer is for them that they might be saved. That was the longing of his heart.

Paul writes to the Corinthians that he became all things to all men that by any means he might win some. Great cry of his heart.

This is not a hopeless melancholy. This isn't some kind of unfulfilled feeling, some kind of exercise in futility.

It is a constraint to pray. Paul prayed because he believed God heard and answered prayer. He believed it could happen.

He believed that Israel could be saved.

He believed that Jews could come to know their Messiah and their Saviour. These are feelings of love and concern that pour out in a prayer to God that is a viable prayer, that is an answerable prayer, not an exercise in emotion.

What gentle forgiveness. He's very much in line with the Saviour and Stephen, who prayed for their killers.

Jesus: "*Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.*"

Stephen: "*Lay not this sin to their charge.*"

Here is Paul who has been maligned, persecuted, and ridiculed by the Jews, who has been tracked down by the Judaizers who

have tried to undo his teaching, who have persecuted him with zeal.

my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved.

The word "saved" means delivered out of disaster, delivered out of judgment, delivered out of sin, rescued from the tragedy of unbelief.

Now the very fact that Paul prays for this means it's a possibility. So don't let your theology of the sovereignty of God eliminate the possibility of people being saved, and we ought still to be praying with all our heart for those that are outside Christ.

Israel's salvation is possible, individual Jews can come to know the Saviour. Paul's prayer indicates that.

- We are not supposed to sit back and try to figure out God's decree.
- We are supposed to proceed with prayer and evangelism.

When people get bound up in this sovereignty of God is they can become very cold and very indifferent and lose the balance.

They really like it in **Romans 9**, and they may never get out of there. So, they don't get to **Romans 10** and hear the passionate prayer of Paul for the salvation of the lost that is a viable prayer.

Don't let anybody ever tell you are not to pray for the unsaved. That's not true.

Paul praying for the unsaved. Don't ever allow anyone to suggest to you a one-dimensional view of God's redemptive program as if it all depended only on Him and had nothing to do with the individual responding.

- if you really have the heart of God your theology won't turn off your compassion anyway.
- if your theology turned off your compassion, it's bad theology.

Paul reveals his great compassion and concern for the salvation of the Jews which he believes can happen and that's what he pours out his heart to see happen.

Why is Paul so stressed with this?

V 2, *For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.*

Because I bear them witness.

The word means to affirm something you have seen and heard.
I have first-hand information.

Paul did.

He was a first-hand Jew.

Galatians 1:13-14, *For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. ¹⁴And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.*

He says I bear witness.

I bear witness that they have a zeal for God.

How do you know that?

I had it.

- I was so zealous for what I thought was the truth of God and the tradition.
- I was so zealous for that that I relentlessly persecuted the church of Jesus Christ.
- I did all I could to slaughter the Christians.
- I was zealous for God.

Philippians 3:5-6, *circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews;*

concerning the law, a Pharisee; ⁶concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

Paul knew first-hand the zeal for God that characterizes a Jew, so zealous.

In his testimony to Agrippa.

Acts 26:5-11, *They knew me from the first, if they were willing to testify, that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. ⁶And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers. ⁷To this promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain. For this hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused by the Jews. ⁸Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead?⁹ "Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. ¹⁰This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. ¹¹And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities.*

Paul says our twelve tribes earnestly serving God day and night hope to come to the fulfilment of God's promise made to the fathers.

Paul says I was up to my neck in the zeal for God that characterizes Judaism.

I really had a zeal for God.

I really thought I had the knowledge.

Acts 22:3-5, *“I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers’ law, and was zealous toward God as you all are today. ⁴I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women, ⁵as also the high priest bears me witness, and all the council of the elders, from whom I also received letters to the brethren, and went to Damascus to bring in chains even those who were there to Jerusalem to be punished.*

I persecuted Christianity unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.

So, Paul had given his testimony in a lot of places that he was up to his ears with zeal.

Paul understood the Jews' desire to see the promise of God fulfilled. To fulfil the commandments of God, to accomplish the purposes of God as they so wrongly understood them.

But they were zealous for God.

V 2, *For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.*

Now when zeal is related to knowledge it's a blessed thing.
But when zeal is misinformed, it's a dangerous thing.

The Jews had zeal, but not according to ***epignosis***.

- They had ***gnosis***, sort of a head knowledge, superficial knowledge.
- They had information but they had no ***epignosis***, deep knowledge.

They had the information.

What kind of information they had?

Head knowledge like Paul.

1 Corinthians 8:1, *Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.*

- They had enough intellectual data in their heads to be proud but not true knowledge that makes you humble.
- They didn't have the true knowledge that brings holiness, that brings humility.

Paul prayed for the Ephesians.

Ephesians 1:17-18, *that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him,¹⁸ the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,*

Paul prays for the Ephesians that God would give them this **epignosis**, that God would give them this deep and profound knowledge that brings humility and holiness.

New Testament call us to deep kind of knowledge.

So, Paul starts this chapter by revealing his heart for the unsaved Jews.

- In chapter 9, the reason they are unsaved is the sovereignty of God.
- Concurrent with that in chapter 10 is their own unbelief.

The theme here is the ignorance of Israel, a willing, unbelieving ignorance.

Following this introduction, that they do not understand, it is not according to knowledge.

V 3 they are ignorant, he gives five reasons.

Five reasons for the unbelief of Israel.

Five reasons for the failure of Israel to rightly understand the Lord Jesus Christ.

- 1. The person of God,**
2. The provision of Christ,
3. The place of faith,
4. The parameters of salvation,
5. The predictions of Scripture.

The whole chapter then comes together to say Israel is lost because Israel is in the ignorance of unbelief.

No man is ever lost because God makes some decree somewhere.

The present rejection of Israel is not simply and only because of sovereign election, as if God withheld His grace.

Paul preached and called, and they refused to believe.

So, they are found in chapter 10 in unbelieving ignorance.

Israel was ignorant of the person of God.

This is so devastating that you just can't imagine how it must have struck a Jewish reader.

V 3, For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.

They were ignorant of God's righteousness.

What a thing to say to people who prided themselves on the knowledge of God.

This is where their ignorance is first evident. They are ignorant of God's righteousness.

- They are ignorant then of the person of God.
- They don't understand what God's like.
- They don't understand one of the most essential attributes of God is His righteousness.
- They don't understand that they are ignorant of that.
- They underestimated God's character.
- They underestimated it.

They thought His holiness and His purity and His righteousness, all of which overlapped, were something less than they really are.

They think God is easier on sin than He is. They think God is more tolerant than He is.

Jeremiah 9:23-24, *Thus says the Lord: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches; ²⁴ But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the Lord.*

If a man's going to glory in something, then let him know that God is righteous and let him know how righteous God is. They didn't know how righteous God was.

Psalm 145:17, *The Lord is righteous in all His ways, Gracious in all His works.*

This verse does is bring righteousness and holiness together as synonyms. He is righteous in all His ways is another way of saying He is holy in all His works.

Works and ways are parallel, and righteousness and holiness are parallel.

They thought they could attain a righteousness on their own.

They thought that without a Saviour, without a Messiah, without anybody to pay for their sin they could live such a righteous life that they would attain the righteousness of God.

They thought the standard was here, what they didn't know was the standard was infinite.

Their whole system was a system of going about to establish their own righteousness. Because they believed they could attain it.

They didn't know that God was holy at a level that no one else had ever been at or could ever be at.

Exodus 15:11, *“Who is like You, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, Fearful in praises, doing wonders?”*

2 Chronicles 20:21, *And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the Lord, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying: “Praise the Lord, For His mercy endures forever.”*

God appoints singers in Israel and their purpose is that they should praise the beauty of His holiness.

Men are called in sing His holiness.

Psalm 30:4, *Sing praise to the Lord, you saints of His, And give thanks at the remembrance of His holy name.*

What is holiness?

Hard to define.

Holiness is self-generated and self-affirmed purity.

Holiness is not to live up to the standard, holiness is to be the standard. God is the standard, absolute perfection, flawless, without sin, without error of any kind.

Even His name is holy!

Psalm 22:3, *But You are holy, Enthroned in the praises of Israel.*

Psalm 99:5, *Exalt the Lord our God, And worship at His footstool— He is holy.*

Psalm 47:8, *God reigns over the nations; God sits on His holy throne.*

Isaiah 6 and **Revelation 4** the angels cry, "Holy, holy, holy."

God is holy. He does not conform to a standard, but He is the standard.

The standard conforms to Him.

He does not keep someone else's rules, He is the living rule.

He has a holiness that is ascending beyond any conception of men.

The people of Israel thought that they could attain to the righteousness of God only shows that they had reduced God to one of their own.

There are no degrees in God's holiness. There can't be degrees in perfection.

God's holiness is best seen in His hatred of sin.

He has total perfection. Therefore, He has total hatred toward that which is imperfect.

He is totally holy, so He totally hates anything that's unholy.

Psalm 11:7, *For the Lord is righteous, He loves righteousness; His countenance beholds the upright.*

So, God's holiness is seen in righteousness. Because God is perfectly pure, He wills, He thinks, He feels, He says and He does what is right, and that's righteousness.

So, they are so inextricably connected that you can't really separate them.

He is so perfect that all that He thinks and feels and does is perfect, it's righteous.

Because He is perfect, He always does what is perfectly right. Righteousness is not arbitrary. It is not alterable or changeable. He is always perfectly righteous, totally pure, without any sin.

Now any man who thinks he can attain to that level is an absolute fool and is living under a sad, tragic illusion.

Psalm 71:19, *Also Your righteousness, O God, is very high, You who have done great things; O God, who is like You?*

What's the answer?

Nobody.

Psalm 48:10, *According to Your name, O God, So is Your praise to the ends of the earth; Your right hand is full of righteousness.*

As if God holds all righteousness.

Psalm 119:142, *Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, And Your law is truth.*

People in the world don't understand how righteous God is!

Psalm 50:21, *These things you have done, and I kept silent; You thought that I was altogether like you; But I will rebuke you, And set them in order before your eyes.*

Men imagining a God patterned after their own minds, their own concepts, their own imperfect sin-tolerating hearts.

They want a God who can tolerate everything.

But God is not a God like the gods that men invent.

Psalm 5:5, *The boastful shall not stand in Your sight; You hate all workers of iniquity.*

Psalm 7:11, *God is a just judge, And God is angry with the wicked every day.*

- Men refuse to believe in that kind of a God.
- They refuse to believe in a God who is angry with them.
- They refuse to believe in a God who hates their sin.
- They refuse to believe in a God who is perfect holiness.

So, they invent one that's lower than that.

The Bible says our God is a consuming fire.

They think they can live their life the way they want, and it will be all right in the end.

Our God is a holy God, a righteous God. He has revealed Himself as a God who kills people, a God who sends people to hell with an undying death. Jews were ignorant of that, and it was a contributor to their unbelief.

They were ignorant of the person of God.

They didn't know how holy He was.

They didn't know how righteous He was.

Why do you think in the book of Proverbs alone, 18 times it says, fear the Lord, fear the Lord?

Why do you think throughout the whole Old Testament God kept demonstrating and demonstrating His holy hatred of sin?

People died when they violated God. God came down in terrifying destructive judgment on the people of Israel who had desecrated His promises and His person and His holy covenant with them at the foot of Mount Sinai in an orgy.

Do you remember **Nadab and Abihu**, who offered God strange fire and they fooled around with the priestly function and God snuffed their lives out the first day of their priestly function.

Genesis chapter 6 God drowned the whole world except for eight faithful people.

Genesis 19 that God swept into Sodom and Gomorrah and flattened them to the point where today we can't even find the ruins.

God didn't tolerate the sin of **Saul**, either. No child out of the loins of Saul would ever be on the throne of Israel again.

God didn't tolerate the pride of **Uzziah** even though he was a good man and had brought some peace to the people and even though he had been kinging over 50 years, when he got proud in his heart God gave him leprosy and he was dead.

God didn't tolerate the seemingly small sin of **Uzzah** who reached out and touched the ark of the covenant so it wouldn't fall off a cart.

Isaiah knew the holiness of God and that's why he cried out, "Woe is me, I am a man with a dirty mouth, I live amidst people with dirty mouths. God is holy and God is righteous."

Manoah came home and said to his wife one day, "We will die, we have seen the Lord."

God is so infinitely holy if we were to come into confrontation with Him all He would see about you would be your evil, all you could see about yourself was your evil and in the presence of an infinitely holy God you know what you would deserve.

Why do you think **Peter in Luke chapter 5**, seeing Jesus on the shore, says, "*Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man.*" Get out of my presence.

I am in the presence of deity.

The sinner in the presence of a holy God knows that he can't stand in that presence.

In **Matthew 5** "*Be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.*"

You must be as holy as I am.

There is no man who ever lived or ever will live on the face of the earth who could attain to such a righteous standard.

None.

How am I going to make it?

You are not going to make it on your own righteousness.

Isaiah 64:6, *But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away.*

Israel thought God was less holy than He was.

V 3, *For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.*

A tragic thing.

They failed to submit to the righteousness of God.

They never submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.

They refused to do it. They didn't even know what God's righteous standard. Therefore, they refused to submit to it.

It's true of anyplace, anytime, any person. Unless you understand the righteousness of God and how holy He is, you are in real trouble.

As soon as you do understand that, and you know the standard that He demands and you know you can't get there.

You are in the position where you are going to reach out for the Saviour who alone can take you there!