

Sermon or Lesson: How To Get To Heaven - Romans 3:20-25a (NIV based)

[Lesson Questions included]

ALTERNATE TITLES: How To Know You Are Going To Heaven; or
Who Gets To Go To Heaven

[PURPOSE: The purpose of this sermon-or-lesson is to provide a 1-session fairly-comprehensive yet compacted evangelistic (Gospel) presentation using the passage of Romans 3:20-25a as the framework. But the purpose is not to provide thorough expository analyses of each of these verses - which are available on this website in other sermon-or-lessons for these verses. Because of the length of this sermon-or-lesson and the cohesiveness of all of its vital contents, good time management will be necessary in order to get through all of this material all the way through to the end without skipping any material.]

INTRO: Perhaps you are curious, wondering, or concerned to know what God requires for us humans to get into Heaven, essentially to be accepted by God eternally.

- - If you were to die today, do you think God would let you into Heaven? Why?
 - - Are you trusting in something or someone to make you accepted by God?
 - - Or are you relying on and trusting in your own actions to somehow make you accepted by God?
 - - Or are you hoping that the good things you have done in your life will outweigh the bad things?
 - - Or are you relying on your religiousness?
 - - And if so, what is the basis of your religiousness - what or whom is it based on and does God find acceptable sufficient merit in that?
 - - The means by which you think you are going to acquire being accepted by God - are these based on anything other than what God dictates and requires as He states in the Holy Bible?
 - - God is the One who decides who gets to enter Heaven, using the requirements He has set.
 - - Do you really think God would break the requirements He has established and grant you an exemption or exception from meeting His requirements?
 - - The wisest approach is to re-examine the basis of how you intend to get into Heaven and if necessary adjust your thinking and beliefs to ensure that they are correctly aligned with what God has established.
 - - This is eternal acceptance by God that you are dealing with here, and you cannot afford to get this wrong.
 - - Let's find out what God's requirements are for getting into Heaven by looking and studying what God has to say about this in His word, the Holy Bible. (2 Timothy 3:16)
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READ: Romans 3:23

[Lesson Question: What is sin, and from the context, what effect does sin have on God's requirements for us and on our relational standing with God?]

SECTION POINT: Due to our having committed sins, every person fails to meet God's requirements that we be perfect in righteousness to get into heaven.

- - We humans may think or claim or hope that we have a right-condition or right-standing with God so that we can get into Heaven one day when we die. (vv.19,20)
 - - But there is a huge insurmountable problem - we "all have sinned", committing transgressions and violations against God and His law.
 - - Thereby, we all "fall short" of the perfect righteousness God requires of each of us. (cf. Psalm 18:30; Romans 3:10-12;20)
 - - And due to God's inherent extreme perfect holiness and righteousness and goodness and justice, God must punish us for every sin we commit in our life. (v.19; cf. 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9)
 - - So we "fall short" and cannot enter "the glory of God" in heaven because of our condition and state of being corrupt with sin.
 - - Thus, we enter this life and live in the default state of being rejected by God, locked out of heaven, and heading towards a final permanent destination where we will be punished eternally.
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READ: Romans 3:20

[Lesson Question: Drawing from verse 19, what is the design and function of the law in regard to our being righteous, and how does that affect us being righteous?]

SECTION POINT: God's law in the Old Testament does not provide any way in which we humans can achieve the perfect righteousness we need to be accepted by God.

- - God clearly pronounces here in verse 20a that "no one", not any human person, will be declared righteous by God on the basis of observing or keeping the Old Testament law.
 - - By extension, the invalidity of 'observing the law' to obtain the required righteousness includes: being religious; or achieving any religious rank, position, or title; or going through a religious ceremony; or regularly completing a religious practice such as confession of sins or taking communion; or being good; or having done more good in life than bad; or having a special or privileged ancestral heritage; and etc. - God uncompromisingly rejects all of these approaches. (cf. Ephesians 2:8-9)
 - - The law and observing the law cannot provide or give the needed perfect righteousness to any person because the law was not designed to provide any way to get rid of our sin corruption.
 - - And to the contrary, the law does function to make us aware, knowledgeable, and "conscious of our sin" - what sin is, how and when we commit sin.
 - - Thereupon, God rejects all of our own efforts to make ourselves good or religious or worthy, which all "fall short" of conforming to the perfect sinless and righteous living He requires to be accepted into His glory in Heaven. (v.23)
 - - Perhaps you are now starting to realize and understand that this is a very serious and insurmountable predicament all of us humans automatically face.
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READ: Romans 3:21

[Lesson Question: What is being stated in this verse about God's program over the centuries of human history, what He has been doing?]

SECTION POINT: God has now revealed a righteousness for us corrupted humans that He accepts because it comes from Himself.

- - "But now" God wants to make us aware that He has provided a way for us to be rescued from our rejected predicament.
 - - God has now "made known" or revealed "a righteousness" for us humans that is acceptable to Him because it "comes from God".
 - - This "righteousness from God" does not come from the law nor from keeping the law, but the writings in the books of the law and the books of the prophets in the Old Testament do testify, distinguish, indicate, and point to this righteousness and our need to acquire it.
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READ: Romans 3:22

[Lesson Question: What is God designating here and how does that fit with the Old Testament?]

SECTION POINT: God has now revealed that faith in Jesus Christ is the only means by which we can acquire His perfect righteousness we need to be accepted by Him.

- - God has designated that faith in Jesus Christ is the means to acquire the needed perfect righteousness from God that we need.
 - - God has now revealed that Jesus "Christ" is the "Messiah", the "Anointed One" foretold in the Old Testament that would fulfill the means by which righteousness can be made available to us corrupted humans. (Strong's GRK #5547 - Romans 3:22; Strong's GRK #3323 - John 1:41; Strong's HBR #4899 - Daniel 9:25,26; Isaiah 53:5,11-12; cf. Luke 24:44-48)
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READ: Romans 3:25a

[Lesson Question: What is the principle being stated in verse 25a?]

SECTION POINT: Through His sacrificial torture and death on the cross, Jesus took upon Himself the punishment for the sins of us humans.

- - Jesus provided a remedy for our sin predicament by becoming a "sacrifice of atonement", being brutally tortured, and giving His blood and His life on the cross as a sacrifice to take the punishment for the sins of us humans "who believe". (v.22; Matthew 27:27-50)
 - - God "presented" Jesus as this sacrifice, being displayed in a public crucifixion in Jerusalem at that time about 2,000 years ago. (Matthew 27:27-50)
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READ: Romans 3:24

[Lesson Question: What results did God accomplish for us through Jesus being a sacrifice of atonement?]

SECTION POINT: Through His sacrifice on the cross, Jesus paid the ransom in full that is sufficient to provide us a free and undeserved opportunity to have right-standing before God that would secure our release from the eternal consequences of our sins.

- - In being presented as a sacrifice of atonement, Jesus accomplished "redemption" or paying the "ransom in full" - the payment of the demanded punishment price in order to secure the means by which we can be released from the bondage of our sin predicament. (from Strong's #0629; and with *AHD* - 'ransom')

- - Through this redemptive work on the cross, Jesus also bought the opportunity for us humans to acquire His perfect righteousness, which we need to be "justified" or declared righteous in God's sight. (vv.22,20)

- - Jesus has perfect righteousness and perfect sinless-ness in and of Himself because Jesus is deity - fully God. (John 1:1; 10:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21)

- - Jesus is also fully human, being born into the human race through Mary (see Matthew 1:18) - thereby making this redemptive sacrifice work on the cross available to all humans, regardless of their ethnicity, culture, gender, and etc. (Romans 5:18-19; 3:9 - "Jews and Gentiles alike", with 3:22 - "there is no difference")

- - There is eyewitness-ed evidence subsequent to His death that Jesus was qualified and successful in the accomplishing of this redemption through His sacrifice work on the cross - He was raised from the dead on the third day. (Romans 4:22-25; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8,17)

- - This redemption that Jesus accomplished is available to everyone, is sufficient to pay in full the punishments for the sins of all humans that ever live, **HOWEVER** this redemption **ONLY APPLIES** to those humans who have "faith in His blood". (vv.25,22)

- - Each person has to personally and individually believe that Jesus paid the punishment for his or her own sins when He died on the cross. (cf. John 3:16)

- - Every person who does not believe that Jesus died for his or her own personal sins remains condemned to suffer the punishment consequences for his/her sins eternally. (cf. John 3:18)

- - Having faith in Jesus Christ is more than merely knowing all about Him, it is genuinely committing oneself, one's life, and one's future to Jesus in faith. (vv.22,25)

- - And further notice in these verses that merely believing in God is insufficient for acquiring the needed righteousness, as is merely believing in 'Jehovah', 'Yahweh' (v.9 - "Jews"), or any characterizations, variations, or offshoots of God other than in Jesus Christ. (cf. John 14:6; Acts 4:10-12)

- - At the moment each person believes in Jesus as prescribed in these Scripture verses, the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ is credited to that person. (cf. Romans 4:4-5)

- - God thereafter regards that believing person as having perfect righteousness even though that person continues to commit sins in this life. (cf. Romans 3:31-4:8)

- - The granting and crediting of this righteousness comes to the receiving human believer for "free", costing the person nothing, being unearned, and being unwarranted. (from Strong's #1432, with *AHD* - 'gratuitous')

- - The accomplishing of this redemptive way to grant free righteousness is being done by the graciousness and love that God lavishes on us totally undeserving and totally corrupted humans. (Strong's #5485; cf. Ephesians 1:7-8)
 - - Matter of fact, to the contrary, we corrupted and totally depraved humans all deserve severe eternal punishment for our sins, and for every single one of our sins. (Romans 3:13-19)
 - - But this redemptive work has bought the gracious undeserved forgiveness of all sins of each believing person, applying to all of the various kinds of sins and the quantity of sins during one's entire life. (Ephesians 1:7-8; Colossians 2:13-14)
 - - Therefore, to believe in the redemptive work that Jesus Christ accomplished should naturally involve changing one's mind, regard, direction, and orientation about one's sinfulness - away from pursuing sinfulness and towards pursuing righteousness.
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BIG IDEA: Through His redemptive sacrificial work on the cross, Jesus Christ paid the full punishment ransom for the sins of those persons who believe, so that they can undeservedly receive His perfect righteousness and permanent right-standing with God.

APPLICATION:

- - Are you ready to place your faith in Jesus Christ, that He died on the cross to pay the punishment for **your** sins and rose from the dead on the third day?
- - Do you acknowledge that you do not deserve forgiveness of your sins, but God loves you and is herein offering you His perfect sinless righteousness from Jesus Christ, free of charge?
- - Why not place your faith in Jesus Christ right now?

You can express this in prayer to God - and really mean it:

Dear God, I know that I am a sinner, that I deserve eternal punishment, and that I need forgiveness and perfect righteousness from you through Jesus Christ to be eternally accepted by you. Therefore, I believe in Jesus, that He died on the cross to take the punishment for my sins, and that He rose from the dead. Right now I place my faith in Jesus Christ and I want His redemptive sacrifice work to apply to me, buying for me forgiveness of my sins and right-standing with you for eternal life. Thank you. Amen.

- - If you have genuinely placed your faith in Jesus Christ right now, then according to God's Word in the Holy Bible you "have eternal life" - life in Heaven that is established, set, and valid from this moment forward forever. (John 3:16; 10:27-30; Hebrews 13:5)
 - - Now that you have eternal life in Heaven free of charge from Jesus, you will want to find a good church that teaches the Bible so that you can grow and mature in this faith. (2 Peter 3:18)
 - - Jesus died for you, now you live for Him. (John 14:15; 10:27-28; Ephesians 4:1)
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