

ROMANS Part 61

Chapter 8:3-9



For what was impossible to the law, in which it was infirm through the flesh, did God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sin's flesh and concerning sin, He condemns sin in the flesh, 4 that the just requirement of the law may be fulfilled in us, who are not walking in accord with flesh, but in accord with spirit. 5 For those who are in accord with flesh are disposed to that which is of the flesh, yet those who are in accord with spirit to that which is of the spirit. 6 For the disposition of the flesh is death, yet the disposition of the spirit is life and peace, 7 because the disposition of the flesh is enmity to God, for it is not

subject to the law of God, for neither is it able. 8 Now those who are in flesh are not able to please God. 9 Yet you are not in flesh, but in spirit, if so be that God's spirit is making its home in you. Now if anyone has not Christ's spirit, this one is not His.

If Paul repeats it, I'll repeat it. Flesh, flesh, flesh. The word "flesh" appears in this brief passage ten times. Guess what the passage is about? I hope this doesn't get too repetitive. On the other hand, yes I do. I believe it is inspired repetition because the truth of what God *really* hates about human flesh goes so hard against the normal human grain that we need to hear it over and over until it starts smelling like fish.

WHAT IS SPIRIT?

We already tapped into verse five last week: "For those who are in accord with flesh are disposed to that which is of the flesh," and those in accord with spirit, to spirit. This anchors the entire passage. I am impressed at how flesh is played against spirit. It was the same in verse one: "Not according to flesh are they walking, but according to spirit." What is spirit? Spirit is God's invisible power by which He accomplishes things. Conversely then, flesh in this context is the power by which humans accomplish things, the key word being "accomplish." By "flesh," then, Paul does not mean your epidermis. Neither is he speaking chiefly of the specific *things* flesh does, such as overeat, become idle, lose patience, cuss, forget a wedding anniversary. He speaks chiefly of the *power* of flesh to "take care of business," mainly spiritual business. Verse seven is helpful here: "The disposition of the flesh ... is not subject to the law of God, for neither is it able."

Flesh wants to be *able* to be subject to the law of God—badly. People build big buildings with tall steeples toward this end.

This is the aspect of flesh Paul teaches against in the first eight chapters of Romans. Again, Paul is contrasting flesh with spirit. The spirit is God's power for accomplishing things. Flesh at its basest, sickest level says: "I can *do* the things of God." This is the mother of all sins. This is *religious* flesh. If you do not see Romans in the light of religious flesh rather than the general doing of right and wrong things, then you miss the whole point of Romans. Paul does not even address the specific misbehaviors of the flesh (the sins mentioned earlier, which may be called "behavioral sins") until chapter 12. So what the heck is he talking about for eight chapters? Why all this talk about flesh when those things we most readily deem to be sins appear nowhere in the neighborhood?

In the first eight chapters of Romans, Paul tackles the most malevolent and malignant manifestation of flesh existent: self righteousness.

THE CORINTHIANS

The Corinthians were beset with all sorts of sins. Paul tried to correct them. I'm not belittling these sins, but I will call them "second-tier sins." Some of them are bad and they will disqualify a person from ruling and reigning with Christ ("the enjoyment of an allotment—Ephesians 5:5), but none of them will keep a person from being saved, which in this context is being a member of the body of Christ. Not even the guy who was screwing his stepmother in 1 Corinthians 5:1 could screw himself out of membership in Christ's body ("You are not judging those *within*"—1 Corinthians 5:12).

Certainly I am not downplaying the seriousness of such sins as adultery. I'm only saying that sexually penetrating one's stepmother is not the "stepmother" of all sins that many want it to be, and neither will it endanger one's eonian salvation. No, the sin that screws people out of eonian salvation is self-righteousness. It is religious sin. It is the sin of the flesh boasting of its ability to do the things of the law, to compete with the spirit of God for power with the intention of accomplishing only that which the spirit of God can accomplish.

"CONFIDENCE IN FLESH"

Paul was an expert on the kind of flesh that would dare usurp the spirit's role. As a Pharisee, Saul had no moral flaws that the law could point to and say, "That guy's a sinner." He probably did not kill anyone personally. He cast ballots against those who were eventually



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disposed of, but his own hands stayed clean. According to the letter of the law, Paul passed the bar. He said of himself in Philippians 3:3-6—

[We] ... have no confidence in flesh. And am I having confidence in flesh, also? If any other one is presuming to have confidence in flesh, I rather: in circumcision the eighth day, of the race of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, in relation to law, a Pharisee, in relation to zeal, persecuting the ecclesia, in relation to the righteousness which is in law, becoming blameless.

The subject here is confidence in flesh. What does this have to do with taking advantage of one's stepmother? Exactly. We are not talking about those kinds of sins here. Those kinds of sins are what I call second-tier sins. Within the body of Christ, we can deal with those. We can judge

those. Paul lists what these sins are. Second-tier sins can and do operate under the umbrella of salvation. Yet here is a sin that, left to its own, effectively eclipses any realization of the power, the might, and the accomplishment of God on the behalf of sinner, through Christ. This, in turn, eclipses any realization of salvation apart from self, preventing true belief. Believing in one's belief in Christ is not believing in Christ. That's how subtle this deception is, and how crafty is the Adversary. Confidence in flesh is killing. Paul verifies the deadline of self-righteousness in Romans 10:2-3. Speaking of the Jews, the apostle says—

For I am testifying to them that they have a zeal of God, but not in accord with recognition. For they, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, were not subjected to the righteousness of God.

Seeking one's own righteousness effectively bars one from recognizing and being subject to the righteousness of God. This is where Satan does his most effective work. By means of self-righteousness, Satan keeps millions from becoming truly subject to the righteousness of God. Not just Jews. Christians, too—millions of them. Such ones never grasp saving faith. How does Satan deliver such a diabolical end? In brothels and bars? So the religionists suppose. Satan couldn't be happier for such suppositions. Satan convinces people of their inherent ability to perform for God, not in brothels or bars, but in churches. Churches are the brokers of religion, putting a happy face on human philosophy.

Back now to Paul's letter to the Philippians. What had made Saul so confident in himself? It was his pedigree. He was of Israelite stock, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews. More importantly, in relation to the righteousness which is in the law, he was "becoming blameless." As I said, no one could point the finger at Paul and say, "Loser!" The "God people" of that day—like the "God people" today—measured failure by the second-tier sins. The religious of every age go by what they see. In other words, "Bill is not an idolater, an adulterer, or a drinker. He never hurts anyone. Thus, he is blameless." Oh, but it's far subtler than that, and more insidious. "Suzie honors her father and mother, she never

smokes, she always wears a smile, she volunteers at the soup kitchen, she helps at the school, she loves her husband, she dotes on her children, she exercises self-control in all areas, she attends church regularly. Suzie is a real saint." *Really?* Has anyone hooked up Suzie to a Self-Righteousness Detector? Suzie may be all of the above things, but by the power of flesh rather than spirit.

The flesh wants badly to perform for God. It fantasizes of its ability. It's the stepmother of all sins. If it runs through Suzie's veins, no one can see it. Suzie can be all of the above things to sight and sound, but simultaneously drunk in unbelief.

To determine Suzie's status, simply bring her truth. Why not? We're supposed to be able to tell believers from unbelievers. If not, then why would Paul say not to be yoked with unbelievers? (2 Corinthians 6:14). The test is simple. Tell Suzie about the sovereignty of God and the corollary lie of human free will. She what she does. Tell her that eternal torment is a lie and that everyone will eventually be saved. She how she reacts. Then you'll know whether or not her belief in Christ is real or a Hollywood wall for belief in herself.



Suzie and her ilk read about "the flesh" in their Bibles, but never relate it to anything other than second-tier sins. In the interest of self interest, Suzie runs her daily life through a behavioral checklist, just as the Jews did (and do) and just as Saul the Pharisee did: "Nope, I don't do that, that, that, or that; I avoid that, I stay

away from that, that, that.” And yet, in the midst of this, the biggest, hairiest, most dangerous beast of all courses through Suzie’s pretty pink veins, effectively blinding her to God’s delivering spirit. This beast is self-righteousness. It is the flesh. What flesh? The flesh that eats one too many potato chips? No. It’s the disposition of the flesh to usurp God’s spirit, attempting the things of God by virtue of its own might.

THE “BLAMELESS” SINNER

Even as Paul accomplished his many Pharisaic marvels, he was, at the same time, the “foremost” of sinners (1 Timothy 1:15). That’s amazing. How could it be? We tend to measure sin by the wrong standard. We look at the outward man and not at the heart. Jesus looked at the heart, which is why he could look at some real societal and moral losers and weep with joy, and why He could look at some religious elites doing “everything right” and cry in sorrow. We look at the outside of the cup, not within. We look at the clean, decorated sepulcher. We rarely check for bones. We should.

The result of Paul’s new humility shows up a couple of paragraphs later, in Philippians, in 3:9-10—

... and may be found in Him, *not having my righteousness*, which is of law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is from God *for faith*: to know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, conforming to His death.

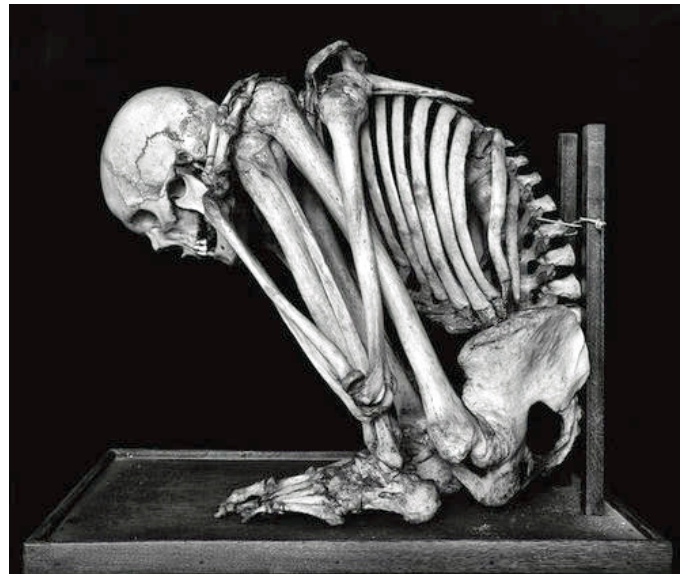
At stake here is salvation, stated in the words, “that which is through the faith of Christ; *for faith*.” We cannot say that the second-tier sins such as the Ten Commandments warn against put salvation at stake. Salvation is *not* at stake there. Because of Christ’s death on the cross for the sins of the world, salvation exists in spite of and, in a sense, because of such sins. We are in an administration of grace. Such an administration readily deals with these sorts of misses. Paul did this in Corinth. As already stated, some of these sins will preclude “an enjoyment of an allotment,” that is, a special place of rulership in the kingdom of Christ (Ephesians 5:5), but said allotment is a boon above and beyond salvation; it is a special reward for service. Let us never say that such sins stand against basic, beautiful salvation: eonian life. Drunks and idolaters can and do appreciate grace. Par-amours and prostitutes tout grace to the highest height. Such cannot be said for the victims of self-righteousness.

Here is the killer sin, for self-righteous/fleshly confidence keeps millions from apprehending grace or uttering anything but empty words into heaven.

EONIAN LIFE

You may say, “But Martin, why doesn’t grace cover the sin of not apprehending grace? Doesn’t grace cover all sin? Isn’t that what grace does?” Indeed—eventually. At the consummation of the eons, not even those who hate God and spit on Christ will deal themselves out of God’s eternal presence. Those who presently deny God Himself (atheists) will one day be saved by the God they currently don’t believe in. That’s grace.

What we are talking about here is eonian life—life that endures throughout the ages; a special life (1 Timothy 4:10) that precedes that life which comes to all at the consummation of the eons (1 Corinthians 15:26-28). It pleases God that those chosen beforehand for this special life *will* believe in the death of Christ for their sins. In



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order to do that, they will have disavowed any confidence in their ability to repudiate sin on their own, whether by deed or thought. Only as belief is appreciated as a gift of God (Romans 12:3) rather than an attainment of will, does true repudiation of flesh occur. It is not that those who have no confidence in flesh will be saved for eonian life, but rather that those who have been chosen before-

hand for eonian life (Romans 8:30; Ephesians 1:4; Acts 13:48), will have no confidence in flesh. Distrust in self is not a requirement for salvation, but rather a result of having been chosen for salvation. Eonian life has to do with apprehending facts concerning Christ. If not, then why isn't everyone in the body of Christ? Belief matters. *What* one believes matters. If it doesn't, then Paul wasted his time teaching a specific message containing specific details given him by Christ. Paul wasted his time exposing error. It was all an exercise in futility if eonian life and membership in the body of Christ hasn't anything to do with teaching, that is, with an evangel.

A MAN AFTER GOD'S HEART

Have you ever wondered how King David could have been called, by God, "a man after My own heart?" (Acts 13:22). Wasn't this the husband of many wives who lusted after another man's wife and had her husband killed so he that he could marry the object of his lust? Isn't this the guy who danced so hard in front of the Lord that he made a fool of himself in front of the slave girls, earning the rebuke of his wife? Here is the account of this notable day in the life of the man God's heart throbbed for. 2 Samuel 6:20—

When David returned home to bless his household, Michal daughter of Saul came out to meet him and said, "How the king of Israel has distinguished himself today, going around half-naked in full view of the slave girls of his servants as any vulgar fellow would!"

According to the "Pulpit Commentary"—

David's offence in the eyes of Michal was, not his dancing, but his divesting himself of his royal robes, and appearing before his subjects clad in the dress of an inferior class. The language of Michal is that of a woman vexed and irritated. After reminding David of his high office as "King of Israel," she reproaches him for appearing on a grand public occasion without the upper and becoming robe in which an Oriental enwraps himself. And this he had done before the female slaves of his own servants, with no more self-respect than that shown by the "vain fellows."

From "Gill's Exposition of the Bible"—

Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David before he had gotten to his own house, and said,

"How glorious was the king of Israel today"; which she spoke in an ironical jeering way, meaning the reverse, how inglorious, mean, and despicable he had made himself to be, by his airs and gestures.

From the "Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary"—

Proud of her royal extraction, [Michal] upbraided her husband for lowering the dignity of the crown and acting more like a buffoon than a king. But her taunting sarcasm was repelled [by David] in a manner that could not be agreeable to her feelings, while it indicated the warm piety and gratitude of David.



Here is what happened next, 2 Samuel 6:21—

David said to Michal, "It was before the Lord, Who chose me rather than your father or anyone from his house when he appointed me ruler over the Lord's people Israel—I will celebrate before the Lord."

David gets in a "dig" here, reminding his wife that God's choice does not necessarily align with pedigree or with what the world would call "propriety." Again from the "Pulpit Commentary"—

The preference of David over Saul was proof that [Saul's] affectation of royal state, and his self-importance, were not pleasing in God's eyes.

The reference to King Saul brings to mind Saul of Tarsus, who was no doubt named after the king, and who was unquestionably—as "a Pharisee of Pharisees"—as self-important in his own eyes as was that former Jewish king standing "... from his shoulder and

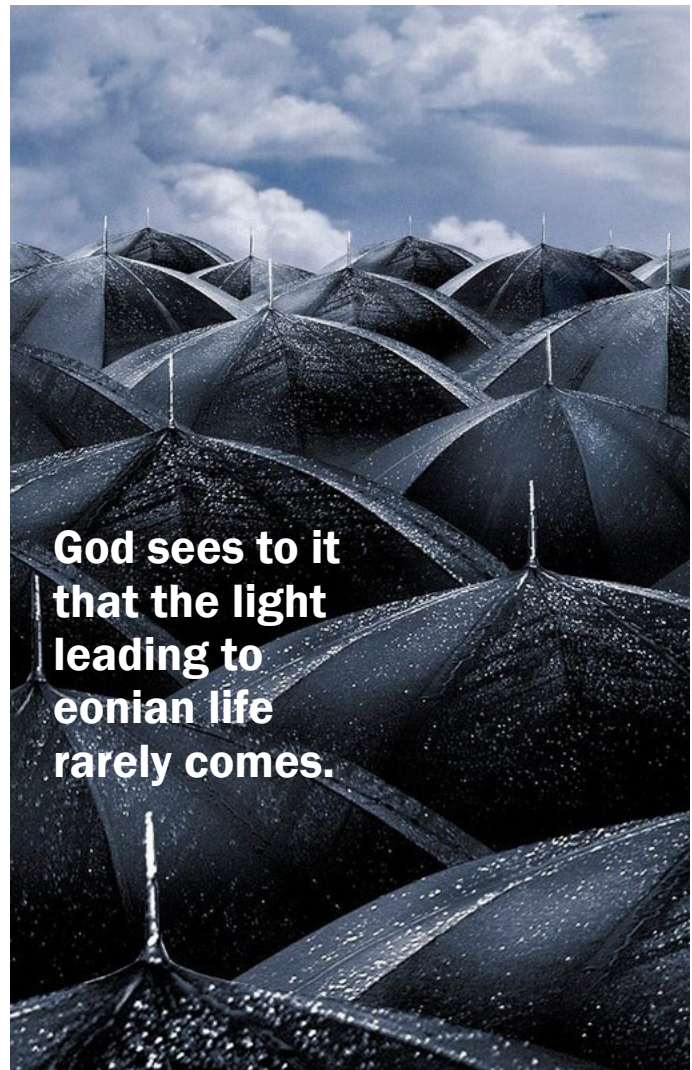
upward, higher than any of the people” (1 Samuel 9:2). What is this but ability based on flesh? Such ability can apply to either physical or moral stature. It is the most hidden of sins, the most justified, the sin most easily provoked—as seen here by Michal’s reaction. In the eyes of God, however (He sees everything differently than we do), this is the most damaging of sins. It puts self-power and self-will above *His* power and will. It is for this darkest corner of flesh that Paul writes the first eight chapters of Romans.

Again from “Gill’s Exposition of the Bible”—

[David] adds: “ ... Who chose me before thy father, and before all his house” (see 1 Samuel 13:14); which he observed to humble her pride, and mortify her, as well as to remark the distinguishing goodness of God to him, which laid him under obligation to express his thankfulness to Him in every shape: to appoint me ruler over the people of the Lord, over Israel; which was a high honour conferred upon him, and required the utmost gratitude.

The pride of the flesh must always be humbled and mortified. But so powerful is the assumption of flesh that it can and should attempt to please God (Romans 8:8—“Now those who are in flesh are *not* able to please God”) that it takes megaton nuclear or spiritual *something* to beat it down. Look what God did to Saul on the Damascus Road. God could flick His finger at a moment’s notice and do this to anyone, anytime, but He purposely *doesn’t* do it for most people, preferring rather that the world consist chiefly of sectarian religious hypocrites so that against such pathetic darkness He can display the shining of His chosen ones (1 Corinthians 11:19; Matthew 5:16). God sees to it that the light leading to eonian life rarely comes. To help repel it, He fans religious anger in the form of so many “Michals” who voice offense at the slightest whiff of others’ freedom. Freedom exposes the bondage of “Michals.”

Michal and her ilk live for appearance’s sake, for self-respect, in fear of being made a fool, in a lust for propriety—especially in the sight of others, particularly those whom one would deem inferior. Such damning self-righteousness is rarely appreciated for the stink that it is, being overshadowed by an ostentatious squashing of second-tier sins, which by all evidence are easier to control than the stepmother: pride. Confidence of flesh is considered by most an asset rather than a liability. Michal represents Saul as the “Phari-



see of the Pharisees,” outwardly blameless in relation to law but quick to condemn. Poor Saul—but at least God changed him. Poor Michal: “And Michal daughter of Saul had no children to the day of her death” (2 Samuel 6:23).

King David represents the converted Saul, becoming Paul, recognizing above all else that he was nothing and that God was everything. The man who as a Pharisee couldn’t stand the sight of Gentiles winds up being their greatest champion. This man would eventually boast in his weakness rather than his strength, endearing himself, as did our Lord (the friend of tax-gathers, fishermen and prostitutes), to societal outcasts such as the Corinthians. In the meantime, David is on a roll and can’t shut up. He further answers Michal in 2 Samuel 6:22—

I will become even more undignified than this, and I will be humiliated in my own eyes. But by these slave girls you spoke of, I will be held in honor.

Wow. Rather than cave to his wife's social sensitivities, David doubles down. "Do you think *this* is undignified? Wait until you see what I'm going to do tomorrow." The "Pulpit Commentary" here is fine—

These words have been variously interpreted, but their simplest meaning is also the best; that even the most uneducated women, though surprised at first at David's want of stateliness, would, on reflection, be led to a right understanding of the greatness of God; and would then feel that even a king was right in owning himself to be nothing in God's presence.

How eloquently this speaks of Christ. It shocked the Pharisees to see Jesus befriending the most unappreciated, uneducated, meanest members of Jewish society. Yet these were the people who, beholding Christ's humility, came to a right understanding of the Father because of it. The Pharisees avoided such riffraff, and where did it get them? To a place of hate. Jesus Christ became and remains the "President" of a club of fools, a parliament of whores, a convocation of nobodies, all of whom will blast the Pharisees out of existence as they enter God's kingdom an eon ahead of the religionists. The Lord Himself testified in Matthew 21:31-32—

"Verily, I am saying to you that the tribute collectors and the prostitutes are preceding you into the kingdom of God. For John came to you on the road of righteousness, and you do not believe him. Yet the tribute collectors and the prostitutes believe him. Now you, perceiving it, did not even regret subsequently, so as to believe him."

Note that Jesus did not say that *ex*-tribute collectors or *ex*-prostitutes would precede the Pharisees into the kingdom, but taxmen and harlots as they stood and stank. For indeed, these are the least of sins. John the Baptist came preaching the righteousness of God, not flesh, and these people believed it. Belief is the thing. This, the Jews could not do. They stumbled at the stumbling stone: a work of God, not man. Yet the tribute collectors and prostitutes heard the message and said, "That's about right." They were nothing *anyway*, so surely they could continue in their nothingness, following John and Jesus into millennial bliss. The Pharisees, confident in their moral attainments (they confused this with the spiritual variety) stayed mired in sin.

The second-tier sins fussed over by Christians are inconsequential *compared to* the sin of pride. Tribute col-

lectors and prostitutes are saved: "The tribute collectors and the prostitutes *believe* him." Their breed of failure left belief intact; such sins tend to soften one in the face of spiritual force. Pride can't do this; pride hardens; it never does the opposite thing. It opposes spiritual force. It precludes belief, and thus salvation. The Pharisees practiced none of the sins they despised, thus supposing themselves justified. They strained out gnats and swallowed camels—humps and all—being blind to the worst sin of all: confidence in flesh.

Nothing has changed today except nomenclature. Today, we call Pharisees "Christians."

WORSE THAN A SINNER

"Moreover, consequently, at the coming of the Son of Mankind, will He be finding the faith on the earth?" Now He said, also, to some who have confidence in themselves that they are just, and are scorning the rest, this parable: "Two men went up into the sanctuary to pray, the one a Pharisee, and the other a tribute collector. The Pharisee, standing, prayed this to himself: 'God, I am thanking you that I am not even as the rest of men, rapacious, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tribute collector. I am fasting twice of a sabbath. I am taking tithes from all whatever I am acquiring.' Now the tribute collector, standing afar off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his chest, saying, 'God, make a propitiatory shelter for me, the sinner!' I am saying to you, this man descended to his home justified, rather than that one, for everyone who is exalting himself shall be humbled, yet he who is humbling himself shall be exalted." —*Luke 18:8-14*

You would think that a sinner would be the worst thing in the world. Isn't this what religion tells us? We are incessantly instructed, warned and shamed into behaving ourselves "for God." The eye-opener above is that, worse than being a sinner is to be confident in one's flesh. But isn't this a sin, also? Yes, but of a different stripe. In the book of Romans, this is presented to us by Paul as "the disposition of the flesh"; it opposes and usurps the power of spirit ("disposed to that which is of the spirit") by believing in its supposed inherent ability to please God.

Another way to say this is "free will."

"Free will" is a euphemism for the thing just mentioned: "the disposition of the flesh to oppose and usurp the power of spirit by believing in its supposed inherent ability to do the things of God." The term "free will"

is a lot shorter, however—only two words. “Free will” is such a universally accepted philosophy that no one bothers to check behind the whitewashed tomb into the string of words describing the human philosophy. (“Free will” = *Self-righteousness*). This sin occupies a class by itself so repugnant that those holding it are *contrasted* with sinners. This parable is often called, “The Pharisee and the Sinner.”

Here is John 9:40-41—

And those of the Pharisees who are with Him hear these things, and they said to Him, “Not we also are blind?” Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have had no sin. Yet now you are saying that ‘We are observing.’ Your sin, then, is remaining.”

If one could admit “I am a sinner” and *mean* it—boy, that’s the catch. You can’t just *say*, “Oh, I’m so unworthy,” and then damn other people to hell for not being smart. You’d be a fake. Fake doesn’t count. The Pharisees double-talked and double-acted all day, even while donning their phylacteries. The said one thing, believed another thing, then wrapped prayers around their arms. They played The Humility Game—

PHARISEE: I’ll take “Raging Hypocrisies” for two-hundred, Alex.

ALEX: This famous saying eventually doomed an entire nation for the eon.

PHARISEE: What is, “All that the Lord has said, we will do.”

ALEX: Correct!

PHARISEE: “Raging Hypocrisies” for *four*-hundred.

ALEX: This sin is worse than all others combined.

PHARISEE: What is, “Spitting out your toothpaste on the Sabbath.”

(Buzzer)

ALEX: That’s incorrect. Tony!

TONY: What is, “Self-righteousness.”

ALEX: Yes, otherwise known as being disposed to the flesh.

TONY: “Christian Ancestry” for two-hundred, Alex.

ALEX: This group of self-righteous, double-talking nincompoops presaged the likes of Billy Graham.

TONY: “Who are the Pharisees?”

ALEX: Good for two-hundred dollars!

PHARISEE: Hey!



The Pharisees acted humble as pomegranate pie but at the same time cherished their moral accomplishments. Today, “Believing in Jesus” is a moral accomplishment. It’s not called that, but what else can it be when both God and Jesus have to “leave you alone” so that you can believe in Them of your own free volition without Their interference? Unless both God and Jesus leave you completely alone as you formulate your life-changing decision, in no way can the life-changing decision be called free.

CHOSEN LOSER

I myself said, “Oh, I am so unworthy” for some time, even while believing that I saved myself by believing in Jesus. One day it hit me like a pound of artichokes that I really was saved by Jesus, rather than by my decision to believe in Jesus. The ensuing shock was that my flesh was just like everyone else’s. I had thought I was special, but no. It reminded me of when I first saw my first chest X-ray at the hospital: *Shit, I’m human*. Without God choosing me, I’d be just another one of the losers I had looked down upon. The only difference now was that I was a chosen loser. I had been a Christian for about two years before the bag of artichokes hit. One can be a Christian for a long time before becoming a believer. It’s not only possible, but probable. Most Christians will never become believers in this lifetime. It’s not God’s pre-determined plan for them (Romans 8:30; Ephesians 1:4; Acts 13:48). Self-righteousness is too ingrained into the liver. This is our default setting. God set us all up perfectly for the miracle of imparted faith. Religion fans the flames with altar calls to “Make a decision today! Your eternal destiny depends on it!”

It’s all too easy to be a Christian without believing in Jesus. Just ask the Pharisees when you see them. It’s going to be a while before you’re able to do that; we won’t be see-

ing the Pharisees until the Great White Throne Judgment—make your conversation brief because they will soon be departing for the lake of fire which is the second death. In the meantime, talk to a tribute collector or a prostitute (operators are standing by) about the opposite phenomenon of Pharisee-ism, which is waking up one day to the miracle of faith and dancing before God in appreciation of the accomplishments of His spirit. Paul refers to this as “being disposed to that which is of the spirit” (Romans 8:5).

GOD HATES THIS CRAP

According to Proverbs 6:16-19, here are the seven things God hates. From the Young’s Literal Translation—

These six hath Jehovah hated, Yea, seven [are] abominations to His soul.

Eyes high; tongues false; And hands shedding innocent blood;

A heart devising thoughts of vanity; Feet hasting to run to evil;

A false witness [who] doth breathe out lies; and one sending forth contentions between brethren.

Number one: *Eyes high*. This verifies everything I’ve been talking about; I love it when this happens. It’s Romans chapter 8. High eyes is self-righteousness and confidence in flesh. God hates it. The Jews especially need an eye adjustment. Their eyes are higher than the dove droppings on the Wailing Wall. They need trifocals just to look down their long noses and see you, a sinner. Many of them won’t even look at me on the street. I am a cur. It’s not just Jews. Christians feel the same way about me: *woof*. I speak of the glories of God and they call me a false prophet; a cult leader; they consign me to hell; one of them I know would shoot me on sight. Christians line up along the parade route to “Michal” me; they want to shame me for being so free. Why can’t I just be normal? Maintain some sort of dignity? Go with the flow? Cool my jets? Stop criticizing religion?

Oh, this gaggle of Michals. Just try to have children now, you self-righteous hypocrites—just try. You’re barren. How long will you pervert the straight ways of God? Look at what you *have* produced: more religion, more self-sufficient soldiers in your army against “flesh”; how ironic and hypocritical to employ the worst manifestation of flesh (religious pride) to fight those lesser manifestations which yet thrive beneath the gaze of grace, concerning which you know nothing, for “ex-

empted from Christ were you who are being justified in law. You fall out of grace. For we, in spirit, are awaiting the expectation of righteousness by faith” (Galatians 5:4-5). By attempting to merit it, you fall from an appreciation of God’s *unmerited* favor, i.e. grace. This benefit surrounds you, yet you yank it offstage with a vaudeville cane. “Next!” Your idol, flesh, is stronger to you than the invisible power of God’s spirit to conform you to His image. You are feigned believers (1 Corinthians 15:2). Were you disposed to the things of the spirit rather than to those of flesh, you would realize your inability to accomplish God’s righteous dictates or even to believe in Him. One day you will see this. But since you *now* say, in your imagined free will, “*we see*,” your sin remains.

Tongues false. Hypocrisy. Lying. Saying one thing, doing another; saying one thing, *meaning* another. Acting one way in church, and another way at home or in the street or at your favorite drinking establishment.

Hands shedding innocent blood. More blood—literal and otherwise—has been shed in the name of religion than for any other cause.



A heart devising thoughts of vanity. “I am saved; they are doomed forever.” “I chose Jesus; why didn’t those stupid people just choose Jesus?” “I am doing so much for God; why aren’t these other people working?” “I thank God that I am not like other people, for instance like these rapacious and unjust adulterers, prostitutes, drunks, gays, porn addicts and tribute collectors who vex my very existence. I go to church every week. I fast and

I pray. I pay my tithes. I rarely sin these days. Thank You, God, for making me a bigger pain in the ass than all of these other sinners combined.”

Feet hasting to run to evil. The teaching of eternal torment is the worst teaching of demons ever to visit earth. Right behind it is the doctrine of annihilation, that is, the eternal destruction of men, women and children for whom Jesus Christ died. And yet feet run to it—every Sunday. Contrast this to beautiful feet: “How beautiful are the feet of those bringing an evangel of good!” (Romans 10:15). How beautiful are the feet of those bringing the truth of the salvation of all—of not only the salvation

be contended for—sound teachings; a right understanding of God—are back-burnered for moral arguments, for who is doing what sin, who offended whom, whose toes got trampled, whose sensitivities suffer, whose fingers overpry into others’ “junk,” while *real* truth and righteousness die in the street. Thus, brother runs from brother and God is mocked.

NOT THE POPULAR LIST

Why did God forget to say what He really hates? Everyone knows that He hates sex, drugs, Rock and Roll.

He forgot to condemn these. This must puzzle moralists. Why don’t we read anything here about AC/DC? Black Sabbath? The Rolling Stones? Where is God’s hatred of marijuana and hallucinogenic mushrooms? He must have forgotten to tell us about how terrible painted toenails and tiny tank-tops are. Maybe it’s that He’s so incensed that He’s reduced to speechlessness. All He can manage to talk about is this “high eyes” stuff; always with the pride, this One, always with the disposition of the flesh to perform righteous acts; always with the self-righteousness. He *meant* to condemn cigarettes, G-strings, the Captain and Tennille, Captain Jack, X-rated movies, paradiddles and porn, but instead He harps away on vanity, hypocrisy, lying, pride.

Maybe we ought to believe Him.

What about that? If we were to believe God, it would mean that religionists clack noisily down the wrong tracks. They are incensed over the wrong things. The enemies Satan engages them against keep them from perceiving the *real* enemy among them: self-righteousness and the disposition of the flesh to perform for God’s pleasure.

How I love it when God is found true though every man a liar. —MZ



God forgot to say that He hated these guys.

of those of earth, but those of heaven—through the blood of the cross of Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:16-20). “But not all obey the evangel, for Isaiah is saying, ‘Lord, who believes our tidings?’” (Romans 10:16).

A false witness who breathes out lies. “And He said to them, “You are repudiating the precept of God, that you should be keeping your tradition” (Mark 7:9).

And one sending forth contentions between brethren. Drama kings and queens, making many somethings out of so many nothings; second-class flaws; building Everests from sandcastles; elevating second-tier sins and ignoring the stepmother. They do not know the way of peace, never heard of the thing. The important things they ignore, the base and ignoble things—even the common failures of flesh—get spotlight, center stage. The things that ought to