

LOST (Part 1 of 6)

Jesus said, “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). The apostle Paul said, “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world [Satan] hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (2 Corinthians 4:3-4).

What does it mean to be lost? It means to believe not. To believe not means that you have not put your trust in Jesus Christ for your salvation by faith alone. Therefore, according to the writing of John you stand condemned before God. You are condemned now – while you are living. Not when this life is over. John said, “That whosoever believeth in him [Jesus] should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him [Jesus] should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not [on Jesus] is condemned already, because he hath not believed [trusted] in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:15-18).

The word lost is a biblical term to describe man’s position or standing before God in his natural state of being. Some hold to the position that this word speaks of man’s desperate condition and that he needs someone to rescue himself from his dilemma. No doubt, those who hold this position would agree with the apostle Paul on man’s condition, even if Paul would not choose to use the word desperate to describe man’s condition. For if a man were desperate it would mean: he is reckless, violent because of despair, nearly hopeless. However, Paul would not choose this word to describe man’s condition. He used the word dead. “And you hath he quickened [made alive], who were dead in trespasses and sins,” (Ephesians 2:1). This raises the question of why? Why man is considered lost and dead before God? First, man is considered lost and dead because of his rejection of natural or general revelation.

Since Genesis 1:1, God has revealed truth about Himself and His will at different times and in various ways. David said, “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard” (Psalm 19:1-3). God has an eternal witness that touches every phase of life and there is not a place where this witness doesn’t testify to the fact of God! The sky, the hills and mountains, the stars, the planets, the rivers and oceans, and our very physical beings were designed to testify to the character and fact of God. Paul witnessed to this fact of revelation when he stated, “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold [suppress] the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.” (Romans 1:18-20).

But how did and how do men react to such knowledge? Paul once again says, “Because that, when they knew God [were conscious of God’s existence], they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain [empty] in their imaginations, and their foolish heart [understanding] was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things” (Romans 1:21-23).

Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse’s potent observation of Romans 1:21 says, “Will God give man brains to see these things and will man then fail to exercise his will toward that God? The sorrowful answer is that both of these things are true. God will give a man brains to smelt iron and make a hammer head and nails. God will grow a tree and give man strength to cut it down and brains to fashion a hammer handle from the wood. And when man has the hammer and the nails. God will put out His hand and let man drive nails through it and place Him on a cross in the supreme demonstration that men are without excuse.” And according to the writing of Paul in Romans 1:18-23 this is exactly what man has done, and God has so inlaid the evidence of Himself in man’s very nature that he (man) is without excuse.

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