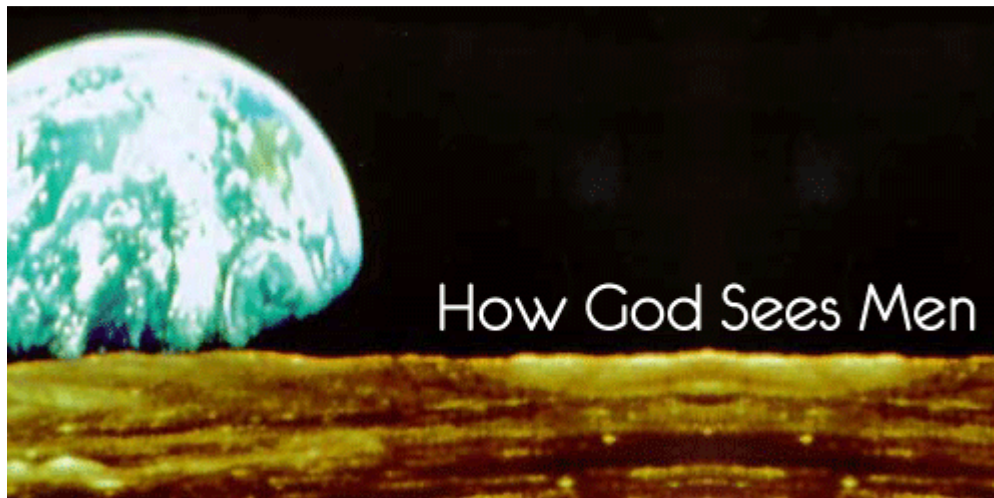


How God Sees Men



The first step on the road to heaven for each of us is to realize our true spiritual state in the sight of God.

It is not how we view ourselves that matters, but how God views us. In the Bible, He paints a totally accurate picture of the natural state of all of us, without exception. It is not at all flattering. It is not meant to be. It is meant to awaken all of us to a deep sense of our need, and the reason for it. Only then can the remedy be given or received.

Here then is God's portrait of all men by nature:

All men are sinners

"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me"
(Psalm 51:5).

"All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"
(Romans 3:23).

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way"
(Isaiah 53:6).

"There is no man that sinneth not"
(1 Kings 8:46).

All men, then, are sinners by nature and by choice. They are held personally responsible by God their Judge as wilful rebels against His law; "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4).

Sinners are spiritually dead

"Dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1)

“By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Romans 5:12)

“In Adam all die” (1 Corinthians 15:22)

This death is a total inability to originate any spiritual good to merit the favour of God. All the sons of Adam are equally dead.

Sinners are slaves to sin and in bondage to the devil

“Whosoever committeth sin is the servant [or bond-slave] of sin” (John 8:34).

“The prince of the power of the air [i.e., the devil], the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:2).

This is a terrible statement. The devil is energetically active in those who are disobedient to God. We tend to imagine that he is active only in those we hold to be particularly sinful — murderers and others of that kind. But he is at work in all sinners.

Sinners are enemies of God

“Enemies in your mind by wicked works” (Colossians 1:21).

“The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Romans 8:7).

Sinners are separated from God

“Your iniquities have separated between you and your God” (Isaiah 59:2).

“Without Christ, ... aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world” (Ephesians 2:12).



Sinners are under God’s condemnation

“Condemned already” (John 3:18).

“The Lord ... will not at all acquit the wicked” (Nahum 1:3).

“The wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23).

“The wicked shall be turned into hell” (Psalm 9:17).

“The fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Revelation 21:8).

Thus, sinners are described by God as being lost (Isaiah 53:6; Luke 19:10) and in danger of being visited by God’s wrath against their sin:

“Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee” (Job 36:18).

What All Men Urgently Need

Obviously, they need sin to be removed, or they must perish. They need to obtain life, or they must remain dead to God and be sentenced to endure the pains of hell, the second death, forever.

They need to be reconciled to God

No man can remain an enemy of God without falling under God’s wrath. “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 10:31).

The need to be freed from the slavery of sin and the devil

And they need to escape from the wrath and condemnation of God

In other words, they need to be saved. God’s Word says, “We must be saved” (Acts 4:12). Every person in the world needs this salvation — a salvation from sin, death, and hell; and a salvation unto God that gives the experience of His love, life, and pardon.

You Can Do Nothing To Meet This Need

If you are in the state we have just read about in God’s Word, you obviously cannot do anything to cause your own salvation.

You are “dead in trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1)

Dead men cannot bring themselves to life.

“Good works” cannot save you

The Bible expressly states that salvation is “not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:9).

Again it states that salvation is “not by works of righteousness which we have done” (Titus 3:5).

This explodes the common notion that God will weigh our “good deeds” against our bad ones and accept us into heaven if they outweigh the bad.

Religion cannot save you

Perhaps you are relying on the fact that you go to church and are careful to do religious works to get you to heaven. You may even pride yourself that you are not nearly so sinful as many other people.

The Lord Jesus told of a Pharisee who felt that way. He gave one tenth of his income to the synagogue and was very religious. But he was not saved (Luke 18:9-14). Jesus condemned him and all who are like him in the words of the prophet Isaiah:

“This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me” (Matthew 15:8).

Paul also showed the folly of hoping to find some saving power in religious observances:

“Why ... are ye subject to ordinances, (touch not; taste not; handle not; which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?” (Colossians 2:20-22).

It is absolutely necessary for you to grasp how desperate your natural state is and how incapable you are of changing it. If you do not, you will never seek the Lord’s remedy on His terms. If you are not clear on this matter, go through this section again. As you do so, ask the Lord to convict you of your urgent need of His saving grace and then to show you how you may receive it.

