

The Three Eternal Destinies #146 *Falling Short of the Glory of God*

Rom 3:23 — What does it mean that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”? No doubt about it — *all* have sinned and thereby fall short of the glory of God. This means that at one time man had not fallen (Gen 1:26), but retained his created likeness of God. But even after man fell into sin, he *still retained* his likeness of God, but not to the degree that he had before he sinned (Gen 3:22). Man became like God in that he now knew what good and evil was and from then on he would have to live by it in order to retain his likeness to his fallen degree of the glory he was originally created to have.

When a man sins today, he falls short of the glory of God. This is something that all mankind knows — no one will ever reach God’s standard of absolute moral perfection and be worthy of God’s glory *without Messiah’s righteousness imputed to him* (Rom 4:5) — even as Acts 4:12 says (and Rom 3:24-26,21,31; 8:4; 4:5). So Rom 3:23 shows us that man is fallen from his original purpose, since he sinned and fell short of it. So man now must die for his sins (Rom 6:23), that is, if he does not have the opportunity to hear the good news of salvation and receive the Holy Spirit by his immersion into Messiah’s Body here on earth (Acts 2:38; 1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:27; Rom 6:2-5). But if he *does* hear the good news, and does not *obey it*, he will not only fall short of the glory of God, but he will remain in his guilt and sin forever and ever (Jn 3:36,18).

But if he *never heard* the good news, as Jn 5:24 says, or Rom 10:17, and lived according to his conscience as Gen 3:22, although he *sins* and is fallen and falls short of the glory of God, still he does not sin according to Rev 21:8 or Rom 1:24,26,28-32, etc. Heb 9:27 says that he will die, as Rom 6:23 also says, but it is *only once* that he will have to die, and this is to *pay for the sins he committed*. His sins were of the nature that could be paid for, and not of the nature that gave him a *depraved mind*, such as the men of Sodom, in contrast to Lot and his family (Gen 18:23,25).

So we see that not all have sinned so that they no longer have any of God’s glory left in them (otherwise Gen 9:6 would be meaningless). All *have* sinned and fall *short*, but one can be out of plumb an inch or so and still be considered among the *Just* of the earth in Rev 22:11, as Lot was in 2 Pet 2:6-8, in contrast to those who had fallen a mile out of plumb (Rom 1:28; 2:5,8).

For certain, no one can be counted among the *Holy* through his own righteousness, but only by Rom 4:5. Rom 2:7 speaks not of the *Holy* but of the *Righteous* who struggle as Job 14:14 to maintain the standard set for a fallen man to keep by his conscience (Rom 2:14-16; Gen 3:22).

Just because Paul said that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God does not mean that all have sinned *to the same degree* as the one in Rom 1:18 – 2:8. The men and women that Rom 2:14-16 speaks of *retained* the glory of God that they were born with, having been made in the image of God even after the fall (Gen 9:6), and will be *accepted* by God (Acts 10:35) after they go through the *first death* (Rev 20:14) and are raised at the *second resurrection* and judgment (Rev 20:12). Abel and Seth and others after them were accepted — but not Cain (although he had the chance, Gen 4:7,13). He was unable to pay for his sin by his own death as Abel could, and all men who had not pushed past the boundaries of their conscience so as to be *turned over* (Rom 1:24) to a depraved mind.

God gives some people over, but not all — only those who exchange the truth of God for a lie (Rom 1:25) *For this reason* (Rom 1:26) God gives them up or turns them over (Rom 1:28), for they are *filled with all unrighteousness*. This means that they *digressed* from the category of the righteous to unrighteous in Rev 22:11. *Filled with all unrighteousness* meant that no righteousness was left in them — they had *completely* fallen from any remnant of the glory of God, fallen to become *Unjust* or *Filthy* as Rom 1:29-31 says. Rom 1:32 says they *knew* the standard of Gen 3:22 and Rom 2:14-16, but *chose* to despise it (Rom 1:28). Rom 2:9 speaks of tribulation and anguish on every soul of man who *continually* practices the evil and not the good of Gen 3:22. The soul and spirit of such a man — his inner self, the essence of who he is — is in *eternal anguish* where *the worm never dies* (Mk 9:44,46,48, NKJV; Isa 66:24). Rom 1:28 says that they did not like to *retain* God in their knowledge, so God gave them over to a *base or depraved* mind, to do the evil *continually* as in Gen 6:5. Rom 1:28 — *Not fitting for man to do* — that is, not fitting for a *fallen* man to do (Gen 3:16-22). They were being filled constantly with what they

knew was wrong or evil, but did it *nevertheless*, as Rom 1:28 says. Rom 1:29-31 is the condition of the world today who break the Everlasting Covenant (Isa 24:5-6; Gen 9:1-7).

So Rev 21:8 is the judgment for those who were as Rom 1:28-29, *not* for those who were as Rom 2:7, as Rom 2:6,16 says (Rev 20:12-15).

All have *sinned*, but not all have said in their hearts that there is no God (Ps 14:1). So not all are as Rom 3:9-18, since not all have lost all the glory of God in them, as some who are regarded like *brute beasts* in 2 Pet 2:12 and Jude 1:10. Ps 14:1-3 — Those who **say** what verse 1 says **do** what verse 3 says. That is, no one who says in his heart that there is no God does the good, but does the evil of Gen 3:22. Rom 1:18 – 2:8 condemns him as one who has *no excuse*. Ps 14:4 *asks the question*, “Have all the workers of iniquity not *known*?” Did they have *no knowledge* of good and evil? But Rom 1:21 says that they *did*.

But Rom 1:22 says what Ps 14:1 says — that is what it means to say in your heart that there is no God. Therefore Rom 1:24 — God *gave them up* to do evil, no longer the good that they *know* to do, since they exchanged the truth of God for a lie (Rom 1:25).

So we see a *progressive degradation* to Isa 24:5-6, to Rev 16:8-9. But a few men were left, even as Mt 25:34 says.