

## Romans 3A (2017)

- At the end of Chapter 2 Paul began to shift away from his argument against nomianism, or righteousness by keeping law, to his fourth and final argument
  - That final argument is against the inherent righteousness of Judaism
    - The Jewish people hold a unique place in the world
    - They are the only nation of humanity to have a covenant relationship with the Living God
  - No other people group can make such a claim
    - Other religions may claim to have a special relationship with God
    - But only Judaism *actually* possesses such a relationship...and they know it
  - Therefore, it's easy for the Jewish people to overplay their hand
    - They might assume their unique position in the world assures them a good judgment
    - That their Jewish identity by itself was enough
    - And so we saw Paul moving into a discussion of Jewish identity at the end of Chapter 2 when he raised the topic of circumcision
  - Jewish identity is typified by the act of male circumcision
    - Jewish men became a party to the covenant God gave Abraham by physical circumcision
    - And women in Israel shared in that identity through the headship of their circumcised Jewish fathers or husbands
    - The Bible says circumcision is a sign of the covenant God made with Abraham
    - But over the centuries Jews came to confuse the sign with the substance
- This overemphasis of Jewish identity led to a fourth false view of righteousness, which I'm calling Judaism

- I'm referring to the view among the Jewish people that Jewish identity alone is a means to righteousness
  - Though Jews are sinful like all humanity, nevertheless they believe that the Lord overlooks their sin based on their relationship with Him
  - That God's favor for His people made accommodation for their sin
  - Those Jews holding this view called Gentiles dogs, and claimed that God created Gentiles merely to fuel the fires of Hell
  - They taught that Abraham guarded the gates to Hades, and that should a Jew find his way to the entrance, Father Abraham would turn him around and send him to Heaven
- This is the lie that Jews tell themselves, so it's unique to Judaism
  - Therefore, it's not an issue outside of the Jewish people
  - But given the importance of the Jewish people to God, it's still an issue that requires discussion
  - Furthermore, in the early church this was of special concern, since Judaizers were at work to convince Gentiles they must be Jewish to be saved
- So even as Paul was wrapping up his argument against nomianism in Chapter 2, he's already lining up his arguments against the fourth and final religious lie: Judaism
  - His first argument appears at the end of Chapter 2 and deals with the fallacy of trusting in circumcision (i.e., Jewish identity)
    - As we studied last week, Paul connected circumcision with law
    - He said that Jews couldn't rely on the Law for righteousness unless they do the law
    - Merely having the right law isn't enough
  - In fact, doing the law was so important that if someone who wasn't circumcised did the law, they would be righteous
    - Meanwhile, a circumcised Jew who failed to do the Law wouldn't gain the benefits of their identity

- Or as Paul put it...

**Rom. 2:28** For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh.

- Circumcision was a sign of a covenant, but possessing a sign doesn't automatically convey the substance of that covenant
  - For example, water baptism is the sign of the New Covenant in Christ
    - But going into the water doesn't automatically confer salvation to a person
    - If their heart isn't in agreement with the covenant, then the sign is meaningless
  - Likewise, a Jew who trusts in the Law and in their identity as a Jew, is missing the big picture
    - The identity God cares about is our spiritual identity, not our physical identity
    - What matters is our spiritual state before God
    - It's keeping the Law that matters, not possessing it
    - It's having a heart that belongs to the family of God, not a body that belongs to the nation of Israel
- And with that, we now move into Paul's treatment of the fourth spiritual lie: Judaism

**Rom. 3:1** Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision?

**Rom. 3:2** Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God.

- Paul addresses the lie of trusting in Jewish identity by asking and answering five questions
  - This is a typical Pauline technique
    - He asks questions he believes his audience will be asking
    - And then he answers them one at a time
    - In the process, he refutes the lie

- He begins with the question most Jews (and many Christians) ask when they learn that all men are treated the same by God at the judgment
  - What advantage was there to being Jew, then?
  - What was the benefit of being party to the covenant God gave Abraham?
- The answer Paul gives is “great in every respect”
  - There were significant advantages to being Jewish
  - Their first and greatest advantage was to receive the oracles of God
- Israel was the nation of people entrusted to receive the word of God on behalf of all humanity
  - No other people on earth received this blessing
  - Gentiles didn’t have the word
  - Most Gentiles lived and died having never heard it
- The Greek word translated “first of all” means of first importance
  - Having the word of God was Israel’s chief advantage in the pursuit of righteousness
  - Of course, simply possessing the word of God wasn’t a means to righteousness any more than possessing the Law
  - Nevertheless, having the word of God gave them a distinct advantage in that pursuit
  - Because in the word of God, the people of Israel had all they required to find, know and follow God
- This leads to the second question

**Rom. 3:3** What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it?

**Rom. 3:4** May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man be found a liar, as it is written,

“That You may be justified in Your words,  
And prevail when You are judged.”

- So if God singled out Israel for special revelation yet not all of them demonstrated faith in God's word, what do we conclude about God?
  - Does the fact that some within Israel didn't follow the Lord faithfully suggest God was not faithful to His covenant people?
    - This is the chief flaw in the lie of Jewish identity
    - Jews assume that God deals with all Jews in a similar way
    - And that if God were to turn His back on one Jew, He has been unfaithful to Israel overall
  - So Paul asks that question...would an unfaithful member of Israel be proof that the Lord has not been faithful to His covenants with His people?
    - To prove the error in this logic, Paul quotes from a case study of one of the most famous Jews in history
    - This man received great promises from God
    - And yet this man was unfaithful to God at times
    - Here's what that man, King David, wrote about his situation:

**Psa. 51:2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity  
And cleanse me from my sin.**

**Psa. 51:3 For I know my transgressions,  
And my sin is ever before me.**

**Psa. 51:4 Against You, You only, I have sinned  
And done what is evil in Your sight,  
So that You are justified when You speak  
And blameless when You judge.**

- Paul quotes David's confession of sin
  - And he declares that when the Lord judged David's sin, the Lord was blameless
    - The Lord judged David by taking the life of his young child by Bathsheba
    - David mourned his child's death but he acknowledged the Lord's judgment was righteous

- So here we have an answer to the very question Paul raises
  - Is the Lord unfair when He holds an unfaithful Jew accountable? Should God overlook the sin of a Jew simply because they are a Jew?
  - If that's how it worked, then David (of all people) would have been excused for his sin
  - But David himself declares that the Lord was blameless when He judged David for his sin
- That leads to the third question

**Rom. 3:5** But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? The God who inflicts wrath is not unrighteous, is He? (I am speaking in human terms.)

**Rom. 3:6** May it never be! For otherwise, how will God judge the world?

- The argument suggests that when God's people are unrighteous and God judges them, their sin highlights God's righteousness
  - We can understand this argument with a simple comparison
  - When you speed on the highway you are breaking the law
  - Because you were speeding, you gave opportunity for a policeman to chase you down and give you a ticket
  - In a sense, your sin gave the policeman opportunity to show his righteous judgment
  - Therefore, when you go to court, you tell the judge he should dismiss your ticket because you were doing your civic duty
  - You merely highlighted your city's excellent justice system
- So this argument suggests that the God who inflicts his wrath against those in Israel who sin, would be unrighteous
  - As crazy as it may seem to us, this is the argument coming from Jewish identity proponents
  - God can't put Jews in Hell to suffer His wrath because it would make God appear unrighteous
  - Paul distances himself from this claim at the end of v.5

- This is an ungodly “human” perspective, but it’s not the truth
- Paul answers if God could overlook the sin of Jews merely because they were Jewish, then how could God justly judge the rest of the world?
  - God would be a hypocrite to hold a sinning Gentile accountable while ignoring the sin of a Jew
  - He would no longer be qualified to serve as humanity’s fair and impartial judge
  - Double standards are not just
- This leads to the fourth question

**Rom. 3:7** But if through my lie the truth of God abounded to His glory, why am I also still being judged as a sinner?

**Rom. 3:8** And why not say (as we are slanderously reported and as some claim that we say), “Let us do evil that good may come”? Their condemnation is just.

- The fourth question is a corollary to the third question
  - Speaking on a personal level, the question asks isn’t the unrighteousness of a Jew actually helping God?
    - When we sin don’t we give God more opportunity to show grace?
    - Shouldn’t He congratulate the sinning Jew rather than condemn him?
  - Paul answers their question with a sarcastic question of his own
    - If someone was going to suggest this, then shouldn’t they live according to this motto at all times?
    - Paul sums up this perspective simply as “Let us do evil that good may come.”
  - In other words, if you really believe this kind of absurd logic, then why are you endeavoring to do anything good at all?
    - Shouldn’t you do all evil all the time?
    - Paul says some have slanderously accused him of making this very claim elsewhere

- But self-evidently, no godly person sincerely believed that this was true, as evidenced by the fact that no one was living that way
  - If they did, they would soon be in prison or dead!
  - And with that Paul leaves the argument unaddressed so as not to dignify it
  - He simply says those who hold to such a view are justly condemned
- The fifth and final question returns to where Paul began...

**Rom. 3:9** What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin;

**Rom. 3:10** as it is written,

“There is none righteous, not even one;

**Rom. 3:11** There is none who understands,

There is none who seeks for God;

**Rom. 3:12** All have turned aside, together they have become useless;

There is none who does good,

There is not even one.”

**Rom. 3:13** “Their throat is an open grave,

With their tongues they keep deceiving,”

“The poison of asps is under their lips”;

**Rom. 3:14** “Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness”;

**Rom. 3:15** “Their feet are swift to shed blood,

**Rom. 3:16** Destruction and misery are in their paths,

**Rom. 3:17** And the path of peace they have not known.”

**Rom. 3:18** “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

- So what do we conclude then concerning Jews vs. Gentiles? Are we better than they?
  - Paul uses the pronoun “we” to refer to Jews, because he was a Jew and so were the leaders in the Roman church
    - So he asks are we the Jews better than Gentiles when it comes to judgment and righteousness and heaven?
    - When all is said and done and we are facing our eternal judgment, will we be able to rest upon our Jewish heritage to save us?



- Will that get us into Heaven, which is the essence of the lie of Jewish heritage?
- To that Paul answers plainly, not at all. Jews are not better than Gentiles on the question of righteousness
  - Jews may have had advantages and received certain promises as a people
  - But individually no Jew stands in a better place than any Gentile
- And to prove this point from scripture, Paul quotes from two Psalms (14 & 53) to close the door on any thought that we are righteous
  - This passage is one of the key passages of the New Testament
  - It addresses a number of theological issues, including original sin, total depravity, & mankind's universality of guilt before God
- First, notice in v.10 Paul quotes the word of God testifying that there is none among humanity who are righteous, not even one
  - This is a sweeping statement
    - The Bible says there is not a single human being descended from Adam who may stand before God without condemnation
    - None are righteous, that is without sin
    - And to be sure we understand, the Lord repeats "not one"
  - It matters not who we are, where we were born, who our parents were, how many sins we've committed, how much sorrow we've expressed
    - It matters not our age, whether an infant or an old man
    - It doesn't matter if we are a genius or mentally incapacitated
    - It certainly doesn't matter if we are a Jew or Gentile
    - Not a single person is righteous before God
- And the reason for this universality of guilt is that our unrighteousness was present in us at birth
  - Adam's fall in the Garden changed his spiritual nature irreparably
    - And when he reproduced, he created new life that shared in his spiritual nature

- So because Adam's spirit was fallen, he produced children with a fallen nature
- So in turn do we, as David acknowledged about himself

**Psa. 51:4** Against You, You only, I have sinned

And done what is evil in Your sight,  
So that You are justified when You speak  
And blameless when You judge.

**Psa. 51:5** Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,

And in sin my mother conceived me.

- Therefore, by nature the children of Adam are unrighteous
  - As some have observed, we aren't called sinners because we sinned
  - Rather, we engage in sin because we were born sinners by nature
- This is the doctrine of Original Sin, the concept that all humanity is born with a spiritual defect
  - Paul describes it this way in Ephesians

**Eph. 2:1** And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,

**Eph. 2:2** in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

**Eph. 2:3** Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

- We come into the world with a spiritual deadness to God
- We are pledged to Satan and we live in our flesh
- As a result we are not children of God but children of His wrath, just as the rest of humanity, Paul says in v.3
- There are important spiritual consequences of this spiritual deadness
  - The first of these consequences is given in the first half of Romans 3:11

- Paul says there is no human being who understands [God]
- As a result of our spiritual deadness from birth, mankind is incapable of understanding the truth about God, to know Him truly
- Spiritual truth lies outside our grasp

- Paul says it this way in 1 Corinthians:

**1Cor. 2:12** Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God,

**1Cor. 2:13** which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.

**1Cor. 2:14** But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

- The believer receives the Spirit of God so that the person may gain the ability to know the truth about God
  - To know the things we were given freely by God, by His grace
  - In turn, we speak spiritual truth not because we've been taught these things by other people but because we were taught by the Spirit
  - Because a natural man, an unbeliever, cannot accept the truth of God
  - They are foolishness to him
- That's what Paul means when he quotes the psalmist to say no one understands
  - No one reasons themselves into believing in the Gospel
  - By human reason, the Gospel is nonsense
  - The ability to understand God lies outside our grasp, and that spiritual blindness is a consequence of our spiritual birth defect
  - It takes a living spirit to understand spiritual truth from God, but we're born with a dead spirit

- Which leads to the third implication in the second half of v.11

- There is no one in the human race who seeks for God
  - Paul isn't saying no one seeks for religious experiences
  - Or that no one seeks for a god
- The Bible's saying no one seeks for the true living God
  - No one finds the path to God on their own
  - And of course, this makes sense when we remember that all have been born with a dead spirit
  - Spiritually dead things don't seek for anything
  - As Paul said in Ephesians, we were dead in our sins, seeking only to serve our flesh
  - Even those who pursue religion in some form do so for fleshly reasons, ironically
- Theologians call this principle total depravity, which means the deadness of man's heart precludes him from ever rising above his nature
  - He does not know God
  - Nor will he ever seek to find him
  - And even if someone should share spiritual truth with this person, he couldn't understand it
- It's the definition of being lost
  - Our sin nature is so corrosive that it only serves to drive us further and further away from God
  - Like a rock dropped in the sea
  - It moves only downward, away from the light of the surface
  - And unless someone reaches down into the dark, the rock will continue to fall and can never rescue itself
- Because we are blind and deaf to God and spiritually unable to find Him, we are useless to Him
  - Together, Paul says in v.12 that all humanity has become useless (or could be translated corrupt) to God

- He gains nothing from unsaved humanity
- We do not thank Him
- We do not honor Him
- We do not praise Him nor serve Him
- And notice again, the psalmist clarifies that not even one exception exists
  - The name of a good person might come to our mind about now
  - Some civic or social leader, some heroic figure from history or a dear family member
  - Someone we supposed has done much good in life, even if they are a sinner
- But the Bible testifies against such thinking, at least in a spiritual sense
  - War heroes may do good acts, but they don't do "good"
  - Social leaders may accomplish good works for the poor, but they don't do good
  - Your grandmother may have loved you dearly, but she didn't do good
- Because the Bible says that even our so-called good works amount to nothing to God

**Is. 64:6 For all of us have become like one who is unclean,  
And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment;  
And all of us wither like a leaf,  
And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.**

- How can this be true? Because we measure good in ways different to God
- We see good from a selfish perspective
- If something pleases us, helps us, let's us feel better about ourselves or others, if it seems good to us, then it's "good"
- But the true and only measure of good belongs to God, Who we already learned is alone good

- And God's definition of good is one of perfection
- And a person who is operating in a dead and sinful spirit is incapable of doing good
- And even if we should accomplish a good deed, it's spoiled coming from a selfish sinful heart
- Finally, Paul finishes in vs.13-18 with a summary of the sinful behaviors that exemplify fallen humanity
  - Our mouths are like open graves, in that the things that come out are like death itself
    - We speak in deceiving ways, hurtful ways
    - We use our tongues to further our selfish desires and to bring down those around us
    - If we took a careful inventory of the sin committed by just our tongue, we would run out of paper to write it all down
    - There is no better measure of the unrighteousness of humanity and the universal nature of our condition than the common sin of our tongues
  - But of course, we have much more than that
    - Our feet are quick to shed blood
    - And these feet beat a path of destruction for ourselves and others
  - This summary is an allusion to the fall itself
    - The sin that began all sin was the lie told by Satan in the Garden
    - It led to the feet of Adam and Woman leaving the garden
    - Which quickly led to Cain shedding Abel's blood
    - And Cain walked a path of destruction away from his family
  - Eventually, we have a world filled with misery where no one has ever known true peace
    - So when you hear people asking why do bad things happen and why does suffering exist, the answer is v.18

- No one born of Adam and living in the deadness of their spirit fears God or even knows Him
- And without a fear of God, we have no reason to restrain our sin nature
- Before moving ahead in Paul's analysis, we need to ask how do we reach the Jew who relies on their family heritage to save them?
  - Perhaps take them to this account in the Gospels

[Luke 19:1](#) He entered Jericho and was passing through.

[Luke 19:2](#) And there was a man called by the name of Zaccheus; he was a chief tax collector and he was rich.

[Luke 19:3](#) Zaccheus was trying to see who Jesus was, and was unable because of the crowd, for he was small in stature.

[Luke 19:4](#) So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree in order to see Him, for He was about to pass through that way.

[Luke 19:5](#) When Jesus came to the place, He looked up and said to him, "Zaccheus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house."

[Luke 19:6](#) And he hurried and came down and received Him gladly.

[Luke 19:7](#) When they saw it, they all began to grumble, saying, "He has gone to be the guest of a man who is a sinner."

[Luke 19:8](#) Zaccheus stopped and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much."

[Luke 19:9](#) And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham.

[Luke 19:10](#) "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

- The point in this passage is that Zaccheus is a Jewish man, albeit a man with significant sin
  - And for that reason, Jesus declared that his response to Jesus dictated His salvation
    - Notice the Lord declared that "today" this man became a son of Abraham
    - Sonship isn't by physical birth but by spiritual birth
    - And if this Jew could be the "lost" then clearly Jews don't have an inside track to heaven

- Still, making this claim depends on their willingness to submit to the authority of scripture
  - Which reminds us that coming to faith is ultimately a matter for the Lord to decide
  - We may use His word and hope for His grace, but we cannot work without it
- So Paul quotes these two Psalms as a capstone argument against all four religious lies: paganism, moralism, nomianism and Judaism
  - Every possible way men have imagined for how to get to Heaven has been shown to be corrupt
    - They don't work, they can't work and in the day of judgment all who follow them will be sorely disappointed
    - Moreover, if no one is righteous, than it raises the more fundamental and frightening question:
    - How can anyone get into Heaven?
  - Does anyone survive the judgment moment with God?

**Rom. 3:19** Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God;

**Rom. 3:20** because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.

- God sent His Law into the world principally for the purpose of educating mankind on the standard for heaven
- It was not intended to be a recipe for meriting heaven
- In fact, Paul says that whatever the Law may say about one thing or another, it's saying it to those who are to be judged by it, so that we may be accountable to God
  - A more literal translation of v.19-20 reads this way

**Rom. 3:19** And we have known that as many things as the law saith, to those in the law it doth speak, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may come under judgment to God;



[Rom. 3:20](#) wherefore by works of law shall no flesh be declared righteous before Him, for through law is a knowledge of sin.

- The ultimate effect of God revealing His Law to mankind was not redemption but condemnation
- This is an inevitable conclusion, logically speaking
- If every human being is born with sin...
  - This means we have already lost our race to heaven before we even start to run
  - Since this is true, what can be the purpose of God giving us the rules to the race, the Law?
  - The only thing those rules do now is remind us that we couldn't have won the race even if we had tried
  - And so it shuts up any disagreement or debate
- How ironic that someone would then try to follow those rules having already been disqualified?
  - Paul says in v.20 that because of mankind's dilemma, no one will be successful in achieving a declaration of righteousness before God
    - You can't do it by trusting in created things
    - You can't do it by trusting in yourself
    - You can't do it by trusting in laws or rules
    - And you can't do it by trusting in your identity as a Jew
  - The Law of God reminds you that you were condemned long before you started to care about such things
    - So once again we have to ask, how does anyone get to heaven?
    - May I suggest that effective evangelism should include some aspect of this truth?
    - We must find the right way to inform a person that they are a sinner, that the standard for heaven is perfection, and they don't meet it

- Otherwise, they have good reason to question why they need what you're "selling"
- You're selling the answer to THE great spiritual dilemma of mankind
  - You're offering the way sinful people can meet the standard required for heaven
  - We all know we're sinful, because our sin is self-evident even if we are reluctant to acknowledge it
  - And since sin is an imperfection, we know it means we are not righteous, not right before God
  - So if we enter God's presence at our judgment in this condition, we have reason to expect to receive His judgment
- So how does someone become good enough to get to Heaven? How can we be declared righteous?
  - This leads us to the turning point in Paul's letter, the point where we return to the main thesis of the letter
    - Before we take this turn, go back briefly to Chapter 1
    - Remember how he set up his thesis to explore these four religious lies

**Rom. 1:16** For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

**Rom. 1:17** For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "but the righteous man shall live by faith."

- The gospel message has the power of God to save everyone who believes, Jew and Gentile
  - And what is that power? How does it solve our dilemma?
    - It reveals how we may obtain the righteousness of God
    - It does not tell us how we may be righteous ourselves
    - It says how we may have the perfection we lack
  - And so now in Chapter 3, Paul is ready to summarize that message with the power to save

[Rom. 3:21](#) But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,  
[Rom. 3:22](#) even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;

- We're beginning Paul's most thorough summary of the Gospel from all his letters (second choice is 1 Corinthians 15)
  - Paul begins saying "apart from the Law"
    - He means that what he's about to tell us has nothing to do with following law
    - Following law or rules of any kind will not bring you to the righteousness you need to enter Heaven
  - Remember, we were sinking to the bottom of the ocean long before we even knew we should have been swimming
    - Our sin began at birth, so how can doing law now help us arrive at our righteousness?
    - We know our past is filled with sin, but we can't change our past
    - And the passing grade required for heaven is 100%, so why bother doing works of law now? What good will that do?
    - The solution MUST be found apart from law
- So then, Paul says the righteousness we need is the righteousness of God
  - This conclusion is absolutely unavoidable
    - The only person who has the required righteousness to enter Heaven is God Himself
    - Remember Jesus said no one is good but God alone
  - If no one is good but God alone, then we're stuck
    - We either need to become God
    - Or else I need to gain God's righteousness
    - Well, the Gospel is NOT a story of how you become God (that's the lie of Mormonism)

- But the Gospel does tell you how you may obtain God's righteousness for yourself
- Paul says the righteousness of God has been manifested to us
  - The verb manifest means to be revealed, to be made known
    - God's righteousness has been made known to us
    - The message of the Gospel is an explanation for how we can obtain God's righteousness
  - The Greek verb tense is in the middle voice, so Paul is saying this revelation came to us by God, He revealed it to us
    - We didn't discover it on our own, of course, because we weren't seeking God in the first place
    - And even if we stumbled upon it, we couldn't understand it because we were spiritually dead
    - Jesus refers to this situation as pearls before swine (Matt 7:6)
  - Instead, God had to make this truth known to us
    - He had to seek us out
    - And He had to give us the means to understand His revelation, otherwise we would have automatically rejected spiritual truth