

Our Dilemma

Surveys show that while people are optimistic for their own future, they are pessimistic about the future of the world. Both the political right and left agree with the Doomsday Clock which was moved forward to 11:57.5 in January (the right because of moral degeneracy and the left because of global warming and nuclear proliferation). Both sides are concerned about the ability of mankind to control technological advances.

II Thessalonians 2 and Revelation 13 prophesy the rise of the Antichrist, who will unify the world and use technology to maintain order. Swedish businesses are experimenting with implanted chips (the size of a grain of rice) in the hands of their employees, foreshadowing the Mark that will be used by the Antichrist (Revelation 13:16). As always, the foundational problem is not technology, but rather the moral character of mankind.

Three Inescapable Facts About Evil:

1. We're All Under the _____ (Curse) of Evil.

- a. *"What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin."* Romans 3:9. All of mankind is under the curse of sin. Sin means "to miss the mark; to fall short of God's standards". In like manner, we are also under the curse of death. Healthy habits may delay, but not deny the certainty of death.
- b. The magnificent paradise of God's creation (Genesis 1-2) was shattered when sin entered the world (Genesis 3). Satan gained temporary custody of earth (I John 5:19; Ephesians 2:2). Mankind became tainted by sin (Psalm 51:5), and under God's wrath (Romans 1:18).

2. We've All Committed _____ (Acts) of Evil.

- a. *"There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away; they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."* Romans 3:10-12. Every human being is indicted on fourteen counts, the first six having to do with our character.
- b. Scripture doesn't deny that we also do many good deeds, as we are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27). However, even one bad deed (like murder) has the capacity of canceling out a lifetime of good deeds.
- c. *"Their throats are open graves, their tongues practice deceit. The poison of vipers is on their lips. Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness."* Romans 3:13-14. We are also indicted on four counts having to do with our conversation. Your speech reveals your heart.
- d. *"Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of peace they do not know. There is no fear of God before their eyes."*

Romans 3:15-18. The final four charges involve our conduct. The root cause is a lack of a fear of God. We should have both *awe* (Proverbs 9:10) in honoring God, and a *dread* of punishment (Proverbs 16:6; Hebrews 10:31).

3. We're All Offered _____(Freedom) from the _____(Verdict) of Sin.

- a. *"Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law...But now a righteousness from God, apart from the law, has been made known." Romans 3:19-21.*
- b. Every human being is guilty before God on all fourteen counts. The verdict is 100% certain and there is no appeal. But there is an offer of freedom on the table, and it comes from Jesus!

In the movie *The End*, Burt Reynold's character decides to commit suicide by drowning, but changes his mind far out into the ocean. Crying out for help, he starts bargaining with God, offering God his obedience to the Ten Commandments, 50% of his income, and no more cheating in his business. As he gets closer to safety, he progressively lowers his offer, and once on shore he lashes out in anger at God.

We are all destined to drown in our sin and there is no hope apart from Christ. But we come on His terms, not ours! Do you realize you are hopelessly lost and in need of a Savior?

Discussion Questions

Our Dilemma

1. Why do you think so many people around the world are more optimistic about their personal future than they are about the future of the world? Have you ever heard of the Doomsday Clock? Why do both the political left and the political right embrace the fragile nature of the future? What do you think of the Swedish businesses that are implanting chips in the hands of their employees? Do you think this could be a fulfillment of Revelation 13:16? Do you think there could come an age when technology controls us rather than us controlling technology?
2. Read Romans 3:9-20. What does verse 9 say about being under the curse of sin? What is meant by the word “sin”? Do you believe you have broken all ten of the commandments? Why or why not? How is being under the curse of sin similar to being under the curse of death? How did sin enter the world in Genesis 3? What does I John 5:19 and Ephesians 2:2 teach about our present world being under the control of Satan? What does Romans 1:18 teach about us being destined for God’s wrath? What does Psalm 51:5 teach about sin?
3. Read verse 10-18. Do you see yourself in these verses? Why or why not? What is taught in Genesis 1:26-27 about being made in the image of God? How does this fact explain why many people do acts that are completely selfless, even sacrificing their life for another person? How does running for political office bring your shortcomings into the public eye? If you ran for office, what flaws would your opponent expose? Of the fourteen charges made against people in verses 10-18, which charges are related to a person’s character? A person’s conversation? A person’s conduct? How does the last charge sum up the rest of the charges? Why is it important to both fear God in the sense of having awe, and to fear God in the sense of having dread? See Proverbs 9:10; 16:6; Hebrews 10:31.

Read verses 19-21. Why does keeping the law fall short in overcoming the verdict of sin? What is the only way to experience freedom from the verdict of sin according to verse 21? How did Burt Reynolds’ character try to negotiate with God? Have you ever tried to negotiate with God? How? Why is it important to understand that we come to God on Christ’s terms, not our own? Why is it important to understand that we are hopelessly lost and inescapably doomed? Do you realize how much you need