

# Paul's Magnum Opus

## INTRODUCTION

The book of Romans is the Apostle Paul's theological magnum opus. It contains a rich presentation of the doctrines of grace, and it is the closest thing we have to a systematic theology of any book of the Bible. In this lesson, Dr. Lawson introduces a three-part study through Paul's letter to the Romans by first examining the doctrine of total depravity, so that God's grace might shine brighter through the darkness of man's sin.

## LEARNING GOALS

When you have finished this lesson, you should be able to:

- Summarize key features of the life of the Apostle Paul and the book of Romans
- Demonstrate the doctrine total depravity from the book of Romans
- Outline the natural progression of man's depravity in Romans 1

## KEY IDEAS

- Paul moved from being a persecutor of the church to becoming a preacher of God's sovereign grace in Jesus Christ.
- The opening chapters of Romans bring charges against the entire human race as guilty before God devoid of righteousness apart from Christ.
- In unrighteousness, man suppresses the truth about God and is given over to idolatry and all manner of sin.
- In Romans 3, Paul demonstrates from Scripture the totalizing nature of depravity and how it affects man in all his faculties.

---

## REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### Before the Video

#### *What Do You Think?*

Take a moment to answer the following questions. They will prepare you for the lecture.

- Have you ever read the book of Romans or heard it preached? What is the book about?
- Are you surprised by what you observe in society at large? Why or why not? Why does it seem that people are generally happy in their sin?

### *Scripture Reading*

*For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one." "Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive." "The venom of asps is under their lips." "Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness." "Their feet are swift to shed blood; in their paths are ruin and misery, and he way of peace they have not known." "There is no fear of God before their eyes." Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.*

—Romans 3:9–20

- Who is Paul speaking about in this passage? What does this passage reveal about one of the functions of the law?

### During the Video

Answer the following questions while you watch the video. They will guide you through the lecture.

#### *God's Wrath & Man's Idolatry*

0:00–11:55

- What is significant about the tense of the verb in Romans 1:18?

- 
- What do “ungodliness” and “unrighteousness” refer to in Romans 1:18? What do they reveal about sin?
  - What is the result of man’s suppression of the truth about God?

### *The Result of Man’s Idolatry*

11:55–24:48

- What phrase is consistently repeated in Romans 1?
- What does Paul mean by “natural relations” in Romans 1:26–27?
- What is the greatest sin mentioned in Romans 1:18–32?
- How does Paul give a complete diagnosis of man’s total depravity?

### After the Video

Answer the following questions after you have finished the lecture. They will help you identify and summarize the major points.

- What was Paul like before encountering the resurrected Christ on the road to Damascus? What are some characteristics of the cultural context of the church at Rome?
- What is the difference between general and special revelation?

- 
- In what two ways should we understand homosexuality in relation to God's judgment?

## PRAYER

Commit what you have learned from God's Word in this lesson to prayer.

- Praise God for the clarity of the doctrines of grace in the book of Romans.
- Confess ways in which you entertain sin, as if it were not an offense against God.
- Thank God for His mercy to you, for He did not give you over completely to your sin but rescued you from its power.
- Ask God to pour out His mercy on homosexuals that they may turn to Him and worship Him in repentance and faith.