THE REVEALED CORRECTION OF HUMAN REASONING

Copyright, J. Michael Strawn

From Romans 1-3. THE REVEALED CORRECTION OF HUMAN REASONING, PART 1

Romans 1-3 addresses the *forms of human reasoning* . The apostle's emphasis is this: The Lord requires that human reasoning be the result of eternal and indestructible revelation. There are 3 ways in which human reasoning is to be corrected. NUMBER ONE: THERE IS ONE TRUE STARTING POINT FOR REASONING WHICH IS THE WORD OF GOD, from Romans 1. Here's how that works.

#1. Human reasoning must have an *active appeal to revelation, to scripture*. "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'" (1:17.) Reasoning is mandated to be a form of righteousness.

#2. Reasoning as a belief function must include the factual element of the power of God (1:4.) This means that the power of God should be allowed to leverage human reasoning about experience.

#3. Reasoning has to be locked to the revealed expectation of "*the obedience faith*" (1:5.) This common correction will affect Jew and Gentile alike. From that point on, Gentile forms of reasoning and Jewish forms of reasoning cease to exist. They do not coalesce because both face the same corrective authority.

#4. Reasoning is yoked to "the gospel" (1:16.) The purpose of God in history stands as precedent over cognitive powers. Human reasoning is not *a God-free zone* .

#5. Reasoning is obliged to respect *the implanted phenomenon of conscience* (1:18-20.) Therefore, Descartes was wrong. Doubt is not a privileged starting point.

#6. Reasoning is not coaxial with time and circumstance (1:21-31.) The mind and Scripture share one common axis: revealed eternal meaning.

#7. Every *corrected mind* keeps distance from the socialization of reasoning (1:31.) Society is not permitted to induce a coercive collectivization of reasoning.

From Romans 1-3. THE REVEALED CORRECTION OF HUMAN REASONING, PART 2

There are at least 3 ways by which human cognition is to be corrected. NUMBER TWO: THE CORRECTED MIND MUST BECOME COMFORTABLE *WITH THE UNTHINKABLES* , from Romans 2.

#1. The unthinkable: Escape from the judgment of God. Every one of us is held accountable to a revealed standard of thought, speech and behavior (2:3.)

#2. The unthinkable: To take lightly the "the riches of the kindness, tolerance and patience" of God (2:4.) Each day granted to us is a gift lending "to repentance."

#3. The unthinkable: To disregard the inevitable personal encounter with the Almighty, "who will render to each person according to his deeds" (2:6-8.)

#4. The unthinkable: To diminish the polar losses and rewards of a lifetime lived in the shadow of God (2:7-10.) It is unthinkable to "not obey the truth but obey unrighteousness" (2:8.)

#5. The unthinkable: That God is partial in His righteous judgment. Jews and Greeks are all one people from the Lord's perspective. "For there is no partiality with God" (2:11.)

#6. The unthinkable: To soften the magnitude of sin (2:12-16.) Condition of heart, conscience, states of mind (2:15) and the secrets of men are (2:16) the human elements that repel sin or absorb it.

#7. The unthinkable: Behavioral blasphemy (2:17-24.) Blasphemy is not just a sin of orality; it can become a way of life. For "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you" (2:24.)

#8. The unthinkable: Rationalization of biblical meaning (2:25-29.) The word of God is not to be brought subject to uncorrected human reasoning. "Circumcision" (2:29) is the removal of *the uncorrected* and its rewording of revealed meaning.

From Romans 1-3. THE REVEALED CORRECTION OF HUMAN REASONING, PART 3

It is possible to pursue doctrinal correctness, which is good, right and necessary. It is possible to make every attempt to observe moral uprightness in one's life. But if one's reasoning is not subject to revealed correction, then the foundation upon which life's edifice is standing is uncertain. NUMBER THREE: THE FORCEFUL ELIMINATION OF DISTORTION. Distorted ways of reasoning are not at all in concert with the confronting reality of revelation. "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'" (3:3.)

#1. Under the aegis of uncorrected human reasoning, "there is none righteous not even one" (3:10.)

#2. There is therefore an imposed priority. *Be a seeker*. Seek God. Seek the knowledge of God. Seek revealed meaning. Then obey it (3:19.) The corrected mind seeks to escape *the gravitation of distortion*. "There is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God" (3:11.)

#3. The Lord wishes to dispel all distortion in human reasoning as the most necessary personal adjustment of all: "There is no fear of God before their eyes" (3:18.)

#4. Corrected reasoning will be able to grasp *a coherent reading of the law and the gospel* (3:21-31.) The Bible is a coherent continuum of revealed meaning. "But now"--"the righteousness of God has been manifested"--"through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe" (3:21,22.)