

Chapter Twenty-six
Studies in the Epistle of Paul to the Romans
The Law Universally Condemns the Whole Adamic Race

“⁹ What then? are we better *than they*? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; ¹⁰ As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: ¹¹ There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. ¹² They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. ¹³ Their throat *is* an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps *is* under their lips: ¹⁴ Whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness: ¹⁵ Their feet *are* swift to shed blood: ¹⁶ Destruction and misery *are* in their ways: ¹⁷ And the way of peace have they not known: ¹⁸ There is no fear of God before their eyes. ¹⁹ Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. ²⁰ Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin” (Romans 3:9-20).

The Religionist thinks he has an advantage before God because he practices religious rituals, tries to live morally according to the Word of God and is involved in a religious community of people. The central point of this portion of Scripture is that all mankind is lost because all are sinners by nature and all have sinned. Therefore, regardless of how religious they are or how morally they have lived their lives, all mankind stands before God already condemned because they are guilty of sin.

In this portion of Scripture, Paul quotes six Old Testament Scriptures to prove the universal condemnation of all of mankind (including the Jews). The advantage of the Jews was they had the Scriptures telling them how to be saved. The problem (like liturgical Christianity) is they misapplied those Scriptures by making religious rituals and morality a way of salvation. The Lord Jesus spoke directly to this problem.

“³³ Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth. ³⁴ But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved. ³⁵ He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. ³⁶ But I have greater witness than *that* of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. ³⁷ And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. ³⁸ And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. ³⁹ Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. ⁴⁰ And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life” (John 5:33-40).

The purpose for quoting these six Old Testament Scriptures is to confirm that God’s truth has not changed. The Jew applied these truths to the Gentiles. Paul corrects that misapplication and applies them to all mankind universally as God intended. In fact, since they are taken from the Jewish Scriptures, they apply primarily to the Jews.

There is no religious activity that can change the fact of our guilt or earn us favor with God. Since all of mankind is universally lost, all of mankind universally needs a Savior. The “Law” here refers to all the Old Testament Scriptures (the verses quoted are primarily from the Psalms and one from Isaiah). The Law primarily applies to the people of the Law, i.e. the Jews. They are equally (with all Gentiles) condemned by the Law.

Are Jews better than Gentiles? No, in no way! All (both Jew and Gentile) are under the condemnation of sin (Romans 3:9). The Jew had an advantage over the Gentile in that as the elect nation they were the chosen vessel through which the Law of God came. They were the chosen vessel through which Messiah was to be born. However, they still needed to be saved like everyone else in the world. As a chosen people, they had some special privileges and benefits with God. Individually they each needed to be saved by grace through faith in the coming Messiah.

Romans 3:9-20 gives us God's view of the universal condemnation of sin due to the universal truth that all mankind are sinners by nature. Man has invented and adopted many views about condemnation. Man has invented and adopted even more views about what God wants man to do to be saved from condemnation. The only important view of how to be saved is God's view.

Since condemnation is solely the result of God's universal judgment on sin, salvation must solely be the result of God's satisfaction of that judgment (propitiation). Paul's argument is that it should be evident to all that the only acceptable view of both condemnation and salvation should be God's view.

The Law is blind to mercy and grace. It simply pronounces the sinner guilty and condemns him to eternal death (hell, Romans 3:23 and 6:23). Salvation is the act of grace whereby God in mercy steps into the human predicament in the person of Jesus Christ (the God/man) and substitutionally pays the death sentence for all mankind.

Six quotes from the Old Testament Scriptures confirming the universality of the condemnation of sin.

1. Romans 3:10-12 quoted from Psalm 14:1-3 (repeated in Psalm 53:1-3).

“¹The fool hath said in his heart, *There is* no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, *there is* none that doeth good.² The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, *and* seek God.³ They are all gone aside, they are *all* together become filthy: *there is* none that doeth good, no, not one” (Psalm 14:1-3).

Mankind is spiritually bankrupt due to our fall in Adam. There is absolutely no potential for good in any man apart from God's intervention and influence. We need only go back to Romans 1:21-32 to see what all mankind would be apart from God's influence.

2. & 3. The first part of Romans 3:13 is quoted from Psalm 5:9, the second part from Psalm 140:3.

“For *there is* no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part *is* very wickedness; their throat *is* an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue” (Psalm 5:9).

“They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; adders' poison *is* under their lips. Selah” (Psalm 140:3).

Apart from God's influence, mankind (the Adamic Race) is desperately wicked and totally deceitful. Apart from God's influence, mankind is absolutely untrustworthy.

“The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it” (Jeremiah 17:9).

4. Romans 3:14 is a quote from Psalm 10:7.

“His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud: under his tongue *is* mischief and vanity” (Psalm 10:7).

The fallen nature of mankind is full of corruption. “Full” is from the Hebrew word *male'* (maw-lay') meaning full to overflowing.

5. Romans 3:15-17 is quoted from Isaiah

“¹ Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:² But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear.³ For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness.⁴ None calleth for justice, nor *any* pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity.⁵ They hatch cockatrice' eggs, and weave the spider's web: he that eateth of their eggs dieth, and that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper.⁶ Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they

cover themselves with their works: their works *are* works of iniquity, and the act of violence *is* in their hands. ⁷ Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts *are* thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction *are* in their paths. ⁸ The way of peace they know not; and *there is* no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace” (Isaiah 59:1-8).

This portion of Scripture is written specifically to the religious hypocrite and deals with the injustices of mankind to one another. We see this corruption exemplified in the political arenas around the world.

6. Romans 3:18 is quoted from Psalm 36:1.

“¹ The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, *that there is* no fear of God before his eyes. ² For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful. ³ The words of his mouth *are* iniquity and deceit: he hath left off to be wise, *and* to do good. ⁴ He deviseth mischief upon his bed; he setteth himself in a way *that is* not good; he abhorreth not evil” (Psalm 36:1-4).

Romans 3:19-20: The Law’s message is a *dead end* sign for any hope of salvation.

The statement of Romans 3:19-20 is that we know with absolute certainty that keeping the Law cannot change a person’s standing before God. Anyone placing himself “under the law” or subject to the law for salvation has done so ignorant of the intent of the law. The law does not cry out, “Come to me for righteousness.” It is only a standard of righteousness for saved people. The law could never save anyone. The law says we are all guilty and all condemned. The law says we need a Savior. The law has only one simple message.

“Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Ezekiel 18:4).

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1. Discuss why the Religionist thinks he has an advantage before God over the Moralists. _____

2. Discuss the central point of Romans 3:9-20. _____

3. List the six Old Testament Scriptures Paul quotes in Romans 3:9-20 and correlate them with the verses in Romans 3:9-20.

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

D. _____

E. _____

F. _____

4. Discuss why Paul quotes these each of these six verses from the Old Testament. _____

5. Discuss why the average Jew thought he was better than a Gentile. _____

6. Discuss God's view of the universal condemnation of all mankind due to the universal truth revealed in Romans 3:9-20. _____

7. Discuss the message of the Law to all mankind in Romans 3:19-20, including the Moralist and the Religionist. _____
