

The Book of Romans
3:9-20
10/24/2018 Wednesday PM

Romans 3:9-20

⁹What 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. ¹⁰As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; ¹¹there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. ¹²All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." ¹³"Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." "The poison of vipers is on their lips." ¹⁴"Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness." ¹⁵"Their feet are swift to shed blood; ¹⁶ruin and misery mark their ways, ¹⁷and the way of peace they do not know." ¹⁸"There is no fear of God before their eyes." ¹⁹Now 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. ²⁰Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

- In these verses Paul is drawing a conclusion from his extended discussion of sin and God's wrath in **vv. 1:18-3:8**.
- In those prior passages, Paul exposed the common excuses of people who refuse to admit they are sinners:
 - "There is no God," or "I follow my conscience" – **1:18-32**
 - "I'm not as bad as other people" – **2:1-16**
 - "I'm a church member," or "I'm a religious person" – **2:17-29**
- **V. 9** – Here he gives us the conclusion, that all people, "Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin."
- To support this conclusion, Paul goes on to quote a series of Old Testament Scriptures. This is the longest series of Old Testament quotations in the New Testament. (**vv.10-18**)
 - **Vv.10-12** – These verses establish the general point that Paul is making that there is universal human sin.
 - He is quoting **Psalms 14:1-3; 53:1-3; Eccles. 7:20**.
 - **Vv. 13-14** – This section focuses on sins of speech, referring to a different organ of speech in each line.
 - He is quoting **Psalm 5:9; Psalm 140:3; Psalm 10:7**.
 - **Vv. 15-17** – This section focuses on sins of violence against others.
 - He is quoting **Isaiah 59:7, 8; Psalm 36:1**.
- What is interesting about these OT quotations is that most of the verses are referring to wicked people in their original contexts.
- Paul is applying OT verses that were intended for wicked enemies of Israel and the unrighteous people within Israel to basically the whole world.
- He isn't taking these verses out of context as some Bible scholars have charged him with, however he is broadening the application of these verses to the entire human race, including the Jews themselves.
- We must remember though, the Jewish audience that would have been reading this letter would not have liked it very much that Paul was using verses that they knew to be about pagans to apply it to them as the "chosen ones."
- **V. 18** – This verse is quoting **Psalm 36:1b** and it concludes this series of quotes by again giving general proof of the universality of human refusal to honor God.
- **V.19** – Paul is speaking in this verse like an attorney at closing arguments.
- The first usage of the word "law" in this verse is referring to the series of quotations he just finished.
- The second usage is referring to the Mosaic Law that the Jews are under.
- Paul feels that after the audience reads what he just got finished saying, that the case is closed and that they should surrender to the facts presented. "so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God."
- **V. 20** – In this verse the NIV translates the Greek word *dioti* as "Therefore." It can also mean "because."
- Look at what Paul says in vv. 19-20 with that word being translated "because": ¹⁹Now 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. ²⁰[Because] no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.
- Paul makes it clear in this passage that simply "observing the law" does not make a person righteous.

- After telling us a lot about what the Law will not do, Paul does end with what the Law does do. He says, “rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.”
- As we “observe the law,” we see vividly how much we fall short of the standards that God has for us.
- The Law is a mirror that we look into to see that we are in fact, sinners in need of a Savior.
- Without an understanding of the standards of the Law, we make up what morality means to us.
- God’s Law is unchanging and absolute and unless we meet those standards we do not receive righteousness.
- How do we reach those standards? By allowing Jesus Christ to bridge the gap for us!!
- The Jews that reject Christ, cannot bridge the gap, thus they fall into the ravine.



Next Week Study

Romans 3:21-26