

PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

Romans 3:9-20

LESSON: UNDER SIN'S POWER — July 10, 2016

INTRODUCTION:

3:1 What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?

3:2 Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.

The questions come: "*What advantage or what profit is there to being a Jew or a religionist—in being circumcised or baptized or a church member? What do you do with the Jew who is Abraham's seed?*" The promise of God to Abraham was that his seed (the Jewish nation) would be the children of God. "*So, if a man is born a Jew (born into a Jewish family) and he professes to be a Jew, a follower of God, is he not acceptable to God? If not, then what profit is there in being a professing Jew, a follower of God?*" Paul's answer is simple: the advantages are great. The Jew and the Christian are highly privileged, especially in that God has committed His Word to them.

- They have the privilege of being the race through whom the Messiah would come to the earth.
- They have the privilege of being the beneficiaries of Covenants with God Himself.
- They have the privilege of reading, hearing, seeing, obeying, and living God's Word.
- They have the privilege of possessing God's Word. They were entrusted with His laws; prophecies, forewarnings, and revelations of God (v.2).
- They have the privilege of having more responsibility of living within a society that will be affected by God's Word. These are enormous privileges.

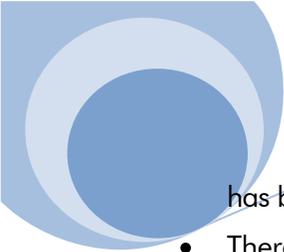
In fact, his privileges are so great that he is left without excuse if he fails to live for God. "*Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people*" Proverb. 14:34. So, the Jew and the Christian has every advantage in coming to God and living righteously for God.

3:3 For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?

3:4 God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

The question is: "*If you say some Jews do not believe and are condemned, doesn't that void God's promises and make God a liar? Or to say it another way, What if some disbelieve and reject God's Word, will their unbelief cause God to void His Word and promises?*" If you rejected the Bible, it will not nullify its truthfulness. Therefore the unbelief of Israel will in no way affect the Great Plan that God has provided for humanity, which is built on the promise of Faith! God promised the Jews a special place and special privileges through Abraham and his seed. "*If some Jews do not believe God's promises and God condemns them, isn't He breaking His promise to Abraham and his seed? Isn't he voiding His Word and Covenant and making Himself a liar?*"

- God forbid!—Perish the thought! Not when its built on faith of the recipient (v.4)
- Rest assured, God will be faithful to His Word and the promise of salvation will stand even if every man lies about believing; and lies about giving his heart to serve Jesus! The religionist who possesses God's Word and belongs to a church, but does not obey God's Word is not acceptable to God. He will not be declared justified (righteous) in God's Word. **It is righteousness that God is after, not religion.** God is not after an outward religion, but an inward righteousness. God wants a heart that will not only profess the Bible, but will keep His commandments. God is after a spiritual rebirth, a new creation, a man who



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has been truly Born Again with a heart and life that's focused upon Christ and keeping His commandments.

- Therefore, as it is written that you might overcome when you are judged. For God will prove His Word! He will save any person who gives his heart to serve Jesus. David himself said that God would judge the unfaithful or disobedient man (Ps.51:4). David had sinned greatly: not keeping the commandment of God, so God judged him and charged him with sin. David did the right thing: he confessed his sin and repented and began to live righteously. But David did something else: he declared that God's charge and judgment against him was just and that God was perfectly justified in doing what He did. God never has and never will be a liar. He would still save any person who did what He said. When we are judged we want to be justified in being right in what we say and prevail by being overcomers when we're judged.

The problem with a lot of us is that we have a problem in doing what God says. Men prefer to be saved by being religious: just being baptized, just joining a church, just buying a Bible, and then just being free to go about their own lives. But this is not enough for worshipping, and serving God.

- God charges the religionist with sin. God wants us to be righteous in our words.
- And God wants us to prevail by being overcomers when we're judged.

3:5 But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man). To put it in human terms...such arguments go like this...

"If my sin and disobedience give God a chance to demonstrate His righteousness, why then am I called a sinner for that? My sin is really a good thing. It gives God a chance to show how good He is. I may sin, yes, but only good has come out of it."

The question is: Is God unjust if He takes vengeance? Such arguments are common among every generation of men, but the arguments are gross deceptions. In no way does this mean that God places an approval upon sin of any nature.

3:6 God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world? The answer is God forbid—Perish the thought, for when one sins, God **will** take vengeance because He is true to His Word and Himself. By Him judging the world because of one's sin is showing that unrighteousness cannot stand; yes, that He is too good and loving to give approval of sin of any nature. There is only One God and man is not him. He will be denying His very nature of love if He did not judge the world. God's justice is the demonstration of perfect love. And the cross was where God exacted His perfect justice upon His Son, and it is the perfect example of the glorious truth. The cross is the perfect demonstration of both the love and the justice of God. Men shall be judged and condemned if they have rejected the love and salvation of God provided in His Son, Jesus Christ.

3:7 For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner? Here Paul is speaking by giving an illustration as a human being; a man that God's truth abounds through his lie, and causing God glory, then *"Why am I yet also judged as a sinner?"* That's saying through my lie I give God glory which is contrary to His truth! Such lies we say so God can work in our lives:

- ¹"It was a good thing I got divorced because now I am able to minister to people I could never minister to before."
- "I'm glad I lost my temper and cussed those two guys out because it really helped me deal with my anger."
- "Sure I had a few drinks with the guys, but now that they know I'm just like them it'll be easier for me to witness to them."
- "If I didn't sin, I wouldn't have nothing to pray about."

¹ <http://www.keepbelieving.com/sermon/1992-03-15-I-Object/>
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Such arguments may go like this:

²God ought to be grateful when people tell lies. Such lies show how truthful God is. The result is that His glory becomes even greater. So it would not be fair for God to describe these people as guilty. In fact, Paul's enemies pretended that Paul taught such ideas. So Paul explained to the Christians in Rome that this report was untrue. Then they say, *"If my sin and disobedience give God a chance to demonstrate His righteousness, why then am I called a sinner for that? My sin is really a good thing. It gives God a chance to show how good He is. I may sin, yes, but only good has come out of it. Why yet am I also judged as a sinner? When God accepts me as I am, a sinner, God has a chance to show how gloriously merciful He is. You can't condemn me for giving God a chance to show His mercy."*

3:8 And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just. Some slanderously reported false accusations saying Paul preached *"let's do evil that good may come about."* That would be really evil. It's like saying:

- ³"Pray for sickness so doctors will have a chance to heal people."
- "Pray for more fires so firemen can show their stuff."
- "Pray for more disasters so ambulance drivers will have something to do."

We don't want evil circumstances to come, so good may come. Paul says the damnation of persons who argue such is just; those who reported such slander are liable to a just damnation.

LESSON: I. ACCUSATION AGAINST MANKIND Romans 3:9

3:9 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;— This Scripture says, *"What then? Are we (not) better than they?—do we not have any advantage over other men?—Are we not better if we... ▪ have the Bible? ▪ profess God? ▪ know God's Will? ▪ approve the best things? ▪ Study the Word of God? ▪ guide and teach others? ▪ know the truth?"* The answer is a strong exclamation: No! Not at all! This accusation is against all mankind. All are under sin—both Jew and Gentile. The words *"under sin"* means, to be subject to the power of or under the authority of, and penalty of. There are consequences when you're under sin. The religionist Jew is under sin just as much as the Gentiles are under sin. To hear this really shocked the religionists Jew. No one is exempt. All are guilty before God. And remember, a man outside of Jesus Christ is under the power of sin, and he is helpless to escape from it by himself. There is a contrast between being *"under sin"* and being *"under grace."* Paul speaks of being under grace in Romans 6:14-15 where our sins are pardoned and ourselves are justified.

II. EVIDENCE AGAINST MANKIND Romans 3:10-18

3:10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:— The Scriptures plainly endorse and prove the fact that there is not a single man that is upright, innocent, righteous; no, not one. Ps. 14:1-3 clinches this argument. This means no human being on his own seeks for God and does any good that merits salvation. There is none that's righteous compared with God's own perfection. Therefore, righteousness is not only a key word in this epistle, but, it is also a criterion by which sin is judged. If it wasn't for Jesus Christ, I don't know where we'd be.

3:11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. This also comes from Psalm 14:2. Here, understanding is not mental but spiritual. The world is totally lacking in spiritual discernment and

² <http://www.easyenglish.info/bible-commentary/romans-lbw.htm>

³ <http://www.keepbelieving.com/sermon/1992-03-15-I-Object/>

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incapable of spiritual understanding. We need the wooing of the Holy Spirit.

3:12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Psalm 14:3 covers this verse also. Man has not only missed the mark, he has also perverted the path. It is a picture of a camel caravan crossing the desert which has strayed from the route and cannot return to the proper path. Likewise, man has lost his way by deviating from God's prescribed route of righteousness. We find that that's what a sinful nature would do.

- A sinful nature is **crooked**: meaning "*They are all gone out of the way*"; lean out, turn away, turn aside from God— from the way that leads to God, to another way. "*All have sinned and come short of the glory of God*" Rom.3:23. They do not follow God nor pursue the right way to God. They are not straight with God; therefore, they take another path, another way.
- A sinful nature is **useless**: meaning "*They are together become unprofitable.*" This means to become worthless, useless, sour, and bad.
- A sinful nature is **evil**: meaning "*There is none that doeth good, no, not one.*" The word "*good*" means moral goodness, kindness, graciousness, gentleness, justice. All men fail in being good toward God and their neighbor. They fail in being kind, gracious, gentle, and just. So, when the Word says, "*No one does good, no, not one*", it's like saying No one deserves to be saved! So, man is viewed as useless, rotten, and corrupted when compared to the righteousness of Christ. But God... But, God sent His Only Begotten Son because He loved us, not because we deserved that love.

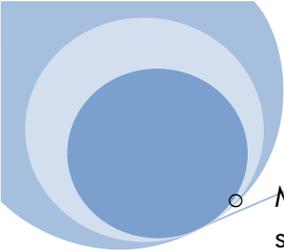
3:13 Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips:— The chief outlets in which the sinner display his sin is what Paul begins to speak of: throats, tongues, lips, and mouths (vv.13-14).

- A sinful tongue is **foul and corrupt**, meaning their throat are an open sepulchre (grave), and the apostle graphically portrays the conversation of the wicked by likening it to the filth that arises from their mouths with the stench of the open sepulcher. An open grave is foul, and it is a symbol of corruption. So the man with a sinful mouth is foul (*stinks*), dirty, obscene (*off-colored humor to dirty jokes*), polluted, filthy (*eats and eats away at his character; and thereby kills the character*), detestable, profane, dishonorable, and offensive.
- A sinful tongue is **deceitful**. This means they have used deceit. The word deceit is a continuous action, meaning they kept on deceiving: hiding and camouflaging their thoughts and feelings and behavior. He kept seeking to protect himself or to get whatever he's after.
- A sinful tongue is **piercing and poisonous**. Just as a deadly cobra snake. The poison of asps is under their lips. The idea is that the tongues of some people have a diabolical nature; they are filled with so much malice that they set out to inflict punishment. A poisonous tongue...
 - talks and gossips about
 - desires to cause suffering
 - inserts and spreads venom
 - strikes out against
 - lies in wait to strike
 - seeks to hurt and destroy

3:14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:— Psalm 10:7 indicates that man's mouth, which was created to speak the truth of God and praise Him continually, has been perverted to speaking of Satan and praising him through cursing and bitterness . You do not have to teach a man to curse. It's the common expression of the bitterness within him that is rooted in personal sin.

- A sinful tongue is full of **cursing** causing...

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- o Men to use profanity and swear. They curse both God and man. Their cursing may range from what society considers to be a mild word of slang, to using God's name in vain.
- o Man's mouth is also **full of bitterness**. His tongue is often sharp, resentful, cynical, cold, harsh, intense, distasteful, and unpleasant. Any expression involving any of these is sin to God. God desires men to be filled with love and joy, and peace.

3:15 Their feet are swift to shed blood:— Paul now turns his attention, not to man's words, but to his deeds- his actions; and the impact of their actions. Man's feet were really created to carry the gospel to the ends of the earth Isaiah 52:7, but just 7 chapters over in Isaiah 59:7 "*Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood...*" They now readily carried men violently to commit injustice and war with their fellowman.

- Sinful acts are murderous acts when their feet are swift to shed blood. "*Swift to shed blood*" means men feet jump to kill; ready to spill, and pour out blood out of hurt and shame to have their own way, and to get what they want.

3:16 Destruction and misery are in their ways:—

- Sinful acts are oppressive acts that destroy and cause misery. Because of pride, selfishness, and greed, man destroys the land, cities, nations, countries, governments, people, shops, houses, and property. He destroys and causes misery wherever he goes even within his own family or by war. Calamity and misery always follow the sinner's futile search for happiness apart from Jesus Christ.

3:17 And the way of peace have they not known:—

- Sinful acts are restless, disturbing, and warring acts. Their own souls are a civil war that experience constant conflict. Wherever men are, they disturb and bring fraction and war to others. The unregenerated man can never find peace with his fellowman until peace has been made with his Creator. The idea is that men do not experience or possess peace with himself until he is at peace with God.

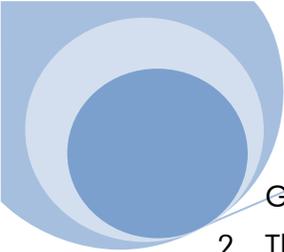
3:18 There is no fear of God before their eyes. This is quoted from Psalm 36:1 and identifies the root cause of sin as the failure to fear and honor God. Any society that commonly assumes that God will not discipline sin in this life or judge it in the next will have no fear of God and will therefore give itself increasingly to evil.

- Sinful acts are godless, irreverent, disrespectful acts. Their eyes and attention are focused not upon God, but upon other things. They ignore and neglect God, living as though there is no God. They sense little desire or need to worship God or to study His Word or Will. They don't fear God, His anger, or His wrath, or judgment.

III. CONCLUSION REGARDING MANKIND Romans 3:19-20

3:19 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. When Paul says "*Now we know*", it means that this is an obvious truth, a clear truth that cannot be missed. Of what truth?- All that has just been said from Scripture (vv.9-18), being quoted from the Old Testament Scriptures. It speaks truth that cannot be missed.

1. The law speaks to all under the law given by Moses. At this particular time Paul is speaking to the Jews in particular, for they thought they were superior to the Gentiles. The law was given to men to show them their need for a righteousness which was not their own. And even though they were teachers of the law to the Gentiles (Rom.2:21), they broke the law; they could not teach themselves. They can no longer compare themselves thereby giving them no more excuses. The Jew and



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Gentiles were under sin.

2. The law stops all boasting; every mouth that acts self-sufficient and declares the goodness of men their mouths shall be silenced and there will be no more excuses. They were the ones opening their mouths to judge others. There is none good, no not one!
3. The law makes all the world guilty before God. They will be made accountable, for God' law declares:
 - a. There's none righteous, no not one (Rom.3:10).
 - b. There's none that doeth good (not perfectly), no not one (Rom.3:12).

Now we know; no one escapes. All the world stands face to face before God; stands short of His glory; stands guilty of sin, for man cannot save himself.

3:20 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. Paul is now coming to the summation of his argument and is about to make an application and draw a conclusion. He begins with "*therefore.*" "*Therefore by the deeds (works) of the law...*"

4. The law justifies no flesh.
 - a. No law and no deed of the law will ever justify a man (make him acceptable to God).
 - b. Man cannot be justified by keeping any law or work.
 - c. Man cannot be justified by any righteousness of good deed of his own.
 - d. No flesh, no man will be justified in God's sight, not by the law.
5. The law shows man that he is sinful. The purpose of the law is not to justify, but to point out sin, to tell a man that he is a sinner. The law was given to make a man aware of his sin. Why? So that man would know he is sinful and that he needs to seek God for forgiveness and salvation.

SUMMARY:

⁴Paul has already charged that both Jews and Gentiles are guilty before God. Now he declares that all men are sinners and he seeks to prove it with references from the Old Testament. "*All are under sin*" (3:9).

This sin reaches into every area of life:

- II. Our character - "*There is no one righteous, not even one*" (3: 10)
- III. Our mind - "*There is no one who understands, no one who seeks God*" (3:11)
- IIII. Our heart - "*All have turned away, together they have become worthless*" (3:12)
- IV. Our speech - "*Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit*" (3:13-14)
- IV. Our feet - "*Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways*" (3:15-17)
- VI. Our eyes - "*There is no fear in their eyes*" (3:18)

Paul declares that "*Every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God*" (3: 19). While it is true that God's standard is perfect, and that obedience to it would secure Devine blessing, the fact remains that in actual life no one is able to keep it (3:20). Sin has infected and affected every part of our being. But to say that, is to say nothing more than the historic Protestant doctrine of Total Depravity. It means that sin has affected every part of man's being; his mind, his emotions, his will, his intellect, his moral reasoning, his decision making, his words and his deeds. No part of man's being is exempt from the debilitating effects of sin. Total depravity means there is an evil seed inside each of us which may lie dormant for years, and pop up without warning. Wow!

⁴ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/romans-39/>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>