

God's Good News About Righteousness

An Inductive Study of the Book of Romans

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Study 5, The Condemnation of All Men

Romans 3:9-20

A. INTRODUCTION: The Writer, the Readers, and the Good News (Romans 1:1-17).

B. **CONDEMNATION:** The Unveiling of God's Wrath against Man's Unrighteousness
1:18 - 3:20

1. The Condemnation of Gentiles. 1:18-32. (The term Gentiles refers to non Jewish people in the world.)
2. The Condemnation of Moralists. 2:1-16. (Moralists are those who stand in judgment on others.)
3. The Condemnation of Jewish People. 2:17 - 3:8.
4. **The Condemnation of All Men. 3:9-20.**

a. **The charge of universal condemnation. (3:9).**

- 1) In 3:9 Paul, the Apostle, asks, "What then? Are we better than they?" By that he is raising the question that, since Jewish people have failed to comply with God's standards, are we Gentiles better than they?
- 2) What is Paul's answer to the question he raises?

b. **The Scriptural documentation of universal condemnation. (3:10-18).**

- 1) **The universality of sin. (3:10-12).** (In this section Paul quotes phrases from Psalm 14:1-3. These questions reveal God's perspective on the human race.)
 - a) How many righteous people are there in the world?
 - b) How many people really understand God or His view of good and evil?
 - c) How many people are diligently searching for God?
 - d) How many have turned aside from God's way?
 - e) How many people are useful in God's view?
 - f) How many people are consistently practicing that which is good in their lives?

2) The totality of depravity.¹ (3:13-18).

- a) Man's depravity is reflected in his destructive speech. (3:13-14. Rom. 3:13 quotes Ps. 5:9; 140:3. Rom. 3:14 quotes Ps. 10:7.)
 - i How is man's throat described?
 - ii How are men's tongues described?
 - iii How are men's lips described?
 - iv What is man's mouth full of?
- b) Man's depravity is reflected in his destructive actions. (3:15-17, which quotes from Isa. 59:7-8.)
 - i How are men's feet described?
 - ii What are men's paths full of?
 - iii What have men not known?
- c) Man's depravity is reflected in his flippant disregard of God. (3:18, quoting Ps. 36:1). What is deficient about men's eyes?

c. The function of God's Law in universal condemnation. 3:19-20.

- 1) The universal implication of Jewish condemnation under the Law. (3:19).
 - a) To whom does God's Law speak (3:19a)?
 - b) Who is condemned by God's Law (3:19b)?²

¹ "Depravity means that man fails the test of pleasing God. [It] denotes his unmeritoriousness in God's sight. This failure is total in that (a) it affects all aspects of man's being and (b) it affects all people" (Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, p. 253). Depravity does not mean that every person is equally bad or that someone is as bad as he could be. It does not mean that he can do no good toward others. It does mean that there is nothing he can do to make himself acceptable to God.

² 3:19 - The thought here is that if the ones to whom the Law was given, the Jewish people, cannot keep it, no one else can either!

- 2) The universal function of God's Law. (3:20).
 - a) What will no one in the world who tries to keep God's Law succeed at (3:20a)?
 - b) What was God's purpose in giving His Law (3:20b)?

d. Universal conclusions about man.

- 1) All mankind is totally depraved. Though some of us are better or worse on a human standard, we are all completely deficient at pleasing God.
- 2) We are totally inept at keeping God's Laws. God will never count a single one of us righteous in His sight for keeping His Laws, because we cannot.
- 3) In fact, God never intended His Laws to be used by us as a means of becoming righteous. The reason He gave us His Laws was to show us that it is impossible for us to keep them. All He ever intended for His Laws to do was to show us how deviant and sinful each one of us is.
- 4) There has to be another way for God to count us as being righteous, because in our own efforts, we can never, never succeed! What is that way? (For the answer, explore Study 6!)

The Condemnation of All Men (Romans 3:8-20)

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