

Cornerstone Bible Church

Is It Really That Bad?

(Romans 3:1-20)

Survey of Romans part 9

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Introduction:

Watching News about the US in Cuba vs Watching News about Venezuela in the US.

~~FAKE NEWS~~

When it comes to certain biblical doctrines, wish things were not as bad as they are described in Scripture. Sin, hell, the wrath of God.

PROPAGANDA

In terms of our standing in righteousness and approval before God, things are infinitely worse than what they appear before our eyes.

Is it really that bad?

Text: Romans 3:1-20

“Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision?

²Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God.

³What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it?

⁴May 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 MAY PREVAIL WHEN YOU ARE JUDGED."

⁵But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? The God who inflicts wrath is not unrighteous, is He? (I am speaking in human terms.)

⁶May it never be! For otherwise how will God judge the world?

⁷But if through my lie the truth of God abounded to His glory, why am I also still being judged as a sinner?

Text: Romans 3:1-20

⁸And why not say (as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say), "Let us do evil that good may come"? Their condemnation is just.

⁹What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin;

¹⁰as it is written, "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE;

¹¹THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD;

¹²ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE."

¹³"THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE, WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING," "THE POISON OF ASPES IS UNDER THEIR LIPS";

¹⁴"WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS";

¹⁵"THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD,

¹⁶DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS,

Text: Romans 3:1-20

¹⁷AND THE PATH OF PEACE HAVE THEY NOT KNOWN.

¹⁸"THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES."

¹⁹Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may become accountable to God;

²⁰because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin."

This ends the reading of the word of God

Where are we?

- Paul wanted to visit Rome where he had never been
- His intentions were to communicate the gospel to them
- He expresses why he is not ashamed of the Gospel
- He writes about three reasons for the Gospel.
 - God's wrath revealed from heaven (verses 1:16-32)
 - God's Irrevocable Judgment (verses 2:1-16)
 - Jews and Gentiles Culpability (verses 2:17-29)
 - Today: Universal Guilt (verses 3:1-20)

Context: REVIEW: THE NEED FOR THE GOSPEL

The reasons for the Gospel

- a) God's wrath revealed from heaven against sin Romans 1:16-32
- b) The irrevocability of God's Judgment Romans 2:1-16
- c) The Jews Guilty before the Law Romans 2:17-29

The Connector: “Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision?”

Today's subject: No exception to universal condemnation

How does Paul develop the argument?

I – HE **ASKS** RETHORICAL QUESTIONS:

II – HE **ANSWERS** IN AN IMAGINARY DIATRIBE

III – HE **APPEALS** TO THE SCRIPTURES

I – THE RETHORICAL QUESTIONS:

a) If The Jews' knowledge of the Law did not waive their condemnation.

- What's the advantage of being a Jew? If they too failed!
- If the Jews were unfaithful, even when God had given to them His Law, doesn't that make God unjust?
- If God uses transgression to show His holiness and righteousness, why does He condemn sinners?
- Implicitly, if the Jews were not saved by receiving the Law, what's the purpose of the Law?

I – THE RETHORICAL QUESTIONS:

b) Paul answers about the advantage of the Jews:

“To them were entrusted the oracles of God.”

I find it amusing that Paul said "first of all" but we have to wait until Romans 9, when he retakes the subject of the place of Israel in God's Redemptive Purposes.

- This is why Protestants have 39 books in the Old Testament and do not include the Apocrypha.
- We use the same TANAKH that Jesus and the Jews of His time used.

I – THE RETHORICAL QUESTIONS:

b) Paul answers about the advantage of the Jews:

- The Jewish TANAKH

Torah: The Law, Moses: Pentateuch

Nevi'im: The Prophets: Joshua + Kings + all prophets (major & minor) except Daniel & Lamentations

Ketuv'im: The Writings, all the rest including Psalms + Lamentations + Daniel; ending in Chronicles (2 Chronicles)

Our faith is an inherited faith!

Paul hammers this further in chapters 9 to 11, so we have to wait.

II – THE DIATRIBE

1. **The disobedience of Israel doesn't make God unfaithful**

But He made a covenant with them? Why did He let them fail?

Answer: it is not God's fault that they failed, but theirs! I do not expect to solve the tension between God's Sovereignty and People's responsibility in this class.

I only recognize it, as the Bible does, but I don't know the answer.

II – THE DIATRIBE

2. **God's condemning Israel's disobedience does not make Him unrighteous**

Because He judges according to works. It was not God who failed but Israel.

3. But, **God used their sin to prove His Righteousness.**

- a. By exposing Israel's sin vis-à-vis the Righteousness of the Law.
- b. The Bible does not hide or justify the flaws of its characters.
- c. By judging Israel for their transgressions. (The Exile!)

II – THE DIATRIBE

3. But, **God used their sin to prove His Righteousness.**

c. Then: Isn't it unfair of Him to judge people for sins that He uses to prove His righteousness?

No, because God is not the author of sin.

The fact that He used Israel's sin to show the perfection of the Law, doesn't make Him unrighteous by judging it.

=> A THEOLOGICAL APPLICATION ABOUT CONFESSING SIN:
It vindicates God! Ex: Achan and Jericho's ban. Joshua commanded him to "give glory to God" by confessing publicly to vindicate God. Then Achan was killed.

The subject: NO EXCEPTION TO THE CULPABILITY OF SIN

1. THE RHETORICAL QUESTIONS

2. THE DIATRIBE

From verses 1 through 9 Paul appeals to the logic of a rhetorician, From 10 to 21 he quotes Scripture.

III - THE SCRIPTURES (Special Revelation depicts the sinfulness of man) (verses 10-21)

1. Paul closes the loop started in 1:16: Everyone's guilty!

⁹What then? Are we (Jews) better than they (Gentiles)? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin;

2. The Gentiles are guilty because they *break the Law revealed in their conscience* and the Jews are guilty because *they break the Law revealed by Moses*.

3. **Here's the need for the Gospel!** That the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against Jews and Gentiles alike because without exception, ALL HAVE SINNED

CONCLUSION: IS IT REALLY THAT BAD? YES, IT IS! 10-20

1. THE DECLARATION ABOUT OUR CONDITION

¹⁰as it is written, "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE;

- None Righteous: diakaios => according to God's standard (of measure)

¹¹THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD;

- None Included: It is the most alienating term.
- Absolutely every person dead or alive failed to understand (God and His Righteousness) and failed to seek Him.

1. THE DECLARATION ABOUT OUR CONDITION

- O yes, people seek a guilt-bearer, a fear-remover or a blessings-provider, but they are just looking to satiate themselves, but they do not seek after God.
- **No such thing as a “seeker-sensitive” person!**
- <My pre conversion religious experiences>

¹²ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE."

- ALL turned aside and become useless (to God in terms of righteousness).
- NONE who does good ... for emphasis, not even one.

2. A PICTORIAL DESCRIPTION OF OUR CONDITION: 13-20

A. The inner being

¹³"THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE, WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING," "THE POISON OF ASPES IS UNDER THEIR LIPS";

¹⁴"WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS";

- Throat, tongue, lips and mouth: the deadness of their inner being. *"The mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart."*
- A grave is a symbol of death,
- Deceit is the evidence of their being under the "father of lies".
- The fountain of their heart is curse and bitterness.
- The poison of asps: *"was the least terrible way to die; the venom brought sleepiness and heaviness without spasms of pain."*
- **It kills you, but nicely!**

2. A PICTORIAL DESCRIPTION OF OUR CONDITION: 13-20

B. The plans and actions:

¹⁵"THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD, ¹⁶DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS, ¹⁷AND THE PATH OF PEACE HAVE THEY NOT KNOWN."

- The devil has been a homicide from the beginning and so are his children quick to shed blood.
- *Illustration: Watching the movie "IT" ... Kill him!*
- Their paths leave a trail of destruction and misery (the story of mankind)
- Wars and tumults despite the ever longing of a peace that never comes "*because there is no peace for the wicked.*" -- Isaiah 48:22

2. A PICTORIAL DESCRIPTION OF OUR CONDITION: 13-20

C. The object of their affection

18" THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES."

- The eyes are full of adultery, covetousness and lust
- Always longing but never satiated!
- Their affection does not consider God's Judgment!

3. THE WORK OF THE LAW: displaying, defining and indicting of sin.

¹⁹Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may become accountable to God; ²⁰**because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.**”

What’s the use of the Law? It defines sin!

The story does not end there, because apart from the Law, the righteousness of God was manifested in Jesus Christ.

This is the hope for the sinner!

End: have you ever come before God totally helpless, naked and destitute? ***This is repenting and believing!***

END