

# Sin and Condemnation: The World's need to get right with God

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[Romans 1:18-3:20](#)

(Continuation from 07/30/17)

## F. God's Case Against All Men, [Romans 3:9-20](#)

### [Romans 3:9-20 \(NASB\)](#)

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

<sup>10</sup>as it is written, “THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE;

<sup>11</sup>THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD;

<sup>12</sup>ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE.”

<sup>13</sup>“THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE, WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING,” “THE POISON OF ASPES IS UNDER THEIR LIPS”;

<sup>14</sup>“WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS”;

<sup>15</sup>“THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD,

<sup>16</sup>DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS,

<sup>17</sup>AND THE PATH OF PEACE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN.”

<sup>18</sup>“THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES.”

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

<sup>20</sup>because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law *comes* the knowledge of sin.”

**(Romans 3:9-20) Man, Depravity— Salvation:** in looking at such passages as this, a person must keep in mind the whole point of the passage. The point is not to charge man with sin, nor to berate man; it is not to look upon man with cynical contempt. The point is not to call man to hopelessness and despair, leaving him with a hanged head and low self-esteem. **The point is to give man hope:** to challenge man to seek a right relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. Man must *never minimize* his sin, lest he ignore or neglect the right way to God. But neither must he minimize the redeeming power of Jesus Christ, lest he hang his head in hopelessness, or wallow in self-pity, or roam the world in despair.

Paul paints a plain picture of the perversity of people in this passage. We are not any better than anyone else. No matter what race you belong to, Jew or Gentile, you are a sinner. Man has

**08-06-17**

**Series: The Book of Romans**

taken a detour from the right path. There are none righteous. The polaroid of perversity shows that man is both unrighteous and unreasonable.

Men like to believe they are basically good and that belief is continually reinforced by psychologists, counselors, and a great many religious leaders.

But deep in his heart man knows there is a problem with the way he is, that something is wrong. No matter whom or what he may try to blame for that feeling, he cannot escape it. He feels guilt, not only about things he has done that he knows are wrong but also about the kind of person he is on the inside.

A popular newspaper advice columnist wrote, “One of the most painful, self-mutilating, time- and energy-consuming exercises in the human experience is guilt.... It can ruin your day—or your week or your life—if you let it. It turns up like a bad penny when you do something dishonest, hurtful, tacky; selfish, or rotten.... Never mind that it was the result of ignorance, stupidity, laziness, thoughtlessness, weak flesh, or clay feet. You did wrong and the guilt is killing you. Too bad. But be assured,” she concluded, “the agony you feel is normal.... Remember guilt is a pollutant and we don’t need any more of it in the world” (*The Ann Landers Encyclopedia* [New York: Doubleday, 1978], pp. 514-17). With that, she went on to another subject.

The ancient Roman philosopher Seneca wrote that every guilty person is his own hangman. No matter how often a man tells himself he is good, he inevitably sees that he cannot help thinking, saying, and doing wrong things and feeling guilty about it. Guilt drives people to alcohol, drugs, despair, insanity, and more and more frequently to suicide. After playing psychological games about blaming his environment or other people or society in general, man still cannot escape the feeling of his own guilt. In fact, societies with sophisticated psychological services seem even more guilt ridden. People want to get rid of their guilty feelings but they do not know how. And the more they probe for solutions, the guiltier they feel.

Men *feel* guilty because they *are* guilty. The guilt feeling is only the symptom of the real problem, which is sin. All of the psychological counseling in the world cannot relieve a person of his guilt. At best, it can only make him feel better, superficially and temporarily, by placing the blame on someone else or something else. That, of course, only intensifies the guilt, because it adds dishonesty to the sin that caused the guilt feeling in the first place.

Man’s guilt has only one cause—his own sin—and unless his sin is removed, his guilt cannot be. That is why the first element of the gospel is confronting men with the reality of their sin. The word *gospel* means “good news.” But the good news it offers is the way of salvation from sin, and until a person is convicted of his sin, the gospel has nothing to offer. The gospel therefore begins by declaring that all men are fundamentally sinful and that the greatest need of their lives is to have that sin removed through trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

As Paul has already forcefully declared in the first two chapters of Romans, both the pagan Gentile and the religious Jew are sinful and stand condemned before a holy God. But human nature strongly resists that truth.

**Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse** said, “It is only stubborn self-pride that keeps man from the confession to God that would bring release, but that way he refuses to take. Man stands before God today like a little boy who swears with crying and tears that he has not been anywhere near the jam jar, and who with an air of outraged innocence, pleads the justice of his position, in total ignorance of the fact that a good spoonful of the jam has fallen on his shirt under his chin and is plainly visible to all but himself” (*God’s Wrath: [Romans 2-3:1-20](#)* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953], p. 191).

The apostle Paul was well aware of man’s disposition to deny his sin. Therefore, from creation, from history; from reason and logic, and from conscience, Paul has already presented powerful testimony of man’s sinfulness. Now he presents the ultimate testimony, the testimony of Scripture. Beginning with [verse 10](#) and continuing through [verse 18](#), Paul introduces before the court, as it were, the testimony of God’s own Word as revealed in the Old Testament. [Verses 9-20](#) summarize God’s divine and perfect view of man and they continue in a trial motif: **the arraignment ([v. 9](#)), the indictment ([vv. 10-17](#)), the motive ([v. 18](#)), and the verdict ([vv. 19-20](#)).**

1. **The charge: all men are under sin ([v.9](#)).**
2. **The case of a sinful nature ([v.10-12](#)).**
3. **The case of a sinful tongue ([v.13-14](#)).**
4. **The case of sinful acts ([v.15-18](#)).**
5. **The case of the law ([v.19-20](#)).**

### 1. ([Romans 3:9](#)) **Sin— Man, Nature: all men are under sin.**

[Romans 3:9 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>9</sup>“What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin.”

The words “**under sin**” (*huph’ hamartian*) means to be subject to the power of or under the authority of. A man outside of Jesus Christ is under the power of sin and he is helpless to escape from it (cp. [Galatians 3:10, 25](#); [Galatians 4:2, 21](#); [Galatians 5:18](#); [1 Timothy 6:1](#)).

[Galatians 3:10 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>10</sup>“For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO PERFORM THEM.”

[Galatians 3:25 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>25</sup>“But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.”

[Galatians 4:2 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>2</sup>“But he is under guardians and managers until the date set by the father.”

[Galatians 4:21 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>21</sup>“Tell me, you who want to be under law, do you not listen to the law?”

**Galatians 5:18 (NASB)**

<sup>18</sup>“But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.”

**1 Timothy 6:1 (NASB)**

<sup>1</sup>“All who are under the yoke as slaves are to regard their own masters as worthy of all honor so that the name of God and *our* doctrine will not be spoken against.”

The religionist (Jew) is “under sin” just as much as other men are “under sin.” The Scripture has just declared that being religious does not make men acceptable to God (cp. [Romans 2:17-28](#)).

**Romans 2:17-28 (NASB)**

<sup>17</sup>“But if you bear the name “Jew” and rely upon the Law and boast in God,  
<sup>18</sup>and know *His* will and approve the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law,

<sup>19</sup>and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness,

<sup>20</sup>a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, having in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth,

<sup>21</sup>you, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that one shall not steal, do you steal?

<sup>22</sup>You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?

<sup>23</sup>You who boast in the Law, through your breaking the Law, do you dishonor God?

<sup>24</sup>For “THE NAME OF GOD IS BLASPHEMED AMONG THE GENTILES BECAUSE OF YOU,” just as it is written.

<sup>25</sup>For indeed circumcision is of value if you practice the Law; but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.

<sup>26</sup>So if the uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?

<sup>27</sup>And he who is physically uncircumcised, if he keeps the Law, will he not judge you who though having the letter *of the Law* and circumcision are a transgressor of the Law?

<sup>28</sup>For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh.”

Religionists are shocked: “What then! Are we not better—do we not have any advantage over other men?

Are we not better if we...

- 1) have the Bible?”
- 2) profess God?”
- 3) know God’s will?”
- 4) approve the best things?”
- 5) study the Word of God?”
- 6) guide and teach others?”
- 7) know the truth?”

The answer is a strong exclamation: “No! Not at all! Not in any way are you better than other people. Both Jews and Gentiles, both religionists and non-religionists—you are all under sin.”

**Now note.** This has been the point of all that has been said in Romans...

- 1) God has a case against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men ([Romans 1:18-32](#)).
- 2) God has a case against the moralist ([Romans 2:1-16](#)).
- 3) God has a case against the religionist (Jew) ([Romans 2:17-3:8](#)).

Scripture shows that God has a case against all men. All men are “**under sin.**” And the fact is clearly seen by any person who will honestly look at man and his world.

[Romans 3:23 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>23</sup>“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

[Romans 5:12 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>12</sup>“Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned.”

[Galatians 3:22 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>22</sup>“But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.”

[1 John 1:8 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>8</sup>“If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.”

[1 John 5:19 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>19</sup>“We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in *the power of* the evil one.”

[Genesis 6:5 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>5</sup>“Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”

[1 Kings 8:46 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>46</sup>“When they sin against You (for there is no man who does not sin) and You are angry with them and deliver them to an enemy, so that they take them away captive to the land of the enemy, far off or near.”

[Psalm 130:3 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>3</sup>“If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?”

[Proverbs 20:9 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>9</sup>“Who can say, “I have cleansed my heart, I am pure from my sin”?”

[Ecclesiastes 7:20 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>20</sup>“Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who *continually* does good and who never sins.”

[Isaiah 53:6 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>6</sup>“All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.”

[Isaiah 64:6 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>6</sup>“For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; And all of us wither like a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.”