

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

(76)

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

(Continuation from 09/24/17)

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

[Romans 3:10-12 \(NASB\)](#)¹⁰ as it is written, "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE;¹¹ THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD;¹² ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE."

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).**

The **thirteen charges** of the indictment are presented in **three categories**—the first concerning **the character** ([vv. 10-12](#)), the second concerning **the conversation** ([vv. 13-14](#)), and the third concerning **the conduct** ([vv. 15-17](#)) of the accused.

The Character of the Accused

[Romans 3:10-12 \(NASB\)](#)¹⁰ as it is written, "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE;¹¹ THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD;¹² ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE."

Under the heading of what could be called character, Paul lists the **first six** of the **thirteen charges**. Because of their fallen natures, men are **universally evil** ([v. 10b](#)), **spiritually ignorant** ([v. 11a](#)), **rebellious** ([v. 11b](#)), **wayward** ([v. 12a](#)), **spiritually useless** ([v. 12b](#)), and **morally corrupt** ([v. 12c](#)).

- 1) **First, mankind is universally evil**, there being absolutely no exceptions.
- 2) **Second, man not only is universally evil but also spiritually ignorant.**
- 3) **Third, in addition to being universally evil and spiritually ignorant, fallen man is rebellious.** “**There is none who seeks for God**”,
- 4) **Fourth, Paul charges that men are naturally wayward.**
- 5) **Fifth, Paul charges that the natural man is spiritually worthless. Together**, that is, all of fallen mankind, **they have become useless.**
- 6) **Sixth, the natural man is charged with being corrupt, which is both a repetition of the first charge and something of a summary of the previous five charges.**
There is none who does good, Paul says, **there is not even one.**

Romans 3:12 (NASB)

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

Fifth, Paul charges that the natural man is spiritually worthless. Together, that is, all of fallen mankind, **they have become useless**. The Hebrew equivalent of the Greek term translated here as **useless** was often used to describe milk that had turned sour and rancid, thereby becoming unfit to drink or to be used to make butter, cheese, or anything else edible. In ancient Greek literature, the word was even used of the senseless laughter of a moron.

Apart from a saving relationship to Jesus Christ, a person is a spiritually dead branch, totally unable to produce any fruit. As such, it is lifeless and worthless, fit only to be thrown into the fire to be burned ([John 15:6](#)).

John 15:6 (NASB)

⁶“If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned.”

Paul’s letter to Titus emphasizes the same tragic reality when it reflects on the utter worthlessness of even religious men ([Titus 1:16](#)).

Titus 1:16 (NASB)

¹⁶“They profess to know God, but by *their* deeds they deny *Him*, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed.”

The natural man is useless for the purposes of God and, much like the worthless dead branch, is destined for the fires of hell.

Romans 3:12 (NASB)

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

Sixth, the natural man is charged with being corrupt, which is both a repetition of the first charge and something of a summary of the previous five charges. There is none who does good. Paul says, **there is not even one.**

Chrēstotēs (does good) refers to what is upright, specifically to what is morally upright. Measured by God's perfect standard of righteousness, the natural man has no ability to do anything upright and **good**. As already mentioned, relative to other human beings, some people obviously are better behaved. But no human being has within himself either the desire or the capacity for the **good** that is holy, perfect, and God-glorifying by the divine standard.

The story is told of a man in Scotland who was walking through a park one Saturday afternoon, carrying a small New Testament in a leather case. Thinking the case contained a camera, a group of young people asked him to take their picture. In response, he said, "I already have it." When the astonished youths asked him where and when he had taken it, he took out the Testament and read [Romans 3:9-23](#). After saying, "**That is your picture,**" he took the opportunity to witness to them about Christ.

3. (Romans 3:13-14) Tongue— Man, Nature: there is the case of a sinful tongue.

Romans 3:13-14 (NASB)

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."

1. A sinful tongue is foul and corrupt ([Romans 3:13](#); cp. [Psalm 5:9](#)): "Their throat is an open sepulchre [grave]."

Romans 3:13 (NASB)

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

Psalm 5:9 (NASB)

⁹ "There is nothing reliable in what they say; Their inward part is destruction *itself*. **Their throat is an open grave;** They flatter with their tongue."

An open grave is foul, and it is a symbol of corruption. So is a man with a sinful mouth. His mouth is...

- 1) foul
- 2) dirty
- 3) obscene
- 4) polluted
- 5) filthy
- 6) detestable
- 7) profane

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- 8) dishonorable
- 9) offensive

The obscene mouth may range from off-colored humor to dirty jokes, from immoral suggestions to outright propositions. But no matter, a man with a foul mouth stinks just like an open grave; his filthiness causes corruption, the decay of character. The filth from his mouth eats and eats away at his character and at the character of his listeners so much that he becomes as offensive as that of a decayed corpse. The foul, filthy mouth kills character, its attractiveness, trust, faithfulness, morality, honor, and godliness.

Matthew 12:34 (NASB)

³⁴“You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart.”

James 3:6 (NASB)

⁶“And the tongue is a fire, the *very* world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of *our* life, and is set on fire by hell.”

Proverbs 24:2 (NASB)

²“For their minds devise violence, And their lips talk of trouble.”

2. A sinful tongue is deceitful (**Romans 3:13**; cp. **Psalm 5:9**): “They have used deceit.”

Romans 3:13 (NASB)

¹³“THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE, **WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING,**” “THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS.”

Psalm 5:9 (NASB)

⁹“There is nothing reliable in what they say; Their inward part is destruction *itself*. Their throat is an open grave; **They flatter with their tongue.**”

The Hebrew says, “They **make** smooth their tongue.” A deceitful person has...

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. a false tongue | 6. a misleading tongue |
| 2. a lying tongue | 7. a treacherous tongue |
| 3. a cheating tongue | 8. a beguiling tongue |
| 4. a deluding tongue | 9. a smooth talking tongue |
| 5. a flattering tongue | |

The word “deceit” (*edoliousan*) is continuous action: “They kept on deceiving.”

Man is not only guilty of deceiving, but of constantly deceiving. He is *constantly* hiding and camouflaging his true thoughts and feelings and behavior, seeking to protect himself or to get whatever he is after.

Psalm 10:7 (NASB)

⁷“His mouth is full of curses and deceit and oppression; Under his tongue is mischief and wickedness.”

Psalm 36:3 (NASB)

³“The words of his mouth are wickedness and deceit; He has ceased to be wise *and* to do good.”

Psalm 55:21 (NASB)

²¹“His speech was smoother than butter, But his heart was war; His words were softer than oil, Yet they were drawn swords.”

Psalm 116:11 (NASB)

¹¹“I said in my alarm, “All men are liars.”

Jeremiah 9:5 (NASB)

⁵“Everyone deceives his neighbor And does not speak the truth, They have taught their tongue to speak lies; They weary themselves committing iniquity.”

Jeremiah 17:9 (NASB)

⁹“The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?”

Micah 6:12 (NASB)

¹²“For the rich men of *the* city are full of violence, Her residents speak lies, And their tongue is deceitful in their mouth.”

Nahum 3:1 (NASB)

¹“Woe to the bloody city, completely full of lies *and* pillage; *Her* prey never departs.”

3. A sinful tongue is piercing and poisonous ([Romans 3:13](#); cp. [Psalm 140:3](#)): “The poison of asps is under their lips.”

Romans 3:13 (NASB)

¹³“THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE, WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING,” “**THE POISON OF ASPES IS UNDER THEIR LIPS.**”

Psalm 140:3 (NASB)

³“They sharpen their tongues as a serpent; **Poison of a viper is under their lips.** Selah.”

The asp (*aspidon*) is the cobra, a deadly snake. God charges men with having tongues that are just as piercing and poisonous as the tongue of the deadly cobra. 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...

1. talks and gossips about
2. strikes out against
3. inserts and spreads venom
4. seeks to hurt and destroy
5. desires to cause suffering
6. lies in wait to strike
7. poisons character and reputation

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Colossians 3:8 (NASB)

⁸“But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, *and* abusive speech from your mouth.”

1 Peter 2:1 (NASB)

¹“Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander.”

Proverbs 12:18 (NASB)

¹⁸“There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword, But the tongue of the wise brings healing.”

Psalms 140:3 (NASB)

³“They sharpen their tongues as a serpent; Poison of a viper is under their lips. Selah.”

4. A sinful tongue is full of cursing and bitterness (**Romans 3:14**; cp. **Psalm 10:7**): “Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.”

Romans 3:14 (NASB)

¹⁴“WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS.”

Psalm 10:7 (NASB)

⁷“His mouth is full of curses and deceit and oppression; Under his tongue is mischief and wickedness.”

Cursing is sin; a cursing tongue is a sinful tongue. (See below—**Deeper Study #1—Matthew 5:33-37**, **Deeper Study #2—Matthew 5:34**, for more discussion.)

Jesus Christ says:

Matthew 5:34 (NASB)

³⁴“But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God.”

Matthew 5:37 (NASB)

³⁷“But let your statement be, ‘Yes, yes’ or ‘No, no’; anything beyond these is of evil.”

- a. Men use profanity; in fact, their mouth is full of cursing and swearing. They curse both God and men. Their cursing may range from what society considers to be a mild word of slang to using God’s name in vain. No matter how mild or how acceptable to society, it is sin. God’s case against man is that his mouth is full of cursing (cp. **James 3:8-10**).

James 3:8-10 (NASB)

⁸“But no one can tame the tongue; *it is* a restless evil *and* full of deadly poison.

⁹ With it we bless *our* Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God;

¹⁰ from the same mouth come *both* blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way.”

Matthew 5:34 (NASB)

³⁴“But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God.”

James 5:12 (NASB)

¹²“But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath; but your yes is to be yes, and your no, no, so that you may not fall under judgment.”

Exodus 20:7 (NASB)

⁷“You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain.”

Leviticus 19:12 (NASB)

¹²“You shall not swear falsely by My name, so as to profane the name of your God; I am the LORD.”

Psalms 59:12 (NASB)

¹²“*On account of the sin of their mouth and the words of their lips, Let them even be caught in their pride, And on account of curses and lies which they utter.*”

Ecclesiastes 7:22 (NASB)

²²“For you also have realized that you likewise have many times cursed others.”

Note a man’s cursing shall fall upon him.

Psalms 109:17-18 (NASB)

¹⁷“He also loved cursing, so it came to him; And he did not delight in blessing, so it was far from him.

¹⁸But he clothed himself with cursing as with his garment, And it entered into his body like water And like oil into his bones.”

b. Man’s mouth is also full of bitterness. His tongue is often...

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| 1. sharp | 6. cold |
| 2. intense | 7. distasteful |
| 3. resentful | 8. harsh |
| 4. cynical | 9. stressful |
| 5. relentless | 10. unpleasant |

Any expression involving any of these is sin to God. God desires men to be filled with love and joy and peace and to express such. Anything less than the expression of these is sin. This is God’s case against men: a tongue full of cursing and bitterness.

Ephesians 4:31 (NASB)

³¹“Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.”

Hebrews 12:15 (NASB)

¹⁵“See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled.”

James 3:14 (NASB)

¹⁴“But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth.”