

(13) "There Is None Righteous": The Doctrine of Condemnation (3:9-20)

# Romans: The Outwork of the Righteousness of God

# Condemnation!—Line of Thought

- Proclaiming a Fact: All Men Are Condemned!
  - The Gentiles Are Condemned due to Sin (1:18-32).
  - The Jews Are Condemned due to Hypocrisy (2:1-5): A Diatribe.
- Answering Expected Questions:
  - Is God Just in This Judgment? (2:6-11)
  - Is God Fair in This Judgment? (2:12-16)
- Resuming the Diatribe (of 2:1-5): Having t/ Law Is Not Secure.
  - There Is a High Expectation for the Jews (2:17-20).
  - They Failed Tragically and Miserably (2:21-24).
- Answering Expected Questions:
  - Are Not the Jews Secure due to Circumcision? (2:25-29)
  - Is God Faithful if He Condemns the Jews? (3:1-8)
- Conclusion (3:9-20): All Have Sinned! There Is None Righteous!

# No Advantage

- “<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;” (Rom 3:9 NAU)
- What Does It Mean?
  - “What then? *Proechometha*? Not at All!”
  - (Gk) *Proechometha* Can Be Middle or Passive Voice.
  - (Gk) *Proecho* Could Mean:
    - In Active or Middle Voice: Have an Advantage, Surpass, Excel.
      - => Am I (Paul) Making an Excuse for the Jews? (x)
      - => Are We the Jews Trying to Excuse Ourselves? (x)
      - => **Do We Jews Have an Advantage?** (✓)
    - In Passive Voice: Be Surpassed, Have a Disadvantage.
      - => Are We the Jews Surpassed by Them (Gentiles)? (x)

# No Advantage + Deep Trouble

- The Jews Did Have a Salvation-Historical Advantage:
  - They Were Identified as God's People for the Visible Kingdom of God (by Circumcision).
  - They Were Given the Word of God (the Law of Moses).
- They Have No Advantage at the Judgment of Man "According to His Works".
  - They Know More, thus Are Expected to Do Better.
  - They Fail in Deeds Just as the Gentiles Do.
- All (Jews and Gentiles) Are "Under Sin"
  - Men Sinned in Mind & Action Is Only Part of the Problem.
  - Men Are Under the Control of the Power of Sin, and Cannot Free Themselves. That Is the Real Problem!

# Scriptural Support

- **“as it is written”** (Rom 3:10s NAU)
  - Paul Quoted a Series of Thematically Related OT Verses to Support His Statement (that “All Are Under Sin”).
  - This Is a Typical Jewish Rabbinical Practice, Called “Pearl String”.
  - Early Christians Did the Same and Called It “Florilegium” (Flowering).
  - Modern Study Bibles Do This, Usually Put in the Central Column, Called “Cross References”.

# Scriptural Support

- These Verses Are from Psalms and Isaiah.
- Questions about Their Appropriateness:
  - They Were from the Poetical Genre in OT. Some Argue That They Should Not Be Taken Literally.
    - It Is True That Not All Things in Poetry Can Be Taken Literally, but Some Can.
    - By Quoting Them in an Epistle (in the Genre of an Essay), NT Affirmed That They Should Be Taken Literally!
  - They Were Written in the Context of the Jews, Some Argue that They Are Not Directed at All People.
    - Paul Was Using the Rabbinical Method of Argument "From the Greater to the Lesser": If The Jews, God's Chosen People, Knowing the Law, Are "**Under (the Tyranny of) Sin,**" Surely The Gentiles Will Be, too.
  - They Were Written Against the Wicked People, Some Say that It Should Not Be Applied to the "Good People".
    - Paul Was Not Talking about Relative Goodness, but the Righteousness that Makes One Stand before God in the Final Judgment. No One Is Righteous Completely!

# Sorry State of Being

- No One Is Righteous (“Rightwise”, as One Should Be) (vv.10b-12):
  - "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." (Ps 14:1-3; Ps 53:1-3 )
- This Is Teaching the Doctrine of “**Total Depravity**”:
  - Not : There Is Nothing Good in Man (There Is a Remnant Image of God).
  - = No Part of Man Qualifies Him to Be Accepted by God.

# Sorry State of Being

- The Corruption of Tongues/Speech (vv.13-14):
  - <sup>13</sup> "THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE,  
WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING" (Ps 5:9)
  - "THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS" (Ps 140:36)
  - <sup>14</sup> "WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS" (Ps 10:7 )
- Unclean Lips Reveal Unclean Heart:
  - "Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips (Isa 6:5)
  - The Corruption of Human Heart Was Marked by God with the Judgment of the Confusion of Language at Babel.



# Sorry State of Being

- Corruption of Actions and the Environment:
  - <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." (Isa 59:7)
- Men Fell at the Temptations of Pride, Greed and Fleshliness.
- Men Become Liars, Cheaters, Adulterers and Murderers.
- The World Became Messy, and Is Getting Worse.
- There Is No Hope in Men by Themselves!

# Sorry State of Being

- The Reason of the Mess:
  - <sup>18</sup> "THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES."
- Men Were Created to Be a Religious Being:
  - Animals Are Satisfied with Food Alone.
  - God Put Eternity in Men's Heart (Eccl 3:11).
  - Without a Proper Fear of God (Being under Grace, in Personal Relationship, Knowing the Consequences of Obedience and Disobedience), Men Will Turn to Errors to Justify Sins, and Go to the Deep End.
  - Democracy Only Works for a People Who Fear God!

# Confirmation of the Condemnation

- “<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;”
- The Written Law Was Given to the Jews , Who Are thus “**under the Law**”.
- But the Purpose Was to Make the Whole World Know That Everyone Is Accountable before God, and Everyone Failed the Standard.
- Gentiles Failed by the Partially Revealed Law in Their Conscience, and Jews Failed at the Fully Revealed Written One.

# Confirmation of the Condemnation

- “<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. ”
- “The Works of the Law” = Works/Deeds in General.
- The Law Works as a Mirror, Revealing the Dirtiness/Sin of Men (James 1:23).
- “The Knowledge of Sin” = Personal Experience of It.

# Lessons and Applications

- All Have Sinned!
  - Only Jesus Is the Exception (Being Conceived by the Holy Spirit).
  - Not Even Mary, the Mother of Jesus.
- Not One Is Righteous (Rightwise!)
  - Even though There Is Still a Remnant Image of God in Men, Which Brings Relative Goodness.
  - Nothing in Men Qualifies Him to Stand before God at His Impartial Judgment by the Deeds.

# Lessons and Applications

- All Are Under (the Tyranny of the) Sin!
  - Men Are Controlled by the Power of Sin.
  - They Cannot Free Themselves.
  - There is No Hope, Except from the Grace of God.
- Turn to the Grace in Jesus, for There Is No Other Way.