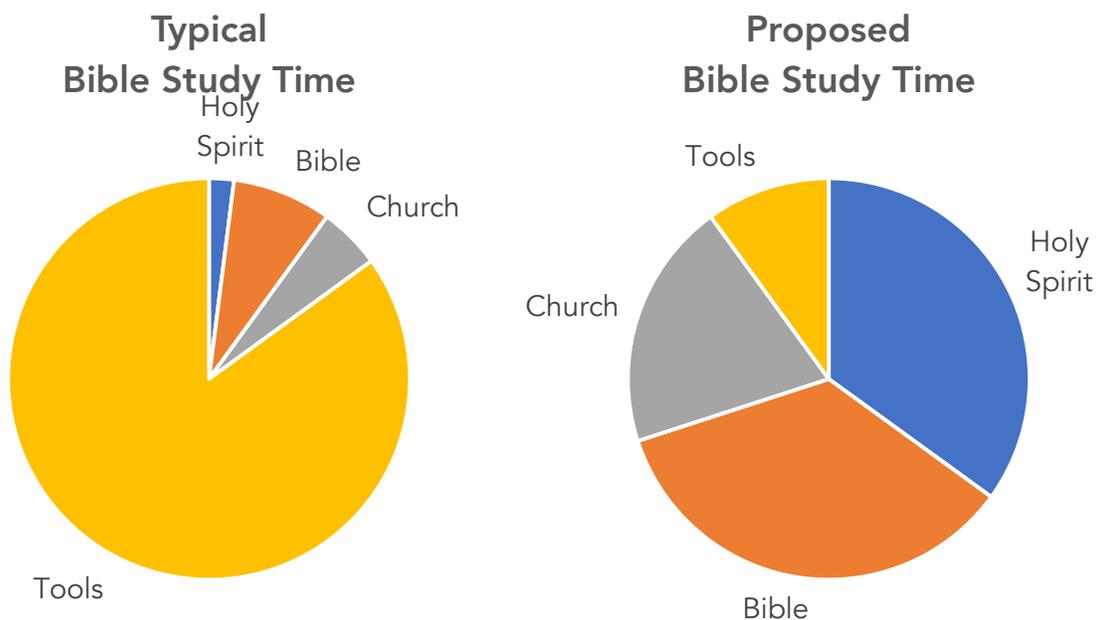


Romans

No One Is Righteous ([Romans 3:9-20](#))

Introduction

A gentle review: **Did we do this?** Spend more time with God and His Word than with anyone and anything else.



Our approach each week will be REAP (read, explain, apply, personalize).

Let's read the text that leads into this week's text.

Greeting

1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, 2 which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, 3 concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh 4 and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, 5 through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, 6 including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

7 To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Longing to Go to Rome

8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world. 9 For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention you 10 always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you. 11 For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you— 12 that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine. 13 I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in order that I may reap some harvest among you as well as among the rest of the Gentiles. 14 I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. 15 So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.

The Righteous Shall Live by Faith

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."

God's Wrath on Unrighteousness

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. 19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. 21 For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

24 Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, 25 because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

26 For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; 27 and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for

one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.

28 And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. **29** They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, **30** slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, **31** foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. **32** Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.

God's Righteous Judgment

1 Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things. **2** We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things. **3** Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God? **4** Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? **5** But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.

6 He will render to each one according to his works: **7** to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; **8** but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. **9** There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, **10** but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. **11** For God shows no partiality.

God's Judgment and the Law

12 For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. **13** For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified. **14** For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. **15** They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them **16** on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.

17 But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God 18 and know his will and approve what is excellent, because you are instructed from the law; 19 and if you are sure that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, 20 an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth— 21 you then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? 22 You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? 23 You who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law. 24 For, as it is written, “The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.”

25 For circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law, but if you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision. 26 So, if a man who is uncircumcised keeps the precepts of the law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? 27 Then he who is physically uncircumcised but keeps the law will condemn you who have the written code and circumcision but break the law. 28 For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. 29 But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.

God’s Righteousness Upheld

1 Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision? 2 Much in every way. To begin with, the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God. 3 What if some were unfaithful? Does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God? 4 By no means! Let God be true though every one were a liar, as it is written,

“That you may be justified in your words,
and prevail when you are judged.”

5 But if our unrighteousness serves to show the righteousness of God, what shall we say? That God is unrighteous to inflict wrath on us? (I speak in a human way.) 6 By no means! For then how could God judge the world? 7 But if through my lie God’s truth abounds to his glory, why am I still being condemned as a sinner? 8 And why not do evil that good may come?—as some people slanderously charge us with saying. Their condemnation is just.

Read: No One Is Righteous (3:9-20)

9 What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, 10 as it is written:

“None is righteous, no, not one;
11 no one understands;

- no one seeks for God.
- 12 All have turned aside; together they have become worthless;
no one does good,
not even one."
- 13 "Their throat is an open grave;
they use their tongues to deceive."
"The venom of asps is under their lips."
- 14 "Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness."
- 15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood;
16 in their paths are ruin and misery,
17 and the way of peace they have not known."
18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes."
- 19 Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. 20 For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

Explain: No One Is Righteous (3:9-20)

Bible study is asking and answering questions about the text. Let's ask some questions.

Are there any literary/structural observations?

Paul continues his Socratic approach by asking questions and answering from Scripture.

One other literary observation: when Paul quotes other authors (from Isaiah and the Psalms), the language used is much simpler than Paul's normal language. So, if you wanted an easier portion of "Paul" to study, start with [Romans 3:10-18](#) (the average word length is shorter and the sentence structure is very straightforward).

Hughes: This is called a **charaz**, which literally means "stringing pearls." Valovcin: He talks about how Paul uses Old Testament texts and strings them together. I love that this is called stringing pearls, stringing together little pearls of wisdom that we can gleam from today.

What do the words mean?

9 **What then? Are we Jews any better off** [present middle/passive indicative; hold ourselves before others, excel, better]? **No, not at all** [entirely, at all events, in no event, by all means, altogether, at all, no doubt, in no way, surely]. **For we have already charged** [aorist active indicative; accused already, previously charged, proven before (see [Romans 1:18-3:8](#))] **that all, both Jews and Greeks, are** [present middle infinitive; exist, are] **under sin** [sin, **offense**], 10 **as it is written** [perfect middle indicative]:

[from **Psalm 14**] **"None is** [present middle indicative] **righteous** [equitable, innocent, holy, just, righteous; same word used in **Romans 1:17, 2:13**], **no, not one;**

11 no one [an 'is' in the Greek not in the ESV —present middle indicative] **understands** [present active participle; puts together, comprehends, acts piously, considers, understands, is wise];

no one [an 'is' in the Greek not in the ESV —present middle indicative] **seeks** [present active participle; searches out, investigates, craves, demands, worships, enquires, seeks after] **for God.**

12 All have turned aside [deviated, shunned, declined from piety, avoided, eschewed, gone out of the way]; **together they have become worthless** [aorist middle indicative; rendered useless, spoiled, unprofitable; laptop with no battery or power cord; **Lightfoot: the Hebrew word means to go bad, become sour like milk;**

no one [an 'is' in the Greek not in the ESV —present middle indicative] **does** [present active participle] **good** [usefulness, moral excellence in character or demeanor, gentleness, good, goodness, kindness],

not even one [an 'is' in the Greek not in the ESV—present middle indicative]."

13 [from **Psalm 5:9**] **"Their throat** [larynx] **is an open** [perfect middle participle] **grave** [grave, place of internment, sepulcher, tomb];

they use their tongues [tongues, languages] **to deceive** [imperfect active indicative; to be guileful, to use deceit]."

[this quote is from **Psalm 140:3**] **"The venom** [rust, venom, poison] **of asps** [coiling serpent, asp] **is under their lips.**"

14 [from **Psalm 10:7a**] **"Their mouth** [mouth, language] **is full** [present active indicative; swelled out, full] **of curses** [**prayer**, imprecation, curse; imprecatory prayers: **Psalm 69, 109**, etc.] **and bitterness** [acridity (especially poison), bitterness; acrid is usually used with the sense of smell (like the burning in your nose from something that's just burned down), but here it's used of words that leave a stinging feeling in others' ears]."

15 [from **Isaiah 59:7-8**] **"Their feet are swift** [keen, rapid, sharp, swift] **to shed** [aorist active infinitive; pour, bestow, gush out, run greedily, spill, shed] **blood;**

16 in their paths [roads, progress, route, act, distance, mode, means, journey, way, highway] **are ruin** [concussion, utter fracture, complete ruin, destruction] **and misery** [wretchedness, calamity, misery],

17 and the way [roads, progress, route, act, distance, mode, means, journey, way, highway; same word used in **Romans 3:16**] **of peace** [peace, prosperity, quietness, rest] **they have not known** [second aorist active indicative; been aware of, known, perceived, understood]."

18 [from **Psalm 36:1b**] **"There is** [present middle indicative] **no fear** [*phobos*; fear, alarm, fright, terror] **of God before their eyes** [vision, eyes, sight, envy (from the jealous **side** glance)]."

19 Now we know [perfect active indicative; see, know, behold, consider, perceive, can be sure, understand] **that whatever the law** [nomos] **says** [present active indicative; relates, sets in discourse, means, asks, calls, describes, names, puts forth, shews, says, speaks, tells] **it speaks** [present active indicative; talks, utters, preaches, says, speaks, tells] **to those who are under the law** [nomos], **so that every mouth** [mouth, language; used in [Romans 3:14](#)] **may be stopped** [second aorist middle subjunctive; fenced in, enclosed, blocked up, silenced, stopped], **and the whole world may be** [second aorist active subjunctive] **held accountable** [under sentence, condemned, guilty] **to God. 20 For** [a connecting word] **by works** [works, toils, effort, occupation, act, doing, labor] **of the law** [nomos] **no human being will be justified** [future middle indicative; rendered just, rendered innocent, freed, justified, be righteous] **in his sight** [in his face, before, in his presence], **since through the law** [nomos] **comes knowledge** [recognition, full discernment, acknowledgement] **of sin** [sin, offense; same word used in [Romans 3:9](#)].

Are there any repeated words?

One, no, law

Are there any repeated topics?

No one is good

What are some observations of the text?

I like this paragraph which summarizes Paul's "closing statement." **The apostle is approaching the end of his lengthy argument and asks himself how to wrap it all up, how to rest his case: "What shall we conclude then?" (v. 9). He has exposed in succession the blatant unrighteousness of much of the ancient Gentile world (1:18-32), the hypocritical righteousness of moralizers (2:1-16) and the confident self-righteousness of Jewish people, whose anomaly is that they boast of God's law but break it (2:17-3:8). So now he arraigns and condemns the whole human race.**

9 What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin [Morris: He is regarding sin as a tyrant ruler, so that sinners are 'under' it], 10 as it is written:

Kroll: Paul continues with his "trial" to determine guilt or innocence. The charge: The whole world is innately sinful. But is there enough evidence for a guilty verdict? . . . Next comes the indictments. There are **14** counts total:

"None is righteous, no, not one [Guzik: There has never been a truly righteous man apart from Jesus Christ. Newell: Even Adam was not righteous: he was innocent—not knowing good and evil.];

11 no one understands;
no one seeks for God.

12 All have turned aside; together they have become worthless;
no one does good,
not even one."

13 "Their throat is an open grave;
they use their tongues to deceive."
"The venom of asps is under their lips."

14 "Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness."

15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood;

16 in their paths are ruin and misery,

17 and the way of peace they have not known."

18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes." [Wiersbe: An X-ray study of the lost sinner, from head to foot]

Kroll: The verdict: **Guilty**

19 Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God [Robertson's New Testament Word Pictures: Every one is "liable to God," in God's court]. 20 For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin [Guzik: J.B. Phillip's paraphrase of this phrase is striking: *it is the straight-edge of the Law that shows us how crooked we are.* McGee: The law doesn't provide the salvation for man, it just reveals man to be a sinner. Poole: Lest any should think that the law hereupon is useless, he goes on to show its use, but a quite contrary one to what they intended. It convinceth us of our guilt, and therefore is far from being our righteousness. Robertson's New Testament Word Pictures: The effect of law universally is rebellion to it (1 Corinthians 15:56). . . . He has now proven the guilt of both Gentile and Jew.].

Guzik: Summation: the law cannot save us from our sin and the penalty it deserves

Paul has teed us up for the savior from all this condemnation and wrath. Julia Gregg: His presentation reminds me of a funnel as the reader is drawn to redemption work of Christ.

Apply (What is the point?)

1. All men are sinners
2. No one is righteous
3. Every part of man is sinful
4. The Law shows us our sinfulness

Personalize (What do we do with that?)

1. **We** are all sinners (not exempt/special)
2. We are **not** righteous (and not exempt/special)
3. **Every** part of us is sinful and unrighteous
4. Be thankful for the **Law** (because it tutors us to Jesus)

Next week: The Righteousness of God Through Faith (3:21-31)

21 But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— **22** the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: **23** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, **24** and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, **25** whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. **26** It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

27 Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. **28** For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law. **29** Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, **30** since God is one—who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. **31** Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law.

Homework

Resources (our helps—order matters)

- Holy Spirit
- Bible: **Romans** (ESV)
- Church: bit.ly/FlemingSS
- Tools: bit.ly/romans2017

Our process

- Ask (the Holy Spirit for help)
- Read (**Romans**)
- Talk (about **Romans**—bit.ly/romans2017group)
- Send (feedback to jim314@yahoo.com) by Wed)

Quotes & Observations

Albert Whiting (Calvin)

Amy Valovcin (Hughes)

Everyone in the world is under the power of the dynamic of sin!

v 10: "**None is righteous, no, not one.**" There are no exceptions.

This is called a charaz, which literally means "stringing pearls." He talks about how Paul uses Old Testament texts and strings them together. I love that this is called stringing pearls, stringing together little pearls of wisdom that we can glean from today.

vv 13-18: When God is not in our speech, sight or where we walk; there can be no good that comes from any of it.

v 15: **Man's depravity is seen in his rush to violence.** I must have read this line ten times. So true in so many ways and not just with violence. We rush with speech, our actions, our version of what is happening. We need to breathe Him in!

We must make use of our great advantage of truly knowing who we are and who God is, and what he wants of us as declared in His word.

v 20: "**Since from the law come knowledge of sin.**" The truth is we are His and we can hold true to His word. Having his word does not save us from sin. Taking it, knowing it, believing it and in the Creator is what sets us apart.

Chris Arnold (Barclay)

Christen Barber (Luther)

Darla Skinner (Mounce)

Doug Skinner (Phillips)

Man is incapable by nature of doing that which is right in the sight of God. . . . Judges 17:6; 21:25—did that which was *right*, mark you, not that which was wrong.

On the things that matter most, man is blind. For example, the things that a person will believe in the name of religion are astounding. One person will tell you, "It doesn't matter what you believe so long as you're sincere"—a philosophy he would not tolerate for a moment in a professor of mathematics teaching arithmetic or calculus.

George Jackson (Murray)

Jessica Miller (Stott)

Jessica Norris (Kroll)

The Gentiles are lost because they suppress God's truth even though they've seen it in both nature and conscience. Moral people are lost because they are inwardly guilty of the same sins. Jews are lost because they have not kept the law. All of them are under sin.

Paul continues with his "trial" to determine guilt or innocence. The charge: The whole world is innately sinful. But is there enough evidence for a guilty verdict?

Next comes the indictments. There are 14 counts total:

1. There is none righteous, not even one.
2. There is none who understands.
3. There is none who seeks for God.
4. All have turned aside.
5. They have become useless.
6. There is none who seeks for God.
7. Their throat is an open grave.
8. With their tongues, they keep deceiving.
9. The poison of asps is under their lips.
10. Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.
11. Their feet are swift to shed blood.
12. Destruction and misery are their paths. ("Calamity and misery are soul mates.")
13. And the path of peace they have not known.
14. There is no fear of God before their eyes.

The verdict: Guilty

I had to look up the word "asp" and found that it means a poison that is stored in a bag under the "lips" of a serpent. What a terrible thing to have your speech to be compared to. I wouldn't think anyone would want that comparison. I know I wouldn't.

I really like how Paul's mind works and how he is working out his case. He has switched into full prosecutor mode. In trial preparation, a lot of time is obviously spent on preparing your case, but a WHOLE lot of time is spent on your opening statement and closing argument. After *voir dire* [a fancy phrase for interviewing potential jurors in order to strike the ones you might not want], your jury is open and listening. The opening statement is the first thing they hear and their first impression of both attorneys. You might lose some of their attention during the trial itself, especially if it is

lengthy, which is why your closing argument must be good. It is the last thing they hear before going to deliberate. A closing argument in a bench trial is even more crucial because you typically can't fool a judge with trickery of words. The judge already knows the laws. There are no emotions to play off of like you sometimes can with a jury. Paul doesn't even include a closing statement because there is nothing at all that can be said to sway the mind of the judge, God. I find that very powerful. There is no room for plea bargaining or even a chance to filing an appeal. The verdict is straight to guilty. The judge is finished listening, made up His mind on your innocence, and does not want to hear anymore lame excuses.

[Justin Harness \(Wiersbe\)](#)

[Jim Fleming \(Moo\)](#)

[Julia Gregg \(Schreiner\)](#)

The interesting interpretation of this passage that struck me this week was, "**Do we Jews possess any advantage.**" (v 9) The use of the word possess or an active verb in this verse creates an interesting dynamic for me as I read this passage. The Jews did have some advantage in being priority but this "birthright" was not continual through judgment. We see Paul again return to an emphasis that God is not a respecter of persons and he concentrates on four areas where man (Jew or Gentile) is the same: none is righteous, all have turned away from God, all have sinned in their speech, and all have injured their fellow man.

As a result, the Jews do not possess an advantage in every respect. One sentence that carried extensive meaning from my text was, "[Jews] **cannot shield themselves from God's wrath by appealing to the covenant and their Jewishness**" (164). Hmmm ponder that one minute. Essentially Paul doesn't spend his time proving that all men are sinners—he makes the accusation that they are: "**Sin as a power cannot ultimately be separated from the acts of sin**" (164). (I mean WOW . . . something we all know but do we recognize the depth of that statement?) This is why the LAW would never be enough and we would need the atoning blood of Christ!!! As I completed this section, Paul's painting of a picture of the Law not being sufficient because it was focused somewhat (actually mostly) on man's works . . . it's excellent.

His presentation reminds me of a funnel as the reader is drawn to redemption work of Christ. Justification cannot be obtained through works! It is sin—(our nature both Jew and Gentile)—which presents us for judgment. It's an eventuality. Key thought here for me was that the focus is drawn again to the holiness/righteousness of God in presenting himself a Lamb ultimately.

Julie Fleming (Keller)

Karrie Harness (MacArthur Bible Study)

Michelle Erickson (MacArthur)

Olivia Swint (MacArthur)

Rachel Samsel (McGee)

We need to understand what it means to be "**under sin.**" Verse 9. We are sinners in many ways.

1. Man is a sinner by action
2. Man is a sinner by nature. Sinning does not make a sinner; we sin because we are sinners
3. The estate of man is under sin. We are all under sin—the entire human family.

Verse 10. **None righteous.** What does righteous mean? It means "Doeth good." It means to be right. Right with whom you ask? Right with God. This is different than being right with fellow man. When we have differences with friends, we may or may not be to blame so we may have to reach a compromise. But being right with God is saying I will play by His rules. No compromise. But to God it isn't a game. He doesn't play games. Just simply. . . . Salvation is a free gift. Take it or leave it.

Verse 12. When it states "**they are together become unprofitable**" he compared this to fruit that passes the ripe state and is then rotten, overripe, spoiled. Also in this verse it states, "**There is none good, no not one.**" A triple negative. He references [Matthew 15:14](#): "**you are blind leaders of the blind.**" We are like a group of travelers who have gone in the opposite direction of the right one and we are of no help to each other.

Verses 19-20. Man cannot attain righteousness by the Mosaic Law. It seems mankind feels that if they keep the law they are ok. When they are missing the point. By keeping the law we cannot be justified (declared righteous/saved). So what is the purpose of the law? "**By the law is the knowledge of sin.**" The law doesn't provide the salvation for man, it just reveals man to be a sinner.

Sean McGarvey (Ironsides)

Stephen Mays (Stott)

Stephen Samsel (Stott)

I like this paragraph which summarizes Paul's "closing statement." The apostle is approaching the end of his lengthy argument and asks himself how to wrap it all up, how to rest his case: "**What shall we conclude then?**" (v. 9). He has exposed in

succession the blatant unrighteousness of much of the ancient Gentile world (1:18-32), the hypocritical righteousness of moralizers (2:1-16) and the confident self-righteousness of Jewish people, whose anomaly is that they boast of God's law but break it (2:17-3:8). So now he arraigns and condemns the whole human race.

Stott goes on to talk about sin. Sin is the revolt of the self against God. . . . Ultimately sin is self-deification, the reckless determination to occupy the throne which belongs to God.

Stott finishes by asking how we should respond to this statement. He lists out many of the excuses we give for sin. We change the subject . . . blame our behavior on our genes, nurturing, education or society.

We need to accept responsibility of our sinful nature and recognize that we have fled from the first judgement of God on our sins to the only refuge there is, namely Jesus Christ, who died for our sins . . . only then shall we be ready to hear the great 'But now' of verse 21, as Paul begins to explain how God has intervened through Christ and his cross for our salvation.

Tim & Mila Archer (Maclaren—but Wiersbe since Maclaren was silent on this passage)