

Sermon #7, Romans 3:9-20
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Turn with me please in your Bibles this morning to Romans 3. In our Sunday morning services, I am preaching through the Book of Romans and we have worked our way through Chapter 2. We come today to take up our study in vv. 9-20 of Romans 3. It might appear to those of you who attend regularly that I am skipping over vv. 1-8 of Romans 3, however I am not. In time I will return to those verses and work through them.

Follow closely please as I read vv. 9-20 of Chapter 3.

Bow your heads and pray with me please.

Many of you know that the Baseball World Series is currently being played between two California based teams, the San Francisco Giants and the Anaheim Angels. Having played baseball a little myself, I know something about the sport. In baseball, there are starting pitchers and there are relievers. Among relievers, there are middle relievers, set up men and closers. A closer is a person that you bring usually only when you are ahead and you bring him in toward the CONCLUSION of the game to close out the victory for you. When the closer comes into the game, he comes in to CLINCH the victory.

The text of Scripture that we are looking at today could be called Paul's closer. What Paul says in vv. 9-20 is for the purpose of CLINCHING what he has been saying for 2 and 1/2 chapters.

Now let me quickly remind you of what Paul has been saying.

And then Paul comes to **Chapter 3, v. 9** and look at Paul's first statement: **"What shall we CONCLUDE then?" Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin."**

Romans 3:9-20 are written by Paul for the purpose of CLINCHING or CLOSING OUT all that he has been saying since Romans 1:18—that the whole world, all of mankind, lacks righteousness before God and therefore stands in need of God's salvation!

And look at how Paul CLOSES OUT his argument. He does it by citing the Scriptures. In Paul's mind, the Scriptures are his strongest argument for proving that the whole world lacks righteousness. Look at v. 10. "As it is written" and then Paul quotes 6 passages from the OT for proving that all mankind is guilty of sin and therefore lacks righteousness before God.

Romans 3:10-20 is Paul's strongest argument yet for proving his accusation that all mankind lacks righteousness and therefore needs good news from God. To CLINCH his argument, Paul cites the Old Testament Scriptures. "As it is written . . ." And then in vv. 10-18, Paul is going to provide 6 quotes from the Old Testament Scriptures.

Now let me overview the verses first and then we will look at each quote separately. And there are three important facts about the quotes that I want to point out in my overview of the quotes taken from the OT.

An Overview of the 6 Quotes from the Old Testament and Three Important Observations

1. Verses 10-12 are intended to roughly address how mankind has sinned against God and vv. 13-18 are intended to address how mankind has sinned against his fellow man. These two categories of sin are what Paul began his argument with back in 1:18.

2. Notice that vv. 9-12 are clearly intended by Paul to impress upon us the universality of sin. 9 times in 4 verses, Paul uses words that indict the whole human race.

A. Paul uses the word, "all" 2 times:

V. 9, . . . "all under sin."

V. 12, . . . "all have turned away."

B. Paul uses the words, "no one" 4 times:

V. 10, "There is no one righteous"

V. 11, "There is no one who understands,"

V. 11, "No one who seeks God"

V. 12, "There is no one who does good,"

C. Paul uses the words, "not even one" 2 times:

V. 10, "There is no one righteous, not even one."

V. 12, "There is no one who does good, not even one."

D. Paul uses the word, "together" 1 time:

V. 12, "All have turned away, they have together become worthless."

3. The verses 3:9-20 are intended by Paul to prove that the whole human race lacks righteousness (sins) before a holy God and therefore stands in need of God's salvation. However, the verses no longer describe those who have received God's salvation and therefore have been changed by God's grace.

Now look with me at the 6 Old Testament quotes separately.

6 Quotes From The Old Testament That Prove The Whole World (except those who now belong to Christ) Lacks Personal Righteousness And Is Therefore Under God's Condemnation

1.) Vv. 10-12, "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." (Quote taken from Ps. 14:1c, 2b-3 and repeated in Ps. 53:1c, 2b-3).

2.) V. 13, "Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit". (Quote taken from Ps. 5:9).

3.) V. 13c, "The poison of vipers is on their lips." (Quote taken from Ps. 140:3).

4.) V. 14, "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness." (Quote taken from Ps. 10:7).

5.) Vv. 15-17, "Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of peace they do not know." (Quote taken from Isaiah. 59:7-8).

6.) V. 18, "There is no fear of God before their eyes." (Quote taken from Ps. 36:1).

NOTES:

-“What shall we CONCLUDE then?” Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin.” (When Paul says, “under sin”, he means under the Condemnation, Tyranny, Control and Bondage of sin). Under sin means to be dominated, controlled and condemned by sin.

The phrase, “under sin” occurs again in 6:14; 7:14; Gal. 3:22

-Romans 3:9 is the first occurrence of the word, “sin” out of nearly 50 in Chapters 1-8.

-There are various NT words for “sin.” The most familiar and most frequent means “to miss the mark.” Another word for sin means, “overstepping a boundary.” Another word for sin means “falling instead of standing.” Another word for sin means “being ignorant instead of knowing.” Another word for sin means, “diminishing what should be rendered in full.” Another word for sin means, “disobeying a voice.” Another word for sin means, “disregarding a command.” Another word for sin means, “willfully careless.”

-9 times in 4 verses (vv. 9-12), Paul impresses upon us the universality of sin.

1. Paul uses the word, “all” 2 times:

V. 9, . . . “all under sin.”

V. 12, . . . “all have turned away.”

2. Paul uses the words, “no one” 4 times:

V. 10, “There is no one righteous”

V. 11, “There is no one who understands,”

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3. Paul uses the words, “not even one” 2 times:

V. 10, “There is no one righteous, not even one.”

V. 12, “There is no one who does good, not even one.”

4. Paul uses the word, “together” 1 time:

V. 12, "All have turned away, they have **together** become worthless."

Look at the phrases 1 by 1. Analyze them.

-Vv. 10-12 deal with man's godlessness (sins against God, see 1:18, godlessness).

-Vv. 13-17a deal with man's wickedness (sins against mankind, see 1:18, wickedness)

-V. 18, the root cause of all godlessness and wickedness ("There is no fear of God before their eyes").

-Vv. 19-20

-These verses are talking about mankind as a whole, including every person who has ever been a part of the human race. However, the verses are describing mankind before they come to Christ as their Savior and Lord. What is said here does not include those who have received God's good news and therefore have been changed into different persons. These verses are intended by Paul to describe man in his natural state before He meets Christ and is turned into a different person.

-In vv. 9-20, Paul is saying that all mankind, including both Jews and Gentiles are bound to plead guilty before the bar of God because the Scriptures tell us that it is so.

-In vv. 9-20, Paul gives 6 OT quotations in which the general sinfulness of men is summed up. Paul is bringing these quotations from the OT in to close out, to clinch, what he has been saying.

-In v. 19, Paul wants it known that he has taken these quotations from the Jewish Scriptures so that no Jew can say that Paul is not speaking of him.

-The law brings out men's sinfulness, but it does nothing to cure his sinfulness.

The 6 quotes:

1.) Vv. 10-12, "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." (Quote taken from Ps. 14:1c, 2b-3 and repeated in Ps. 53:1c, 2b-3).

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5.) Vv. 15-17, "Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of peace they do not know." (Quote taken from Isaiah. 59:7-8).

6.) V. 18, "There is no fear of God before their eyes." (Quote taken from Ps. 36:1).

-Paul tells us that it is through the law that we gain the knowledge of sin (Rom. 3:20; 5:20, 7:7ff. For a fuller explanation of this, see Tyndale NT Commentary on Romans, p. 99 and then see pp. 56, 128, and 147ff)..

-Justification must be by something other than works, for law only reveals sin, it does not redeem.

-Duty cannot be done perfectly as God requires and thus righteousness is not attainable by works.

-The supreme question to ask is: "Can man provide an adequate righteousness by himself? Or must man obtain one from God? God's purpose in giving us the Book of Romans is to convict us of the impossibility of the former question, in order to show the possibility of the latter question.

-The old song, "Could my tear forever flow, could my zeal no languor know, all for sin could not atone, Thou must save, and thou alone.

-Law only reveals sin, it cannot redeem from sin.

