

THE BOOK OF ROMANS

WE ARE ALL BAD, VERY BAD!

Romans 3:9-20

Paul's Summary and Application

Romans 3:9-20 is a summary and application of what Paul has already stated in 1:18-3:8. It is Paul's "so what" statement. Both Jew and Gentile are under sin and guilty before God. This section of Romans summarizes both the universality of sin and the purpose of the Law. The Law detects sin, but does not remove it. The levitical sin offering reminded of guilt, but did not take it away (*Heb. 10:13*). The problem wasn't that the Jews possessed the Law, *but that they relied on it to save them*. Practically they had a benefit, but it did not help them.

Romans 2:17; 3:20, Galatians 3:10, 2 Corinthians 3:6-18

The Indictment Against the Jews

Romans 3:9-18

The "We" of Verse 9

There are a number of opinions about who the "we" of verse 9 is referring to. At least two of these options are worth mentioning:

- *Are we (Christians – Jew and Gentile) any better than they (Jews)?*
- *Do we (Jews) have an advantage?*

I prefer the second option because it fits the context of chapter 3 where Paul is obviously talking about the advantage of the Jew. It becomes an unimportant argument by the time we finish verse 9 where all of humanity is under the bondage of sin. Paul has *already made the charge*.

Romans 1:18; 2:5, 12

Paul's Accusation Against the Jews

In verses 10-18, Paul quotes at least 6 Old Testament passages to support his accusation that the Jews join the Gentiles in their guilt before God.

- Indictment #1: There is no one in a right standing with God (Verses 10-12)
Psalm 14:1-3, Romans 3:23, Ephesians 2:1-3
- Indictment #2: Their speech is corrupt (Verses 13-14)
Psalm 5:9; 10:7; 140:3; Matthew 12:34-37; Ephesians 4:29-32; James 3:6
- Indictment #3: Their lifestyles deny any true knowledge of God (Verses 15-18)
Isaiah 59:7-8, Psalm 36:1, 2 Timothy 3:1-7, 1 Corinthians. 6:9-11, Ephesians 2:10

The point is that ALL people, every single person, needs Jesus Christ and the Gospel!

The Long Arm of the Law

Romans 3:19-20

The Law offers no hope for the Jew. There is no safe refuge in attempting to keep the Law, because the Law condemns and kills. The Law "stops every mouth" and pronounces all of those under it, guilty. Any attempt by the Jews to evade Paul in verse 19 is countered in verse 20. "*Paul counters any Jewish evasion of v. 19 by explicitly denying that the law can offer any hope of defense. We must remember that Paul's chief purpose throughout Romans 1:18-3:20 is not to demonstrate that Gentiles are guilty and in need of God's righteousness – for this could be assumed – but that Jews bear the same burden and have the same need.*" Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, pg 206.

Romans 5:20, Hebrews 7:18,19

Why don't we believe that all people are corrupt?

Do you believe you are corrupt in yourself?