

Romans 3:9-26

- ⁹ *What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;*
- ¹⁰ *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:*
- ¹¹ *There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.*
- ¹² *They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*
- ¹³ *Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips:*
- ¹⁴ *Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:*
- ¹⁵ *Their feet are swift to shed blood:*
- ¹⁶ *Destruction and misery are in their ways:*
- ¹⁷ *And the way of peace have they not known:*
- ¹⁸ *There is no fear of God before their eyes.*
- ¹⁹ *Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.*
- ²⁰ *Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*
- ²¹ *But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;*
- ²² *Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:*
- ²³ *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;*
- ²⁴ *Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:*
- ²⁵ *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;*
- ²⁶ *To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.*

Romans 3:9

What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin...

What then, Paul asks, are we, that is, the Jews, better than the gentiles? As the context of chapter 3 began with *what advantage hath the Jew*.

But no, Paul says, the Jews are no better than the other nations. For by this point he has demonstrated both Jews and gentiles are all under sin.

Paul speaks of being *under* sin, being *under* the Law, and being *under* grace. What does it mean to be *under* these things?

He speaks of the *dominion* of sin in 6:14, and the dominion of the Law in 7:1. A *dominion* is a sovereign power or control, it is an authority.

Paul speaks of the *reign* of sin and the *reign* of grace in Romans 5:21.

We see then there is a *power* associated with each of these—with sin, with the Law, and with grace.

And so when Paul says he has before proved that Jews and gentiles are all under sin, he's saying they are all under a dominion and a power.

The Holy Ghost is going to now reference multiple Old Testament passages, calling witnesses His very own witness from the Scriptures, to demonstrate this point even further.

Romans 3:10-12

¹⁰ *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:*

¹¹ *There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.*

¹² *They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*

Psalms 14:1-3

¹ *The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.*

² *The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God.*

³ *They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*

Psalm 53:1-3

¹ *The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity: there is none that doeth good.*

² *God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God.*

³ *Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*

Ecclesiastes 7:20

For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.

The Law of Moses says that in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every matter be established:

Deuteronomy 19:15

One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established.

God doesn't break the Law; He is the essence of the Law. In His indictment against all of mankind for sin, He provides three witnesses from Scripture—from the very Law the Jews themselves said they believed and followed.

If you ever wondered why the Bible repeats things at times, this is one of the reasons. It's not arbitrary. Everything in God's Word has a purpose.

Romans 3:13

Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips...

Psalm 5:9

Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips...

Psalm 140:3

They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; adders' poison is under their lips. Selah.

Romans 3:14

Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness...

Psalm 10:7

His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud: under his tongue is mischief and vanity.

Romans 3:15-17

¹⁵ *Their feet are swift to shed blood:*

¹⁶ *Destruction and misery are in their ways:*

¹⁷ *And the way of peace have they not known...*

Isaiah 59:7-8

⁷ *Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths.*

⁸ *The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace.*

Romans 3:18

There is no fear of God before their eyes.

Psalm 36:1

The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes.

Romans 3:19

Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

We see here the stated purpose for the Law—to condemn; and what the Law said was specifically to the recipients of the Law, namely, the Israelites. The gentiles were already given over to sin and deprivation, having decided not to retain God in their knowledge (Rom. 1:28).

Ephesians 2:11-12

¹¹ *Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;*

¹² *That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world*

The gentiles had already been proven sinners.

The Jews had every advantage—*what advantage hath the Jew? Much every way* (Rom. 3:1). And yet still they were found sinners all the same. And so what the Law said it said to those who received it, to prove beyond any shadow of a doubt the ineptitude of mankind to be found righteous even with every advantage. And so with Israel's fall, every mouth was stopped and the whole world became guilty before God.

This is what many don't yet understand: we are not *waiting* for the verdict from God—the verdict came nearly 2,000 years ago with a resounding *GUILTY* for all of mankind, and the Law made that clear.

Paul calls the Law a ministration of death in 2 Corinthians.

2 Corinthians 3:6-7

⁶ *Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.*

⁷ *But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away...*

Romans 3:20

Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

The knowledge of sin is, in part, natural, it can be naturally discerned in the conscience. Some sin, however, is not as evident, such as sin that resides in the heart. Consider what Paul writes in Romans 7:

Romans 7:7

What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.

The Law pinpointed something inside Paul, and shone a light upon it, and made it clear to him that it was in fact sin.

Notice that this verse says that by the deeds of the Law *no flesh* can be justified in His sight. There is a connection between the Law and the flesh. Consider Romans 7:5:

Romans 7:5

For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.

What Paul is saying here however is that the Law cannot justify any one, because it demands perfect obedience in one's physical body. But there is something about our physical body that makes this impossible:

Romans 7:23

But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

Romans 3:21

But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets...

We see here that there was a righteousness contained in the Law:

Philippians 3:6

Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

The righteousness which is of the Law is a man's righteousness:

Deuteronomy 6:24-25

²⁴ *And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as it is at this day.*

²⁵ *And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as he hath commanded us.*

God allowed them to enter into the Old Covenant contract with Him, and He prescribed the Law and sacrificial system for them as a means of exercising faith in Him, and though their works could never produce the perfect righteousness of God, their faith in that covenant and their obedience as a demonstration of that faith was necessary for God to credit righteousness to them, as there was no true solution yet to sin, there was no perfect object of faith (Jesus Christ), there was no perfect work offered (the death, burial, and resurrection). The righteousness which

was of the Law was functionally limited to the righteousness which they could perform, and thus, the need for the exercise of faith in the sacrifices they offered, recognizing the need for something more, recognizing their own inability to carry out the commandments with perfection.

This is the lesson they were to learn from that covenant; and yet many did not. What we see in apostate Israel is them rejecting God's righteousness in an attempt to establish their own.

The gospel of Christ however displays *and offers* the perfect righteousness of God:

Romans 1:16-17

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

¹⁷ For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

The gospel of Christ is the righteousness of God in that it not only offers the perfect imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ, but because it offers it *lawfully*. It was accomplished through a legal means that in no way violated God's demand for justice and Holiness, and yet allowed Him to exercise the great love wherewith He loved us, through the cross. Even the manner of death—the cross—was done lawfully.

There had to be shedding of blood:

Leviticus 17:11

For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.

It had to be upon wood:

Deuteronomy 21:22-23

²² And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree:

²³ *His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.*

As we see here in Deuteronomy, He could not have stayed upon the tree all night, but had to be buried that day:

Mark 15:42-46

⁴² *And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath,*

⁴³ *Joseph of Arimathaea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus.*

⁴⁴ *And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead.*

⁴⁵ *And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph.*

⁴⁶ *And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre.*

He had to be a *kinsman*, of the same blood, in order to redeem humanity:

Leviticus 25:47-49

⁴⁷ *And if a sojourner or stranger wax rich by thee, and thy brother that dwelleth by him wax poor, and sell himself unto the stranger or sojourner by thee, or to the stock of the stranger's family:*

⁴⁸ *After that he is sold he may be redeemed again; one of his brethren may redeem him:*

⁴⁹ *Either his uncle, or his uncle's son, may redeem him, or any that is nigh of kin unto him of his family may redeem him; or if he be able, he may redeem himself.*

In Numbers 30, if a husband hear a vow of his wife, and doesn't disallow it, but then later disallows it, He is to bear her iniquity:

Numbers 30:13-16

¹³ *Every vow, and every binding oath to afflict the soul, her husband may establish it, or her husband may make it void.*

¹⁴ *But if her husband altogether hold his peace at her from day to day; then he establisheth all her vows, or all her bonds, which are upon her: he confirmeth them, because he held his peace at her in the day that he heard them.*

¹⁵ *But if he shall any ways make them void after that he hath heard them; then he shall bear her iniquity.*

¹⁶ *These are the statutes, which the Lord commanded Moses, between a man and his wife, between the father and his daughter, being yet in her youth in her father's house.*

As Israel was espoused to God, was *married* to God, and He heard her vow to do all that the law commanded them three times in Exodus and yet allowed them to enter into that contract—and yet later *disallows* it, in abrogating that covenant for a new, *He* must bear her iniquity under that old covenant system. This we see in Jesus Christ: He bore the iniquity of Israel His wife.

There are endless examples of how God upheld His Righteousness in the Law through the Gospel of Christ, and in accomplishing all things Lawfully, was able to offer justification and imputed righteousness to those who believe, but time doesn't permit us to exhaust every nuance and detail.

We do see an example of God upholding His perfect character in every aspect alluded to in Psalm 85:

Psalm 85:2, 10

² *Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin. Selah.*

¹⁰ *Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.*

God *lawfully* accomplished something by which He could maintain *His* righteousness and offer the *perfect* righteousness of Jesus Christ *to us* without any performance from us on our part. The only requirement we will see is to exercise faith in that complete and finished work.

Romans 3:21

But now the righteousness of God without the Law is manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the prophets.

We see here how God's righteousness in the Law can be demonstrated in what He did—this becomes important when considering the end result; namely, that He is offering salvation and

righteousness *without the Law*. If He is to offer man salvation without the Law, He had to accomplish this by Lawful means. God cannot just do whatever He wants—He is bound by His character and nature. To understand this point is important when witnessing to religious Jews or Muslims, who have some understanding of God's righteousness in the Law, and the righteousness of the Law. One of their main objections is that the Law is eternal, and so God cannot just set it aside. We will see later that man is liberated from the Law through *death*.

We see in Paul's extensive quotations of the Old Testament witnesses of man's total depravity on a global scale, bearing witness to the need for justification by faith without works.

It is God's righteousness by the faithful performance of Jesus Christ.