

Romans 3:9~12

There are no words in the “*human vocabulary*” to describe the importance of this passage before us... I can't imagine a more important subject for every human being on earth, than that of “*The Judgment of God*” that every man, woman, boy & girl will undergo at the end of our life here on earth...

Beginning back in chapter 1:16, continuing through chapters 2&3, Paul is dealing with this subject... In doing so, he breaks it down to two categories, two kinds of people, the Jews and the Gentiles...

Gentile is a reference to those who have no “*religious affiliation*”. He dealt with the Gentiles firstly, in chapter 1... Those in general society, those who live the lives of their choosing... They don't claim the bible is God's word, they don't study it, separate themselves to it...

Then beginning in chapter 2:1, Paul shifts his attention to those who are “*affiliated with religion...*” Those who do claim to worship God, those who do believe in a higher being, and seek to serve and worship Him. And something I find interesting is the striking contrast of difference of the amount of scripture and time given to each group.

To the “*Gentile*”, Paul only spends 14 verses... While in contrast, he has spends 56 verses... on the Jew. That is 4 times as much scripture... **Why is that?**

Why would God spend so much time speaking to the people who come to His house?

Religion is “*Very Dangerous*” thing... People who are very religious tend to think of themselves as being inherently better than others and see themselves as favored by God because of their goodness and religiosity.

Listen... Paul doesn't spend much time on the Gentile, because it's pretty obvious they are in sin... They live out their life any way they see fit... But inside the religious community, it's not so obvious.

It's possible to have an “*Outward Appearance*” of being right with God, by adhering to religion, and yet have an unchanged heart! And as Paul has made clear in 2:17~29, regardless of his “*outward appearance*”, he will suffer the wrath of God, for God will look on the heart!

That really puts in perspective, what Paul is speaking too here in this passage...

(Vs 9) Paul begins this section, by asking...⁹ *What then? are we better than they?*

Which leads to the question... **Better than WHO?**

To answer that question, we must go back to where Paul began his argument, in chapter 2 verse 1.

¹*Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judges: for wherein thou judges another, thou condemn thyself; for thou that judges doest the same things.*

Paul is speaking to the “*Religious Man*”... The man who looks at the “*Society*” around him, observing those who have “*No affiliation*” with religion, those who “*openly*” practice and flaunt their sin...and CONDEMNS them for living so contrary to the Laws of the Living God!

Paul ask this man... **Are you better than they?**

To which he would answer with a resounding YES! Of Course! I don't do the disgusting things they do... According to the passage, it becomes apparent, he sees himself quiet differently... He views himself as “*just*” before God, “*innocent*” before God, because of his “*goodness*” and adherence to God's Law! The

mere “*thought*” that he would undergo the judgment and wrath of God, is absurd... A thought that never enters his mind!

³*And think thou this, O man, that judges them, which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shall escape the judgment of God?*

Is that what you think... Do you honestly think that you will escape the judgment & wrath of God because of your goodness?

Jesus illustrated this for us in Luke 18... **The Pharisee and the Publican...**

⁹*And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:* ¹⁰*Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.*

¹¹*The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.* ¹²*I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I possess.* Now here stands a good man...*at least he thinks so, and outwardly he is*

I'm sure it was true that he “*didn't steal*” from others, I'm sure that he was a “*fair man*”, I'm sure that he never “*cheated on his wife*”... NO DOUBT, that as far as morality goes, **he was a much better man** than the publican...

In stark contrast, *stands the publican...*

¹³*And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.*

Once again...No doubt, this publican probably all that the Pharisee had concluded about him... I'm sure it was true that he “*did steal*” from others (extortioners). I'm sure it was true that he was “*deceitful in his dealings*” with others. The passage evens seems to hint that the Publican *had committed adultery*, and the Pharisee knew about it...

No doubt, all these things were true about both men... But that is not what is in question here.

The whole point of the passage, is... WHO WENT HOME JUST BEFORE GOD?

¹⁴*I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other:*

... for every one that exalts himself shall be abased; and he that humbles himself shall be exalted.

Ain't that amazing... The “*Good, Upstanding, Religious man*” **was REJECTED by God!** He left there “*Thinking*” he was right with God, when in reality, he was rejected and condemned!

Why? How could that be?... His Heart was not right...

The “*Religious Man*” was just as much a SINNER as the Publican was...but he trusted in himself, in his “goodness”. The difference, the publican realized it, confessed it, & threw himself on the mercy of GOD.

Religion is very dangerous...Religion tends to make people think of themselves as being inherently better than others and favored by God **because of their goodness and religiosity.**

(Vs 9) ⁹*What then? are we better than they?*

Are you better than those whom you condemn? Those “*Outside*” the church...

No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;

In verses 9~12, Paul declares,

*“Religious or Non-Religious...the whole world is **guilty** before God!*

★ Paul is not saying, that all men are “*JUST GUILTY*”, but...*they are all under sin*;

*To be “**under sin** ... ” is to be in denominated by it, or under the authority of it!*

And when you look closely at what Paul says there, you’ll find that he is not saying that somewhere along the line that every man has “*messed up*.” He’s not saying that in general, there are many who do really good, but somewhere along the way, they “*slip and fall*.”

But rather, in saying that all men are “*under sin*...” he is really saying, they are under it’s power and authority... He is speaking to the fact, that **all man can produce is sin!**

T: If you look closely, you will find...Paul is speaking to the “***Total Depravity of Man!***”

^{9b}...they are **all under sin**...

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

¹¹There is **none** that understands...

...there is **none** that seeks after God...

¹²They are **all gone out of the way**...

...they are together **become unprofitable**...

...there is **none** that doeth good...

...no, not one...

Paul uses the term *none* (and its equivalent, *not even one*) six times in referring to man’s total depravity!

Nobody Understands... **Nobody** Seeks God...**Everybody** is going their own way...**Everybody** is useless concerning the things of God...**Nobody** does good! **...no, not one...**

Man is “***Totally Depraved***...” There is no righteousness in man at all... The only “*form*” of righteousness man has is “*Self-Righteousness*...” Which comes about when man adheres to religion... Which only affects the “*outward man!*” Never touching or influencing his heart, other than it makes him feel superior to those who are not religious!

Because of his religiosity...he does see himself as “*Better*”...

“*Religious People*...” never see themselves as sinful...

(Matthew 9) ⁹And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, **Follow me**. And he arose, and followed him. ¹⁰And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. ¹¹And when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said unto his disciples, Why eat your Master with publicans and sinners? ¹²But when Jesus heard *that*, he said unto them, **They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.** ¹³But go ye and learn what *that* means, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: **for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.**

Here in verses 9~12, Paul declares that ALL MEN are “UNDER SIN...” And there is absolutely **nothing** “*we can do!*” Everything we can produce, is merely “*Dead Works*...”

As a matter of fact, the best works that we can produce, our righteousness is “*as filthy rags*” in His sight, as Isaiah said...

Why is that? I mean, aren't there some “*good people*” in the world? People that are kind, generous, those who will do anything for others...

Why would Isaiah describe man's good works as “*filthy rags*?”

Because of the source.....they come from a “*Heart*” that is “*Totally Sinful!*”
As kind as someone may be, as generous as someone may be, as good as someone may be...
It doesn't hold a candle compared to the kindness, the generosity, and the goodness of God!
When man's BEST is placed in the presence of God, man's best is like a wretched, *filthy rag*...

Man is “*Totally Depraved*...”

(Romans 7:18) ¹⁸For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwells *no good thing*: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

There is “**NOTHING GOOD**” in the flesh...complete depravity!

Quoting C.H. Spurgeon... He who doubts total depravity had better study himself...

It's not merely *that we have committed sin*...but we are **sinners...**

It's not that we committed some things we need forgiveness for...it's not that we need a new start, or a new way of life... WE NEED A SAVIOR! WE NEED A NEW LIFE!

Conclusion... ALL are “UNDER SIN...”

To be “*under sin* ... ” is to be denominated by it..... under it's authority!

According to the bible...we are servants of one of only two masters... Either the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, or the God of this world...Satan himself... The important thing to note, is that every person on earth is a servant to “one” of these... *Ye cannot serve two masters*...

And the warning here from Paul, is to not be deceived by religion...

Religion is very dangerous...Religion tends to make people think of themselves as being inherently better than others and favored by God because of their goodness and religiosity.

When the truth is...if a person ever becomes right before God, it is never because he is innately better than anyone else or because he has managed to bring his life up to God's standards, or because he zealously observes certain religious practices...

It is only because he has acknowledged his sin and helplessness and prostrated himself in humble faith before the Lord Jesus Christ for forgiveness and cleansing.