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Minot, ND  
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# The Epistle of Romans

The Justification of the Ungodly

Chapter 3 Verses 9-20

In verses 9-20, the Apostle Paul has his concluding remarks about mankind. In other words, this is Paul's nail in the coffin. So what are Paul's conclusions? They are two-fold:

- 1) When it comes to being righteous before God, trying to be righteous by way of the Law is futile. It can't be done. Our deeds do not earn brownie points with God; our so-called good deeds do not earn us spiritual points before God.
- 2) When it comes to the Law, the main purpose of the Law is to show us our sins in thought, word, and deed.

More specifically, when we look at Romans 3:10-18, we see Paul focusing on Sin's domination over all people and how it dominates mankind's words, deeds, and thoughts.

At this point, though, we must pause to point out something very important. The Law is not bad. The Law is good. In other words, beware of church's and pastors

who deride God's Law and elevate mankind. *(Remember that legalists and antinomians both despise God's Law? Legalists diminish the demands of the Law, and the antinomians dismiss the Law!)* You see, the Law is good and we, as sinners, are poisoned by the virus of sin. We are not created bad, for we are created in the image of God, but we are infected by the virus of sin, which makes us poor miserable sin-sick people in need of redemption.

With all of this stated, let's examine verses 9-20 a bit more closely.

In verses 10-12, Paul shows that all persons are dominated by sin. Consider the following:

- No one is righteous = attacks moralists
- No one understands = attacks rationalists
- No one seeks = attacks mystics

Consider the following chart on the next page.



As you can see, each of these is ways that we try to climb to God. However, Paul states that there is no upward movement of mankind towards God by works, wisdom, and feelings, for no one is righteous, no one understands, and no one seeks.

In verses 13-14, Paul shows sin's dominion over mankind's Words.

- Throats are open graves
- Tongues deceive
- Lips have venom
- Mouths are full of bitterness

And in verses 15-18, mankind's deeds and thoughts are shown to be infected with sin.

To the point, though, everything is wrong for humankind. Universally our condition is – sinner. To deny this is to deny reality. To deny this is to live a fairytale.

Frankly, as human beings, we are afraid to admit the universality of sin. We try to keep this truth hidden. Life is easier that way. And that is why we hate the Law. The Law shows us our true condition. The Law makes us uneasy.

This all leads us to 20b. And what do we hear in 20b? We hear that through the Law, our skewed posture and position before God is revealed. The Law shows us that we are in bondage to sin – prisoners to the old Adam. This is the primary function of God's Law for pagans and Christians alike. And now we arrive at verse 21 in next week's study – but now



