

ROMANS 3:9-18 | NONE RIGHTEOUS

- Verse 9 –
 - **are we better** - That is, *are we Jews, whose advantage is great better?*
 - **before proved** - Literally, *previously accused*. The word does not carry the idea of logical proof. Chapters 1-2 contain these accusations.
- Verses 10-18 are quotes from the Psalms and Isaiah. They give Biblical support to Paul's accusations.

ROMANS 3:19-20 | THE GREAT PROBLEM

- Verse 19 –
 - **to them under the law** - These words are fundamentally important for Biblical interpretation, declaring two truths.
 - First, the law was always only **to them who are under the law**. Those who apply the law to all the world are misunderstanding the law, which was always given to the Jewish nation.
 - Second, though not mentioned in this verse, Paul later will declare that *no one is currently under the law*, thus to apply the law today is unbiblical.
 - **that every mouth may be stopped** - How does the Law, which was for Israel alone, conclude that **every mouth may be stopped** and prove the guilt of all?
 - If the *advantage of the chosen nation* did not prove sufficient to provide for salvation, then certainly the *disadvantage* of not having the **oracles of God** would be an even higher hurdle to overcome.
 - This argument is similar to Peter's argument in Acts 15:10, where he asks why the Jewish believers want to put Gentiles under the yoke of the law, **which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear.**"
 - The starting point of salvation is when a person's mouth is stopped. When they recognize they have nothing to say in defense of their sin, then they are ready to turn to the Savior.
 - **become guilty before God** - literally, *come unto the judgment of God*. The KJV uses **guilty** as a proper interpretation, because no one is *judged* unless they are *guilty*.
- Verse 20 –
 - **therefore** - This should be *on account of this*.
 - So, on account of the fact that **all the world is judged and guilty before God**, then there is no hope for justification by law.
 - Since **all the world** (v. 19) is guilty, law is only going to change the **knowledge of sin** not the judgment of sin.
 - It is important to note that Paul moves from talking about **the Law** (v. 19) to **law** (with no definite article) in v. 20.
 - Paul is talking about *any law*. Once a person is found guilty, there is no law at all that justifies them, only condemns them.
 - Paul will address the problem of justification in v. 24. It is unconscionable to use v. 20 without continuing to the solution in v. 24.

ROMANS 3:21-25 | THE SOLUTION

- Verse 21 –

- Having set forth the basic problem of humanity, Paul here declares that **now** (a time word) something has been **manifested** which *solves the problem*.
- **Manifested** is φανερώ [phaneroo].
 - Greek verbs with an -oo ending indicate a *bringing out* of the root word. So δικαίω [dikaioo] in v. 20 (**justified**) is a "bringing out of righteousness" since "righteousness" is the root word.
 - Here, *phaneroo* is a "bringing out of appearance" since the root is φαίνω [phaino], *to appear*. The root is also the root word of our English word *phantom*, because a phantom is the *appearance* of the unseen.
 - The importance of the word **manifested** is that it was *once unseen* but now can be seen.
- Note that earlier the problem was one of being **justified** (bringing out righteousness), which the law cannot do (it can only make known the *unrighteousness*).
 - **But now the righteousness of God is made to appear.**
 - The word **righteousness** is of the same root as **justified**.
 - So, an amplified translation of vv. 20-21 could be, "no flesh will ever have its righteousness brought forth by works of law, because law cannot do this. All law can do is point out unrighteousness. But now, righteousness of God is seen, and it is this righteousness that was **witnessed by the law and the prophets.**"
- All of **the law and the prophets** ultimately point to the **righteousness of God**.
- Verses 22-24
 - These verses argue against Limited Atonement. The righteousness is explained as 1) of God, 2) by faith, 3) toward ALL, 4) upon all those that believe. Then Paul continues to say that there is *no difference* upon Jew and Gentile, they (v. 23) all have sinned and come short of the glory of God and (v. 24) are being justified freely by His grace through the redemption Christ has provided.
 - **the faith of Christ** –
 - Grammatically (which is the only real way to interpret Scripture), this is "Jesus' faith" and NOT "faith in Jesus." Therefore, NASB, ESV, NIV, NLT, NKJV and many others are all wrong by saying *faith in Jesus*.
 - Thus, the **righteousness of God** has been **manifested** through the **faith of Jesus Christ** and has been manifested **unto all** but only **upon all them that believe**.
 - Verse 24 –
 - The question must be asked, *Who is being justified freely by his grace?* Grammatically, there is only one possibility: the same who have sinned are also justified. This does NOT equate to universal salvation, it only equates to universal **propitiation** (v. 25), because **being justified** and **redemption** are NOT one and the same.
 - This **redemption** is not only **by his grace** but also appropriated **through faith** (v. 25, and Eph. 2:8-9) . Here, unlike the **faith of Jesus Christ** in v. 22 (see note), this redemption is **in Christ Jesus**, and one must be *in Him* to experience this redemption.
 - Verse 25 - Literally, "a mercy seat."
 - Under the Law, the blood of the sacrifices was an *atonement* but the Mercy Seat was the place where the blood was taken. Jesus is not an *atoning* sacrifice, but He is the literally "seat of mercy."
 - Jesus is a **propitiation** only **through faith in his blood**.