

THE DIVINE VERDICT

Text: Romans 3:9-19

*Trial in Little Rock
when guilty verdict & just
sentence, & just
sorry for him*

INTRODUCTION: Romans 3 is God's sledge hammer to crush every man. He uses it to pound him into dust. God is crushing man; getting him in a corner; there is no escape left. The last vestige of self-respect must be destroyed that he might stand as a naked, shameful bankrupt before God. All are shown under condemnation and death that all might live through the redemption in Christ. God deprives man of every defense and shield in order that man, having no protection will be free to take refuge under His wing. God paints the portrait of salvation against the black background of man's sin. What is needed to prepare the way for the Gospel is that man should admit themselves to be sinners, accept the Divine verdict.

Verse 9 is the introduction to the passage. Paul has described the Gentile sinfulness, and the Jewish position. The question: "Are we better?" The word means, "Are we holding something before us for protection?" Paul rejects the idea that the Jews possess anything that might shield them from God's wrath. The Jew is surprised at seeing his prerogatives disappear.

"We have before proved..." This is a legal term, to charge. He means that he has not only made the charge, but has proved the indictment. The Divine Verdict: All under sin.

All under sin: both Jew and Gentile--Paul picks out the elite of the human race. Greek: Culture; Jews: religion. Jesus and Nicodemus.

Under sin--under the dominion, power, authority of sin. Sin as reigning. Man is not simply sinful, but under the power of that sin. Men are both guilty and unable to escape from that condition. The resulting perversity--various ways its power is manifested. The passage demonstrates that the entire personality has been perverted by sin.

Photograph of heart = O's analysis of man

I. MAN IS SINFUL IN HIS CHARACTER. (Verses 10-12)

A great misunderstanding about sin. Not something like a tooth, that can be extracted, but an innate force which motivates the individual to sin. It is not a series of acts to be stopped, rather it is an inborn drive. Sin is a state, a condition.

1. UNRIGHTEDOUS:

*man has no righteousness of his own
can't be saved without it*

Righteousness is the criterion by which sin is judged. The absence of righteousness means the presence of sin. Paul's object is to prove the necessity of accepting God's righteousness. Man is less perfect than God.

Reverts everything & guilt to convict man Tongue!

II. ~~MAN IS SINFUL BY HIS WORKS~~ (Verses 13,14)
2. IGNORANCE: vs. 11

Sin has incapacitated them for making moral and spiritual discriminations. Man cannot distinguish the good from the evil--unable to make moral distinctions.

Jonah 4:11--"cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand?"

"I see no harm in it." No sense of guilt is a symptom of a dead conscience.

Cannot comprehend God or spiritual things.

Don't even know what pleases

3. INDIFFERENCE: Vs. 11,12

(1) No movement towards God. No God-ward aspiration.

(2) Intellectually: blind

Physically: no movement towards God.

(3) This implies that man needs to go out of himself to fulfil his needs. *this is so in all realms*

(4) The implication is not that God is hid nor has to be searched out, but that man is lost and is not trying to find his way back to God.

(5) Verse 12: "gone out of the way" Departure from God. In one way or another all men are guilty of turning away from God--not glorifying Him, not giving thanks, etc.

4. UNPROFITABLE

(1) Word used for milk turned sour. Good for nothing, useless and corrupt. Like salt that loses its saltiness, or fruit that goes rotten and no longer serves any useful purpose. Unfit for what they were designed.

(2) Apart from the grace of God and the redemption in Christ there can be no use for man in the universe.

A corrupt tree bears corrupt fruit. Likewise, a man's works are of the same moral quality of his nature. What a man does grows out of what he is. Now Paul shows that man's works are corrupt.

"Stick Out Your Tongue!"

II. MAN IS SINFUL IN HIS WORDS. (Verses 13,14)

God now gives man a complete physical examination--takes the various parts of man's body and uses them for an illustration of his departure from God. Very frequently when a doctor begins an examination he starts by looking in the mouth. The state of the tongue can be very revealing of the patient's general condition.

1. VULGARITY: Throat an open grave

This graphically portrays the filthy conversation of men. Nothing could be more abominable to the senses than a open grave, with a corpse lying at the bottom. The opening of the grave and the odor reveals the death below. Their words like the unfilled grave, give forth an obnoxious odor of corruption.

The depravity of man is revealed in his speech. God looks in the mouth and sees the condition below--it is a grave, dead. The odor from the open grave is a revelation of the rottenness of their own corrupt nature.

2. HYPOCRISY: deceitful tongue.

Here their speech is contrary to their nature. Their tongues glide in flattery in order to conceal the rottenness of their throat. Their speech appears sound, seems to have life in it. The corruption of the heart is concealed in words of flattery.

They are vilest when they are best. They are bitterest when they are sweet. They are basest when they are noblest. They are most hypocritical when they come with flattery. They are most Satanic when they garb themselves in the spirit of Christ.

3. SLANDER: poison of asps.

Slender like poison from a serpent--poisonous form of speech. The slanders are the seed of that old serpent.

When a snake bites someone, we chop the snake's head off, not the one bitten. But when the snake crawls in the church and bites someone we let the snake alone and chop the head off the victim.

4. PROFANITY: cursing and bitterness

III. MAN IS SINFUL IN HIS PRACTICE. (Verses 15-17)

- 1. CRIME: Man acts without regard to his neighbor.
- 2. FAILURE: Denotes failure in life, remorse, soul agony. Only sinners fail, and all sinners fail.

"Destruction"--a dashing to pieces--there is no fear of Misery--path is watered with the tears of others.

- 3. NO PEACE: They have never had an experience of inner peace.

Paul does not mean that each of these characteristics is found equally developed in man--some may remain latent--the possibility is there. They all exist in germ and the least circumstance may cause them to pass in the active state. This is the cause of the wrath of God being suspended over man. *like a sleeping lion -*

This passage does not say that every man is as bad as he can be, but it does mean that every area of life is so affected by sin that man is by nature potentially evil in the absolute sense. There is latent within humanity a force for total corruption which will carry mankind relentlessly into complete regeneration, until God intervenes.

ILL: 15 year old boy--honor student, religious parents, legally sane, assaulted and strangled a 3 1/2 year old girl. "I just had a funny feeling." *1959 - Philadelphia*

Her father said, "It was so human."

IV. THE SINFUL SOURCE OF THE WHOLE. (vs. 18)

This overflow of depravity and suffering arise from a void: the absence of that feeling which should have filled the heart. It is that disposition in man which always has God present in the heart; His will, and judgment.

The words, "before their eyes," show that it belongs to man freely to evoke or suppress this inward view of God, on which his moral conduct depends.

This lack of reverence is the source of these sins. Irreverence is the mother of evil, and vice versa. Psa. 111:10

The eyes are the organs of vision and the fear of God is appropriately expressed as before our eyes because the fear of God means that God is constantly in the center of our thoughts, and life is characterized by the all-pervasive consciousness of dependence upon him and responsibility to him. The absence of this fear means that God is excluded not only from the center of our thoughts, but from the whole horizon of our reckoning. It is a disregard for God. No love for God to guide conduct--Fear seeks not to offend.

a dam holding back turbulent waters

These latent powers may become active when there is no fear of God to govern the heart and hold it in check.

CONCLUSION: Verse 19--mouth closed--finality--nothing to say. The conclusion is that all, without exception lie under the judgment of God.

The word means one who has lost his suit and is condemned and is awaiting execution. Speechless from guilt. Must answer to God---nothing to say. No defense.

[Faint handwritten notes and bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.]

[Faint handwritten notes and bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.]

[Faint handwritten notes and bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.]

[Faint handwritten notes at the bottom of the page.]