

## The Universal Reign of Sin

**Text:** Romans 3:1-12

### Introduction:

1. Review context: In this section the Apostle is bringing the whole world to its knees condemned before a righteous, holy God. He is demonstrating the exceeding sinfulness of sin.
2. In the first 8 verses, Paul addresses their resistance to their guilt before God

### I. The Protest (Vs. 1-8)

Note: The principle we see here is that when the religious man is confronted with the truth of his depraved condition, he will try and defend his own righteousness. It is interesting that in his attempts to do this, he invariably begins to make charges against the very God he professes to serve!

#### A. **Objection # 1 – If we are as lost as the Gentiles, what advantage is there in being a Jew? (Vs. 1-2)**

1. Paul has just explained in chapter 2 that the Jew is equally as guilty before God as the Gentile.
2. The Jew would naturally object on the basis of the fact that he had been made the beneficiary of certain blessings under the Old Covenant.
3. Paul acknowledges that they did enjoy certain privileges. In particular, the privilege of being made the custodians of the Old Testament Scriptures.
4. The key point is that these privileges were privileges of opportunity. The privileges themselves did not impart salvation to the Jews. They had a tremendous advantage over most in that they had the Revelation of God that showed the way of salvation. But they had to be saved by faith like anyone else.
5. Illustration: A youth enrolls in college. He has the following advantages over many others: he comes from a rich family, so that paying room and board, tuition etc... is no problem. He enjoys excellent health, and is even blessed with above average intelligence. The college he attends rates very high. His teachers are the best. In spite of all these advantages he never graduates. Why not? Because he does not make the most of his opportunities. He fritters away his time, is lazy, unfaithful to his trust. (Hendriksen)

#### B. **Objection # 2 – If God is going to punish me as a Jew, doesn't that render the promises of blessing He made invalid? (Vs. 3-4)**

1. God has made certain promises to the Jewish people but these were conditional promises.
2. God had also made clear promises of judgment.

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3. The Jews wanted to selectively report God's promises of blessing, and ignore His promises of judgment
4. In much the same way, many today give an unbalanced portrayal of the character of God. They make reference to the fact that God is loving, kind and forgiving but they do not also acknowledge His justice and holiness.
5. Paul then quotes from Psalm 51. God will always be proven right

### **C. Objection # 3 – If my sin and unrighteousness magnify the holiness and righteousness of God, how can God judge me? If salvation is only by grace, then shouldn't I simply sin more so that God's grace can be glorified? (Vs. 5-8)**

1. An arrogant and stubborn argument! It is as if this man says, "How can God judge me for my sin when my sin has actually added to his glory!"
2. Some had even spread the slanderous rumor that Paul was teaching that grace gave license to sin.
3. Paul confronts this error later in the Epistle. Romans 5:20 – 6:1

## **II. The Verdict (Vs. 9)**

A. Question: Are we (the Jews) better off than the Gentiles?

B. Answer: No! All have sinned

1. Rom. 3:23
2. Note the word 'under'. Signifies the position of sinful man. He is a slave to the mastership of sin. Sin has dominion over him. His problem is not just that he commits sin but that he is enslaved to sin. John 8:34 *"Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant (bondslave) of sin."*
3. Sin reigns universally over mankind, irrespective of their religious privileges. All are captives to its power. All are condemned before God. All are guilty.
4. Rom. 5:12

## **III. The Evidence (Vs. 10-12)**

Note: The Apostle now cements his searing indictment on the human race with quotations from the Old Testament that clearly prove the total depravity of man. "Paul had first appealed to the natural sentiments of conscience and undeniable fact. He now employs the authority of Scripture." (Haldane)

### **A. Unrighteous (Vs. 10)**

1. Quotation from Psalm 14. "May be regarded as the leading proposition, the truth of which the Apostle is now about to establish by the following quotations." (Haldane)

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2. Ecc. 7:20 *“For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.”*
3. “none righteous” = note wording in these verses. “none...no, not one...none...none...all...none...no, not one”
4. Isaiah 64:6 *“But we are all as an unclean thing, and **all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags;**”*
5. Rom. 10:3 *“For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about **to establish their own righteousness**, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.”*
6. Phil. 3:9 *“And be found in him, **not having mine own righteousness**, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:”*

### B. Ignorant (Vs. 11a)

1. In his natural state, man is blind to the truth
2. 1 Cor. 2:14 *“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”*

### C. Lost (Vs. 11b)

1. Ignorant of his need, man stumbles on further from God. His sinful heart does not lead him to seek God.
2. Psalm 10:4 *“The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.”*

### D. Rebellious (Vs. 12)

1. “gone out of the way” = the nature of sin
2. Jeremiah 17:9 *“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”*
3. Isaiah 53:6 *“**All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.**”*
4. ‘unprofitable’ = to make useless, render unserviceable, to go bad (like sour milk). The consequences of our sin
5. ‘good’ = moral goodness

**Conclusion:** The Bible plainly reveals that all men are sinners, lost and without hope. The only way of salvation is to come to God in repentance and faith, accepting His free offer of salvation.