

# **Romans 3:9-18 – The Total Depravity of All Men**

Reinecker, TSK, GreekLexicon, Handfuls, Gaebelin, Trapp, Robertson, Vincent, PNT, Newell, Koning, JFB, Family, Calvin, Henry, INT Brothers and sisters in Jesus: It was not uncommon for Jews to see themselves as superior by reason of their genealogical heritage, their national status, their covenant with God, and their sign of the covenant – circumcision. They not only saw themselves as superior but they saw all non-Jews – the goyim – the Gentiles – as wicked, hopeless, and inferior!

Today you will see how Apostle Paul showed both the Jews and the Gentiles were wicked, hopeless, and inferior – totally depraved, explain WHY both needed the same faith in Jesus to become the true Jew!

Our headings are:

**The Jews were no better than the Gentiles -Declared**

**The Jews were no better than the Gentiles -Described**

Our goals are: That you will see all men as being totally depraved, that all men needed to be rescued from their depravity by faith in Jesus, and that those who are saved will passionately praise the Savior for doing this work.

## **The Jews were no better than the Gentiles - Declared**

9 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin.

### **1. Apostle Paul pastorally brought the Jews back to reality by asking if they thought they were better than the Gentiles.**

He answered that question with a resounding “no.” What is notable here is that he included himself with the Jewish side. Their genealogical heritage, their national origin, their national covenant with God, their circumcision – none of those things made them better! Jews were even from the land from which Messiah would come to save the world, but even that was not good enough to make them better. Their hearts had to be circumcised.

The Jews did not have an edge over the Gentiles with their salvation. They had the law, they had the Gospel, and the links with the past, but none of those things could remove their sin! These things did not make them morally better. These things could not save them. Even the Gospel could not remove sin!

### **2. Both the Jews and the Gentiles were totally under sin!**

The whole world is guilty. All have come short. V23

Romans 3: 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Galatians 3:22 But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

Job cried out: “Can anything clean come from that which is unclean?” He meant no one coming from a woman could be clean!

### **3. Both the Jews and the Gentiles were therefore under condemnation from God.**

Apostle Paul noted the wickedness of the Jews even in their attacking the Gentiles. (1Thess 2:14ff)

### **4. This rebuke had to stop the mouths of the Jews...who thought they were better...and this had to stop the mouths of the Gentiles who thought they were superior on account of their education.**

Romans 3:19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

## **5. Lessons:**

**a. If all are wretched, then all must be justified.** All are under God’s just condemnation.

**b. That justification is only by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.**

John 15:6 "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.

**c. Maybe you thought you were all good.** People liked you. You paid your taxes. You followed the speed limit. But none of those things pleased God so that he would declare you innocent of your sin and shame. *You were still wretched in his eyes.*

**d. Wickedness does not stick with certain classes of people and avoid others.** Rich and poor are both wicked. Don’t assume the rich are wicked and the poor are godly. What you can be sure of is this: **Both the rich and the poor are wicked before God because they don’t know and love the Savior.**

## **The Jews were no better than the Gentiles - Described**

10 As it is written: "There is **none righteous**, no, not one;

**1. From the very beginning after The Fall, from the time of the very first Scripture, and continuing on, God stated clearly that none was righteous, for all were corrupted in Adam**

These descriptions, by the way, were not the theological arguments as Apostle Paul often made in his writings. Rather, he simply **quoted a lot Scripture to the Jews who would have known the Scriptures**. And notably is Apostle Paul's **focus on the doctrine of Total Depravity from the Psalms**. ***It is true men were described as righteous – like Job and the man of Psalms 1***. But that was simply a description of how they appeared. ***None of them could claim Divine righteousness by their own actions***.

11 There is **none who understands**; There is none who seeks after God.

**2. Because of the corruption of man to the depths of his soul, he could no longer understand the holiness of God and why he needed to be made right with him.**

**Jeremiah 4:22** "For My people are foolish, They have not known Me. They are silly children, **And they have no understanding**. They are wise to do evil, But to do good they have no knowledge."

**Isaiah 1:3** The ox knows its owner And the donkey its master's crib; **But Israel does not know, My people do not consider."**

Man's reasoning was gone! He could not even understand the depth of his condemnation.

12 They have all turned aside; They have together **become unprofitable**; There is none who does good, no, not one."

**3. Instead of seeking God, he chose to turn to everything unprofitable- he opposed to all that was good.**

This is a reiteration of Chapter 1. Men had opportunity to know God but they looked, shook their heads, and walked away. None did anything "wholesome." **What they sought was only fit for the dunghill**.

**Psalms 14:3** They have all turned aside, **They have together become corrupt**; There is none who does good, No, not one.

**Psalms 53:1** The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." **They are corrupt, and have done abominable iniquity**; There is none who does good.

They were like a child who has good parents but grows up to be useless.

13 "Their **throat** is an open tomb; With their **tongues** they have **practiced deceit**"; "The poison of asps is under their **lips**";<sup>14</sup> "Whose **mouth** is full of cursing and bitterness."

**4. One of those most unprofitable things that man did was to spew poisonous venom from his lips.**

"Asps" often referred to Egyptian cobras.

**Psalms 140:3** They sharpen their tongues like a serpent; **The poison of asps is under their lips**.

**Psalms 5:9** For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; Their inward part is destruction; **Their throat is an open tomb**; They flatter with their tongue.

**"Deceit" meant they were "constant cheaters."**

**Another picture is that of the stink smell of an open tomb**...when a tomb was opened to put in another decomposing body. That's man without God.

**Note all the use of the parts of the body with an emphasis on the mouth. The mouth was full of cursing and bitterness.**

**Psalms 10:7** His **mouth is full of cursing** and deceit and oppression; Under his tongue is trouble and iniquity.

**James 3:8** But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, **full of deadly poison**.

**Jeremiah 9:5** Everyone will deceive his neighbor, And will not speak the truth; They have **taught their tongue to speak lies**; They weary themselves to commit iniquity.

The words they spoke was not the source of life, but of death. Their mouth condemned them.

15 "Their **feet** are swift to shed blood; 16 **Destruction and misery** are in their ways;

**5. Talk is harmful and cursing too, but man was not satisfied and was involved in murderous ways.**

Apostle Paul knew this well! He did this. Many were hurt by Apostle Paul's godless behavior.

**They destroyed things and people, like a clay jar was dashed to the ground and broken in pieces.**

Isaiah 59:7 Their feet run to evil, **And they make haste to shed innocent blood**; Their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; Wasting and destruction are in their paths.

Proverbs 1:16 For their **feet run to evil**, And they make haste to shed blood.

17 And the way of peace they **have not known**."

**6. These are so wicked they never experienced (knew, loved) peace.**

They were restless. And wherever they went, they left a trail of trouble and destruction. They had habitual wandering feet. **So they didn't "love" peace.** They were looking for and **longing for war and disputes.**

18 "There is **no fear of God** before their **eyes**."

**7. Ultimately, it came down to the fact man did not fear God...all men, including the Jews, didn't fear God!**

This **lacking of fear of God** is set last because it is the ground of all sin.

Psalms 36:1 An oracle within my heart concerning the transgression of the wicked: There is no fear of God before his eyes.

**The fear of God would always cause men to refrain from sin.**

**8. Lessons:**

**a. Be ready with Scriptures to prove your point.** The church order is good, but it is not Scripture.

**b. Focus on the Psalms.** This is why God commanded man to sing all of it and memorize it! Many of the Psalms focus on the depravity of men and the sinful struggles of the Christian man!

**c. Sin has infiltrated every individual and every aspect of society.** The state, business, nations, and schools have been infected with deadly sin. All of these places need to be redeemed – starting with the individual heart.

**d. Man isn't as sinful as he could be or wants to be because God stops him.** God stops him for the safety of his people and for the advancement of his kingdom. But Apostle Paul made it clear for you that **man is sinful in the full extent of his being.**

**e. Those who reject Christ and the salvation he offers will be broken in pieces!**

Revelation 2:27 'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels' — as I also have received from My Father;

**Conclusion:**

Apostle Paul declared, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit the **Jews were just as condemned before God as the Gentiles**, if they did not have faith. He then **described how the Jews were just as condemned as the Gentiles.** He did this to point both of them to Christ – the only one who could justify them – the only one who come make them true Jews.

Beloved in the Lord:

**1. Thank God you were justified or you would have had to die for your sins.** It doesn't matter if you weren't as bad as others. You were rightly condemned. One sin was enough to condemn you forever.

**2. Don't mess with sin now that you have been redeemed from it.** It is **contempt of God!** It is **dangerous for you.** It is **harmful to the ones who are observing you.**

**3. Warn the world of the danger of life apart from Christ.** Warn them that sinful depravity is deadly. I am not just talking about causing physical death. Total depravity leads to eternal death in hell.

Finally: If you are not a Christian, you too are totally depraved and under the threat of hell. Do you want that real threat removed? If so, **then ask God to justify you by declaring you innocent and counting your guilt on the Lord Jesus** – the one who died for sinners.