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Subject: GOD'S VERDICT -- MAN IS GUILTY

GOD'S VERDICT -- MAN IS GUILTY

TEXT: ROMANS 3:9-20

INTRODUCTION:

1. Romans 1:1 -- 3:8 emphasizes that both Jew and Gentile are guilty sinners before God.
2. Though wickedness and ungodliness and unrighteousness are repeatedly condemned, the first time the word "sin" is found is here in Romans 3:9.
3. Altogether the word "sin" is found 52 times in the book of Romans (including "sins," "sinner," and "sinners").
4. *Sin* means to miss the mark, to overstep a boundary.
5. In his excellent commentary on the book of Romans, W.H. Griffith Thomas gives several other definitions of sin: "falling instead of standing; being ignorant instead of knowing; diminishing what should be rendered in full; disobeying a voice; disregarding a command; wilfully careless."
6. Our text tonight concludes the first major section of this great epistle – the whole world is guilty before God (3:19).
7. In chapter 1 man is arrested and indicted by the law of God (1:29-32).
8. In chapter 2 man is on trial (2:1ff). This trial continues into chapter 3.
9. Now the prisoners are silenced and the verdict is given: "guilty before God" (3:19).

GOD PROVES HIS CASE (3:9).

GOD SUMS UP HIS CASE (3:10-18).

GOD ANNOUNCES HIS VERDICT (3:19, 20).

I. GOD PROVES HIS CASE (3:9).

1. Paul asks, "Are we (Jews) better than they (Gentiles)" (3:9). "No, in no wise" (3:9).
2. The idea is, "In light of our great privileges (3:1-8), are we Jews superior to the Gentiles?" The answer: "No, in no wise" (3:9).
3. When it comes to this matter of sin, all men are on the same footing before God – Jew and Gentile, black and white, it does not matter (2:11).
4. All men are guilty sinners before God (3:19, 23).
5. Those words "before God" (3:19b) are instructive.
6. Genesis 6:11 says, "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence."

7. Ecclesiastes 8:13 says, "But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow; because he feareth not before God."
8. The apostle Paul often used the phrase "before God." For example, Paul said in Acts 23:1, "I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day."
9. Some day each and every one of us must stand "before God."
10. The Bible teaches all men are sinners before God. The Roman Catholic Church teaches that Mary was without sin but this is contrary to the Bible. "They are all under sin" (3:9). "For all have sinned" (3:23).
11. Mary herself said, "My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour" (Luke 1:47). Only sinners need a Saviour.
12. Furthermore, she offered a sacrifice, a sin-offering, in the temple (Luke 2:24; cf. Lev. 12:8). Only sinners needed to bring a sin-offering to the temple.
13. "Under sin" is a striking phrase. It is different than what Paul is saying in verse 23. "Under sin" means under the guilt of sin, under the power of sin, under the condemnation of sin, under the penalty of sin, under the doom of sin.

II. GOD SUMS UP HIS CASE (3:10-18).

1. Now that the charge has been made – "they are all under sin" – the indictment must be written. So Paul says, "As it is written..." (3:10).
2. Sinners are condemned by the Word of God. "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one" (3:10; cf. Ps.14:1-3; 53:1-3).
3. Four times the word "none" is used (3:10-12), and like the Psalmist, Paul adds, "not one" (3:10-12). This repetition is meant to emphasize that all men are included ("all" – cf. 3:9, 12, 19).
4. There are fourteen counts in this indictment. God has drawn for us a comprehensive picture of the human race.

"There is none righteous, no, not one" (3:10).

Here is a simple definition of "righteous" -- to be right with God. People need to get right with God. The Supreme Court needs to get right with God. After their recent decision promoting so-called homosexual "marriage," the White House was covered with rainbow colors. The president and his advisors need to get right with God. "There is none righteous, no, not one."

"There is none that understandeth" (3:11).

The mind of man is blinded by sin so that he is incapable of understanding spiritual things. First Corinthians 2:14 says, "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." Colossians 1:21 says, "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled." Man does not understand how abhorrent his sin is to God. Man does not understand the grace of God, or the holiness of God. Man cannot comprehend eternity, judgment, heaven, and hell. John Phillips writes: "Despite his genius in so many realms, man betrays a most remarkable denseness when it comes to the things of God. He has no natural understanding in this realm at all. His mind, incisive in so many ways, is warped and

twisted when it comes to eternal and spiritual issues. The damage wrought by sin runs deep into the very roots of the thinking processes of man. His imaginations are often filthy; his memories often betray him; his deductions are often false; and his conclusions are often wrong."

"There is none that seeketh after God" (3:11).

Note that Paul does not say, "There is none that seeketh after religion." There are billions of people seeking after religion. There are Muslims and Buddhists and Hindus and Roman Catholics and JW's, etc.

"They are all gone out of the way" (3:12).

A few years ago, four NYC nurses drove their car off the top floor of a five-story parking garage next to the hotel where they were staying in Virginia Beach. "They are all gone out of the way." People are going headfirst into hell the same way.

"They are together become unprofitable" (3:12).

God created man in His own image. The Bible says, "And God saw every thing that He had made, and behold, it was very good" (Gen. 1:31). But because of sin, man has "become unprofitable."

"There is none that doeth good, no not one" (3:12).

Men are capable of doing good deeds, but as a way of life, "there is none that doeth good, no not one."

"Their throat is an open sepulchre" (3:13).

Once again, Paul quotes from the book of Psalms. "Their throat is an open sepulchre" (Ps. 5:9). What an expressive way to describe corrupt speech. Much of the language in movies and television programs is indescribably filthy. Many politicians have dirty mouths. When Obamacare was signed into law, vice-president Joe Biden cursed and laughed. Rather than being embarrassed by their filthy mouths, Mr. Biden and the president have been laughing over it. They even sell tee-shirts, which say: "Healthcare Reform, Still a BFD." "Their throat is an open sepulchre" (3:13).

"With their tongues they have used deceit" (3:13).

The Great Physician is giving man a check-up. He says, "Open your mouth." Yuck! "Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit..." God is telling man that spiritually he is very, very sick -- deceitful; uncharitable ("The poison of asps is under their lips" -- 3:13); blasphemous ("Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness" -- 3:14); murderous ("Their feet are swift to shed blood" -- 3:15); destructive ("Destruction and misery are in their ways"-- 3:16); quarrelsome ("The way of peace have they not known" -- 3:17). Romans 3:18 sums it all up -- "There is no fear of God before their eyes." This is the root of the problem.

"The poison of asps is under their lips" (3:13).

The poison of the asps was stored in a bag under the lips. So it is with men. Psalm 140:3 says, "They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; adders' poison is under their lips."

"Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness" (3:14).

Some people cannot express themselves without bitter cursing. Psalm 10:7 says, "His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud: under his tongue is mischief and vanity."

Filthy, four-letter words spew freely from the lips of wicked sinners. A couple of years ago, some drunk fell out of his boat and started cursing and screaming out filthy words. He was arrested because young children were nearby and heard his filthy outburst. But now, thanks to Hollywood, and television, and our public school system, little children are now using the same dirty words. Just listen to a crowd of teenagers (and even pre-teens) as they pass you by on the sidewalk.

I was thinking about how some unsaved people refrain from cursing, and then I read this by Alva McClain: "Man is *full* of cursing and bitterness. A man may have lived all his life who never used indecent language, but when he is about to die and unconscious, he pours forth a stream of profanity! God knew it was there all the time. He knows that you or I may have never lived in an environment to bring it forth, but potentially it is there, in embryo; our mouths are full of it!"

"Their feet are swift to shed blood" (3:15).

Proverbs 1:16 says, "For their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood." Isaiah 59:7, 8 says, "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. The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace."

Jesus said there would be wars and rumors of war till He returns. (Matt. 24:6). We are often reminded of the horrible atrocities performed by the Nazis during WWII. Remember, Germany was an educated, cultured, enlightened, and advanced nation. But when they rejected historic fundamental Christianity, they reverted to barbarism. America is heading in the same direction. The liberal politicians and the liberal newspapers keep telling us that these are days of unprecedented peace here in America. What they fail to mention is the millions of aborted babies butchered every year. Proverbs 6:17 says God hates "hands that shed innocent blood."

"Destruction and misery are in their ways" (3:16).

This is the history of the human race.

"The way of peace have they not known" (3:17).

They can never have peace until they accept the Prince of Peace. Man is at enmity with God and can only have peace with God when he repents from his sin and receives Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour.

"There is no fear of God before their eyes" (3:18).

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge" (Pro. 1:7). Without this reverential fear of God, man is in darkness and hopelessly lost. This is the problem: "There is no fear of God before their eyes" (cf. Ps. 36:1). Here is the reason for all of mankind's problems: war, crime, drugs, pornography, rape, homosexuality, adultery, fornication, abortion, divorce, drunkenness, etc. Man is hopelessly lost, totally depraved, and spiritually blind. What a need for the Gospel!

III. GOD ANNOUNCES HIS VERDICT

1. These verses describe the "total depravity" of man. Man is corrupt from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet (3:12-15).
2. The best of men are still wretched sinners in the eyes of God. Griffith Thomas said, "We are condemned in the sight of God for what we are rather than for what we do. It has been often pointed out that the morality of a Christless heart may be beautiful, but it will not last, since the soul is full of evil seed. Many a social restraint may keep this seed from springing up, but nevertheless it is there, and liable to come forth under proper conditions" (*St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*).
3. It should be noted Griffith Thomas wrote those words over 100 years ago. The "social restraints" he referred to have been lifted, and now sinners no longer hide behind a cloak of morality and respectability.
4. The Jews are very self-righteous and will try to escape this verdict. The Jews see these Scriptures as an accurate picture of the Gentiles. So Paul says in 3:19, "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law."
5. "All" are guilty before God (3:9-12,19b).
6. Before the sentence is passed, do the guilty sinners have anything to say? No, "every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (3:19).
7. Man has no excuse. There is the witness of creation (1:19, 20). Man has a conscience (2:15). And man has the law of God (3:19).
8. Many people (Jews, SDA, etc.) think they will be saved by keeping the law. But this is impossible (3:20). Through the law comes the knowledge of sin. The law accentuates man's guilt.
9. The law shows us our sin. We have not met God's standard. The law cannot save; it can only condemn. We are guilty sinners before a holy God.
10. Those without Christ do not need to wait till they die to find out where they stand before God. The Bible says they are already condemned and under the wrath of God (John 3:18,36). The verdict is already in.

CONCLUSION:

1. Rousseau, the famous infidel who inspired the French Revolution, refused to get married and he sent all five of his illegitimate children to an orphanage. He boldly declared, "I will stand before God and defend my conduct!"
2. Many other lost souls have made similar statements.

3. But the Bible says that when unsaved men stand before the judgment bar of God, there will be no speeches, no defense, no alibis, no excuses. Their mouths will be stopped (3:19).
4. Human courts allow criminals to defend themselves because human courts make mistakes, and we do not want innocent people wrongly sentenced.
5. But God makes no mistakes. His charges are accurate. His verdict is just. Therefore, every mouth will be stopped, "and all the world guilty before God" (3:19).