
THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS (9)

Reflections on Paul's teachings

We near the end of the first part of Paul's letter. In this first part Paul has outlined man's misery due to sin. Since man is utterly sinful, religious privileges aren't sufficient to warrant salvation and acceptance with God. In that sense Jew and Gentile, Christian and non-Christian are on the same level: completely unable to secure a right standing with God based on anything we are or do. If we seek salvation through works or self-improvement, then we will seek in vain. In these last verses of section one (Rom. 3:9-20) Paul has collected various OT quotes to present the darkest side of our fallen human nature. Perhaps without realizing the depth, this is the inner condition of each of our hearts and therefore in God's sight, no one of us is righteous.

1. What does 'to be under sin' in vs. 9 actually mean? Does that refer to our guilt or our depravity?
2. Vs. 10-18 is the most comprehensive Biblical statement on the depravity of fallen man. A brief exposition of these verses is found in Canons of Dort, 3rd & 4th Head, art. 1-3. Is this what every man is? Or must we see this what every man is potentially able to be without God's restraining grace?
3. Looking over the list in vs. 10-18, is there a cause-effect relationship between them all, or is this just a listing of the various aspects? Attempt to analyze the list by making various headings of each verse or verses.
4. Why is it that we tend to think that we are better than others, at least such who live a gross and rough life of sin? How will such thinking influence our attitude towards others? How only can we be cured from such an attitude?
5. Does the fact that "we all are unrighteous" (i.e., without being and doing right and without being in the right relation with God) mean that we are all as guilty as the other? Explain.
6. At times very rich but non-Christian people give a big portion of their wealth to fight poverty or other social problems. How does that fit in with the truth of vs. 12?
7. The truths of vs. 16-17 seem to describe only true of hard-core criminals and terrorist's bombers. Or is this true of all of us?

8. What is the fear of God? How do we know if we fear God?

9. According to Paul all he listed applied to all of us: that the *whole world become guilty before God*.
 - a. How is it evident that I have become guilty before God?

 - b. Is this an essential component *for* or *of* salvation?

 - c. Is this condition a momentary or a life-long attitude of heart?

10. If by the law we learn to know our sins, does that mean the preachers are the preach the law? And if, how are they to preach the law then?

11. What does vs. 20 mean to you personally?