



**Religious Folks Need Jesus Too!  
You Go to Church, Great. But Do You Know Jesus?  
Romans 3:1-9**

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One of the most serious issues we confront, since all of us have been born with a sin nature, is the ability to lie to ourselves about our condition spiritually. Satan helps us along with that prior to us coming to Christ and tries to deceive us further even after coming to Christ.

You see, God created a need for Him in each of our hearts (Ecclesiastes 3:11) and before Jesus, we tried to fill that with all kinds of stuff rather than our creator.



The worst thing we can do in lying to ourselves is turn to religion, which is nothing more than man approaching what they believe to be God, on their own terms.

God made it clear to the nation of Israel that He wanted their hearts. Moses tried to make it clear as well, since he also understood the predilection we all have. That would be to turn towards religion and create our own conditions for coming to God totally ignoring His word. God made His conditions quite clear at Mount Sinai and Moses reminded the people of it in one of his three sermons we have in Deuteronomy.

Deuteronomy 10:12–21

“And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to **fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of the LORD, which I am commanding you today for your good?** Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it. Yet the LORD set his heart in love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them, you above all peoples, as you are this day. **Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn.** For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe. He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing. Love the sojourner, therefore, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. You shall fear the LORD your God. **You shall serve him and hold fast to him, and by his name you shall swear. He is your praise. He is your God, who has done for you these great and terrifying things that your eyes have seen.**” (ESV)

Pretty clear. It is not all about the sacrificial system or the various rites taking place, it is about loving the Lord and being obedient to Him.

Psalms 51:1–4

“**Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!** For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.” (ESV)

David understood what walking with the Lord required. Exactly what Moses had stated, not religious ritual. After his great sin with Bathsheba, he made a comment about religion versus what God truly wanted from him.

Psalms 51:16–17

“For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. **The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.**” (ESV)

Paul has already pointed out to us that there are those who are religious Jews and follow the law yet are not truly believers. They believe they are in, based on birth. By contrast, he has also pointed out that there are those who are not religious at all, but who, when they encounter Christ, are more Jewish than any religious only Jew ever thought about being and physical birth had nothing to do with it.

Romans 2:29

“**But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from people, but from God.**” (NASB 2020)

Let's take a look at our text for today. Warning, I will not get through all of it today, only to verse 9. But this is an entire unit that takes more time to teach adequately than just a single session together.



Romans 3:1–20

“Then what advantage does the Jew have? Or what is the benefit of circumcision? Great in every respect. First, that **they were entrusted with the actual words of God**. What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it? Far from it! Rather, God must prove to be true, though every person be found a liar, as it is written: “SO THAT YOU ARE JUSTIFIED IN YOUR WORDS, AND PREVAIL WHEN YOU ARE JUDGED.” But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? The God who inflicts wrath is not unrighteous, is He? (I am speaking from a human viewpoint.) Far from it! For otherwise, how will God judge the world? But if through my lie the truth of God abounded to His glory, why am I also still being judged as a sinner? And why not say (just as we are slanderously reported and as some claim that we say), “Let’s do evil that good may come of it”? Their condemnation is deserved. What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for **we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; as it is written: “THERE IS NO RIGHTEOUS PERSON, NOT EVEN ONE; THERE IS NO ONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NO ONE WHO SEEKS OUT GOD; THEY HAVE ALL TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME CORRUPT; THERE IS NO ONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE.” “THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE, WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING,” “THE VENOM OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS”; “THEIR MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS”; “THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD, DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS, AND THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN THE WAY OF PEACE.” “THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES.”** Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God; because by the works of the Law none of mankind will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes knowledge of sin.” (NASB 2020)

Paul had been an incredibly religious Jew before meeting Christ on the road to Damascus. Some look at this section of scripture as the old religious Paul talking with the one who now knows Jesus. What is the advantage of being religious?

Here in Romans 3, Paul further develops the thought that those who are religious, look good and may be incredibly close to the truth, but without Jesus Christ, they are as guilty and lost as those who never had the opportunity to even hear about the law much less participate in the rituals connected with the sacrificial system.

I have talked with numerous folks over the years who have informed me that they are Christians. Great, what makes you say that?

“My parents had me baptized as a child.” Wonderful, they dedicated you to the Lord and did so visibly for all to see, so do you have a relationship with Jesus? No, I was baptized as a child. Baptism does not save anyone, it never has. Here at Calvary Chapel, we do baby dedications, but not baby baptisms.

This reminds me of a story about a little boy who had just moved to a new community with his parents. In the town they moved from, they went to the First Christian Church, but that denomination was not in the new community, so the family were attending First Methodist Church. One Sunday, the Sunday school teacher asked the young man if he was a Christian.

His response, “well we used to be, now were just Methodists.”

Belonging to and being a member of a denomination does not save you. Again, it is only a relationship with Jesus Christ based on believing what He did on the cross in dying to pay for our sin and believing He rose from the dead that does.



Romans 10:9–13

“If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.” Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”” (NLT)

Going into a small box and talking with someone else about what you have done, asking them to intervene on your behalf with the Lord for forgiveness and then performing those actions, those things they ask you to do in penance for the sin, does not save you. Only Jesus does. Oh, and exercising 1 John 1:9 means we can go to the Lord direct with no intermediary. Jesus did that for us as well.

Jesus was deeply concerned about how the enemy uses and would use religion to deceive people into thinking they are saved. He knows us and knows how we would try and take shortcuts to what He laid out as the only way. He warned about this.

But His warnings continue to fall on deaf ears even today, since there are those who actively teach works to get to heaven versus faith in the completed work of Jesus Christ alone.

John 14:6

“Jesus said to him, **“I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.”** (NASB 2020)

Matthew 7:21–23

**“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord!’ will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, only those who do what my Father in heaven wants.** On that Day, many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord! Didn’t we prophesy in your name? Didn’t we expel demons in your name? Didn’t we perform many miracles in your name?’ Then **I will tell them to their faces, ‘I never knew you! Get away from me, you workers of lawlessness!’**” (CJB)

The first shock for many, after their death, is they are in Sheol and Jesus is nowhere to be seen. The next is discovering, upon being resurrected, that they are at the Great White Throne Judgment, not the Bema Seat. The third shock, their name isn’t in the book of life.

And then comes the final shock, that happens when Jesus says that last phrase to someone who was religious, went to church, acted the part of a Christian, but never believed.

That statement from Jesus, **“I never knew you! Get away from me, you workers of lawlessness!”** is one of the things that leads me to do exactly what Paul told the folks in Corinth to concentrate on. Self-examination concerning my relationship with Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 13:5

**“Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves.** Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!” (ESV)

Can we prove that we are indeed saved? Paul implies that is indeed possible. Is Christ in you in the person of the Holy Spirit? Have you believed and placed all of your trust on Him and Him alone for salvation. If yes, the big question is already being cleared up.

What else can I use?



Do you love Jesus? Unbelief does not love or reverence Christ, faith does.

1 Corinthians 16:22

**"If anyone does not love the Lord, he is to be accursed. Maranatha!"** (NASB 2020)

Do you love His word?

2 John 6

**"And this is love, that we walk according to His commandments.** This is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, that you are to walk in it." (NASB 2020)

Do you love those who are your brothers and sisters in Christ? Yes, I know there are some who are hard to love, but considering the pre-Christ to after Christ life, you indeed know there has been a change.

1 John 3:14

**"We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers and sisters. The one who does not love remains in death."** (NASB 2020)

Are you allowing the Holy Spirit to continue to change you and make you more like Jesus? That is called sanctification. That shows up as fruit, a changed life. All of us are called to be fruit inspectors as followers of Jesus.

Galatians 5:19–26

"Now the **works of the flesh are obvious:** sexual immorality, impurity, depravity, idolatry, sorcery, hostilities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish rivalries, dissensions, factions, envying, murder, drunkenness, carousing, and similar things. I am warning you, as I had warned you before: **Those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God! But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.** Against such things there is no law. Now **those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also behave in accordance with the Spirit.** Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, being jealous of one another." (NET 2nd ed.)

C. Everett Koop and Francis Schaeffer tell us that "when we accept Christ as Savior, we must also acknowledge and then act upon the fact that if He is our Savior, He is also our Lord in all of life. He is Lord not just in religious things and not just in cultural things such as art and music, but in our intellectual lives and in business and our attitude toward the devaluation of people's humanness in our culture. Acknowledging Christ's Lordship and placing ourselves under what is taught in the whole Bible includes thinking and acting as citizens in relation to our government and its laws. We must know what those laws are and act responsibly to help to change them if they do not square with the Bible's concepts of justice and humanness. The biblical answers have to be lived and not just thought. (Koop and Schaeffer 1983, 131)

Paul, talking to his pre-Christ self asks, what advantage is there to being Jewish or even being circumcised? If you are relying on it for salvation, zip, nada, nothing. Dr. McGee puts it into more contemporary terms for us.

"Now, this is the same question, I think, that we hear today. I get it because the gospel that I preach says that church membership has no advantage for salvation, that any rite or ritual you go through is meaningless as far as salvation is concerned. God has the world shut up to a cross. He's not asking you to join anything or do anything. What God is asking the lost sinner to do is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and he shall be saved. And until a person answers that question, then God hasn't anything else to say to him." (McGee 1997, 660)



Once you are saved, then some of those rituals, catechisms or other things might become a means to worship Jesus but doing them does not save you. Baptism is commanded for us by Jesus, but it does not save us. It is another outward expression of what has happened inside of us.

Again, baptism, it does not save us, yet Jesus commands us as followers of His to follow Him and identify with Him in baptism. For the early church, “baptism was a public act (it was observed by witnesses—other community members) to identify with Jesus and his followers. It signified several things, among them that your sins had been forgiven because of what Jesus had done on the cross and that you now had new life (Rom 6:1–4; 2 Cor 5:17). Baptism was the first step to entering into the life of the community. The persons being baptized acknowledged their faith in Jesus, and the witnesses acknowledged their commitment.” (Heiser 2018, 78-79)

In effect, baptism in New Testament theology is a loyalty oath, a public avowal of who is on the Lord’s side in the cosmic war between good and evil. But in addition to that, it is also a visceral reminder to the defeated fallen angels. Every baptism is a reiteration of their doom in the wake of the gospel and the kingdom of God. Early Christians understood the typology of this passage and its link back to the fallen angels of Genesis 6. Early baptismal formulas included a renunciation of Satan and his angels for this very reason. Baptism was—and still is—spiritual warfare. (Heiser, *The Unseen Realm: Discovering the Supernatural World of the Bible* 2025, 408)

If you are a follower of Jesus Christ and have not been baptized, please let us know and we will set up a time for that to take place in the near future. It is one of the things He has asked us to do as His followers.

Matthew 28:19–20

“**Go**, therefore, and **make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them** in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to follow all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (NASB 2020)

Paul is discussing here that a faithful God means that for those who are Jewish, religious but not following; God’s faithfulness means judgment.

One more reason why I say religion does not save. Jesus is faithful to the word of God and because He is, those who never bother to go beyond the outward expression and come to Him in belief, He will faithfully uphold God’s word. That means judgment at the Great White Throne and an eternity away from God. This is not what those who worked for their salvation during the life, thinking that would save them but never bothering to believe in what Jesus did on the cross for us, expected to have happen. That is on those so-called shepherds who have failed and continue to fail to teach what the word teaches.

Paul never denied in chapter 2 that there was value in the law and in circumcision; his point was that this did not give the Jews special privileges over the Gentiles. Both groups would be judged at the bēma, or judgment seat, of God on the basis of keeping the law, not on the basis of possessing it. (Osborne 2017, 80-81)

And the good news for all of us is that in Christ, that has been taken care of for us by Him. ““Do not presume that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill.” (Matthew 5:17, NASB 2020)

In verse 2 we read that the nation had been entrusted with “the actual words of God.” Totally true but again, possession of His word does not mean you are following His word; and it does not translate into being saved. If it did, we would all be stockpiling Bibles like crazy, not to read and make part of us, but to possess.



We have His word today in the Bible. All 66 books written by 40 different authors over 1,600 years weave together for us the story of redemption. Paul has a high view of scripture and assumes we do as well.

When we read Scripture, we should picture God actually speaking these things to us directly! Paul is especially stressing here the promises of Scripture in which God has committed himself to working on behalf of his people, that we have a covenant God who cares for and works to better his people, and we can rely on those promises. (Osborne 2017, 81)

We call the Bible the word of God. It is! But do we treat His word and obey His word as exactly that? Even today, when a Jew takes up a Torah scroll to read, they treat the Word of God exactly as that and honor His word as such.

In the traditional morning service, before the Torah scroll is removed from the ark and carried out among the congregation, the worship leader calls out, “Vay’hi binsoa ha’aron, vayomer Moshe—And it came to pass, whenever the ark went forward, that Moses would say: ‘Arise, O LORD! Let Your enemies be scattered, and let those who hate You flee before You’ ” (Num. 10:35).

The traditional Torah service reenacts the scene at Mount Sinai, when all Israel stood before the mountain to receive the word of the Lord from the hand of Moses. As the Torah scroll is carried through the congregation, we touch it with a prayer book, or the fringe of the prayer shawl, and then touch that object to our lips. Through this ancient custom, we repeat the words that our ancestors spoke when the Torah was first brought down from the mountain and offered to them: “All that the Lord has said, we will do” (Exod. 24:17). (Resnik 2006, 139)

Hebrews 4:12

“For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any double-edged sword, piercing even to the point of dividing soul from spirit, and joints from marrow; it is able to judge the desires and thoughts of the heart.” (NET 2nd ed.)

We consider the Bible, here at Calvary Chapel, to indeed be God’s word which is why we study it chapter by chapter and verse by verse. We take His word seriously. His word is the source of truth and provides us instruction to live and how to do life. If we consider it as such, then how can we ever neglect it in our lives?

If you study the minor prophets, you quickly pick up on the fact that many of the nation of Israel and Judah, took great pride in their heritage but did not truly believe those things God’s word taught. That is what was behind the northern kingdom of Israel going into exile at the hands of Assyria and the southern kingdom of Judah going into exile in Babylon. That issue of belief followed with obedience is also behind the diaspora post 70 AD and just now being reversed through fulfilled prophecy.

The danger of those involved in religion today is the same as it was then, the ritual makes you feel as if you are close to God, but are you? A tendency in our culture today is live a divided life, the church me versus the rest of the week me. I look good and faithful at church but not so much the rest of the week. If we live that way, are not faithful or even saved, that does not stop God from being faithful to His word.

Nothing in the history of Israel or Judah changes what God did and still does on their behalf today.

That is the same today for us, nothing what any church goer does, whether in a religious setting with ritual and liturgy or one that does not have that, changes God’s faithfulness to His word, at all. In the book of Revelation, there are two churches that Jesus writes to that He has nothing good to say to them about. And they both suffer from the same disease, religion without faith or obedience.



The first is the church at Sardis. That would be the church of the reformation. Even today, those who were involved in the beginnings of the reformation have a name, but at the end of the day, what they wound up producing was dead religion. Even though it was dead, there are some who are saved as a result.

Revelation 3:1–5

“And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: ‘The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. “ ‘I know your works. **You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God. Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you.** Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy. The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.” (ESV)

And unfortunately, many of those religious institutions are still around today and are now hopelessly dead. Most have even gone as far as to deny the pretribulation rapture of the church, so that when He returns, they will indeed be shocked as Jesus returns as a thief for them. But there are some in them who are followers, just as with religious Jews. There has always been a faithful remnant.

Then there is the church in Laodicea, the last days church that we see all around us now. Totally empty religion and people who are not only not being taught the word, but some are even being affirmed in their sinful lifestyles. And the sad thing for this religion, Jesus is not even in the building. He is outside knocking to come in.

Revelation 3:14–21

“And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: ‘The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God’s creation. “ ‘I know your works: **you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth.** For you say, “I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing,” not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. **I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see. Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.** The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.” (ESV)

The message to both is similar, the lack of faith and obedience within the two rather different but similar churches, results in both winding up being religious, but no relationship exists with Jesus. It is the same as what Paul is reflecting here about the religious Jew.

Knowing about God, even if you are not faithfully following Him, creates responsibility. And worse, if you do not know Him, but are in an environment such as a church that is involved in ritual and liturgy, there are some there who believe, but those who do not, know better. Enough teaching has taken place to provide the light to know.

God still has a future for His people, the Jews, and it is not based on how much or how little they are faithful to Him; God remains faithful to His promises. The same is for the church. Yes, there will indeed be some who will be shocked when Jesus returns since they have not been taught that He is returning anytime soon, but they are followers.



As Paul says in both cases, “their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will It.” I am incredibly glad that statement is there. As a saved sinner, I need to know that God’s faithfulness to me is not dependent on my faithfulness to Him. I know I blow it and at times I am not as faithful as I should be. But He is always faithful.

Ephesians 2:8–10

**“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast.** For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we may walk in them.” (NRSVue)

Romans 3:4

“Far from it! Rather, **God must prove to be true, though every person be found a liar**, as it is written: **“SO THAT YOU ARE JUSTIFIED IN YOUR WORDS, AND PREVAIL WHEN YOU ARE JUDGED.”**” (NASB 2020)

This is a message to the religious non-believer.

1 John 5:10

**“The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar**, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son.” (NASB 2020)

Those who reject Jesus, are saying God is a liar that Jesus is the only way to be saved. Again, religion, rituals, works do not save, only Jesus.

Paul is clear on an objection that even continues today.

Romans 3:5–6

“But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? The God who inflicts wrath is not unrighteous, is He? (I am speaking from a human viewpoint.) Far from it! For otherwise, how will God judge the world?” (NASB 2020)

Much to the chagrin of many who would prefer for the concepts of situational ethics to be true, based on God’s word and His faithfulness to His word, sin is sin. He does not grade on the curve, and our sin cannot be used as a proof text for His righteousness. He is eternal after all, and He is the creator and is indeed omniscient. He is God.

Isaiah 2:4

“He will judge disputes between nations; he will settle cases for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nations will not take up the sword against other nations, and they will no longer train for war.” (NET 2nd ed.)

Romans 3:7–8

“But if through my lie the truth of God abounded to His glory, why am I also still being judged as a sinner? And why not say (just as we are slanderously reported and as some claim that we say), “Let’s do evil that good may come of it”? Their condemnation is deserved.” (NASB 2020)

Dr. Seccombe summarizes this rather well.

“It is a common delusion to assume that because God bestows blessings on us, all must be well between him and us. God’s generosity is such that he is forever bestowing favours on the godly and ungodly alike. What matters is that we respond to these favours with obedience and faith. And if all God’s people



betrayed him, if he had to raise up children for Abraham from the stones, his goodness and integrity would not be compromised at all. The responsibility would be entirely ours, because we had the word of God and ignored it." (Seccombe 2013, 66-67) God as God judges sin, because there is sin, there is judgment.

Paul is still talking about the differences between the religious person versus the one who has placed their faith in Christ. Whether you are religious but unsaved, religious or are a non-religious faithful follower, we all have the same disease, sin, and it is one that only Jesus Christ can resolve for us. As we come to verse 9, we are going to hear the verdict of God on all of mankind. Guilty. "And the accusation of "guilty" is made by God against all mankind—both Jew and Gentile, black and white, male and female, rich and poor. It doesn't make any difference who we are; if we belong to the human race, you and I stand guilty before God." (McGee 1997, 662)

Romans 3:9–18

"What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for **we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; as it is written: "THERE IS NO RIGHTEOUS PERSON, NOT EVEN ONE; THERE IS NO ONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NO ONE WHO SEEKS OUT GOD; THEY HAVE ALL TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME CORRUPT; THERE IS NO ONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE."** "THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE, WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING," "THE VENOM OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS"; "THEIR MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS"; "THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD, DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS, AND THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN THE WAY OF PEACE." "THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES." (NASB 2020)

There are fourteen different charges made here. Without Jesus, we are all in a rather desperate way.

Charge 1 - Right up front in verse 9, we discover that we, all of the human race without any exception at all, are under sin. The word is not plural and that is intentional.

Paul is outlining for us with these charges the most explicit description of human depravity that exists in the scriptures. R. Kent Hughes tells us "This does not mean man is as depraved as he could be, but that there is always room for "deprovement" because he is under the power of sin." (Hughes 1991, 75)

We are under sin. The entirety of the human race is SIN positive. NO exception sat all other than the God Man Jesus Christ. How bad is the sin problem? Four different ways.

We are under sin because that is who we are, it is our nature. Paul will later write this:

Romans 5:12

"Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all mankind, because all sinned—" (NASB 2020)

This also speaks to all of us being sinners because it is imputed to us thanks to Adam.

Imputed? What does that mean? "It means to attribute or to reckon something to someone. The Bible speaks of three great imputations. The first imputation is the imputation of Adam's sin to the human race. The second imputation is the imputation of the sin of man to the Messiah; this occurred on the cross. The third imputation is the imputation of the righteousness of the Messiah to the believer; this happens when one believes. (Fruchtenbaum 1983, 17)

We are under sin because we sin, we do the acts. Daniel understood that.



Daniel 9:5

**“we have sinned! We have done what is wrong and wicked;** we have rebelled by turning away from your commandments and standards.” (NET 2nd ed.)

Literally, all of mankind is under sin. And this is a really dark idea based on the word choice of Paul. “The Greek word translated “under” refers to a system that holds dominion over a person. It is a divine reckoning that is to be considered as true. By divine decree, man was placed in a state under sin. He is in a system in which sin holds dominion over every person. By divine decree, all Jews and Gentiles are now placed into that estate in which human merit is worthless insofar as salvation is concerned. (Fruchtenbaum 1983, 12)

Being “under sin” means before Jesus, we were all under the dominion of Satan. That created a unique relationship where Satan could and does do everything he can to blind those who are not believers.

2 Corinthians 4:3–4

**“But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing, among whom the god of this age has blinded the minds of those who do not believe so they would not see the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God.”** (NET 2nd ed.)

It is worse, Satan works through those who are not followers of Jesus Christ. Yep, even you and me before Jesus.

Ephesians 2:1–2

**“And although you were dead in your offenses and sins, in which you formerly lived according to this world’s present path, according to the ruler of the domain of the air, the ruler of the spirit that is now energizing the sons of disobedience,”** (NET 2nd ed.)

I wish I was done but being under sin, being in the dominion of Satan means that the majority of the world around us today, lives in a place they do not know about and refuse to learn about because their minds are blinded.

Colossians 1:13–14

**“For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”** (NASB 2020)

I really wish I had overstated the case when I said that the majority of those living on this planet live under the dominion of Satan. But John tells us otherwise.

1 John 5:19

**“We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.”** (NASB 2020)

When we come to Jesus Christ, we are shifting allegiances to the one who paid the price to purchase us out from the dominion of Satan. Literally, we have been purchased from the slave market of sin. And as followers of Jesus, yes we are still sinners, but He has changed our destination and, as we just read, has transferred us to the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. We are now His kids and are no longer under the dominion of Satan. We are now part of that force that is busily attacking the gates of hell and rescuing others from the clutches of the evil one. Do you know Jesus?

Romans 3:21–24

**“But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For**



everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins." (NLT)

Romans 10:9–13

"If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced." Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. For "Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved."" (NLT)

### ABC's of Salvation

- A. Acknowledge that you are a sinner, tell Him that.
- B. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sin and that He rose from the dead.
- C. Confess that Jesus is Lord. Tell someone about what you have done.

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