

Guilty Before God

(Rom 3:18-20)

- V.18 belongs to the section that runs from v.10-18
- I. Rom 3:18- This is a summary statement by Paul
 - A) Summary of all the Old Testament quotes he has given
 - B) Summary of what he has said and proven from 1:18 till now
 - 1. This lack of the fear of God is not only the ultimate outcome of sin, but is also the cause of all man's problems
 - 2. There is one step we can take this further, and that is simply to state that man is in a wrong relationship to God
 - i. The history of the Old Testament (and of the world) prove just this, and show man's failure in even the best circumstances
 - a) The Jew is every bit as much under the wrath of God as the gentile, just read the Old Testament and its 2 great divisions of time
 - 1) From Adam to Abraham
 - 2) From Abraham to Christ
- II. Fear of God (Heb 10:31)
 - A) Fear- "Reverential awe, respect unto God's honor, character and glory" and a desire to not only know Him but worship Him
 - 1. This word doesn't simply mean "afraid" for the pagan world has that in abundance
 - 2. This is a "proper fear" as designed and desired by God, just the same way that we understood "good, understandeth, seeketh," etc. in the previous quotes
 - 3. Heb 12:28- "Serve God with reverence and Godly fear"
 - i. Ex 3:5- "The place whereon thou standest is holy ground"
 - ii. Psalms 4:4- "Stand in awe and sin not"
 - iii. Psalm 89:7- "God is greatly to be feared and held in reverence"
 - iv. Deut 10:12- God requires we fear and serve Him
 - v. Ecc 12:13- The whole duty of man to fear God and obey Him
 - vi. Isa 8:13- "Let God be your fear and your dread"
 - 4. Psalm 36:1- This is the place Paul quotes
 - i. "I see the world's wicked works and depravity, and that speaks to my heart to show me that there is no fear of God in them"
 - 5. Example- Psalm 16:8- "I have set the Lord always before my face"
 - i. John 17:11- The Lord Jesus Christ calls Him "Holy Father"
 - 6. This fear is a conscious acknowledgment of His sovereignty and right to judge
 - i. Heb 4:13- Perfect example of this

- ii. Phil 2:12- The “fear and trembling” of believers
 - a) I’ve heard it said, “well, if He wants to judge me, that’s His business.”
 - 1) Though said flippantly, this is the surest truth
- III. Rom 3:19-20- The great central connection from “guilt” to “justification”
 - A) The very Law the Jew boasted in and trusted in was that which condemns him
 - 1. The Jew is as much under the wrath of God as the gentile he condemned
 - 2. The gentile is as much under the Law of God as the Jew he despised
 - i. All under sin, all guilty, all outside of relationship to God, that has been the theme of this entire section
 - ii. The Jew is guilty under written law and the gentile is guilty under the law of conscience and his own standard -vs- his actual actions
 - B) Law- The Jew often used this word to refer to the whole of the scriptures, for the Law was at the center of them all
 - 1. Paul had taken the previous quotes from the Psalms and the Prophets, and yet calls it here “Law”
 - 2. The Old Testament scriptures clearly declare “all under sin” as they reveal God to us and at the same time they reveal “us” unto us
 - i. We see clearly God’s righteousness and man’s unrighteousness
 - ii. We see what God requires and what man does
 - iii. We see the failure of men in the most advantageous circumstances
 - a) So the “Law” (O/T) condemns us and “slays” us, but thank God it didn’t stop at simply guilt:
 - 1) Rom 3:21- The Law also witnessed the righteousness of God in His promise of providing man a sacrifice
 - (a) The Law shows how much we need cleansing, but it cannot cleanse us; thus the ceremonies entered in to testify and to train the mind to look to God and to His promised redeemer
 - b) Example of the drunkards wife and her placing the 2 pictures besides each other for comparison
 - C) Guilty- This word is only used here in all the New Testament
 - 1. This is a legal term, and it means more than simply guilty of a crime, it means “liable to God, answerable to God in guilt, condemned before God and deserving the sentence pronounced upon us”
 - i. Remember the point of this entire section from 1:18 till now has not been simply to prove our sin, but to show us that we are all under the wrath of God
 - a) Read Rom 1:18-19
 - b) It is not enough to know I am unrighteous and vile, but I must see myself as guilty before God and in His sight unclean and abominable

- 1) I am in a wrong relationship to God, I am altogether not as I was designed to be, and as such, am unprofitable and worthy of full destruction
- 2) The bad news is not simply what we are by nature, all the world knows of their imperfections. The bad news is that we are declared so by our Maker and destined for the wrath of God
 - (a) The atheist will acknowledge his imperfections and troubles, but he will not acknowledge himself as under God's wrath
 - (b) Matt 3:7- "Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"
- 3) This fact is essential to justification

D) Stop every mouth- Quote from Psa 107:42

1. All of this from 1:18 has been to silence man not only about his perceived righteousness and good works, but to stop any and every defense he makes of himself before the judge, to make all speechless in guilt
2. This is to silence the Pharisee in all of us
3. This is what the Law (scriptures) are designed to do
 - i. They reveal God to us and they reveal us to us, and in so doing, "shut up" those that God calls
 - ii. The idea is to silence all the defenses the criminal makes of himself before sentencing is carried out
 - a) "Thou art the man!"
 - 1) Example of Job when he saw God (Job 42:1-6)
 - 2) Example of Isaiah (6:1-5)
 - 3) Example of Peter (Lk 5:8)
 - b) Have you and I given up on our defense? Have we truly become guilty in our own heart and admission?
 - iii. Gen 3- Look at Adam's defense of himself
 - a) Look how much the Pharisee had to say about himself in Luke 18 and compare that with the publican
 - b) Look at the rich young ruler silenced in Matt 19
 - c) Look at the accusers of the woman silenced in John 8

E) No flesh justified by Law (law-keeping) for the O/t saints were justified by faith through hearing

1. Read JB Phillips Rom 3:19-20
 - i. Verse 20 would have been a great place for the chapter break (silence)
 - a) Hab 2:20- "The Lord is in His temple, let all the earth keep silence before Him"
 - 1) Rev 8:1- Silence in heaven at the judgment of God

- b) Every single human that has ever lived will plead guilty before God and be brought to silence concerning his defense, it is either in this life or when God stands to judge
- 2. Psa 143:1-2- Salvation could never be by the Law
 - i. Because I can't plead a law I have broken, that condemns me
 - ii. Because if salvation is by works, that glorifies man and not God
 - a) Not glorifying God is the chief charge against us (Rom 3:23)
 - iii. Because salvation by works doesn't reveal God's glory to us through His mercy and grace
 - iv. Because if its by tainted works, God's justice and righteousness are impugned
 - v. Because if any work at all is involved, then there is boasting and not silence
 - vi. Most important of all, if it be by works, the the Lord Jesus Christ was "murdered" and not "sacrificed"