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### But One Who is Righteous

"I don't know what the heart of a bad man is like, but I do know what the heart of a good man is like and it's terrible." (Hughes, quoting Turgenev)

I. Repetition, repetition, repetition.

A. Repetition of what he's said to the Romans (and other churches).

"What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin." [v. 9]

"It is, moreover, a charge that Paul brings against human beings. We are held accountable for our sin; we have been given over by God to its power and are unable to free ourselves. The whole of Paul's argument up to this point is summarized in this statement in which our confession of guilt (1:18-2:29) confirms the word of God that has consigned us to sin (3:1-8)." (Seifrid)

B. Repetition of what God has been saying for thousands of years.

"Paul underlines his conclusion about universal sinfulness with a series of OT quotations...no person can ever obey God's law sufficiently as to merit a right standing before Him." (Moo)

II. And not just repeating, but quoting.

The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.'  
They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there  
is no one who does good.

The LORD looks down from heaven on all  
mankind to see if there are any who  
understand, any who seek God.

All have turned away, all have become  
corrupt; there is no one who does good,  
not even one.

Do all these evildoers know nothing?

**They devour my people as though eating  
bread; they never call on the LORD.**

But there they are, overwhelmed with  
dread, for God is present in the company  
of the righteous.

You evildoers frustrate the plans of the  
poor, but the LORD is their refuge.

Oh, that salvation for Israel would come  
out of Zion!

When the LORD restores his people, let  
Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad!

[Psalm 14:1–7]

The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.'

They are corrupt, doing abominable iniquity; there  
is none who does good.

God looks down from heaven on the children of  
man to see if there are any who understand, who  
seek after God.

They have all fallen away; together they have  
become corrupt; there is none who does good, not  
even one.

**Have those who work evil no knowledge, who eat  
up my people as they eat bread, and do not call  
upon God?**

There they are, in great terror, where there is no  
terror!

For God scatters the bones of him who encamps  
against you; you put them to shame, for God has  
rejected them.

Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion!  
When God restores the fortunes of his people, let  
Jacob rejoice, let Israel be glad.

[Psalm 53:1–6]

A. Where is Paul's focus within these Psalms?

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“What we have here in this statement and in the following verses is the most explicit description of the total depravity of mankind in all of Scripture.” (Hughes)

1. Through this, the lengthiest of Paul's old testament quotes, Paul is saying in short: humans reject God, humans are unkind to one another; humans are violent in word and deed, they reject God. (Moo)

“‘Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive.’ ‘The venom of asps is under their lips.’ ‘Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness.’ ‘Their feet are swift to shed blood; in their paths are ruin and misery, and the way of peace they have not known.’ ‘There is no fear of God before their eyes.’ [v. 13–18]

2. None are righteous, none seek God.

“as it is written ‘None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.’” [v. 10–12]

- III. All men are under **condemned** as unrighteous.

“Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God.” [v. 19]

- IV. The Threefold Use of The Law.

- A. The Law condemns us of our **guilt** before a perfectly holy God.

“For by works of the law no human being will be justified in His sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.” [v. 19–20]

“[The purpose of verse 19] is that every mouth may be silenced and that the whole world may be held accountable to God.” (Stott)

- B. The Law provides rules to **govern** civil society.

“For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer.” [Rom. 13:3–4]

- C. The Law **guides** believers toward good works that are pleasing to God.

“But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not! For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor. For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God.” [Gal 2:17–19]

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“But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code.” [Rom 7:6]

V. Here, though, Paul is focusing on the first use of the law.

A. You stand **condemned**, you are not righteous.

“For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin.” [v. 9b]

“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” [Rom. 6:23]

“The principal point...of the law...is to make men not better but worse; that is to say, it [shows] them their sin, that by the knowledge thereof they may be humbled, terrified, bruised and broken, and by this means may be driven to seek grace, and so come to that blessed Seed [sc. Christ].” (Stott, quoting Martin Luther)

B. Only One was **justified** according to The Law.

“He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth.” [1 Peter 2:22]

“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.” [Heb 4:15]

VI. But you are in Christ

A. The Law has been **satisfied**.

“For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.” [2 Cor. 5:21]

“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree.’” [Gal 3:13]

“We are not ready to hear the gospel until we first understand the indictment against humanity that comes down to use form God Himself.” (Sproul, 2009)

B. You stand **justified**.

“[Y]et we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of The Law, because by works of The Law no one will be justified.” [Gal 2:16]

“When He was reviled, He did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but continued entrusting Himself to Him who judges justly. He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed.” [1 Peter 2:23–24]

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C. You stand **redeemed**.

“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.” [Gal. 4:4–5]

“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of His will, according to His purpose, which He set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Him, things in heaven and things on earth.” [Eph 1:7–10]

D. You stand **freed**.

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” [Eph. 2:10]

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