

Next, Paul examines the guilt of man who has taken up the principle of law. This may be a law of their own making based upon conscience and bitter experience, any code of behavior men set out for obedience.. Or it may be the God-given revelation later given to a specific, chosen nation (Israel) through Moses. A law gives us something against which to measure ourselves and our conduct. The conclusion of any honest person is that the law shows him he is a disobedient sinner. The Law of Moses is especially suited for that purpose.

*1 Timothy 1:8 But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; 9 Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, 10 For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; 11 According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.*

Historically God has progressively revealed more and more to Mankind making the way of salvation more and more easily seen, and in the process making mankind more and more responsible. Those who do not respond are guilty of greater sin as well. (And those who do respond are more indebted to the grace for the salvation they receive by faith because they were given greater light than in earlier ages. We had to be given even greater light than Old Testament people to be reached at all.)

Clearly sinners all perish if they die in their sins. They perish whether they are under law or if they are not under law. But simply having a law, as opposed to being lawless, does not make those who hold it or put themselves under it more acceptable to God. In reality it simply makes them more responsible. Now as **Trespassers** subject to righteous judgement. There is no saving virtue in **having** law, although a nation or culture with law is generally more stable, safe and pleasant for its constituents. But it is Jesus Christ who will judge **righteously** according to their works with no respect to persons. All works, whether done openly or secretly, all will be exposed and righteously judged by the Lord., whether Jew or Gentile, rich or poor, bond or free. Paul still doesn't mention there is a way of escape from that judgement or what it is, for he has more to say to complete his case. For Paul is taking the part of a Prosecutor systematically presenting his case before the Judge, and those to be judged, before he rests his case in Romans 3.

In the process he rebukes those who take it upon themselves to judge their fellow human beings. Why? Because they are just as guilty as those they set out to

judge. This is a universal principle in scripture. Jesus said, *Matthew 7:1 Judge not, that ye be not judged. 2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. 3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? 4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? 5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.*

See also: Romans 14:3-4,10,13; 1 Corinthians 4:3,5; James 4:11-12

The Jews were particularly guilty because of their national and personal pride and self esteem. They were a chosen nation (but a nation once weak and of no account in and of itself among the nations of the earth). But God chose them through the call of Abram and unilaterally conferred on him the promise that through his seed (descendants) all the nations of the earth will be blessed.. Not only did God give Abram the great and precious promises, He blessed him and his descendants with great revelations of His righteousness and His nature through the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms of the Old Testament. The promise is fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

*Matthew 1:1 The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.*

Some listened in faith and realized they were truly unable to keep the Law given them by God. They frankly acknowledged this and cast themselves upon God's mercy and loving-kindness. They sought to walk by faith in obedience to God and were blessed with eternal life. As was Abraham's faith, their faith was counted for righteousness.

*Psalms 32:1 A Psalm of David, Maschil. Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.*

Others recognized the scriptures as an immense gift God had given them and entrusted to their custody. But instead of endeavoring to keep it they began in their thinking and attitude to pridefully exalt themselves because **they** had been given more than other nations. They took pride in the immensely superior revelation and knowledge entrusted them as a people, a people of God., but did not heed its contents. Even today devoutly religious people are deluded, valuing the ceremonial reading of the scriptures during a service as salutary to God, while they remain woefully ignorant and heedless of the solemn words read to them.

Notice the solemn justice and unswerving nature of God's righteousness. It shows no partiality – is not a respecter of persons. It is not arbitrary or capricious but intensely, rigidly, immovably fair. Not wealth, nationality, color, social status, religion, politics, heritage, ancestry,

knowledge, intellect, beauty, charm, natural abilities, natural gift, parent's faith, whether Atheist, Barbarian, Gentile or any other influence valued by men, will count. Only what men have done in their lives will affect God's justice. He will judge with discrimination but without partiality. For all have sinned and all come short of the glory of God and all are deserving of eternal punishment.

Actually, because of the much greater revelation given them, the Jewish people are held to a much higher standard of righteousness than the Gentiles. God holds us accountable for what He has given us. How much have we valued the truth we have among unbelievers of the world today? How much have we valued the truth we have been entrusted with among other believers in our community? To the extent we do not walk in the truth entrusted to us, the name of the Lord Jesus Christ is blasphemed among those around us who witness our inconsistency. To the extent we do not warn the unruly or if we allow sin to fester in our midst unjudged His Holy Name is blasphemed.

*2Samuel 12:13 And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. 14 Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die. (KJV)*

May God give us hearts for Him and grace to walk daily acceptable in His sight. May He reveal sin in our lives we might be concealing from others or even fooling ourselves.

*Psalm 139:23 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: 24 And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

May He reveal any instance of our knowingly or unwittingly harboring sin in the assembly.

*1Peter 4:17 For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? 18 And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?*

By Ron Canner, July 25, 2007.