

Deuteronomy 19:15 tells us that any accusation must be supported by two or three witnesses. Here the Holy Spirit calls two witnesses: David for verses 10-13 and 18; Isaiah for verses 15-17 (see a cross reference Bible for exact references – worthwhile). Between them, the Psalmist and the Prophet testify that:

All men are corrupt:

- *None* is righteous and *none* does good.
- *No one* seeks for God but *all* have turned aside, in paths of misery and ruin, far from the way of peace.

Every part of them is corrupt:

- Their *throats* are open graves, with deceptive *tongues* and venom under their *lips*, and *mouths* full of curses.
- Their *feet* are swift to shed blood.
- There is no fear of God before their *eyes*.

There's no comfort here. Few of us feel that we are quite this bad but we all must acknowledge that our natural selves fit part of the description, some of the time.

The law is itself is holy but, being made for sinners, can only speak words of judgment (1 Tim. 1:8-9). As verse 2:12 says, those who have sinned under the law will perish as will those who sin apart from the law. There's really nothing to say – all mouths are stopped.

Is it all bad news? So far, yes. But Good News is just around the corner ...

Questions:

1. Verse 9 may be read as asking if the Jews are better than the Gentiles. In some translations it asks if the Jews are more accountable and therefore worse. What is the answer?
2. Reading Acts 17:27 and Hebrews 11:6, it would appear that all men are called to seek God. What does it mean to seek God?
3. Graves in NT times were rock tombs in which bodies were left to decompose. They would be opened when necessary to receive new occupants. How can a throat be like an open grave? (Hint: John 11:39) How can a throat be the opposite of an open grave?

4. Verses 13 and 14 condemn sinful use of our throats, tongues, lips, and mouths. Look through the book of Romans up to this point and list verses describing a transgression of speech: Saying what shouldn't be said, not saying what should be said, or vainly boasting.
5. See verse 15. According to Isaiah 52:7 and Eph. 6:15, what should our feet be used for?
6. Fearing God is a concept that is generally lost in our culture. What happens when there is no fear of God before people's eyes?
7. As review, what testimony have different people received from God that makes them accountable to Him?
8. These verses are like a prosecutor wrapping up his case in court: The defendants all knew the law and all broke the law, beyond all reasonable doubt. The judge cannot bend the law and makes no mistakes. What hope is there for the accused?