

# **The Judgment of God**

## **God's Closing Argument**

Romans 3:1-20: "What then is the superiority of the Jew? or what the profit of circumcision? Much every way: and first, indeed, that to them were entrusted the oracles of God. For what? if some have not believed, shall their unbelief make the faith/faithfulness of God of none effect? Far be the thought: but let God be true, and every man false; according as it is written, So that thou shouldest be justified in thy words, and shouldest overcome when thou art in judgment. But if our unrighteousness commend God's righteousness, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who inflicts wrath? I speak according to man? Far be the thought: since how shall God judge the world? For if the truth of God, in my lie, has more abounded to his glory, why yet am I also judged as a sinner? and not, according as we are injuriously charged, and according as some affirm that we say, Let us practise evil things, that good ones may come? Whose judgment is just.

What then? are we better? No, in no wise: for we have before charged both Jews and Greeks with being all under sin: according as it is written, There is not a righteous man, not even one; there is not the man that understands, there is not one that seeks after God. All have gone out of the way, they have together become unprofitable; there is not one that practises goodness, there is not so much as one: their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; asps poison is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; swift their feet to shed blood; ruin and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace they have not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know that whatever the things the law says, it speaks to those under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world be under judgment to God. Wherefore by works of law no flesh shall be justified before him; for by law is knowledge of sin."

*Father, we again want to thank You for Your Word; Your Word is true. Your Word is truth. How we ask that You open Your eternal Word to us, that living truth, those words of Spirit and life, those words that can transform us from what we are or what we were into what You want us to be. It is only in Your words and in Your life that power exists. So we come to You this morning again bowing the head and saying, Lord, would You speak? We wait upon You. All we want to know, all we want to hear are Your words. So open them to us. For all this we ask in the precious name of Jesus. Amen.*

### **Introduction**

We are looking today at Romans 3:1-20, and this is a very important section. It is the end of the section that deals with the judgment of God. So the title is "The Judgment of God, God's Closing Argument." This is very clear when you read this; it is what this is concerning. It is the conclusion of this long section on the condition of man. Some of you, and I include myself, might think when we read chapters 1-18 through 3-20 is a bit tedious. You might believe that and think that, (of course you would never say that in public like I am so foolish to do). But you might think why has God taken three chapters to pound us into the earth, telling us our terrible condition, how hopeless we are? It is because unless we see our truly hopeless condition outside of Christ, we will never see that great hope that we have in Christ Jesus. If we see who we are, and we see who God delivers us from, and what He brings us into, we will begin to see the magnificent mercy

that we talked about this morning. Paul did not waste too much time of these sixteen chapters in these three chapters. Maybe he did not do enough, but he did more than any man in all of the Scriptures in going into such great lengths and since great detail to show us the judgment of God.

We do not like that word “judgment” very much, do we? We would rather not deal with it. We would rather not talk about it. Every atheist and non-Christian knows the Word from the Sermon on the Mount, “Judge not lest you be judged.” The moment a Christians opens their mouth, the moment we begin to speak, if we say anything about righteousness or holiness, immediately, somehow magically, they know that one verse. They have hardly read the Bible; they do not care about the Bible, but that one verse is on the tip of their tongue as their quick and only answer. It was like that for me before I was saved. Somehow that magic verse was at my disposal, “Judge not.” But you know God is a righteous Judge. And you have to understand that the scene here, the scene in these three chapters is the Divine courtroom. And here the righteous Judge is judging human kind in the Divine courtroom, and at the end of chapter 3:20, he arrives at the Divine verdict. That is the scene, so keep that in mind.

I remember when I first thought of that, I was so thrilled later to read about great men of God that came to that same conclusion, and I thought, how wonderful this is, that we have a righteous Judge. We have One who sees rightfully, and we have One who sees and judges righteously. The righteous judgment of God is a phrase that occurs four times.

There is another phrase even more forceful with the judgment of God which occurs twice, and then there is that phrase that expands it, the righteous judgment of God. That is what we are dealing with in this closing argument. And how we need to see what God is saying. If we see it, we will not despair; we will turn to Him. This morning it was shared about coming to the mercy seat where He will commune with us. We heard about coming to the mercy seat where He will speak to us, and He will reveal to us those overflowing mercies that lead us into His righteous way. That is where we are heading.

Now closing arguments are very important in a court of law. The trial always end with a closing argument. I will never forget seeing the closing arguments in O. J. Simpson’s trial. Probably many of you do not even know who O. J. Simpson is. He was Number 32 of the Buffalo Bills, one of the greatest running backs that ever lived. In those closing arguments, it was a theatrical putting on that glove and saying, “It does not fit; you must acquit him.” The whole thing was won with theater, not fact. This is the importance of closing arguments. It is the one opportunity at the end where the case has to be made. If the case is not made in those moments, the whole case is lost. Don’t take my word for it. This is the way Cornell Law School describes closing arguments. The closing argument is the lawyer’s final opportunity in a trial to tell the judge or the jury why they should win the case by explaining the evidence. I want you to remember that as we go on. This is my definition of explaining the evidence. It is the final step before the trial goes to the verdict. The divine closing argument in chapter 3 of Romans is God’s final word about mankind. How depraved they are! How lost they are! How much they need something Divine to bring them into all that God has.

We will look at three areas this morning. Number 1 is man’s arguments and God’s answers. You may have noticed in that section we read that there were a lot of questions and answers. This is a question and answer period. God has all the answers; and they are right answers. Secondly, we need to take some time and look at those ten verses of God’s closing argument and see how full the evidence is. You remember, it must be based on evidence; it has to be. And God bases His

argument on evidence. And finally, we will see the purpose of the law. Now you know where we are headed and I hope you will have a better view as we go through it.

### **Man's Argument/ God's Answers (3:18)**

Chapter 3:1-8 continues with the judgment of the Jews. We looked earlier in chapter 1 and saw the judgment of the Gentiles, and in chapter 2 we saw the judgment of the Jews. Now we will see further the full complete judgment of the Jews. I will offer you an opinion for the reason for this, and you can debate it, question it or have your own opinion. Religious people are the hardest people to deal with. They think they have an idea. They think they know God; they think they have some reality, and they will be the first ones to fight you tooth and nail when you try to share the gospel with them. Often the unbeliever, although they might quickly throw out "judge not," they will listen, and they will wonder, "Is this true?" But oh, the religious (may I say this without offending some of you) are impossible sometimes. So that is the reason for this.

Romans 3:1: "What then is the superiority of the Jews? Or what is the profit of circumcision?"

Man is always trying to justify himself. We need to understand this. We are always trying to justify ourselves. We are always trying to question God's right to judge us. And in this first part of chapter 3:1-8, man's arguments put God in judgment. They are questioning God, and how often that is the problem. We question God; we question what He says, we question, "can you believe this?" All these questions are raised with man's arguments, even to the thought that they question what God would even say to them. This is what 3:1-8 is saying. The clear message of Romans is only that God is just. Remember that. That is the reason Paul went from 1:18-3:20. He wanted to convince us and show us in light of the Holy Scriptures that only One is just. That is the theme of Romans, and certainly the theme of the early part of Romans.

Man is always filled with excuses. We love to make excuses, and a number of these questions raised and arguments that are put forth are excuses. "Why should God judge us? Why should He extend wrath to us if this is true?"

Linda and I have seven grandchildren, and grandparents love to talk about their grandchildren, but I am not going to talk about them. I am not going to say anything good about them as a matter of fact. Sometimes when I look at our grandchildren, particularly the grandsons, and see them acting up in a full way, the first thing that happens is that Graison blames his brother and says, "Nathaniel did it." And then Nathaniel turns around and blames Grayson and says, "Grayson did it." We are always blaming others. We are always trying to push the blame off from ourselves. That is the way we are. When I look at those lovely grandchildren that Linda and I love, I say there is little Adam in all of his glory, full in glory. But Adam started this whole thing, and we are sons of Adam.

You remember in the garden in Genesis that the woman was truly deceived by Satan—at least she was deceived. What Adam did, he did willfully. But she took that fruit and ate that fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and she passed it on to Adam. That brilliant soul took that fruit and ate it willfully. He willfully disobeyed. When God came to him and said, "What have you done?" Adam said, "The woman gave it to me to eat." Men have been doing that for all of history. Oh, how we like to blame everything on everyone else but ourself! But the clear judgement of God here is that it comes to our feet. God comes to us, and His concluding verdict is, "It is you. It is me." It is not someone else. This Romans 3:1-8 is the last gasp of man trying to

exonerate himself in the divine court. You will never be exonerated in the divine court. You will never get off because some brilliant lawyer in a theatrical moment affected a whole jury and poisoned them, and the murderer went free. Now if you think that is too strong, talk to me later. I know there are a lot of opinions about that.

In these overall questions we see man's arguments, man's reasonings, and man's questionings. More importantly, I think we see God's questions and the Divine answers that absolutely destroy and undo the reasonings of man. Now I know Bible studies are a little tougher because we have to really needle into the weeds. We really need to go into the heart of it. There are four questions and four answers. I hope you noticed that when you read this section. Sometimes the way that it is worded, you may not have followed it. Let's look at it because in that we see man's arguments and God's answers.

We see the first question in chapter 3:1: "What then is the superiority of the Jew? or what the profit of circumcision?"

In verse 2 we see the first answer: "Much every way: and first, indeed, that to them were entrusted the oracles of God."

Brothers and sisters, the Jews have incalculable privilege. Now I know you might argue with that. The whole world is astir with this word, "Do you have privilege?" I am going to mention something one of the presidential candidates said, and it is not Donald Trump: "I grew up with privilege; I grew up with a father and mother." What privilege! I thought that was brilliant. What an answer! It was a home where there was love; that is privilege.

But the Jews had incalculable advantage and privilege. Think about it. It cites here that they were entrusted with the oracles of God. They were given the words of the living God. Can you think of more privilege than that? To me that is privilege, but it is more than that. They had the Holy Scriptures, and God appeared to them personally. Can you think of more privilege than that? God appeared to Moses in the burning bush; He appeared to Moses on Mount Sinai. God said, "I will appear to you. We said it this morning at the mercy seat: 'I will meet with you.'" He followed them around or they followed Him around is the proper way to put it, with a pillar of fire and a cloud by night. Everything they needed for food and sustenance was given to them. Can you find any more privilege than that? When they got tired of the bread of heaven, the mana, He gave them quail, and they still murmured. If you think man is good, read the book of Exodus. You would quickly change your opinion when you read the book of Exodus. Seventy went down into Egypt, and two million were delivered out of Egypt. It was the greatest deliverance ever known. God delivered them from Egypt, and made them a people unto Himself. Don't you think this word that Paul inserts from the mind of God, "much in every way" is a very full expression? That is what it means. Could there be any more privilege? Hardly.

The tabernacle was the place where God's presence was, and the temple of Solomon was where God's very presence was found. They were instructed, and he prayed to this place: "Confess all of your evils and repent, and I will do all these things for you." There is privilege beyond what can be described. And yet these very ones with all this privilege questioned God: "Is He right? Is He just? Is He kind? Would He inflict wrath on us? His privileged ones?" Brothers and sisters, this is the first question and the first answer.

The second question is in verse 3: "For what? If some had not believed, shall their unbelief make the faith of God of none effect?"

Now I have already told you to put the word “faithfulness of God” instead of “faith of God.” Darby puts it in his notes, but there are a lot of good versions that read it that way which I think is far better.

The answer to question two is in verse 4a: “Far be the thought.” What a powerful word! Have you ever noticed in reading the book of Romans how many times the Apostle Paul uses that phrase, “Far be the thought?” He uses it ten times; it is a Pauline phrase. It is only used three times in all the rest of the New Testament, but you cannot go anywhere without noticing Paul advancing the argument in favor of God, “far be the thought.” And I love the way William Newell expresses that in his commentary on Romans. He says, “Banish the thought!” It is unthinkable; put it out of your mind. If you thought God was this way, how wrongly you have ascertained the very character and the nature of the living God. Banish that thought! That is the power of that word.

Verse 4b: “But let God be true and every man false; according as it is written, so that Thou (God) shouldest be justified in thy words, and shouldest overcome when thou art in judgment.”

That phrase, “when thou art in judgment,” is so pregnant with meaning. Did you know that man has become so audacious and so self-absorbed and so full of himself (and you know it has different meanings) that he puts God in judgment? Far be the thought! That was the only appropriate answer. Banish that thought from your mind! Do not think like that! If you think God is like that, you are under the deceptive work of the enemy. That is exactly what it means. That is the one where I told you that the “faith of God” should be “faithfulness Of God”. We know that the bedrock principle of the Scripture is the faithfulness of God. It is the whole bedrock principle. God is faithful. No one else is faithful; we are not faithful. When you read it more carefully, you begin to see the unfaithfulness of man, and you begin to see the faithfulness of God. No one is faithful like God. You remember what Paul wrote in his last communication in II Timothy? He wrote it to his beloved son in the faith, Timothy. In II Timothy 2:13 he said, “If we are faithless, (this is exactly what this is talking about) God is faithful still because He cannot deny Himself.” This is the thought here.

Brothers and sisters, the faithfulness of God is the theme of the whole Bible from beginning to end. Through all of man’s ruin, through all of man’s questionings, through all of man’s wanderings, through all of man’s doubts, there is one supreme message that is exerted over the whole Bible, and that is the faithfulness of God. In the end, we see Him coming on that white horse, and on His very garments is written, “Faithful and true.” Do you understand? They questioned the faithfulness of God. This was man’s reasoning; this was God’s answer.

Question 3 is in verse 5: “But if our unrighteousness commends God’s righteousness, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who inflicts wrath?”

Answer: Verse 6: “I speak according to man. Far be the thought: since how shall God judge the world?”

At least you have to admit this is clever. It is clever in the sense it says, “But our unrighteousness so to make God’s righteousness shine brighter, how can you judge us?”

Don’t you think there is some merit to that? It is at least diabolical merit to that. What an argument man has proposed when he talks about God! “If we sin and it makes His glory and His sinlessness look even better, why would He judge us? How could He judge us?” That is why the apostle said, “I talk as a man.” You know what Paul was doing? These questions and answers to these questions are either Paul’s own understanding as a Jew is that they are the best of Israel’s

sons in many ways or they were what the Judaizers confronted him with constantly: "Is this so? Aren't we privileged?" Or once he saw the light on the road to Damascus, he saw things in a very different picture. You remember he went to Arabia, as it says in Galatians, for three years, and he relearned the entire Scriptures in the light of Christ. So I think these questions and answers are a combination of all three. But nevertheless, they reveal what man's heart is and what God's answer is.

It is man's diabolically inspired reasoning. When he said, "I speak as a man," they were trying to escape the judgment of God. They were justifying themselves in that since their unrighteousness established God's righteousness, they were actually thinking in their deceived way, that they were elevating Him. So you might think they are appropriate questions, "Why should He judge us?" How inappropriate! This is the third question, and it is the diabolical nature of sin on the human mind that has been all twisted. I can tell you that it used to be people were more polite, particularly our southerners. I am sorry for the people from Chicago; it will make you feel a little better. Southern hospitality is where people are so cordial and polite, and we are always so pleasant to everyone. But what is behind our words? It is quite a different thing altogether when we say, "Bless your heart." We merely mean, "Put a knife right through you." Do you understand? We think we are so refined, but how darkened is the imagination of man's mind!

The fourth question is in verses 7-8, and this is very close to the one we just did. "For if the truth of God in my lie has more abounded to His glory, why yet am I also judged as a sinner?" (verse 7).

It sounds good, doesn't it? It is rational, diabolical rational. "For the truth of God, in my lie ..." Now how can you connect those two thoughts? But somehow in the darkened imagination of the mind in man, they can connect those two thoughts. "Has more abounded to His glory." it sounds like some excuse I would make to Linda. "I bought this; it is good for us."

"Why yet am I also judged as a sinner?" The answer is in verse 8b: "And not, according as we are injuriously charged, and according as some affirm that we say, Let us practise evil things that good ones may come?"

That is man's darkened reasoning. That is the fourth question. And you know what the answer was? The answer was very simple. "Whose judgement is just" (verse 8c).

Do not think that is part of the question; that is the answer. Paul had little use, or put it better, God had little use for that argument, and His only answer was brief and succinct, and He said, "Whose judgment is just." Never forget that. I believe that is clearly what we are seeing here. We are seeing such dark thinking. I like what Griffin Thomas said, "He called these perversions of reasoning." Brothers and sisters, I hope you are not so offended this morning. You would rather me break quickly to chapter 5. Our perversions of reasoning are part of the darkened mind. It is part of the judgment of God, and he does not hold back. In all their objections, in all their reasonings, in all their questions, in all of their judgments, God is silenced by these four answers. There is a hush in the courtroom; they had no other word to speak. They could not justify themselves, but man will always try.

You may have read the book of Malachi. Some people do not read the minor prophets. They may feel, why read a minor prophet when you can read a major prophet? I had rather spend my time in Isaiah or Jeremiah, but you ought to read Malachi because this is the end of the history of God's people, the Jews, and they were questioning God. That is what Malachi is all about. Read these questions they raised.

God said to them in Malachi 1:2: "I have loved you, saith Jehovah; but ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us?"

Can you imagine saying that to God? "How have You loved us?" This is the darkened mind. At the very end of the Old Testament, it comes to this point of a darkened mind that questions God.

Malachi 2:17 says, "Ye have wearied Jehovah with your words," and ye say, "Wherein have we wearied him?" Can you imagine a greater darkness than that? Can you imagine? That is how dark mankind is.

Malachi 3:8, God speaking: "Will a man rob God? But ye rob me. And ye say, Wherein do we rob thee?"

They were not even aware, brothers and sisters. Particularly the religious that were on trial were not even aware of their darkened state. They were not even aware of what they were saying. But nevertheless, God is true. This is the first part of Romans 3: 1-8.

### **God's Closing Argument**

Then we will look at Romans 3:9-18, and this is God's closing argument. This is the epidemic of evidence. Now you know I am not a lawyer; I do not even pretend to be, and I would not be a good one if I were, but you cannot convict someone in a court of law without the verifying evidence. Thank God, I think it is still like that in the US, but I am not so sure. But you cannot do it. You cannot go into a court of law as a person and give just hearsay evidence: "Well, I heard somebody say, "Kenny is a real slouch." You cannot do that; it will not be accepted. It is hearsay evidence. It has to be fact. It cannot be argued against. It has to be fact that removes the doubt and makes it possible so that one can be fully convicted in a court of law, and that is what these ten verses, 9-18 are about. God has His last opportunity here to make His case through Paul. The outcome of the divine trial rests upon this argument. This is his concluding thought about man, and it rests upon this argument. Our God has all the answers. Aren't you thankful for that? Brothers and sisters, when we despair, we can remember that our God has all the answers.

I love that scene when the Lord Jesus was twelve years old, and He stayed behind in Jerusalem. He camped out in the temple, and He was talking to the teachers and the authorities. And His parents had a panic attack. I think they were three days out when they realized young Jesus was nowhere to be found. "Where is He? Where is He?" It was not like us who could start up our SUV and take just moments to get back to Jerusalem. They had to walk back on that long journey, and they found the Lord Jesus sitting in the temple, listening to teachers. And while He was sitting in the temple listening to their questions, the last part of it says, "He was answering questions." They were astounded at the answers He gave. Oh, dear brothers and sisters, our God has all the answers. Even the Lord Jesus at twelve years old had the answers that astounded the teachers. They had no arguments for His answers.

So in chapter 3:9-18, it is the irrefutable conclusion, and now it is back to the Jews.

Verse 9: "What then? are we better? No, in no wise; for we have before charged both Jews and Greeks with being all under sin."

Dear brothers and sisters, this is the eternal verdict in the divine court. All are under sin whether they were religious Jews who had every appearing privilege and advantage or whether they were Gentiles, all under sin. This is what the closing argument is about. "Are we better? No,

in no wise; for we have before charged.” Notice that word; these are the charges in the court of law. We have before charged everybody with being under sin. He heard the accused questions and their reasonings, their unenlightened responses and their diabolical minds set, and he gave his final summery of their condition. You have to understand verses 9-18 or you will never understand the righteous judgment of God. If you look at them, they are unassailable charges. They are based on irrefutable evidence which is the Word of God.

It says at the beginning of verse 10: “According as it is written.” That one phrase repeats itself in the Word of God again and again in almost every book in the Bible, “according as it is written.” What does that mean? It means that it is according to the Word of God. That is the answer; that is the evidence; that is the indisputable evidence; that is the irrefutable evidence; that is the evidence that can never be questioned. You can question people’s thoughts, you can question people’s moods, you can question sometimes people’s actions, but the Word of God stands forever. Do not ever forget that.

You remember when the Lord said, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My Word will never pass away” (Matthew 24:35). Isn’t that amazing! How we need to know His Word! That is what this irrefutable evidence is. It shows us the absolute depravity of man, and it is a searing indictment consisting of fourteen charges. Now lately, and I am not going to mention any names, but there is a certain person in the news that has forty indictments against him, along with many, many charges. Often, when I read the news, they go on and on about the charges.

Here these are the charges of God, fourteen charges. The first set of charges, and the first six have to do with our outward condition. Do we really understand our outward condition? The second four have to do with our inward condition. Do we really understand our inward condition? Finally, the last group have to do with our actions, what we do. In other words, God judges us on what we are, and God judges us on what we do. I know some people do not like the verse: “We shall be judged according to our works.” And by the way, they particularly do not like it when it is talking about believers. They say, “No, no, you must have interpreted your Bible wrongly. It is all of grace. We cannot be judged according to our works.” But we will be as Christians judged according to our actions. What did we do with what God put at our disposal? Were we faithful? The whole kingdom hangs on that answer. I believe these are very clear. These are the first six that are concerning our outward condition.

3:10 says, “There is not a righteous man, not even one.” Can there be stronger language than that? “There is not a righteous man, not even one.” Can there be stronger language than that? That comes from Psalm 14:1-3. That is the infallible evidence, the indisputable evidence.

Verse 3:11a: “There is not the man that understands.” How strong those words! This is the charge. “There is not the man that even understands.” It gets worse than that.

Verse 3:11b the third one says, “There is not one that seeks after God.” Now you may dispute that, but this is God’s conviction. This is God’s charge. This is God’s summary in His closing arguments to say, “This is who we are.”

Verse 3:11c: The fourth one says; “All have gone out of the way.” By the way, all of these come from those three verses in Psalm 14:1-3. Can you imagine! Paul, in his wisdom, in his light, in His relearning of the Scriptures in the light of the glory of the gospel in Arabia discovered the whole opening of the Word of God.

Verse 3:11d says in the fifth one, “They have together become unprofitable.”

I will tell you a story about our Brother Kaung since he is not here and Dora is not here. As we young brothers met with Brother Kaung all those years, we were blessed, privileged to meet with him. Of course, Brother Kaung would pray first, and He always prayed that prayer we read in Luke: "I am an unprofitable servant." And I thought, "Good grief! If Brother Kaung says that, what am I? Here is this man of God." But you know, we have together become unprofitable, as far as man goes. This is the clear convicting word of Scripture. Then It goes on.

Verse 12: "There is not one that practises goodness, not so much as one." Don't you think those are strong words? Incredibly strong!

Do you remember when the rich young ruler came to the Lord Jesus? By the way, I think he was so full of himself. He came to the Lord Jesus and said, "Good Teacher, what must I do that I might inherit eternal life?" The Lord Jesus did not answer his question at first. He said, "Why do you call me good? None is good but God." Then He told that rich young ruler what he could not do. He thought he had kept all the law and all the commandments, and he said, "I have done all of these." And the Lord, in His searing eye of judgment on the true condition of man said, "Sell all you have. Give it away, and come follow Me." Now before you slip up and think that is a requirement for all you believers to go out and empty your bank account, it is not. The Lord wants you to be gracious. The Lord wants you to be giving, but the point is that this man thought he had done everything required, but in the light of God He had to expose it, and he went away sad. That is the story of the rich young ruler.

### **Our Inward Condition**

The next four issues are concerning our inward condition. Verse 3:13a says, "Their throat is an open sepulcher." This is our mouth, and this is our inward condition; it is no longer just our outward condition. We are not just outwardly totally corrupt; inwardly we are totally corrupt. Our mouth is a graveyard, full of death. I remember going to Israel, and we were up on the Mount of Olives. We went down to the Citron Valley, and there were sepulchers everywhere, grave after grave, an endless sea of graves. But our mouth is an open grave, and this is our inward condition, our true inward condition.

He goes on to say in 3:13b: "With their tongues they have used deceit." There is deceit in our tongues. You know, they say that often of lawyers, but I think it is a little unfair to lawyers. They say, "How do you know a lawyer is lying? "When he opens his mouth." I know there is a lawyer on the video so I apologized to him right away. This is true not only of a class of people; it is true for every person. How do you know we are lying? When we open our mouth, deceit comes out, and this is our true inward nature. It says, "With their tongues they have used deceit."

I love what James says in chapter 3:5-6, and he talks about the work of the tongue. He says, "It is a fire." It is a small member of the body, but it is a fire. It can light the whole world on fire. That is what we are. It is the defiler of the whole body. It sets on fire the course of nature, and it is set on fire by hell. I discovered something. If you get around some of the sweetest little sisters and personally talk to them, you discover the fire that can come out sometimes; it is a flame thrower torching people. It is true of all of us by nature. You need to understand this. If you are going to know the mercy of God you must understand this.

The ninth reason, is asps' (snake) poison; it is in their lips. They may be a beautiful little person, a cute little one, yet the vipers' bite is in their lips. Can you imagine! Naturally speaking, we have the vipers' bite in us. Have you ever been bit by a human being? It is a vipers' bite. I remember when we were giving this messages in Pakistan through zoom, and that very morning

the whole message was cancelled because one of the brothers got bit by a viper. They had to rush him to the hospital to save him, and his foot was all bandaged. In the Lord's concluding argument, He says, "Asps' poison is in our lips." This is all right out of the Bible in Psalm 140:3.

The tenth one is in 3:14: "Whose mouth is full of cursing and deceit." This is our inward condition. You may not think that, but it is true in our natural state. I know that was true of me. I grew up in a household where everybody cursed. I did not grow up in a Christian household. I did not become a Christian until I was twenty. I was prolific with seasoned words, salty words. I am not proud of this; it was terrible. I almost got kicked out of college because of a rumor about my salty words to an employer. That was number one in my group. It was not true thankfully, but I will never forget standing before that dean who said, "Why should you still be here?" But when I was saved, God took away from me all of those words. They disappeared. When I slipped and said a salty word, pain shoots through me. Brothers and sisters, cursing and bitterness fills them. This is the judgment of God.

### **Our Actions**

The last few are our actions. This is what we do. It says in verse 3:15, "Swift their feet to shed blood." Men are blood-thirsty. If you doubt it read history. I will never forget C. S. Lewis, who lived through World War I and World War II, and he was not a believer. He became a believer because he said, "He saw the cruelty of man in war. Fifteen to twenty-two million were killed in World War I. Can you imagine? What is it forty to sixty million were killed, slaughtered by the blood lust of man in World War II. Is there any reason for the human race to still be here apart from the mercy of God? This is the truth, this is our actions. Think of China and Communist Russia, and how many millions have been killed.

It says in Verse 16; "Ruined and misery is in their ways." All of this comes from Isaiah 59:7. "And the way of peace they have not known." This is the 13<sup>th</sup> charge.

In verse 18 is the 14<sup>th</sup> charge: "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

Proverbs 1:7: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: fools despise wisdom and instruction."

This closing argument of God makes all men and all women fools. This is what we are. This is our outward conduct; this is our inward character; this is our actions. And this irrefutable evidence comes in to show us that all are guilty. Everyone is guilty. The divine verdict finally is read, and it says, "Guilty as charged, and it cannot be contested." There is no one who will be acquitted apart from the mercy of God, and there is no favor that will be shown apart from the mercy of God. It is a full, unanimous conviction by God Himself. That is what this second half does.

### **The Purpose of the Law**

Finally, in verses 19-20 we read the purpose of the law. Listen to this carefully. "Now we know that whatever the things the law says, it speaks to those under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world be under judgment to God." That was the reason for the law. The law had one reason—stop every mouth. And it was that everyone would be under the judgment of God.

Verse 20: "Wherefore by works of law no flesh shall be justified before Him; for by the law is knowledge of sin."

Have you ever thought about the purpose of the law? Why did God give the Jews the law? He gave them the law so that they might see sin as sin. He gave them the law that they would not trust in themselves, and they would cry out to God. Even as they cried out in Egypt for divine deliverance, they would cry out for a new divine deliverance from who they were, and they would find that divine deliverance only in God. That was the purpose; it was to convict all men. If you want to use a more pleasant word, it was to convince all men, but it was certainly to bring all men under the judgment of God. In His light we see light. This is what the single purpose of the law is. It was never meant for us to keep it. You may argue with me because the Lord said, "Keep the law." Well, He wanted them to try, to be convinced that they could never keep the law in themselves.

The fatal mistake they made three times is in Exodus. They said to Moses, "All God has commanded us we will do." You remember they said it again, "All He has said, we will do." And then they said a third time, "All He said, we will do." And they made a fatal mistake when they said, "And obey." They could not because they did not know. God, in His great mercy, knew man would argue. He knew man would reason. He knew man would justify. He knew man would try to cast away even the thought of God. He knew it, and He gave them the law so that by the law they would be convinced. And when you read Romans 7 and you see Paul's experience of the law, you understand that was the thing that convicted him. This is Romans 3:1-20.

As I have gotten older my eyesight is not so good. I think I am going to have to give up the little Bible, and Linda keeps pushing her giant print Bible. I am fighting it tooth and nail. At work they used to bring me these little plans. These young engineers with good eyesight would bring me these little plans and hand them to me to check their work. I think they did it so I would not see their work. But I had a secret; I had this giant magnifying glass with a special little place on it that was an even larger magnification, and then to beat that it had an LED light on it. I could hit the LED light and it would magnify those impossible to read drawings, and I knew exactly what they were saying. The law is God's magnifying glass. That is what the law is.

### Conclusion

Brothers and sisters, this is the righteous judgment of God. Apart from a righteousness that is not in them, there is no hope. Apart from the righteousness that they cannot produce, there is no hope. Apart from a righteousness that they will only find in and through another, there is nothing they can do but be charged and convicted guilty, all guilty. This is Romans 3:1-20.

*Lord, we confess we do not see things the way You do. We are blinded by our own reasonings. We are blinded by our questionings. We are blinded by our own unfaithfulness or faithlessness, but we thank You for Your light. Shine Your light into our hearts that we cannot argue with what is true, and we will be able to give ourselves to you and say, "Have mercy, like that tax gatherer prayed. Have mercy. It is only through Your mercy we can be changed from this entirely ruined condition in chapters 1-3. It is only by Your grace that we can be saved from what we are. It is only as You show us divine favor that we can be brought from death into life. Lord, open our eyes. Shine Your light, cause us to see, and when we see, how great is the deliverance! And we will bow at Your feet and worship. Amen.*