



## World Christian Fellowship

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### Romans 42 All are guilty! Part 01

**Romans 3:9-19**, *What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. <sup>10</sup>As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; <sup>11</sup>There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. <sup>12</sup>They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one." <sup>13</sup>"Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit"; "The poison of asps is under their lips"; <sup>14</sup>"Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness." <sup>15</sup>"Their feet are swift to shed blood; <sup>16</sup>Destruction and misery are in their ways; <sup>17</sup>And the way of peace they have not known." <sup>18</sup>"There is no fear of God before their eyes." <sup>19</sup>Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.*

Man likes to think he is good and convinced himself that he is.  
He ought to be able to pat himself on the back.  
He ought to certainly think positively about himself.

But down deep inside man has a real problem in convincing himself of his goodness, and the problem is guilt. Because men are inevitably and invariably guilty, and they feel that way.

One of the most painful, self- mutilating, time and energy consuming exercises in the human experience is guilt. It can ruin your day or your week or your life if you let it.

Guilt is a pollutant, and we don't need any more of it in the world.

### **How do we get rid of guilt?**

No matter how often man tells himself he is good, he inevitably faces the fact that he does evil and feels the guilt.

Guilt drives people to alcohol, to drugs, to loneliness, insanity, suicide. When they play psychological games with their mind and try to pass their guilt on to somebody else, it only increases their guilt.

Now they are not only guilty for what they did, but now they are guilty of blaming somebody else for it. Sin and its resultant guilt pose the ultimate and severest problem for all mankind.

Men would like to get rid of guilt, but they really don't know how to get rid of it.

An interesting story of a man who sent a £50 check to the HMRC and he said, "I am sending you this check because I can't sleep at night because I was dishonest with my income tax. P.S. If I can sleep after sending this, okay. If I can't, I will send you the balance."

Now man is guilty because he has real guilt. All the psychological and psychiatric exercises in the world do not ultimately relieve man of his guilt.

They only help him to put it on to somebody else, which intensifies the guilt because he is now blaming someone who is not responsible. Man cannot relieve himself of guilt in a legitimate and effective way.

Reason is because he has real sin.

Real sin has the effect of guilt, just as real injury to the body causes the effect of pain.

Now the recognition of the sin of man and the guilt of man is the first great element in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The church is in the world to tell men they are sinful, to tell men they have real guilt, not just psychological or psychiatric

or emotional guilt but real guilt. They have in fact sinned against a holy God and they are responsible.

Gospel only begins this way.

Apostle Paul writes this marvellous letter to Romans presenting the gospel of Christ, begins with presenting the statement on sin in Romans 1:16.

Before he can get to the remedy, he must present the disease. So, in **Romans 1:18 to Romans 3:19**, an open condemnation of every human being who's ever lived on the face of the earth and all are held as guilty before God.

**Romans 3:19**, *Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.*

We are not here to tell everybody they are fine.

We are here to say that men are sinners, they have real guilt before God, and they are under condemnation.

We have been seeing that all the way through the first three chapters of Romans. Man finds it so very difficult to admit that.

It is only stubborn self-pride that keeps man from the confession to God that would bring release. But that way he

refuses to take. Man stands before God today like a little boy who swears with crying and tears that he has not been anywhere near the honey jar and who with an air of outraged innocence pleads the justice of his position in total ignorance of the fact that a good spoonful of the honey is fallen on his shirt, under his chin and is plainly visible to all but himself.

Paul knows that men tend to resist the reality of their sinfulness. So, in summing up this portion, he wants to make a final strong statement about the utter and total sinfulness of man.

Up to this time Paul has argued that man is sinful from creation, from the testimony of creation.

- He has argued from the testimony of history.
- He has argued from the testimony of reason.
- He has argued from logic.
- He has argued from conscience.

Now Paul argues from Scripture.

So, beginning in verse 10 -18, we have series of quotations from of the Old Testament.

This is like Paul's bringing God into the court to give testimony as to the sinfulness of man.

This is Paul at the pinnacle, summarizing everything he has said, only putting it in the terms of the very Word of God Himself.

This is God's view of man.

We are not dealing with Paul or human reason or human conscience or history, we are dealing with God.

It is very powerful, and it is convincing. This is the message that we must preach. Man is sinful and man guilty, and he must come to the recognition of that. Then he will be led to know the one who can be the remedy.

Verse 9 is like a summary of the opening statement of the courtroom.

*V 9, What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin.*

**Two questions:**

What then, what is the case?

What is the conclusion to all of this?

- Paul has condemned the immoral pagan,
- Paul has condemned the moral, religious man,

- Paul has condemned the Jew who had the right religion.

Everybody has been condemned.

Now the question, what's next?

This second question, *are we better than they?*

Are we any better than the foregoing immoral man, moral man, or Jew?

Are we any better?

Who is the "we"?

Of whom is he speaking?

Many commentators feel he was speaking about the Jews.

It cannot be because he has just finished their section.

Paul had answered the questions the Jews would ask in **Romans 3:1-8**.

Paul had already showed the Jews that they do have an advantage over the Gentiles in having the law of God.

So why would he ask the same question again?

Last 2 lessons we studied that the Jew is no better off even though he has the law of God. He is under a greater condemnation if he doesn't believe.

Whether you are an immoral man, or a moral man or a religious Jew, you are under the same condemnation. They are all sinners.

One is no better than the other.

One may have the law of God written, one may have the law of God in conscience, but when it comes to guilt before God, they are all the same and they all need salvation.

Never in the rest of the epistle to the Romans does Paul identify himself with the Jew with a rhetorical “we.”

“we” here is the “we” that gathers up the only remaining people that he hasn't discussed and that would be himself and the Romans to whom he writes, which would be representative of the believers.

### **Are we any better than these people?**

Are we any better than the immoral pagan, the moral religious man, and the religious Jew, who are condemned before God?

Are we elite who are intrinsically better than everybody else?

I think these fits with verse 8 where you have a “we,” as “we are slanderously reported and as some affirmed that we say.” And there the “we” definitely refers to Paul and his companions in ministry. And so, the question is very simple.

Are we who are Christians, by nature in ourselves any better than the rest of the condemned world?

No.

So, he just gets us into that condemnation so some of us aren't sitting outside saying, "Yes they are awfully bad, those people on the outside are awful," and get the idea that we are some kind of elite, and we are redeemed because we were better than everybody else.

The answer is *ou pantos*, "all together no," "no in every way," no.

Everybody from the most immoral, vile, reprobate, homosexual, vice-ridden person to a person who assembles himself with the community of believers and includes the apostle Paul and says none of us is any better than the other by ourselves in our human nature we are all equally guilty of sin before God.

All of us; this encompasses everybody.

For we have already proven, or charged, both Jews and Greeks. Everybody is included in that. You are either a Jew or a non-Jew. All are under sin, all of us.

Now, the entire human race then is accused in verse 9, everybody. We are condemned for our sin. Now notice the phrase at the end of **verse 9**, "*We are all under sin.*"

The word "under" is *hupa*, very common Greek term. It means to be in the power of, under the dominion of, in the authority of, under the control of.

We are under the power of sin, under the control of sin, the authority of sin, the dominion of sin.

### **Who is?**

All.

All is an all-inclusive "all." Everybody!

There is nobody outside of that!

It is hard for religious people to recognize this.

Jews they just wouldn't accept this. When the Lord confronted them, or the apostles confronted them about being sinful, they would not accept that.

**Galatians 2:15**, *We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,*

Meaning the Gentiles are sinners, but we are different.

A born blind man was healed, and the Jewish people confronted him.

**John 9:34**, *They answered and said to him, "You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?" And they cast him out.*

They were assuming themselves something higher and better. Religious people always feel that way, but it isn't true. Even we who are Christians in ourselves before we were redeemed by Christ were no better than anybody else.

We did not become Christians because we were better than anybody else. In a Christless state a man is under the command, control, dominion, authority of sin and Satan utterly.

**1 John 5:19**, *We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.*

If you don't admit it, then the depth of your self-deceit and delusion is even greater.

A cultured sinner is no closer than a vile sinner!

All men are under sin. Now that's the arraignment.

Everybody in the human race is dragged into the court and charged for being under the dominion and the power and the control of sin.

So, the whole human race comes to the judgment bar, the court of holy God, and they are persecuted.

Now, after the persecution comes the indictment.

The indictment is very specific beginning in verse 10.

There are thirteen counts against us, clear verifiable in human experience.

## **1. No one Righteous.**

In verse 9, have the word "all" are under sin, but in verses 10 through 18, four times the word "none" is used.

**V 10, As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one;**

The accusation: "*As it is written.*"

Where does Paul going to go to get his accusation?

Out of the Scripture, as it is written.

A familiar phrase used when quoting the Old Testament. Perhaps its most familiar to us as it was used by our own Lord, who in conflict with Satan in Matthew 4 and Luke 4 when

Satan tempted Him replied three times with the same statement.

**Matthew 4:4; 4:7 and 4:10.**

**Luke 4:4; 4:8 and 4:10.**

**What does that mean?**

That indicates an Old Testament quote!

Exactly that is what we have from verse 10 to 18, a series of Old Testament quotes that tell us the truth about man.

The thirteen-part indictment, it's going to have three areas.

1. Character,
2. Conversation, and
3. Conduct.

You start with what's inside of him, what comes out of his mouth, then what he does.

**V 10, As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one;**

The man's basic problem is character.

He's rotten at the core.

**Jeremiah 17:9, "The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?"**

The Bible indicates to us that man's heart has gone foul, that man's heart is corrupt, that that inner spring of being is vile and wretched and filthy.

So out of his character comes what he says and what he does.

The character of man in verses 10 through 12, there is a series of negative statements describing man's character.

"There is none righteous, no not one."

### **Why does he add that?**

Because somebody would always say "except for me."

No, not you.

**Psalm 14:1-3**, *The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, They have done abominable works, There is none who does good. <sup>2</sup>The Lord looks down from heaven upon the children of men, To see if there are any who understand, who seek God. <sup>3</sup>They have all turned aside, They have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, No, not one.*

Now the concept of righteous and righteousness is really the theme in many ways of the whole epistle.

In some form or another that term appears over 30 times in just these 16 chapters. It's a tremendously important part.

The word "righteous," it means good and right.  
Nobody is good, nobody.

### **How good do you have to be?**

"There is none righteous," is used of God.

### **So how good is good?**

As good as God, as good as Christ; and that is the only standard, and anything less than that is bad.

There aren't any levels.

There are only two kinds.

Perfect and bad.

Absolutely righteous like God, like Christ, who is utterly holy and without sin.

If you have got one sin, you just belong with the bad.

**Matthew 5:48**, *Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.*

Always that has been the standard.

### **How does God expect us to get there?**

He doesn't.

That's the whole point of the gospel.

He just expects you to recognize you can't get there. Then He will take you there through the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Man is either perfect or he's bad. Since none of us is perfect, we are all bad.

**Example:**

Swimming across the Pacific Ocean to get to the American side your effort.

That is the way it is with God's standard.

Some people are going to be better than other people. Some people are going to go along further than other people. There's a certain amount of relative human goodness and morality, but in the end, the goal is so far beyond anybody.

**What is the goal?**

**Romans 3:23**, *For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.*

The glory of God is perfection. The glory of God is the emanation of His nature. The glory of God is righteousness. Nobody is righteous like that. If you were, you would be God.

So, there's none that is truly good, no one manifests God's true goodness. Nobody's good, everybody's bad.

Man is not only evil, but he is also ignorant, which compounds his problem.

## 2. No one understands.

**V 11**, *There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God.*

Paul quotes from two places, **Psalm 14:2** and **Psalm 53:3**, *Every one of them has turned aside; They have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, No, not one.*

Not only is man bad but he doesn't even understand what good is. Now we are getting a rather bleak picture.

Man has no organ of perception, so that he cannot understand the truth.

He has no right understanding of God.

He has no right apprehensions of God.

He has no ability in his humanness to perceive truth about God on his own.

**1 Corinthians 2:14**, *But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

He cannot know them because they are spiritually discerned and of course, in the flesh he has no organ for understanding it. Man is to the spiritual world as a deaf, dumb, and blind person would be to the physical world if that person never ever learned to hear or speak or communicate in any way. Man is utterly cut off from any understanding of God.

To intensify your understanding of how serious this is let us look at it.

**Ephesians 4:18**, *having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart;*

Now you have understanding darkened, alienation from the life of God, ignorance, and blindness of heart. That is the picture of man.

Not only is he bad but he is hopelessly stupid. When it comes to divine truth, men have a natural, innate inability to understand the things of God.

What have we learned Romans 1?

**Romans 1:21-23**, *For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, <sup>21</sup>because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. <sup>22</sup>Professing to be wise, they became fools, <sup>23</sup>and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.*

We can look at it two ways.

We can look at it historically or

We can look at it individually.

Historically, originally man was given the knowledge of God and man by an act of his will turned out the lights.

Individually, people come into this world born with a sense of God in their conscience, with a sense of God visible through creation, and if they reject that then the last little flicker of God's revelation that exists even in conscience and creation is gone and the lights go out.

But men in the midst of that stand up and announce that they are wise, which is the ultimate stupidity. As a blind man who goes around telling everyone that he can see when everyone knows he can't see at all.

Man is in darkness, and he does not know the truth. He is blind.

Man is hopelessly blinded to the truth about God, but he doesn't know that. When you approach him with the gospel, he thinks you are trying to take something away from him. You are trying to hurt him, and trying to make things impossible for him, when all you want to do is take the tab off his darkness so he can solve his problem.

Paul sums it up about them beautifully.

**2 Timothy 3:7**, *always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

### **3. No one seeks after God.**

**V 11**, *There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God.*

Paul again quotes from Psalms.

**Psalms 53:2**, *God looks down from heaven upon the children of men, To see if there are any who understand, who seek God.*

There are a lot of people seeking after God.

**What about all the religions?**

Well, we talked about that, didn't we, earlier in our study of Romans.

This is obviously true from God's perspective that none seeks after Him.

What about all the people who supposedly are on a mission or on a pilgrimage trying to seek God?

What about the Bible?

**Jeremiah 29:13**, *And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.*

**Matthew 7:8**, *For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.*

**Hebrews 11:6**, *But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*

**Acts 15:16-17**, *'After this I will return And will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, And I will set it up; <sup>17</sup>So that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, Even all the Gentiles who are called by My name, Says the Lord who does all these things.'*

**Doesn't the Bible say that men are to seek God?**

Is that contradictory?

No, it isn't contradictory at all.

The people involved in false religion are seeking something other than God. They are running from God to their own man-made system. The people who seek God, who truly seek God, do not seek God on their own initiative. On their own initiative they seek other gods, blinded to the truth.

If they seek the true God, it is because God has taken the initiative. Jesus put it this way in one of the most important statements.

**John 6:37**, *All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.*

On what basis then do men come to Him?

**John 6:44**, *No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.*

There's no contradiction at all.

Men do not seek God. Romans 1 says they seek to run from God. They seek their own will and their own way. They may seek it in religion, but it is not the true God. It is the gods that they have manufactured. They turn their back on the true God and they make an image like corruptible man, birds, four-footed beasts, and creeping things.

So, men who go through the religious route are running from God and people who are truly seeking God are not doing it because of their own natural initiative, they are doing it because the Father has begun to draw them. Men naturally don't seek God.

**How could they?**

**Does a corpse seek anything?**

It doesn't seek anything.

A corpse doesn't seek anything at all, and they are dead, blind deaf, dumb, and that is the way it is with man.

To seek God is more than just a concept related to salvation. It is related to salvation, but also that it is much more than that.

To seek God does not mean only to come and ask for salvation, it means that in everything we seek God.

It means what David meant in Psalm 16.

**Psalms 16:8**, *I have set the Lord always before me; Because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved.*

David says that my focus in everything is God.

As if he put the Lord in front of him and God became a grid through which he perceived everything, through which he

received everything. Going and coming, God was the filter of everything.

**Matthew 6:33**, *But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*

It is to see that God is the focus of everything.

God is the source of everything.

God is the beginning and the end of everything.

- It is to desire the full manifestation of all of God's wondrous perfections.
- It is to respect and adore His sovereign majesty.
- It is to feed on His truth.
- It is to live in His presence, to obey His commandments, to speak to Him in prayer, to trust Him in everything and to spend your life declaring His glory.
- It is to seek God not only for salvation but to seek that God should be glorified in everything, and men do not do that.

They do not do that. They run from God in the seeking of their own ends and their own desires.

**Philippians 2:21**, *For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus.*

Everybody is after his own thing, not Jesus Christ's.

#### **4. All have turned aside.**

**V 12,** *They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one."*

Now there are none of them good,  
None of them understand,  
None of them seek God and  
All have turned the other way.

**Psalm 14:3,** *They have all turned aside, They have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, No, not one.*

- If to begin with they are bad, they are certainly not going to stay in God's right, good path.
- If they are stupid, they are not going to even know where it is.
- If they are blind, they are not going to be able to find it.
- If they are not looking for it, they will be off somewhere else.

They are all gone out of the way, an interesting Greek term that has the idea of leaning off in the wrong direction. It came to refer to fleeing. It is even used in some classic Greek

writings of Polybius for a group of soldiers who turned and fled in confusion during a battle.

It is abandonment.

Man has deserted the way of God.

**Isaiah 53:6**, *All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*

We have gone out of God's way. Man is not in God's path. He's gone astray. That's why when Jesus came, He made such a monumental announcement when He said, "I am the way."

**Did you know that Christianity known as "The way?"**

**Matthew 22:16**, *And they sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that You are true, and teach the way of God in truth; nor do You care about anyone, for You do not regard the person of men.*

**Acts 16:17**, *This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation."*

**Acts 18:26**, *So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.*

**Acts 19:9**, *But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus.*

**Acts 19:23**, *And about that time there arose a great commotion about the Way.*

The way of God.

The way of salvation.

**Acts 24:14**, *But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets.*

**Hebrews 10:20**, *by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh,*

**2 Peter 2:15**, *They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;*

**2 Peter 2:21**, *For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.*

It became known as “the way.”

The word simply means a “path.”

It is the path to God.

**Proverbs 8:13**, *The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverse mouth I hate.*

**Proverbs 14:12**, *There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.*

Men don't follow God's path. They are gone out of the way.

When you come up to them and tell them they are in the wrong path and going the wrong way, they are offended.

Because they live under the delusion that  
they can see when they are blind,  
they can hear when they are deaf, and  
they can think when they are dead.

That is why any evangelism that is ever done is done in the prompting of the Spirit of God in the heart, that stone-cold heart of the unbeliever.

None righteous, not one.

None that understands,

None that seeks God,

All of them have gone out of the way.

Until a person recognizes that there is no hope for them!

Story of the prisoners by D.L. Moody, great evangelist, while he was the pastor of Fulton Street Church, New York.