

INTRODUCTION

1. Inferiority complexed people proclaim the inferiority of others. This relieves their own sense of imperfection. It's a kind of moral trepanation to relieve the pressure of insufficiency.
2. God does not work that way. Rather, He crushes one's entire being to death in order to raise up in newness of life by the Gospel. He removes all vestiges of self-respect that one might stand bankrupt before God, Who in grace then raises such a sinner to being a son of God.
3. Paul has come to a turning point in his argument. He looks in retrospect and prospect. Here is how he does it:-

1. QUESTION RAISED v. 9.

The advantages of the Jews (vv. 1-2) are national. Anatomically, Jews and Gentiles are the same. The verb "better" is difficult. Best to take it as "are we (Jews) preferred?" The reply is simple: "Not at all," or "not altogether," i.e. not in all respects (cf. 1 Cor. 5:10). Jewish advantages as a nation are not denied, but other grounds make Jews the same as Gentiles--sinners!

2. CHARGES LEVELLED v. 9.

The entire gamut of truth presented in chapters 1 and 2 are here indicated. The verb is not "before proved," but "before laid to the charge." This is a formal indictment. The verb is not found elsewhere in the N.T. It is obvious what is meant: a. Total depravity (chap. 1). b. Total judgment (chap. 2). c. Total faithlessness (3:1-8). God's charges are clear against humanity. Their damnation is just (v. 8). In effect, God says--stop your arguing. You are a sinner by nature. You are a sinner by deliberate choice.

3. JUDGMENT DECLARED v. 9.

The Jews had despised the Gentiles and considered themselves above the Gentiles (cf. Gal. 2:15; John 7:46-49; 9:34). But now, God declares what Jews and Gentiles are before Him--all under sin. This is God's fiat. It is the end of all argument. "All" is emphatic. The word "sin" has a variety of Greek terms from which it is translated. Each has its own peculiar emphasis. Among them are the following:

a. Sin as "missing the mark." It denotes inability. In a society which knew bows and arrows, the significance is very real. No man can satisfy the demands of God.

b. Sin as "overstepping a boundary." This denotes rebellion. It signifies the wilful perverted desire to have one's own way. Lostness is meant.

c. Sin as "falling instead of standing." A synonym for standing is "upright" which comes from the root "righteousness." By God's standard, men are crooked. The word "froward" (fromward) should be considered in this connection. It means to move away from (cf. 1 Pet. 2:18), but the Greek means crooked (cf. scoliosis or curvature of the spine).

d. Sin as "being ignorant instead of knowing." The first interrogation in Scripture is related to this (Gen. 3:1). It is a sin to be ignorant of God's Word!

NOTE: To be "under sin" is much more than the above; it is to be under its control, power, dominion. It is our nature by birth. It is our condition by choice. It is our position by divine declaration. It is where God sees us. Admit it and sing--Just as I am, O Lamb of God, I come.

4. SCRIPTURE RECORDED v. 10a

The perfect tense verb notes "it stands written." This is an unbelievable truth. With this phrase, Paul brings a series of quotations to support man's sinfulness. It is the N.T. way of saying "thus said the Lord." It is the sharp sword of God's spirit. The Godhead employed it (Heb. 10:5-7). Jesus used it (Lk 4:21; Mt. 4:1-11; Lk 24:25-27). On these bases, what Paul writes is Scripture. It is all that is needed. Remember, Scripture cannot be broken (John 10:35).

CONCLUSION

Jews and Gentiles alike stand guilty before God. The charges are clear. All are the same in His sight. Scripture supports the assertion. Now what? Christ died for us while we were sinners (Rom. 5:8). Believe it. Be saved from the wrath of God against sinners!