

Romans

The Depravity of Man [1:18-3:20]

• Immoral Depravity [1:18-32]

- For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness
Ἀποκαλύπτεται γὰρ ὀργὴ θεοῦ ἀπ’ οὐρανοῦ ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ἀσέβειαν
 - The word “wrath” is ὀργή (orgē) which means “anger” or “wrath”.
 - The emphasis here is on retribution as opposed to emotion [Col 3:5-7].
 - The word “revealed” is from ἀποκαλύπτω (apokaluptō) which means “make fully known”.
 - This is the word we saw in verse 17 and puts these two verses in a parallel contrast.
 - The phrase “from heaven” tells us that the wrath (retribution) in view comes from heaven itself.
 - This brings to mind the courtroom of heaven from which God dispenses justice.
 - The word “ungodliness” is from ἀσέβεια (asebeia) which means “impiety” or “ungodliness”.
 - This word emphasizes living in a manner without reverence toward God and contrary to His word.
- and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth by means of *their* unrighteousness, καὶ ἀδικίαν ἀνθρώπων τῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν ἀδικίᾳ κατεχόντων,
 - The two words “unrighteousness” are from ἀδικία (adikia) which means “wickedness”, “injustice” or “unrighteousness”.
 - The basic meaning is to violate the rules (or law) or act against what is just.
 - The Apostle John equates this word with ἁμαρτία, hamartia = sin) in 1 John 5:17 (see also Heb 8:12).
 - The word “suppress” is from κατέχω (katechō) which means “hold fast” or “hold back”.
 - This word is used in the negative sense here, but also has a positive meaning [1 Co 11:2; He 10:23].
 - The word “truth” is from ἀλήθεια (alētheia) which means “truth” or “uprightness”.
 - This word specifically refers to the ultimate, irrefutable truth expressed in God’s word.
 - The phrase “in unrighteousness” expresses the means by which these people suppress the truth.
 - A verbose translation of this would be “by means of unrighteousness”.
- because what can be known about God is evident among them; διότι τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ φανερόν ἐστιν ἐν αὐτοῖς.
 - The phrase “that which is known about God” is literally “the known of God”.
 - A better way to express this phrase would be “what can be known about God”.
 - The word “evident” is from φανερός (phaneros) which means “clear” or “plainly to be seen”.

- This word states clearly that the evidence of God and His attributes are obvious and in plain sight.
- The phrase “within them” is literally “in them” or “among them”.
- Verse 20 tells us that the evidence of God is in the creation all around us, so it is “among them”.
- for God made it evident to them.
ὁ θεὸς γὰρ αὐτοῖς ἐφανερώσεν.
 - The phrase “made it evident” is from φανερώω (phaneroō) which means “disclose”, “show” or “make known”.
 - This word is a cognate of “evident” in this verse, so even though it is typically translated “reveal” or “manifest”, “made it evident” works better here.
- For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes,
τὰ γὰρ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου
 - The word “creation” is from κτίσις (ktisis) which means “act of creation” or “that which is created”.
 - Almost all uses refer to that which is created [Rom 8:19-22; 2 Cor 5:17; Col 1:15, 23], but in this verse it is obvious that it refers to the act of creation.
 - The phrase “His invisible attributes” is literally “the invisible of Him”.
 - The translators added “attributes” because of the phrase which follows, “His eternal power and divine nature” describing attributes of God.
- His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen,
καθορᾶται, ἢ τε αἰδίου αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θεϊότης,
 - The word “eternal” is αἰδίου (aidios) which means “always” or “eternal”.
 - This word occurs only one other time in the N.T. in Jude 6 – the most often used word for eternal is αἰώνιος (aiōnios).
 - As we saw in verse 16, the word “power” is δύναμις (dunamis) which is functional power – power in action or the ability to perform an action.
 - The phrase “divine nature” is θεϊότης (theiotēs) which means “divineness” or “divine nature”.
 - This is the only use of this word, but a similar word (θεότης, theotēs) occurs in Col 2:9.
 - The phrase “clearly seen” is from καθοράω (kathoraō) which means “perceive clearly”.
 - This is a play on words as this has the same root (οραω, oraō) as the word for “invisible attributes”.
- being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.
τοῖς ποιήμασιν νοούμενα ... εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτοὺς ἀναπολογήτους,
 - The phrase “what has been made” refers to all that God made when He created the world.
 - In Genesis 1 we see that God created (from nothing) and made (from existing materials).
 - The phrase “without excuse” is from ἀναπολόγητος (anapologētos) which means “inexcusable” or “without excuse”.
 - The only other occurrence is in Rom 2:1.

- Principles of Romans 1:18-20
 - The gospel reveals the righteousness of God thru faith in salvation and faith in the lives of believers.
 - When the truth is suppressed in unrighteousness, God's wrath is revealed [Eph 5:6; 1 Th 2:14-16].
 - As believers, we should avoid being partakers with people who engage in ungodliness [Eph 5:7-10].
 - The present wrath of God being revealed against such individuals is not the same as the wrath of God to be revealed in the Tribulation [1 Th 1:9-10].
 - This present wrath being revealed against ungodly people is not a fire and brimstone type of wrath, but is a progressive giving over [Rom 1:24, 26, 28].
 - The reason God pours out this wrath is that He has made Himself evident to everyone (including those who reject Him) by clearly revealing His invisible attributes in the creation all around us.
 - The evidence of God is so overwhelming that all of the creation knows Him and that He is the creator of the universe [Job 12:7-10; Psalm 19:1-4].
 - Because God has made Himself so clearly evident to everyone, those who choose to reject Him have no excuse for their unbelief.
 - At the Great White Throne, any attempt by unbelievers to make excuses that they never had the opportunity to know God will be rejected and they will be sent to the Lake of Fire [Rev 20:11-15].

- For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks *to Him*,
διότι γνόντες τὸν θεὸν οὐχ ὡς θεὸν ἐδόξασαν ἢ ἠὲχαρίστησαν,
 - The phrase “even though they knew” is an aorist participle of γινώσκω (ginōskō) which simply means “having known”.
 - Most translations add “although” or “even though” because the sentence construction sets up a contrast between knowing God and honoring Him.
 - The word “honor” is from δοξάζω (doxazō) which means “glorify”, “honor” or “extol”.
 - To honor God means to glorify Him with your life.
 - The phrase “give thanks” is from εὐχαριστεῶ (eucharisteō) which means “be thankful”.
 - It should be obvious that this is talking about giving thanks to God.
- but they were given over to futility in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.
ἀλλ’ ἐματαιώθησαν ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς αὐτῶν καὶ ἐσκοτίσθη ἡ ἀσύνετος αὐτῶν καρδιά.
 - The word “but” is from ἀλλά (alla) which means “but” or “rather”.
 - This word is a sharp contrast as opposed to the word δέ (de) that is also often translated “but”.
 - The phrase “became futile” is from ματαιῶ (mataiō) which means “render futile”.
 - This verb is in the passive and literally means that they “were given over to futility/foolishness”.
 - So, this is actually the first of the “giving over” verses describing the wrath of God being revealed to these ungodly individuals [Rom 1:24, 26, 28].
 - The word “speculations” is from διαλογισμός (dialogismos) which means “thought” or “reasoning”.
 - The word “foolish” is ἀσύνετος (asunetos) which means “void of understanding”, “senseless” or “foolish”.
 - The word “heart” is in the singular, but clearly this is talking about their hearts collectively.
 - The word “darkened” is from σκοτίζω (skotizō) which “become dark” or “be darkened”.
 - This is describing an inward darkening [Eph 4:18].
- Arrogantly claiming to be wise, they were made to be fools,
φάσκοντες εἶναι σοφοὶ ἐμωράνθησαν
 - The word “Professing” is from φάσκω (phaskō) which means “state with confidence”, “assert” or “claim”.
 - In this verse, this is not confidence but rather arrogance.
 - The phrase “they became fools” is from μωραίνω (mōrainō) which means “show to be foolish” or “make foolish” [1 Cor 1:20].
 - In this passive, this word means to “be made foolish” or “become foolish”.
- and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image
καὶ ἠλλάξαν τὴν δόξαν τοῦ ἀφθάρτου θεοῦ ... εἰκόνοϋ
 - The word “incorruptible” is from ἀφθαρτος (aphthartos) which means “imperishable”, “incorruptible” or “immortal”.

- Because this word is in reference to God’s glory (holiness), incorruptible is the best translation.
- This is given in contrast with corruptible man.
- The word “image” is from εἰκών (eikōn) which means “image” or “likeness”.
- This is referring to idols or other likenesses of creatures.
- ‘in the likeness of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.
ἐν ὁμοιώματι ... φθαρμοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ πετεινῶν καὶ τετραπόδων καὶ ἔρπετῶν.
- The phrase “in the form of” is ἐν ὁμοιώματι (en homoiōmati) which means “in the likeness of”.
- The word “corruptible” is from φθαρτός (phthartos) and is used in contrast to incorruptible God.
- The word “man” is from ἄνθρωπος (anthrōpos) which can refer to “mankind”, but the image is in the likeness of a man.
- The phrase describing all the animals sounds like what Peter saw in Acts 10:12, but it is simply a reference to the various creatures of the earth.
- Principles of Romans 1:21-23
 - In their heart of hearts, unbelievers know that God exists and yet foolishly deny Him which leads to corruption within their souls [Psalm 14:1-3].
 - These foolish people walk in futility [Eph 4:17-19] and their hearts become darkened such that only the Light of Christ can pierce through [2 Cor 4:6], although some will still reject Him [John 3:19].
 - Though their thinking is irrational and futile, these unbelievers arrogantly claim to be wise, making them the worst kind of fools [Pr 26:12; Rom 12:16].
 - The wisdom of God exposes the so-called wisdom of this world for what it really is – utter foolishness [1 Cor 1:19-21; 3:18-20; Jas 3:13-17].
 - These unbelievers are so foolish in their thinking that they have exchanged the incorruptible (God) for an image of the corruptible (man).
 - The irony of this is that, in God’s perfect plan, the believer will one day exchange the corruptible for the incorruptible [1 Cor 15:52-55].
 - O.T. Scriptures teach us that we act corruptly and in blind futility when we make a graven image of a man or an animal [Deut 4:16-18; Isa 44:9-20].
 - As believers, we ought to understand that God’s nature and His glory are not like any image that can be formed by man [Acts 17:29].

- Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to sexual impurity,
 Διὸ παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς ἐν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις τῶν καρδιῶν αὐτῶν εἰς ἀκαθαρσίαν
 - The word “Therefore” is διό (dio) which means “therefore” or “for this reason”.
 - This means that the reason for the giving over in this verse is the actions in the previous verses.
 - The phrase “gave ... over” is from παραδίδωμι (paradidōmi) which means “give over” or “deliver”.
 - This word has a positive meaning in the delivering of God’s truth [Rom 6:17; 1 Cor 11:2, 23; 15:3].
 - This is also the word used to describe Jesus being delivered over as a sacrifice [Rom 4:25; 8:32].
 - Here, this word describes God allowing ungodly people to fall deeper into their own depravity.
 - The word “lusts” is from ἐπιθυμία (epithumia) which means “desire”, “longing” or “lust”.
 - This word can have a positive [Phil 1:23; 1 Thess 2:17] or negative [1 Thess 4:5; 2 Pet 1:4] meaning.
 - The word “impurity” is from ἀκαθαρσία (akatharsia) which means “uncleanness” or “impurity”.
 - This word emphasizes sexual sins [1 Thess 4:3-7].
- so that their bodies would be degraded among them.
 τοῦ ἀτιμάζεσθαι τὰ σώματα αὐτῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς·
 - The word “bodies” is from σῶμα (sōma) which means “body”.
 - This can be the physical body, a body of people or a reference to the sin nature in the body.
 - The word “dishonored” is from ἀτιμάζω (atimazō) which means “dishonor” or “shame”.
 - The meaning in this context is an actual degrading of the body (in particular the sin nature).
- For they exchanged the truth of God for the lie,
 οἵτινες μετήλλαξαν τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ ψεύδει
 - The word “exchanged” is from μεταλλάσσω (metallassō) which means “exchange”.
 - This word is found only here and in verse 26, but is an amplified form of the word ἀλλάσσω (allassō) used in verse 23.
 - The word “lie” is from ψεῦδος (pseudos) which means “lie” or “falsehood”.
 - The phrase here is actually “the lie” rather than “a lie” which is a reference to evil (deceitful precepts).
- and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator,
 καὶ ἐσεβάσθησαν καὶ ἐλάτρευσαν τῇ κτίσει παρὰ τὸν κτίσαντα,
 - The word “worshiped” is from σεβάζομαι (sebazomai) which means “show reverence to”.
 - This is the only occurrence of this word in the N.T., the common word is προσκυνέω (proskuneō).

- This word carries with it a sense of awe in the one who is engaged in worship.
- The word “served” is from λατρεύω (latreuō) which means “serve” or “worship”.
- As we saw in Rom 1:9, this word means to serve someone (or something) as a function of worship.
- The word “creature” is from κτίσις (ktisis) and the word “Creator” is from the cognate κτίζω (ktizō).
- The contrast is between that which is created and the One who created the universe.
- who is praised throughout the ages. Amen.
ὅς ἐστιν εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, ἀμήν.
 - The word “blessed” is εὐλογητὸς (eulogētos) which means “blessed” or “praised”.
 - The idea is to be blessed through words of praise.
 - The word “forever” is literally “to the ages”.
 - The best translation would be “throughout the ages”.
- Principles of Romans 1:24-25
 - Rejecting God and worshipping the creation rather than the Creator results in being given over to even deeper depravity.
 - This includes self-indulgence – becoming slaves to one’s own lusts [Rom 16:18; Isa 56:11-12].
 - As the conscience is defiled [1 Cor 8:7] the lusts of the heart result in overt bodily sins [Rom 6:12-13].
 - The body is supposed to be reserved for the Lord, not sexual immorality [1 Cor 6:13, 20; 1 Thess 4:4].
 - Indulging the lusts of the flesh by engaging in sexual immorality is a sin that actually degrades the body itself [1 Cor 6:13].
 - Sex within marriage is a gift from God intended for our blessing and one aspect of worshipping God.
 - The simple truth is that, as creatures of God, we can find true fulfillment only in worshipping and serving God the Creator.
 - Satan’s big lie is that we do not need the Creator at all and can exist independently of Him [John 8:44; Isa 14:13-14], worshipping what God has created rather than God Himself.
 - Buying into Satan’s lie results in distorted views including self-worship, earth worship, pornography (worshipping the human form), etc.
 - When this focus on the creation is coupled with a vilification of humanity, you see animals or the environment being given priority over humans.

- For this reason God gave them over to degrading sinful passions;
Διὰ τοῦτο παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς εἰς πάθη ἀτιμίας,
 - Here we have the 2nd occurrence of παραδίδωμι (paradidōmi) meaning “give over” [impurity v. 24], but the 3rd giving over [futility v. 21] of God’s wrath.
 - The word “degrading” is from ἀτιμία (atimia) which means “dishonor” or “disrespect”.
 - This is a cognate of ἀτιμάζω (atimazō) which we translated “degraded” in verse 24.
 - The word “passions” is from πάθος (pathos) which means “strong desire” or “passion”.
 - The only two other occurrences of this word in the N.T. describe sinful desires [Col 3:5; 1 Th 4:5].
- for their women exchanged the natural sexual function for that which is opposed to nature,
αἱ τε γὰρ θήλειαι αὐτῶν μετήλλαξαν τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν εἰς τὴν παρὰ φύσιν,
 - Here we have the 2nd occurrence of μεταλλάσσω (metallassō) meaning “exchange” [truth/lie v. 25], but the 3rd exchange [glory/image v. 23].
 - The word “natural” is from φυσικός (phusikos) which means “in accordance with the basic order of things in nature” and does not refer to what seems “natural” to an individual.
 - The word “unnatural” is also from φυσικός (phusikos), but is the object of the preposition παρὰ (para), the phrase meaning “against nature” or “opposed to nature”.
 - The word “function” is also from χρῆσις (chrēsis) which means “usage” or “function”.
 - In this context it refers to sexual function.
- and in the same way also the men gave up on the natural sexual function of the woman
ὁμοίως τε καὶ οἱ ἄρσενες ἀφέντες τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν τῆς θηλείας
 - The word “abandoned” is from ἀφίημι (aphiēmi) which means “cancel” or “depart from”.
 - Here it means “abandon” or “give up on”.
 - The phrase “natural function” is the same as what we saw in verse 26.
 - As in verse 26, this refers to sexual function.
- and were intensely aroused in their lust toward one another,
ἐξεκαύθησαν ἐν τῇ ὀρέξει αὐτῶν εἰς ἀλλήλους,
 - The word “burned” is from ἐκκαίω (ekkaiō) which means “kindle” or “be inflamed”.
 - The best way to translate here is “were intensely aroused”.
 - The word “desire” is from ὀρεξις (orexis) which means “longing” or “strong desire”.
 - This is the only use of this word in the N.T., but a cognate is translated “longing” in 1 Tim 6:10.
- men with men committing disgraceful acts
ἄρσενες ἐν ἄρσεσιν τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην κατεργαζόμενοι
 - The phrase “men with men” makes it obvious that homosexual acts are in view here.
 - This passage is crystal clear in its condemnation of homosexual behavior.
 - The phrase “indecent acts” is from ἀσχημοσύνη (aschēmosunē) which means “behavior that elicits disgrace” or “shameless deeds”.

- and receiving within themselves the recompense due because of their perversion.
καὶ τὴν ἀντιμισθίαν ἣν ἔδει τῆς πλάνης αὐτῶν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἀπολαμβάνοντες.
 - The word “receiving” is from ἀπολαμβάνω (apolambanō) which means “receive from”.
 - In this case, the due penalty is received from God based upon the disgraceful acts being committed.
 - The phrase “in their own persons” is literally “in themselves” or “within themselves”.
 - This indicates that there is punishment within the body for these disgraceful acts.
 - The phrase “due penalty” is literally “the recompense which is necessary”.
 - The word “error” is from πλάνη (planē) which means “wandering from the path of truth”.
 - This word makes it clear that their behavior deviates from God’s standards.
- Principles of Romans 1:26-27
 - After being given over to the futility of their minds and subsequently in the lusts of their hearts to sexual impurity, unbelievers who continue in their rebellion are given over to degrading passions.
 - This progressive giving over is the outworking of God’s wrath against ungodliness and the unrighteousness of men.
 - The degrading passions of these unbelievers results in sexual perversion which is manifest in homosexual acts [1 Tim 1:8-11].
 - God’s design for sexual relations is that it be between one man and one woman within the context of marriage [Gen 2:21-24; Matt 19:4-6].
 - Such sexual activity is intended to be a blessing.
 - Any form of sexual activity which is contrary to God’s design is a perversion of God’s intended blessing and is a sinful pursuit of the passing pleasures of the flesh [Eph 2:1-3].
 - In addition to this, homosexual behavior violates the very basic order of nature itself and is a disgraceful abomination [Lev 18:22].
 - Contemporary liberal theologians have tried to put forth various arguments to attempt to claim that homosexual behavior is legitimate (and not sinful), but these arguments are weak and are completely negated by a proper exegesis of this passage.
 - Individuals who choose to engage in homosexual relations will receive from God the due penalty of their sexual perversion [Isa 59:18; Ezek 11:21].

- And just as they did not think it worthwhile to acknowledge God any longer,
Καὶ καθὼς οὐκ ἔδοκίμασαν τὸν θεὸν ἔχειν ἐπιγνώσει,
 - The phrase “see fit” is from δοκιμάζω (dokimazō) which means “put to the test” or “examine”.
 - This is the word which means “test for approval” that we find in 1 Cor 3:13.
 - This word is translated “approve” in Rom 2:18 and Rom 14:22 and “prove” in Rom 12:2.
 - The Holman translates this “think it worthwhile” which best expresses the meaning here.
- God gave them over to a degenerate mind, to do those things which are not proper,
παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς εἰς ἀδόκιμον νοῦν, ποιεῖν τὰ μὴ καθήκοντα,
 - Here we have the 3rd occurrence of παραδίδομι (paradidōmi) meaning “give over” [impurity v. 24, degrading passions v. 26], but the 4th giving over [futility v. 21] of God’s wrath.
 - The word “depraved” is from ἀδόκιμος (adokimos) which means “worthless”.
 - Given that it is talking about the mind, “reprobate” or “degenerate” would be a better translation.
 - The word “proper” is from καθήκω (kathēkō) which means “proper” or “fitting”.
 - The list which follows makes it clear that “proper” is according to God’s standard.
- being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, decadence;
πεπληρωμένους πάσῃ ἀδικίᾳ πονηρίᾳ πλεονεξίᾳ κακίᾳ,
 - The word “filled” is from πληρόω (plēroō) which means “fill” or “fill up”.
 - This word is often used positively regarding believers [Eph 3:19; 5:18; Phil 1:11; Col 1:9].
 - Here, the unbeliever is being filled up with all the things which represent the opposite of what the believer should be filled with.
 - The word “wickedness” is from πονηρία (ponēria) which means “wickedness”.
 - This word describes maliciousness, sinfulness, baseness, etc. [Mark 7:20-23]
 - The word “evil” is from κακία (kakia) which means “wickedness” or “depravity”.
 - This word describes the decadence that results from the degenerate mind.
- full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; *they are incessant* gossips,
μεστοὺς φθόνου φόβου ἔριδος δόλου κακοηθείας, ψιθυριστὰς
 - The word “full” is from μεστός (mestos) which means “full” or “filled with”.
 - Paul uses this word along with πληρόω (plēroō) in Rom 15:14 to describe filling of growing believers.
 - The first five words that follows μεστός (mestos) are in the genitive.
 - That means a verbose translation would read “full of envy, full of murder, full of strife, ...”.
 - The word “envy” is from φθόνος (phthonos) which means “envy” or “jealousy”.
 - The NASB translates this word “envy” almost every time, but this word includes the sin of jealousy.
 - The word “strife” is from ἔρις (eris) which means “strife”, “discord” or “contention”.

- This word describes the contentious, quarrelsome behavior commonly seen today.
 - The word “malice” is from κακοήθεια (kakoētheia) which means “meanspiritedness” or “malice”.
 - This just calls attention to the malicious nature of the “wickedness” already mentioned.
 - The word “gossips” is from ψιθυριστής (psithuristēs) which means “rumormonger”.
 - This word is used only here in the N.T. to describe someone who always has some gossip to share.
- slanderers, haters of God, violent aggressors, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, καταλάλους θεοστυγεῖς ὑβριστὰς ὑπερηφάνους ἀλαζόνας, ἐφευρετὰς κακῶν,
- The word “slanderers” is from κατάλαλος (katalalos) which means “slandorous”.
 - This word is also used only here in the N.T. and makes it clear that their gossip speaks ill of others.
 - The phrase “haters of God” is from θεοστυγής (theostugēs) which means “hating God”.
 - This word is also used only here in the N.T. and describes utter disdain for God.
 - The word “insolent” is from ὑβριστής (hubristēs) which means “violent” or “insolent”.
 - This word is used one other time in 1 Tim 1:13 where it describes violent aggression.
 - The words “arrogant” and “boastful” are combined here to express their heart attitude of pride.
 - Using the language of the earlier verse, these unbelievers are “filled with arrogance”.
 - The phrase “inventors of evil” expounds upon the notion that they are filled with evil.
 - These individuals actually invent (contrive) new forms of evil to be perpetuated against God.
- disobedient to parents, foolishly ignorant, untrustworthy, hardhearted, unmerciful; γονεῦσιν ἀπειθεῖς, ἀσυνέτους ἀσυνθέτους ἀστόργους ἀνελεήμονας·
- The phrase “without understanding” is from ἀσύνετος (asunetos) which means “foolish”.
 - This word includes the idea of being senseless and a lack of understanding what is right/moral.
 - The word “unloving” is from ἄστοργος (astorgos) which means “hardhearted” or “unfeeling”.
 - This word describes a selfish, total disregard for others.
 - The word “unmerciful” continues the idea of the hardheartedness of these unbelievers.
 - These individuals are incapable of having compassion for others because of their selfishness.

- and having known full well the requirement of God,
οἵτινες τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπιγινόντες
 - The phrase “although they know” is an aorist participle of ἐπιγινώσκω (epiginōskō) which means “know” or “know well”.
 - This aorist participle translated very literally would be “having known full well”.
 - The word “ordinance” is δικαίωμα (dikaiōma) which means “requirement” or “regulation”.
 - With regard to the Law, this word is translated “requirement” elsewhere in Romans [2:26; 8:4].
- that those who take part in such things are deserving of eternal death,
ὅτι οἱ τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντες ἄξιοι θανάτου εἰσίν,
 - The phrase “those who practice” is a present participle of πράσσω (prassō) which means “do” or “accomplish”.
 - This word does not mean “practice” in the sense of learning how to do something through practice.
 - This word means to take part in an activity.
 - The word “worthy” is from ἄξιος (axios) which means “worthy”, “fit” or “deserving”.
 - The word “death” is from θάνατος (thanatos) which means “death”.
 - In this verse, this is a reference to eternal death.
- they not only do the same, but also join in approval with those who take part in them.
οὐ μόνον αὐτὰ ποιοῦσιν ἀλλὰ καὶ συνευδοκοῦσιν τοῖς πράσσουσιν.
 - The phrase “give hearty approval to” is from συνευδοκέω (suneudokeō) which means “join in approval” or “consent to”.
 - Paul gave approval to killing Stephen [Acts 8:1].
 - Once again the word “practice” is from πράσσω (prassō) which means “do” or “accomplish”.
 - We will translate this as “take part in” again.

- Principles of Romans 1:28-32
 - The final giving over of God's wrath comes about when unbelievers decide to completely reject God by no longer even acknowledging His existence.
 - These unbelievers are given over to a degenerate mind such that they become engaged in all sorts of behavior that is not proper [2 Tim 3:1-8].
 - Instead of being filled with wonderful things God has in store for believers [Acts 13:52; Eph 3:14-19; Phil 1:9-11; Col 1:9], these unbelievers are filled with all sorts of unrighteousness.
 - This includes greed, envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice, gossip, slander, hate, violent aggression and, at the root of it all, arrogance.
 - The depravity of their degenerate minds is such that they seek out new ways to participate in acts of evil [Ecc 7:29].
 - They are foolish in their ignorance, hardened in their hearts such that they have no mercy at all [Matt 5:7; Jas 2:13].
 - The children become insolent and stubbornly rebel against their parents [Deut 21:18-21 cf. Deut 5:16; Prov 1:8; Eph 6:1-3].
 - Deep down in their souls these individuals know that their actions are sinful and that they are deserving of eternal separation from God.
 - In spite of knowing this, they not only take part in their shameful deeds, they also join together with others in approving of these acts [Acts 22:20].
 - The goal of their approval is to make what is evil be accepted as good and what is good be accepted as evil [Isa 5:20; Pr 17:15].
 - This passage describes unbelievers, but believers who, in their carnal rebellion, return to their vomit [2 Pet 2:22] can display the same type of behavior and give approval to unrighteous deeds.
 - These believers, if they do not repent, will be on the path toward the sin unto death [1 John 5:16].

- **Moral Depravity [2:1-16]**

- Therefore you are without excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment,
 Διὸ ἀναπολόγητος εἶ, ὃ ἄνθρωπε πᾶς ὁ κρίνων·
 - The phrase “have no excuse” is from ἀναπολόγητος (anapologētos) which we saw in Rom 1:20 to mean “inexcusable”.
 - The phrase “passes judgment” is a participle of κρίνω (krinō) which means “criticize” or “find fault with” here.
 - The basic meaning of this word is “decide”, “select” or “prefer”.
 - This is the first of three occurrences of κρίνω (krinō) in this verse alone.
 - In the first three verses we find κρίνω (krinō) four times, κρίμα (krima = judgment) twice and κατακρίνω (katakrinō = condemn) once.
 - We have not seen κρίνω (krinō), κρίμα (krima) or κατακρίνω (katakrinō) up to this point in Romans, so we know we have switched to a new topic and are now looking at judgmental, holier-than-thou people.
- for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself;
 ἐν ᾧ γὰρ κρίνεις τὸν ἕτερον, σεαυτὸν κατακρίνεις,
 - This is the second of the three occurrences of κρίνω (krinō) in this verse.
 - The word “condemn” is from κατακρίνω (katakrinō) which means “pronounce a sentence on”.
 - In the Greek “another” and “yourself” are right next to each other, highlighting the way the judgment boomerangs back on the one being judgmental.
- for you who judge take part in the exact same things.
 τὰ γὰρ αὐτὰ πράσσεις ὁ κρίνων.
 - Once again the word “practice” is from πράσσω (prassō) which means “do” or “accomplish”.
 - We will translate this as “take part in” again.
 - The phrase “the same things” is τὰ αὐτὰ (ta auta).
 - In order to give the emphasis contained in the Greek, we will translate this as “the exact same things”.
- And we know that the judgment of God against those who take part in such things is based upon absolute truth.
 οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστὶν κατὰ ἀλήθειαν ἐπὶ τοὺς τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντας.
 - The phrase “we know that” is οἶδαμεν ὅτι (oidamen hoti) which means “we know that”.
 - This Greek phrase is used to introduce a well-known fact that is generally accepted as true.
 - This is the first of the two instances of κρίμα (krima = judgment) in this passage.
 - Here and in verse 3 this word is used of God’s perfect judgment as opposed to man’s judgment.
 - The phrase “rightly falls upon” literally translated would be “is according to truth against”.

- This verse states that God’s judgment is based upon objective truth, not feelings or subjectivity.
- Once again the word “practice” is from πράσσω (prassō) which means “do” or “accomplish”.
- We will translate this as “take part in” again.
- But are you of the opinion, O man,
λογίζη δὲ τοῦτο, ὃ ἄνθρωπε
 - Paul now uses a rhetorical question to make his case against those who pass judgment.
 - The word “suppose” is from λογίζομαι (logizomai) which means “reckon”, “think” or “consider”.
 - Here this word means “hold a view/opinion”.
 - The phrase “O man” is ὃ ἄνθρωπε (ō anthrōpe) which includes the vocative of ἄνθρωπος (anthrōpos) meaning “person” or “human”.
 - Paul uses this phrase to emphasize that we are mere creatures who stand before Almighty God the creator [Rom 9:20].
- when you pass judgment on those who take part in such things and do the exact same things *yourself*,
ὁ κρίνων τοὺς τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντας καὶ ποιῶν αὐτά,
 - Once again the word “practice” is from πράσσω (prassō) which means “do” or “accomplish”.
 - We will translate this as “take part in” again.
 - The phrase “the same” is αὐτά (auta) which means “the same things”.
 - We will translate this as “the exact same things”.
- that you will escape the judgment of God?
ὅτι σὺ ἐκφεύξῃ τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ;
 - The word “escape” is from ἐκφεύγω (ekpheugō) which means “become free from danger by avoiding some peril”.
 - Paul uses this word in 1 Thess 5:2-3 to describe those who are caught off guard in the Day of the Lord tribulations.

- Principles of Romans 2:1-3
 - Another category of depravity is comprised of those who pass judgment on (rather than giving hearty approval to) people who take part in sinful activities.
 - In Paul's time these individuals might have been either pagans with high ethical standards or Jews who were eager to condemn the Gentiles.
 - Both groups probably thought that God's condemnation did not apply to them because they were morally superior to the ones they judged.
 - Paul made it clear that they stood condemned because they were doing the exact same things as the people whom they were judging.
 - Human viewpoint judgment of others is always subjective and is rooted in pride [Job 35:2].
 - As we shall see in this section of Romans, God's judgment is objective [Psalm 9:7-8] because it is based upon truth, impartiality, and the person and character of Jesus Christ Himself.
 - In order to stay humble, it is important for us to remember that all of us have sinned and fall short of the glory of God [Rom 3:23].
 - We also must remember that no one will escape the righteous judgment of God [Rom 14:10; 2 Cor 5:10; Rev 20:11-15].
 - Knowing these things, we should resolve not to judge others anymore [Rom 14:11-13].
 - We can do this with great confidence knowing that God is the Lawgiver and Judge [Jas 4:10-12].

- Or do you consider the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience to be worthless,
 ἢ τοῦ πλούτου τῆς χρηστότητος αὐτοῦ καὶ τῆς ἀνοχῆς καὶ τῆς μακροθυμίας καταφρονεῖς,
 - The phrase “think lightly of” is from καταφρονέω (kataphroneō) which means “look down upon”, “despise” or “treat with contempt”.
 - This means to consider something of no value.
 - The word “kindness” is from χρηστότης (chrēstotēs) which means “kindness” or “generosity”.
 - This word describes kindness in action [Eph 2:7].
 - The word “tolerance” is from ἀνοχή (anochē) which means “tolerance” or “forbearance” [Rom 3:25].
 - This word describes God’s gracious tolerance, not today’s so-called tolerance.
 - The word “patience” is from μακροθυμία (makrothumia) which means “patience” or “forbearance”.
 - The combination of “tolerance” and “patience” describes the attribute of God that encompasses His compassion and mercy – His longsuffering [KJV: Ex 34:6; Num 14:18; Ps 86:15; Jer 15:15].
- unaware that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?
 ἀγνοῶν ὅτι τὸ χρηστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς μετάνοιάν σε ἄγει;
 - The phrase “not knowing” is from ἀγνοέω (agnoeō) which means “ignorant of” or “unaware”.
 - This is from the same family of Greek words that gives us the English word “agnostic”.
 - The word “repentance” is from μετάνοια (metanoia) which means “change of mind”.
 - This word does not imply any regret or sorrow, although these are sometimes associated.
- But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart
 κατὰ δὲ τὴν σκληρότητά σου καὶ ἀμετανόητον καρδίαν
 - The word “stubbornness” is from σκληρότης (sklērotēs) which means “hardness (of heart)”.
 - This word is used only here, but is found in the LXX [Deut 9:27; 2 Sam 22:6].
 - The phrase “unrepentant heart” confirms that the stubbornness of these people is preventing them from having a change of heart (mind) regarding God’s grace and mercy (and the gospel).
- you are storing up wrath for yourself
 θησαυρίζεις σεαυτῷ ὀργὴν
 - The phrase “storing up” is from θησαυρίζω (thēsaurizō) which means “gather” or “store up”.
 - This is the same word Jesus used twice when teaching about earthly treasures versus heavenly treasures [Matt 6:19-21].
 - The word “wrath” is from ὀργή (orgē) which means “anger” or “wrath”.
 - This is the same word we saw in Romans 1:18 regarding the wrath of God being revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness.
- in the Day of Wrath when the righteous judgment of God is revealed,
 ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὀργῆς καὶ ἀποκαλύψεως δικαιοκρισίας τοῦ θεοῦ
 - The phrase “in the day of wrath” refers to the wrath to come in the Day of the Lord [Zeph 1:15-18].
 - This is a personal application within the universal reservation of judgment by fire [2 Pet 3:7].
 - The word “revelation” is from ἀποκάλυψις (apokalupsis) which means “make fully known”.

- Here this refers to the righteous judgment of God being fully realized when it actually takes place.
 - This judgment will take place at the Great White Throne after the Day of Wrath fire has consumed this universe [2 Pet 3:10; Rev 20:11-15].
 - The phrase “righteous judgment” is from δικαιοκρισία (dikaiokrisia) which means “just/fair verdict”.
 - This word is used only here and in 2 Thess 1:5.
 - This word is used only of God as it highlights His absolute Righteousness and perfect Justice in action.
- who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS:
 ὃς ἀποδώσει ἑκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ·
- This quotation of Psalm 62:12/Prov 24:12 was also referenced by Jesus in Matt 16:27 and focuses attention on the fact that the judgment of God will be according to a person’s deeds [Rev 20:12-13].
- eternal life to those who in the continuance of a good work are looking for glory and honor and immortality;
 τοῖς μὲν καθ’ ὑπομονὴν ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν ζητοῦσιν ζωὴν αἰώνιον,
- The phrase “eternal life” appears at the end of the verse in the Greek, but the English will read better is we reorder things.
 - The phrase “by perseverance in doing good” is literally “according to perseverance of a good work”.
 - Young’s Literal Translation has this as “in continuance of a good work”.
 - This translation best expresses the fact that this verse describes the outworking of our salvation.
 - The phrase “seek for” is from ζητέω (zēteō) which means “seek” or “look for”.
 - The phrase “glory and honor and immortality” describes our state when we get to heaven.
- but wrath and indignation to those who are consumed by selfish interests and disobey the truth, but follow after unrighteousness.
 τοῖς δὲ ἐξ ἐριθείας καὶ ἀπειθοῦσι τῇ ἀληθείᾳ πειθομένοις δὲ τῇ ἀδικίᾳ ὀργὴ καὶ θυμὸς.
- The phrase “wrath and indignation” appears at the end of the verse in the Greek, but, as before, the English will read better is we reorder things.
 - The phrase “selfishly ambitious” is from ἐριθεία (epitheia) which means “selfishness” or “selfish ambition” which leads to strife/contention.
 - The picture here is that these people are totally focused on their own selfish interests/goals.
 - The phrase “do not obey the truth” is literally “disobey the truth”.
 - This is a description of their outright rejection of the gospel [John 3:36].
 - The word “obey” is from πείθω (peithō) which means “obey” or “follow” here.

- Principles of Romans 2:4-8
 - When Adam and Eve took and ate of the fruit in the Garden, God executed His perfect judgment upon mankind when they suffered spiritual death.
 - God would have been justified in taking their physical lives as well, but in His kindness and tolerance and patience He allowed them to live on so that one day they could repent and believe.
 - Throughout the Scriptures we find examples of God's kindness and tolerance and patience (lovingkindness) [Isa 54:8-10; 63:7-14].
 - When we arrogantly place ourselves in the position of judging others, we totally neglect the value and importance of God lovingkindness which leads people to repentance [2 Pet 3:9].
 - When believers fall into this error, they will find themselves under the hand of God's discipline [Heb 12:7-11; 1 Thess 5:4-10].
 - When unbelievers fall into this error, they store up for themselves wrath which will be revealed in the day of judgment [Job 21:30; 2 Pet 2:4-9].
 - Everyone, believers and unbelievers alike, will one day face judgment – one that will be rendered according to our deeds [1 Cor 4:5; Rev 22:12].
 - Sin will not be in view at the time of judgment because Jesus already paid the penalty of death for our sins [1 Pet 2:21-24; 1 Cor 15:3-5].
 - Eternal life is a grace gift from God to all who believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior [John 3:16; 6:40; 11:25-26; Eph 2:8-9].
 - God has done a good work in saving believers and, in the continuance of that good work, believers should have their eyes focused on eternal things [2 Cor 4:17-18; 2 Pet 3:13].
 - All believers have glory and honor and immortality awaiting them [1 Pet 1:3-9].
 - It is through the calling of the gospel that believers have gained, by grace through faith, the glory and honor which has been bestowed upon the Lord Jesus Christ [2 Thess 2:14; Heb 2:7-9].
 - Unbelievers, who have disobeyed the truth (rejected the gospel) and have taken pleasure in wickedness instead, have wrath and indignation awaiting them [John 3:36; 2 Th 1:6-10; 2:11-12].
 - They face eternal condemnation which is not a result of their deeds, but a result of their rejection of the Savior [Mark 16:16; John 3:18; 5:24].

- *There will be affliction* and distress for the soul of every man who does evil,
 θλιψις καὶ στενοχωρία ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ψυχὴν ἀνθρώπου τοῦ κατεργαζομένου τὸ κακόν,
 - The word “tribulation” is θλιψις (thlipsis) which means “affliction”, “trouble” or “tribulation”.
 - The basic meaning is trouble that inflicts distress.
 - The word “distress” is στενοχωρία (stenochōria) which means “distress” or “anguish”.
 - The basic meaning is to be in the midst of very stressful circumstances.
 - The phrase “every soul of man” is an awkwardly literal translation of the Greek.
 - The translation “the soul of every man” captures the meaning more clearly.
- of the Jew first and also of the Gentile,
 Ἰουδαίου τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἕλληνας·
 - The word “first” is from πρῶτος (prōtos) which simply means “first”.
 - In Romans 1:16 we saw that this word described chronological order regarding the giving of the gospel message.
 - In this verse (and in verse 10) this word is simply a marker of the first item in a list with no particular emphasis on chronological order, prominence, degree, etc.
 - The word “Greek” is from Ἕλληνας (Hellēn).
 - As we saw in Romans 1:16 this use simply refers to a non-Jew or Gentile.
- but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good,
 δόξα δὲ καὶ τιμὴ καὶ εἰρήνη παντὶ τῷ ἐργαζομένῳ τὸ ἀγαθόν,
 - This verse mentions “glory and honor and peace” whereas in verse 7 we had “glory and honor and immortality”.
 - The difference is that verse 7 was looking heavenward and this verse describes temporal blessings for the believer walking in the Light.
 - The word “peace” is εἰρήνη (eirēnē) which means “peace” or “harmony”.
 - Here this word refers to peace in the soul of believers walking in faith-rest [Phil 4:6-7].
 - In this verse we have “good” which is set in contrast to “evil” mentioned in verse 9.
 - These words represent that which is righteous and God-honoring and that which is not.
 - In either case, Paul is talking about the external evidence of a person’s position before God – the evil things done by an unregenerate person and the good things done by a believer.
- to the Jew first and also to the Gentile.
 Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἕλληνας·
 - As we saw in verse 9 the word “first” is a marker of the first item in a list and the word “Greek” simply refers to a non-Jew or Gentile.
- For there is no partiality with God.
 οὐ γάρ ἐστιν προσωποληψία παρὰ τῷ θεῷ.
 - The word “partiality” is προσωποληψία (prospolēmpsia) which means “partiality”.
 - This word is used in Eph 6:9 and Col 3:5 as it is here with reference to God and in Jas 2:1 with regard to the “personal favoritism” of people.
 - When you put this verse together with Eph 6:9 and Col 3:5 you establish that God’s judgment does not take into account ethnic background, relative position in this life, or any other consideration beyond what a person has done.

- Principles of Romans 2:9-11
 - Those who participate in wickedness may give the outward appearance of being happy, but in their souls is affliction and distress [Pr 1:27-31].
 - Believers who walk in righteousness will share in the glory and honor of Christ and will experience peace in their souls [Phil 4:6-7; Isa 26:3].
 - This contrast is true regardless of ancestry, place of birth, financial status, skin color, gender, etc.
 - God deals with the entire human race with perfect fairness – He does not even give special consideration to the Jewish people, although they do have a future stewardship in His A to Ω plan.
 - With God, there simply is no partiality [Deut 10:17; Acts 10:34-35; Gal 2:6; Eph 6:9; Col 3:25].
 - In a similar way, believers who are walking in the Light and expressing ἀγάπη love should treat others without any personal favoritism [1 Tim 5:21; James 2:1-9].

- For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law,
 Ὅσοι γὰρ ἀνόμως ἥμαρτον, ἀνόμως καὶ ἀπολοῦνται,
 - The word “sinned” is from ἁμαρτάνω (hamartanō) which means “miss the mark”.
 - This word is used of sin in the transgressing of God’s righteous standard (here, the Law).
 - The phrases “without the Law” are ἀνόμως (anomōs) which means “without law”.
 - This refers to people before the Law was given, Gentiles during the time of Law, the Church, etc.
 - The word “perish” is from ἀπόλλυμι (apollumi) which means “experience destruction”.
 - When talking about people this word means death [Luke 15:17; John 3:16; 10:28; 2 Cor 2:14-16].
- and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law;
 καὶ ὅσοι ἐν νόμῳ ἥμαρτον, διὰ νόμου κριθήσονται·
 - The phrase “under the Law” refers to the people to whom the Law was given – the Jewish people during the dispensation of Israel.
 - The word “judged” is from κρίνω (krinō) which means “engage in a judicial process”.
 - The basic meaning of this word is “decide”, “select” or “prefer”, but means “administer justice” here.
- for *it is* not the hearers of the Law *who* are righteous in the sight of God,
 οὐ γὰρ οἱ ἀκροαταὶ νόμου δίκαιοι παρὰ [τῷ] θεῷ,
 - The word “hearers” is from ἀκροατής (akroatēs) which means “hearer”.
 - This is the same word James used regarding the hearing of the word of God [Jas 1:22-25].
 - The word “just” is from δίκαιος (dikaios) which means “righteous” or “just”.
 - Given the context, “righteous” would be a better translation here.
 - The word “before” is παρὰ (para) which means “by the side of” or “in the sight of”.
 - The clearest way to translate this here is “in the sight of”.
- but instead the doers of the Law will be justified.
 ἀλλ’ οἱ ποιηταὶ νόμου δικαιωθήσονται.
 - The word “but” is ἀλλά (alla) which means “but” or “rather”.
 - This word highlights a sharp contrast and would be better translated “but instead” here.
 - The word “justified” is from δικαίωω (dikaioō) which means “justified” or “vindicated”.
 - Here this refers to the temporal justification of those who are already eternally justified [Jas 2:21].
- For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do intuitively the things required by the Law,
 ὅταν γὰρ ἔθνη τὰ μὴ νόμον ἔχοντα φύσει τὰ τοῦ νόμου ποιῶσιν,
 - The word “Gentiles” is from ἔθνος (ethnos) which means “nation”, “people” or “people group”.
 - This word is used of non-Jews or Gentiles [Acts 4:27; 9:15; 10:45; 11:1; 13:46-48, ...].
 - The phrase “who do not have the Law” is a literal translated of the Greek.
 - Everyone “has” the Law in the sense that it is recorded in the Scriptures.
 - What Paul is saying is that the Gentiles were not the recipients of the Law.
 - Along with this is the fact that most Gentiles were never given instruction regarding the Law.
 - The word “instinctively” is from φύσις (phusis) which means “natural character/disposition”.

- The meaning here is “by nature” or “intuitively”.
- The phrase “do ... the things of the Law” is a literal translation of the Greek.
- A slightly looser translation that conveys the meaning is “do ... the things required by the Law”.
- these people, not having the Law, are a law to themselves,
οἱτοὶ νόμον μὴ ἔχοντες ἑαυτοῖς εἰσὶν νόμος·
 - The word “these” is οἱτοὶ (houtoi), a masculine, plural pronoun.
 - This refers back to the Gentiles and should be translated “these people”.
 - The phrase “are a law to themselves” is kind of an odd expression, but the meaning of this phrase is explained in the very next verse.
- in that they demonstrate the work *required by* the Law written within their hearts,
οἵτινες ἐνδείκνυνται τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου γραπτὸν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν,
 - The word “show” is from ἐνδείκνυμι (endeiknumi) which means “show” or “demonstrate”.
 - To fully express the emphasis here, the word “demonstrate” is a better translation.
 - The phrase “the work of the Law” is a literal translation of the Greek.
 - A slightly looser translation that conveys the meaning is “the work required by the Law”.
 - The phrase “in their hearts” is a dative construction that could be translated “in ...” or “for ...”.
 - In this case more emphasis is implied which leads me to use “within ...” instead.
- their conscience testifying together with
συμμαρτυρούσης αὐτῶν τῆς συνειδήσεως
 - The word “conscience” is from συνείδησις (suneidēsis) which means “moral consciousness” or “conscience”.
 - This refers to the nature within us (even after the fall) to distinguish between right and wrong which can be defiled [1 Cor 8:7; Titus 1:15].
 - The phrase “bearing witness” is from συμμαρτυρέω (summartureō) which means “bear witness together with”.
 - Their conscience is testifying together with their thoughts as we will see in the following phrase.
- their thoughts one or the other accusing or else defending them,
καὶ μεταξὺ ἀλλήλων τῶν λογισμῶν κατηγορούντων ἢ καὶ ἀπολογουμένων,
 - Given the “together with” meaning of συμμαρτυρέω (summartureō), the Greek word καὶ (kai) should probably not be translated here.
 - The word “alternately” is μεταξὺ ἀλλήλων (metaxu allēlōn) which means “between one another”.
 - The idea is that, between the two (conscience and thoughts), they convict of right vs. wrong.
 - The word “accusing” is from κατηγορέω (katēgoreō) which means “bring charges against”.
 - Our conscience and/or thoughts will bring charges against us when we behave badly.
 - The word “defending” is from ἀπολογέομαι (apologeomai) which means “speak in one’s defense against charges” or “defend oneself”.

- on the day when, according to my gospel,
ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὅτε ... κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου
 - The phrase “on the day when” refers back to the earlier section in verses 5 through 8 that speaks of the judgment each person will face.
 - As we have seen, the focus in verses 9 through 14 shifts to temporal issues.
 - The phrase “according to my gospel” actually occurs near the end of the Greek for this verse.
 - What Paul was trying to emphasize is that God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus [John 5:22-27; Acts 17:30-31; 2 Tim 4:1].
- God will judge the hidden things of men through Christ Jesus.
κρίνει ὁ θεὸς τὰ κρυπτὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ... διὰ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ.
 - The word “secrets” is from κρυπτός (kruptos) which means “hidden” or “secret”.
 - This is a neuter plural noun which means “hidden things”.
 - The word “through” is διὰ (dia) which means “through” or “by”.
 - This is a marker of agency here indicating that all judgment will be carried out by Christ Himself.
- Principles of Romans 2:12-16
 - The Law was given to the people of Israel through Moses [John 1:17; 7:19].
 - The Mosaic Law codified God’s righteous standard for Israel, but sin (violating His standard) existed before the Law was ever given [Rom 5:12-14].
 - Those who lived under the Law were responsible for following the Law [Deut 30:15-20; 31:24-26].
 - Simply hearing the Law was not enough – it was necessary to obey the commandments of the Law [Deut 4:5-6; Luke 11:28].
 - Everyone who has lived (and will live) apart from the Law is not responsible for following the requirements of the Law.
 - However, people who have never been under the Law may intuitively do the things of the Law because God has given each of us a conscience.
 - If the conscience remains undefiled, all of us instinctively have an understanding of what is right and wrong according to God’s holy standard.
 - The undefiled conscience will bring accusation against us when we do what is evil and defend us when we do what is good.
 - As believers mature, they gain an even greater discernment in this area [Heb 5:14].
 - In the end, everyone will sit before God for judgment [Heb 9:27].
 - Whether or not we lived under the Law, we will all give an account before God [Rom 14:12] and be judged according to our deeds [Rom 2:6].
 - In that day, God will bring every act to judgment, even the things which appear to remain hidden [Ecc 12:14; 1 Cor 4:5].

- **Religious Depravity [2:17-3:20]**

- But if you bear the name “Jew” and find security in the Law and boast in God,
Εἰ δὲ σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ἐπονομάζη καὶ ἐπαναπαύῃ νόμῳ καὶ καυχᾶσαι ἐν θεῷ
 - The phrase “bear the name” is from ἐπονομάζω (eponomazō) which means “name/call yourself”.
 - This is a hapax, but ὀνομάζω (onomazō) appears elsewhere [Lk 6:13-14; Eph 1:21; 2 Tim 2:19].
 - The phrase “rely upon” is from ἐπαναπαύομαι (epanapaomai) which means “find rest upon”.
 - The idea is that well-being or security is found in something.
 - The word “boast” is from καυχάομαι (kauchaomai) which means “take pride in” or “brag about”.
 - This is the word used in 1 Cor 1:26-31 that teaches us about boasting in the Lord.
- and know *His* will and approve the things that are of value, being instructed out of the Law,
καὶ γινώσκεις τὸ θέλημα καὶ δοκιμάζεις τὰ διαφέροντα κατηχούμενος ἐκ τοῦ νόμου,
 - The word “approve” is from δοκιμάζω (dokimazō) which means “examine” or “put to the test”.
 - This is the word used in 1 Cor 3:10-15 that refers to the testing at the Judgment Seat of Christ.
 - The phrase “the things that are essential” is from διαφέρω (diapherō) which means “be greater in value” [Matt 10:31; 12:12; Luke 12:7, 24].
 - Here “of value” would be a better translation.
 - The phrase “being instructed” is from κατηχέω (katēcheō) which means “teach” or “instruct”.
 - This is the word found in Gal 6:6 regarding the teaching of the word of God.
- and are certain that you are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness,
πέποιθάς τε σεαυτὸν ὁδηγὸν εἶναι τυφλῶν, φῶς τῶν ἐν σκότει,
 - The word “confident” is from πείθω (peithō) which means “persuade” or “convince”.
 - Here this means “certain” in one’s own mind.
 - The phrase “you yourself” is from σεαυτοῦ (seautou) which means “yourself”.
 - Here this can be translated with a simple “you”.
 - The word “blind” is from τυφλός (tuphlos) which means “unable to see/comprehend”.
 - Here this is spiritual, not physical blindness.
 - As with the word “blind”, “light” and “darkness” are spiritual rather than physical in nature here.

- a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature
 παιδευτὴν ἀφρόνων, διδάσκαλον νηπίων,
 - The word “corrector” is from παιδευτής (paideutēs) which means “instructor” or “teacher”.
 - This word carries an emphasis on discipline or correction as part of instruction [Heb 12:9].
 - The word “foolish” is from ἄφρων (aphrōn) which means “foolish” or “ignorant”.
 - The basic meaning of this word is a lack of prudence or good judgment.
 - The word “teacher” is from διδάσκαλος (didaskalos) which means “teacher”.
 - This word describes basic instruction without any emphasis on discipline or correction.
 - The word “immature” is from νήπιος (nēpios) which means “infant” or “child”.
 - This word is used here and elsewhere of infants in Christ [1 Cor 3:1; Eph 4:14; Heb 5:13].
- having in the Law the full articulation of knowledge and of the truth,
 ἔχοντα τὴν μὀρφωσιν τῆς γνώσεως καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας ἐν τῷ νόμῳ·
 - The word “embodiment” is from μὀρφωσις (morphōsis) which means “formally structured”.
 - It can mean external “form” [2 Tim 3:5] as well as “formulation” or “embodiment”.
 - The word “knowledge” is from γνῶσις (gnōsis) which is the main word for “knowledge”.
 - All other verses where “knowledge” and “truth” are both found use ἐπίγνωσις (epignōsis).
 - Verses with ἐπίγνωσις (epignōsis) and ἀλήθεια (alētheia) :1 Tim 2:4; 2 Tim 2:25; 3:7; Titus 1:1; Heb 10:26.
- you, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself?
 ὁ οὖν διδάσκων ἕτερον σεαυτὸν οὐ διδάσκεις;
 - The two words “teach” are from διδάσκω (didaskō) which is a cognate of διδάσκαλος (didaskalos) which we saw in verse 20.
 - This individual teaches the immature (infants in Christ), but does he teach himself?
- You who preach that one shall not steal, do you steal?
 ὁ κηρύσσων μὴ κλέπτειν κλέπτεις;
 - The word “preach” is from κηρύσσω (kērussō) which means “proclaim” or “preach”.
 - Paul continues his rhetoric here by asking if the preachers of the Law [Exod 20:15] violate the very Law that they preach.
- You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?
 ὁ λέγων μὴ μοιχεύειν μοιχεύεις; ὁ βδελυσσόμενος τὰ εἰδῶλα ἱεροσυλεῖς;
 - Paul continues his rhetoric here by mentioning different aspects of the Law [Exod 20:3-5, 14] that these speakers of the Law might have violated.
 - The mention here of robbing temples [Acts 19:37] has to do with stealing idols from pagan temples.

- You who boast in the Law, you dishonor God through your transgressing of the Law.
ὁς ἐν νόμῳ καυχᾶσαι, διὰ τῆς παραβάσεως τοῦ νόμου τὸν θεὸν ἀτιμάζεις·
 - The Greek of this verse is not in the form of a question.
 - This verse is actually a statement regarding the dishonoring of God through breaking the Law.
 - The word “boast” is from καυχάομαι (kauchaomai) which means “take pride in” or “brag about”.
 - This is the same word we saw in verse 17 regarding boasting in God.
 - The word “breaking” is from παράβασις (parabasis) which means “deviation from the norm” or “transgression”.
 - This should be translated “transgressing of” here.
- For “THE NAME OF GOD IS BLASPHEMED AMONG THE GENTILES BECAUSE OF YOU,” just as it is written.
τὸ γὰρ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ δι’ ὑμᾶς βλασφημεῖται ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, καθὼς γέγραπται.
 - Paul continues his rebuke of the Jews by quoting the end of Isa 52:5 (from the LXX).
 - Paul solidifies his case by pointing out that his quotation is from the Scripture (which they most likely already knew).
 - Paul uses this phrase two more time in this section [Rom 3:4, 10] and 10 more times in this book [Rom 4:17; 8:36; 9:13, 33; 10:15; 11:8, 26; 15:3, 9, 21].

- Principles of Romans 2:17-24
 - Moral depravity encompasses all people who pass judgment on people who are sinning, yet commit the same sins themselves.
 - Religious depravity specifically addresses people who find their moral “high ground” in religion.
 - In this section of Romans, Paul specifically addresses the Jews of his time.
 - These people proudly bear the name “Jew”, but wearing such a label means nothing [Isa 48:1-2; John 8:33-39].
 - These Jews had been instructed regarding the Law and knew the will of God (which is a good thing [Eph 5:17]), but doing the will of God is the key [Jas 1:22; 4:17; Rom 12:1-2; Phil 1:9-11].
 - These Jews were certain that they were teaching others, having gleaned knowledge and truth from the Law, but knowledge must be married with love or it is worthless [1 Cor 8:1-2].
 - Anyone who is in the position of teaching the word of God will be held doubly accountable [Jas 3:1; Heb 13:17; Luke 12:48b].
 - These Jews were religious hypocrites because they proclaimed the Law to others, yet did not adhere to the Law themselves [Matt 23:2-4].
 - They also failed to understand that religious observance is no better than pagan morality in terms of meeting the righteous standard of God [Col 2:20-23].
 - By preaching strict observance of the Law and yet transgressing the Law themselves, they dishonored God [Mal 1:6-14].
 - Many legalistic religions today fall into a similar category, using their clipboards to enforce strict observance of their man-made rules [Matt 15:7-9] while failing to meet God’s standards.
 - We must be careful to avoid falling into this trap, always recognizing that we are sinners saved by grace who must humbly rely upon God’s grace continually [Rom 12:3; 1 Cor 4:7; 15:10].
 - Being caught in the snare of hypocrisy [Matt 23:23-28] is a sure way to destroy our witness before the world [1 Pet 2:12; 3:14-17].

- For indeed circumcision has a benefit if you do the things required by the Law;
 Περιτομή μὲν γὰρ ὠφελεῖ ἐὰν νόμον πράσσης·
 - The word “circumcision” is περιτομή (peritomē) which means “circumcision”.
 - In this passage circumcision and uncircumcision refer to physical circumcision until we get to verses 28 and 29.
 - The phrase “is of value” is from ὠφελέω (ōpheleō) which means “benefit” or “be of use”.
 - This word can also include the idea of gain or profit [Luke 9:25; 1 Cor 13:3; Heb 4:2].
 - In Rom 3:1 the cognate noun ὠφέλεια (ōpheleia) is translated “benefit”.
 - The word “if” here is a third class conditional – maybe yes, maybe no.
 - The word “practice” is from πράσσω (prassō) which means “do” or “accomplish”.
 - A good verbose translation of this word here is “do the things required by”.
- but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has effectively become uncircumcision.
 ἐὰν δὲ παραβάτης νόμου ἦς, ἡ περιτομή σου ἀκροβυστία γέγονεν.
 - The word “if” here is once again a third class conditional – maybe yes, maybe no.
 - The word “transgressor” is παραβάτης (parabatēs) which means “violator” or “transgressor”.
 - This word is always used in the N.T. regarding the Law [Gal 2:18; Jas 2:9-11].
 - The word “uncircumcision” is ἀκροβυστία (akrobustia) which means “foreskin”.
 - This word figuratively means “uncircumcision” or “lack of circumcision”.
 - The phrase “your circumcision has become uncircumcision” states a physical impossibility, so this is referring to the effective result.
- So if the uncircumcised man obeys the righteous requirements of the Law,
 ἐὰν οὖν ἡ ἀκροβυστία τὰ δικαιώματα τοῦ νόμου φυλάσσει,
 - The word “if” here is once again a third class conditional – maybe yes, maybe no.
 - The word “keeps” is from φυλάσσω (phulassō) which means “watch”, “guard” or “protect”.
 - This word means “keep” in regard to the Law, but a better translation is “follow” or “obey”.
 - The word “requirements” is from δικαίωμα (dikaiōma) which means “requirement”.
 - This word carries with it the idea of righteousness.
- will not his uncircumcision be thought of as circumcision?
 οὐχ ἡ ἀκροβυστία αὐτοῦ εἰς περιτομήν λογισθήσεται;
 - The phrase “be regarded” is from λογίζομαι (logizomai) which means “reckon” or “consider”.
 - This is a thinking word that can be translated “be thought of”.

- And he who is physically uncircumcised and fulfills *the requirements of* the Law, καὶ ... ἢ ἐκ φύσεως ἀκροβυστία τὸν νόμον τελοῦσα
 - The phrase “if he keeps” is from τελέω (teleō) which means “carry out” or “fulfill”.
 - There is no “if” here, so this should be translated “and fulfills”.
 - To make this more explicit, we are going to use a loose translation by adding “the requirements of”.
- will he not judge you who, despite having the written code of the Law and circumcision, are a transgressor of the Law? κρινεῖ ... σὲ τὸν διὰ γράμματος καὶ περιτομῆς παραβάτην νόμου.
 - It is the actions of the physically uncircumcised man who fulfills the requirements of the Law that effectively judge the transgressor of the Law.
 - The phrase “though having the letter” is literally “through the letter”, but is used here to describe an attendant circumstance.
 - The word “letter” is from γράμμα (gramma) which means “writing” or “letter”, but should be translated “written code” here.
- For he is not a genuine Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. οὐ γὰρ ὁ ἐν τῷ φανερῷ Ἰουδαῖός ἐστιν οὐδὲ ἡ ἐν τῷ φανερῷ ἐν σαρκὶ περιτομή,
 - The phrase “he is not a Jew” is talking about those who are true Jews as opposed to those who are merely Jews by appearance.
 - The words “outwardly” and “outward” are from φανερός (phaneros) which means “visible” or “plain to see”.
 - The contrast is with that which is inward [v. 29], so these are references to external things such as wearing phylacteries, paying tithes, etc.
 - The word “flesh” is used literally here regarding circumcision, not figuratively referring to the sin nature [Rom 6:19; 7:5, 18; 8:4-8].
- But instead he is a genuine Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code; ἀλλ’ ὁ ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ Ἰουδαῖος, καὶ περιτομὴ καρδίας ἐν πνεύματι οὐ γράμματι,
 - The word “But” is ἀλλά (alla) which forms a sharp contrast and should be translated “But instead” here.
 - As we saw in verse 28, the phrase “he is a Jew” refers to those who are true Jews as opposed to those who are merely Jews by appearance.
 - The word “inwardly” is from κρυπτός (kruptos) which means “hidden” or “secret”, but refers to the inward part of a person that you cannot see.
 - The word “heart” is from καρδία (kardia) which literally refers to the blood-pumping organ, but is used figuratively to refer to the inner soul.
 - Circumcision of the heart is the change of heart wrought by the Spirit resulting in true obedience, not merely lip-service [Deut 10:16; 30:6; Isa 29:13].

- As before the word “letter” is from γράμμα (gramma) and should be translated “written code”.
- and his approval *does* not come from men, but rather from God.
 - οὐ ὁ ἔπαινος οὐκ ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἀλλ’ ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ.
 - The word “praise” is ἔπαινος (epainos) which means “praise”, “approval” or “recognition”.
 - The emphasis here is on where someone gets approval for their actions.
 - The word “but” is ἀλλά (alla) which forms a sharp contrast and should be translated “but rather” here.
- Principles of Romans 2:25-29
 - The Jewish people take great pride in their position of being God’s chosen people.
 - This positional truth for Israel under the Abrahamic Covenant is signified by physical circumcision [Gen 17:10-14].
 - Physical circumcision has no value unless it is accompanied by a devoted heart [1 Kgs 8:54-61].
 - A heart truly devoted to the Lord is possible only when one has been made new by the circumcision of the heart [Gal 6:15; Col 2:11].
 - This circumcision of the heart applies to everyone – Jews and Gentiles [Eph 2:11-16; Col 2:13-14].
 - Those who are of the true Israel have had this circumcision through faith in Christ [Rom 9:6-8].
 - External observances may result in praise from other people, but God evaluates us by looking at our hearts [1 Sam 16:7; 1 Cor 4:5 cp. 1 Cor 2:11].
 - We should seek for the approval of God rather than the approval of men [John 5:44; 12:42-43].
 - If we are approved by God, we will sometimes also be approved by men [Pr 3:3-4; Rom 14:18].

- Then what is the superiority of the Jew? Or what is the benefit of *physical* circumcision?
 Τί οὖν τὸ περισσὸν τοῦ Ἰουδαίου ἢ τίς ἡ ὠφέλεια τῆς περιτομῆς;
 - The word “advantage” is from περισσός (perissos) which means “extraordinary” or “remarkable”.
 - The basic meaning is that which is much better than what is ordinarily encountered [Matt 5:37, 47].
 - The word “benefit” is ὠφέλεια (ōpheleia) which means “gain”, “advantage” or “benefit”.
 - This is the noun cognate of the verb ὠφελέω (ōpheleō) we saw in Rom 2:25.
 - After referring to a circumcision of the heart, Paul once again refers to physical circumcision.
 - The first question pertains to Rom 2:17-24 and the second question pertains to Rom 2:25-29.
- Significant in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God.
 πολὺ κατὰ πάντα τρόπον. πρῶτον μὲν [γὰρ] ὅτι ἐπιστεύθησαν τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ.
 - The word “Great” is from πολὺς (polus) which means “many”, “much” or “extensive”.
 - The message Paul was trying to communicate is that there were significant benefits for the Jews.
 - The phrase “First of all” is from πρῶτος (prōtos) which means “first” or “foremost”.
 - This word can be used to start a list or can indicate something which is most important.
 - The following word μὲν (men) marks the beginning of a list, but Paul never continues this list.
 - Paul does this elsewhere in his writing, most notably in 1 Cor 11:18ff.
 - This type of “mistake” does not mean that God’s word contains errors, but shows how God speaks through the human authors of Scripture without nullifying their personality, including the quirks.
 - The word “entrusted” is from πιστεύω (pisteuō) which means “believe”, “trust” or “entrust”.
 - This word indicates confidence in the recipient(s) [Gal 2:7; 1 Thess 2:3-4; 1 Tim 1:8-11; Titus 1:1-3].
 - The word “oracles” is from λόγιον (logion) which means “saying” or “utterance”.
 - This word is translated “oracles” in the NASB to indicate special revelation from God [Acts 7:35-38].
- What then?
 τί γάρ;
 - Paul continues his thoughts with the question, “What then?”.
 - Paul uses this literary device fairly often to highlight a point of significance or a potential opposing view [Rom 3:9; 6:15; 11:7; Phil 1:8].

- Although some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it?
εἰ ἠπίστησάν τινες, μὴ ἡ ἀπιστία αὐτῶν τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ καταργήσει;
 - The “If” in this verse is a first class conditional – if and it is true.
 - For clarity, we will translate this “Although”.
 - The phrase “did not believe” could be translated “were unfaithful” and “unbelief” could be translated “unfaithfulness”, but a lack of faithfulness is directly tied to a lack of faith.
 - The word “nullify” is from καταργέω (katargeō) which means “invalidate”, “nullify” or “abolish”.
 - The answer is clear – our unbelief (unfaithfulness) will not in any way nullify God’s faithfulness.
- Absolutely not! Rather, let God be shown to be true and every man be shown to be a liar,
μὴ γένοιτο· γινέσθω δὲ ὁ θεὸς ἀληθής, πᾶς δὲ ἄνθρωπος ψεύστης,
 - Paul answers his own question with an emphatic response, μὴ γένοιτο (mē genoito).
 - This is an optative verb and a verbose literal translation is “Please, may it never happen!”.
 - Paul uses this expression 9 more times in Romans [Rom 3:6, 31; 6:2, 15; 7:7, 13; 9:14; 11:1, 11].
 - The NASB translates this as “May it never be!” but I prefer the HCSB translation of “Absolutely not!”.
 - The phrase “be found” is from γίνομαι (givomai) which means “be”, “become” or “be proven”.
 - Here, “be proven” is the obvious meaning since we know that God is true.
 - The word “though” is δὲ (de) which can be translated “but”, “and”, “though”, “etc”.
 - In this case, “and” seems best since Paul believes both results will occur.
 - The NASB added “be found” regarding every man because it is implicit, but since we changed the translation we need to change it here as well.
- as it is written, “THAT YOU MAY BE JUSTIFIED IN YOUR WORDS, AND PREVAIL WHEN YOU ARE JUDGED.”
καθὼς γέγραπται· ὅπως ἂν δικαιωθῆς ἐν τοῖς λόγοις σου καὶ νικήσεις ἐν τῷ κρίνεσθαί σε.
 - As we saw back in verse 24 Paul uses the phrase “as it is written” when quoting the O.T.
 - Paul then quotes the second half of Psalm 51:4 where David confesses his guilt before God.

- Principles of Romans 3:1-4
 - The Jewish people have enjoyed great blessings as a people compared to Gentile nations [De 4:7-8; Neh 9:13-15; 2 Sam 7:23-24].
 - Of most importance is the fact that God delivered His word through Jewish prophets [Ps 147:19-20].
 - The Church has been entrusted with the same blessing [2 Cor 5:19; 2 Tim 1:12-14; 2:2].
 - The corporate blessings given to the nation of Israel do not override the necessity of faith for the individual Jewish person.
 - Personal faith has always been necessary for salvation [Acts 4:12; 10:43].
 - The fact that some people will reject the Savior does not in any way nullify the faithfulness of God.
 - God will always be shown to be true [John 3:33; 1 John 5:20] although those who reject Christ treat God as though He were a liar [1 John 5:10].
 - In contrast, fallen humanity will be shown to be liars [Ps 116:11; Pr 30:6; 1 John 2:4, 22; 4:20].
 - Acknowledging that God is true and just is an implicit part of confession [Ps 51:4].

- But since our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say?
εἰ δὲ ἡ ἀδικία ἡμῶν θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην συνίστησιν, τί ἐροῦμεν;
 - The “If” in this verse is a first class conditional – if and it is true.
 - For clarity, we will translate this “Since”.
 - The word “demonstrates” is from συνίστημι (sunistēmi) which means “commend” or “show”.
 - This word is translated “demonstrates” in Rom 5:8 which is a similar usage to what is found here.
 - The phrase “what shall we say” is τί ἐροῦμεν (ti eroumen).
 - Paul use this phrase plus the conjunction οὖν (oun) four times in Romans [Rom 6:1; 7:7; 9:14, 30].
 - This is another literary device Paul uses to highlight a point of significance or a potential opposing view.
- God who imposes wrath is not unrighteous, is He? (I say this according to human viewpoint.)
μὴ ἀδικὸς ὁ θεὸς ὁ ἐπιφέρων τὴν ὀργήν; κατὰ ἄνθρωπον λέγω.
 - The phrase “The God” is ὁ θεὸς (ho theos).
 - This is the Greek used for “God” everywhere in the N.T. and should be translated that way here.
 - The verb “inflicts” is from ἐπιφέρω (epipherō) which means “bring” or “bring on”.
 - This word is translated “pronounce” in Jude 9, but “imposes” is a better translation here.
 - The phrase “I am speaking in human terms” is literally “According to man I speak”.
 - Paul’s aside was to explain that he was using human viewpoint in deriving this false statement.
- Absolutely not! For otherwise, how will God judge the world with fairness?
μὴ γένοιτο· ἐπεὶ πῶς κρινεῖ ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον;
 - Once again Paul answers his own question with an emphatic response, μὴ γένοιτο (mē genoito).
 - As we did before, we will translate this “Absolutely not!”.
 - Paul’s question is based on the understanding that God will, in fact, judge the world.
 - What he is asking is how can God judge the world with fairness if He is somehow unrighteous in imposing His wrath against unrighteousness.
- But since through my lie the truth of God is shown to abound to His glory,
εἰ δὲ ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ ἐμῷ ψεύσματι ἐπερίσσευσεν εἰς τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ,
 - The “If” in this verse is a first class conditional – if and it is true.
 - For clarity, we will translate this “Since”.
 - Paul personalizes this question by saying “my lie” to reinforce the message of verse 4.
 - This question is another version of the question in verse 5 from the perspective of verse 4.
 - The word “abounded” is from περισσεύω (perisseuō) which means “abound” or “overflow”.
 - What Paul is stating here is that his lie will show the abundance of the truth of God.

- why am I also still being judged as a sinner?
τί ἔτι κἀγὼ ὡς ἁμαρτωλὸς κρίνομαι;
 - Paul expresses human viewpoint again with this question.
 - Human viewpoint rationalization says that if Paul’s lie (a sin) glorifies God by showing the abundance of His truth, then it does not make sense that he would be judged for such a sin.
- And why not *say* (as we are maligned and as some falsely assert that we say),
καὶ μὴ καθὼς βλασφημούμεθα καὶ καθὼς φασὶν τινες ἡμᾶς λέγειν ὅτι
 - Paul continues his argument by posing another question.
 - The words “why” and “say” are not in the Greek, but are implied by the sentence construction.
 - The phrase “slandorously reported” is from βλασφημέω (blasphēmeō) which means “slander” or “malign”.
 - This word means “blaspheme” in reference to God.
 - The word “claim” is from φημί (phēmi) which means “say” or “assert”.
 - It is implied in this sentence that the assertions of these people are not true.
- “Let us do evil in order that good may result”? Their condemnation is deserved.
ποιήσωμεν τὰ κακά, ἵνα ἔλθῃ τὰ ἀγαθὰ; ὧν τὸ κρίμα ἔνδικόν ἐστιν.
 - The word “that” is ἵνα (hina) which means “so that” or “in order that”.
 - The latter translation seems to fit this usage best.
 - The word “come” is from ἔρχομαι (erchomai) which means “come” or “come about”.
 - The idea here is that something will take place as a result of these actions.
 - The word “just” is from ἔνδικος (endikos) which means “just” or “deserved”.
 - This word is used only here and in Heb 2:2 where it refers to a just penalty (or recompense).
- Principles of Romans 3:5-8
 - We know that all of us are sinners and fall short of the glory of God [Rom 3:23].
 - Even the “good” things we try to do apart from God fall short of His righteousness [Isa 64:6].
 - Calling on the name of God apart from truth does not constitute righteousness [Isa 48:1].
 - Any type of unrighteousness serves to highlight the absolute righteousness of God.
 - This positive consequence does not negate the judgment due such unrighteousness [Isa 5:16; Ezek 28:22-23].
 - Human viewpoint might deem this unfair, but God is holy and must deal justly [Gen 18:25].
 - Today we are seeing human viewpoint reasoning move closer and closer to the extreme position that no one should ever be punished for anything.
 - This kind of upside down thinking is a perfect example of Isa 5:20-21.
 - This highlights the difference between the world’s “wisdom” and God’s wisdom [1 Cor 3:18-20].

- What then? Are we better than they? By no means;
 Τί οὖν; προεχόμεθα; οὐ πάντως·
 - The phrase “Are we better than they?” is from προέχω (proechō) which means “excel”.
 - This word literally means “Are we better?”, but being better than the religious Jews is implied.
 - The phrase “Not at all” is the negation of πάντως (pantōs) which means “by all means”.
 - A better translation of this phrase would be “By no means”.
- for we have already charged that both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin;
 προητιασάμεθα γὰρ Ἰουδαίους τε καὶ Ἑλληνας πάντας ὑφ’ ἁμαρτίαν εἶναι,
 - The phrase “we have already charged that” is from προαιτιόμαι (proaitiaomai) which means “accuse beforehand”.
 - This word is used only here in the N.T.
 - As we have seen previously the word “Greek” simply refers to a non-Jew or Gentile.
 - The phrase “under sin” describes the positional truth of total depravity.
 - This universal condemnation allows for the universal offer of salvation by faith [Gal 3:22].
- as it is written, “THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE;
 καθὼς γέγραπται ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν δίκαιος οὐδὲ εἷς,
 - Paul uses the phrase “as it is written” and then begins a series of quotes from Ps 14:1-3.
 - Paul did not quote the Psalm as written, but instead cherry picked various quotes from the Psalm for maximum emphasis.
- THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD;
 οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ συνίων, οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ ἐκζητῶν τὸν θεόν.
 - Paul did not directly quote Psalm 14:2 here, but instead stated the obvious conclusion.
 - When God looked down from heaven He did not find any who understand or seek after Him.
- ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME WORTHLESS;
 πάντες ἐξέκλιναν ἅμα ἠχρεώθησαν·
 - Verse 12 is a quote of Psalm 14:3.
 - The word “useless” is from ἀχρειώω (achreioō) which means “become worthless”.
 - This speaks to the universal depravity of man.
- THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD TO OTHERS, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE.”
 οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ ποιῶν χρηστότητα, [οὐκ ἔστιν] ἕως ἑνός.
 - This concludes the quotes from Psalm 14.
 - The word “good” is from χρηστότης (chrēstotēs) which means “uprightness toward others”.
 - There is a text question regarding the “THERE IS NOT” in the second half of this verse, but as with 99.9% of text questions, it does not affect the meaning of the verse as it is implied.

- “THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE, WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY DEAL TREACHEROUSLY,”
τάφος ἀνεωγμένος ὁ λάρυγξ αὐτῶν, ταῖς γλώσσαις αὐτῶν ἐδολιοῦσαν,
 - This is a quote of Psalm 5:9 from the LXX.
 - The word “deceiving” is from δολίω (dolioō) which means “deceive” or “deal treacherously”.
- “THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS”; “WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS”;
ὀδὸς ἀσπίδων ὑπὸ τὰ χεῖλη αὐτῶν· ὧν τὸ στόμα ἀρᾶς καὶ πικρίας γέμει,
 - The end of verse 13 is a quote of the second half of Psalm 140:3 from the LXX.
 - Verse 14 is a loose quotation of the first part of Psalm 10:7 from the LXX.
- “THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD, DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS, AND THE PATH OF PEACE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN.”
ὀδὸς ἀσπίδων ὑπὸ τὰ χεῖλη αὐτῶν· ὧν τὸ στόμα ἀρᾶς καὶ πικρίας γέμει,
 - Verses 15-17 are a paraphrase of Isa 59:7-8.
- “THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES.”
οὐκ ἔστιν φόβος θεοῦ ἀπέναντι τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτῶν.
 - Verse 18 is a quote of the second half of Psalm 36:1 from the LXX with αὐτῶν (autōn = their) substituted for αὐτοῦ (autou = his).

- Principles of Romans 3:9-18
 - Jews have been given many advantages over the Gentiles, but God does not give them preferential treatment because of this.
 - Everyone is born under sin which sets us all on equal footing [Gal 3:22] and allows God to show mercy to us all [Rom 11:32].
 - Whatever category an unbeliever might fit into – immoral, moral or religious – the positional truth is that they are all under sin and totally deprave.
 - Unbelievers are not capable of understanding God [1 Cor 2:11-14].
 - Only those who have received Christ (and are in Christ) are given understanding [1 John 5:20].
 - Believers must remember that we were once of the stray sheep [Isa 53:6] and are not righteous in our walk all of the time [Ecc 7:20].
 - Unbelievers tend to be deceitful because they follow after the god of this age [2 Cor 4:4] who is the father of lies [John 8:44].
 - Cursing and bitterness come from the mouths of unbelievers as a reflection of the condition of their hearts [Matt 12:34].
 - Believers must be mindful that the untamed tongue is poisonous and spews forth cursing and blessing [Jas 3:8-11].
 - Unbelievers tend not to hold to the sanctity of life because they follow after the god of this age who was a murderer from the beginning [John 8:44].
 - Unbelievers follow destructive paths that do not lead to peace because the only way to find peace is to be at peace with God through Christ [Rom 5:1 cf. Isa 57:21].
 - Fearing (respecting/revering) God is fundamental to the one who is walking with the Lord [Job 28:28; Pr 1:7; 9:10; Ecc 12:13-14].
 - Unbelievers have no fear of God which is utter foolishness [Pr 19:3].
 - Many verses in the O.T. make it clear that we are all sinners who fall short of God's glory [Rom 3:23].

- Now we know that everything the Law says, it speaks to those who are subject to the Law, οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι ὅσα ὁ νόμος λέγει τοῖς ἐν τῷ νόμῳ λαλεῖ,
 - The phrase “we know that” is οἶδαμεν ὅτι (oidamen hoti).
 - This is a Greek phrase used for something that is well understood by most people.
 - The word “whatever” is from ὅσος (hosos) which means “as far as” or “as much as”.
 - A better translation of this word in this verse would be “everything” [Matt 7:12; John 10:41; 17:7].
 - The phrase “under the Law” is literally “in the Law”.
 - The meaning of “in the Law” here is to be subject to the Law.
- so that every mouth may be silenced and all the world may become accountable to God; ἵνα πᾶν στόμα φραγῆ καὶ ὑπόδικος γένηται πᾶς ὁ κόσμος τῷ θεῷ.
 - The phrase “may be closed” is from φράσσω (phrassō) which means “shut” or “close”.
 - In this verse the idea is that mouths would be silenced.
 - The word “accountable” is ὑπόδικος (hupodikos) which means “answerable” or “accountable”.
 - This word is used only here in the N.T. and its parts mean “under justice”.
- because no flesh will be justified in His sight as a result of the works of the Law; διότι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιωθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ,
 - The word “because” is διότι (dioti) which means “because” or “for”.
 - This word is used to explain why something just stated should be considered valid.
 - The word “by” is from ἐκ (ek) which means “from” or “out of”.
 - Here this word is used in the sense of “as a result of”.
 - This phrase needs to be rearranged to make it more readable.
 - The word “justified” is from δικαιόω (dikaioō) which means “declare righteous/innocent”.
 - This word is the language of a judicial verdict being reached by God.
- for through the Law *comes* the full knowledge of sin. διὰ γὰρ νόμου ἐπίγνωσις ἁμαρτίας.
 - The word “knowledge” is ἐπίγνωσις (epignōsis) which means “full knowledge”.
 - We have basic knowledge of sin without the Law, but the Law gives us full knowledge of sin.

- Principles of Romans 3:19-20
 - The Mosaic Law was given to Israel and was not the governing authority over any Gentile nation [Deut 4:8; Psalm 147:19-20].
 - However, the righteous standard of the Law closes up every mouth (Jew and Gentile) in accountability to God with the result that every mouth may be opened in judgment [Isa 45:23; Rom 14:11].
 - The Mosaic Law was a tutor showing that any works based attempt to be justified before God could never succeed [Gal 2:15-16; 3:24-25].
 - The Mosaic Law also provided mankind with a clear understanding of the utter sinfulness of sin and the depravity of man [Rom 7:7-13].
 - Because of our depravity we know that apart from the forgiveness of sin we receive by grace through faith in Christ, none of us could stand righteous before God [Job 4:17; 25:4; Ps 130:3].
 - Therefore, our salvation is possible only according to God's mercy and grace, not any deeds we may have to offer [Titus 3:5-7; Eph 2:8-9].

- **Summary**

- In Romans 1:18-3:20 Paul discussed the depravity of man in detail.
- He began by describing immoral depravity [1:18-32], then moral depravity [2:1-16] and finally, as a subset of moral depravity, religious depravity [2:17-3:20].
- The depravity of man came about as a result of the fall [Gen 3:6-8].
- After the fall, Adam and Eve were still able to hear the voice of God [Gen 3:9-13].
- In this state of depravity, people are still able to perceive God through natural revelation (the creation) [Rom 1:20].
- Although, in general, deprave mankind does not seek God [Rom 3:11], there will always be those who have positive volition at God consciousness and seek Him [Deut 4:27-29].
- Those who seek God and believe in Him will be rewarded [Heb 11:6] and will rejoice in their salvation [Ps 70:4].
- Because of the fall, we are all born into this world under condemnation [Ps 51:5; Jn 3:18].
- Any unbeliever who hears the gospel message and believes passes out of death into life and no longer faces condemnation [John 5:24; Rom 8:1].
- Nowhere in the Bible does it say that the depravity of man renders us incapable of believing the gospel.
- In fact, verses like John 3:16, 11:25-27; Acts 16:29-31, etc. make no sense whatsoever if unbelievers are incapable of making the volitional choice to believe in Jesus.
- Some make the false claim that for man to believe he has to be given faith by God.
- Eph 2:8-9 is used as a proof text, but proper analysis of that passage makes it clear that the gift in verse 8 refers to salvation, not faith.
- We will now examine the Greek of Eph 2:8 to see this truth for ourselves.
- In addition to having the ability to believe, unbelievers can hear and understand the gospel and yet still reject it [Mark 16:16; Luke 10:16; John 12:48; Acts 14:2; 1 Pet 2:4-7].
- The truth of the Bible is that the depravity of man renders us unable to save ourselves with our works [Isa 64:6; 2 Tim 1:8-9; Titus 3:4-7].
- Conclusions...
 - Mankind was created righteous in the garden and became deprave as a result of the fall.
 - Being deprave means that mankind is condemned and unable to achieve salvation through works.
 - Being deprave does not mean that mankind is unable to think and make choices, including the choice to believe in Jesus Christ as Savior.