

We Were All Under Sin's Power Lesson 6 - July 12, 2026

Bible Basis: Romans 3:9–20

Bible Truth: Humans are God's creation. Paul laments that we have corrupted ourselves from the beginning and that all unrepentant sinners will be held accountable by God.

Memory Verse: "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin? (Romans 3:20)

Theme: *All Are Guilty — and All Need Grace*

1. Lesson Aim

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Explain Paul's conclusion that **Jews and Gentiles alike are under sin**.
- Identify the **evidence of sin** Paul lists from the Old Testament.
- Understand why **no one can be justified by the law**.
- Recognize their personal need for God's grace through Christ.

2. Background Context

Romans 1–3 builds a courtroom scene:

- **Romans 1:** Gentiles are guilty.
- **Romans 2:** Jews are guilty.
- **Romans 3:** *Everyone* is guilty — and Paul delivers the final verdict.

Paul uses Old Testament quotations to show that this is not a new idea. God has always revealed that the human heart is corrupted by sin.

Romans 3:9–20 is the **closing argument** before Paul announces the good news in 3:21–26.

3. Scripture Overview (Summary, not full text)

Paul declares that:

- Jews and Gentiles are **all under sin**.
- No one is righteous, seeks God, or does good on their own.
- Human speech, actions, and attitudes reveal sin's power.
- The law exposes sin but cannot save.

- No one will be justified by works of the law.

Background Scriptures: Psalm 136:1-9 and I John 1:5-10-

How do they correlate with Romans 3?

“Psalm 136 shows us who God is. Romans 3 shows us why we need Him.”

“Psalm 136 says ‘*His mercy endures forever.*’ Romans 3 says ‘*There is none righteous... no, not one.*’

Psalm 136 celebrates God as Creator — powerful, wise, and faithful. Romans 3 reveals humanity as broken — fallen, sinful, and unable to save ourselves.

Here’s the connection: God’s enduring mercy is the only answer to our enduring need. Psalm 136 declares mercy. Romans 3 demands mercy. Together they show the beauty of grace.”

“1 John 1 & Romans 3: Why We Need the Light”

“1 John 1 says *God is light* — and if we claim we have no sin, we’re lying. Romans 3 says *all are under sin* — none righteous, none good, none seeking God.

Here’s the connection: Romans shows the **truth about us** — we’re guilty and we can’t fix ourselves. 1 John shows the **hope from God** — if we confess, He forgives and cleanses.

Romans reveals the problem. 1 John reveals the solution. We need His light because our darkness is real.”

The Lesson:

I Sin Is Universal – Romans 3:9-12

Romans 3:9

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

A. The Universal Charge: “All Are Under Sin” (v. 9)

Paul answers the question: *Are Jews better off?*

- They had advantages (3:1–2), but **not superiority**.
- Sin is a universal condition — not a selective one.
- “Under sin” means being **dominated, controlled, or enslaved** by sin.

Fill in the missing pieces -Summary of Romans 3:1–8

Paul is dismantling every excuse, objection, and argument that tries to avoid the truth about sin.

He shows that:

- Jewish heritage doesn’t save
- Human unbelief doesn’t cancel God’s faithfulness
- God is righteous in judging sin
- Sin cannot be justified by claiming it “helps God look good”
- No argument can escape the reality of human guilt

Romans 3:1–8 clears the ground so Romans 3:9–20 can deliver the verdict:

“All are under sin.”

“Paul begins with a simple but devastating question: ‘*Are we better than they?*’

His answer? ‘*Not at all.*’

Whether Jew or Gentile, religious or irreligious, raised in church or far from it — Paul says **we are all under sin**.

That phrase ‘under sin’ means sin isn’t just something we do. It’s a power that rules over us. It shapes our desires, our decisions, and our direction.

Paul is leveling the playing field. No one gets to stand above anyone else.”

Teaching Point: Sin is not just what we *do* — it’s a power that rules the human heart apart from Christ.

Discussion Question: What are some ways people today try to deny or minimize the reality of sin?

Romans 3:10-12

¹⁰ As it is written: “There is none righteous, no, not one;

¹¹ There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God.

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

What’s Happening Here?

B. The Evidence: A Portrait of Human Sinfulness (vv. 10–12)

Paul quotes multiple Old Testament passages to show that Scripture has always taught humanity’s corruption.

He is using a common Jewish teaching method—combining multiple Old Testament texts into one statement (a “chain” of quotations).

Breakdown of the evidence:

1. Our Character (vv. 10–12)

- No one is righteous. Psalm 14:1-3, Psalm 53:1-3
- No one understands.
- No one seeks God.
- All have turned away.
- No one does good.

Paul isn’t saying we never do anything kind. He’s saying that on our own, we don’t naturally move toward God — we move away from Him.”

Teaching Point: This is not about isolated acts — it’s about the **condition** of the human heart.

II. Sinful Deeds (vv. 13-18)

¹³ “Their throat *is* an open ^[d]tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit”;

“The poison of asps *is* under their lips”;

¹⁴ “Whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness.”

¹⁵ “Their feet *are* swift to shed blood;

¹⁶ Destruction and misery *are* in their ways;

¹⁷ And the way of peace they have not known.”

¹⁸ “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

What’s Happening Here?

Paul continues to use Old Testament scriptures to show the Jews that they are fully aware of what happens when sin enters the heart of man.

2. Our Speech (vv. 13–14) -

Psalm 5:9 “Their throat is an open grave;
they flatter with their tongue.”

Psalm 140:3 – “the poison of asps is under their lips”

Isaiah 11:8 – a child playing near an asp’s den

An asp is a deadly snake (like a cobra), and in Scripture it’s a symbol of danger, poison, and sin.

- **Just like venom harms the body**
- **Evil words or sin “poison” people spiritually**

Paul lists:

- Deceit
- Cursing
- Bitterness
- Destructive words

“Our speech reveals our hearts. Paul says our words can be deceitful, poisonous, and destructive.

If you’ve ever said something you wish you could take back... you know exactly what he means.”

Teaching Point: Our words reveal our hearts. Jesus said the same (Luke 6:45).- A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart. What you say flows from what is in your heart. (NLT)

3. Our Actions (vv. 15–17) Paul quotes from Isaiah 59:7–8 as a whole section

- Violence -
- Destruction -
- Lack of peace

“Human history is full of violence, conflict, and brokenness. Paul says our feet are quick to run toward destruction.

We don’t naturally choose peace.”

Teaching Point: Human history confirms this — wars, injustice, oppression.

4. Our Attitude Toward God (v. 18)

- “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

“And then Paul gets to the root: ‘*There is no fear of God before their eyes.*’ –

No reverence of God- no honoring Him as God, creator of all things.

At the core of sin is a heart that refuses to honor God as God.”

Teaching Point: The root of sin is a heart that refuses to honor God.

Discussion Question: Which part of Paul’s description feels most relevant to our world today?

III. Sin Exposed (vv. 19-20)

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 ^[e]guilty before God.

²⁰ Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.

What's Happening Here?

C. The Law's Role: Not to Save, but to Expose (vv. 19–20)

Paul Concludes with- THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW (3:00–4:10)

On-screen text: "The Law Reveals — It Doesn't Rescue"

"After laying out the evidence, Paul explains the purpose of the law.

The law speaks so that **every mouth may be stopped** and the whole world becomes accountable to God.

In other words, the law doesn't give us something to brag about — it silences us.

And then Paul says something shocking: *'By the works of the law no flesh will be justified.'*

Why? Because the law is a mirror, not a ladder.

A mirror shows you your condition. A ladder helps you climb out.

The law can reveal sin, but it can't remove sin. Only Christ can do that."

- The law speaks to those under it — and **silences every mouth**.
- The whole world becomes **accountable** to God.
- The law reveals sin; it does not remove it.

Teaching Point: The law is a mirror, not a ladder.

- A mirror shows you your condition.
- A ladder helps you climb out. The law is not the ladder — Christ is.

Discussion Question: Why do people still try to earn salvation through good works?

WHY THIS MATTERS (4:10–5:00)

"So why does Paul spend so much time proving that everyone is guilty?

Because until we understand the bad news, we can't appreciate the good news.

Romans 3:9–20 prepares our hearts for the next verses — where Paul reveals the righteousness of God through Jesus Christ.

Teaching Point: Grace doesn't make sense until guilt is understood."

5. Application

A. We must stop comparing ourselves to others.

Paul levels the playing field — no one is “better” before God.

B. We must acknowledge our personal need for grace.

The gospel is not for “bad people” — it’s for *all people*.

C. We must stop trusting in our own goodness.

Good works cannot erase guilt. Only Christ can.

D. We must share the gospel with humility.

We are not “better than” unbelievers — we are simply forgiven.

7. Closing Reflection

Ask students to reflect silently:

- Where do I see the evidence of sin in my own life?
- Have I been trusting in my goodness instead of God’s grace?
- How does this passage prepare my heart for the gospel in Romans 3:21–26?