

# THE CLOSING ARGUMENT

The background of the slide is a composite image. On the left, the Colosseum in Rome is visible, partially obscured by a large, billowing white cloud. In the center, a green hill rises, topped with a simple wooden cross. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall style is dramatic and religious.

Chapter 3:9-20

THE BOOK OF

# ROMANS

# THE CHARGE!

“What then? Are we any better off? Not at all! For we previously charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin.”

This section and verse opens in the same way as 3:1. “What then?”

It’s intended to bring forth a conclusion as drawn from 3:1-8.

Paul then furthers the discussion with another question: “Are we any better off?”

Romans  
3:9



# THE CHARGE!

“What then? Are we any better off? Not at all! For we previously charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin.”

**The question:** “Are we any better off is actually one Greek word. It is written in the middle/passive voice and can be translated as: “have an advantage.”

**Yet, this advantage is rejected:**  
“Not at all!”

Romans  
3:9

# THE CHARGE!

“What then? Are we any better off? Not at all! For we previously charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin.”

To recognize the charge we must understand that, yes, the Jews were entrusted with the “oracles of God” (3:2); but this does not grant them an advantageous position or even makes them better before the judgment seat of God! Why is that?

Romans

3:9



# THE CHARGE!

“What then? Are we any better off? Not at all! For we previously charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin.”

Paul takes the Romans back to 1:16; 2:9-10. The plurals (Jews/Greeks) with the addition of the Greek words “οὐ πάντας” (ou pantas) – “not at all” reinforces the all-encompassing applicability of the charge.

Romans  
3:9

# THE CHARGE!

“What then? Are we any better off? Not at all! For we previously charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin.”

Therefore, this verse is the cumulative outcome of the case that Paul has been building from 1:18. So the charge that all Jews and all Greeks are under sin is a forensic, legal accusation that has been proven from 1:18 to 3:9.

Romans

3:9



# THE PROOF!

LET'S READ VERSES 10-18

The accusations are now firmly buttressed by what will follow:  
“Just as it stands written...!”

Paul will now use a “catena”  
that is, the splicing together of a  
series of authoritative  
Scriptural quotations to  
reinforce his accusations!

Romans  
3:10-18

# THE PROOF!

## Proof Text #1: Verse 10

**This verse is likely taken from Ecclesiastes 7:20. Since Paul is under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, which is important for us to remember, there may also be the use of Ps. 14:1.**

**You may have noticed that the quotes are not exact! Yet, the Spirit can certainly meld both verses together to enforce His accusation.**

**Romans  
3:10-18**



# THE PROOF!

## Proof Text #2: Verses 11-12

To follow his first proof text, Paul use the next two verses from Ps. 14. Specifically, verses 2b-3. Notice that the Spirit inspires Paul to virtually replicate what He has written in Ps. 53:2b-3:

Romans  
3:10-18

# THE PROOF!

## Proof Text #2: Verses 11-12

(14:2b-3) “To see if there are any who understand, who seek God. They have all turned aside, They have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, No, not one.”

(53:2b-3) “To see if there are any who understand, who seek God. Every one of them has turned aside; They have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, No, not one.”

Romans  
3:10-18



# THE PROOF!

## Proof Text #3: Verse 13a

**Paul now cites Ps. 5:9b exactly!**

**“Their throat is an open tomb;  
They flatter with their tongue.”**

## Proof Text #4: Verse 13b

**Ps. 140:3**

**“They sharpen their tongues like a  
serpent; The poison of asps is under their  
lips.”**

**Romans  
3:10-18**

# THE PROOF!

## Proof Text #5: Verse 14

**Paul now cites Ps. 10:7. The only difference is the word order.**

**“His mouth is full of cursing and  
deceit and oppression;  
Under his tongue *is* trouble and  
iniquity.”**

**Romans  
3:10-18**



# THE PROOF!

## Proof Text #6: Verses 15-17

**Paul cites Isaiah 59:7-8a.**

“Their feet run to evil,  
And they make haste to shed  
innocent blood;

Their thoughts are thoughts of  
iniquity;

Wasting and destruction are in their  
paths.

The way of peace they have not  
known....,”

Romans  
3:10-18

# THE PROOF!

## Proof Text #7: Verse 18

Paul closes the “catena” with  
Ps. 36:1b.

“There is no fear of God  
before his eyes.”

**You may have noticed that Paul (The Holy Spirit) changes the first person singular personal pronoun “his” to a third person plural personal pronoun “their!” This broadens the accusation to all – Jews and Greeks!**

Romans  
3:10-18



# THE PROOF!

**What conclusions can we draw from these authoritative accusations? Well, there are six!**

1. Paul is using the Septuagint (LXX or Greek Old Testament) as his reference. This is the Torah/O.T. texts that was translated from the Hebrew into Greek circa. 3 Cent. B.C.
2. The catena is framed by “there is not” which complements the “all” of verse 9.

**Romans**  
**3:10-18**

# THE PROOF!

**What conclusions can we draw from these authoritative accusations? Well, there are six!**

3. There is an internal structure of “three.” “There is not” “Sins of Speech” “Physical Violence”
4. By his use of the LXX, Paul is placing everyone, especially the Jews, in the same category of all being under sin. Of special note, the Formula of Concord references Rom. 3:11, 12 when it cites the total depravity of all humanity (FC SD II 10, 12).

**Romans**  
**3:10-18**



# THE PROOF!

**What conclusions can we draw from these authoritative accusations? Well, there are six!**

5. Is. 59:7-8 is used since it depicts Israel speaking of itself in the 1<sup>st</sup> person plural. Thus, Israel also stands with unrighteous humanity as Paul has described in 3:1-8.
6. Paul has enlarged the referent is Ps. 36 from “his” to “their” eyes. This is the inclusive impact of the accusation upon “both Jews and Greeks.”

Romans  
3:10-18

# CLOSING THE CASE!

## THE LAW SPEAKS – VERSE 19

*“And we understand that as much as the Law is saying, it is speaking to those within the Law, with the result that every mouth might be silenced and all the world might become accountable to God.”*

**First, let's understand Paul's use of the Law. The meaning of νόμος (law) in Paul's letters is dependent on context.**

Romans  
3:19-20



# CLOSING THE CASE!

## THE LAW SPEAKS – VERSE 19

Sometimes he means the Torah (the first five books of the Bible or all of the OT); sometimes as the Mosaic Law given at Sinai or the moral law (Ten Commandments); and sometimes as a rule or principle in the broad and general sense. Most frequently though, in Romans, Paul is referring to the Mosaic Law that makes ethical demands.

Romans  
3:19-20

# CLOSING THE CASE!

## THE LAW SPEAKS – VERSE 19

In this verse, the Law talks with a present and active voice. Therefore, you could read this verse as a personification of the Law (cf. Heb. 4:12)!

Paul's primary task in this verse is to verify the accusation of 3:9 and that it is applicable to the Jews!

Romans  
3:19-20



# CLOSING THE CASE!

## THE LAW SPEAKS – VERSE 19

In other words, yes, the Jews have the “oracles of God” that includes the Torah, the Prophets, and the Psalms which call them, over and over again, to repent for violating the Law. This is exactly what Paul has proven in verses 10-18.

This also includes the Greeks (Gentiles) (cf. 2:12, 16)!

Romans  
3:19-20

# CLOSING THE CASE!

## THE LAW SPEAKS – VERSE 19

*“...with the result that every mouth might be silenced and all the world might become accountable to God.”*

**This is the clause that introduces the outcome of the Law’s speaking. This is the verdict:**

**EVERY MOUTH MIGHT BE SILENCED**

**and**

**ALL...BECOME ACCOUNTABLE TO GOD!**

**Romans**  
**3:19-20**



# CLOSING THE CASE!

## WORKS OF THE LAW – VERSE 20

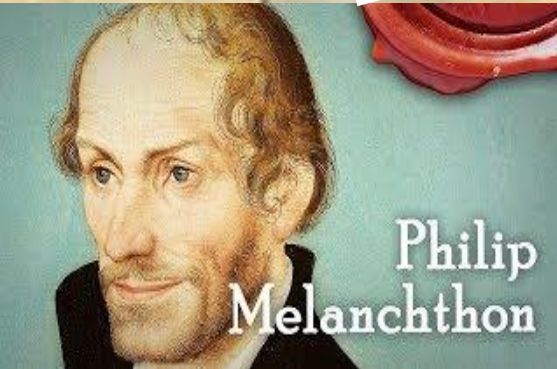
*“Consequently, from works of the Law, every fleshly person will not be declared righteous before Him, because through the Law [is] a recognition of sin.”*

What does Paul means by “works of the Law?” Paul is explicitly saying that “works of the Law” will not declare one righteous before God. So let’s ask a Lutheran Reformer to summarize what Paul is saying!

Romans  
3:19-20

# CLOSING THE CASE!

## WORKS OF THE LAW – VERSE 20



“In this passage he [Paul] admits that works do take place. This is because he is discussing external works. In this sense the Law is possible to fulfill. But he denies that a man is righteous because OF *[my emphasis]* these works.”<sup>1</sup>

Romans  
3:19-20

<sup>1</sup>Melancthon, *Loci Communes*, quoted in Chemnitz, *Loci Theologici*, 402.



# CLINCHING THE CASE!

## THE SUMMARY

**In Lutheranism, we would understand that the use of the Law being used is the 2<sup>nd</sup> use of the Law!**



Romans  
3:19-20

# CLINCHING THE CASE!

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# CLINCHING THE CASE!

## THE SUMMARY

**In Lutheranism, we would understand that the use of the Law being used is the 2<sup>nd</sup> use of the Law!**

**Thus, Paul contends that the Law brings a sharp stop to any and all efforts of works-rigtheousness!**

**Romans  
3:19-20**

# CLINCHING THE CASE!

## THE SUMMARY

**Paul has built his case all the way up to 3:20! And the verdict will stand, since:**

- + All are under God's righteous decree of death;**
- + All are storing up wrath in the day of wrath and of the revelation of His righteous judgment;**
- + Sinners will be judged and perish since they have been proven to be sinners; and,**

**Romans**  
**3:19-20**



# CLINCHING THE CASE!

## THE SUMMARY

+ Everyone who accomplishes evil, transgresses the Law, or judges others will be judged when the Judge, Jesus Christ, comes to judge the world, all of which are accountable to Him, Alone!

So the verdict against the self-righteous Jews and the unbelieving Greeks:

# GUILTY!

Romans  
3:19-20

**A SHORT EXCURSUS ON:  
“WORKS OF THE LAW”**

**THEN**

**GOD’S  
RIGHTEOUSNESS IS  
DECLARED  
TO ALL**

**JULY  
16**

**ROMANS 3:21-31**