Romans 3:19-20

Romans: Romans 3:19-The Final Verdict-Both Jew and Gentiles are Guilty Under the Law

Romans 3:19 presents the verdict against the human race that it stands condemned guilty before a holy God. In this passage, we will note that the entire human race is guilty before a holy God because of the evidence presented against them by the Old Testament Scriptures.

Romans 3:19, “Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God.”

“Now” is the post-positive “transitional” use of the conjunction de (δὲ), which transitions from Paul’s statements in Romans 3:9-18 to another set of statements in Romans 3:19-20 that present the guilty verdict of unregenerate man.

In Romans 3:9, Paul presents the arraignment of unregenerate mankind. Then, in Romans 3:10-17, he lists the thirteen charges against them. Paul then identifies the motive behind their crimes against God in Romans 3:18. In Romans 3:19, Paul employs the conjunction de to introduce a transition from these statements in Romans 3:9-18 to statements in Romans 3:19-20 that present the guilty verdict against them. Therefore, this word transitions from the arraignment and thirteen count indictment against mankind to the guilty verdict. We will translate the conjunction de, “Now.”

“We know” is the 1st person plural perfect active indicative form of the verb oida (οἴδα), which denotes the possession of knowledge and thus means, “to know for certain, to know without a doubt.”

The first person plural form is an “inclusive we” meaning that Paul is referring to himself and his audience, which would include both Jew and Gentile. Therefore, in Romans 3:19, the verb oida denotes that Paul’s readership had full possession of the facts concerning the guilty verdict of mankind since he presented evidence in Romans 1:18-3:18 that condemned both Jew and Gentile as guilty before a holy God.

This knowledge is “intuitive” meaning that through guilt produced by the function of the conscience, both Jew and Gentile are well aware of the fact that they are guilty before a holy God.

The first person plural form of the verb oida indicates that both Paul and his readership composed of both Jew and Gentile know without a doubt that they and all men stand condemned as guilty before a holy God.

The perfect tense of the verb oida in Romans 3:19 is a “perfective present” or as some identify a “perfect with present force,” which emphasizes that Paul, his
readership and all humanity possess through the function of their conscience a mental attitude state of knowing for certain that they stand condemned as guilty before a holy God. The Jew was condemned by the written form of the Law whereas the Gentile was condemned by the inherent form of the Law written into the soul of every human being and which manifests itself through the function of the conscience (Romans 2:11-15).

Romans 2:11-15, “For there is as an eternal spiritual truth absolutely never any partiality in the presence of God. For as many as have sinned without the Law have caused themselves to be destroyed without the Law and as many as have sinned under the jurisdiction of the Law will be condemned by means of the Law. For you see, the hearers of the Law are, as an eternal spiritual truth, absolutely never righteous before God but rather the doers of the Law will, as an eternal spiritual truth, be justified. Since, whenever Gentiles, who, as a fact of history, do not possess the Law, obey, at any time, instinctively the principles belonging to the Law, although, these, as a fact of history, do not possess the Law, they, as an eternal spiritual truth, manifest that they possess inherently, a law, which belongs to them who, indeed by virtue of their obedient character, demonstrate, as an eternal spiritual truth and fact of history, the conduct produced by obedience to the Law as written on their hearts. During which time their conscience does confirm the testimony, namely, their thoughts alternately, at any time, making an accusation or else, at any time, making a defense.”

The active voice is “stative” emphasizing that all of humanity “exist in this state of” knowing for certain that they stand guilty before a holy God because both Jew and Gentile have rejected the revelation of that form of the (inherent or written) Law of God given to them.

The indicative mood is used with the conjunction hoti to form a declarative hoti clause in indirect discourse and is a specialized form of a direct object clause after a verb of perception, which contains reported speech.

We will translate oida, “we know for certain.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 3:19: “Now, we know for certain.”

Romans 3:19, “Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God.”

“That” is the conjunction hoti (ὅτι) (hot-ee), which is employed with the indicative mood of the verb oida in order to form a declarative hoti clause in indirect discourse. This clause is a specialized form of a direct object clause after a verb of perception, which contains reported speech and summarizes that both Jew and Gentile are condemned as guilty by the Law of God. We will translate hoti, “that.”
“Whatever” is the accusative neuter plural form of the relative pronoun hosos (ὁσος), which refers to the teaching of the Law of God and functions as an “accusative direct object” meaning it is receiving the action of the verb lego, “says.”

The relative pronoun hosos, “whatever” refers to the six Psalms and Isaiah 59:7-8 that Paul quoted from in Romans 3:10-18 in order to present a thirteen count indictment against the entire human race, which demonstrates that they are enslaved to the old Adamic sin nature and thus totally depraved and thus in need of salvation in the eyes of a holy God.

Paul quotes these passages in order to validate his accusation that both Jew and Gentile are under the power of the sin nature and to demonstrate to his Jewish audience that they are just as guilty as the Gentiles before a holy God.

In Romans 3:10-18, Paul is utilizing the “sword of the Spirit” by employing these Old Testament Scriptures to validate his charges that both Jew and Gentile are under the dominion of the sin nature and thus under condemnation before a holy God.

Ephesians 6:17, “Also, I solemnly charge all of you to take hold of your helmet, which is your salvation as well as your sword that originates from the Spirit, which is, as an eternal spiritual truth, God’s Word.”

In Romans 3:10-12, he quotes Psalm 14:1-3 and 53:1-3 in order to present the first six charges against mankind, which emphasize that all of humanity without exception are unrighteous in the eyes of a holy God.

Romans 3:10-12, “As it stands written for all of eternity, ‘there is, as an eternal spiritual truth, absolutely none righteous, not even one. There is, as an eternal spiritual truth, absolutely none who, at any time, comprehends. There is, as an eternal spiritual truth, absolutely none, who, at any time, diligently seeks after God. Each and every one has deviated from the way (of righteousness). Together, they have become useless. There is, as an eternal spiritual truth, absolutely none, who at any time performs an act of kindness. There is, as an eternal spiritual truth, absolutely none, so much as one.’”

Then, in Romans 3:13, Paul quotes Psalm 5:9 twice to present the seventh and eighth charges in the thirteen count indictment as well as Psalm 140:3 to present the ninth charge, all of which address the sins of the tongue or verbal sins.

Romans 3:13, “Their conversation is like an open grave. With their tongues they were always deceiving. Venom produced by poisonous snakes is always under their lips.”

Paul cites Psalm 10:7 in Romans 3:14 in order to present the tenth charge, which also addresses the sins of the tongue.

Romans 3:14, “Whose mouth is always full of cursing and bitterness.”
He quotes Isaiah 59:7-8 in Romans 3:15-17 in order to present the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth charges, which address the sinful conduct of unregenerate mankind.

**Romans 3:15-17,** “Their feet are always swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery characterize their ways. Indeed, they totally refused to acknowledge the way, which is peace.”

Finally, in Romans 3:18, Paul quotes Psalm 36:1 in order to present the motive behind mankind’s crimes against God.

**Romans 3:18,** “There is, as an eternal spiritual truth, absolutely no reverence for God before their eyes.”

In Romans 3:10-18, Paul doesn’t use the Mosaic Law, i.e. the Pentateuch but rather he quotes from “the Writings” and “the Prophets” to present that mankind is guilty before a holy God.

The Jews divided the Old Testament Scriptures into three parts: (1) The Torah (2) The Prophets (Nabhiim) (3) The Writings (Kethubim).

The first section is called the Torah meaning “the Law” and contained: (1) Genesis (2) Exodus (3) Leviticus (4) Numbers (5) Deuteronomy.

The second section was called “the Prophets,” which were divided into two sections: (1) The “Former” Prophets” (2) The “Latter” Prophets.

The “Former” Prophets included: (1) Joshua (2) Judges (3) Samuel (4) Kings.

The “Latter” Prophets were divided into two categories: (1) Major (2) Minor.

The “Major” Prophets included: (1) Isaiah (2) Jeremiah (3) Ezekiel.

The “Minor” Prophets were also called “the Twelve” because they were all contained in one Book: (1) Hosea (2) Joel (3) Amos (4) Obadiah (5) Jonah (6) Micah (7) Nahum ((8) Habakkuk (9) Zephaniah (10) Haggai (11) Zechariah (12) Malachi.

The third and final section was called “the Writings”**: (1) The Poetical Books: Psalms, Proverbs and Job (2) The Five Rolls (Megilloth): Song of Solomon, Ruth, Ecclesiastes, Esther and Lamentations (3) The Historical Books: Daniel, Ezra and Nehemiah (1 book) and Chronicles.

Therefore, we can see that in Romans 3:10-18 Paul employs “the Writings” when he quotes the Psalms and “the Prophets” when quoting Isaiah, which indicates that the term nomos, “Law” in Romans 3:19 is a reference to not simply the Mosaic Law but rather the entire Old Testament canon of Scripture.

We will translate the relative pronoun hosos, “whatever.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 3:19: “Now, we know for certain that whatever.”

**Romans 3:19,** “Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God.”
“The Law” is the articular nominative masculine singular form of the noun *nomos* (νόμος) (nom-os), which again does not refer to simply the Mosaic Law, i.e. the Pentateuch but rather the entire Old Testament Scriptures including the Pentateuch.

Again, this indicated in that in Romans 3:10-18, Paul quotes from “the Writings” and “the Prophets” in order to illustrate that both Jew and Gentile are under the power of the old Adamic sin nature. The fact that the articular form of *nomos* here refers to the entire Old Testament canon of Scripture indicates that the expression *tois en to nomo*, “to those under the Law” refers to the Jew’s exclusively and not both Jew and Gentile since the Jews were given the Old Testament Scriptures and not the Gentiles.

Many expositors believe this expression *tois en to nomo*, “to those under the Law” refers to the fact that the Jews are under the written form of the Mosaic Law and the Gentiles are under the law written on their souls by the Lord Jesus Christ, which Paul mentions in Romans 2:14-15. However, the fact that *nomos* refers here to the Old Testament Scriptures rules out the possibility that the expression *tois en to nomo*, “to those under the Law” refers to both Jew and Gentile since only the Jew received the Old Testament.

The definite article preceding the noun *nomos* indicates that the Old Testament Scriptures were “well-known” to Paul’s readers since Paul and the apostles in the first century used them to instruct believers along with the new revelation that they received from the Lord that is recorded in the New Testament canon.

The noun *nomos* functions as a “nominative subject” indicating that the Old Testament Scriptures as the subject are performing the action of the verb *lego*.

See our exegesis and exposition of Romans 2:12 for a detail and exhaustive discussion regarding the noun *nomos*.

We will translate the articular form of *nomos*, “the Law.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 3:19: “Now, we know for certain that whatever the Law.”

“Says” is the 3rd person singular present active indicative form of the verb *lego* (λέγω), which refers to the “content” of what is communicated in writing in the Old Testament Scriptures concerning the fact that mankind, is condemned before God.

The present tense is retained in indirect discourse indicating that Paul is referencing the Old Testament canon’s assessment of the human race. This is a “perfective” present, which emphasizes that even though the Holy Spirit’s assessment that the entire human race stands guilty before a holy God was communicated in writing in the Old Testament Scriptures in the past, it still speaks today and is binding on the hearers.
The active voice indicates that the Old Testament Scriptures as the subject produce the action of the verb in communicating that the entire human race stands guilty before a holy God.

The indicative mood is “declarative” presenting this assertion as an unqualified statement of fact.

We will translate *lego*, “says.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 3:19: “Now, we know for certain that whatever the Law says...”

Romans 3:19, “Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God.”

“It speaks” is the 3rd person singular present active indicative form of the verb *laleo* (λαλέω), which refers to the “act” of God the Holy Spirit inspiring men to communicate in writing in what is known as the Old Testament Scriptures that all men are guilty before God.

The verb *lego* refers to the “content” of what was communicated in writing in the Old Testament Scriptures whereas *laleo* refers to the “act” of expressing the content in writing.

This too is a “perfective” present, which emphasizes that even though the act of the Holy Spirit inspiring men to communicate in writing that all men are guilty was accomplished in the past, it still has relevance for men today and is binding on the hearers.

The active voice indicates that the Old Testament Scriptures as the subject produce the action of the verb in communicating that the entire human race stands guilty before a holy God.

The indicative mood is “declarative” presenting this assertion as an unqualified statement of fact.

We will translate *laleo*, “it speaks.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 3:19: “Now, we know for certain that whatever the Law says, it speaks...”

Romans 3:19, “Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God.”

“To those who” is the dative masculine plural form of the definite article *ho* (ὁ), which refers exclusively to the Jews.

As we noted earlier, the articular nominative form of *nomos*, “the Law” refers to the entire Old Testament canon of Scripture. This indicates that the expression *tois en to nomo*, “to those under the Law” refers to the Jew’s exclusively and not both Jew and Gentile since the Jews were given the Old Testament Scriptures and not the Gentiles.
As we also noted earlier, in Romans 3:10-18, Paul does not quote the Mosaic Law, i.e. the Pentateuch but rather he quotes from “the Writings” (Psalms) and “the Prophets” (Isaiah) in order to illustrate that both Jew and Gentile are under the power of the old Adamic sin nature.

The definite article functions as a “substantive” meaning it nominalizes (i.e. converts to a noun) the prepositional phrase en to nomo, “under the Law” and thus we can translate it with the noun phrase “to those.”

The definite article is a “dative of advantage” meaning that the Jews “benefited” by being under the jurisdiction of the Old Testament Scriptures. They benefited in the sense that the Mosaic Law revealed to the Jews their sinfulness and their need for a Savior (Galatians 3:24)

The Old Testament Scriptures benefited the Jews in that the Mosaic Law also presented the Savior and His sacrificial death through the Levitical sacrifices (Leviticus 1-7). They also present the record of the plan for the Tabernacle and Temple and the protocol for the worship of the Lord that would take place in them.

The articles of furniture and the set up of the Tabernacle for worship gave Israel insight into their future Messiah with regards to His Person and Work in providing salvation.

The Jews were benefited by the Old Testament canon in that the Mosaic Law also set forth freedom principles for their nation that would lead to their prosperity and freedom from tyranny. The Old Testament canon benefited the Jews in that it contained the record of the Messianic prophecies as well as the promises and covenants that God has made with the Abraham, Isaac and Jacob from whom, originated the nation of Israel.

In the book of Genesis alone, God reveals to the nation of Israel through Moses the origins of the universe, the solar system, the atmosphere, life, man, sin, the total depravity of man, marriage, evil, language, government, culture, the nations, religion, the chosen people (Israel). This too benefited the Jews.

The Old Testament Scriptures benefited the Jews in that “the Writings” and “the Prophets” prophesied of their future Messiah in both His First and Second Advents and millennial reign in Jerusalem with Israel as head of the nations. This revealed that God had a plan for the nation of Israel, which would serve as encouragement to the nation in times of adversity.

This is not a dative of disadvantage because the Old Testament Scriptures present evidence that mankind is guilty before a holy God because they also point the human race in the direction of the Savior, Jesus Christ (See Galatians 3:24).

We will translate the definite article, “for the benefit of those.”

“Are” does not translate a word in the Greek text but is added by the translators in order to make a smoother translation since they believe Paul is using the figure of ellipsis by omitting the verb eimi.
Corrected translation thus far of Romans 3:19: “Now, we know for certain that whatever the Law says, it speaks for the benefit of those...”

Romans 3:19, “Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God.”

“Under the Law” is composed of the preposition en (ἐν), “under” and the articular dative masculine singular form of the noun nomos (νόμος) (nom-os), “the Law.”

The noun nomos refers to the entire Old Testament canon of Scripture for reasons, which we have already mentioned previously in the exegesis of Romans 3:19.

The preposition en is a marker of sphere denoting that the Jew was under the jurisdiction or sphere of the Mosaic Law.

The definite article preceding nomos is “anaphoric” indicating the noun nomos, “Law” was referred previously in the passage.

Therefore, we will translate the prepositional phrase en to nomo, “under the jurisdiction of the Law.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 3:19: “Now, we know for certain that whatever the Law says, it speaks for the benefit of those under the jurisdiction of the Law...”

Romans 3:19, “Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God.”

“So that” is the conjunction hina (ἵνα), which is employed with the subjunctive mood of the verb phrasso in order to form a purpose clause that expresses that one of the purposes of the Old Testament Scriptures was to reveal God who is holy and to demonstrate the reality of an infinite gulf that separated sinful mankind from Him. We will translate hina, “in order that.”

“Every” is the nominative neuter singular form of the adjective pas (πᾶς), which is anarthrous in the first attributive position modifying the noun stoma, “mouth” and is used in a distributive sense referring to each and every member of the human race. We will translate the word “each and every.”

“Mouth” is the nominative neuter singular form of the noun stoma (στόμα) (stom-a), which refers to that organ of the human body that gives one the capacity for eating and speaking.

The word functions as a “nominative subject” meaning that is receiving the action of the verb phrasso, “may be closed.”
Corrected translation thus far of Romans 3:19: “Now, we know for certain that whatever the Law says, it speaks for the benefit of those under the jurisdiction of the Law in order that each and every mouth...”

Romans 3:19, “Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God.”

“May be closed” is the 3rd person singular aorist passive subjunctive form of the verb ϕρασσο (φράσσω) (fras-so), which means, “to cause someone not to have anything to say.”

The word meant, “to fence, to enclose with a fence, hedge or wall, to block up, stop up, close up and so to keep from opening.” It was used in Greek meaning to fence in, hedge round, especially for protection or defense, to fence, secure, fortify.

Phrasso was used with stoma, “mouth” in the idiomatic phrase “stop the mouth” meaning, “to put to silence, to muzzle or to remove any reason to speak.” Here in Romans 3:19, the verb phrasso indicates that the entire human race has no argument or defense before God in the courtroom of heaven. They are rendered speechless in the courtroom of heaven because of the incontrovertible evidence that has been brought against them that was presented by Paul in Romans 1:18-3:18.

The word paints a picture of the effect that the evidence that the Old Testament Scriptures present against the entire human race. The human race is like a defendant in court who is rendered speechless by the evidence brought against them.

Job 9:2-3, “Indeed, I know that this is true. But how can a mortal be righteous before God? Though one wished to dispute with him, he could not answer him one time out of a thousand.”

Unsaved Gentiles will be rendered speechless at the Great White Throne Judgment of all unbelievers at the end of human history since they have failed to live up God’s perfect holy standards as demonstrated by their sinful conduct (Romans 1:24-31). They also failed to acknowledge God by virtue of what He has created (Romans 1:18-23).

The function of their guilty conscience will also rendered them speechless with no defense before the Lord Jesus Christ since their guilt manifests the fact that they did not live up to the moral code inherent in them.

They will be rendered speechless and without defense at the Great White Throne Judgment since Jesus Christ suffered a substitutionary spiritual death in their place so that they would not have to suffer eternal condemnation.

Also, the fact that salvation is received as a gift through faith in Him will render them speechless and without defense.
Unsaved Jews will be rendered speechless and without defense since like the Gentiles, they too failed to live up to His perfect holy standards as demonstrated by their sinful conduct, which mirrored the Gentiles. They also will be rendered speechless and without defense since they failed to keep the Law, which demanded perfect obedience since God is perfect.

The function of his guilty conscience will also render the Jew speechless and without defense since their guilt manifests the fact that they did not live up to the moral code inherent in them as well as the written form of the Law that was given to them through Moses. They too will be rendered speechless and without defense before the Lord since the Lord suffered a substitutionary spiritual death in their place so that they would not have to suffer eternal condemnation.

The fact that salvation is received as a gift through faith in Jesus Christ also will render the unsaved Jew speechless, giving him no defense before a holy God.

No matter how you slice it, the human race does not have a case against God and can never accuse Him of being unjust for sentencing them to the Lake of Fire forever since His will was for them not to go there and He did everything necessary at the Cross to secure salvation for them.

The subjunctive mood of the verb *phrasso* is employed with the conjunction *hina* (ἵνα) in order to form a purpose clause that expresses that the purpose of the Old Testament Scriptures was to reveal God who is holy and to demonstrate the reality of an infinite gulf that separated sinful mankind from Him.

The passive voice means that the subject, the entire human race receives the action of the verb *phrasso* from an unexpressed agency, which is the Old Testament Scriptures since they present evidence against the human race that has rendered them with no argument in their own defense (See Romans 3:10-18).

This is a “culminative” or “consummative” aorist tense, which views the function of the Old Testament Scriptures in its entirety but regards its from the standpoint of existing results, which is that the entire human race has no defense before God because of the evidence that the Old Testament Scriptures present against them.

We will translate the verb *phrasso*, “may be silenced.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 3:19: “Now, we know for certain that whatever the Law says, it speaks for the benefit of those under the jurisdiction of the Law in order that each and every mouth may be silenced.”

Romans 3:19, “Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God.”

“*And*” is the “adjunctive” use of the conjunction *kai* (καὶ), which is used to introduce a statement that presents an additional purpose of the Old Testament Scriptures. Therefore, we will translate the word, “and in addition.”
“All” is the nominative masculine singular form of the adjective *pas* (πᾶς), which is modifying the noun *kosmos*, “world” emphasizing the human race in its totality, thus the word is correctly translated.

“The world” is the articular nominative masculine singular form of the noun *kosmos* (κόσμος) (kos-mos), which refers to the unsaved inhabitants of the earth who are enslaved to the old Adamic sin nature and to Satan and his cosmic system.

The definite article preceding the noun *kosmos* is “generic” meaning that it distinguishes unsaved human beings as a class from those who are saved.

The word functions as a “nominative subject” meaning that it is producing the action of the verb *ginomai*, “may become.”

Therefore, we will translate the articular form of the noun *kosmos*, “the unsaved inhabitants of the cosmic system.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 3:19: “Now, we know for certain that whatever the Law says, it speaks for the benefit of those under the jurisdiction of the Law in order that each and every mouth may be silenced and in addition all the unsaved inhabitants of the cosmic system.”

Romans 3:19, “Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God.”

“May become” is the 3rd person singular aorist (deponent) middle subjunctive form of the verb *ginomai* (γίνομαι) (ghin-om-i), which means, “to be shown or demonstrated to possess a certain characteristic,” and which characteristic is identified by the adjective *hupodikos*, “guilty.”

The subjunctive mood of the verb *ginomai* is employed with the conjunction *hina* in order to form an additional purpose clause that presents an additional purpose for the Old Testament Scriptures, namely, to demonstrate that the entire human race is guilty before a holy God.

The middle voice is “deponent” meaning that it has an active voice meaning even though it has a middle voice form. Therefore, the “deponent” middle voice indicates that the entire human race produces the action of having their guilt exposed by the testimony of the Old Testament Scriptures.

This is a “culminative” aorist tense, which views another function of the Old Testament Scriptures in its entirety but regards its from the standpoint of existing results, which is that the evidence presented by the Old Testament Scriptures against the entire human race demonstrates that they are guilty before God.

We will translate the verb *ginomai*, “may be demonstrated.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 3:19: “Now, we know for certain that whatever the Law says, it speaks for the benefit of those under the jurisdiction of the Law in order that each and every mouth may be silenced
and in addition all the unsaved inhabitants of the cosmic system may be demonstrated.”

Romans 3:19, “Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God.”

“Accountable” is the nominative masculine singular form of the adjective *hupodikos* (ὑπόδικος) (hoop-o-dee-kos), which is a technical legal term used to describe a person charged with a crime or crimes that he cannot disproved, thus he is under a guilty verdict.

Therefore, the word describes the entire human race as being unable to disprove the charges leveled against them by the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament canon of Scripture, thus they are deserving of eternal condemnation.

The adjective describes the entire human race as having no argument or defense on their behalf because of the incontrovertible evidence brought against them in the Old Testament Scriptures.

The word functions as a “predicate nominative” meaning that it is making the assertion that the entire human race is guilty before the Supreme Court of Heaven.

We will translate the term, “as guilty.”

“To God” is the articular dative masculine singular form of the *theos* (θεός), which refers to the Supreme Court of Heaven, i.e. the Trinity.

The word functions as an “ethical dative” indicating the person or persons whose viewpoint are intimately tied to the action or state of the verb. Instead of “to,” one should paraphrase the personal noun in the dative with “as far as I am concerned” (or you, he, she, etc.), “as I look at it,” or “in my opinion.” Therefore, the noun *theos*, “God” functions as an “ethical dative” indicating that this guilty verdict is the opinion or the judgment of the Supreme Court of Heaven, i.e. the Trinity. We will translate the articular dative form of the noun *theos*, “in the judgment of God.”

Completed corrected translation of Romans 3:19: “Now, we know for certain that whatever the Law says, it speaks for the benefit of those under the jurisdiction of the Law in order that each and every mouth may be silenced and in addition all the unsaved inhabitants of the cosmic system may be demonstrated as guilty in the judgment of God.”

The question arises that if the Old Testament Scriptures were addressed specifically to the Jews and that only the Jews were under their jurisdiction, how can the entire world or in other words, the Gentiles be declared guilty as well? The answer is that the Ten Commandments, which appear in writing in the Mosaic Law that were specifically given to the Jews, were written onto the heart of every Gentile according to Romans 2:14-15.
Romans 2:12-15, “For as many as have sinned without the Law have caused themselves to be destroyed without the Law and as many as have sinned under the jurisdiction of the Law will be condemned by means of the Law. For you see, the hearers of the Law are, as an eternal spiritual truth, absolutely never righteous before God but rather the doers of the Law will, as an eternal spiritual truth, be justified. Since, whenever Gentiles, who, as a fact of history, do not possess the Law, obey, at any time, instinctively the principles belonging to the Law, although, these, as a fact of history, do not possess the Law, they, as an eternal spiritual truth, manifest that they possess inherently, a law, which belongs to them who, indeed by virtue of their obedient character, demonstrate, as an eternal spiritual truth and fact of history, the conduct produced by obedience to the Law as written on their hearts. During which time their conscience does confirm the testimony, namely, their thoughts alternately, at any time, making an accusation or else, at any time, making a defense.”

The fact that the Gentiles did not adhere to this inherent law is evidenced by their sinful conduct recorded by Paul in Romans 1:18-32.

Romans 1:18-32, “For God’s righteous indignation is as an eternal spiritual truth revealed from the third heaven against each and every kind of ungodliness and unrighteousness produced by mankind who as an eternal spiritual truth are characterized by suppressing the truth by means of unrighteousness. Because that which is objectively and experientially known about God, is as an eternal spiritual truth evident within them for God made it evident to them. Because from the creation of the world, His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature are as an eternal spiritual truth observed and comprehended by means of that which He has created so that they are without excuse. Because even though, they as an eternal spiritual truth had an objective, experiential knowledge of God, they never worshipped Him as God or gave thanks, but rather they became futile in the realm of their thought process and their ignorant hearts became darkened. It is an eternal spiritual truth that although they profess to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory originating with God, which is immortal for a likeness, which is an image of man, which is characterized by corruption as well as birds and four footed creatures and creeping things. Therefore, God gave them over in the lust of their hearts to impurity, namely, they degraded their bodies between themselves who indeed by virtue of their evil character exchanged the truth originating from God by means of the lie. Furthermore, they worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is worthy of praise and glorification throughout eternity. Amen. Because of this God gave them over to disgraceful perversities, namely, their females, who
indeed by virtue of their evil character, not only exchanged the natural sexual function for that which is contrary to the laws of nature but also, in the same way, even the males after they had abandoned the sexual function possessed by the female, they became inflamed with sexual desire by means of lust towards one another, their males with males with the result that they committed the indecent act. Consequently, they as an eternal spiritual truth receive the inevitable, negative consequence in themselves produced by their perversion, which was appropriate in the nature of the case. Furthermore, just as, they never approved of God for the purpose of retaining (Him) in the realm of knowledge, God, as an eternal spiritual truth, gave them over to a disapproved intellect in order to habitually do improper things with the result that they have been consumed with each and every kind of unrighteousness, evil, greed, malice, extensively engaged in envy, murder, strife, deception, evil dispositions, scandals, slanders, God-haters, violent insolents antagonists, arrogant, loud arrogant boasters, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, stupid, contract breakers, unaffectionate with loved ones, unmerciful who indeed by virtue of their evil character, although, they as an eternal spiritual truth know experientially the righteous regulation originating with God, namely, that those who as a lifestyle practice such things are as an eternal spiritual truth worthy, namely, of death, they not only as a lifestyle do the same things but also, they as an eternal spiritual truth applaud those who as a lifestyle practice them.”

Therefore, since the Gentiles did not obey perfectly the inherent law that was given to the Jews in written form in the Ten Commandments of the Mosaic Law brings them under condemnation just as the Jews.

Also, in Romans 3:19, Paul is anticipating any attempt by his Jewish readership to get by on a technicality in that the Old Testament quotations used by Paul in Romans 3:10-18 were used with reference to the Gentiles and not the Jews. However, since the Old Testament Scriptures were directed primarily to the Jews, whatever reference there may be to the Gentiles would certainly apply equally to the Jews with the result that both Jews and Gentiles were equally condemned by the Old Testament Scriptures.

Paul’s Jewish readership would have known that only the Jews were under the jurisdiction of the Mosaic Law and in fact the entire Old Testament Scriptures since they and not the Gentiles were given them by God. In fact, in Romans 2:12, Paul points out that the Jew was under the jurisdiction of the Mosaic Law.

Romans 2:12: “For as many as have sinned without the Law have caused themselves to be destroyed without the Law and as many as have sinned under the jurisdiction of the Law will be condemned by means of the Law.”
In Romans 3:2, he points out that the Jews were given the privilege of being the custodians of the Old Testament Scriptures.

**Romans 3:1-2,** “Therefore, what is the advantage of being a Jew? Or, what is the benefit of circumcision? Great in every respect! Indeed, the primary one that they were entrusted with the declarations by God.”

However, they evidently failed to recognize or were not aware of the fact that the Scriptures served to condemn them in the eyes of a holy God since they did not obey perfectly the Scriptures. Therefore, this served to silence any attempt on the part of the Jews to attempt to gain the approval of God who is absolute righteousness with their own personal relative righteousness.

The Jews had distorted the purpose of the Law. It was never intended to commend a man before God, but to condemn him.

As J. Hampton Keathley Jr. states, “Like the blood-alcohol test is designed to prove men are drunk, so the Law is designed to prove men are sinners, under the wrath of God.”

The Law provided a standard of righteousness, not that men could ever attain such human righteousness, but to demonstrate they are incapable of doing so and must find a source of righteousness outside themselves. This is the point of all of the sacrifices of the Old Testament.

When the Law revealed a man’s sin, God provided a way of sacrifice so that a man would not need to bear the condemnation of God. The Law was never given to save a man, but to show man that he needed a Savior.

**Romans 3:19-20,** “Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world may be held accountable to God. For no one is declared righteous before him by the works of the law, for through the law comes the knowledge of sin.”

In the study of the Bible, there are three specific purposes that surface in the proper use of the Mosaic Law. First of all, in a general sense, the Mosaic Law was given to provide a standard of righteousness (Deuteronomy 4:8; Psalm 19:7-9) and in the process, it revealed the righteousness, holiness, and goodness of God (Deut. 4:8; Lev. 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7; Rom. 7:12-14).

The Law given at Mount Sinai to Israel was to reveal a holy God and to demonstrate the reality of an infinite gulf that separated man from Him.

**Romans 3:23,** “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

Secondly, the Law was given to identify sin and reveal man’s sin and bankrupt spiritual condition as guilty before God (Rom. 3:19f; 7:7-8; 5:20; Gal. 3:19). God’s holy Law reveals to man just who and what he is, namely, sinful and separated from God by an infinite gulf that he is unable to bridge in his own human strength.
Lastly, the Law was given to shut man up to faith, i.e., to exclude the works of the Law (or any system of works) as a system of merit for either salvation or sanctification and thereby lead him to Christ as the only means of righteousness (Galatians 3:19-20, 20-24; 1 Timothy 1:8-9; Romans 3:21-24).

Galatians 3:19-25, “Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made. Now a mediator is not for one party only; whereas God is only one. Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law. But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.”

The ceremonial portion of the Law did this by pointing to the coming of a suffering Savior, “for without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness” (Hebrews 9:22).

Romans 3:21-24, “But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.”

By keeping the Law, we are speaking about the true sense as God intended it, not as Israel and man tend to take it.

The Law demonstrated to the Jew his sin (and so all mankind) and that he was shut up under that sin but was also designed to guide him, indeed to drive him to Christ.

The Mosaic Law cannot justify an individual before God (Romans 3:20-28; Galatians 2:16) and could not provide eternal salvation for men (Galatians 3:21-26). The Mosaic Law could not provide the Holy Spirit and could not solve the problems of the old sin nature (Romans 8:2-3) and it could not make perfect, or permanently deal with sin (Hebrews 7:19) nor could it sanctify (Galatians 3:21; 5:5; Romans 8:3). Therefore, as Paul says in Galatians 3:19-24, the Law was designed to be a temporary guardian until the coming of Christ, the Suffering Messiah Savior. However, Israel approached the Law as a system of merit, shifting from a faith basis to a works basis (Exodus 19:8; Romans 10:3).
Even today, people often try to use the Law as a means of establishing their own standing before God. But the Word of God emphatically teaches us that the Law brings a curse (Galatians 3:10-12), brings death, it is a killer (2 Corinthians 3:6-7; Romans 7:9-10), brings condemnation (2 Corinthians 3:9), makes offenses abound (Romans 5:10; 7:7-13), declares all men guilty (Romans 3:19), and holds men in bondage to sin and death (Galatians 4:3-5, 9, 24; Romans 7:10-14). This is because man possesses an old Adamic sin nature that can never fulfill the righteousness of the Law, especially in the spirit of the Law. Therefore, mankind always falls short as Romans 3:23 tells us, and becomes condemned or guilty before a Holy God (Romans 3:19).

Several passages of Scripture clearly establish that the coming of Christ has brought an end to the Mosaic Law.

Romans 10:4, “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes,” which instituted a new law or principle of life, i.e., the law of the Spirit, the one of liberty and grace (Rom. 8:2, 13). This fact was also clearly settled by the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15, which was convened to investigate the issue of the Law and its place in the life of believers.

The council came about because some were saying “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved,” and because even certain of the Pharisees who had believed were also saying “It is necessary to circumcise the Gentiles and to order them to observe the law of Moses.” The conclusion of the council, consisting of apostles and elders, was to reject the concept of placing New Testament believers under the yoke of the Law (Acts 15:6-11). The only thing the Jerusalem Council asked was that Gentile believers control their liberty in matters that might be offensive to Jewish believers, but they did not seek to place the believers under the yoke of the Law for they realized the Law had come to an end (Compare Romans 14).

Finally, the book of Hebrews demonstrates that the old covenant of the Mosaic Law was only temporary and has been replaced by the coming of Christ whose ministry is based on. A better priesthood, one after the order of Melchizedek, which is superior to Aaron’s, and a better covenant with better promises (see Hebrews 7-10). The old covenant was only a shadow of heavenly things, and if it had been able to make men perfect before God there would have been no occasion for a second or new covenant (see Hebrews 7:11-12; 8:1-13). This change in the priesthood also necessitates a change in the Law, which demonstrates that the Law has been terminated or done away.

A careful reading of the New Testament shows us that nine of the Ten Commandments are repeated as obligations for believers with the one exception being the command to keep the Sabbath.
If the Mosaic Law has been done away, then why are these commandments repeated in the New Testament? Further, some commandments outside the Ten Commandments are even repeated in the New Testament. For instance, as a motivation for loving others, Paul referred to four of the Ten Commandments because they demonstrate this principle, but then, to summarize, he mentioned one from Leviticus 19:18, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

Part of the purpose of the Law was to point men to the coming Savior through its shadows and types. Through the moral law, man could see God’s holy character as well as his own sinfulness and the infinite gulf that separates God and man. Through the ceremonial part of the Law (the priesthood, sacrifices, and tabernacle), man could find the solution to his sin by faith in what this part of the Law represented, a suffering Savior, one who would die as the Lamb of God. But even though no one could perfectly keep the Law, it was also designed for Israel’s immediate blessing by setting forth-righteous principles that would show them how to love God and their fellow man. This would produce a stable and secure society as well as a testimony to the nations (Deuteronomy 4:6-8).

Thus, in 613 commands the Mosaic Law represented an ethical code given by God to Israel to govern the nation until the coming of Messiah, but at their heart, they represented the moral law of God, namely, righteous principles vital to humanity.

Today, we are not under this code, but many of its righteous principles, the eternal laws of God, have been carried over and are part of the law of the Spirit of life in Christ (Romans 8:2) or the law of Christ (1 Corinthians 9:21; Galatians 6:2).

In this, some of the former commands are carried over (Romans 13:9), some new commands and guidelines are added (Ephesians 4:11f; 1 Timothy 3:1f; 4:4), and some have been revised, as in the case of capitol punishment, which is to be exercised by human government (Romans 13:4).

It needs to be emphasized that the end of the Mosaic Law, including the Ten Commandments, does not cancel or detract one iota from the eternal moral law of God. Remember, the moral principles of the ten laws did not begin with Sinai but are as eternal and immutable as the character of God. Understanding this should dispel the fears of those who think the abolition of the Mosaic Law leaves only a state of lawlessness.

The moral principles embodied in the law of Moses are called “the righteousness of the law” (Romans 8:4), which demonstrates that such principles are the goal of a life directed by the Spirit and the Word, and in the same context, Paul teaches that the believer is not under the Mosaic law (Romans 6-8). Therefore, the born-again Jew of the first century moved entirely from the Mosaic Law into the new economy of grace instituted by Jesus Christ (John 1:17).
The Law is still good from the standpoint of its main function and purpose (1 Timothy 1:8-10; James 2:1-10; Galatians 5:1-3; 6:1), which is how James uses the Law, to reveal sin (James 2:9), to get believers out of self-righteous legalism, and move them into a walk by faith in a living Savior.

The believer is never saved by keeping the Law (Galatians 2:21) and he is not under the Law as a rule of life, i.e., sacrifice, Sabbath keeping, tithing (Rev. 6:14; Acts 15:5, 24). Therefore, he does not walk by the Law but by the Spirit, which is the new law for the New Testament saint (Romans 8:4; Galatians 5:5), which is law of liberty through faith in the power of God.

The believer is dead to the Law (Rom. 7:1-6; Gal. 2:19) by virtue of his identification with Jesus Christ in His death, who fulfilled the Law. He is to fulfill the righteousness of the Law, i.e., the spirit of the law as seen in Christ’s words in Matthew 10:37-40 love for God, and love for one’s neighbor (James 2:9). But this can only be fulfilled through knowledge of the Word of God and the filling of the Holy Spirit, which furnishes the power or ability needed to live the Christian life according to the eternal moral law of God. Therefore, church age believers are under God’s new law, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:2-4).

Christ fulfilled the Ten Commandments by living a perfect and sinless life and so when man trusts in Christ as his Savior, Christ’s righteousness is imputed to that individual so we have justification (Romans 4) resulting in the fact that the Law can’t condemn us (Romans 8:1; 7:1-6; Romans 5:1; 4:4-8).

Christ fulfilled the ceremonial ordinances, the shadows and types of His person and work, by dying on the cross for us and in our place.

Again there is no condemnation because the believer is “in Christ” (Col. 2:14; Romans 3:24-25).

Christ also fulfilled the Social Law, but now He replaces it with a new way of life fitting to our new salvation. He gives provision for the inner man, namely, the indwelling Holy Spirit who provides us the capacity to experience sanctification so that we may experience also the righteousness of the Law (Romans 8:2-4).

Christ is the end of the Law and church believers are not under the Mosaic Law but under grace (Rom. 6:14). Since the Lord Jesus Christ fulfills the Law by His person and work at the Cross, church age believers are under a new law, namely, the obligation to walk by the Spirit of Life through faith in the Word of God (Romans 8:2-4). If we are led by the Spirit, then we are not under the Law (Galatians 5:18).

Against such, i.e., the fruit of the Spirit, there is no law because the believer is then operating under the highest law, the standards are met as we walk by the Holy Spirit and grow in the Word (Gal. 5:22).

Galatians 5:16-23, “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the
Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

After salvation by grace there has always been the grave danger of reverting to Law or legalism by taboos and tactics of coercion, or some form of human manipulation (Galatians 3:1-3). To go back to the Law as a way of life puts one under the control of the flesh, it nullifies true spirituality by faith in the Holy Spirit, and defeats the believer, which results in human good and domination by the sin nature or the flesh (Galatians 5:1-5; Colossians 2:14f).

The fact that the Christian is not under the Mosaic Law does not mean, of course, that there is lawlessness or no proper sense of morality or ethics in the Christian life but rather quite the opposite is true. But in dealing with the subject of morality, it must be understood that the teaching of the New Testament is that morality cannot justify you before a holy God (Titus 3:5; Ephesians 2:8-9).

Furthermore, the morality of the Christian life is to be the result of the living in the nature of Christ by obedience to the Spirit’s voice, which is heard through the communication of the Word of God.

In the New Testament, then, completely adequate teaching is provided as to the principles of conduct the Christian will follow if he truly presents his body “a living sacrifice” (Romans 12:1) and walks “by means of the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:9).

Titus 2:11-14 provides an outline around in which to group these principles.

Titus 2:11-15, “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds. These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you.”

First in this passage it is stated that God’s grace brings us salvation but His grace then teaches us to live soberly, righteously and godly. These are three important lines of responsibility in that the believer is not to become arrogant or think more highly of himself than he ought to (Romans 12:3). He is fulfill his
obligations to love his fellow man and love God with his entire being (Romans 3:8-10).
Romans: Romans 3:20-The Final Verdict-Humanity is Never Justified by the Works of the Law

Romans 3:20 completes our study of the Supreme Court of Heaven’s verdict that the entire human race is guilty before a holy God based upon the evidence presented against them by the Old Testament Scriptures. In Romans 3:20, Paul teaches that no one in the human race is ever justified before God by performing the works of the Law.

Romans 3:19-20, “Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.”

“Because” is the conjunction διότι (dee-ot-ee), which functions as a marker of cause introducing a statement that presents the reason for Paul last statement in Romans 3:19.

Romans 3:19, “Now, we know for certain that whatever the Law says, it speaks for the benefit of those under the jurisdiction of the Law in order that each and every mouth may be silenced and in addition all the unsaved inhabitants of the cosmic system may be demonstrated as guilty in the judgment of God.”

In Romans 3:19, Paul presents a two-fold purpose of the Scriptures. The first purpose of the Old Testament Scriptures is to demonstrate to the entire human race that they are sinners in the eyes of a holy God, which would in effect, silence their arguments or excuses. Also, in this passage, he states that in addition to this, another purpose was to demonstrate the guilt of the human race in the judgment of God.

In Romans 3:20, the conjunction διότι is introduces a statement that explains the “reason” for this last statement in Romans 3:19. Therefore, the word introduces a statement that explains the “reason why” the entire human race is guilty in the judgment of a holy God. The reason no one in the entire human can ever be justified before God by means of his actions that are produced by obedience to the Law is that the Law demands perfect obedience, which sinful man does not have the capacity to do because of the presence of the sin nature. We will translate διότι, “because.”

“By the works of the Law” is composed of the preposition ἐκ (e-k), “by,” which is followed by the genitive neuter plural form of the noun ἐργον (er-gon), “the works” and the genitive masculine singular form of the noun νόμος (nom-os), “of the Law.”
The preposition *ek* functions with the genitive form of the noun *ergon*, “works” as a marker of means constituting a source.

The noun *ergon* is used of unregenerate humanity in a negative sense and in the plural form with reference to “actions” that are produced by obedience to the Old Testament Scriptures, which as we will note is designated by the term *nomos*, “Law.”

The noun *ergon*, “actions” functions as a “genitive of means,” which by way of definition is where a genitive substantive indicates the means or instrumentality by which the verbal action implicit in the head noun or adjective or explicit in the verb is accomplished and answers the question, “How?”

In Romans 3:20, the noun *ergon*, “actions” functions as a genitive of means indicating the means by which verbal action explicit in the verb *dikaioo*, “will be justified” is accomplished and the meaning of this verb is emphatically negated by the negative adverb *ou*, “not.”

Therefore, the preposition *ek*, “by” and the noun *ergon*, “actions” as a “genitive of means” indicates that the entire human race is guilty in the judgment of God because no one is ever justified before God “by means of” actions produced by obedience to the Law since the presence of the sin nature renders man powerless to be perfectly obedient, which the Law requires.

**James 2:10, “For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.”**

So we will translate the preposition *ek*, “by means of” and the noun *ergon*, we will translate as “actions.”

As we noted in our study of Romans 3:19, the noun *nomos*, “Law” in this passage did not refer simply to the Mosaic Law, i.e. the Pentateuch but rather the entire Old Testament Scriptures including the Pentateuch. This was indicated in that in Romans 3:10-18, Paul quotes from “the Writings” and “the Prophets” and not the Mosaic Law or Pentateuch in order to illustrate that both Jew and Gentile are under the power of the old Adamic sin nature. Therefore, in context, the noun *nomos*, “Law” in Romans 3:20 refers to the entire Old Testament canon of Scripture and not the Mosaic Law exclusively.

Also, the noun *nomos*, “Law” contains a figure of speech called “metonymy” where the Law is put for obedience to the Law.

The noun *nomos*, “Law” functions as a “genitive of production” meaning that it “produces” the noun *ergon*, “actions” to which it stands related.

As we have noted, the noun *ergon* is in the plural form and refers to “actions” produced by obedience to the Old Testament Scriptures. Thus, the noun *nomos*, “Law” as a “genitive of production” indicates that obedience to the Old Testament Scriptures “produced” these actions. Therefore, we will translate the articular form of the noun *nomos*, “produced by obedience to the Law.”
This prepositional phrase *ex ergon nomou*, “by means of actions produced by obedience to the Law” and the verb *dikaioo*, “will be justified” whose meaning is emphatically negated by the negative adverb *ou*, “not” indicate that the entire human race is guilty in the judgment of God because no one is justified before God “by means of” actions produced by obedience to the Law. Again, the reason why this is the case is that the entire human race is under the power and control of the old Adamic sin nature.

Romans 3:9, “What shall we conclude then? Are we (Christians) as an eternal spiritual truth, superior? By all means, absolutely not! Since, we have already previously indicted both Jew and Greek, with the result that each and every one is under the power of the sin nature.”

Therefore, the human race does not have the capacity to obey the Word of God perfectly, which a holy God requires in order to be accepted into a relationship and fellowship with Him.

In Romans 8:3, Paul explains that God sent His Son to fulfill the requirement of the Law because obedience to the Law could not save humanity because the human race does not have the capacity to be perfectly obedient to the Law.

Romans 8:1-4, “Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 3:20: “Because by means of actions produced by obedience to the Law.”

Romans 3:20, “Because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.”

The next word in the Greek text of Romans 3:20 is the emphatic negative adverb *ou* (οὐ) (oo), which is emphatically negating the meaning of the 3rd person singular future passive indicative form of the verb *dikaioo* (δικαίω) (dik-ah-yo-o), “will be justified.”

The verb *dikaioo* means, “to declare or pronounce righteous.” We noted earlier in our studies of the verb’s cognate adjective *dikaios*, “righteous” in the book of Romans that the adjective refers to a person as having virtue in the sense that they have moral excellence, goodness, and their conduct conforms to the will of God. Therefore, the one who perfectly obeys the commands of the Law in the eyes of God has integrity in the sense that their character is sound and adheres to the will of God. Thus, they are upright, honest, perfectly whole and undiminished, sound, and unimpaired and in a sound or good condition.
Of course, only the Lord Jesus Christ was *dikaios* since all members of the human race are sinners. No one in the human race is righteous before God since only the Lord Jesus Christ was sinless as manifested in that He was perfectly obedient to every aspect of the Mosaic Law.

Also, we noted in our studies of the adjective *dikaios* in the book of Romans that the word describes the state or condition of a person who has fulfilled his obligations to both God and men, which is to love God and your neighbor as yourself. Therefore, the one who obeys the Law fulfills his obligation to love God and his neighbor as himself.

Since, the Lord Jesus Christ was impeccable, He was the only member of the human race who was truly righteous in the eyes of God and who truly loved God and His neighbor as Himself. Therefore, the adjective *dikaios* refers to a person being declared by God as righteous as He is and is thus in right relation to both God and man.

Again, there is absolutely no one in the human race that is in right relation to both God and man since there is no one righteous because of sin and disobedience to the commands to love God with one’s entire being and one’s neighbor as oneself. Only the Lord Jesus Christ was perfectly obedient to the Word of God, which can be summarized by the commands to love God with one’s entire being and one’s neighbor as oneself.

In Romans 2:13, Paul teaches that only the doers of the Law will be justified.

**Romans 2:13:** “For you see, the hearers of the Law are, as an eternal spiritual truth, absolutely never righteous before God but rather the doers of the Law will, as an eternal spiritual truth, be justified.”

No one in the human race is righteous before God and therefore justified before Him since no human being except Jesus Christ was ever perfectly obedient to the Law. The function of the volition in obeying the sin nature prevents any human being from keeping the Law perfectly.

Also, in Romans 3:9-20, Paul teaches that there is absolutely no one in the human race who can ever be accepted by a holy God and enjoy a relationship with Him by obeying the Law, i.e. the Old Testament Scriptures since they can never be perfectly obedient because the entire human race is under the power of the old Adamic sin nature.

**Romans 3:9-19,** “What shall we conclude then? Are we (Christians) as an eternal spiritual truth, superior? By all means, absolutely not! Since, we have already previously indicted both Jew and Greek, with the result that each and every one is under the power of the sin nature. As it stands written for all of eternity, ‘there is, as an eternal spiritual truth, absolutely none righteous, not even one.’ There is, as an eternal spiritual truth, absolutely none who, at any time, comprehends. There is, as an eternal spiritual truth, absolutely none,
who, at any time, diligently seeks after God. Each and every one has deviated from the way (of righteousness). Together, they have become useless. There is, as an eternal spiritual truth, absolutely none, who at any time performs an act of kindness. There is, as an eternal spiritual truth, absolutely none, so much as one. Their conversation is like an open grave. With their tongues they were always deceiving. Venom produced by poisonous snakes is always under their lips. Whose mouth is always full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are always swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery characterize their ways. Indeed, they totally refused to acknowledge the way, which is peace. There is, as an eternal spiritual truth, absolutely no reverence for God before their eyes. Now, we know for certain that whatever the Law says, it speaks for the benefit of those under the jurisdiction of the Law in order that each and every mouth may be silenced and in addition all the unsaved inhabitants of the cosmic system may be demonstrated as guilty in the judgment of God.”

Therefore, in order for man to be justified before God, God must treat him in grace and provide a way for him to be justified.

Grace is all that God is free to do in imparting unmerited blessings to those who trust in Jesus Christ as Savior based upon the merits of Christ and His death on the Cross. It means that God saved us and blessed us despite ourselves and not according to anything that we do but rather saved us and blessed us because of the merits of Christ and His work on the Cross.

Grace excludes any human merit in salvation and blessing (Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5) and gives the Creator all the credit and the creature none. By means of faith, we accept the grace of God, which is a non-meritorious system of perception, which is in total accord with the grace of God.

Grace and faith are totally compatible with each other and inseparable (1 Tim. 1:14) and complement one another (Rom. 4:16; Eph. 2:8). Grace, faith and salvation are all the gift of God and totally exclude all human works and ability (Eph. 2:8-9).

Ephesians 2:8-9, “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

The message of God's saving act in Christ is described as the “gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24), and the “word of His grace” (Acts 20:32; cf. 14:3). By His grace, God justifies the undeserving and unworthy through faith in His Son Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:24).

Grace is an absolute and is no longer grace if we are saved on the basis of human works (Rom. 11:6). A Christian is someone who is a “partaker” of the grace of God (Phil. 1:7) and he is to live by the same principle of grace after salvation (Col. 2:6; Rom. 6:4) and is the Christian's sphere of existence (Rom. 1:7;
1 Cor. 1:3; Col. 1:2). The believer who rejects this principle is said to have “fallen from grace,” (Gal. 5:1-5).

God in His grace and love disciplines the believer in order to get them back in fellowship with Himself (Heb. 12:5-12) and also trains the believer through undeserved suffering in order to achieve spiritual growth (2 Cor. 12:7-11).

The Word of God, which is the mind of Christ, manifests the grace of God and the application of it will reproduce the beautiful, virtuous character of Christ in the believer (Galatians 5:22-23).

Therefore, since God has dealt graciously with the believer, the believer is in turn commanded to be gracious with all members of the human race, both believers and unbelievers (Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13; 4:6; 1 Thess. 3:12).

The believer is commanded to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 3:18).

The believer experiences the grace of God while in fellowship with God, which is accomplished by obedience to the Word of God.

Therefore, God must treat sinful mankind under His grace policy in order for mankind to be accepted into a relationship with God. Thus, justification is based upon God’s grace.

Titus 3:5-7, “He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

The voluntary substitutionary spiritual death of the impeccable humanity of Christ in hypostatic union on the Cross is the basis for justification since His unique spiritual death propitiated or satisfied the demands of God’s holiness, which required that sin be judged. This unique spiritual death also redeemed mankind out of the slave market of sin, fulfilled the righteous requirements of the Law and reconciled the human race to God.

Redemption and deliverance from the Law and reconciliation are appropriated through faith alone in Christ alone.

The imputation of divine righteousness at the moment of faith in Christ and the believer’s resultant justification was made possible because the Lord Jesus Christ’s spiritual death on the Cross dealt with the issue of the sins of the world and fulfilled God’s righteous requirements for man.

The perfection of Christ’s Person and Work are the foundation of the imputation of divine righteousness and resultant justification.

The Scriptures teach that the only way that a member of the human race can ever be declared righteous by God is through receiving the gift of divine righteousness by grace through faith alone in Christ alone.
Romans 3:21-26, “But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”

Romans 5:1-21, “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having now been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation. Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many. The gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification. For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in
life through the One, Jesus Christ. So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous. The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Galatians 2:16, “nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.”

Abraham’s faith in the Lord in Genesis 15:6 and the Lord imputing His righteousness to Abram as a result of his faith is employed by the New Testament writers as the pattern of a sinner’s justification (Rm. 4).

Genesis 15:1-6, “After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, ‘Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great.’ Abram said, ‘O Lord GOD, what will You give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?’ And Abram said, ‘Since You have given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir.’ Then behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, ‘This man will not be your heir; but one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir.’ And He took him outside and said, ‘Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.’ And He said to him, ‘So shall your descendants be.’ Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.”

“Believed” is the verb ‘aman ( `$m^a*$) (aw-man), which is in the “hiphil” (causative) stem meaning, “to cause to have confidence in, to trust.”

The object of Abram’s faith is the Lord Himself who alone can make this guarantee to Abram because He sovereign and omnipotent and omniscient.

Although, the New Testament writers employ Genesis 15:6 to teach that justification is through faith alone in Christ alone, it does “not” mean that Genesis 15:6 records the moment when Abram first got saved. There at least three reasons for this.

First of all, Abram had already obeyed the Lord’s call to leave Ur and Haran (Acts 7:2-5; Gen. 12:1-5). Secondly, the Lord had entered into a covenant agreement with him as recorded in Genesis 12:1-3 and 15:4-5, which is something the Lord would never do with an unbeliever. Thirdly, the perfect tense of the verb ‘aman, “believed” demonstrates that Abram’s faith did “not” begin after the events recorded in Genesis 15:1-5 since it represents the state of Abram trusting in the
Lord, which flowed from his initial faith in the Lord the moment he got saved in Ur of the Chaldeans.

Bible Knowledge Commentary, The Old Testament, “Abram’s faith is recorded here because it is foundational for establishing the Abrahamic covenant. The Abrahamic Covenant did not give Abram redemption; it was a covenant made with Abram who had already believed and to whom righteousness had already been imputed” (page 55, Victor Books).

“Reckoned” is the verb chashav (חָשַׁב) (khaw-sawv), which refers to the Lord imputing His righteousness to Abram and as a result it refers to His “viewpoint” of Abram as a result of Abram’s faith in Him in delivering on His promise to give Abram a son.

Imputation is the function of the justice of God in crediting something to someone for cursing or for blessing. At the moment of spiritual birth, God imputed His righteousness to the believer so that he is “positionally” the righteousness of God meaning God has given His righteousness as a gift to the believer and that God views the believer as righteous as Himself. This imputation results in God acknowledging His righteousness in the believer and declaring the believer to be a righteous as He is.

The righteousness of God is received through faith in the gospel concerning Jesus Christ since in it (the gospel) the righteousness of God, Jesus Christ is revealed.

Romans 1:16-17, “For I am never ashamed of the gospel for it is as an eternal spiritual truth God’s power resulting in deliverance for the benefit of everyone who as an eternal spiritual truth believe, to the Jew first and then to the Greek. For by means of it, the righteousness originating from God is as an eternal spiritual truth revealed from faith to faith. Just as it stands written for all of eternity, ‘But the righteous shall choose for himself to live by means of faith.’”

The Bible teaches us that the Lord Jesus Christ is the believer’s righteousness since the believer is declared righteous by God because of the Person and Work of Christ on the Cross and His righteousness imputed to the believer at salvation.

1 Corinthians 1:30, “But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption.”

The righteousness of God can never be attained by anyone through human power and dynamics or by keeping the Mosaic Law but rather it is received as a gift through faith in Jesus Christ who is the righteousness of God incarnate.

In Romans 4:1-5, the apostle Paul references Genesis 15:6 and teaches that Abraham’s faith was not only credited to him as righteousness but that he was also justified by his faith as well.
Romans 4:1-5, “What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? ‘ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.’ Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness.”

In Galatians 3:6, Paul refers to Genesis 15:6 again and teaches that the Scriptures prophesied that the Gentiles would be justified by faith in the Promised Seed, Jesus Christ. In Galatians 3:11-12, he teaches that no one would be justified by obeying the Law but rather by faith. Then, in Galatians 3:24, Paul teaches that the Law was designed to show the sinner his need for a Savior and thus lead him to Christ so that they are justified by faith in Christ.

Galatians 3:1-29, “You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? Did you suffer so many things in vain -- if indeed it was in vain? So then, does He who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? Even so Abraham BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS. Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘ALL THE NATIONS WILL BE BLESSED IN YOU.’ So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer. For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, ‘CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO PERFORM THEM.’ Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, ‘THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.’ However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, ‘HE WHO PRACTICES THEM SHALL LIVE BY THEM.’ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us -- for it is written, ‘CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE’ in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Brethren, I speak in terms of human relations: even though it is only a man’s covenant, yet when it has been ratified, no one sets it aside or adds conditions to it. Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not
say, ‘And to seeds,’ as referring to many, but rather to one, ‘And to your seed,’ that is, Christ. What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise. Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made. Now a mediator is not for one party only; whereas God is only one. Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law. But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.”

Therefore, in Romans 3:20, the verb dikaioo refers to God declaring a person as righteous as He is as a result of God imputing or crediting to that person His Son’s righteousness, the moment they exercised faith in His Son, Jesus Christ.

The word refers to the doctrine of “justification,” which by way of definition is a judicial act of God whereby He declares a person to be righteous as a result of crediting or imputing to that person His righteousness the moment they exercised faith in His Son Jesus Christ. Consequently, God accepts that person and enters that person into a relationship with Himself since they now possess His righteousness.

The mechanics of justification are as follows: (1) God condemns the sinner, which qualifies them to receive His grace. (2) The sinner believes in Jesus Christ as His Savior. (3) God imputes or credits Christ’s righteousness to the believer. (4) God declares that person as righteous as a result of acknowledging His Son’s righteousness in that person.

Justification is God declaring a person to be righteous as a result of acknowledging or recognizing His righteousness in that person, and which righteousness He imputed to that person as a result of their faith in His Son, Jesus Christ.
Justification causes no one to be righteous but rather is the recognition and declaration by God that one is righteous as He is.

When Paul speaks of justification in Romans 3 and 4, he is using it in relation to eternal salvation whereas James uses justification in relation to the believer’s spiritual life after receiving eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

In the epistle of James, James makes a reference to justification, which is not a reference to justification in relation to eternal salvation but rather approval from God for performing actions, which are in obedience to the Word of God. In the epistle of James, James teaches his readers who were believers that Abraham demonstrated his faith by performing works and when he speaks of works, he is referring to actions that are produced by obedience to God’s commands.

James 2:14-24 is addressed to believers challenging them to operated in faith “after” salvation and which faith is demonstrated by obedience to God resulting in good works that are approved by God.

James 2:14, “What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him?”

In the Bible, the term “brethren” is always used as a designation for believers and never unbelievers, thus James is addressing his readers as fellow believers in relation to their walk with God “after” salvation since they are already saved. Therefore, the term “save” is “not” a reference to eternal salvation but rather the believer’s “deliverance” after salvation from his sin nature, the devil and the cosmic system by obeying the Word of God.

The term “works” is “not” a reference to working for one’s eternal salvation but rather it is a designation for obedience to God resulting in actions that benefit one’s fellow believer.

James 2:15-16, “If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,’ and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?”

James 2:17, “Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.”

In James 2:15-17, James teaches his readers that if they do not help their fellow believer who is destitute and in need of the essentials of life, then they are not operating in faith meaning they are disobeying God who commanded them to love one another as themselves (Mark 12:28-31).

James 2:18, “But someone may well say, ‘You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works.’”

James teaches that a believer’s faith is demonstrated by his works and when he speaks of works, he is referring to his actions that benefit his fellow believer, and which actions are produced by obedience to God’s Word.
James 2:19, “You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.”

James teaches his readers that the demons believe that God is one but they do not produce actions that are the result of obedience to God.

James 2:20, “But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?”

James 2:21, “Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?”

James teaches that Abraham was justified by his works and identifies what those works were, namely, the offering of Isaac his son on the altar, which was in obedience to God. Therefore, we can see that when James uses the term “works” in this passage he is referring to a believer’s actions that are the result of obedience to God’s Word.

When Paul in Romans 3:20 uses the term “works” he is using it with reference to the unbeliever’s actions that are in obedience to the Scriptures, which can never justified him before a holy God since the Law demands perfect obedience.

When James uses the term “justified,” he is “not” referring to justification in relation to eternal salvation but rather justification in the sense of “approval” by God for one’s obedience to Him.

James 2:22, “You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected.”

James teaches that Abraham’s faith produced actions that were in obedience to God and which actions, he calls “works.” When James uses the term “perfected” he means perfected in the sense of being accomplished. Therefore, James is teaching that as a result of Abraham’s actions in sacrificing Isaac, and which actions were in obedience to God, the goal of faith was accomplished. The goal of faith is obedience to God, which is what Paul is referring to in Romans 1:5.

Romans 1:1-5, “Paul, a slave owned by Christ who is Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel originating from God, which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures concerning His Son, who was born as a descendant of David with respect to His human nature. The One demonstrated as the Son of God by means of divine power with respect to a nature characterized by holiness because of the resurrection from the dead ones, Jesus Christ, our Lord through whom we have received the spiritual gift of apostleship in order to bring about the faith, which produces obedience among all the Gentiles on behalf of His name.”

James 2:23, “and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, ‘AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIDGEOUSNESS,’ and he was called the friend of God.”

James is quoting Genesis 15:6.
James 2:24, “You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.”

When James uses the term “justified by works” he means that a believer is justified before God in the sense that he is “approved” by God when he produces actions that are in obedience to God. This obedience demonstrates his faith in God and does “not” refer to justification in relation to eternal salvation.

Abraham was a tremendous example for James’ readers to follow in that Abraham was approved by God because his attempted sacrifice of his beloved son Isaac was in obedience to God’s commands and which obedience demonstrated his faith.

James is not attempting to describe for his readers how they can identify a so-called “genuine” believer but rather he is simply challenging his readers to obey God, which demonstrates their faith and benefits their fellow believer.

Now, although James is referring to believers receiving approval from God for their obedience, God’s approval of the believer’s actions that are in obedience to His Word are evidence that the believer has been justified in relation to eternal salvation.

In Romans 3:20, the future tense of the verb dikaioo is “predictive” indicating something will take place or come to pass and summarizes that something will happen. Therefore, the future tense of the verb indicates that it will come to pass or it will happen at the Great White Throne Judgment that no one in the human race will be justified in the judgment of Jesus Christ by means of actions produced by obedience to the Law.

Again, the presence of the sin nature in man renders the unbeliever powerless to be perfectly obedient to the Law, which is required by a holy God.

The passive voice indicates that the subject, the unregenerate humanity, will never by actions produced by obedience to the Law receive the action of being justified by an expressed agent who in context is God.

The indicative mood is “declarative” presenting the unqualified assertion as an unqualified statement of Bible doctrine.

Therefore, we will translate the verb dikaioo, “will be justified.”

The emphatic negative adverb ou emphatically negates the idea that any member of the human race under the power of the sin nature could ever be justified in the judgment of God since the presence of the sin nature renders the human race powerless to obey perfectly the Law, i.e. the Old Testament Scriptures, the Word of God, which the Word of God requires. We will translate ou, “never.”

Romans 3:20, “Because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.”

“Flesh” is the nominative feminine singular form of the noun sarx (σάρξ) (sarx), which refers to the entire human race under the power of the old Adamic sin
nature. This points back to the noun *hamartia*, “sin” that appears in Romans 3:9 and refers to the old Adamic sin nature.

**Romans 3:9,** “What shall we conclude then? Are we (Christians) as an eternal spiritual truth, superior? By all means, absolutely not! Since, we have already previously indicted both Jew and Greek, with the result that each and every one is under the power of the *sin nature.*”

Paul doesn’t employ *hamartia* in Romans 3:20 but rather *sarx* since he wants to emphasize that every human being is under the power of the sin nature and doesn’t want to simply emphasize the sin nature itself. Also, Paul could have used the noun *anthropos* to refer to the entire human race as he does in Romans 3:4.

**Romans 3:3-4,** “So then, what if-and let us assume for the sake of argument some did not believe, then will their unbelief render inoperative God’s faithfulness? No! Absolutely not! God must be acknowledged as true but each and every member of the human race a liar. Just as it stands written, for all of eternity, ‘that You will be acknowledged as righteous by means of Your pronouncements so that You will be victorious while You are undoubtedly being accused of injustice.’”

However, instead he uses the noun *sarx* instead since he wants to emphasize not simply the human race but rather the human race under the power of the sin nature.

Therefore, in Romans 3:20, Paul uses the noun *sarx* rather than *hamartia* or *anthropos* in order to emphasize the entire human race under the power of the sin nature. So he is saying in Romans 3:20 that absolutely no one in the human race could ever be justified before God by means of their actions in obedience to the Law since the Law requires perfect obedience, which the human race has no capacity to do because of the presence of the old Adamic sin nature. Therefore, we will translate the noun *sarx* accordingly as “*sinful humanity*” since the word denotes the human race under the power of the old Adamic sin nature.

The noun *sarx*, “flesh” functions as a “nominative subject” meaning that it is receiving the action of the verb *dikaioo*, “will be justified” whose meaning is negated by the emphatic negative adverb *ou*, “never.”

Now, in the Greek text of Romans 3:20, the nominative feminine singular form of the adjective *pas* (πᾶς) is modifying the noun *sarx*, “*sinful humanity.*” However, the adjective *pas* is not translated by the New American Standard and many other English translations. The reason being is that the English translations don’t interpret the negative particle *ou* as negating the meaning of the verb *dikaioo* but rather negating the noun *sarx*.

The adjective *pas* is used in a distributive sense for “each and every member of” sinful humanity. The word emphasizes that there are no exceptions in that no one in the human race can ever be justified before God by actions produced by obedience to the Law since the Law requires perfect obedience, which the human
race has no capacity to do because they are under the power of the sin nature. Therefore, we will translate the adjective “each and every member of.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 3:20: “Because each and every member of sinful humanity will never be justified by means of actions produced by obedience to the Law.”

Romans 3:20, “Because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.”

“In His sight” is composed of the preposition enopion (ἐνοπία) (en-o-pee-on), “in sight” and the genitive 3rd person masculine singular form of the intensive pronoun autos (αὐτός), “His.”

The intensive pronoun autos refers of course to the Lord Jesus Christ who will conduct the Great White Throne Judgment of all unbelievers at the conclusion of human history (Revelation 20:11-15).

Autos functions as a “possessive” genitive meaning that this judgment “belongs” to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Enopion functions as an improper preposition, which takes an object in the genitive case as is the case here in Romans 3:20 with the genitive form of the intensive pronoun autos, “His.”

The word is composed of the preposition en and opion and generally means, “before, in the sight or presence” either in terms of space, sight, relationships, time or rank. However, in Romans 3:20, enopion is used in relation to the verb dikaiō in a legal or forensic sense means, “in the judgment” of God. Therefore, no human being will be justified by conduct produced by obedience to the Law in the judgment of the Lord Jesus Christ at the Great White Throne Judgment since their obedience does not measure up to His perfect obedience.

Job 25:4-6, “How then can a man be righteous before God? How can one born of woman be pure? If even the moon is not bright and the stars are not pure in his eyes, how much less man, who is but a maggot- a son of man, who is only a worm!”

Job 15:14-16, “What is man, that he could be pure, or one born of woman, that he could be righteous? If God places no trust in his holy ones, if even the heavens are not pure in his eyes, how much less man, who is vile and corrupt, who drinks up evil like water!”

We will translate the prepositional phrase enopion autou, “in His judgment.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 3:20: “Because each and every member of sinful humanity will never be justified in His judgment by means of actions produced by obedience to the Law.”

Romans 3:20, “Because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.”
“For” is the “causal” use of the post-positive conjunction gar (γάρ), which presents the “reason why” no human being will ever be justified in God’s judgment by means of actions produced by obedience to the Law. The word introduces a purpose of the Law, i.e. the Old Testament Scriptures.

“The Law” is composed of the preposition dia (διά), “through” and the genitive masculine singular form of the noun nomos (νόμος) (nom-os), “the Law.”

The noun nomos refers to the entire Old Testament canon for reasons we noted earlier in our study of this word in this passage.

The preposition dia is a marker of the instrument or the agency by which something is effected.

The noun nomos functions as a “genitive of agency” indicating that the Old Testament Scriptures are the means or the instrumentality by which unregenerate man becomes conscious or aware of sin.

Therefore, we will translate the prepositional phrase dia nomou, “through the Law.”

Corrected translation thus far of Romans 3:20: “Because each and every member of sinful humanity will never be justified in His judgment by means of actions produced by obedience to the Law for through the Law.”

Romans 3:20, “Because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.”

“Comes the knowledge of sin” is composed of the nominative feminine singular form of the noun epignosis (ἐπίγνωσίς), “knowledge” and the genitive feminine singular form of the noun hamartia (ἁμαρτία) (ham-ar-tee-ah), “sin.”


Richard Chenevix Trench notes, “In comparing epignosis with gnosis, the epi must be regarded as an intensive use of a preposition that gives the compound word a greater strength than the simple word alone possesses” (Synonyms of the New Testament, page 300).

Quoting Culverwell, he writes, “Epignosis and gnosis differ. Epignosis is the complete comprehension after the first knowledge (gnosin) of a matter. It is bringing me better acquainted with a thing I knew before; a more exact viewing of an object that I saw before afar off. That little portion of knowledge which we had
here shall be much improved, our eye shall be raised to see the things more strongly and clearly...All Paul’s uses of epignosis justify and bear out this distinction. This same intensive use of epignosis is confirmed by similar passages in the New Testament and in the Septuagint. It also was recognized by the Greek fathers. Thus Chrysostom stated: ‘You knew (egnote), but it is necessary to know thoroughly (epignonai).” (Synonyms of the New Testament, page 300)

J.B. Lightfoot commenting on epignosis, notes, “The compound epignosis is an advance upon gnosis, denoting a larger and more thorough knowledge...Hence also epignosis is used especially of the knowledge of God and of Christ, as being the perfection of knowledge” (St. Paul’s Epistles to the Colossians and Philemon, page 138).

The verb epiginosko appears 46 times in the NT and the noun epignosis is found 21 times.

Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains, volume 2: (1) To possess more or less definite information about, possibly with a degree of thoroughness or competence – ‘to know about, to know definitely about, knowledge about’ (page 334). (2) The content of what is known – ‘knowledge, what is known’ (page 336).

The Analytical Greek-Lexicon Revised (page 155): (1) The coming at the knowledge of a thing, ascertainment (2) A distinct perception or impression, acknowledgement.

Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, “epignosis, akin to A, No. 3, denotes ‘exact or full knowledge, discernment, recognition,’ and is a strengthened form of No. 1, expressing a fuller or a full ‘knowledge,’ a greater participation by the ‘knower’ in the object ‘known,’ thus more powerfully influencing him. It is not found in the Gospels and Acts. Paul uses it 15 times (16 if (Heb. 10:26) is included) out of the 20 occurrences; Peter 4 times, all in his 2nd Epistle. Contrast (Rom. 1:28) (epignosis) with the simple verb in (v. 21). ‘In all the four Epistles of the first Roman captivity it is an element in the Apostle's opening prayer for his correspondents' well-being, (Phil. 1:9; Eph. 1:17; Col. 1:9; Philem. 6)” (Lightfoot). It is used with reference to God in (Rom. 1:28; 10:2; Eph. 1:17; Col. 1:10; 2 Pet. 1:3); God and Christ, (2 Pet. 1:2); Christ, (Eph. 4:13; 2 Pet. 1:8; 2:20); the will of the Lord, (Col. 1:9); every good thing, (Philem. 6), RV (KJV, ‘acknowledging’); the truth, (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Tim. 2:25), RV; (3:7; Titus 1:1), RV; the mystery of God. (Col. 2:2), RV, ‘(that they) may know’ (KJV, ‘to the acknowledgment of’), lit., ‘into a full knowledge.’ It is used without the mention of an object in (Phil. 1:9; Col. 3:10), RV, ‘(renewed) unto knowledge.’"

The New Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon (page 237): (1) Precise and correct knowledge (2) Knowledge of things ethical and divine (3) Of God, especially knowledge of His holy will and of the blessings which He has bestowed and
constantly bestows on men through Christ (4) Of Christ, i.e., the true knowledge of Christ’s nature, dignity, benefits (5) Of God and Christ, i.e., to keep the knowledge of the one true God which has illumined the soul


Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament, volume 2, page 25: (1) Knowledge as recognition of the will of God that is effective in the conduct of the one who knows God (2) Christian faith.

In Romans 1:28, 3:20 and 10:2, the noun *epignosis* is used in relation to the unbeliever. However, every other instance in which the word appears in the Greek New Testament, it is always used in relation to the believer.

*Epignosis* is used many different adjuncts such as God, Christ, divine-love, truth, divine assets and provisions and the will of God.

In the Greek New Testament, with the exception Romans 1:28 and 3:20, the noun *epignosis* always means “experiential knowledge.”

To experience means, “to personally encounter, observe or undergo something through a process, to have knowledge or practical wisdom gained from what one has observed, encountered or undergone,” and implies being affected by what one meets.

**Romans 10:2**, “For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with an accurate knowledge (*epignosis*).”

In Romans 10:2, the noun *epignosis* refers to the fact that unsaved Israel did not have an “experiential knowledge” of God in the sense that they did not personally encounter God through the process of fellowship as He is revealed in the pages of Scripture so as to be affected by this encounter with the Father. Fellowship with God is experienced by obeying the Father’s will as it is revealed by the Holy Spirit in the Word of God.

**1 John 2:3**, “Now, by means of this, we can confirm that we know Him (the Lord Jesus Christ) experientially: if any of us at any time does observe conscientiously His (the Lord Jesus Christ’s) commands.”

**1 John 2:4**, “The one who at any time does say, ‘I know Him experientially,’ and yet at any time does not observe conscientiously His commands, is a liar and furthermore, the truth is unequivocally not in him.”

**1 John 2:5**, “But, whoever, at any time does observe conscientiously His Word, indeed, in this one, the love for the one and only God is accomplished. By means of this we can confirm that we are at this particular moment in fellowship with Him.”

This encounter would result in the gaining of practical spiritual wisdom and more of the character of Christ.
Ephesians 1:17, “that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a lifestyle of wisdom and of revelation by means of an **experiential knowledge** (*epignosis*) of Him.”

In Ephesians 1:17, the noun *epignosis* means, “experiential knowledge,” which refers to personally encountering through the process of fellowship the Father as He is revealed by God the Holy Spirit through prayerful study of the Word of God and being affected by this encounter with the Father. Fellowship with God is experienced by obeying the Father’s will as it is revealed by the Holy Spirit in the Word of God. This encounter will result in the gaining of practical spiritual wisdom and more of the character of Christ.

Ephesians 4:13, “until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and an **experiential knowledge** (*epignosis*) of the Son of God into a mature man into the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.”

In Ephesians 4:13, the noun *epignosis* refers to an “experiential knowledge” of the Lord Jesus Christ in the sense of personally encountering Him through the process of fellowship as He is revealed by the Holy Spirit in the pages of Scripture and prayer and being affected by this encounter with the Lord. Fellowship with God is experienced by obeying the Father’s will as it is revealed by the Holy Spirit in the Word of God. This encounter will result in the gaining of practical spiritual wisdom and more of the character of Christ.

Colossians 1:9-10, “For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with an **experiential knowledge** (*epignosis*) of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the **accurate knowledge of God**.”

In Colossians 1:9, *epignosis* refers to an “experiential knowledge” of the Father’s will in the sense of personally encountering through the process of experiential sanctification the Father’s will as it is revealed by the Holy Spirit in the pages of Scripture and prayer and being affected by this encounter with the Father’s will. Fellowship with God is experienced by obeying the Father’s will as it is revealed by the Holy Spirit in the Word of God. This encounter with the Father’s will through the process of fellowship will result in the gaining of practical spiritual wisdom and more of the character of Christ.

Colossians 2:2, “that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together by means of divine-love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in an **experiential knowledge** (*epignosis*) of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself.”
Colossians 3:10, “and have put on the new self, the one being renewed for an **experiential knowledge** (*epignosis*) according to the image of the One who created him.”

In Colossians 2:2 and 3:10, the noun *epignosis* refers to an “experiential knowledge” of the Lord Jesus Christ in the sense of personally encountering Him through the process of fellowship as He is revealed by the Holy Spirit in the pages of Scripture and prayer and being affected by this encounter with the Lord. Fellowship with God is experienced by obeying the Father’s will as it is revealed by the Holy Spirit in the Word of God. This encounter with the Lord will result in the gaining of practical spiritual wisdom and more of the character of Christ.

1 Timothy 2:4, “who desires all men to be saved and to come to an **experiential knowledge** (*epignosis*) of the truth.”

2 Timothy 2:25, “with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them a change of mind leading to an **experiential knowledge** (*epignosis*) of the truth.”

2 Timothy 3:7, “always learning and never able to come to an **experiential knowledge** (*epignosis*) of the truth.”

Titus 1:1, “Paul, a bond-servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and an **experiential knowledge** (*epignosis*) of the truth which is according to spirituality.”

Hebrews 10:26, “For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving an **experiential knowledge** (*epignosis*) of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins.”

In 1 Timothy 2:4, 25, 2 Timothy 3:7, Titus 1:1 and Hebrews 10:26, the noun *epignosis* means an “experiential knowledge” of Word of Truth, which is the mind of Christ in the sense of personally encountering through the process of fellowship the mind of Christ as it is revealed by the Holy Spirit in the pages of Scripture and prayer and being affected by this encounter with the mind of Christ. Fellowship with God is experienced by obeying the Father’s will as it is revealed by the Holy Spirit in the Word of God. This encounter results in the gaining of practical spiritual wisdom and more of the character of Christ.

Philippians 1:9, “Now, this I make it a habit to pray that your divine-love might continue to flourish yet more and more by means of a total discerning **experiential knowledge**.”

In Philippians 1:9, the noun *epignosis* refers to an “experiential knowledge” of Christ’s love in the sense of personally encountering through the process of fellowship the love of Christ as it is revealed by the Holy Spirit in the pages of Scripture and prayer and being affected by this encounter with the love of Christ. Fellowship with God is experienced by obeying the Father’s will as it is revealed
by the Holy Spirit in the Word of God. This encounter again will result in the
gaining of practical spiritual wisdom and more of the character of Christ.

Philemon 1:6, “and I pray that the fellowship of your faith may become
effective through an experiential knowledge (epignosis) of every good thing
which is in you for Christ's sake.”

In Philemon 1:6, the noun epignosis refers to an “experiential knowledge” of
every good thing in the sense of personally encountering through the process of
fellowship the divine assets and provisions given to the believer by the Father as
they are revealed by the Holy Spirit in the pages of Scripture and prayer and being
affected by this encounter. Fellowship with God is experienced by obeying the
Father’s will as it is revealed by the Holy Spirit in the Word of God. This
encounter will result in the gaining of practical spiritual wisdom and more of the
character of Christ.

2 Peter 1:2-3, “Grace and peace be multiplied to you by means of an
experiential knowledge (epignosis) of God even Jesus our Lord; seeing that
His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and
spirituality, through an experiential knowledge (epignosis) of the One having
called us by His own glory and excellence.”

2 Peter 1:8, “For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they
render you neither useless nor unfruitful with respect to an experiential
knowledge (epignosis) of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

2 Peter 2:20, “For if after they have escaped the defilements of the world
by an experiential knowledge (epignosis) of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,
they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become
worse for them than the first.”

In 2 Peter 1:2, 8 and 2:20 the noun epignosis refers to an “experiential
knowledge” of the Lord Jesus Christ in the sense of personally encountering Him
through the process of fellowship as He is revealed by the Holy Spirit in the pages
of Scripture and prayer and being affected by this encounter with the Lord.
Fellowship with God is experienced by obeying the Father’s will as it is revealed
by the Holy Spirit in the Word of God. This encounter will result in the gaining of
practical spiritual wisdom and more of the character of Christ.

In Romans 1:28, the word is used in relation to the unbeliever and refers to the
human race never retaining God in the sphere or area of knowledge or in other
words, they never “recognized” or “acknowledged” the existence of God.

Romans 1:28: Furthermore, just as, they never approved of God for the
purpose of retaining (Him) in the realm of knowledge, God, as an eternal
spiritual truth, gave them over to a disapproved intellect in order to
habitually do improper things.”
In Romans 3:20, the noun *epignosis* is used in relation to the unbeliever and means, “awareness, consciousness” of sin.

The noun *epignosis* functions as a “predicate nominative” meaning that it is making an assertion regarding the purpose of the Law, i.e. the Old Testament Scriptures, namely, they make men aware or conscious of sin in their lives. We will translate the noun *epignosis*, “an awareness.”

Then as the adjunct to the noun *epignosis* we have the genitive feminine singular form of the noun *hamartia* (ὁμάρτια) (ham-ar-tee-ah), “sin.”

The noun *hamartia* refers to the old Adamic sin nature. Therefore, the Old Testament Scriptures give a person an awareness that they possess an old Adamic sin nature and are under its power. The old sin nature produces mental, verbal and overt acts of sin through the function of human volition.

The noun functions as an “objective” genitive meaning that it functions as the direct object of the verbal idea implicit in the head noun *epignosis*, “awareness.” We will translate *hamartia*, “sin nature.”

Next, we must note that the apostle Paul employs the figure of ellipsis where the 3rd person singular present active indicative form of the verb *eimi* (ἐιμί), which is omitted but is implied by the context.

The verb *eimi* functions as a substantive and the pronoun “there” is implied in the verb and is the subject, thus indicating *epignosis* is the predicate nominative.

The verb *eimi* denotes something occurring or an event taking place, something happening, or occurring. In Romans 3:20, the verb denotes that “there does come about” an awareness of the sin nature in a person through knowledge of the Scriptures.

The present tense is a “gnomic” present, which describes something as true “any” time and “does” take place. Therefore, it indicates that an awareness of sin “does” take place in a person through the Scriptures.

The active voice is “stative” expressing the mental attitude state of awareness of sin that is arrived at through the Scriptures.

The indicative mood is “declarative” presenting this assertion as a unqualified statement of Bible doctrine or dogmatic statement of fact.

We will translate *eimi*, “there does comes about”

Completed corrected translation of Romans 3:20: **“Because each and every member of sinful humanity will never be justified in His judgment by means of actions produced by obedience to the Law for through the Law there does come about an awareness of the sin nature.”**

The fact that the Law makes man aware of sin in his life is why Paul says in 2 Corinthians 3:6 that the “letter kills.”

2 Corinthians 3:5-6, “Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who also
made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.”

The fact that the Law makes man aware of sin in his life is why he says in 1 Corinthians 15:56 that the power of sin is the Law.

1 Corinthians 15:56, “The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.”

In Romans 7:1-13, the apostle Paul develops this concept in greater detail that one of the purposes of the Law was to make man aware of or conscious of the sin nature in his life.

Romans 7:1-13, “Or do you not know, brethren (for I am speaking to those who know the law), that the law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives? For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband. So then, if while her husband is living she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress though she is joined to another man. Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God. For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death. But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter. What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, ‘YOU SHALL NOT COVET.’ But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin is dead. I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died; and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me; for sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good. Therefore did that which is good become a cause of death for me? May it never be! Rather it was sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by effecting my death through that which is good, so that through the commandment sin would become utterly sinful.”

In Galatians 3:19-25, Paul reveals a four-fold purpose of the Law, i.e. the Old Testament Scriptures.

Galatians 3:19-25, “Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a
mediator, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made. Now a mediator is not for one party only; whereas God is only one. Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law. But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.”

In Galatians 3:19, Paul teaches that the Law reveals sin for what it was until the Promised Seed Jesus Christ should come. Then, in Galatians 3:22, he teaches that the Scriptures shut up all men under the sin nature so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

Next, in Galatians 3:23, the Law kept the human race in custody until men could put their faith in the coming Savior. Lastly, the Law was a tutor to lead the human race to Christ according to Galatians 3:24.

The consummate purpose therefore, for the Law was to reveal to men they are sinners in need of a Savior and to lead them to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.