

Romans 3:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

Analysis

Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Paul applies the catena (vv. 10-18). Ta nomō (τὰ νομῷ, "in the law")—the Old Testament Scriptures just quoted—speaks to tois en tō nomō (τοῖς ἐν τῷ νόμῳ, "those under the law"), i.e., Jews.

The purpose: hina pan stoma phragē (ἴνα πᾶν στόμα φραγῆ, "that every mouth may be stopped")—silenced, no defense left. And hypodikos genētai pas ho kosmos tō theō (ὑπόδικος γένηται πᾶς ὁ κόσμος τῷ Θεῷ, "all the world may become accountable to God"). Hypodikos (ὑπόδικος) is a legal term: liable to judgment, answerable. If Israel, possessing Scripture and covenant, stands condemned by its own Scriptures, then Gentiles have no excuse either. All humanity—Jew and Greek, religious and pagan—is hypodikos before God.

Historical Context

Paul's argument is rhetorically brilliant: he uses Israel's own Scriptures to silence Jewish objections to universal guilt. If the people of the book are condemned by the book, who can claim exemption? This sets up the necessity of justification by faith alone (vv. 21-26).

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. What excuses, comparisons, or self-justifications must be silenced before you can receive grace?
2. How does recognizing your accountability (hypodikos) to God change your approach to sin and righteousness?
3. Why must all mouths be stopped before the gospel can be heard?

Interlinear Text

Οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι ὅσα ὁ νόμω λέγει τοῖς

we know Now that what things soever the law saith G3588 G3588

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ἐν τῷ νόμῳ λαλεῖ ἵνα πᾶς στόμα

to them who are under the law it saith that all mouth

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the law

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it saith

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that

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all

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φραγῇ καὶ ὑπόδικος γένηται πᾶς ὁ κόσμος τῷ

may be stopped and guilty may become all the world G3588 G3588

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may become

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all

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θεῷ.

before God

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Additional Cross-References

Galatians 3:10 (Word): For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

Romans 3:9 (Parallel theme): What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;

Ezekiel 16:63 (References God): That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord GOD.

Psalms 107:42 (Parallel theme): The righteous shall see it, and rejoice: and all iniquity shall stop her mouth.

Romans 3:23 (References God): For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

1 Corinthians 1:29 (Parallel theme): That no flesh should glory in his presence.

Galatians 5:18 (Word): But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

Job 5:16 (Parallel theme): So the poor hath hope, and iniquity stoppeth her mouth.

Romans 1:20 (References God): For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

John 8:9 (Parallel theme): And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.