

A SERIES OF DEVOTIONS BASED ON PAUL'S LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN ROME

THE WHOLE WORLD IS ACCOUNTABLE TO GOD

Romans 3:19 "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 held accountable to God."

How many times have you broken the law? When you drive your car do you come to a complete stop at every stop sign, looked both ways and then, if having the right of way proceed through the intersection? Do you faithfully, without exception, drive within the posted speed limit, never exceeding it? Does your mind wander and you cross over the lane marking without first signaling? Until confronted with these specific points of traffic law, you may not have given thought to the number of times you have disobeyed one or more of them because a police officer has never once pulled you over and issued you a ticket. You have yet to pay a fine for disobeying a traffic law. Nevertheless, you have broken/disobeyed the law.

You live within God's law as well. The difference between being accountable to man's law where there is no consequence unless you "are caught" breaking it, God knows every time you break one of His laws or ignore what He tells you in His word. Whereas living under man's law you only are held accountable if you are "caught" disobeying it, are issued a ticket, or placed under arrest and charged with a crime, God will judge you for having broken every one of His laws.

Paul writes in today's devotional verse you are held accountable to God as you live within His law. Because of His written law you are often aware of having broken it. And then, your conscience, upon which His law is inscribed at your conception, holds you accountable even when you try to silence it. As St. Paul said of Himself when reviewing His life through the lens of God's law, you also must say "O wretched man that I am."

With man's law you may "fudge" as long as you don't get caught. Not so with God's law. It does not discriminate. It says what it says and means what it says. And, as you confess in the Creeds, He will come to "judge the living and the dead."

By God's grace, Jesus took upon Himself God's judgement of your sins. Jesus was condemned to die on Calvary's cross in punishment for your breaking God's laws. He suffered in your place. And, most important of all, God accepts Jesus' death on

the cross in your place as sufficient punishment for your sins, pardons you and declares you guiltless.

Prayer: Grant me, Heavenly Father, Your forgiveness of my sins for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Rock of Ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood, From Thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure; Cleanse me from its guilt and pow'r.

Not the labors of my hands Can fulfill Thy Law's demands;
Could my zeal no respite know, Could my tears forever flow,
All for sin could not atone; Thou must save, and Thou alone.

Nothing in my hand I bring; Simply to Thy cross I cling.
Naked, come to Thee for dress; Helpless, look to Thee for grace;
Foul, I to the fountain fly; Wash me, Savior, or I die.

While I draw this fleeting breath, When mine eyelids close in death,
When I soar to worlds unknown, See Thee on Thy judgment throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee.
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