

Romans Chapter Two

Romans 2:1-2 – Sin is Universal

v1. "WHEREFORE THOU ART WITHOUT EXCUSE, O MAN, WHOSOEVER THOU ART THAT JUDGEST: FOR WHEREIN THOU JUDGES ANOTHER, THOU CONDEMNEST THYSELF; FOR THOU THAT JUDGEST DOST PRACTISE THE SAME THINGS." (ASV)

Paul, who has described the wickedness of the Gentiles who had rejected God and God's law and lived for centuries without God now turns to the Jew and tells him that he isn't any better. They were all guilty of the same thing - rejecting and refusing to obey the law of God.

In looking down upon the Gentile people and condemning them they condemned themselves. This is not an indication that the Jews practiced the same excesses of lust and depravity that the Gentile of that day practiced but that in refusing to accept and obey the laws of God they put themselves in the same position in God's sight - that of being willfully disobedient.

Paul further warns that they, in judging the Gentile in his disobedience, judged themselves as well because they were also disobedient. If you have a reference Bible; the scholars who gave you the references leads you back to:

Matthew 7:1-2 "JUDGE NOT, THAT YE BE NOT JUDGED. FOR WITH WHAT JUDGMENT YE JUDGE, YE SHALL BE JUDGED: AND WITH WHAT MEASURE YE METE, IT SHALL BE MEASURED UNTO YOU." (ASV)

and **John 8:9** where the woman guilty of adultery was brought to Jesus for him to condemn but when confronted with their own sins her accusers one by one slinked off like whipped dogs

"AND THEY, WHEN THEY HEARD IT, WENT OUT ONE BY ONE, BEGINNING FROM THE ELDEST, EVEN UNTO THE LAST: AND JESUS WAS LEFT ALONE, AND THE WOMAN, WHERE SHE WAS, IN THE MIDST." (ASV)

This does not forbid judging. Jesus said in **John 7:24** to "judge righteous judgment". **Hebrews 5:14** "discern good and evil".

v2. "AND WE KNOW THAT THE JUDGMENT OF GOD IS ACCORDING TO TRUTH AGAINST THEM THAT PRACTISE SUCH THINGS." (ASV)

It doesn't matter who we are, Jew, Gentile, rich, poor, weak, strong, Christian or not Christian if we do things contrary to God's law; God's justice and righteousness will prevail. He won't spare any of us.

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Romans 2:3-5 – The Certainty of Divine Judgment

v3. "AND RECKONEST THOU THIS, O MAN, WHO JUDGEST THEM THAT PRACTISE SUCH THINGS, AND DOEST THE SAME, THAT THOU SHALT ESCAPE THE JUDGMENT OF GOD?" (ASV)

Because God had not brought his judgment down upon the Jew to the extent that he had the Gentile - having abandoned them to their lusts and depravity - the Jews thought that they had special favour just because they were Jews. Their nation and genealogy had been protected in order to bring the Son of God into the world as God had promised so long ago. But that wasn't because they were such good people was it? What about the times that they rejected and refused to obey God, even though they had closer, more first-hand knowledge of God than any other race of people? They expected God to overlook in them the very things that they would not overlook in their fellowman, the Gentile, because they had special privilege. This false trust is rebuked by

John the Baptizer:

Matthew 3:7-9 "BUT WHEN HE SAW MANY OF THE PHARISEES AND SADDUCEES COMING TO HIS BAPTISM, HE SAID UNTO THEM, YE OFFSPRING OF VIPERS, WHO WARNED YOU TO FLEE FROM THE WRATH TO COME? BRING FORTH THEREFORE FRUIT WORTHY OF REPENTANCE: AND THINK NOT TO SAY WITHIN YOURSELVES, WE HAVE ABRAHAM TO OUR FATHER: FOR I SAY UNTO YOU, THAT GOD IS ABLE OF THESE STONES TO RAISE UP CHILDREN UNTO ABRAHAM." (ASV)

Are men who will not humble themselves to the obedience of God's law not in danger of the same today? Are not those who claim to be God's children but tamper with the word of God that He has given us and made laws and interpretations unto themselves just as guilty of sin as the Pharisee of John's day? Are we not in danger of joining them if we let the same attitudes prevail within us as well?

v4. "OR DESPISEST THOU THE RICHES OF HIS GOODNESS AND FORBEARANCE AND LONGSUFFERING, NOT KNOWING THAT THE GOODNESS OF GOD LEADETH THEE TO REPENTANCE?" (ASV)

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Does the Jew, or we for that matter, imagine that because of who we think we are; that we can escape the wrath of God in the day of judgment? Do we despise God's goodness, patience and longsuffering because he has waited for us to repent and turn, or return, to him? Have we taken advantage of God's patience and longsuffering thinking that no punishment will be forthcoming? Or that we are nowhere near the time that God will give us here on this earth? God patiently tolerated the Jews in their disobedience and rejection in order to bring about his own purpose and to give them all the time he could to repent and accept Him. The purpose of His goodness was to bring them to repentance and obedience. Didn't they recognize that?

The scripture tells us of God's nature in this respect:

"AND THEREFORE WILL JEHOVAH WAIT, THAT HE MAY BE GRACIOUS UNTO YOU; AND THEREFORE WILL HE BE EXALTED, THAT HE MAY HAVE MERCY UPON YOU: FOR JEHOVAH IS A GOD OF JUSTICE; BLESSED ARE ALL THEY THAT WAIT FOR HIM." **Isaiah 30:18** (ASV)

and it is in him that we will find forgiveness:

"IN WHOM WE HAVE OUR REDEMPTION THROUGH HIS BLOOD, THE FORGIVENESS OF OUR TRESPASSES, ACCORDING TO THE RICHES OF HIS GRACE," **Ephesians 1:7** (ASV)

and:

"THE LORD IS NOT SLACK CONCERNING HIS PROMISE, AS SOME COUNT SLACKNESS; BUT IS LONGSUFFERING TO YOU-WARD, NOT WISHING THAT ANY SHOULD PERISH, BUT THAT ALL SHOULD COME TO REPENTANCE." **II Peter 3:9** (ASV)

Peter goes on in verse 15 of the same chapter to tell us this:

"AND ACCOUNT THAT THE LONGSUFFERING OF OUR LORD IS SALVATION; EVEN AS OUR BELOVED BROTHER PAUL ALSO, ACCORDING TO THE WISDOM GIVEN TO HIM, WROTE UNTO YOU;" **II Peter 3:15** (ASV)

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v5. "BUT AFTER THY HARDNESS AND IMPENITENT HEART TREASUREST UP FOR THYSELF WRATH IN THE DAY OF WRATH AND REVELATION OF THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT OF GOD;" (ASV)

Rather than allowing God's goodness, longsuffering, forbearance, and patience that was for the purpose of waiting for them to wake up and return to him; the Jews mocked him by using his patience to add to their sins - thinking or living like no judgment was ever to come. Paul says that in doing this; taking advantage of God's patience; they were actually storing up added wrath. They were placing themselves in danger of a more severe judgment that would come with the ultimate revelation of God at the end of time.

Moses also records in the schoolmaster for our learning this charge against those who don't believe in God's wrath or vengeance:

"FOR THEIR VINE IS OF THE VINE OF SODOM, AND OF THE FIELDS OF GOMORRAH: THEIR GRAPES ARE GRAPES OF GALL, THEIR CLUSTERS ARE BITTER: THEIR WINE IS THE POISON OF SERPENTS, AND THE CRUEL VENOM OF ASPES. IS NOT THIS LAID UP IN STORE WITH ME, SEALED UP AMONG MY TREASURES? VENGEANCE IS MINE, AND RECOMPENSE, AT THE TIME WHEN THEIR FOOT SHALL SLIDE: FOR THE DAY OF THEIR CALAMITY IS AT HAND, AND THE THINGS THAT ARE TO COME UPON THEM SHALL MAKE HASTE. FOR JEHOVAH WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE, AND REPENT HIMSELF FOR HIS SERVANTS; WHEN HE SEETH THAT THEIR POWER IS GONE, AND THERE IS NONE REMAINING, SHUT UP OR LEFT AT LARGE." **Deuteronomy 32:32-36** (ASV)

Romans 2:6-13 – Judgment According to Works

v6. "WHO WILL RENDER TO EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS WORKS:" (ASV)

The wise man Solomon tells us of this:

"IF THOU SAYEST, BEHOLD, WE KNEW NOT THIS; DOTHT NOT HE THAT WEIGHETH THE HEARTS CONSIDER IT? AND HE THAT KEEPETH THY SOUL, DOTHT NOT HE KNOW IT? AND SHALL NOT HE RENDER TO EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS WORK?" **Proverbs 24:12** (ASV)

Paul tells us also:

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I Corinthians 3:8 "NOW HE THAT PLANTETH AND HE THAT WATERETH ARE ONE: BUT EACH SHALL RECEIVE HIS OWN REWARD ACCORDING TO HIS OWN LABOR." (ASV)

John, very near the end of his record of God's revelation, give us the words of Jesus:

"BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY; AND MY REWARD IS WITH ME, TO RENDER TO EACH MAN ACCORDING AS HIS WORK IS." **Revelation. 22:12** (ASV)

v.7 "TO THEM THAT BY PATIENCE IN WELL-DOING SEEK FOR GLORY AND HONOR AND INCORRUPTION, ETERNAL LIFE:(ASV)

Here Paul gives us assurance, the confirmation of our reward for righteous living, eternal life with God.

To those who seek for glory, honor and incorruption, through faith in doing the will of God, he will provide the blessings of eternal life. Their lot will be to live in the happiness and joy of the saved, in the honor of being in God's kingdom and the freedom from suffering, pain and trouble in the next world. This should cause us to come with joy before the Lord in worship, seeking to do his will, seeking to please Him in everything that we do. But many don't:

v8-9. " BUT UNTO THEM THAT ARE FACTIOUS, AND OBEY NOT THE TRUTH, BUT OBEY UNRIGHTEOUSNESS, SHALL BE WRATH AND INDIGNATION, TRIBULATION AND ANGUISH, UPON EVERY SOUL OF MAN THAT WORKETH EVIL, OF THE JEW FIRST, AND ALSO OF THE GREEK;" (ASV)

There is no in between, there is no room in God's realm of the blessed for the lukewarm, the half hearted, the half convinced or half-converted, those that would dabble in a little righteousness on Sunday and play in the devil's sandbox the rest of the week.

He mentions specifically those who are factious, contentious (KJV) but contentious about what? Those who preach and teach in the spirit of a hireling, self-seeking, promoting their own agenda's rather than God's; those who create factions or divisions in men's thinking; those who spread principles that are contrary to God's will and maintain them by disputings. This is the condition of many during this age, those who dispute themselves into unbelief of the simplest and plainest of the principles of God's law as found in His Word.

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They are those who argue in support of every supposedly religious notion of man; regardless of how foreign it may be in terms of God's word.

He is speaking of those that continue to willfully refuse to do what God requires of them; obeying instead unrighteousness. God's wrath and indignation will be visited upon them; tribulation and anguish will be their lot with no respect of persons; all men will be treated exactly alike.

We have plenty of instances in scripture where this promise is made: God through his prophet Amos warns the nation of Israel:

"YOU ONLY HAVE I KNOWN OF ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH:
THEREFORE I WILL VISIT UPON YOU ALL YOUR INIQUITIES." **Amos 3:2**
(ASV)

God continues to warn us through his Son:

"AND THAT SERVANT, WHO KNEW HIS LORD'S WILL, AND MADE NOT
READY, NOR DID ACCORDING TO HIS WILL, SHALL BE BEATEN WITH
MANY STRIPES;" **Luke 12:47** (ASV)

The apostle Peter asks simply this question:

"FOR THE TIME IS COME FOR JUDGMENT TO BEGIN AT THE HOUSE
OF GOD: AND IF IT BEGIN FIRST AT US, WHAT SHALL BE THE END
OF THEM THAT OBEY NOT THE GOSPEL OF GOD?" **I Peter 4:17** (ASV)

v.10-11 "BUT GLORY AND HONOR AND PEACE TO EVERY MAN THAT
WORKETH GOOD, TO THE JEW FIRST, AND ALSO TO THE GREEK: FOR
THERE IS NO RESPECT OF PERSONS WITH GOD." (ASV)

For those who do good God will bring honor and peace. These blessings shall come first to the Jew and then to the Gentile. God does not deal with man by partiality:

"BUT IN EVERY NATION HE THAT FEARETH HIM, AND WORKETH
RIGHTEOUSNESS, IS ACCEPTABLE TO HIM." **Acts 10:35** (ASV)

This is part of Peter's sermon at the conversion and baptism of Cornelius and is rooted deeply in the teaching of God's word. Even in the Old Law:

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"FOR JEHOVAH YOUR GOD, HE IS GOD OF GODS, AND LORD OF LORDS, THE GREAT GOD, THE MIGHTY, AND THE TERRIBLE, WHO REGARDETH NOT PERSONS, NOR TAKETH REWARD." **Deuteronomy. 10:17** (ASV)

Job declares in the book named for him that God cannot be unjust

"THAT RESPECTETH NOT THE PERSONS OF PRINCES, NOR REGARDETH THE RICH MORE THAN THE POOR; FOR THEY ALL ARE THE WORK OF HIS HANDS." **Job 34:19** (ASV)

We are all the works of the same God but the Jews trusted in their relationship with God as a result of their being the sons or descendants of Abraham. They thought that this relationship made them better than other people. Most importantly, they thought that this relationship made them above needing to listen to the words of the carpenter from Nazareth; they told Jesus:

"THEY ANSWERED AND SAID UNTO HIM, OUR FATHER IS ABRAHAM. JESUS SAITH UNTO THEM, IF YE WERE ABRAHAM'S CHILDREN, YE WOULD DO THE WORKS OF ABRAHAM." **John 8:39** (ASV)

But as Paul reminds the Colossian brethren, God doesn't care who we think we are:

"FOR HE THAT DOETH WRONG SHALL RECEIVE AGAIN FOR THE WRONG THAT HE HATH DONE: AND THERE IS NO RESPECT OF PERSONS." **Colossians 3:25** (ASV)

v12. "FOR AS MANY AS HAVE SINNED WITHOUT LAW SHALL ALSO PERISH WITHOUT THE LAW: AND AS MANY AS HAVE SINNED UNDER THE LAW SHALL BE JUDGED BY THE LAW;" (ASV)

If sin is transgression of the law (**I John 3:4**) how can those described in this verse that are "WITHOUT LAW" sin? If you are using ASV or RSV, or any number of other translations this verse reads "WITHOUT THE LAW" referring specifically to the Mosaic covenant.

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Before God made that covenant with the children of Israel mankind had a law from God through Noah, his sons and their descendants. It was given through the patriarchs, not only those such as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob but before them. It was the same law of God that Moses and the Israelite nation lived under before Sinai. It was a law that was never rescinded or replaced for anyone other than the nation of Israel until Christ died on Calvary.

But if the Jews under the Mosaic covenant sinned, they were condemned by that law, and so perish. All who sin, whether within the Mosaic covenant or outside of the Mosaic covenant will perish as a result of their refusal to obey God's law for mankind.

v13. "FOR NOT THE HEARERS OF THE LAW ARE JUST BEFORE GOD, BUT THE DOERS OF THE LAW SHALL BE JUSTIFIED:" (ASV)

James gives us instruction regarding being a "DOER" of the word. Turn and read **James 1:22-25**:

"BUT BE YE DOERS OF THE WORD, AND NOT HEARERS ONLY, DELUDING YOUR OWN SELVES. FOR IF ANY ONE IS A HEARER OF THE WORD AND NOT A DOER, HE IS LIKE UNTO A MAN BEHOLDING HIS NATURAL FACE IN A MIRROR: FOR HE BEHOLDETH HIMSELF, AND GOETH AWAY, AND STRAIGHTWAY FORGETTETH WHAT MANNER OF MAN HE WAS. BUT HE THAT LOOKETH INTO THE PERFECT LAW, THE LAW OF LIBERTY, AND SO CONTINUETH, BEING NOT A HEARER THAT FORGETTETH BUT A DOER THAT WORKETH, THIS MAN SHALL BE BLESSED IN HIS DOING." (ASV)

The Gentiles had abandoned their law and lived according to their own lusts and desires; except for a few such as Cornelius. The Jews heard the law, but refused to obey it. Just as we just read in James: hearing the law will not help a man unless he obeys it.

The Holy Spirit reminds us through the apostle John also:

"MY LITTLE CHILDREN, LET NO MAN LEAD YOU ASTRAY: HE THAT DOETH RIGHTEOUSNESS IS RIGHTEOUS, EVEN AS HE IS RIGHTEOUS:" **I John 3:7** (ASV)

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Romans 2:14-21 – The Condition of Obedient Gentiles

v14. "(FOR WHEN GENTILES THAT HAVE NOT THE LAW DO BY NATURE THE THINGS OF THE LAW, THESE, NOT HAVING THE LAW, ARE THE LAW UNTO THEMSELVES;" (ASV)

The reference here is made again to the Mosaic Law. Paul tells us that even though God did not give the law unto the Gentiles, yet when they did by nature, not by command, the things of the law, they became the law unto themselves, and were acceptable. Some Gentiles, like Cornelius, living among the Jews, attracted by the superiority of the God of the Jews and the holiness of his law, while not formally coming under it, rendered honor to God. This was not uncommon, neither was it something peculiar to the time of the New Testament

We can read in **II Chronicles 2:17**:

"AND SOLOMON NUMBERED ALL THE SOJOURNERS THAT WERE IN THE LAND OF ISRAEL, AFTER THE NUMBERING WHEREWITH DAVID HIS FATHER HAD NUMBERED THEM; AND THEY WERE FOUND A HUNDRED AND FIFTY THOUSAND AND THREE THOUSAND AND SIX HUNDRED." (ASV)

Bible scholars tell us that these 153,600 "sojourners" were people who, while not Israelites, were people who accepted God's law to his people and served God even though they were Gentiles or strangers. We also see a similar situation all the way back to Sinai where God give commandments concerning the treatment of sojourners and strangers in Israel in **Exodus 22:21**.

v15. "IN THAT THEY SHOW THE WORK OF THE LAW WRITTEN IN THEIR HEARTS, THEIR CONSCIENCE BEARING WITNESS THEREWITH, AND THEIR THOUGHTS ONE WITH ANOTHER ACCUSING OR ELSE EXCUSING THEM);" (ASV)

Those who kept God's law, even though they were not under it, show that it was written in their hearts. This cannot mean that their hearts prompted them to do what was in the law while ignorant of it, but that their hearts -- their understanding, their will, their affection -- embraced the law, and that they obeyed the law of the covenant because they loved God. The Gentiles might know the law, and while it was not given to them, they might from the love of God keep it, and in so doing become a law unto themselves.

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Their conscience and because of the prompting of their conscience, their works, in such cases would bear witness of their love. This passage is often quoted to prove that man can be saved without obeying the commands of God; all he needs to do is live in good conscience. No context in the Bible can be found that is further from this notion than these verses. Even those not having the Mosaic Law must be saved through doing the things contained in the law that they were given. Compliance with God's law is the essential prerequisite to salvation. Hence, conscience is not a law even unto those who did not have the Mosaic covenant. The conscience bears witness as to what is in our hearts; either accusing or excusing us. The man who renders acceptable service to God must have a good conscience; but just a good conscience alone will not gain any of us any promise of divine blessings.

v16. "IN THE DAY WHEN GOD SHALL JUDGE THE SECRETS OF MEN, ACCORDING TO MY GOSPEL, BY JESUS CHRIST." (ASV)

Verse 16 is actually a continuation of the thought in verse 12; turn back and read it. The verses 13-15 that are found in between are an aside, a parenthetical explanation to help us understand what the Holy Spirit in this instance wants us to understand. All who have sinned by transgressing God's law, shall be judged by God's law in the day when God shall judge all of the secrets of men. All secrets and hidden things of man will be laid open by God in the last day by the words of Jesus Christ and judged in the light of this same gospel preached by Paul.

Jesus tells us of the occasion of his coming:

Matthew 25:31 "BUT WHEN THE SON OF MAN SHALL COME IN HIS GLORY, AND ALL THE ANGELS WITH HIM, THEN SHALL HE SIT ON THE THRONE OF HIS GLORY:" (ASV)

Have no doubt, judgment is coming; Peter tells us in **Acts 10:42** that the apostles were "...COMMANDED...TO PREACH UNTO THE PEOPLE, AND TO TESTIFY THAT IT IS HE WHICH WAS ORDAINED OF GOD **to be** THE JUDGE OF QUICK AND DEAD." (This is translation error "to be" shouldn't be here, God is our judge not Jesus, **Hebrews 12:23**; we are judged by the words of Jesus but our judge is God).

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Paul tells us that the law was made for a variety of things but lumps them into the single category of "MY GOSPEL" at the end of this particular thought similar to "...AND IF THERE BE ANY OTHER THING CONTRARY TO THE SOUND DOCTRINE; ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL OF THE GLORY OF THE BLESSED GOD, WHICH WAS COMMITTED TO MY TRUST." **I Timothy 1:10-11 (ASV)**

Paul uses this declaration that the words of Jesus will be used to judge the quick and the dead to encourage Timothy to "PREACH THE WORD" **II Timothy 4:2**

v17. "BUT IF THOU BEAREST THE NAME OF A JEW, AND RESTEST UPON THE LAW, AND GLORIEST IN GOD," (ASV)

Paul describes here and in the following verses the self-confident and boastful attitude of the Jews. They were the children of Abraham, God's chosen. They were content to rest upon the fact that they had the law and in their estimation the mere fact that God had bestowed his law upon them indicated that they had a special place or enjoyed special favor in God's sight. They boasted that they were the favored of God after the flesh, as if he were their special guardian.

We referred earlier in this study of this very attitude expressed in **John 8:33-34**

"THEY ANSWERED UNTO HIM, WE ARE ABRAHAM'S SEED, AND HAVE NEVER YET BEEN IN BONDAGE TO ANY MAN: HOW SAYEST THOU, YE SHALL BE MADE FREE? JESUS ANSWERED THEM, VERILY, VERILY, I SAY UNTO YOU, EVERY ONE THAT COMMITTETH SIN IS THE BONDSERVANT OF SIN." (ASV)

v18. "AND KNOWEST HIS WILL, AND APPROVEST THE THINGS THAT ARE EXCELLENT, BEING INSTRUCTED OUT OF THE LAW;" (ASV)

The Jews possessed the divine revelation, given to the prophets, recorded in their writings and claimed to know God's will. The problem is that they regarded mere knowledge of God's will as a mark of superiority and made it in their own minds the grounds of being acceptable unto God. They claimed that they understood and judged that which is best. Having been instructed out of the Mosaic Law and the writings of the prophets from their childhood, they claimed superiority of judgment in these matters. Can we fall into this same trap today?

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v19. "AND ART CONFIDENT THAT THOU THYSELF ART A GUIDE OF THE BLIND, A LIGHT OF THEM THAT ARE IN DARKNESS," (ASV)

They never doubted their knowledge of the truth and of their ability to guide and teach the Gentiles, whom they regarded as blind and in darkness and alienation from God. They also thought that they had greatly improved the law of God by adding the customs and traditions of the elders.

Jesus, however, had another idea about these people who thought this:

"LET THEM ALONE: THEY ARE BLIND GUIDES. AND IF THE BLIND GUIDE THE BLIND, BOTH SHALL FALL INTO A PIT." **Matthew 15:14** (ASV)

v20. "A CORRECTOR OF THE FOOLISH, A TEACHER OF BABES, HAVING IN THE LAW THE FORM OF KNOWLEDGE AND OF THE TRUTH;" (ASV)

They felt confident that they were able to correct the foolish and teach those who did not have an understanding of God's will. They had the form, or letter, of knowledge and truth in the law, but did not understand its true spirit; did not take it into their hearts and allow it to influence their lives.

Paul warned the young preacher, Timothy, about people who hold this attitude:

II Timothy 3:5 "HOLDING A FORM OF GODLINESS, BUT HAVING DENIED THE POWER THEREFORE. FROM THESE ALSO TURN AWAY" (ASV)

v21. "THOU THEREFORE THAT TEACHEST ANOTHER, TEACHEST THOU NOT THYSELF? THOU THAT PREACHEST A MAN SHOULD NOT STEAL, DOST THOU STEAL?" (ASV)

Because they held only a form of truth without allowing it to penetrate their hearts and lives and guide their thoughts and actions they did not practice what they taught or preached. While they taught the law, "Thou shalt not steal," they themselves stole, cheated, defrauded, and misrepresented. They were gross hypocrites and Jesus called them hypocrites:

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Matthew 23:1-3 "THEN SPAKE JESUS TO THE MULTITUDES AND TO HIS DISCIPLES, SAYING, THE SCRIBES AND THE PHARISEES SIT ON MOSES SEAT: ALL THINGS THEREFORE WHATSOEVER THEY BID YOU, THESE DO AND OBSERVE: BUT DO NOT YE AFTER THEIR WORKS; FOR THEY SAY, AND DO NOT." (ASV)

Romans 2:22-23 – The Guilt of the Jews

v22. "THOU THAT SAYEST A MAN SHOULD NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, DOST THOU COMMIT ADULTERY? THOU THAT ABHORREST IDOLS, DOST THOU ROB TEMPLES?" (ASV)

There is no doubt that this was a very common practice among the Jews, (just as it is today) showing itself today in the corrupt practice of permitting divorce without reasonable or righteous cause. Thereby either committing adultery themselves or allowing and condoning others to live in adultery.

They were horror-stricken at the very mention of idols, but they themselves committed sacrilege that was just as bad as the idol worshipper by setting aside the law of God and substituting the ideas and traditions of their elders in its place. We have the same situation in the denominations and among our denominationally minded brethren today.

v23. "THOU WHO GLORIEST IN THE LAW, THROUGH THY TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW DISHONOREST THOU GOD?" (ASV)

He makes the direct charge that while they boasted of being the guardians of, and supporters of, the law, that while they professed to be obedient to that law; they were actually dishonoring God by breaking it.

Romans 2:24-26 – The Evil Influence of the Disobedient Jew

v24. "FOR THE NAME OF GOD IS BLASPHEMED AMONG THE GENTILES BECAUSE OF YOU, EVEN AS IT IS WRITTEN." (ASV)

As it is written: because of the disobedience of God's people; the name of God was blasphemed, because of God's punishment of their sins the Gentiles peoples around them spoke against their God. This was the natural result of their captivity in Egypt, the disbursement of the ten tribes by Assyria and the captivity of Judea in Babylon:

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"NOW THEREFORE, WHAT DO I HERE, SAITH JEHOVAH, SEEING THAT MY PEOPLE IS TAKEN AWAY FOR NOUGHT? THEY THAT RULE OVER THEM DO HOWL, SAITH JEHOVAH, AND MY NAME CONTINUALLY ALL THE DAY IS BLASPHEMED." **Isaiah 52:5** (ASV)

In addition; **Ezekiel 36:18-24** is a long condemnation of the Israelite nation because they had brought shame upon themselves and ridicule against God's name by their refusal to serve him. God's name was reproached and blasphemed among the Gentiles because of the violation of God's law by the Jews. The dishonor to God arose from their greed of gain, their deceit, and their hypocrisy, which were fully known to the Gentiles among whom they lived.

v25. "FOR CIRCUMCISION INDEED PROFITETH, IF THOU BE A DOER OF THE LAW: BUT IF THOU BE A TRANSGRESSOR OF THE LAW, THY CIRCUMCISION IS BECOME UNCIRCUMCISION." (ASV)

Circumcision was the mark of the people of God and was given as a sign that they were bound or consecrated to the service of God. What Paul is telling them is that if they didn't serve or obey the God that this mark indicated they should serve; then the mark meant nothing. If the law was not kept, being a son of Abraham, having the law, and being circumcised were useless. Everything depends on keeping the law of God. The same general principle holds true under the gospel. Faith is worthless without repentance, and so is baptism without faith; and coming into Christ is useless unless it is followed by a life of devotion to God.

v26. "IF THEREFORE THE UNCIRCUMCISION KEEP THE ORDINANCES OF THE LAW, SHALL NOT HIS UNCIRCUMCISION BE RECKONED FOR CIRCUMCISION?" (ASV)

Paul now provides the Roman Christians with what we would call the other side of the situation. In common logic if the basic premise is something that is true; then a related proposition must be true as well. The purpose for the giving of the Mosaic Law was to provide the means for God's people to be righteous in the sight of God. So then if the Gentiles, who were uncircumcised, who were not God's chosen people, kept God's law, then the purpose of circumcision was accomplished better in them than it was in those who were circumcised, but didn't keep God's law. The Gentile who obeyed the law was a better Jew than the Jew who did not obey the law.

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We might even apply that same analogy to Christians today; those who keep the law of Christ, even though they are not children of God; have not been born into his family, are not citizens of his kingdom; are better examples of the Christian life than those who have been born in God's kingdom and refuse to obey his laws. They are not justified, they are not saved but they would be better examples of the righteousness of God.

Romans 2:27 – The Obedient Gentile is Judge of the Disobedient Jew

v27. "AND SHALL NOT THE UNCIRCUMCISION WHICH IS BY NATURE, IF IT FULFIL THE LAW, JUDGE THEE, WHO WITH THE LETTER AND CIRCUMCISION ART A TRANSGRESSOR OF THE LAW?" (ASV)

If the uncircumcised, who were not under the law of God and to whom it was not given, keep it, they condemn those who are circumcised, who are under the law, who are God's children, but who fail to keep His law.

Romans 2:28-29 – Definition of a True Israelite

v28-29. "FOR HE IS NOT A JEW WHO IS ONE OUTWARDLY; NEITHER IS THAT CIRCUMCISION WHICH IS OUTWARD IN THE FLESH: BUT HE IS A JEW WHO IS ONE INWARDLY; AND CIRCUMCISION IS THAT OF THE HEART, IN THE SPIRIT NOT IN THE LETTER; WHOSE PRAISE IS NOT OF MEN, BUT OF GOD." (ASV)

The name "Jew" here is used by Paul here to indicate the true servant of God; someone who kept God's law and walked in the steps of Abraham. He was not a good "Jew" who observed the outward form of the law, but failed from the heart to keep its precepts. He was a true "Jew", approved of God, who was one inwardly, and whose circumcision was that of the heart. It is the hidden man of the heart; not the outward man with his outward circumcision and physical performance of the rituals of the law; that will meet with the approval of God.

This is the reason for Paul's writing to the Colossian brethren that:

"IN WHOM YE WERE ALSO CIRCUMCISED WITH A CIRCUMCISION NOT MADE WITH HANDS, IN THE PUTTING OFF OF THE BODY OF THE FLESH, IN THE CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST; HAVING BEEN BURIED WITH HIM IN BAPTISM, WHEREIN YE WERE ALSO RAISED WITH *him* THROUGH FAITH IN THE WORKING OF GOD, WHO RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD."
(Colossians 2:11-12 ASV)

Romans Chapter Two

And to the Philippians:

"FOR WE ARE THE CIRCUMCISION, WHO WORSHIP BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD, AND GLORY IN CHRIST JESUS, AND HAVE NO CONFIDENCE IN THE FLESH." **Philippians 3:3** ASV

The outward manifestation of ritualistic, physical performance of God's commandments did not justify the Israelite and will not justify the Christian today. Participating in baptism just as another ritual, attending the worship service, partaking of the Lord's Supper, and any of the other things we might do as obedience to God's laws will not save us if our hearts, if our mindset is not one of real love for God and the motivation behind our actions.

This whole section of this chapter shows that religious privileges, resulting from birth, the revelation of God's will, ritual observances, or knowledge of God's word actually increase the guilt of those whose daily living does not reflect their love for God and His commandments. The Jews, especially the Pharisees, were very eager for the praise of men and much of what they did as worship was for that purpose. But the true Jew, the real child of Abraham by faith (and the worship and service of the true Christian) will have what is infinitely better -- the approval and praise of God.