

Romans 2

1. Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.

A. Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest:

1. The “therefore” means we will build upon the truths taught in ch 1.
2. Specifically verse 1:20 (“so that they are without excuse.”)
3. This word is designed to show the Jews that they were no less guilty than the Gentiles.
4. The Jews, who had a form of religion, felt that they knew how bad the Gentiles had been living. We still see this today. Religious does not = right.
5. They seemed to be comfortable passing judgment on the Gentiles. We are all familiar with AP. The word apologetics means ‘to make a defense.’ “Inexcusable” comes from the Gr word anapologetos.
 - a. The judging condemned here is hypocritical judging.
 - b. Righteous judgment is commanded: John 7:24.
 1. Matt 7:1-5 is often misrepresented.
 2. Anything that we say Matt 7 means has to agree with 1 Thess 5:21, 22 and 1 Jn 4:1.
 3. Later on in Matt 7 judgment is required (vs 15-20).
 - c. It is impossible for us to function without being able to judge.
6. This did not apply to every man (person), but only to those who judge unjustly or unfairly.
 - a. Not all Jews, not all Gentiles were under this indictment.
 - b. The Jews did have a reputation of disliking other nations: e.g., John 4:9 Samaritans; Acts 10:28, a Roman, a Gentile.

B. For wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself;

1. When these people judged others for doing wrong they condemned themselves.
2. How did they condemn themselves? When they said a certain act violated the will of God, then turned around and did the same thing, they were admitting that they knew better but did it anyway.
3. Jewish born Christians thought of themselves as better Christians because they were Jews.

4. We see the same mentality in our world. Wrong side of tracks, middle school boys and what sneaker they wear. Purse, jeans...

C. For thou that judgest doest the same things.

1. From the lips of Jesus He said the Jews were “a generation of vipers (Matt 3:7).
 - a. “...an evil and adulterous generation” (Matt 12:39).
 - b. “...wicked generation” (Matt 12:45).
 - c. Proud, haughty and hypocritical ((Matt 23).
2. When we condemn a person for doing a thing, then turn right around and do the same thing, we are hypocrites. Thus, we condemn ourselves, Rom 2:21, 22.
4. When we sit in judgment of others hypocritically, we condemn ourselves.
5. Haman built the gallows to hang Mordecai, they used that very gallows to hang Haman.
6. He was guilty of what he condemned. We need to tread softly with our words of condemnation.
7. Context: Jews were just as guilty as the Gentiles.
 - a. Condemning another nation or race simply for being another nation. We would say this is being prejudice.
 - b. Nothing wrong with being proud of your heritage. Lots wrong with thinking one is better than another.
8. People are prone to be severe judges of others.
 - a. Perhaps more so when guilty of same offense.
 - b. Drinkers condemning drinking. Smokers, drugs...etc.
 - c. Example in John 8:1 ff woman taken in adultery. (vs 7) “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.”
 - d. Nathan teaching David in 2 Sam 12:1-6.
 - e. Always remember to check your own heart. If we condemn another are we guilty of the same type of thing?

Rom 2:1 "Well," you may be saying, "what terrible people you have been talking about!" But wait a minute! You are just as bad. When you say they are wicked and should be punished, you are talking about yourselves, for you do these very same things.

9. This was one of those “pot, kettle” situations.

2. But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.

A. But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth:

1. Have you ever been misjudged? It always hurts.

2. The judgment of God will not be hypocritical.
3. Judgment will be according to truth.
4. John 12:48; Hebrews 4:12, 13.

B. Against them which commit such things.

1. The judgment of God will be against them that do such things.
2. There are some actions that are right in the sight of God and there are some actions which are wrong.
3. Truth is absolute and attainable. We can know what is right and wrong in the sight of God.
4. The words “But we are sure...” literally means “we know.” Inspired confidence. Recorded by an inspired apostle about truth.
5. In our minds we ‘may think we know,’ ‘we may be pretty sure,’ but if we have God’s guidance, “we are sure.”
6. This is because there is a real and knowable standard: God’s word.
 - a. Your ideas and my ideas on a matter may not line up. God gets the final vote.
 - b. We are all entitled to an opinion, but we have to remember, it is just our opinion, not gospel.

3. *And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?*

A. And thinkest thou this, O man.

1. We sometimes get our thinking all messed up.
2. We think the word of God applies to the other person, but not to us.
3. This is a basic appeal to common sense.

B. That judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?

1. The Jews were quick to condemn the Gentiles for various sins and yet were guilty of the same things.
2. We cannot escape the judgment of God because we are able to point out sins in the lives of others.
3. Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14.
4. This mentality was the point of John the baptizer saying, “And think not to say within yourself, We have Abraham to our father...” Matt 3:7-9.
5. The privilege of birth into a society or race means nothing for our salvation. We still have to obey and live the life.
6. It is difficult to know what the Christian Jews may have been thinking, but perhaps their earthly history caused them to think:
 - a. Maybe our relationship to Abraham will help.
 - b. Maybe our knowledge of the Law of Moses will benefit.

- c. Maybe our circumcision will give us an edge.
- d. Maybe the merits of our forefathers will bring good will.
- 7. And we, in our advanced age and intelligence say, do not be fools.
 - a. Yet, we think wealth and power will help us.
 - b. Worship attendance alone will save us.
 - c. That makes us like the Jewish Christians, no better.
 - d. The only escape in this world is thru Christ (Acts 4:12) just like the only escape from the flood was in Noah's ark (1 Pet 3:20, 21).
 - e. Robertson had an interesting approach, he said the words "and doest the same" mean "and doest them occasionally."

4. Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

A. Or despises thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering.

1. The "riches" here is revealed as God's goodness, God's forbearance and God's longsuffering.
 - a. The riches of His goodness = His abundance, His wealth.
 - b. The riches of His forbearance = His holding in His restraint. Not unleashing His anger at our sins.
 - c. The riches of His longsuffering = His patience in dealing with wicked and sinful humans. Giving us time to help ourselves out of the trouble we get into, 2 Pet 3:9.
2. Some people believe they are getting away with sin just because they do not have to answer for their sins today.
 - a. Lightning didn't strike me, I must be ok.
 - b. Didn't get cancer from that first cigarette, I'm good.
 - c. Didn't have DUI or kidney failure from my first drink, I'm ok to drink.
 - d. "And be sure your sins will find you out" Num 32:23.
 - e. Everything you decide to do casts a shadow of influence.
 - f. No such thing as secret sin.
 - g. I drink (smoke) at home. No one sees me. Lie.
3. They do not realize that this is the goodness and longsuffering of God giving men a chance to do that which is right, before it is everlastingly too late.

B. Not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

1. "Not knowing" could mean not acknowledging the goodness of God.
2. This verse teaches that all need to repent.

3. Furthermore, it teaches that the goodness of God leads mankind to repentance.
4. The fact that God loved us enough to give His Son for us ought to be enough to get all of us to repent.
 - a. John 3:16; Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:10, 19.
 - b. Repentance is the toughest commandment in the Bible.

5. *But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;*

A. But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath.

1. The Jews had a hard and impenitent heart. Therefore, they were treasuring up wrath for themselves come judgment day.
 - a. “Treasurest up” means to continue to increase the debt owed to the Divine justice. Stored or collected, e.g., Deut 28:12.
 - b. The treasure of wrath in this verse is in opposition to levels of goodness of the last verse. Deut 32:34, 35.
 - c. The awful idea expressed here is the sinner is amassing, like hoarded treasure, an ever-accumulating stock-pile of divine wrath.
 - d. The passage probably does not refer to what we consider to the worst of sinners, i.e., murderers, rapist, etc.
 - e. Possibly those individuals who simply boast of purity, faith and godliness, while living in sin.
 - f. Remember, the letter was written to Christians. Rom 1:7, 8.
2. The “day of wrath” will be the day God reveals or executes His wrath of sinners: Luke 13:28; John 8:21; Heb 2:2.
3. This wrath was plainly declared in Rom 1:18 toward the Gentiles.
4. The sinful Jewish Christians were not going to escape either, Eph 5:6.

B. And revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

1. There is going to be a judgment day. “Payday someday.”
2. John 5:22; 27-29; Acts 17:30, 31.
3. The judgment will not be according to race, social status, or intellectual achievement, but by the righteous standard of God.
 - a. The standard will be the word of God, Jn 12:48.
 - b. “The wages of sin is death” Rom 6:23.

6. *Who will render to every man according to his deeds:*

- A. The one criteria God will be concerned with is our deeds.
- B. 2 Cor 5:10; Gal 6:7, 8.

1. Render is most often translated by the words 'shall reward' or 'pay' in the NT. The same word used in Matt 22:21.
 2. The writer is quoting Prov 24:12.
 3. Same word used in Matt 16:27; 2 Tim 4:14; Rev 18:6; 22:12.
- C. The verse ends with "according to his deeds."
1. Deeds means works, things done.
 2. Faith alone will save no one. James 2:24, 26.
 3. Sinners often escape punishment for a time, but not altogether.
 4. True faith in Christ will make His followers doers; vs 13; James 1:22, 23, 25.

7. To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:

A. To them who by patient continuance in well doing

1. Perseverance in well doing.
Note: Well doing within the law of Christ. Not just well doing. This means doing good within the Bible structure. Lots of non-Christians do good. It does not help their soul's salvation at all. Obedience to God's plan makes us right.
2. Patience or steadfastness is "a must" to be saved.
3. There are those who contend that well doing has nothing to do with salvation. This verse teaches just the opposite.
4. Notice, one must continue not just start. This destroys the doctrine of 'once saved, always saved.'
5. John 8:31, 32; 1 Cor 15:58.
6. No one will "slip into" heaven.
7. The saved will be made up of those who put forth the time and effort to attain and maintain the proper relationship with God thru Christ.

B. Seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:

1. God and salvation are to be sought.
 - a. Patience and seeking are coupled together in this verse.
 - b. This same seeking is used in seeking the kingdom first, Matt 6:33 and seeking the pearl of great price, Matt 13:45.
 - c. Acts 17:27; Heb 11:6.
 - d. Seek means to actively search like something is missing.
2. That for which one is seeking is glory, honour, and eternal life:
 - a. Glory: Psalm 73:24; Rom 9:2.
 - b. Honour: John 5:44; 12:26.
 - c. Immortality 1 Cor 15:53, 54.
 - c. Eternal life: Mark 10:30; Rom 6:22.

3. The stark reality is that if a person is not actively seeking salvation there is only one other place for them to go, hell.

8. *But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,*

A. *But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness,*

1. Some will be contentious and not take God at His word.
 - a. This same word (contentious) is translated as 'strife' and is part of the works of the flesh Paul mentions in Gal 5:2.
 - b. We deal with a lot of rejection of truth today. Jesus had the same issue, Jn 3:12; 5:47; 16:9.
2. Some will be contentious and not obey the truth, 2 Thess1:7, 8.
3. Some will be contentious and obey unrighteousness, Rom 6:16.
 - a. If a person obeys false doctrine would they not fall into this category?
 - b. Whether denominational doctrine or false teaching within the church. We need never think it a harmless thing to follow a false teacher or false doctrine.
 - c. If we can know the truth (Jn 8:32) and we do not learn the true God hold us responsible.
4. It seems this contentiousness is toward God. More in pleasing one's self rather than pleasing God.

B. *Indignation and wrath,*

1. Those who disobey God can expect indignation and wrath from God. And rightly so. Disobedience is the rejection of Heaven's gift, the sacrifice of God for His creation.
2. What is the difference between indignation and wrath?
 - a. In one place I read that indignation was internal emotion and wrath was the external manifestation of indignation.
 - b. No right thinking person will desire either, Heb 10:31.

9. *Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;*

A. *Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil,*

1. This verse continues the thought of what is going to happen to the disobedient.
2. They shall also receive tribulation and anguish.
 - a. Tribulation means 'to repay with affliction.' Same word used in Mark 13:19 where it is translated as *affliction* and in 1 Cor 7:28 where it is translated as *trouble*.
 - b. Anguish will be the payment, Matt 25:30.

- c. Notice the comma between verses 8 and 9. The two words that begin verse 9 are closely connected to the two words that end verse 8.
- 3. There are those who teach that the disobedient soul will be annihilated at the judgment. These verses teach otherwise.
 - a. Specifically talking about the part of us that shall suffer punishment. All who have not had their sins forgiven will suffer thusly on judgment day.
 - b. This is the antithesis of what we are about to read in verse 10.

B. Of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;

Note: This is the first time we have come across the term “Jew” in this chapter so we shall take a moment to make sure we understand the biblical meaning of the word.

- (a) It is typical to have the term “Jew” used in a bad connotation in modern times, but it was not always so.
- (b) The term was not used before about 750 BC and was used in connection with the Judeans (easy connection) 2 Kings 16:6.
- (c) Maybe a hundred years later the term was used for the tribe of Judah, and possibly Benjamin also, Jer 34:6-9.
- (d) “Jews” is most often used in the book of Esther, where the captives of Judah played the central role.
- (e) By the time we get to the NT the term is generally used to refer to any Israelite and is often used as a counter-distinction for the Gentile world.
- (f) Paul is using it in this book in an honorable fashion, depending on the context, of course.
- (g) Jesus never used, as far as we know, the word “Hebrew.” He often used the term “Jews.” Mark 7:3; John 2:6.
- 1. The Jews are mentioned first because the gospel was preached to them first. (John the baptizer, Jesus, the 12 then the 70.)
- 2. Some believe the Jews are going to be saved regardless of their relationship with God and His commandments, but that is wishful thinking rather than biblical fact..

10. But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:

A. But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good

- 1. Glory, honor, and peace are going to be bestowed upon every man who “worketh good” 1 Pet 1:7.
- 2. One does not receive these ‘honors’ unless they ‘worketh good.’ However, we are told by some in the religious world that there is

nothing we can do in order to obtain the aforementioned blessings.

- a. Matt 7:21; Heb 5:8.
- b. Peace and contentment are the blessed rewards for obedience, Rom 14:17; 15:13.

B. To the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:

11. For there is no respect of persons with God.

A. This point is rendered to de-emphasize the Jewish mind set of special privileges they felt were theirs for being Jews. God will show no partiality or favoritism.

1. The three words translated “respect of persons” come from a single Greek word and literally means ‘favoritism.’
2. One of the appealing facets of Christianity is that it breaks down the “middle wall of partition” between race and nationality (Eph 2:14).
3. Peter had to learn this point, but he did learn, as we see in Acts 10 and 11; Acts 15:7-9.

B. Many in the religious world do not believe this point.

The following points prove that many in the religious world believe that God is a respecter of persons:

1. Limited atonement (meaning Jesus died for some people only).
2. The Jews will be saved regardless of how they live because they are God’s elect.
4. Unconditional election. (God is going to save some no matter what they do.)
3. Direct operation of the Holy Ghost to save one. (Why does God not send the direct operation of the Holy Ghost upon all?)
4. Dreams, visions and angels or special revelation to save one. (Why does God not do this for all men?)

C. Acts 10:34, 35; Gal 2:6; Eph 6:9; Col 3:25; 1 Pet 1:17.

12. For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law;

A. For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law

Note: This verse divides the two classes (or races) into two different distinctions: those who have sinned without the old law and those who have sinned in the old law.

1. It appears the “law” referenced here is not a written law but more of a general law, as stated in Rom 2:14, 15.
2. We know the Jewish law was divided into three sections: the law, prophets and Psalms, Luke 24:44.
3. Whether one sinned outside the law of Moses, as did the Gentiles, or under the law, as did the Jews, they are still sinners.

4. Paul makes the argument that people died (spiritually) before the law of Moses. Therefore, the Gentiles were under law, Romans 5:13, 14.

Note: The word “perish” means ‘to be doomed to eternal death,’ not the *annihilation of being* according to Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges.

B. And as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law;

1. We shall be judged by the law under which we lived.
2. The Jews sinned “in the law” means “subject to the law.” Therefore, they will be judged by the law.
3. All the world, under this dispensation, will be judged by “the law of Christ,” Gal 6:2.

Note: ‘Dispensation’ is confusing to a lot of religious people. It is a good Bible word to use: Eph 1:10; 3:2; Col 1:25.

4. John 13:34; 1 Cor 9:21; James 2:8.

Note: The next three verse are parenetically inserted.

13. (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.

A. For not the hearers of the law are just before God,

1. The Jews had the law in their possession but the Gentiles, in some cases, were living better than the Jews.
2. A failure to do what the law says is to be guilty of the sin of omission, James 4:17.
3. 1 Thess 5:21 requires more than feelings to make something right or acceptable, it requires book chapter and verse. Proof.

B. But the doers of the law shall be justified.

1. Matthew 7:24-27.
2. “Justified” means to be accounted righteous, not to be held guilty.
3. It takes more than hearing to be acceptable, James 1:22-25.

14. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:

A. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law,

1. The Gentiles did not have the law of Moses.
2. They had some law that God had given to them otherwise it would be unjust to punish them, Romans 5:13.
3. The Gentiles became sinners. Therefore, they violated some law 1 John 3:4; 5:17.
4. All men are amenable to the New Testament today.

B. Do by nature the things contained in the law

1. They do practice the basic teachings in a law. Common sense rules like obeying parents, justice in legal matters, honesty, truth telling, chastity and kindness.
2. The Gentiles did not have a written law. However, some of their practices were better than those of the people who had a written law.
3. The world is a better place when morality and a pure conscience are followed.

C. These, having not the law, are a law unto themselves

1. The Gentiles did not have the law, which means they did not have a divine revelation to guide them, Acts 28:1, 2.
2. They were “a law unto themselves” means they were under no official, written law.
 - a. Melchizedec (spelt with ‘k’ in NT) was a law unto himself; Gen 14:18; Heb 7:15, 17, 21.
 - b. Jethro was a law unto himself, Ex 18:10-12.

15. Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)

A. Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts

1. To “show the work of the law written in their hearts” means they were sincerely giving heed to certain wholesome principles.
2. The Gentiles were keeping some of the moral principles of the law better than what the Jews were doing.
3. Paul is arguing that to be custodians of the law was not good enough. Having a Bible under our arm will not help us.
4. The old law was written on tablets of stone, Ex 24:12.
5. The new law is written on believers’ hearts, 2 Cor 2:2, 3, 6-8.

B. Their conscience

1. The words mean judgment of mind concerning right and wrong, Rom 9:1; 2 Cor 1:12.
2. Some reasons why we cannot live by the conscience only:
 - a. The conscience must be educated, Proverbs 22:6
 - b. The conscience can honestly misguide us if uneducated, Acts 23:1.
 - c. Our conscience cannot be our guide because we might believe a lie, 1 Kgs 13:1 ff.
 - d. Our conscience cannot be our guide, because we are saved by faith and faith comes by hearing God’s word, Romans 10:17.

- e. We are set free by truth and not our conscience, John 8:32.
- f. If our conscience is our guide, truth is subjective and everyone who feels honest is right no matter what they believe, Matt 4:4.
- g. Our conscience cannot be our guide because sin is a violation of God's law whether it violates our conscience or not, 1 John 3:4.

C. Also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)

- 1. The conscience is a prodder and not the body of truth itself, Rom 2:15.
- 2. We can never go against the conscience and be right. However, we cannot allow the conscience only (alone) to be the guide.
- 3. "Their thoughts" or their own reasoning powers. Have you ever had a thought that turned out to be totally wrong? Reasoned wrong, had a wrong opinion?
- 4. Thoughts that might accuse at one point and excuse at another point?

16. In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

A. In the day

Note: If we observe the parenthetical insert, this verse is properly connected to verse 12. The unfinished statement in that verse is closed in this verse.

- 1. God will judge Jew and Gentile alike. No escape. Acts 17:31; 2 Tim 4:8; Jude 6.
- 2. The certainty of judgment and entrance into the spiritual realm is emphasized in 2 Pet 3:10, 11.

B. When God shall judge the secrets of men

- 1. Ecc 12:13, 14.
- 2. Nothing will be hid: Matt 10:26; Luke 8:17; 1 Cor 4:5; Heb 4:13.
- 3. It is common to think of this in a negative way; i.e., the desires, lusts, passions and hidden motives we hold inside will be exposed. . The word must be defined by the context. Not necessarily negative; John 7:10; 18:20.
- 4. We are limited to judgment based on external. We see, we hear and we make conclusions on that information, Matt 7:24.
- 5. We are often mistaken in our judgments. No mistakes on that day.

C. By Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

1. Jesus has been appointed judge; John 5:22; 12:48; Rom 14:10.
2. We most often think of God, Jehovah, as judge. It must be remembered that before Jesus became Jesus He was God: Matt 1:23; 1 Tim 3:16.
3. Paul declared that the good news he shared was gospel: Rom 16:25; 1 Tim 1:11; 2 Tim 2:8.
4. The risen Christ is mediator of salvation, and will be mediator of final judgment.

17. Behold, thou art called a Jew, and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God,

A. Behold, (*But, if, added jb*) thou art called a Jew,

1. Under Christianity a Jew was not one who was born of the flesh, but one who had been born again – a *spiritual* Jew.
2. Flesh does not count in Christianity, Galatians 3:27-29.
3. Romans 2:28, 29.

B. And restest in the law,

1. “Restest” is a present tense verb, and implies this was still happening done about thirty years after the church was established. Note: This may be the same type of ‘safety’ some fall into as being part of a denomination. They grasp the truth when it is taught, but comfort, or maybe familiarity, keeps them from obeying.
2. The Jews had relied on the law that God had given to Moses, but it had been nailed to the cross, superceded, Colossians 2:14.
 - a. The book of Hebrews is replete with this very doctrine; chapters 7-10; e.g., Heb 8:13.
 - b. The word ‘restest’ here evidently means something to lean on. The Jews heritage mistakenly gave them something they thought they could rely on.
 - c. In one sense, it is good and right to rest in and on God’s law. It is the objective standard of right and wrong.
 - d. But the Jew was not allowing the light of the new law to direct the pathway. It is a little like some today who think that are going to be saved simply because they own a Bible.
3. To keep the law of Moses was to fall from grace, Galatians 5:4.

C. And makest thy boast of God,

1. They made their boast of God. However, they could not have a relationship with God unless they put their faith in Christ and His law, John 8:24.
2. They made their boast of the law, they did not keep the law.

3. The law, which should have humbled them because it pointed out all their shortcomings, made them proud instead.
4. Knowledge often puffs up. It sometimes out runs charity. Therefore, love is not shown toward those who need it.
5. One writer said of the Jewish people that it was much easier for them to boast of their privileges than to be thankful for them.

18. And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law;

- A. The Jews are said to know God's will, approve of right things, and be instructed out of the law.
 1. This knowing was a present tense knowledge of the old law.
 2. If these were first or second generation Christians, their parents had instructed them from Moses' law, Deut 6:4-7.
 3. Knowing the old law is a good thing, Rom 15:4.
 4. Relying on the old law for salvation was futile.
- B. The issue was, why did they not keep the law?
 1. This may be a case of having so much knowledge that they assumed they knew more than was written.
 2. A fatal error in any generation.
- C. They wanted to tell others how to live, yet they would not obey God.

19. And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness,

- A. They were confident that they were to guide the blind and to be a light (a teacher) to those in darkness (ignorance).
 1. This was the very condemnation Jesus leveled against them, Matt 15:14.
 2. One cannot be a guide or light if they will not live what they preach or teach.
 3. The pride of the Jews heritage was getting in their way.
- B. Have you ever been around that person who said, 'I could tell you a thing or two?' Well, the Jews really could do that, based on all the back-ground knowledge of the OT.
 1. Instead of helping the Gentile Christians, they would rather degrade or mock their ignorance.
 2. This is an indication of how non-evangelistic the OT Jews were. They had God's written will, and if you came to them they would share, but less likely to seek you out.
- C. The Jews were wicked, proud and often lived hypocritically, but thought they were just what the Gentiles needed to guide them out of the darkness of congenital ignorance: Isa 60:1-3; Matt 23:16; 23:24.

1. We all need to be taught.
2. We should be thankful for all those who have taken the time to help us understand.
3. Teachers have an obligation to God and their students to be humble servants, not domineering overlords.
4. A 'guide' is someone who knows the way. The 'blind' is someone who needs to be guided, Matt 15:17, 19.
5. A successful guide will instill confidence and desire in those being guided. A 'blind' person cannot see. Fear of unknown.

20. An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.

A. An instructor of the foolish

1. They deemed themselves to be instructors and teachers.
2. The word "foolish" is the same word used in Luke 11:39, 40; 1 Cor 15:35, 36.
3. A teacher needs to be an example. The instructor needs to be able to be taught before they can teach. Like saying a leader need to know how to follow before they can truly lead.
4. Spiritual Israel needed to learn from the mistakes of physical Israel.

B. A teacher of babes

1. The word "babes" is another form of condescension the Jews had toward the Gentiles. The meaning was that the Jews thought the Gentiles were as ignorant as children.
2. Paul uses it as one who has not come of legal age in Gal 4:1.
3. It is a term the Jews might use for a proselyte or novice.

D. Which hast the form of knowledge

1. It appears their mentality was that all nations had to look up to them because they were the only race, or nation, that had the form of spiritual knowledge.
2. "Form" here denotes a delineation or picture of a thing (Barnes). It is commonly used when object appears, as in 2 Tim 3:5.

E. And of the truth in the law.

1. It is as if the apostle is conceding their knowledge based on the old law.
2. We need to keep in mind that very little of the new law had been recorded at this time, with even less of it in circulation.
3. Christians endowed with miraculous gifts and wandering teachers were the core of their obtainable knowledge.

21. *Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?*

Note: Paul then rebukes the Jewish Christian with a series of five, apparently rhetorical, questions for them to ponder. If answered honestly, the Christian Jews would have been challenged to seek their own salvation. Note: “Thou therefore” references those who were instructors. Inspiration was behind James’ statement “My brethren, be not many master (teachers)...” James 3:1. A teacher must pray for and practice humility. Matt 10:24. The verse finishes with the warning of a “greater condemnation.”

A. *Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?*

1. We are to teach ourselves first then we can see to teach others, 1 Cor 9:27.
 - a. Some will say ‘teaching is not for me.’ Your life is instruction to all who see you, Titus 2:1-7.
 - b. The Jewish Christians were the converse, they had in their minds, I’m a great instructor, I can really help.
2. There is a startlingly contrast established; the Jews taught a lot, but practiced little.

B. *Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?*

1. The word “preachest” is different than the word “teachest.” Preaching is the public proclamation, whether in a meeting house or on the public streets.
2. Exodus 20:15 – Thou shalt not steal. But, the Jews have been proverbial in their ‘creative’ ways of doing business, Matt 23:14; Mark 7:11.
 - a. Common expression that more people are robbed with a brief-case than with a gun.
 - b. Design, desire and direction are important in a teacher.
3. The law was plain and they knew how it applied to others, but did they make application to themselves? Matt 21:13.

22. *Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?*

A. *Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery,*

1. Exodus 20:14 – Thou shalt not commit adultery.
2. They were *saying* what the law said, but were they *practicing* what the law said?
3. While they may be teaching ethical behavior, they did not practice that behavior.

- a. Jer 3:8, 9; 5:7, 8; same Hebrew word as in Ex 20:14.
- b. This sin was reported to be very common among the Jews, especially in the ruling or high ranking Jews.
- 3. Adultery, by definition, involves at least one married party.
- 4. This is one of the reason it is so important to remind ourselves we are the bride of Christ if we are in the church.
 - a. A relationship outside that union is adultery.
 - b. The chaste bride adorned for her Husband is pictured at the end of all things terrestrial: Rev 21:9; 22:17.
 - c. Any assumed or fabricated associated with the bridegroom will be classified as adultery by God.

B. Thou that abhorrest idols,

- 1. The children of God were carried into captivity because of their idol worship. It seems they had learn their lesson in this area. After the Babylonian captivity, the Jews never had a major problem with idols.
- 2. We need to learn to love what God loves and abhor what God abhors.
 - a. What God classifies as idols we may not think of as idols, Gen 31:14-19.
 - b. What is most important to you? What do you value the most? Health, wealth, power, family? We can make even these things idols in God's view, Jer10:1-4, 14.
 - c. According to Thayer, the word "abhorrest" means to turn away from something because of the stench. A physical repulsion.
 - d. The Jewish mind might abhor idols, yet be involved in committing a sacrilege.

C. Dost thou commit sacrilege?

- 1. Robertson translated this phrase to mean "to rob a temples" (ASV), or to treat that which as holy as common or profane. It may have been figurative rather than literal stealing.
- 2. Eze 22:26.
 - a. "Commit sacrilege" is same word used in Acts 19:37.
 - b. Which is worse, to make idols or dishonor that which is holy?
- 3. "Paul evidently selected the very sins which were most odious to the Jews, at least in theory; for, of all the sins of the pagans around them, the Jews particularly detested their idol worship and their abominable sexual excesses.

- a. Theft and blasphemy were also regarded similarly.
- b. Paul charged them with guilt in all these areas.
- c. If a Christian withholds contributions to the treasury would they not be guilty of this type of ‘sacrilege?’

23. *Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?*

A. Thou that makest thy boast of the law,

- 1. The Jews made their boast of the law, but dishonored God by historically failing to keep the law.
- 2. It is interesting to look at this verse as a summation of verses 17-20.

C. Through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?

- 1. “Breaking the law” means to cross over the line.
- 2. We honor or dishonor God by the way that we treat His law.
- 3. John 14:15 – If ye love me, keep my commandments.
- 4. John 15:14 – Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.
- 5. This was the point in Jesus asking the question in Luke 6:46.
 - a. Some say that the word ‘dishonourest’ means disgrace God.
 - b. For Christians this would mean improper conduct which would harm the church. Our lives are always under scrutiny. This thought leads into the next verse.

24. *For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.*

A. For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you,

- 1. The way we live reflects on God; 1 Tim 6:1; Titus 2:3-5.
- 2. Many are disobedient to the gospel because of unfaithful Christians.
- 3. In our modern churches we witness divisions, misplaced priorities and religious foolishness and wonder why the world turns away from our efforts.

B. As it is written may have a pair of OT sources:

- 1. Isaiah 52:5.
 - a. The conquerors of Israel thought lightly of Israel’s God because He was not able to stop them or help His people.
 - b. It was actually the sins of the people that caused their plight, not God’s weakness.
 - c. A study in the book of Judges will confirm this.
- 2. Eze 36:20-23.
 - a. The conduct of the nation caused the other nations to blaspheme God.

- b. It has always been the norm for people to judge a religion based on the professing people's conduct.
- c. They may think; good man = good god. Bad man = bad god.
- d. The dishonor done to God arose from greed, hypocrisy and misconduct.

25. *For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.*

A. For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law:

- 1. "Circumcision was first given to Abraham as a token or a sign of the covenant between him and God (Gen 17:11-14) and was later made a part of the law of Moses (Ex 12:48-49; Jn 7:12).
- 2. This token was of no good if one did not honor the covenant.
- 3. If one was going to bind circumcision, then he would have been obligated to keep the whole law, Galatians 5:2-4.
- 4. The only value (profiteth) circumcision held was as a sign of obedience under the old law.
- 5. Profitable, yes. Justification for salvation, no.

B. But if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.

- 1. If the Jew chose to break the law, then he was acting as if there was no covenant relationship with God. Therefore, his circumcision became uncircumcision.
- 2. One could not keep the law without being circumcised, but one could be circumcised and not keep the law. The outward sign was without effect if the inward man was not changed.
- 3. No one physical act that, once performed, would keep a man in His good graces regardless of how that individual lived.
- 4. The Jews thought that just because they were Abraham's seed (physically) and were circumcised they were saved regardless of how they lived.

26. *Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?*

A. Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law,

- 1. If the Gentiles kept the law, why should they not be considered the friend of God? Thus, in fellowship with God.
- 2. Some Gentiles lived better lives than some Jews.

B. Shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?

- 1. Should the Gentile not be considered one in covenant relationship with God if he keeps the law?

2. The Gentile had no command to be circumcised, but God approved his life when he kept the righteousness of the law.
3. “Be counted” means to be reckoned, Rom 4:3. God judges things as they are, not the way we think they should be.
4. For God to reckon uncircumcision as circumcision is to say that its presence or absence makes no real difference to God’s acceptance of man.

27. And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?

A. And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law,

1. Fleshly circumcision alone was insufficient.
2. The word “nature” means *physically* and refers to the concept of without any written revelation.,
3. So then, if the Gentiles by nature or practice did what God wanted, then this ought to be counted as pleasing to God.

B. Judge thee,

1. Not only were the Gentiles pleasing to God, but it condemned the Jews for not doing the same.
2. The Jews had greater opportunities. Therefore, they should have lived better, Matt 12:41, 42.

C. Who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?

1. “The letter” refers to the written law, 2 Cor 3:6.
2. It should not be overlooked that both groups under consideration were children of God because they were doers of the revelation extended to them.
3. They had the written law and the token of the covenant, but continued to violate the law of God.
4. To God an honest-hearted Gentile was better than a corrupt-hearted Jew.

28. For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:

A. For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly;

1. Justification is not based on race or fleshly forefathers, Matt 3:9.
2. Christians are spiritual Jews.
3. We must become Abraham’s seed in order to be saved, Gal 3:27-29.
4. Paul is making a differentiation between a national Jew and a real Jew. Fleshly Jew and spiritual Jew.

B. Neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:

1. The Christian is not circumcised of the flesh, but of the heart: Rom 4:10-12; 1 Pet 3:21.
2. God does the operating, Col 2:11, 12.
3. Paul was warning the brethren at Philippi about this very matter in Phil 3:1-3. In verse 2 he uses the word “concision,” which means *mutilation*. Jewish Christians were requiring more than God require to be Christian. Paul would not even call what the false teachers were doing ‘circumcision.’

29. *But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.*

A. But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter;

1. “Circumcision of the heart” is cutting off the evil desires and stubborn will of the heart: 1 Chron 29:17; Luke 11:39.
2. An improper heart was evident in Jerusalem when Stephen spoke before the Jewish council in Acts 7:51, 52.
3. This destroys premillennialism because they have their trust in National Israel. The returning Jesus sitting on a literal throne, in the literal city of Jerusalem, for 1,000 years.
4. Gal 6:15, 16; James 1:1.

B. Whose praise is not of men, but of God.

1. Many in fleshly Israel sought their praise from men: Matt 6:1-5; John 12:42-43.
2. God’s praise is not for those in the letter (law of Moses), but for those who serve in the spirit (New Testament law).
 - a. God intended for mankind’s lives to be holy, cut off from sin.
 - b. He wanted consistent behavior motivated by submission to His will as revealed in His written word.

A brief summary of Romans to this point:

Paul has shown the whole world is guilty before God. The Gentiles are, because they had a knowledge of God and yet they sinned against that knowledge. The Jews were guilty too. They do the same things for which they condemn the Gentiles. They fail to meet the standards that God has revealed.

Five rhetorical questions have been posed which establish the Jews guilt in objecting to the Gentiles. The objection based on circumcision has been answered. We will see three additional objections dealt with in chapter 3.