

Romans 2:17-29 – 01/01/2015 – New LIFE Fellowship

¹⁷Now if you call yourself a Jew, and rest in the law, boast in God, ¹⁸know His will, and approve the things that are superior, being instructed from the law,¹⁹and if you are convinced that you are a guide for the blind, a light to those in darkness, ²⁰an instructor of the ignorant, a teacher of the immature, having the full expression of knowledge and truth in the law— ²¹you then, who teach another, don't you teach yourself? You who preach, "You must not steal"—do you steal? ²²You who say, "You must not commit adultery"—do you commit adultery? You who detest idols, do you rob their temples? ²³You who boast in the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law? ²⁴For, as it is written: The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.

²⁵For circumcision benefits you if you observe the law, but if you are a lawbreaker, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. ²⁶Therefore if an uncircumcised man keeps the law's requirements, will his uncircumcision not be counted as circumcision? ²⁷A man who is physically uncircumcised, but who fulfills the law, will judge you who are a lawbreaker in spite of having the letter of the law and circumcision. ²⁸For a person is not a Jew who is one outwardly, and true circumcision is not something visible in the flesh. ²⁹On the contrary, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is of the heart—by the Spirit, not the letter. That man's praise is not from men but from God.

Last week the apostle Paul focused on "O man" "you who judge..." This "O man" was judging those folks who were in Romans 1:18-32. That "O man" was a "fake person" who personified a **Gentile Moral Sinner** ... a moral sinner ... a sinner, who did not have a covenant relationship with God, but still had a sense of morality and was judging those wicked sinners... that they deserved to go to hell. The Christians that received this letter from Paul, lived in Rome. These early followers of Christ in Rome lived in the midst of people that fit the categories of those in Romans 1:18-32 **AND** with those that fit the category of Moral Sinner (Romans 2:1-16). Rome really couldn't even have a civil government with laws, rules, etc... and a mostly civil society unless they had some strong sense of Morality. The word "jurisprudence" and the concept of "due process" were Roman Concepts. Yes, they borrowed these from previous civilizations, but they saw their need for those kinds of civil laws ... which trace their roots back to Noah and his three sons ... who received God's laws regarding governance and

civil law back in Genesis 9, for all mankind (after the Global Flood). Thus, the sense of Morality, Justice, Fairness, etc... all hint at our common Humanity ... our commonality of being created by God, in the Image and Likeness of God (Genesis 1:26ff). Paul is echoing back to this commonality, and God being our Creator and Judge, whom we are commonly accountable to, regardless if we are Gentile or Jew.

These early Roman Christians lived in the neighborhoods with very nice, civil, moral people ... but who, also, did not follow the Living and True God. Yet, those moral sinners still had a sense of morality, civility, respect, and were considerate of each other, etc. We, today, live in a very similar society. We live in a society in which it is truly going to “hell in a hand basket” as described in Romans 1:18-32 ... **and** we live with folks who fit the “Moral Sinner” category of Romans 2:1-16.

In each Case, Paul said that they are all without Excuse, because of God’s Morality, His Righteousness, and His Just and Holy Judgment that is coming some day. Some day in the future God will judge both Jew and Gentile based upon His own Holiness and Righteousness → Judging their works or deeds that they did while alive here on earth. Anyone who is sinner, outside of Christ, will be judged forever in the Lake of Fire (ref.: Revelation 20:11-15)

Today we are looking at the rest of Romans chptr 2... Romans 2:17-29

Paul, in this section of Romans 2, is completely focusing on the devoted, religious Jewish person. This is very different than the “person” we looked at last week. Last week, that “person” “O man” could’ve been a lost Gentile sinner, or even a non-religious Jew who is just culturally a Jew, kind of moral, but not much different than a lost Gentile sinner. Yes, there we Jews like that, even as there are today. Jewish/Israeli genetically, but not very devoted religiously.

Today, Paul is only focusing on the Devout, Religious Jew.
The follow is TRUE about this “Jew” whom Paul is focusing on:

1. This Devout Religious Jew - does hold to God’s Word as Holy, God’s Law as Holy, and should boast in the God of Israel as the only, real, Living and True God (because it is true, etc. – Romans 2:18)
2. This Devout Religious Jew - not only believes but Preaches God and His Word to lost Gentiles (Romans 2:19-22)
3. This Devout Religious Jew – believes that circumcision is a benefit from God, that somehow it makes him holy, etc. etc.

But, Paul exposes some “holes” in this Jewish Person’s belief system:

1. He is not above the Law of God, and has broken God’s Laws at least once in his life. We see that, even the most devout of Jews sin, and break God’s Holy, Just and Righteous Laws. Romans 2:24 → For, it is written, “The Name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you” (see Isaiah 52:5 & Ezekiel 36:16-24).
2. Circumcision is a **sign**, 8 days old, from devout Jewish parents for their son, **but** what matters is how a person lives in relationship and obedience to God, in a Trusting/Covenant Relationship. The **circumcision of the heart by the Spirit of God** is really what matters to God.
→ read: Deut. 10:12-17 [**focus: 16**]; 30:1-8 [**focus: 6**]; Jer. 4:1-4

Thus, unless a person is **fully Circumcised in the Heart by the Spirit of the Living God**, he/she is not really a Jew, in the sense of **God’s Ideal of what He originally intended...** fully in LOVE with GOD, ONLY.

That kind of person **ONLY lives his/her life for God, to please God, alone.** (that can only happen if that person is **truly** “Born Again” in Christ)

If that Devout, Jewish, Circumcised Person fully lives for God, obeys the Law perfectly (from birth until death), never sins ... then and only then can that Jew “earn or inherit” eternal life. Only Jesus, the Messiah did this! (**hypothetically**, an “uncircumcised” Gentile, if he could live a life for God, never sin, from birth to death, would be able to earn eternal life and be a “real Jewish person” in God’s sight – he would be considered, by God, “circumcised” ... really → circumcised in the heart, by the Spirit)

God’s view of what a real “Jew” is... → of the heart, inwardly, deeply real ... circumcision of the Heart, by the Spirit of God, not by following rules of God’s Law, but living a Life of Obedience out of LOVE for God, only caring about hearing God’s praise and applause (living to Please God only) and not living to be approved of by fellow humans (living to please other humans – living to be accepted, to fit in, to be a part of the folks, etc.) .
Thus, Physical Circumcision means nothing anymore, in Christ.
(reference Acts 15:1-29 for more on how this impacts Gentile Christians)

Paul leaves no wiggle room for blatant “on the road to hell” sinner, for the moral Gentile sinner, nor for the Devout, Religious Jew... all are under “sin” ... that is → all are held under the judgment by God, because all of us are sinners (see Romans 3:9)

The three broad categories of Humans are:

1. Blatant Sinners ... openly sinful, rebellious to God and His Word, etc...'
(ref.: Romans 1:18-32)
2. Moral Gentile Sinners (mostly Gentile, but could be non-religious Jews)
(ref.: Romans 2:1-6)
3. Devout, Religious Jews (ref.: Romans 2:17-29)

Thus, all of the categories of Humanity are all sinners, every category of humans, every individual human being who is a descendant of Adam and Eve (except for Jesus Christ, of course). We are all under the judgment of God (all of us humans outside of Christ) and it is God's Holy, Fair, Just Judgment ... He has every right to judge us. He owns the universe, He created it, He is the creator, sustainer and judge/ruler of the universe ... thus He has every right to judge sinners.

Paul nails the last nail in the coffin of humanity regarding our Deserved Judgment from God. No human is exempt (no human who has a real human father and mother, genetically descended from Adam and Eve, etc.) No human can say. "hey, wait a minute, I am completely sinless, I love you God, your judgment doesn't apply to me, I've kept the Law from birth until death, perfectly, never sinned in any way, shape or form, etc. ... not in thought, word or deed..." No human being can say this. Jesus Christ is the only Human that was and is perfect and never sinned, never ever. But, the rest of us billions of humans we are sinners under God's Judgment.

Isn't it great to know, that we, Christians, who are now saved by the Grace, Mercy, Forgiveness, and Love of God that is ONLY found in Christ Jesus ... were Rescued from God's Holy & Just Judgment against us ... we didn't and will never deserve His Loving Rescue, ever... thus we can **only** thank Him, worship Him, Trust in Him, and Live for Him forever, because of His Salvation. When we truly recognize what God saved us From and what God saved us Unto ... we will never cease to Praise Him and Live for Him.

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Next week, we will look at Romans 3, and we may take a couple weeks looking at it and seek to digest what God is teaching us there.