

Romans

“I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes”

– Romans 1:16

Jews No Better Than Gentiles

- **2:1 – “Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge...”**
 - The principle that all are equally lost, and that judgment of others is self-condemning is true for all people
 - However, vs. 17 shows that Paul has now turned his attention to the Jews, charging that they are equally under sin (cf. 3:9)
 - The flow of vs. 1 goes like this:
 - Paul (by the Holy Spirit) condemned the Gentiles as sinners
 - The Jews made the same judgment concerning the Gentiles
 - *But* the Jews also practiced some of the same sins, thus their judgment of the Gentiles condemned themselves
- **2:2 – “But we know that the judgment of God...”** – the Jews, with their revelation, should have seen reflected in the moral dilemma of the Gentiles that they would equally face judgment

Jews No Better Than Gentiles

- **Note: the wisdom of God in preparing the gospel**
 - He allowed the Gentiles of old to live without the Law:
 - To demonstrate that man cannot arrive at the mind of God without revelation (see I Cor 2)
 - *Now He calls on all men everywhere to repent and come to Him through the gospel (Acts 17:30-31)*
 - He allowed the Jews of old to live under the Law:
 - To demonstrate that no one will be saved without God's grace
 - *Now He calls even those of the Old Covenant to find salvation through faith in Jesus Christ (Rom 1:16-17)*
 - **On both sides there is no salvation until the coming of Christ!**

Jews No Better Than Gentiles

- 2:2-4 – “...against those who practice such things”
 - If the Jews *practiced* sins condemned under the Law, would the Law stand between them and the judgment of God?
 - Rather than learning repentance from the Law, some of the Jews kept on living in unrighteousness, hardening their hearts to godliness
- 2:5-8 – “But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant”
 - Here the “wrath” of 1:18 is defined: God’s wrath in judgment
 - In accordance with the Old Law, the covenant would not shield evildoers from the wrath of God
 - See Psalm 62:12; Proverbs 24:12
 - To those who *practice* obedience: eternal life (Matt 25:46)
 - To those who *practice* evil: eternal condemnation (II Thes 1:7ff)

Jews No Better Than Gentiles

- **2:9-11 – “of the Jew first and also of the Greek”**
 - The same Law which caused the Jews to judge the Gentiles condemned themselves as subject to God’s wrath
 - Judgment will be without partiality and based on how we have *lived*:
 - Tribulation and distress to those who continue in evil
 - Glory, honor and peace to those who continue in good
- **2:12-13 – “the doers of the Law will be justified”**
 - Just *hearing* (or having) the Law does not make you righteous, but how you choose to live
 - The revelation of God is not the reason the world is condemned: with or without the Law, "all have sinned"
 - It is *our actions*, not God's revelation, that condemns us.

Jews No Better Than Gentiles

- 2:14-16 – How then will the Gentile be judged?
 - This verse must be interpreted with 1:32.
 - Conscience, traditions from the patriarchal age, observations of the Jews - Gentiles who lived according to this moral code become the standard of judgment for all Gentiles *during that time period before Christ*.
 - In judgment, man will answer according to the law under which he lived
 - The Gentiles, according to oral tradition or conscience
 - The Jews, according to Moses
 - All the world since Christ: the gospel (John 12:48)
 - “*Through Christ Jesus*” – i.e. Acts 10:42, 17:31; Rom 14:10
- Note: it’s going to start getting **really** important to pay attention to where “the” is and where it isn’t...

Jews No Better Than Gentiles

- **2:17-20 – “But if you bear the name ‘Jew’”**
 - Here we see that Paul has specifically turned the argument against the Jews, as 1:18-32 was made against the Gentiles
 - “Jew” was apparently used in the days of Assyrian captivity of Israel, synonymously with “Judeans” (Jer 34:6-9)
 - Later came to distinguish anyone of the Hebrew race (cf. Est 8:17; Neh 13:24; Acts 2:5,22)
 - **Can the Jew rely on the Law to prove himself righteous?**
- **2:21-23 – How could that be?** The same Law that separated them from the Gentiles condemned them as sinners with them!
 - “*rob temples*” is to profane sacred things (cf. Ez 22:26; Matt 21:12)
 - Because they *lived as though without the Law*, the name of God was profaned among the Gentile nations!
 - cf. Isa 52:5; Ez 36:20-22; II Sam 12:14

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Application:

You indeed say you are a Christian, and hold the knowledge and truth of God – what does the world conclude about God and His gospel because of *your* example?

See Matt 5:13-16; etc.

Jews No Better Than Gentiles

- 2:25-29 – “For circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law”
 - Two points made in this section:
 - If a Jew lives rejecting the Law, will his circumcision justify him?
 - But if a Gentile lives according to the moral principles of the Law “by nature,” will he not be justified in God’s sight, though uncircumcised?
- Circumcision was commanded of all Jewish males in order to be part of the Mosaic covenant (cf. Gen 17:14; Est 8:17 LXX)
- Circumcision meant nothing if not accompanied by righteous living (cf. Deut 10:16; Jer 9:25-26; etc.)
- But when Gentiles, **who were never commanded to be circumcised**, lived righteously, they were justified in God’s sight (see discussion of vss. 12-15)

Jews No Better Than Gentiles

- 2:25-29 – “For circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law”
 - The written code and physical token of the covenant (Gen 17:11) did not save the Jew if he did not live by the Law
 - The Gentiles who lived righteously “judged” the Jews by *comparison*:
 - These Jews were condemned by not living up to the standard of a people who had no written revelation
- Can this argument be applied to the gospel age – i.e. as long as you *live* righteously, does it really matter if you obey the gospel?
 - This argument is sometimes used against baptism for the remission of sins (cf. Acts 2:38; Rom 6:1-4; I Pet 3:21; etc.)
 - The parallel does not work: the Gentiles *were never commanded* to be circumcised, thus they violated no law of God in not being circumcised.
 - The Jews who *were* commanded were lost if they did not obey!
 - Today ALL are commanded to be baptized (cf. Matt 28, Mk 16)

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