

Rooting Through Romans Pt 8 Romans 2:12-16, Will Those Who Have Never Heard the Gospel Go to Hell?

Romans 2:12-16

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;
13 (For not the hearers of the law *are* just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.
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:
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;)
16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

We pick back up in our sermon series in Romans immediately following Paul's discourse to the Jews in Rome concerning righteous judgment, and how that God does not give them preferential treatment just because they are Jews. It said in verse **11** *For there is no respect of persons with God.*

We explained how that meant he does not show partiality but sees everyone as the same.

So, now we get to verse 12 and he continues explaining the truths concerning God's judgement concerning those that are in the law and those without the law.

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;

These that Paul is describing as those who sinned "*without law*" are the Gentiles. The Gentiles were not part of Israel. They had no knowledge of the Pentateuch or of the **Mosaic Laws**. For example, the **10-Commandments** which are laid out in **Exodus 20:1-17** and describes the Moral Law that God imposed upon the Israelites – now called Jews.

Of course, the Jews had many more laws that they were to follow besides the 10-Commandments. In fact, there were 613 more Levitical Laws given to the Jews to follow concerning their dietary restrictions, holy days, personal living, community living, worship, etc.

Paul is not referring to the **Levitical Laws**, he is referring to **God's Moral Law**:

1. Exo 20:3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
2. Exo 20:4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image
3. Exo 20:7 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain
4. Exo 20:8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.
5. Exo 20:12 Honour thy father and thy mother
6. Exo 20:13 Thou shalt not kill.
7. Exo 20:14 Thou shalt not commit adultery
8. Exo 20:15 Thou shalt not steal
9. Exo 20:16 Thou shalt not bear false witness
10. Exo 20:17 Thou shalt not covet

One does not have to have a list of these Moral Laws to have an understanding of them. These are things that by nature are understood by all men because God reveals it to all men. We just saw that in the first Chapter of Romans where it says: **Romans 1:18-20** *18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;*

19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. 20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

This is the reason that when Missionaries go to foreign lands where no other missionary has ever been, they always find that the native people have some type of worship routine and some type of law implemented. They aren't worshipping the Lord God Jehovah but they are worshipping something, whether it be the Sun, Moon, and Stars, or some animal or object. It is built into the nature of man the inclination to worship and the realization there is a higher power than man.

While I was doing some research on un-reached people groups, I came across some shocking statistics. There is a Christian organization called "**The Joshua Project**," who's goal is to reach as many people with the Gospel as possible.

According to their statistics:

World Population: 7.75 Billion

World Population Unreached: 3.23 Billion

% World Population Unreached: 41.6%

85% of unreached people in the world live in the **10/40 Window**.

The 10/40 Window is the rectangular area of North Africa, the Middle East and Asia approximately between 10 degrees north and 40 degrees north latitude. The 10/40 Window is often called "The Resistant Belt" and includes the majority of the world's Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists. It is also the place with the least number of missionaries. If you look at that hand-out, I gave you will see there are 68 countries listed in this 10/40 Window

In all these unreached people groups who have never heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ, they still practice some type of religion. = If you go to the **Amazon Rain Forest** you will find over 400 tribes of Indians that have lived there for thousands of years and they have never heard of Jesus or the Gospel or the 10-commandments or the Levitical Law yet all those tribes hold religious ceremonies and have their own moral laws because it is revealed unto them by nature.

Naturally, this brings up the question of: "***If someone has never heard the Gospel and they die, will they go to Hell?***"

We focus on sharing the Gospel so that people will hear it, be convicted of their sins and get saved. However; it is not rejection of the Gospel that condemns someone to Hell. People are condemned to Hell because they are sinners.

Nowhere in the Bible will you read "**Rejecting the Gospel brings forth death.**" However, you do read in **Romans 5:12** *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:*

Or in **James 1:14-15** *But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. 15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.*

And in **Romans 6:23** *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

So, rejecting Christ is not what sends you to hell, it is sin. Of course, Christ is the remedy. The Bible says that God has revealed himself to man, manifest himself to man, that his eternal power and Godhead is clearly seen and understood so they are without excuse.

Will God send someone to Hell because they have never heard of Jesus? No, someone cannot reject Jesus if they have never heard of him; however, people are sent to hell because of sin. They are unrepentant sinners. They know they are sinners yet they continue to live in their sin without any type of repentance toward God.

It says in our opening text in verse 12 **For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law:** To “perish” means to die and go to Hell, it is the opposite of having eternal life or living and going to Heaven.

We understand that by what the Bible say in **John 3:16-17 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.**

Did you see that? Those that believe should not **PERISH** but have **EVERLASTING LIFE**. So, the opposite of everlasting life or eternal life is perishing – dying and going to Hell.

Paul makes the case that those who died without the law will be judged and condemned, but so will those that die with the Law (meaning the Jews). All men will be judged according to the light they have been given. The Gentile that has never heard of Jesus won't be judged for not hearing about Jesus but will be judged and condemned according to the light given to him by God.

The Jew, who lived in the Law, will also be judged by the Law and condemned. They will be held even more accountable since they had the knowledge of the Law.

I've heard some people say “**well, God is not fair if he would send someone to hell when they have never heard the Gospel.**”

My answer is always the same – “**No, you are looking at it the wrong way – what's not fair is that God doesn't send everyone to hell.**”

If we got what we deserved or what was fair, we would be in Hell at this very moment paying for the heinous sins that we have committed. And, don't try to act all righteous. Remember what we read last week from **Romans 3:10-12 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.**

The truth is, there isn't a person listening to me this morning that hasn't thought some of the most sinful and despicable thoughts in your own mind that would embarrass you to death if anyone else knew.

I'm reminded of a Sermon that I heard Bro. Paul Washer preach and he was talking about the wickedness of our minds and he said this:

“If I were to take out your heart or if I were to take every thought you've ever had from the moment you first remember thinking until this very night, this very moment, if I took every thought you've ever had and I was able to put it on a DVD, and then I was able to show every thought and every deed that you have ever accomplished on this earth, I submit to you that you would rise up and you would run out of this building and you would never come back here again. You would never show your face to any of us. You have thought things so vile, so wicked, that you cannot even

begin to share them with your closest friend. You have thought things against your closest friend that if they knew them, they would no longer be your friend. Now look at this. If your thoughts were laid bare here tonight, every one of them, you would run out of here in shame.”†

Next you will notice that verses 13-15 are in **parenthesis:**

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

The use of parenthesis in your King James Bible is where the translators identified a **thought within a thought**. You could read the surrounding verses before or after without the words in parenthesis and it still makes sense.

This does not mean they added these words that are in parenthesis but only inserted the parenthesis to indicate that, in this case, Paul, explained in more detail what he had just said in verse 12. Sort of like Paul writing a commentary on his statement.

But, here again, Paul emphasizes that the Gentiles will not be judged on whether or not they kept the Mosaic Laws but rather based upon their actions in accordance to the light they received. Remember again what it said in **Romans 1:18-20**
18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; 19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. 20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

In **Chuck Smith's Commentary** he puts it like this: *God has written His law in every man's heart. There is that consciousness and awareness of good and evil. It is innate--written in my heart by God, and my conscience either excuses or accuses me.‡*

So, the Jews had the Law written on tablets of stone but the Gentile has the Law written on the tablets of their heart and consciousness. It is human nature to understand if you take something that does not belong to you it is wrong. If you take another person's life for no reason, it is wrong. If you lie about something it is wrong. Everyone has that built into their conscious and everyone will be judged accordingly.

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

The Bible says in **Acts 17:31** **Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.** Everyone will be judged by the Lord Jesus Christ – he is “**that man whom he hath ordained.**” Jesus himself says this in **John 5:22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:**

† Paul Washer – Sermon, “He Drank Your Hell” <https://illbehonest.com/he-drank-your-hell-paul-washer>

‡ Chuck Smith's Through the Bible Commentary 2000