

Start, 5/9/29

Lesson 14

Romans 2:12ff.

This chapter is quite involved as it lays the foundation of the rest of the book, so I will put more of these notes in your hands than normal. First, we will have a lengthy summery to this point as a basis of what Paul will cover in Romans, and

Let us be reminded again that Paul is speaking to the children of the Israel that return to Palestine from the Babylonian captivity under Ezra and Nehemiah. The headquarters of the Jews' religion, which was not the religion founded at the Mount, remained in Babylon. Those today who claim to be Jews have no connection with those Jews of Paul's day. Today, all one must do is proclaimed himself to be a Jew, and a follower of the Jews' religion, and he is considered a Jew.

(Chapter from Judeo-Churchanity, "Who is a Jew" available upon request. tbe@biblicalexaminer.org.)

There is no such animal as a Jew or a Gentile in the first century, biblical sense of the word today. The only division today is between the converted and the unconverted.

Today, a Gentile is simply anyone who does not consider himself a Jew.

We have seen thus far:

First: he who condemns others for what he is doing also condemns himself

Second: God's judgments are according to the Truth, or according to the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Third: the special goodness and mercy of God shown toward any individual or people cannot be considered a reason for hope of avoiding the results of sin. Rather, the purpose of God's goodness and mercy is to draw men to repentance.

Fourth: God will punish the wicked and reward the good, whether Jew or Gentile without the least respect of persons.

Fifth: in both cases, the standard of judgment will be according to the light the individual or people have been given.

Paul has proved to the Jews that both laws are more than sufficient to convict anyone of sin.

The Jews expected to be accepted by God according to the covenant God made with their father Abraham. In that covenant, God promised to be a God to Abraham and to his seed after him. They wrongly believed that the promise to Abraham would secure salvation for all who maintain connection with Abraham by obedience to Moses and to circumcision, regardless of their personal character.

The Jews totally misappropriated God's promise to Abraham to mean a literal, physical connection to him.

Matthew 3:9 *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.*

According to Charles Hodge, here is what Paul confronted:

“It is obvious that the Jews regarded circumcision as in some way securing their salvation. That they did so regard it, may be proved not only from such passages of the New Testament where the sentiment is implied, but also by the direct assertion of their own writers. Such assertions have been gathered in abundance from their works by Eisenmenger, Schoettgen, and others. For example, the Rabbi Menachem, in his Commentary on the Books of Moses, Fol. 43, col. 3, says, "Our Rabbins have said, that no circumcised man will see hell." In the Jalkut Rubeni, num, 1. it is taught, "Circumcision saves from hell." In the Medrasch Tillim, fol. 7, col 2, it is said, "God swore to Abraham, that no one who was circumcised should be sent to hell." In the book Akedath Jizehak, fol. 54, col. 2, it is taught that "Abraham sits before the gate of hell, and does not allow that any circumcised Israelite should enter there." The apostle considers circumcision under two different aspects. First, as a rite supposed to possess some inherent virtue or merit of its own; and secondly, as a sign and seal of God's covenant.” (A Commentary on Romans, p 63. 1853. 1973 reprint by Banner of Truth Trust, PO Box 652, Carlisle, Pennsylvania. This writer has dealt thoroughly with circumcision in his book, "Padobaptism and the Word of God.")

We see all of the authors of the New Testament condemning the Jews for corrupting the Decalogue, and replacing it with the tradition of the elders.

We will deal with the following verses when we get to them. We will only read them at this time.

Romans 4:13 *For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. 16 Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,*

Galatians 3:14

V. 11. Regardless of the source of the law, written or conscience, all are sinners, and will be equally judged accordingly.

Which leads us to

Sixth: the secrets of men will be judged by Jesus Christ. That is, all hypocrisy shall be revealed, v. 16.

Paul explains his position that Israelites – Jews – and non-Israelites, Gentiles, are equally guilty under the law when it comes to that day when all shall stand before Christ.

Ro 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.

V. 13 cannot mean justified for salvation.

Paul is speaking to the Israelites who prided themselves in having and knowing the law, yet did not do it. So, he is pointing out that God's approval is not based in a

Jew/Gentile distinction, but his approval is based upon doing's what is contained in the law.

Paul is dealing with two laws: The law for the Gentiles and the law for the Jews. In both cases, God's judgment is just and true. Those having the outward **written law, the Jews**, shall be judged by it. Those having only the **law of the conscience** as written in their hearts, **the Gentiles**, will be judged by that inner law.

So, Paul speaks of two laws here in Romans 2: the law given to Israel through Moses, and the law written in the conscience of all men.

Psalms 147:19 He sheweth his word unto Jacob, 's his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. 20 He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the LORD.

First, the Gentiles had the light of nature, by which they will be judged.

The unsaved today have the light of nature which leaves them without excuse. Those who have never heard the gospel will be judged according to the little light which they have.

V. 12. For as many as have sinned without law (of Moses) shall also perish without law:

V. 15. The unbelieving Gentiles of Paul's day had no other guide except their built-in conscience. Though they were not given the law of Moses, their conscience told them that women with women and men with men was wrong, as well as the other evils mentioned in chapter 1.

They sinned without the law, for the law was not delivered to them by Moses. It is their own "built in" law of the conscience that condemns them as sinners.

Not having the law of Moses, as did the Israelites, their judgment would not be as harsh as the judgment against those who had the law.

ARE THE HEATHEN LOST, AND WHY ARE THEY LOST?

Yes, and they will be judged according to the law that is written in their conscience. Their judgment will not be as harsh as it will be for those who have heard and rejected the gospel.

V. 15, they had the work of the law. They did not have the obedience that leads to life. Rather, they had their conscience that directed their works according to what their law said. They did by nature the things contained in the law. **They acted with** a sense of justice, equality, honour, purity and love.

The primary works of the law, whether the conscience or Moses, is to show man's need for his justification through Christ. (Gal 3:24, 25)

I have known several men who had never made a profession nor even had been in church, yet they had a better understanding of how the law worked than many Christians I have known. They did by nature the things contained in the law, never knowing the law, nor the Lawgiver.

Example:

There was a retired Air Force man in Louisiana, Tom Stewart. Providence brought him to the church, and he and his family were all converted. However, as we got to know him, we found that even as an unconverted and unchurched man, he had lived and raised his children in strict obedience to the law of God. They were probably the best example of a Christian family in the church, though he never knew about the law of God, and how it worked out in the family.

He was unchurched with no religious background, but he had a military background, so how could he be such a good example of Christianity?

Paul tells us here in the first two chapters of Romans that Tom knew in his heart what was right to do, and he set out to do it even as an unsaved man. However, the Lord revealed to him that he could not do all that was required by God for eternal life.

If he had died and stood before God even before he was saved and not knowing what the written word of God demanded of him, he would still have had to admit he was a sinner without any reference to the law of Moses.

The conscience is called the candle of the Lord, and as we saw in chapter 1, man must work at keeping that light suppressed.

Proverbs 20:27 *The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly.*

2:15, *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**;*

Paul tells the Romans that the same light and law of nature that witnesses against sin in the Gentiles, witnesses against sin in all men. The non-Israelites were left without excuse, and God is justified in condemning them. Neither the Gentiles, nor the Jews, can plead ignorance.

First, the Gentiles had the light of nature, by which they will be judged.

Second, the light of the law of Moses.

The Israelites, Jews, had the law of Moses. They not only sinned having the law, but sinned in the law. They were surrounded by the law; they lived in a society that was built on Moses. Therefore, their judgment would be much harsher.

Matthew 11:16-24 *But whereunto shall I liken this generation? (of the children of Israel) It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, 17 And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented. 18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. 19 The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children. 20 Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: 21 Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22 But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. 23 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. 24 But I say unto you, **That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.***

Luke 12:47 *And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. 48 But he that **knew not**, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, **(the Israelites to whom the law of Moses was given)** of him shall be much required: and to whom men have*

committed much, of him they will ask the more.

Simple human understanding realizes that the greater the responsibility, the more that will be required of that person.

Knowing the law of Moses vs having only the law of the conscience.

Matthew 11:24 *More tolerable...* Many stripes, vs. few stripes... I do not know how these two percepts play out in the end, but that is what the Lord said.

Though the Israelites had great privilege with the law, Paul assures them that that privilege was not a saving privilege. Regardless of their attitudes and even actions according to Moses, they were just as lost as were the non-Israelites, Gentiles without repentance and conversion.

V. 16, Paul assures those who were proud of Moses that there is a day coming when all secrets of all men will be brought to light. Those secrets will be judged by the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ according to the gospel presented through Paul.

Vv. 1-16 Summation:

First

In God's goodness, forbearance and longsuffering, he did not want us to continue on the road to ruin. So, he met us, and showed us our sin and its results of everlasting destruction. Our conscience was made alive, and we acknowledged that God's judgment was righteous, and would strike us. We saw ourselves as God sees us, and humbled ourselves under the mighty hand of God, repented and turned to his righteousness alone through Christ Jesus.

In and by God's mercy, we were given a new life, and we desire to learn more and more about him and how to please him.

Then there are those with hard and unrepentant hearts. They are confident that their deeds will allow them to appear before the righteous judge in his day of his wrath against sin.

God gives eternal life according to what each has done with Christ. And scripture is clear; faith results in righteous deeds. God's wrath is upon those who follow the natural desires of their hard and impenitent hearts.

In both situations, vv. 7, 8, each person reveals his heart by what he pursues in life. Christ is revealed by well doing, but well doing is useless before God without Christ.

Second

We have a description of those who know exactly how others should act. They seem to think that their God-given gift is to correct others, and telling them how they should live. They see their responsibility is to remove the mote from the eye of others. (Mat 7. Mote-a piece of chaff.)

Often that mote is seen in the preacher, and there are those who see a responsibility to straighten out the preacher—a responsibility they gladly take on.

I can easily recall at least four people who felt it was their responsibility to keep the preacher straight.

A few years ago, I spoke at Lloyd Sprinkle's church in Harrisonburg Virginia. After the service, a lady who had been to seminary started to correct me about something I had said. Pastor Sprinkle was standing beside me, and he sharply rebuked her. She left the church shortly thereafter.

We see here that we evaluate others according to our strong points and we judge others based on their weak points.

It is easy to look down our nose at the unsaved, but when we do the same thing in our heart, we are just as guilty.

How do we expect the unregenerate man to act?

Paul says, "Don't think you can escape the judgment of God that you are harshly condemning others with, when you have the same sort of sins in your own heart".

Remember the woman caught in the very act of adultery, John 8:1-11. When they continued asking him, he lifted himself up, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. Each being convicted by his own heart, they left one by one. There were no witnesses left against her, so the Lord could not condemn her. He told her to go and sin no more.

Certainly, none of us are guiltless, but that must not prevent us from confronting the sinner with his sin. But it must be done remembering that we are sinners, and guilty of the same things in our own heart.

1 Corinthians 6:9 *Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*

Galatians 6:1 *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.*

2 Timothy 2:25 *In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; 26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.*

Paul warns many times against hypocrisy.

We are clearly told that God does not show partiality or favoritism to anyone in the future judgment. The wrong-doer will receive tribulation and anguish from God. Those who live a righteous life will receive glory, honour and peace.

Those who have never been exposed to the God of the Bible still know it is wrong to steal, though they have never been told. Stealing results in a troubled conscience, as it speaks to them. The result is that they show the work of the law as written in their hearts, *Thou shall not steal.*

God looks past the deeds to the source of the deeds. We can mislead others with our deeds, but we cannot mislead God.

Lesson 14, end