

had delight in others for practicing them. All this they did, knowing the decree of God, both against their sins and against themselves. They therefore sinned willfully and recklessly.

Comment

Why did God give them up? Because they refused to have him in their knowledge. How could they have him before their mind while they indulged in such vile passions as attributed to both men and women in verses 26-27a? In all this free reign of lust there was to be found the sure recompense of their error in their own bodies (27b). Because they abandoned their minds to sin and gave God no place in their knowledge God gave them up to do those things which are not fitting (28). The Gentiles were (and are) "filled" with the terrible catalog of sins described in verses 29-31.

The final toll of the bell of doom in all of this willful sin is that they who knew the law of God and realized that they who did such things under such conditions were worthy of the penalty of the wrath of God, actually encouraged others to do the same (32). (1:26-32)

Rethinking in Outline Form

II. Proposition Needed. 1:18—3-20

1. Needed by the Gentiles. 1:18-32

a. Needed by the Gentiles because they were under the wrath of God vs. 18a

(1) They were objects of God's wrath for the following reasons:

- (a) Although they had a knowledge of God's power and divinity through creation, they through their sin stifled this truth. 18b-20
- (b) Deliberately ignoring their knowledge of God they entered into vain speculation. This ended in the worst type of idolatry. 21-23
- (c) God had to give them up because of their absolute moral degradation. 24-32

2. Needed by the Jews. 2:1—3:9a

Text

2:1-11. Wherefore thou art without excuse, O man, whosoever thou are that judgest; for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest dost practice the same things. 2 And we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against them that practice such things. 3 And reckonest thou this, O man, who judgest them that practice such things, and doest the 20. What is the final word of condemnation given against the Gentiles?

same, that thou shall escape the judgment of God? 4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering not knowing that the goodness of God leadest thee to repentance? 5 but after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up for thyself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; 6 who will render to every man according to his works: 7 to them that by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and incorruption, eternal life: 8 but unto them that are factious, and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, shall be wrath and indignation, 9 tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that worketh evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Greek; 10 but glory and honor and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek: 11 for there is no respect of persons with God.

REALIZING ROMANS, 2:1-11

52. Why introduce the thought of judgment (on man's part) at this particular time? How does it relate to what has just been said?
53. Read carefully through these eleven verses and mark the three principles or standards of judgment God will use in judgment. They are in verses 2, 6, 11. Name them.
54. Who are the persons of whom the apostle speaks in verse two? (the 'them' of the verse.)
55. Do you believe that God will ever punish a man who does not know he is guilty?
56. The goodness of God does not lead all men to repentance. What is needed in our understanding before this is true?
57. What is repentance? Write out *your* definition.
58. What would be a synonym for the word "hardness" as in verse 5?
59. Will there be measures of punishment on the day of judgment?
60. In what way will we be judged "according to our works"? I thought we were saved by grace through faith.
61. Is Paul saying here that some Gentiles will be given eternal life even if they had no opportunity to hear of Christ, but continued to obey the law they knew? (Cf. 2:6, 7)
62. Why all the variety of words to describe punishment? i.e. "wrath, indignation, tribulation, anguish."
63. In what sense is God no respecter of persons? How does the acceptance of Christ relate to this thought?
64. Will God give heaven to the Gentile who never heard of Christ, and never had opportunity, but lived up to the law of right and wrong that he did know? Be careful with this question; do not be too hasty on either side of the subject.

Paraphrase

2:1-11. Since all who practice these crimes are worthy of death, thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art, who thus judgest, and yet expected that thyself shall be saved: for whilst thou judgest the Gentiles worthy of death, thou condemnest thyself; because thou who thus judgest, committest the very same things.

2 Besides, we know that the sentence of God contained in the curse of the law of Moses is agreeable to truth, even when it is pronounced upon the Jews who commit such crimes, and condemns them to death.

3 This being the case, dost thou think, O Jewish man, who condemnest those heathens who commit such sins, and yet committest the same sins thyself, that thou shalt escape the sentence of God because thou art a son of Abraham, and a member of God's visible church?

4 Or dost thou misconstrue the greatness of his goodness, in bestowing on thee a revelation of his will, and forbearing to punish thee, and his being slow to anger with thee, by inferring from these things that God will not punish thee; not knowing that this goodness of God is designed to lead thee to repentance?

5 Whatever thou mayest think, in proportion to thy own obduracy and impenitency of heart, thou layest up in store for thyself punishment, to be inflicted on thee in the day of punishment, when there shall be an illustrious display of the righteous judgment of God made before the assembled universe;

6 Who will render to every man, not according to his external privileges, but according to the real nature of his works:

7 To them, verily, who by perseverance (I Thess 1:3) in faith and holiness, according to the light which they enjoy, seek glory, honor, and immortality, he will render eternal life:

8 But to them who, being of a proud skeptical disposition, dispute against, and obey not the truth concerning God and his will, made known to them, but obey unrighteousness from false principles and evil inclinations, anger and wrath shall be rendered.

9 I speak of all men without exception: for I say, the severest punishment will be inflicted on every man who practices evil; upon the Jew first, or heaviest, because his sins are aggravated by superior advantages, and also upon the Gentile, because, being taught his duty by the light of nature, he is justly punishable.

10 On the other hand, I affirm, that eternal life shall be to every one who practices good; first or chiefly to the Jew, who, through his superior advantages, hath made greater progress in virtue, and also

to the Greek, whose improvement hath been in proportion to his advantages.

11 For there is no respect of persons with God: A wicked Jew shall not escape at the judgment, because he is a son of Abraham; neither shall a wicked Gentile be spared, because he lived without revelation.

Summary

The Jew constantly condemned the Gentile for doing certain things, but in doing so he condemned himself, for he did the same things. God's just judgment is against all who do such things as the Jew did. Therefore he cannot escape condemnation. The goodness and patience of God are designed to lead men to repentance, but the Jew misconstrues these and does not repent. By this course he heaps up for himself wrath in the last day, when God will render to every one according to his deeds. To the good he will give eternal life; on the disobedient he will inflict wrath. There is no partiality with God.

Comment

While this passage (like the rest of the book) was written primarily for the edification of Christians, it seems to have an equally important secondary purpose—to convert the non-Christian Jew. This is seen in the fact that Paul is here addressing his remarks directly to the Jew, as a careful reading will substantiate.

With the above thought in mind we can realize that the eyes of the Jewish reader must have reflected the sense of self-righteousness he felt within his heart as he read Paul's conclusion of the state of the Gentiles. The apostle now turns to the other half of that world of "Gentiles" and "Jews." He is to finally demonstrate that they are in reality less excusable than the Gentiles, and thus laboring under a greater need for the gospel. Verse one indicates nothing of the persons addressed, and the argument continues in this concealed form until the 17th verse. Since this is true, the Jew would read and hear these words without the veil of prejudice over his mind and would imagine Paul to be continuing in his discussion of the sinful state of the heathen. This being so, he would readily assent to the principles laid down in these verses; and yet before he knew it, he would begin to behold his natural face in the mirror.

21. What is the primary and secondary purpose of Rom. 2:1-3:9a?
22. How does Paul begin his discussion of the need of the Jew?
23. Why does he do it in this way?
24. Why would it be ridiculous to excuse a man who practiced the same sins he condemned in another?
25. Explain the purpose of the personal note in Rom. 2:3.

It would seem ridiculous to excuse the man who judged or condemned another and at the same time practiced the very sins he condemned (vs. 1). This evident fact is based upon the eternal truth that God will render judgment upon the basis of truth, not upon heredity or position. The judgment of God will be against all such hypocrites (vs. 2).

Making it still more personal (to the Jewish reader): this is a good principle but personally speaking do *you*, O man, who are doing this very thing, suppose that *you* will escape the judgment of God? Notice here the inspired author has anticipated the thoughts of the Jewish mind which were probably as follows: "He seems to be applying this to me also, but I'll escape somehow; for although I am guilty of the above stated charges, I see no immediate judgment of God. He will overlook it. After all, I mean well and I am a son of Abraham and bear the mark of circumcision." (vs. 3).

To correct this erroneous view, the inspired writer then points out that all this goodness of God, both in forbearing his judgments, and this suffering long with the offender, and in giving him a place in the family of Abraham, along with the mark of circumcision, is but directed to the end that he might repent. The fact that God has not sent his judgment upon you is evidence that He is giving you a period of time for repentance. And now if you fail to repent, you will despise all the riches of His goodness. But what are you doing? Why, through your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up for yourself a great portion of wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. vs. 3-5.

In this great day of judgment the Judge of the world will have one rule which He will be sure to use, and it won't be whether you are a son of Abraham and bear the mark of circumcision or not. The rule of judgment will be "according to works." Then follow examples of the two classes of people who will appear before God to be judged by this rule. There are those who through patient continuance (steadfastness) in well doing seek for glory and honor and incorruption; these shall be given eternal life. Notice: There is no indication here that sinless perfection is the requirement for receiving eternal life, but rather a constant, unwavering and honest effort to attain "glory and honor and incorruption" by doing that which they

26. What was the purpose of God's long-suffering?
27. To whom was this long-suffering of God especially directed?
28. What did the Jew do instead of repenting?
29. What was the Jew doing for himself by not repenting?
30. On what basis will God judge these Jews and Gentiles?
31. What is meant by "patient continuance" of Rom. 2:7?
32. What will be given to those who so continue in well doing?

know to be right—right according to God's law. This may not seem to you to be true, but please conclude this part of the study before reaching a definite conclusion. Then there are those who through a proud, self-centered spirit, dispute against that which they know to be right and obey not the truth, but unrighteousness; to them shall be meted out the punishment due for such willful disobedience: wrath, indignation, tribulation, and anguish. This punishment will be rendered to every soul of man who works evil. Note that they are lost, but not because they simply fell short of perfection. They are lost not only because they did not even try, but rather because they steadfastly disobeyed and deliberately opposed God, clamoring against His law. (Cp. 1:18b, 25, 28a) Although the Jew and Greek will be judged by the same rule (according to works), the Jew, because of his superior knowledge and opportunity is under a greater responsibility; hence he will receive more severe judgment than the Gentile who was less privileged. (Cp. Lu. 12:47-48) Thus we see that in the judgment, the Jew and Greek will each receive a fair consideration. Behold and admire the impartiality of God's coming judgment. Truly God is no respecter of persons. (2:1-11)

Text

2:12-16. For as many as have sinned without the law shall also perish without the law: and as many as have sinned under 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 Gentiles that have not the law do by nature the things of the law, these, not having the law, are the law unto themselves; 15 in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them); 16 in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men, according to my gospel, by Jesus Christ.

REALIZING ROMANS, 2:12-16

65. Having a law such as the Jews is no advantage in being justified; with or without law, men are lost. But *why* are they lost? Is it because they do not have Christ, or because they fail to keep their law?
66. What is "the law" of verse 12? Does this verse say that there is no possibility of being saved without Christ, or is it discussing the principle God will use in judgment?
67. Who are "the hearers of the law" in verse 13? Are there any comparable persons today? Who are they?
33. In reference to the judgment, what is meant by "the Jew first"?

68. I thought the law was unable to justify anyone. Here, it says the doers of the law shall be justified.
69. How could a person who had not the law "do by nature" the things of the law?
70. Note carefully what is written on their heart: *Not* the law, but "the work of the law." What is the work or purpose of law?

Paraphrase

2:12-16. As many, therefore, as have sinned without revelation, shall also perish without being judged by revelation; their punishment will be less on account of their want of revelation. And as many as have sinned under revelation shall be judged by revelation, their guilt being aggravated by the advantages which they enjoy. They shall be punished in proportion to their guilt.

13 For not those who have enjoyed revelation are esteemed just in the sight of God, but those only who do (vs. 10) the things enjoined in revelation shall be justified at the judgment.

14 When, therefore, the Gentiles who have not revelation, do, by the guidance of their reason and conscience, the things enjoined by revelation, these persons, though they have no external revelation to direct them, furnish a revelation to themselves, by obeying that by which they may be justified through Christ, equally with the Jews.

15 These show plainly, that the distinction between virtue and vice, inculcated in revelation, is written not on tables of stone, but on their hearts, their conscience bearing witness thereto, as also their debates with one another; in which they either accuse one another of evil actions, or else defend each other when so accused.

16 What I have said concerning God's rendering to every one according to his works, and concerning the judgment of those who have sinned, whether under law or without law, will happen in the day when God will judge the inward dispositions of men by Jesus Christ, according to the gospel which I preach.

Summary

The Gentiles who have sinned without a written law will be judged without one, while the Jews will be judged by the law under which they live. Nations who have no written law are law to themselves in so far as they know right from wrong. What they know in this respect is attested by their conscience, and shown by their mutual accusations and acquittals.

34. Explain the meaning of Rom. 2:12.

Comment

Taking up the case of the Jew and Greek from a closer viewpoint, Paul now states the basis of judgment (Notice: the basis of *judgment*, NOT the basis of *justification*) for those without the law as well as those with the law (the Mosaic law). As many as have sinned who have not the law of Moses, will be judged by the law they do have, the law of nature. Paul does not tell us exactly what this law is, but he undoubtedly gives us the basis of it in chapter one, verse twenty. And if justice demands it, they will perish. Their judgment will be totally apart from the law of Moses. It is well to notice here that the case of the Gentiles presented in the first chapter would seem to indicate that nearly all, if not all of the Gentile world would be lost, being judged upon the basis of the law of nature. But those who have sinned under the law of Moses, what about them? They will be judged upon the very law they have transgressed. The apostle points out in verse 13 that what he has said in verse 12 is true because of the previously stated facts that God's judgment will be "according to works" and "without respect of persons." (Cp. 2:6,11) In effect, he says: "Just because you hear the law read in your synagogues every sabbath, you need not rest easily; for this will mean nothing toward your acquittal on the day of eternal equity. I repeat again, it is the 'doing of the law' that counts before God." Paul has thus removed the Jew's last vestige of hope of being counted as a special object of favor, and has placed before him the mirror where he can see his need of the gospel. 2:12-13.

It would be quite probable that some learned Jew would offer this objection: "Now how could the Gentiles be judged by this rule (that the doers of the law shall be justified) since they have no law?" This objection is answered in the parenthetical statement of verses 14-15. The apostle says that even though the Gentiles have not "the" law, if they do by nature (naturally) the things of "the" law, they thus become "a" law unto themselves. This strange circumstance is explained in the fact that they have an accurate, though perhaps limited, knowledge of right and wrong which they received from the law of nature, and possibly through tradition. Thus the distinction between virtue and vice (which is the "work of the law") is

35. Upon what is the Gentile's law probably based?
36. What is the conclusion to be drawn from chapter one regarding the spiritual standing of the Gentiles in judgment?
37. In respect to the law, who is going to be justified in God's sight?
38. Why is the parenthetical statement of vs. 14-15 here inserted?
39. Explain in your own words verses 14-15.

written upon their hearts. That it is written upon their hearts is demonstrated by their actions. Inwardly their conscience assents to the fact that right is preferable to wrong. When the decision of the will is made and the deed is done, their thoughts or inward reasonings either accuse them if the deed was wrong, or excuse them if it was right. The Gentile will be judged according to his conscientiousness in keeping the law of nature and the Jew according to his conscientiousness in keeping the law of Moses. (Cp. 2:6, 7, 10) (We notice here a certain element of mercy extended to those who never heard the gospel.) The apostle has now clearly explained the way God will judge them "according to their works," 2:14-15.

It is here necessary to point out that the thought of verse 13 is broken by the parenthetical statement of verses 14-15, and is not completed until verse 16. Completely stated the thought is as follows: "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified; in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men, according to my gospel, by Jesus Christ." When God begins to mark the secrets of our hearts, "O Lord, who can stand?" But that will be absolutely fair judgment, will it not? Paul says that this is the message of the gospel he preaches, and that God will commit all decisions unto Jesus Christ, and act through him on that great day of judgment. 2:(13), 16. (2:12-16)

Rethinking in Outline Form

THE NEED OF THE GOSPEL AMONG THE JEWS, 2:1-16

The Jews Were Truly in Need of Justification, for:
If God's judgment was going to be:

1. According to truth. vs. 2
2. According to works. vs. 6
3. With no respect of persons. vs. 11
4. According to doing and not hearing. vs. 13

Then the Jews were tragically in need, for:

1. According to truth. vs. 2
 - a. The Jews condemned others and practiced what they condemned. vs. 1
 - b. The Jew felt he would be treated in a special manner. vs. 3
 - c. He misunderstood God's mercy as a license for sin and not an opportunity to repent. vs. 4

40. What thought is broken by this parenthetical statement?

41. How does this thought read when the parenthetical statement is left out?

42. To whom has God committed judgment? Cp. Jn. 5:22.

d. By his hard heart and unrepentant attitude he was only increasing his coming wrath. vs. 5

2. According to works. vs. 6

a. To the steadfast well-doer, eternal life. vs. 7

b. To the factious and disobedient, hell. vs. 8

c. This will be given to everyone, Jews and Greeks, vs. 9-10

3. With no respect to person. vs. 11

a. Even the Gentiles will be judged by this standard. They do "by nature" their law and will be judged accordingly. vs. 14-15

In the day when God shall judge the secrets of the hearts of men it will be:

1. According to truth.

2. According to works.

3. With no respect for persons.

4. According to doing.

If this be so, and it is, then the Jew is truly, tragically, in need . . . for he is condemned **ON ALL FOUR POINTS.**

Text

2:17-24. But if thou bearest the name of a Jew, and retest upon the law, and gloriest in God, 18 and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, 19 and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them that are in darkness, 20 a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having in the law the form of knowledge and of the truth; 21 thou therefore that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, does thou steal? 22 thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou rob temples? 23 thou who gloriest in the law, through thy transgression of the law dishonorest thou God? 24 For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you, even as it is written.

REALIZING ROMANS, 2:17-24

71. Is there any real significance in the name "Jew" other than the fact that it distinguishes them from the Gentiles?

72. In what sense were the Jews "resting upon the law"? To what purpose or intent?

73. Make a list of the characteristics of the Jews here given by Paul. There are eleven of them; see if you can find them all.

74. Was there one of these qualities that was not true or desirable?

75. In what sense were the Jews glorying in God? Explain the expression.

76. What is the difference, if any, of "knowing His will" and "approving the things that are excellent"?
77. Tie up the expression "being instructed out of the law" with the two preceding phrases; i.e., show the relationship.
78. Did God ever intend for the Jewish nation to be a guide to the blind?
79. Show the tremendous significance of revelation as expressed in these words.
80. Is it true that all who are now without revelation are blind—in the dark, ignorant, and foolish?
81. Can you see any application to present-day church members?
82. In what sense had the Jew failed to teach himself?
83. What definition of teaching does this verse (21) give?
84. Do you believe these Jews were actually committing adultery and at the same time teaching others not to?
85. Why would a Jew rob a temple of idols? Would it be to worship them?
86. Note in verse 23 that transgression of the law is more serious than the transgression of a divine will. It has judgment implications.
87. Can God be dishonored?
88. What is the meaning of "blasphemed" as here used?

Paraphrase

2:17-24. What improvement have ye Jews made of revelation? Behold, thou hast the honorable appellation of a Jew, and retest in the law as a complete rule of duty and boastest in God as the object of thy worship;

18 And knowest what God requires, and approvest the things that are excellent, being instructed by the law, which is a revelation from God, and a much surer rule than philosophy;

19 And boastest that thou thyself art a guide in matters of religion to the Gentiles, who, notwithstanding their philosophy, are blind, and a light to all who are in the darkness of heathenism;

20 A reprover of the foolish, a teacher of persons as destitute of spiritual ideas as babes:—those titles thou assumest, because thou hast a just representation of religious knowledge and truth in the scriptures.

21 Is thy behaviour suitable to those high pretensions? Thou then who teaches the Gentiles, why teachest thou not thyself? Thou who preachest to them, Do not steal,—dost thou steal?

22 Thou enlightened Jewish doctor, who sayest to the Gentiles, Do not commit adultery,—dost thou commit adultery? Thou who

abhorrest idols, dost thou rob temples of the tithes destined for the support of the worship of God? as if impiety were criminal in heathens, but pardonable in thee.

23 Thou who boastest of revelation, dost thou, by breaking the precepts of revelation, dishonor God who bestowed it on thee? (See vs. 4)

24 I do not charge you Jews with these crimes rashly: For, as it was written to your fathers, so I write to you, the name of God is evil spoken of among the Gentiles through your wickedness, who call yourselves his people.

Summary

The Jew made great pretensions to superior knowledge; yet he acted as though he himself needed to be taught. He was inconsistent in his conduct. He preached not to do this, but did it. He taught not to do that, but did it. He boasted in the law, yet broke it. He abhorred idols; yet robbed temples of them to serve them. He affected great reverence for God; yet dishonored him by breaking his law. He even brought his name into disrepute among surrounding nations.

Comment

The Jewish readers of this letter have no doubt by this time come to see the personal application of what has been said, so the open statement of verse seventeen, directed as it is to the Jew, would be no great surprise. The 142 words of this remarkable sentence contain an undeniable exposé of Jewish sins which demonstrate the need in their lives for the gospel of Christ. Notice the apparently complimentary touch of these words along with the masked sarcasm which finally bursts forth into open denunciation of undeniable sins. Hear Paul speak to the heart of these Jews: (Ro 2:17-20)

First, he spoke of their high standing.

- a. Bore the proud name of a Jew. (Proud because it meant "praise" Gen. 29:35.)
- b. Rested upon the law.
- c. Glorified in God.
- d. Knew His will.

43. How does the universal need of the gospel help to answer question one?
44. How does the basis of judgment help to answer the question?
45. In what manner is the guilt of the Jew (chap. 2) and Gentile (chap. 1) made known?
46. Why wouldn't the Jew be surprised to hear his name mentioned as in verse 17?
47. What form does the 142-word sentence of the Jewish exposé take? Why?
48. Why was the name "Jew" a proud name?
49. Who was blind, in darkness, a babe, foolish?

- e. Were able to discriminate in a very close way as to right and wrong because of their instruction in the law.
- f. A confident guide to the blind Gentile.
- g. A light to those in darkness.
- h. An instructor of the foolish.
- i. A teacher of those who were so destitute of spiritual knowledge as to be counted as "babes."
- j. All these things were theirs because they had the law and in it the knowledge and truth which made such a standing possible (2:17-20).

He then condemned their hypocrisy. To the question now asked by Paul there could be but one answer. Here is the question, which contains the crux of the whole matter: "Thou therefore that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?" (2:21a)

- a. What about your teaching on stealing? How does it compare with your actions?
- b. And your prohibitions against adultery—are you practicing the very thing you prohibit?
- c. How you do abhor idols! But is it you who are entering temples of these idols to steal the very objects you abhor?
- d. Summing up the matter, you present a strange paradox. You glory in the law of God and then by your transgressions of the law you dishonor Him who originated the law.
- e. It is as in the days of your fathers—the name of Jehovah is sneered at among the Gentiles because of you (2:21b-24). (2:17-24)

Text

2:25-29. For circumcision indeed profiteth, if thou be a doer of the law; but if thou be a transgressor of the law, thy circumcision is become uncircumcision. 26 If therefore the uncircumcision keep the ordinances of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be reckoned for circumcision? 27 and shall not the uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfill the law, judge thee, who with the letter and circumcision are a transgressor of the law? 28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: 29 but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

REALIZING ROMANS, 2:25-29

- 89. In what sense would circumcision be of any profit? I thought we were answerable to the gospel.
- 50. What phrase contains the crux of the whole matter? Explain.

90. Either a man is circumcised or not. After being circumcised, how could he be "uncircumcised"?
91. Paul seems to understand circumcision in an entirely new light. Does this have any application to Christian baptism? cp. Col. 2:12-14. If so, what?
92. What is the meaning of the word "judge" in vs. 27?
93. What is "the letter" of vs. 27?
94. Do outward forms have any significance at all?
95. In this section a good synonym for "circumcision" would be___?
96. Could we as Christians keep the spirit of the Faith and not the letter, and yet still be acceptable with God? Explain.

Paraphrase

2:25-29. Whilst ye continue wicked, it is foolish to expect salvation because ye are circumcised; for circumcision, indeed, as the sign of God's covenant, will profit thee, if thou keepest the law of faith enjoined in the covenant; but if thou be a transgressor of that law, thou are in the condition of a wicked Gentile.

26 And if a heathen, instructed by right reason, and by the grace of God, perform the precepts of the law of faith, will not God treat him as a person circumcised, by bestowing on him justification, the blessing promised to Abraham's seed?

27 And will not every uncircumcised Gentile, who, under the direction of reason and conscience, without revelation, practises the faith and obedience enjoined in the covenant with Abraham, condemn thee as a transgressor of that covenant, though a Jew by the circumcision which is according to the letter of Moses's precept?

28 For he is not a son of Abraham, and an heir of the promises, who is one by natural descent only; neither is true circumcision that which is outward in the flesh:

29 But he is a Jew who is one in the temper of his mind; and circumcision is that of the heart, by cutting off evil desires, according to the spirit, not according to the letter of the law. Of such a real Jew, the praise will not be from the Jews, who will disown him if he is uncircumcised, but it will come from God, who, knowing his heart, will acknowledge him as one of Abraham's spiritual seed.

Summary

Circumcision is of no value unless the law is kept. The Gentile who keeps the law, though not circumcised, will be accepted. The Jew who breaks the law, though circumcised, will be condemned. The Judaism and circumcision which save men are in the heart and spirit, and not outward in literal fleshly marks.

51. What means of special approval did the Jew attempt to use?

Comment

Properly humbled, the Jew now searches for some way to bolster his deflated ego. He harkens back to the old prejudice of special favor supposedly found in circumcision. Paul speaks of the true meaning of circumcision after this fashion: Circumcision is indeed of profit if you are a doer of the law, but if you are not, of what value is your circumcision? You had just as well be uncircumcised. And speaking of the matter of circumcision, that person who does not bear this rite, if he keeps the ordinance of the law, will he not be considered as if he were circumcised? And would not such a person judge and shame you who have the law and circumcision, yet are a transgressor? As shocking as it may sound, being a Jew is not a matter of outward form, nor circumcision a mere physical rite, for God recognizes a man as a Jew from the condition of his heart. Likewise with circumcision, it also is of the heart and not of the letter. The circumstances are thus constituted so God may do the praising (since the name "Jew" means "praise") and not man. 2:25-29.

Text

3:1-9a. What advantage then hath the Jew? or what is the profit of circumcision? 2 Much every way: first of all, that they were intrusted with the oracles of God. 3 For what if some were without faith? shall their want of faith make of none effect of the faithfulness of God? 4 God forbid: yea, let God be found true, but every man a liar; as it is written,

That thou mightest be justified in thy words,

And mightest prevail when thou comest into judgment. 5 But if our unrighteousness commendeth the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who visiteth with wrath? (I speak after the manner of men.) 6 God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world? 7 But if the truth of God through my lie abounded unto his glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner? 8 and why not (as we are slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say), Let us do evil, that good may come? whose condemnation is just. 9 What then? are we better than they?

REALIZING ROMANS, 3:1-9a

97. Who is asking this question of vs. 1? i.e., for whom is Paul asking it?

98. Why imagine there would be an advantage and profit? cf. vs. 1.

99. The Jews had the oracles of God, but they did them no good.

How did such oracles relate to Christ?

52. How could the circumcised become uncircumcised and vice versa?

53. How could Paul say that circumcision was of the heart when it plainly was in the flesh?