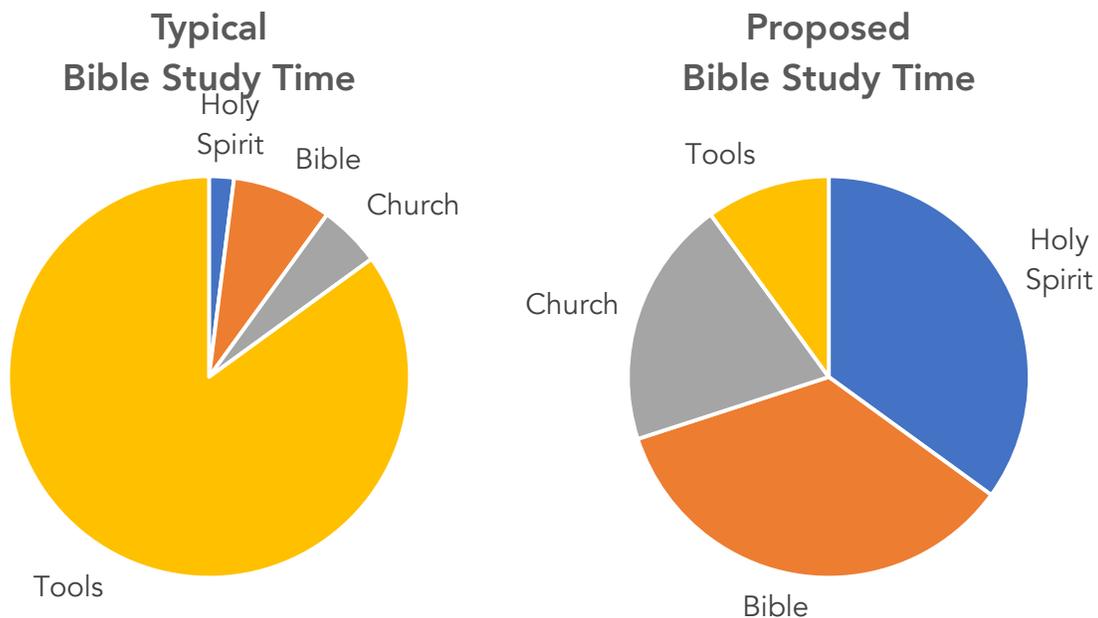


# Romans

God's Judgment and the Law ([Romans 2:12-29](#))

## Introduction

A gentle review: **Did we do this?** Spend more time with God and His Word than with anyone and anything else.



Our approach each week will be REAP (read, explain, apply, personalize).

Let's read the text that leads into this week's text.

## Greeting

**1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, 2 which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, 3 concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh 4 and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, 5 through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, 6 including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,**

**7 To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints:**

**Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

## Longing to Go to Rome

**8** First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world. **9** For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention you **10** always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you. **11** For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you— **12** that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine. **13** I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in order that I may reap some harvest among you as well as among the rest of the Gentiles. **14** I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. **15** So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.

**16** For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. **17** For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."

## God's Wrath on Unrighteousness

**18** For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. **19** For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. **20** For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. **21** For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. **22** Claiming to be wise, they became fools, **23** and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

**24** Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, **25** because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

**26** For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; **27** and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.

28 And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. 29 They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, 30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 31 foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. 32 Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.

### God's Righteous Judgment

1 Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things. 2 We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things. 3 Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God? 4 Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? 5 But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.

6 He will render to each one according to his works: 7 to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; 8 but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. 9 There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, 10 but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. 11 For God shows no partiality.

### Read: God's Judgment and the Law (2:12-29) (1/2)

12 For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. 13 For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified. 14 For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. 15 They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them 16 on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.

17 But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God 18 and know his will and approve what is excellent, because you are instructed from the law; 19 and if

you are sure that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, **20** an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth— **21** you then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? **22** You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? **23** You who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law. **24** For, as it is written, "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you." **25** For circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law, but if you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision. **26** So, if a man who is uncircumcised keeps the precepts of the law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? **27** Then he who is physically uncircumcised but keeps the law will condemn you who have the written code and circumcision but break the law. **28** For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. **29** But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.

## Explain: God's Judgment and the Law (2:12-29) (1/2)

Bible study is asking and answering questions about the text. Let's ask some questions.

Today, we're going to review, "[How to Get a Grasp on My Bible](#)" from [Growth Track 2](#).

1. **Hear** (listening to the Bible being read)
2. **Read** (reading the Bible ourselves) → Read (the "what does it say?")
3. **Study** (asking and answering questions)
4. **Memorize** (hiding the Bible our hearts)
5. **Meditate** (thinking about the Bible to apply the Bible to our lives)
6. **Apply** (living the Bible out in community)
  - **What did it mean to the original hearers? Interpretation** → Explain (the "what does it mean?" structure, words, repetitions, topics, observations, etc.)
  - **What is the underlying timeless principle? Implication** → Apply (the "so what is the point?")
  - **Where or how could I practice that principle? Implementation** → Personalize (the "now what do we do with that?")

We are walking through this process each week in [Romans](#). Today, we will walk through the "read" and the first few steps of the "explain" on this passage. Next week, we will walk through the remaining "explain" steps on this passage. (This passage is too big for all the steps in one lesson.)

## Are there any literary/structural observations?

Last week we saw that Paul shifted from “they” in **Romans 1** to “you” in **Romans 2**. Paul continues his usage of the “you” pronouns (called a diatribe) in this passage—and even clarifies in **Romans 2:17** that he is speaking specifically to Jewish believers.

## What do the words mean?

**12 For all who have sinned** [second aorist active indicative; missed the mark and not share in the prize, erred, sinned, offended, trespassed] **without the law** [lawlessly, without the law] **will also perish** [future middle indicative; be destroyed fully, perish, lose, die] **without the law** [lawlessly, without the law; same word used earlier in **Romans 2:12**], **and all who have sinned** [second aorist active indicative; missed the mark and not share in the **prize**, erred, sinned, offended, trespassed; same word used earlier in **Romans 2:12**] **under the law** [*nomos*; regulation, law of **Moses**, law; this word will be repeated **19** times in this passage] **will be judged** [*krino*; future middle indicative; distinguish, decide, try, condemn, punish, avenge, conclude, condemn, damn, decree, determine, esteem, judge, sue, ordain, call in question, sentence, think; showed up three times in **Romans 2:1, 3**] **by the law** [*nomos*]. **13 For it is not the hearers** [listeners, hearers] **of the law** [*nomos*] **who are righteous** [equitable, innocent, holy, just, righteous; same word used in **Romans 1:17**] **before God, but the doers** [**performers**, doers (used of poets)] **of the law** [*nomos*] **who will be justified** [future middle indicative; rendered just, rendered innocent, freed, justified, righteous]. **14 For when Gentiles** [non-Jewish, Gentiles, heathens, nations, peoples], **who do not have** [present active participle; have, hold] **the law** [*nomos*], **by nature** [growth, **natural** production, native disposition, usage, kind, nature; used in **Romans 1:26**] **do** [present active subjunctive; make, do] **what the law** [*nomos*; used in **Romans 2:12, 13, 14**] **requires, they are** [present middle indicative; have, hold] **a law** [*nomos*]; **to themselves, even though they do not have** [present active participle] **the law** [*nomos*]. **15 They show** [present middle indicative; indicate, do, show] **that the work** [toil, act, deed, doing, labor, work] **of the law** [*nomos*] **is written** [inscribed, written] **on their hearts** [heart, thoughts, feelings, mind], **while their conscience** [co-perception, moral consciousness, conscience] **also bears witness** [present active participle; testifies jointly, corroborates by **evidence**, bears witness], **and their conflicting thoughts** [computations, reasonings, imaginations, thoughts] **accuse** [present active participle; **object**, accuse, be a plaintiff, charge with some offense] **or even excuse** [present middle participle; give a legal plea of oneself, exculpate, answer for, make a **defense**, excuse, speak for self] **them** **16 on that day when, according to my gospel** [good message; used in **Romans 1:1, 16**], **God judges** [*krino*; future active indicative; used in **Romans 2:1, 3, 12**] **the secrets** [concealed, privates, hidden, secrets] **of men by Christ** [“anointed”] **Jesus** [“Jehovah is salvation;” used in **Romans 1:1**].

**17 But if you call** [present middle indicative; named further, denominated, call] **yourself a Jew and rely on** [present middle indicative; settle on, remain, rely on, rest in] **the law** [nomos] **and boast** [vaunt, boast, glory, joy, rejoice] **in God** **18 and know** [present active indicative; know, are aware of, feel, perceive, understand] **his will** [determination, choice, purpose, decree, volition, inclination, desire, pleasure, will] **and approve** [present active indicative; test, approve, allow, discern, examine, like, prove, try] **what is excellent** [present active participle; borne through, transported, reported, bettered, excellent, published, of more value; (JF note: I am confused on the proper application of the definition of this word—and so was A.T. Robertson)], **because you are instructed** [katecheo; present middle participle; sounded down into the ears, indoctrinated, **catechized**, apprised of, informed, taught, instructed] **from the law** [nomos]; **19 and if you are sure** [second perfect active indicative; convinced, assented, rely, agreed, assured, believed, have confidence in, contented, make friend, obeyed, persuaded, trusted, yielded] **that you yourself are** [present middle infinitive] **a guide** [conductor, teacher, **guide**, leader] **to the blind** [opaque, **smoky**, blind], **a light** [luminousness, **fire**, light] **to those who are in darkness** [**shadiness**, obscurity, darkness], **20 an instructor** [trainer, teacher, discipliner, instructor] **of the foolish** [mindless, stupid, ignorant, egotistic, rash, unbelieving, foolish, unwise], **a teacher** [instructor, doctor, master, teacher] **of children** [infants, simple-minded, **immature** Christians, babes, childish], **having** [present active participle; having, holding] **in the law** [nomos] **the embodiment** [formation, appearance, semblance, formula, form] **of knowledge** [knowing, knowledge, science] **and truth—** **21 you then who teach** [present active participle] **others, do you not teach** [present active indicative; same word used earlier in **Romans 2:21**] **yourself? While you preach** [present active participle; **herald**, preach, proclaim, publish] **against stealing** [present active infinitive], **do you steal** [present active indicative]? **22 You who say** [present active participle; lay forth, relate, discourse, ask, bid, boast, call, describe, give out, name, put forth, say, speak, tell, utter] **that one must not commit adultery** [present active infinitive], **do you commit adultery** [present active indicative; same word used earlier in **Romans 2:22**]? **You who abhor** [present middle participle; are disgusted by, detest, abhor, abominate] **idols** [images, heathen gods, worship of heathen gods], **do you rob temples** [present active indicative; commit sacrilege, rob temples]? **23 You who boast** [present middle indicative; vaunt, boast, glory, joy, rejoice; same word used in **Romans 2:17**] **in the law** [nomos] **dishonor** [present active indicative; render infamous, despise, dishonor, suffer shame, entreat shamefully] **God by breaking** [violating, breaking, transgressing] **the law** [nomos]. **24 For, as it is written** [perfect middle indicative; written, described], **“The name of God is blasphemed** [present middle indicative; vilified, spoken impiously of, blasphemed, defamed, railed on, reviled, spoken **evil** against] **among the Gentiles because of you.”**

**25 For circumcision** [the rite of circumcision] **indeed** [indeed, truly, verily] **is of value** [present active indicative; is useful, benefits, advantages, betters, prevails, profits] **if you obey** [present active subjunctive; perform repeatedly or **habitually**, execute, accomplish, collect, fare, commit, do, exact, keep, require; used in **Romans 1:32; 2:1, 2, 3**] **the law** [*nomos*], **but if you break** [present middle subjunctive; violation, breaking, transgression; used in **Romans 2:23**] **the law** [*nomos*], **your circumcision** [the rite of circumcision; same word as earlier in **Romans 2:25**] **becomes** [second perfect active indicative] **uncircumcision** [not circumcised, uncircumcised]. **26 So** [a connecting word], **if a man who is uncircumcised** [not circumcised, uncircumcised; used in **Romans 2:25**] **keeps** [present active subjunctive; watches, guards, preserves, obeys, keeps, saves] **the precepts** [equitable deeds, statutes, decisions, judgments, justifications, ordinances, righteousness] **of the law** [*nomos*], **will not his uncircumcision** [not circumcised, uncircumcised; used in **Romans 2:25**] **be regarded** [future middle indicative; **inventoried**, estimated, concluded, despised, esteemed, imputed, laid, numbered, reasoned, reckoned, supposed, thought of] **as circumcision** [the rite of circumcision; same word as used twice in **Romans 2:25**]? **27 Then he who is physically** [growth, natural production, native disposition, usage, kind, nature; used in **Romans 1:26; 2:14**] **uncircumcised** [not circumcised, uncircumcised; used in **Romans 2:25**] **but keeps** [present active participle; completes, executes, concludes, discharges, accomplishes, makes an end, expires, **fills** up, finishes, goes over, pays, performs] **the law** [*nomos*] **will condemn** [*krino*; future active indicative; used in **Romans 2:1, 3, 12, 16**] **you who have the written code** [writing, letter, note, epistle, book, learning, scripture] **and circumcision** [the rite of circumcision; same word as used in **Romans 2:25, 26**] **but break** [violate, break, transgress] **the law** [*nomos*]. **28 For no one is** [present middle indicative] **a Jew who is merely one outwardly** [shiningly, apparently, publicly, openly, outwardly, manifestly], **nor is circumcision** [the rite of circumcision; same word as used in **Romans 2:25, 26**] **outward** [shiningly, apparently, publicly, openly, outwardly, manifestly; same as used earlier in **Romans 2:28**] **and physical** [flesh, meat, human, physical]. **29 But a Jew is one inwardly** [concealed, privately, hidden, inwardly, secretly], **and circumcision** [the rite of circumcision; same word as used twice in **Romans 2:25, 26, 28**] **is a matter of the heart** [heart, thoughts, feelings, mind], **by the Spirit** [current, breath, soul, spirit], **not by the letter** [writing, letter, note, epistle, book, learning, scripture; same as used in **Romans 2:27**]. **His praise** [laudation, commendable thing, praise] **is not from man but from God**.

Your homework: complete the rest of the handout (page 18 in the student notes; page 107 in the teacher notes) on your own (remember to ask, read (use the English text, the meanings of the Greek words, and the Basics of Greek Verbs to help), talk, and then use resources: commentaries, etc.).

## Basics of Greek Verbs

A Greek verb has a person, a number, a tense, a voice, and a mood.

### Person (the form of the verb)

- First person: the person speaking
- Second person: the person being spoken to
- Third person: the person being spoken of or about

### Number (the reference of the verb)

- Singular: referencing one
- Plural: referencing more than one

### Tense (the time and kind of action of the verb)

- Present: right-now continuous
- Aorist: simple occurrence without regard for the amount of time taken to accomplish the action
- Imperfect: action continually or repeatedly happening in past time
- Perfect: completed action with the results continuing
- Future: anticipated action
- Pluperfect: completed action that existed at some point in the past

### Voice (the performer of the verb)

- Active: the subject performs the action
- Passive: the subject is the recipient of the action
- Middle: the subject acts in his own interest or performs action on himself or for his own benefit

### Mood (the relationship to reality of the verb)

- Indicative: statement of fact
- Imperative: a command
- Subjunctive: probability or possibility
- Optative: possibility (more remotely possible than subjunctive)
- Participle: verbal adjective—can add an -ing
- Infinitive: verbal noun—"to" plus the word

Summarized and adapted from Corey Keating ([ntgreek.org](http://ntgreek.org)) and Strong's Concordance

## Are there any repeated words?

law (*nomos*), judge (*krino*),

## Are there any repeated topics?

## What are some observations of the text?

## Apply (What is the point?)

## Personalize (What do we do with that?)

## Next week: God's Judgment and the Law (2:12-29) (2/2)

### Homework

Resources (our helps—order matters)

- Holy Spirit
- Bible: **Romans** (ESV)
- Church: [bit.ly/FlemingSS](http://bit.ly/FlemingSS)
- Tools: [bit.ly/romans2017](http://bit.ly/romans2017)

Our process

- Ask (the Holy Spirit for help)
- Read (**Romans**)
- Talk (about **Romans**—[bit.ly/romans2017group](http://bit.ly/romans2017group))
- Send (feedback to [jim314@yahoo.com](mailto:jim314@yahoo.com)) by Wed)

## Quotes & Observations

Albert Whiting (Calvin)

Amy Valovcin (Hughes)

We should pursue a profound honesty before God, for He knows everything.

He talks about *The Great Divorce* by CS Lewis and the conversation that takes place between a resident in heaven and one in hell. This fanciful conversation perfectly captures the misleading religious confidence of the damned.

He talks about how we (even believers) can take God's word and use it to make us seem okay. We have overconfidence (what Paul warns us about in 17-24) we have, know, understand, can quote the Bible (and in different versions) but if we aren't clinging to its truths we are relying on the wrong thing. We are relying on our own ability instead of the Word of God. May God open our eyes as often as then need to be opened.

God is never fooled. The truth is, earnest, confident, religious people will ultimately be lost . . . they will be told "I never knew you; depart from me." Matthew 7:23b

God is our hope!

Chris Arnold (Barclay)

In this passage Paul turns to the Gentiles. He has dealt with the Jews and with their claims to special privilege. But one advantage the Jew did have, and that was the Law. A Gentile might well retaliate by saying, "It is only right that God should condemn the Jews, who had the Law and who ought to have known better; but we will surely escape judgment because we had no opportunity to know the Law and did not know any better." In answer Paul lays down two great principles.

(i) A man will be judged by what he had the opportunity to know. If he knew the Law, he will be judged as one who knew the Law. If he did not know the Law, he will be judged as one who did not know the Law. God is fair. And here is the answer to those who ask what is to happen to the people who lived in the world before Jesus came and who had no opportunity to hear the Christian message. A man will be judged by his fidelity to the highest that it was possible for him to know.

(ii) Paul goes on to say that even those who did not know the written Law had an unwritten law within their hearts. We would call it the instinctive knowledge of right and wrong. The Stoics said that in the universe there were certain laws operative which a man broke at his peril—the laws of health, the moral laws which govern life and living. The Stoics called these laws *phusis* (Greek #5449), which means nature, and urged men

to live *kata* (Greek #2596) *phusin* (Greek #5449), according to nature. It is Paul's argument that in the very nature of man there is an instinctive knowledge of what he ought to do. The Greeks would have agreed with that. Aristotle said: "The cultivated and free-minded man will so behave as being a law to himself" Plutarch asks: "Who shall govern the governor?" And he answers: "Law, the king of all mortals and immortals, as Pindar calls it, which is not written on papyrus rolls or wooden tablets, but is his own reason within the soul, which perpetually dwells with him and guards him and never leaves his soul bereft of leadership."

Paul saw the world divided into two classes of people. He saw the Jews with their Law given to them direct from God and written down so that all could read it. He saw the other nations, without this written law, but nonetheless with a God-implanted knowledge of right and wrong within their hearts. Neither could claim exemption from the judgment of God. The Jew could not claim exemption on the ground that he had a special place in God's plan. The Gentile could not claim exemption on the ground that he had never received the written Law. The Jew would be judged as one who had known the Law; the Gentile as one who had a God-given conscience. God will judge a man according to what he knows and has the chance to know.

To a Jew a passage like this must have come as a shattering experience. He was certain that God regarded him with special favor, simply and solely because of his national descent from Abraham and because he bore the badge of circumcision in his flesh. But Paul introduces an idea to which he will return again and again. Jewishness, he insists, is not a matter of race at all; it has nothing to do with circumcision. It is a matter of conduct. If that is so, many a so-called Jew who is a pure descendant of Abraham and who bears the mark of circumcision in his body, is no Jew at all; and equally many a Gentile who never heard of Abraham and who would never dream of being circumcised, is a Jew in the real sense of the term. To a Jew this would sound the wildest heresy and leave him angry and aghast.

In this passage Paul says that there are Jews whose conduct makes the name of God ill-spoken of among the Gentiles. It is a simple fact of history that the Jews were, and often still are, the most unpopular people in the world.

It was all too true that the Jews did bring the name of God into disrepute, because they shut themselves into a rigid little community from which all others were shut out and because they showed to the heathen an attitude of contempt for their worship and complete lack of charity for their needs. Real religion is a thing of the open heart and the open door; Judaism was a thing of the shut heart and the shut door.

Barclay and I have must have conflicting focal points here. Barclay seems to view this as an argument between two sides: Gentile and Jew. My mind's eye pictures a crowd

divided down the middle when I say this. This may be accurate. The Jews did keep to themselves, culturally and socially, and were somewhat victimized by their societal isolationism. They received special accommodation from Rome regarding religious practices and were even noted to not be conscripted into the Roman Army. Barclay points out that the Jewish fierceness of maintaining their racial/cultural purity brought rise to rumors such as misanthropy, pig worship (because of the dietary prohibition against enjoying the awesomeness of bacon), and worshipping an Ass' Head in the wilderness. There was also some discord because the Jews were allowed to set up their own cultural courts, and were allowed to for a time) send their temple tax to Jerusalem, instead of local temples. They were allowed to have their own private enclaves and meetings, and if any Gentile were to become a convert to Christianity, the Jews would still not associate with that person unless they were physically circumcised.

Now, this is a matter of history and in the sense of providing some context, I can see where Barclay would spend a lot of time on it. But he does seem to paint the picture of the Jews as the bad guys.

But when I read this section of [Romans](#), I see a much more holistic view of what is being said. When I read this I here Paul telling us that The Law of God, should define our actions and interactions, not the laws of men. I've said before that the law defines the crime. So it seems like Paul is saying that the Jews have the Law of Moses, the 10 commandments, hundreds of years of custom and culture, and that is well and good, but are not complying with the Law of God. They are being haughty and judgmental while not practicing what they preach. And because of this they are trying to enforce their cultural practices on new believers in an attempt to "correct" them.

It also read that the Gentiles who are coming to Christ, without the historical background that the Jewish cultures had, are getting more of the intent of the Law, while not necessarily having the "Letter" of the law as a point of reference. Barclay even tries to point out that "God implanted the knowledge of right and wrong on the hearts of the Gentiles, who, without the benefit of having the Jewish Law as a point of reference, just knew how to behave. Barclay seems to prop up this argument with quotes from philosophers. See this quote: **It is Paul's argument that in the very nature of man there is an instinctive knowledge of what he ought to do. The Greeks would have agreed with that. Aristotle said: "The cultivated and free-minded man will so behave as being a law to himself" Plutarch asks: "Who shall govern the governor?" And he answers: "Law, the king of all mortals and immortals, as Pindar calls it, which is not written on papyrus rolls or wooden tablets, but is his own reason within the soul, which perpetually dwells with him and guards him and never leaves his soul bereft of leadership."**

So who is right?

Not, I think, Barclay.

Let's get this out of the way quickly, before I get to the main point I wanted to make. I think Barclay places too much emphasis on the "universal law of man," as he relates in his comments from Aristotle, Pindar, and Plutarch, and (I am sure, others). He completely ignores the Holy Spirit, who Paul states later in **Romans**, dwells in us. Paul further states in **2 Corinthians** that "**God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts.**" Paul believes that the Holy Spirit penetrates our lives fully. Paul believes that the Holy Spirit influences every part of the believer's being. Barclay, in comparison, seemed to have written some soft-balled "follow your heart, true believer" commentary that completely misses a great opportunity to extol the Holy Spirit. That bothers me.

Paul reminds them that the judgment of God is not based upon your cultural history, or whether you have the appropriate number of tassels on your robe, or whether you've had a strip of skin removed from a personal area. It is not about comparing yourself with other people. This is about how you measure up to the Law of God. Let's not take this week's verses and look at them in a vacuum. In the context of what has been said in the verses immediately prior, Paul is telling people so stop:

Stop judging others.

Stop sinning and claiming special privilege by virtue of custom.

Stop standing in the way of our Christian brothers.

Stop trying to justify your own sin by pointing out the sins of others.

When Paul points out in **verse 24** **For, as it is written, "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you."** he is reminding everyone that what we do is witnessed by others, and we are judged by what we do. By extension, so is God. We cannot continue to be a witness when our witness is a lie.

The quote from Barclay that I do like is "**Real religion is a thing of the open heart and the open door; Judaism was a thing of the shut heart and the shut door.**"

Paul reminds us that our cultural identity pales in comparison with our spiritual identity. Our place in society should never be equated with our place in the throne room. And our brothers and sisters in Christ should never be isolated and criticized for their past or their roots, but should be identified by their hearts' longing for the things of God and their faithfulness in following the will of God.

Paul reminds us that, for the faithful, "**his praise is not from man but from God.**"

And if it is good enough for God to praise, who are we to criticize?

Christen Barber (Luther)

Darla Skinner (Mounce)

People have a fatal tendency to substitute passive agreement for action.

David Barber (his college notes)

Doug Skinner (Phillips)

George Jackson (Murray)

Jessica Miller (Stott)

Jessica Norris (Kroll)

As Paul reprimanded the Jews, I mentally heard over and over "Do as I say, not as I do." That's what the Jews were practicing, that's what I as a parent sometimes practices, and that's what we as the modern day Christians sometimes practice. I wondered why and the simple answer is because it's just easier that way sometimes. It's really, really hard to be a good Christian example, some days worse than others. I imagine it must have been hard if not harder for the Jews as well because in reality, they were people and sinners just like us. Should they have been doing all of these unrighteous things? Of course not but when we step back and reflect on the church/Christians as a whole we are all guilty of the very same things at one time or another. It's easy to judge the Jews for judging everyone else but this still happens today because we are still imperfect humans. **Verse 24** really spoke to me: "**The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.**" Ouch. I know many people that refuse to go to church. Sometimes for no good reason at all or many times due to bad experiences. In talking to these people their first reason for not going is usually because they view "church goers" as hypocrites. I can sympathize with them as to how they came to that conclusion though it makes me sad because I have been in a church where the members were basically putting on a show, running around judging everyone about everything, and honestly, it turned me off from church for a while too. We need to be better examples and actually practice what we preach. I think if Paul were here now he would probably reprimand us in the same fashion. I understand how folks like Martin Luther got fired up after reading Romans and demanded change. Sorry this is so long. This one really hit me hard and made me realize that I need to slow down and take a look at what some of my actions represent.

In reference to my book, the Jews were convinced that they had been made righteous and believed they were able to assume four roles as laid out in **verse 18**. They felt the blind were the Gentiles in their un-Jewish darkness, the Gentiles needed to be enlightened by Jews who were enlightened by the Law, because the Gentiles did not

know the Law the Gentiles were fools, and Gentiles were spiritually or religiously immature objects of Jewish disgust.

[Justin Harness \(Wiersbe\)](#)

[Jim Fleming \(Moo\)](#)

[Julia Gregg \(Schreiner\)](#)

Thoughts for this week...this section of the passage makes me think of JENGA- the stacking game. . . . it's a delicate balance of sorts. For this reason, I seemed to view this section in layers—so my comments will lay out in the same fashion (yes, I am crazy lol)

GOD IS IMPARTIAL

Paul's comments are still mostly directed at the Jews and their assumption that possession of the law extended credibility, superiority, and even deniability of their actual lifestyles. Paul confronts this in the first few verses by establishing (reminding) the reader of an absolute in God's nature—He is impartial. There is no salvific value in mere possession of the law. (116-119)

DOING THE LAW in this context = JUSTIFICATION

In my opinion, much misinterpretation of these verses comes as a result of man's natural tendency to "atone" for himself. This is not present in salvation—it is the saving/redeeming power of Christ—not of works. . . . This is present in much of religion; it is relationship that should set the standard. I especially like the connection to [Jer 31:33](#) "**that the work of the law is written in their hearts.**" Even though the Gentiles did not possess the law by birth- it eludes here to the Holy Spirit—and the fact that they were grafted in/adopted. (Julia's thought—since there isn't an actual date that I am aware of for first Pentecost—I find this reference by Paul interesting. In the event that the Holy Spirit has not come—it is almost a foreshadowing) The author states that it's a pair in [vs 12-16](#) "**First, the command of the law are written in their hearts, and second, the conscience also testifies to the validity of those oral norms, in that it condemns or approves of the behavior practiced**" (123) Interesting note here, it reminds me of the Tn dept of correction's mantra—'firm, fair, and consistent.' . . . We preach this to new employees—it seems akin to what Paul is doing in [verses 12-16](#). He concludes these verses with reference to God's examination of obedience...not works.... and there is a difference.

Julie Fleming (Keller)

Karrie Harness (MacArthur Bible Study)

Michelle Erickson (MacArthur)

Olivia Swint (MacArthur)

Rachel Samsel (McGee)

Sean McGarvey (Ironsides)

Judgment is according to deeds. To know the law and fail to obey it only increases the condemnation. Doers of the law will be justified, if such there are. But elsewhere we learn that from this standpoint all would be lost, for **'by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight'** (3:20). The Jew prided himself upon being in possession of the divine oracles and thought this made him superior to the Gentile nations round about. But God has not left Himself without witness. To these nations He has given both the light of conscience and the light of nature. They **'show the work of the law written in their hearts'** (2:15). (p. 27)

Holding correct doctrine does not avail if practical righteousness be overlooked or disregarded. (p. 27) Oooh, snappity doo dah!

Of the Hebrews, then, "God had revealed Himself to this people as to no other, but they were wrong in supposing that this exempted them from judgment if they failed to keep His covenant. He had said long before, **'You only have I known of all the families of earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities'** (Amos 3:2). Privilege increases responsibility. It does not, as they seemed to think, set it aside." (p. 28)

Incisively the Spirit of God drives home the truth as to their actual state in four questions calculated to expose the innermost secrets of their hearts and to lay bare the hidden sins of their lives.

**Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?** (Rom. 2:21). Did they actually heed the instruction they were giving others? I, too, have felt the sting of this one.

**'Thou that preaches a man should not steal, dost thou steal?'** (v. 21)." The Jews were seen as cunning money lenders, usurers, and pawnbrokers who **"had no niceties of pity or compassion for an indigent debtor when the debtor was a hated Gentile dog."**

**'Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery?'** (v. 22)" In this practice, Jews were seen to be as guilty as their Gentile neighbors.

'**Thou that abhorrest idols dost thou commit sacrilege?**' (v. 22). The word translated 'commit sacrilege' really means 'to traffic in idols.' This was an offense of which the Jew was peculiarly guilty. They were often known to act as intermediaries in moving idols stolen from conquered peoples to others ready to buy them, or "systematically robbing temples and then selling the images." Ironside uses the example of the town clerk of Ephesus in speaking of this known practice: '**Ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of [temples, not churches], nor yet blasphemers of your goddess'** (Acts 19:37). (p. 29)

Which brings us to [verse 24](#) and God's name being blasphemed among the Gentiles via the Jews. And it is no stretch to find where members of the church have done much the same in the world.

The true Jew (and 'Jew' is a contraction of 'Judah,' meaning, 'Praise') is not one who is such by natural birth alone or by outward conformity to ritual, but one who is circumcised in heart, who has judged his sinfulness in the sight of the Lord, and who now seeks to walk in accordance with the revealed will of God (see [vv. 26-29](#)). '**Whose praise** [note the play on the word Jew] **is not of men, but of God'** (v. 29). (p. 29)

Hard stuff.

Stephen Archer

Stephen Mays (Stott)

Stephen Samsel (Stott)

Stott says that, "If we judge others, we should be able to judge ourselves ([vv. 1-3](#)). If we teach others, we should be able to teach ourselves ([vv. 12-24](#)). If we set ourselves up as either teachers or judges of others, we cannot possibly plead ignorance. On the contrary, we invite God's condemnation of our hypocrisy."

He also redefines what it means to be a Jew in a fourfold explanation.

1. It is not outward and visible, but inward and invisible.
2. Circumcision is in the heart and not of the flesh.
3. It is by the Spirit and not the law.
4. It is the approval of God and not Man.

Man relies on the outward. What we can see and feel. God cares about what is within. How the Holy Spirit is working in our hearts.

Tim & Mila Archer (Maclaren—but Wiersbe since Maclaren was silent on this passage)

12 is prefaced by . . . Paul's statement in verse 11, "**For there is no respect of persons with God**" would shock the Jew, for he considered himself deserving of special treatment because he was chosen by God.

15-24 You find among all cultures a sense of sin, a fear of judgment, and an attempt to atone for sins and appease whatever gods are feared.

The Jews looked upon the Gentiles as blind, in the dark, foolish, immature, and ignorant! But if God found the "deprived" Gentiles guilty, how much more guilty were the "privileged" Jews!

The Jews had a religion of outward action, not inward attitude. They may have been moral on the outside, but what about the heart?

The pagan Gentiles had daily contact with the Jews in business and other activities, and they were not fooled by the Jews' devotion to the Law. The very Law that the Jews claimed to obey only indicted them.

Vs. 25-29 Circumcision:

To the Jews, the Gentiles were "uncircumcised dogs." the tragedy is that the Jews depended on this physical mark instead of the spiritual reality it represented.

People today make this same mistake with reference to baptism or the Lord's Supper, or even church membership.

In fact, a disobedient Jew turns his circumcision into un-circumcision in God's sight, for God looks at the heart.