

***“Romans, Dispensationally Considered —
Who Art Thou O Man That Judges, Part 2?”***

Review:

- ***Once All Knew God and His Glory But Now That Knowledge Has Been Lost***
- ***What Has Been the Effect of The Dispensational Change Through Paul?***
- ***The Bottom Line — All Stand Under Judgment By Their Creator, Always***
- ***The Revelation of the Dispensation of Conscience Continues In the Romans***

- ***Once All Knew God and His Glory But Now That Knowledge Has Been Lost***
 - ***We have been studying how Paul opens the letter to the Romans and how he in other ways as well and the Lord also in other portions of the Word revealed various important aspects of his dispensational plan for the ages. We took note here during the last several weeks how God had revealed himself and his plan of redemption in the heavens itself as well as here on earth. That revelation and accompanying explanation was found in chapter 1 of Romans and in chapter 10 where Paul referred to Psalm 19.***

 - ***There was hope as the first verses in the Romans made so clear. The way the apostle put it in his Mars Hill speech was that in addition to the signs given before, many which had remained in the common knowledge of mankind (while many other were sadly lost, we know), but now a new sign had been added, that of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. That was the crown jewel of the revelation of God concerning his great work of redemption from the effects of Adam’s sin propagated to all of humanity. It was the good news of the coming of the Seed of the Woman, as the prophetic plan had now been advanced in its fulfillment greatly. But this demanded a dispensational change to what God had previously revealed concerning his work down through the ages.***

Acts 17:16-22

16 Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.

17 Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him.

18 Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babblers say? other some,

He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.

19 And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, *is*?

20 For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean.

21 (For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.)

22 Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious [*or, "religious, fearful of demons, literally"*].

- *The Lord had revealed himself in the heavenly panoply and had communicated to them by way of their inborn conscience, so they were without excuse. But not any other revelation had been given to them, unlike the Jews that were given through Moses the Law. So they were ignorant in other ways that the Jews were not. Some were given more though, we know, witness Job for example. But this condition had now changed as the apostle proclaims next:*

Acts 17:30-32

30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

32 And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this *matter*.

- *So the Lord had brought forth a new "sign" — that of the resurrection of Christ! Revealing the meaning of the sign required more grace teaching which he gave then to those compelled to receive this additional truth outside the formalities of what the Athenic legal, philosophical, and religious system demanded.*
- *So although the witness of the stars of heaven and the signs of the seasons, new moons, etc. only continued in a more limited way, nevertheless all were without excuse. And now a new sign has been given — and that was Christ resurrected from the dead!*

But would the Gentiles receive it for according to prophecy, the Jews for the most part had not?

- *But now we go back to the Romans account to see more of what is written there, as the dispensational plan of Almighty God for sinners is further outlined.*
- *The Bottom Line — All Stand Under Judgment By Their Creator, Always*
 - *What is written here at the end of chapter one and at the beginning of chapter two of the Romans is very foundational and a good introduction to the rest of the verses in chapter 2. Let us see:*

Romans 2:1 Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.

- *The Bottom Line, the apostle writes here, is that all stand under judgment by their creator, all, Jews and Gentiles. And he strongly implies that all know it. The may not know all that was revealed before, but they do know this.*
- *The Revelation of the Dispensation of Conscience Continues in verses 4 - 11.*
 - *The apostle continues here in chapter 2 in a remarkable way. His intention here in these words should be clear: The judgment of God on all is held to be still known by all if little else. But there is more still to be known as well, and a way pointing to salvation is seen here in verse 4. For, he writes, there was still available a knowledge of the “riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering” of God and then the reality of repentance regarding that former life, for indeed the truth was there to be known that “... the goodness of God leadeth to repentance”? This was not only a grieving about one’s past sins in the sense of “feeling sorry”, for that was a concept conveyed by a different Greek work than the one found here, but rather a change of mind regarding ones current condition before the Creator and indeed so much more.*
 - *The bottom line is that the Lord held all accountable, Jew or Gentile, for they all had the same revelation that had been given before and its truth sufficiently continued in Paul’s day for him to write these words about both individual accountability AND eternal redemption for those who had lived according to that other program, implying*

that there were always some as verse 7 makes clear. Those that also took God at his word by repenting had the desire for and expectation of eternal blessing. That one through life after repentance saw all with an eternal expectation of future glory. That one would be blessed by God in both this life and eternally. Consider Job in this regard as a clear example. This was the hope of Gentiles who received the revelation that the Lord God had provided.

- ***Verses 8-9: But the other side of the coin was also clear, for many would not receive that testimony. And those that would not keep his will would suffer the consequences as these verses make so evident.***
- ***Verse 10: The positive and eternal hope of the Gentile believer is now repeated here in direct opposition to the one opposing God truth: “But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile”.***

Our Outline Today:

- ***Gentiles and Jews Must Be Distinguished, At Least Dispensationally***
- ***The True Judaism Under Moses Law Was Firstly a Matter of the Heart***
- ***To Prevent Hypocrisy, Truth Demands A Proper Application to Oneself***
- ***The True Judaism Under Moses Law Demanded More Than Anyone Could Deliver***

I. Gentiles and Jews Must Be Distinguished, At Least Dispensationally:

- ***Verses 4 - 10 describe two ways of life by contrasting them ... that of the believer and that of the unbeliever. Though there are some non-dispensational aspects described here, like taking God at his revealed word and believing that obediently, others are dispensational and these verse focus on those but only in outline. Jews and Gentiles are distinguished, for example, but the emphasis is on the conscience as we have seen in verses 11 - 16 and the conscience as a faculty of evaluation and self judgment still present in every person. Its instruction, however, was greatly diminished over time and was in fact perverted by the satanic interpretation of the heavenly revelation with astrology and mythology.***
- ***But some are Gentiles and others are Jews, and the judgment of God through Christ will take that into account. The Gentiles were not under the law, it says here, but the Jews were. The Gentiles had***

“law from God” written in their hearts in the form of the conscience (verses 11-16), at least initially.

- ***But the Jews also had the Law of Moses ADDED to the previous covenants and so they were truly “under the law” and would have by necessity a life marked by that law while the Gentiles had no law except what was written in their conscience:***

[READ] Romans 2:11-16

11 For there is no respect of persons with God.

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.)

- ***The dispensational plan of God is outlined here at least in two instances, the conscience and the law. The other dispensations that have already past are also hinted at here, human government (Noah, Job), and promise (Abraham) as we shall see in chapters yet ahead, and, of course, grace has already been introduced in chapter one. These are all independent but there are relationships between them as we will see as we proceed.***
- ***One aspect of this seems clear though, and that is that earlier dispensational plans (such as the one that relied on the heavenly witness and on the inwrought conscience) continued as foundational in importance as other plans came to be instituted which had their own unique focus (such as human government or promise or the law). But Paul was respectful towards them all, amazingly, and faithfully explained their ongoing relevance. But what exactly is the apostle saying here in these verses is the question that must dominate our minds and hearts as we consider these verses. The apostle is there to give us further understanding, praise God.***

II. The True Judaism Under Moses Law Was Firstly a Matter of the Heart:

- ***Now Paul's focus shifts radically from the Gentiles to the Jews. He has just outlined in these previous verses the situation that the sinners of the Gentiles were in with regard to a holy and righteous God. They did not know the Law as it had never been given to them. But Paul writes that they were nevertheless accountable before Almighty God as he had revealed himself to them (and to all, since there were no Jews until Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob gave birth to the Twelve Tribes) though the heavenly panoply and its accompanying interpretation passed down generationally and especially in that one line of descent as we know so well.***
- ***Paul is writing from the perspective of his current day, that is, the mid-point of the first century A.D. But he has been writing about the Gentiles here and the Jews in the next verses we will look at today. Of course at that time the Gentiles are living nearly 40 centuries after the creation of Adam and Eve. But since they were not given the Law and were not living under it, they are not being seen by the Lord God from the perspective of the Law but independently of that Law.***
- ***Rather, they are seen as the descendants of Adam through Seth and then Noah. But now we come to the next section here where the focus in the letter switches to the Jews. The Jews have a much younger heritage, than the Gentiles, of course, being descendants of one of the heads of the twelve sons of Jacob.***
- ***Religiously, though, these sinners of the Jews considered themselves as under that Law nonetheless and Paul addresses them accordingly to establish a common ground, just like he had earlier with the Gentiles. Of course in fact neither Gentile nor Jew was actually under those previous dispensational plans, since the new dispensation of grace was in fact already in place. That will become clear as he continues. And, as the Gentiles needed instruction since their corrupted understanding of God's plan previously revealed to them was in error even though that plan had previously been revealed to them, these Jews needed the same concerning their misunderstandings of Moses Law. He reveals that here in these verses:***

[READ] Romans 2:17-20

17 Behold, thou art called a Jew, **and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God,**

18 And knowest *his* will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law;

19 And **art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind,** a light of them which are in darkness,

20 **An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.**

- *The Law was about so much more than virtue signaling to use a current expression. No, to avoid hypocrisy one must submit oneself to the same standard as one demands of others.*
- *And, of course, the focus on [the] law encouraged the flesh which was a great issue indeed. The fleshly self-worship is found here in several places as Paul cuts to the heart the sheer arrogance of those Jews which was so often displayed so openly.*
 - *“... retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God”:*
 - *“... art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind ...”:*
 - *“An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes ...”:*
 - *“... which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law”: See also 2 Timothy 3:5: “Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.” The word form speaks of “outward appearance”. And there may be nothing more on the inside to justify that outward show, sadly. Oh, but how wonderful when that outward appearance is the reflection of an inward working of God in the spirit.*
- *But the law, any law, does have this effect, the apostle writes in Romans 7:7-8 and we will study that in detail another time. But Romans 3:20 says it explicitly in only a few powerful words:*

“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”
- *This is a harsh criticism of legalists and their philosophy of life, isn’t it? And for the Jew living under the Law that Law was a great burden. Before grace was available only the mercy of God might be gained and there were no assurances of that. But the sacrificial system was there for those that were obedient — until it was taken*

away and then for all those centuries the Jews had no way even under the Law to approach to God. It is a sobering thought. What do contemporary Jews believe in our day? One wonders. And even with the vast majority of Jews living in unbelief and revealing that to all, anti-semitism abounds wherever one looks.

- ***But true Judaism was intended to be a matter of the heart and also of obedience to the Law of Moses even though there never was an enabling allowing the complete fulfillment of that law, legally speaking. For law always leads to a fuller realization of one's own failures and sinful condition — unless one religiously rests in one's own obedience as if it were ever enough to gain any acceptance before a holy and righteous God.***
- ***Yes, the sacrificial system had been given by God and was designed to orient the faithful Jew to matters of the heart, for it demanded re-confession of all sins and transgressions every year on the Day of Atonement. That required reflection and focus from the heart and not only superficially in the fleshly mind. But the sacrificial system that had been provided for ongoing access and fellowship with Almighty God was removed in the course of time by the Lord due to Israel's ongoing unbelief and idolatries. So Judaism left the Jews in a difficult position by the time of the first century A.D. when Paul was writing here as not even that system was still available. For the Law condemned but there was no longer a sacrificial system that was available to provide a sin-covering or forgiveness as had previously been provided. But the Law did hold all Jews accountable in any case, and provided much soul-searching for all that were willing to take God at his word in any degree.***

III. To Prevent Hypocrisy, Truth Demands A Proper Application to Oneself:

- ***So truth and the terms of the Mosaic Legal System demanded an inward reality for otherwise it would have provided merely an outward display. That brings us to these following verses that so well describe the position of a sinner living as if “under the law”:***

[READ] Romans 2:21-24

21 Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?

22 Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?

23 Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?

24 For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.

- ***There are 4 examples given, enough to convict anyone, even a Jew.***
 - ***Teaching — This is especially interesting to me and should be for all teachers. Self application is essential for teachers.***
 - ***Stealing — There are many dimensions to stealing, aren't there? Who can list all of the ways one can steal?***
 - ***Adultery — This is a "matter of interpretation", one might think. The Kingdom Law however significantly expands its application and here Paul seems to be implying the same.***
 - ***Idolatry — Paul writes in Col. 3:5 that covetousness is in fact a form of idolatry, so the scope of this seems endless.***
- ***So the Law pointed always inward to personal failure to keep its many precepts. Paul has shown this by his rhetorical questioning here. Who can deny their failure whatever the standard may be let alone by the Law of Moses? But without the Sacrificial System, this left the Jew in a difficult spot indeed.***
- ***As the apostle will soon make evident, the "solution" of the problem for Jews being held accountable in every way by that Law is that they by grace would recognize their savior in our Lord Jesus. That will become clear as we proceed. But here the apostle is only laying the foundation for his teaching in the following chapters. Here it is clearly taught that Jews, like Gentiles, have no excuse and are all to be held accountable by Almighty God. But for the Jews there is an additional hurdle, the Law. For the righteousness judgment of God HAS been revealed, whether apart from the Law for Gentiles, or by the Law, for Jews. Amen.***

IV. The True Judaism Under Moses Law Demanded More Than Anyone Could Deliver:

[READ] Romans 2:25-29

25 For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.

26 Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?

27 And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?

28 For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:

29 But he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; whose praise *is* not of men, but of God.

- ***There is so much here and we would do well to save it for next time. For the true blessings of God are internal and of the spirit, not external and perhaps only a matter of appearances.***
- ***This is therefore about how the Lord sees us sinners and not about how we see ourselves as measured by a compromised standard entirely inadequate for the purpose.***
- ***But we will save our teaching on these verses for next time, Lord willing.***

Conclusions / Application:

- ***So many blessings of God under grace are freely given to us, even the very righteousness of God in Christ, what Jew or Gentile has previously had. Amen.***

Next Time:

- ***As we proceed next time, Lord willing, we will see how this develops here in the great letter to the Romans. Other dispensational plans will be brought under Paul's microscope as he examines them next with a special focus on Abraham and the promises and on Moses and the Law.***