

# ROMANS: The Gospel of God

## Chapter 2

- 2:1-3 Haughty Jews, thinking otherwise, are condemned by their own logic and God's true judgment.  
2:4-5 Presuming that God's goodness approves of a sinful lifestyle is to earn greater wrath from Him.  
2:6-11 God's judgment of Jews and Gentiles is righteous, equitable, and impartial. All are condemned.  
2:12-16 The Gentiles will be condemned before God by sinning against their internal law of conscience.  
2:17-24 The Jews shall be condemned before God by sinning against the external, written law of God.  
2:25-29 The Jews shall be condemned before God regardless of circumcision unless they fulfill the law.

### Introduction:

1. This chapter continues Paul's long argument to condemn all men as sinners before God (1:18 - 3:20).
  - a. Paul will appeal to the work he does in this chapter when he begins presenting salvation (3:9,19).
  - b. This lays a needed foundation of hopelessness as far as any personal righteousness before God.
  - c. He must destroy the greatest heresy facing the early church – Jewish legalism from Moses' law.
  - d. Condemned without ability to earn any standing before God, all synergistic concepts are rejected.
  - e. Once established, the gloriously good news of a substitutionary Saviour is all that more glorious.
  - f. But Paul does not put forth the solution to the impossibility until the last half of the third chapter.
2. Paul had condemned all men worthy of death, especially idolatrous Gentiles like Rome's citizens, by their rejection of God's offer of truth through the natural creation and His kind providence (1:18-32).
3. He then moved ahead to reject several objections that could be raised by those justifying themselves, especially Jews, who thought themselves superior to the Gentiles in every respect and worthy of God's special mercy by descent from Abram, having the temple, the law, circumcision, worship, etc.
  - a. Classifying sins or sinners to justify yourself will not work, for all are equally guilty (2:1-3).
  - b. Presuming your standing before God by circumstances brings judgment, not salvation (2:4-6).
  - c. Esteeming your heritage by race, nation, or religion will not alter judgment by works (2:7-11).
  - d. Those without an outward law have an internal law they may keep better than the Jews (2:12-16).
  - e. Glorifying in the benefits of having the law did not excuse the Jews who break the law (2:17-24).
  - f. External circumcision is worth less than internal righteousness by any nationality (2:25-29).
4. Our method is that taught in the scriptures, read distinctly and give the sense (Neh 8:8; II Tim 2:15).
5. Let us pray with the humble spirit that David and Solomon taught us (Ps 131:1; 119:18; I Kings 3:7).
6. Arminian! Have you invented a Romans Road to salvation in chapter 3 and 6? Try 2:6-11 instead.

***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.***

#### ***A. Therefore.***

1. What is the *therefore* there for? It draws a conclusion from what went before (1:18-32).
2. While the whole previous context counts, the emphasis is on the universal guilt of 1:32.
3. The Bible is not a collection of sound bites. Paul had a developing argument in process.
4. His purpose thus far has been primarily to condemn Gentiles by rejecting creation truth, and now he turns to the Jews, which were his theological enemies through his ministry.
5. The list of sins deserving death in chapter one leaves all men very condemned (1:29-32).

B. *Thou.*

1. This pronoun is singular, as *thou* always was in High English. Love the *thee*'s and *thou*'s.
2. Paul had not used a singular pronoun from 1:18-32, but now he makes it very personal.
3. Each person must examine his or her heart about despising others while justifying self.
4. We should not limit these verses to either Gentiles or Jews: they apply to both (2:9-10).
5. However, the Jews are specifically identified and exclusively dealt with at 2:17, so they are definitely included here, and they are likely the primary focus for these reasons:
  - a. The usage of singular pronouns begins here, and *thou* is identified as a Jew in 2:17.
  - b. The self-righteous judges of others, especially Gentiles, were the Jews (2:17-24).
  - c. Gentiles had been addressed in the third person throughout chapter one (1:18-32).
  - d. Gentiles are addressed in the third person in chapter two (2:14,24), as writing to Jews.
  - e. Since the previous section (1:18-32) addressed Gentiles, the Jews would be haughty.
  - f. The haughtiest judging found in the Bible and history is that of Jews toward Gentiles.
  - g. God's goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering (2:4) were particularly to the Jews.
  - h. If a segment of humanity thought they should be respected (1:11), it was the Jews.
  - i. Paul's constant enemy in preaching the gospel was Jewish legalism, self-confidence, and self-righteousness, including this epistle (2:17-24; 3:1; 4:1; 7:1; 9:3; 10:1; 11:1).
  - j. They are mentioned first before Gentiles regarding God's coming judgment (2:9-10).
  - k. Paul began generally and subtly to win Jewish hearers before naming them (2:10,17).

C. *Art inexcusable.*

1. As all men are without excuse by creation (1:20), they are also by 23 crimes (1:29-32).
2. Paul's argument in this and the following two verses is by the universal guilt from 1:32.
3. *Inexcusable* is *without excuse* (1:20), in that their damnation is totally fair and right.
4. All men have the propensity, by the sin of pride, to think themselves superior to others; they reason in foolish ways to justify themselves or excuse themselves from judgment.
5. They learn by position, power, price, persuasion, or influence that they can alter man's judgment to justify themselves or be excused from punishment, but not before God!
6. However, the real adversary here is the Jews, who presumed much on their Jewishness.

D. *O man.*

1. Paul goes right after each member of mankind, including you and me, by this usage; but he primarily goes after individual Jews, which he shall identify by name shortly (2:17).
2. It is haughty arrogance and profane pride that causes one man to judge others of his race, but it is especially profane for Jews to despise Gentiles while committing the same sins.

E. *Whosoever thou art that judgest.*

1. Paul, no less than our Lord, did not have kind affection for those who justify themselves.
2. Jehovah had identified these wicked persons earlier and condemned them (Isaiah 66:2-6).
3. Consider our Lord's comparison of a Pharisee and publican by prayers, especially noting the Spirit's introduction of the parable by His description of its audience (Lu 18:9-14).
4. Jesus rebuked haughty Pharisees as abominable for justifying themselves (Lu 16:14-15).
5. Righteousness is not zealous condemnation of others but zealous obedience yourself.
6. David showed his and our ugly hearts by his indignation over a lamb (II Sam 12:1-6).
7. While all men judge others to some extent, there are some men who judge others to a great extent e.g. Greek philosophers, Roman senators, Jewish nationalists, etc., etc.

- F. *For wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself.*
1. You cannot and may not condemn the most depraved sinner of 1:18-31 without condemning yourself by guilt of crimes in the very same list and context.
  2. It is inclusive language and demonstrative words ... *those things* (1:28) and *such things* (1:32) and *same things* (2:1) and *such things* (2:2) and *such things* (2:3) and *same* (2:3).
  3. The judge condemns himself by his own argument here, but God will judge next (2:2).
- G. *For thou that judgest doest the same things.*
1. It is inclusive language and demonstrative words ... *those things* (1:28) and *such things* (1:32) and *same things* (2:1) and *such things* (2:2) and *such things* (2:3) and *same* (2:3).
  2. Degrees of wickedness are shown in the scriptures by fools, scorners, and sons of Belial.
  3. Morally there are degrees of abomination, as sodomy is one contrary to nature as well; yet, it is wise to remember that Paul labeled the 23 crimes as also not being convenient.
  4. Legally there are not degrees of wickedness and abomination, since any sin is an infinite evil by transgression against an infinite God and worthy of total judgment (Jas 2:10).
  5. God's righteous judgment based on the crimes given (1:32) will not excuse any man, no matter what he may think of himself or how he may reason that he should be exempted.

## ***2 But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.***

### ***A. But we are sure.***

1. The Bible is God's certain and sure revelation regarding any subject, which we should never forget and always declare when teaching (Ps 119:128; Is 8:20; I Tim 6:3-5; etc.).
2. Most things in life are not sure, including people, promises, precepts, and punishments, but there are sure things that the world mocks and does not mock ... death and judgment!
3. Solomon wrote Proverbs to provide *certain words of truth* to give to others (Pr 22:17-21).
4. Luke wrote a gospel to prove things to Theophilus *surely believed* and *certain* (Lu 1:1-4).
5. Peter declared to Jesus Christ that even he believed and was *sure* of Him (John 6:68-69).

### ***B. That the judgment of God.***

1. God is a Judge. Of course, He will not be preached that way in 99% of American pulpits.
2. Lies are perpetuated that God of the New Testament is different (Heb 10:31; 12:28-29).
3. Liars say Jesus was a sweet, loving man, not a Judge (Matt 10:34-37; John 9:39; etc.).
4. The judgment should not be ignored, but rather used, as Paul did (II Corinthians 5:9-11).
5. In fact, Paul even used it while reasoning about Christian liberty (Romans 14:10-12)!
6. When you are tempted to skip Bible reading and prayer, think about the Judgment!
7. When you are tempted to defraud your spouse, purloin, or gorge, think about Judgment!
8. David said it well in just a very few words, "Stand in awe, and sin not ..." (Psalm 4:3-5).

### ***C. Is according to truth.***

1. God's judgment is certain, sure, and true regardless and contrary to man's vain delusions.
2. Though men may respect persons and excuse some from judgment, God will never do so.
3. Though men may justify or excuse first offenders, slight offenders, etc., God will not.
4. Man often expects and receives leniency from human judges, but not with true judgment.
5. Man often sees himself safe by person, position, or influence, but not with true judgment.
6. The books will be opened (Rev 20:11-15), for the Judgment will proceed based on truth.
7. Forget influencing a jury or judge in that day, for the Judge will rule by righteousness.
8. God is not like us, so He will not be emotional, compromise, or respect persons (2:11).
9. Sinners may please ignorance, extenuating circumstances, or good works ... to no avail.

10. Paul will prove in 2:6-11 that God's judgment is truly righteous – by objective criteria, for men are judged according to their character and conduct, not person, privilege, etc.

D. *Against them which commit such things.*

1. In case a hearer or reader has lost track of the persons to be judged, the Spirit reminds us.
2. The criminals in this case are not just vile sodomites, but offenders by 23 broad statutes.
3. The context here is important to keep maximum guilt upon every soul of man (1:32; 2:1).

### ***3 And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?***

A. *And thinkest thou this.*

1. One of the most dangerous things you can do is think outside the box ... of the Bible.
2. A purpose of preaching is to bring your thoughts into captivity to God (II Cor 10:4-6).
3. Do not dare think for a minute because you could justify yourself to parents or teachers or employers or civil magistrates that you will be able to do so with the God of heaven.
4. Your heart is deceitful above all things, and it will lead you to think you are an exception to the rule, that you are special, that you will be loved by God, etc. (Jer 17:9-10).
5. The Jews thought this always, as scripture indicates (Ezek 33:24; Matt 3:9; John 8:39).

B. *O man.*

1. Paul will not let this man off the hook, but addresses him personally again, for emphasis.
2. Who is this man? The profane persons, you and me, who self-righteously despise others, but especially the Jews, whom he will identify shortly (2:17).

C. *That judgest them which do such things.*

1. How quick are some, and all in their thoughts, to judge others for the least shortcoming.
2. It is so easy for the best of men to sit in judgment on sodomites or other sexual perverts.
3. It is so easy for the best of men to sit in judgment on bold and wild sinners of lesser sins.
4. Yet ... the context indicates that each and every man is guilty of the same list (1:28-32)!

D. *And doest the same.*

1. The list of 23 crimes (1:29-31) is comprehensive in the sense of condemning every man.
2. The list of 23 crimes (1:29-31) is conclusive in the sense of its condemnation (1:32).
3. Do you despise fornicators (1:29), but defraud your spouse by covenantbreaking (1:31)?

E. *That thou shalt escape the judgment of God.*

1. How do you think you will escape? You are fully, finally guilty. You must die (1:28-32).
2. On what foolish grounds do you presume to escape while damning those just like you?
3. The Jews presumed that they would definitely escape by national privilege (Jer 7:8-10).

### ***4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?***

A. *Or despisest thou.*

1. How do men despise God's goodness? By viewing God's goodness as approval of conduct, even while sinning against Him, by ignoring the call of goodness to repentance!
2. How dare you presume on His silence about your sins to be approval (Psalm 50:18-22)!
3. Despise is a strong word? Is it justified? Yes! Such presuming brings greater wrath (2:5)!
4. What do parents think of children who despise gifts and continue rebellion or worsen it?

B. *The riches of his goodness.*

1. Ah, sinner! Have we discovered your thoughts? Are you presuming on God's goodness?
2. Without a doubt, God is rich, abundantly rich, mercifully rich, in His goodness to all creatures, including men (Ps 65:9-13; 104:24-28; 145:9; Matt 5:43-48; Acts 14:15-17).
3. There is a play on words between the *riches of his goodness* here with *treasurest up unto thyself wrath* of the next verse. Compare God's rich goodness to your treasure of wrath!
4. Some of God's goodness is the privilege of the Law of Moses. See the context (2:12-27).
5. This is God's providence that is under consideration here, which is His benevolent government of the world to the benefit and pleasure of the creatures in it.
  - a. **Providence.** The action of providing; provision, preparation, arrangement. The foreknowing and beneficent care and government of God; divine direction, control, or guidance. Hence applied to the Deity as exercising prescient and beneficent power and direction. An instance or act of divine intervention; an event or circumstance which indicates divine dispensation. [Oxford English Dictionary.]
  - b. "It being the indispensable duty of all Nations, not only to offer up their supplications to ALMIGHTY GOD, the giver of all good, for his gracious assistance in a time of distress, but also in a solemn and public manner to give him praise for his goodness in general, and especially for great and signal interpositions of his *providence* in their behalf: Therefore the United States in Congress assembled, taking into their consideration the many instances of divine goodness to these States ...." [Continental Congress Thanksgiving Proclamation, 1782.]
  - c. Paul hinted at such providence earlier with the words, *neither were thankful* (1:21).

C. *And forbearance and longsuffering.*

1. Ah, sinner! Have we discovered your thoughts? Are you presuming on God's forbearance and longsuffering, that He has withheld His judgment thus far from annihilating you?
2. For sure, God is forbearing and longsuffering (Ex 34:6; Num 14:18; Acts 14:16; 17:30).
3. Consider! Even the Flood involved much longsuffering by God (I Peter 3:20; Gen 6:3)!
4. Judah presumed wickedly that God preserved their nation for them to sin (Jer 7:8-10)!
5. How dare you presume on His silence about your sins to be approval (Psalm 50:21-22)!

D. *Not knowing that the goodness of God.*

1. While you are thinking about your goodness, you do not muse on the purpose of God's.
2. God's goodness is a testimony to the whole earth that He is good and they should repent.
3. How dare you presume on His silence about your sins to be approval (Psalm 50:21-22)!
4. Without understanding is a capital sin (1:31)! You had better understand God's goodness.
5. Why don't you know? If you know these sins are worthy of death, why do you persist in them, even as God continues to show great longsuffering, mercy, and goodness?

E. *Leadeth thee to repentance.*

1. Here is where we cross-reference and understand II Peter 3:9 and its call to repentance.
2. God's witness of goodness, clearly seen in the earth, leads to repentance (Ac 14:15-17).
3. If you taste and see that the LORD is good, but do not return the benefit, wrath is coming.
4. The true God may chasten to teach repentance, but He also encourages to it by goodness.

**5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;**

**A. But after thy hardness.**

1. What hardness? General hardness of sinful hearts? No, unique hardness of presumption, ingratitude, and rebellion in the face of goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering!
2. How hard is the heart that is not softened toward God by His daily barrage of goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering! It shows the depraved wickedness of devilish arrogance.
3. What is the sin of never being softened or pleased? Implacability! Back to the list (1:31)!

**B. And impenitent heart.**

1. How impenitent? General impenitence of heart? No, unique hardness of presumption, ingratitude, and rebellion in the face of goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering!
2. How impenitent is the heart that does not consider repentance in light of God's goodness!
3. The heart is mentioned, because the affections and pride of man dictates such choices.
4. What is this impenitence like? It is hating God or like hating God! Back to the list (1:30)!

**C. Treasurest up unto thyself wrath.**

1. Continued rebellion earns additional wrath from God, as God's dealings with the Canaanites and Jews plainly show (Gen 15:16; Matt 23:32-35; I Thess 2:14-16).
2. Not all nations were judged like the Canaanite descendants of Ham, but God annihilated them by Israel, and the land itself would have vomited them out but for that vengeance.
3. The more you sin brings greater judgment, which should make perfectly good righteous, logical, and mathematical sense (Prov 29:1).
4. Jesus often referred to greater and lesser guilt for cities compared to those of Israel, depending on the degree of light and privilege shown them (Matt 10:14-15; 11:20-24).
5. There is greater and lesser guilt depending on the degree of wickedness and the degree of privilege (Luke 12:47-48), or the argument here would have little value as a false charge.
5. There is a play on words between the *riches of his goodness* (2:4) with *treasurest up unto thyself wrath* of this verse. Compare God's rich goodness to sinners' treasure of wrath!
6. When we treasure something, we accumulate as much as we can find and store, which aptly describes those despising God's goodness as heaping up wrath from God.
7. Compare Psalm 39:6, for *heapeth up riches*, though in a different context, gives the idea.
8. How can you treasure up wrath? You rejoice in your flesh in God's goodness, but use it all as if it were yours with no cost or price, when you ought to know you should repent.
9. The treasuring of wrath is caused by the despising of goodness, for despising God's constant goodness accrues an increasing degree of His wrath for your insolent rebellion.
10. Compare Amos 3:10 and James 5:3 as similar uses of such terminology by the Spirit.
11. Compare Deuteronomy 32:34 regarding God's treasure for rebellious Israelites.
12. It is hypocrites without conscious that Elihu described as treasuring up wrath (Job 36:13).

**D. Against the day of wrath.**

1. There is a day of wrath coming, and it should be and must be preached on a regular basis.
2. God is angry at the wicked every day (Ps 7:11), but He shall soon pour out His wrath.
3. While Jerusalem's destruction was coming wrath, much more is the last day (Matt 3:7).
4. There is judgment for sin now, but there is certainly judgment later (I Timothy 5:24-25).
5. It is appointed unto men to die, but after the ease of death comes judgment (Heb 9:27).
6. The day of wrath will make all the pleasurable sins of life to be hateful (Psalm 36:1-2).
7. A glorious aspect of our salvation is to be delivered from wrath to come (I Thess 1:10).

E. *And revelation of the righteous judgment of God.*

1. The Lord Jesus shall be revealed in a way that few have even imagined (II Thess 1:7).
2. No wonder we have Paul's ejaculatory praise of the Lord Jesus Christ (I Tim 6:13-16).
3. For comfort – relax, praise, and serve for the grace to be revealed to you (I Pet 1:13).

**6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds:**

A. *Who will render.*

1. There is nothing in heaven or earth to stop the Creator from punishing rebel creatures.
2. God will reward every good or evil deed, as Enoch prophesied very early (Jude 1:14-15).
3. God will reward every good or evil deed, as Solomon warned about life (Eccl 12:13-14).
4. It is appointed unto men to die and be judged sometime after death (Heb 9:27; Ac 17:31).

B. *To every man.*

1. Ah, sinner! Dost thou think that maybe you will be overlooked in that day of great wrath?
2. Every man, without exception, without distinction, shall receive the due of his many sins.

C. *According to his deeds.*

1. Here is a key phrase for the understanding of the following verses about God's judgment.
2. God's judgment of sin is equitably stated here (2:6) and impartially stated later (2:11).
3. The issue about to be presented is not how to earn eternal life by good works, as Rome would presume, to justify her heresies of sacramental salvation by prescribed good deeds.
4. The issue about to be presented is not the good lives of unconverted elect, as Fatalists.
5. The issue about to be presented is not good works as evidence of eternal life, as is true.
6. The issue is this – God judges men by their conduct in light of the knowledge they had, and the knowledge they had thus far is by creation, providence, and conscience.
7. Therefore, any privilege of providence or adoption will not help – judgment is of actions.
8. God's judgment is objective, fair, and righteous – He will judge by individual conduct.
9. Simply stated, God will objectively judge each man by his own personal performance.
10. This and the followings verses (2:6-11) present an impossibility more than a potentiality.
11. Here is God's system of works: perfect obedience is rewarded; disobedience is punished.
12. There is no mention in the definition of persons, positions, or privileges being any help.
13. Paul will declare shortly God is no respecter of persons (1:11), further proving this rule.
14. There is none that doeth good by nature, no, not one (Rom 3:10-12; Ps 14:1-3; 53:1-3).
15. The lesson: God will judge objectively by character and conduct, not person or privilege.
16. Paul has not reached the place in his argument where he presents the doctrine of salvation; he is at the place where he must condemn the self-righteous and presumptuous, those taking confidence in their Jewish mercy and privileges over the deluded heathen.
17. Therefore, all Gentiles and Jews are condemned by nature, providence, and conscience.
18. Paul's purpose with 2:6-11 is to condemn Jewish self-righteousness as judges of vile Gentiles (2:1-3), Jewish self-righteousness as presumptive abusers of God's goodness and patience (2:4-5), and Jewish self-righteousness by religious privileges (2:12-27).
19. Character and conduct are the evidence of eternal life, and they are taught in many places as that evidence, but the context of this chapter sets 2:6-11 forward for this other reason stated in the previous point (Matt 7:21; I Tim 6:11-12,17-19; Heb 5:9; II Pet 1:5-11; etc.).
20. For detail about salvation by works ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/pdf/salvation-by-works.pdf>.

**7 To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:**

**A. To them who by patient continuance in well doing.**

1. Here is God's just standard of righteousness: keep this short description and live forever!
2. Keep in mind in these verses Paul's intent is to prove the guilt of all – Jews and Gentiles.
3. This is not how you can earn your way to heaven, for no man can keep the condition.
4. No man is saved by his own goodness as Roman Catholics would interpret this verse.
5. How patient and continuing in well doing does Paul shortly describe man (3:9-19)?

**B. Seek for glory and honour and immortality.**

1. Paul described noble souls lifting their eyes from earth to pursue heaven's excellence.
2. The righteous standard describes constant conduct that pleases the God of glory.

**C. Eternal life.**

1. What is the end and reward of those constantly doing what is right before God? Heaven.
2. If you think yourself better than Gentiles (2:1), then here is the Romans Road to heaven.

**8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,**

**A. But unto them that are contentious.**

1. Contrasted to *patient continuance in well doing* (2:7) are contentious souls rejecting truth.
2. Contention requires a presentation of truth, which the Jews had greatly (Jer 11:7; 25:4).
3. The application should not be overlooked that the Jews were always contentious (Ex 32:9; Deut 9:6; Neh 9:16; Ps 78:8; Pr 13:10; Jer 17:23; Zec 7:11-12; Act 7:51; Titus 3:9).
4. Who was as obstinate and rebellious as the Jews (Mat 11:21; 23:13-15; Acts 11:2; 17:5)?
5. Every reader must examine his heart, for contention against truth is wrong (I Cor 11:16).

**B. And do not obey the truth.**

1. Keep in mind in these verses that Paul is proving the guilt of all – both Jews and Gentiles.
2. Whether the truth of creation (1:18-21) or of sin and death (1:32; 2:1), all men disobey it.
3. Jesus Christ is coming soon to destroy those who disobey the gospel (II Thess 1:7-9).

**C. But obey unrighteousness.**

1. Rather than obeying the truth to please God, rebel man chooses to obey the lusts of sin.
2. They cheerfully, without exception, obediently follow the devil (Eph 2:1-3; 4:17-19).
3. Have you ever contended with authority and disobeyed the truth? You are guilty! Die!

**D. Indignation and wrath.**

1. What is the end and reward of contentious rejecters of truth – indignation and wrath.
2. God is angry at the wicked every day (Ps 7:11), but His great Day of wrath is coming.
3. It is a calamity of superficial Bible study and effeminate Christianity to misunderstand and reject the clear teaching of God's indignation and wrath through the Bible.
4. Make no mistake here – it was not lovingkindness that caused God to send the Flood.
5. Make no mistake here – God is willing to pour His wrath on the vessels of wrath (9:22).
6. The face of God will chase heaven and earth away in the Day of His wrath (Rev 20:11).
7. Jesus Christ will ride His white horse over the wicked in God's fierce wrath (Rev 19:15).



***9 Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;***

***A. Tribulation and anguish.***

1. What is the end and reward of contentious rejecters of truth – tribulation and anguish.
2. God has rejected the Geneva Convention as having any authority over His judgment.
3. He will torture and torment the wicked for their rebellion against His goodness and truth.
4. You do not think He will torture? You err (Mark 9:44,46,48; Luke 16:23; Rev 14:11)!
5. Torture for eternity begins to approach the legal results for sin against an infinite God.

***B. Upon every soul of man.***

1. There are no exceptions or exemptions. Get Paul's argument! All are guilty for death!
2. The haughty judge of 2:1, representing the Jews (2:17), thought they would be exempted.

***C. That doeth evil.***

1. The crime to deserve God's indignation and wrath is to do evil, which all have done.
2. What is evil? It is not as bad as your flesh reasons. Check the list of 23 crimes (1:21-31).
3. Since all have done and continue to do evil, Paul's point simply and only proves guilt.

***D. Of the Jew first.***

1. The Jews love to be first and thought it right to do so, but here it is of God's judgment!
2. The Jewish-Gentile division of the human race is mentioned primarily to warn the Jews, who thought themselves superior to the Gentiles and not subject to the same judgment.

***E. And also of the Gentile.***

1. The Jews knew Gentiles had to be judged for idolatry (1:20), but only after the Jews!
2. Though the Jews despised the Gentiles, they would face God's wrath before them.

***10 But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:***

***A. But glory, honour, and peace.***

1. Paul continued describing God's righteous judgment with rewards for good conduct.
2. The glory, honour, and peace here are eternal blessings in heaven (Rom 2:7; Is 57:1-2).

***B. To every man.***

1. The judgment has no exceptions, exemptions, or extenuating circumstances for any man.
2. Every man has an appointment to die and after death to be judged by God (Heb 9:27).

***C. That worketh good.***

1. But there is none that doeth good, no, not one (Romans 3:10-12; Psalm 14:1-3; 53:1-3).
2. Therefore, Paul is not in any way teaching a novel way to get to heaven for sinners.
3. He is instead setting a standard of impossible righteousness that neither Gentile nor Jew could reach, which provides one further proof that both kinds of men are guilty (3:9,19).

***D. To the Jew first.***

1. The Jewish-Gentile division of the human race is mentioned primarily to warn the Jews, who thought themselves superior to the Gentiles and not subject to the same judgment.
2. While they would be rewarded first for doing good in life, none could achieve the desire.

***E. And also to the Gentile.***

1. By including Gentiles, second in order, it put Jews in the same predicament with them!
2. They could also receive eternal blessings for good conduct, but they were after the Jews.
3. Why were they after the Jews? Because had chosen Israel as His own (Deut 7:6-8).

## ***11 For there is no respect of persons with God.***

### ***A. For.***

1. This coordinating conjunction concludes Paul's running argument that objective conduct is God's just criterion for judgment (2:6-10), for He does not differentiate among men.
2. This basis for judgment so clearly stated condemned the Jews, who generally believed they were the exceptional people of God and would receive an exemption from judgment.
3. Paul will shortly indicate that the Jews did boast of their relationship with God (2:17).
4. In the preceding context he plainly stated Jews and Gentiles are judged the same (2:9-10).

### ***B. There is no respect of persons.***

1. Respect of persons is allowing a person or their circumstances to affect how you view their actions, for true righteousness must judge by the facts, not by friendship or other factors that are personal in nature or might result in good or bad for you.
2. The Gentiles will find no mercy for ignorance, humility, accomplishments, or glory before God, for they are without excuse (1:20).
3. The Jews would find no mercy for their presumptive confidence as God's own nation, for they are without excuse at least as much as the Gentiles (2:1).
4. This rule condemned individual haughty Gentiles, like philosophers and civil rulers; and it condemned the Jewish nation and their pompous attitude about being God's people.
5. God's judgment of sin is impartially stated here (2:11) and equitably stated earlier (2:6).
6. The Bible declares that the small and great (by any criterion) shall be judged out of the books of their works without regard to their person (Rev 20:12).

### ***C. With God.***

1. God deals objectively with every individual based on character and conduct, without any influence on His judgment by preference or pity for person, place, power, privilege, etc.
2. This is a perpetual axiom defining the character of Jehovah our God and Jesus our Lord and Saviour, which should affect how we view ourselves and how we view others (Deut 10:17; Job 34:19; Acts 10:34; Gal 2:6; Eph 6:9; Jas 2:1; I Pet 1:17; etc.).
3. Since human judgment is easily affected by persons and their circumstances, the flesh often reasons that it will be the same with God, but the text declares this is not true.
4. Since human judgment is easily affected by persons and their circumstances, God ruled against all such judgment by His appointed judges (Lev 19:15; Deut 1:16-17; 16:18-20; II Chron 19:7; Pr 24:23; 28:21) and by ordinary saints of God (Jas 2:1-9; I Tim 5:21).

## ***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;***

### ***A. For as many as have sinned.***

1. English allows, even commends, that a sentence be read without parentheses to identify the continuing thought without the detailed explanation of the supplemental material.
2. Therefore, by connecting 2:12 and 2:16, we clearly see that Paul condemned Gentiles and Jews by respective laws to the judgment of Jesus Christ in the great day of God's wrath.
3. The written law will not excuse any Gentiles or Jews – those without it or those with it.
4. Each man's conduct based on his given degree of light would be the basis for judgment.
5. How many Gentiles have sinned? Just the bad ones? Just the sodomites? No! All of them!
6. Paul has already condemned the Gentiles guilty of sin against the truth of creation (1:20).
7. This phrase is modified by the following words to address Gentiles without a written law.
8. There are no exceptions at all (2:6,11), just as the language *as many as* declares here.

- B. *Without law.*
1. That is, Gentiles, without the external written law brought down from Sinai by Moses.
  2. The Jews were exceptional by their written law (3:1-2; 9:4; Deut 4:5-8; Ps 147:19-20).
  3. The Jews thought themselves exceptional by their law (2:17,23; John 5:45; 9:28-29).
  4. The Gentiles were not without law, for they had an internal law by nature and conscience.
- C. *Shall also perish without law.*
1. There is no question about this point – it is assumed throughout – judgment brings death!
  2. Gentiles have enough evidence against them to die, even without Moses’ written law.
  3. Yet, sin requires a law (4:15; 5:13; I John 3:4), and the Gentiles sinned, so Paul will shortly identify the law that they violated in order to be condemned as sinners (2:14-15).
  4. Are the Gentiles sinners? Indeed! By creation, providence, and conscience! Triple guilty!
- D. *And as many as have sinned.*
1. The written law will not excuse any Gentiles or Jews – those without it or those with it.
  2. Each man’s conduct based on his given degree of light would be the basis for judgment.
  3. How many Jews have sinned? Just profane ones? Just the sodomites? No! All of them!
  4. Turning from the Gentiles, those without a written law, Paul turned to the Jews with it.
  5. There are no exceptions at all (2:6,11), just as the language *as many as* declares here.
- E. *In the law.*
1. That is, Jews, with the external written law brought down from Mount Sinai by Moses.
  2. Sins for the Jews were not by nature, providence, or conscience ... but by precepts.
- F. *Shall be judged by the law.*
1. While the Law of Moses was a privilege (3:1-2), it also brought duty and punishment.
  2. Are the Jews sinners? Indeed! By creation, providence, conscience, revelation (2:17-27)!

### ***13 (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.***

- A. *For not the hearers of the law are just before God.*
1. The parenthetical matter answers objections to 2:12, first the Jews and then the Gentiles.
  2. English allows, even commends, that a sentence be read without parentheses to identify the continuing thought without the detailed explanation of the supplemental material.
  3. Therefore, by connecting 2:12 and 2:16, we clearly see that Paul condemned Gentiles and Jews to the judgment of Jesus Christ in the great day of the wrath of God.
  4. The first objection against 2:12 was by the Jews, who argued against being judged beside the Gentiles on the basis of the law, since they assumed superiority to Gentiles by virtue of receiving the law directly from God to them alone (2:17; Zep 3:11; Jn 9:28; etc.).
  5. By declaring both Jews and Gentiles under condemnation of death (2:6-11), including his first reference to the law of the Jews (2:12), Paul pricked the Jews in a sensitive matter.
  6. They presumed having Moses’ law in their nation and read every Sabbath Day was sufficient for God’s blessing on their nation and enough to avoid judgment (2:17-23).
  7. These superstitious rebels wore scripture in phylacteries on their foreheads and upper arms, but they did not obey the commandments and precepts of scripture (Mat 23:1-5).
  8. **Phylactery.** A small leathern box containing four texts of scripture, Deut 6:4-9; 11:13-21; Ex 13:1-10,11-16, written in Hebrew letters on vellum and, by a literal interpretation of the passages, worn by Jews during morning prayer on all days except the Sabbath, as a reminder of the obligation to keep the law. [Oxford English Dictionary.]

9. It is very true God exalted the written Law of Moses e.g. two tablets of stone from His finger, brought down from Sinai accompanied by a horrible tempest, and kept perpetually in the Ark of the Covenant within the veil in the holiest of all.
  10. However, the rule had always been that obedience to that law was what counted and mattered to the Author of it (Deut 4:1; 5:1; 6:3; 28:1-2,15; I Sam 15:22-23; Ezek 20:11).
  11. Paul condemned this erroneous confidence of the Jews (Acts 13:27; Rom 10:5; Gal 3:12).
  12. God destroyed false confidence in external privileges of religion through Jeremiah the prophet, though at that time Jewish pride and rebellion were by the temple (Jer 7:1-15).
  13. Many in Christian churches think that physical items like the Bible or the hearing of it has value by sound of the preached or recited words, like Muslims with Arabic chanting, but James clearly condemned hearing the word of God and doing it (James 1:21-25).
  14. The greatest doctrine in Romans is justification, of which we seek perfect understanding, but which is denied here to those who merely hear the law of God.
  15. For more of the Bible not profiting ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/pdf/bible-cannot-profit.pdf>.
  16. For more of the Bible for doers only ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/pdf/doers-of-the-word.pdf>.
  17. For more of the Bible for doers ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/pdf/parable-of-the-sower.pdf>.
- B. *But the doers of the law shall be justified.*
1. Here is an important axiom of law – Moses’ law – only the soul that obeys it shall be justified or saved by it (Lev 18:5; Neh 9:29; Ezek 20:11; Lu 10:28; Rom 10:5; Gal 3:12).
  2. The obverse of the above axiom is very simple – the soul that sins shall die (Ezek 18:4).
  3. Paul did not introduce another way of justification, for no man can keep the condition.
  4. As far as the Law of Moses went, justification by it could only be obtained by obedience, which overthrew the Jews’ confidence in possessing it, hearing it, wearing it, etc., etc.
  5. Remember the overall argument of condemnation (1:18 – 3:20) and present argument that both Gentiles and Jews are condemned by the law ... not saved by the law in either case!
  6. There is nothing to contradict 3:20 or Gal 3:13, for Paul did not teach a means of justification by the law – he rather taught the Jews hopelessly condemned by the law.
  7. If the Jews wanted to be justified by their greater privilege of having the written law of God, then all they needed to do was keep the law perfectly throughout their whole lives.

***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:***

A. *For when the Gentiles.*

1. The next objection against 2:12 would come from the Gentiles, who would plead ignorance of the law, and thus excuse themselves for not keeping it for their justification.
2. As Adam in Eden, men look for an excuse for their sin and a reason to escape judgment.
3. You will not get far with God by claiming you did not know right or wrong in your life, and every sane reader knows this presumptuous fact is true every day of his or her life.

B. *Which have not the law.*

1. The Gentiles, other than exceptions, did not have the written law of God (Ps 147:19-20).
2. The scriptures from the prophets were given to the Jews, and Gentiles did not have them.
3. Though they did not have the written law from Sinai, they had a natural law inside them.

- C. *Do by nature the things contained in the law.*
1. Do you believe II Tim 2:15? You must divide here between *natures* as Paul used them.
  2. What *nature* does Paul describe here? The sin nature of fallen man that hates God and the things of the gospel of Christ (I Cor 2:14)? No. The natural knowledge of right and wrong that includes knowing that men and women fit better sexually (1:26-27)? Yes.
  3. Review this *nature* again to see how much Gentiles without the law actually understood.
    - a. Gentiles understood by *nature* that man-woman sex is right, sodomy evil (1:26-27).
    - b. Gentiles understood that incest with one's father's wife is so wrong as to not even be considered (I Cor 5:1), even though they did not have Gen 35:22; 49:4; Lev 18:8; 20:11; Deut 22:30; 27:20; I Chr 5:1; Ezek 22:10; or Amos 2:7 to teach them this.
    - c. Gentiles understood by *nature* that hair length differs for the sexes (I Cor 11:14-16).
    - d. Gentiles, even barbarous ones, knew that vengeance for murder is death (Ac 28:1-4).
    - e. Gentiles, even God-rejecting infidels, know to care for elderly parents (I Tim 5:4,8).
    - f. Gentiles understood that adultery is very different from theft for hunger (Pr 6:30-33).
    - g. Even evil fathers know to give good gifts to their children when asked (Lu 11:11-13).
    - h. How many verses do you think Gentiles need about just balances to punish stealing?
    - i. How many verses do you think Gentiles needed to condemn kidnapping (Ex 21:16)?
  4. They did not do these things perfectly, for that is not Paul's point; they understood these things well enough, that any violation of them was sufficient to condemn them as guilty.
- D. *These, having not the law, are a law unto themselves.*
1. Gentiles do not have the written law like the Jews did, but they were a law to themselves.
  2. Gentile nations have not been like irrational animals without any moral sense whatsoever.
  3. They wrote and enforced laws they understood by nature to enforce right from wrong, and these laws extended from the obvious like murder to small business transactions.
  4. The laws of ancient and heathen nations show knowledge of the law similar to Moses.
  5. Gentiles will be judged by this law, for it is sufficient to prove guilt of presumptive rebellion, though not a written law from heaven, yet an internal standard of righteousness.
  6. They knew ... they know ... and we know ... that doers of 1:29-31 deserve death (1:32)!
  7. The only way 1:32 and this place can be understood is by conscience and natural law.
  8. If your conscience is wrong, it is still sin to go against it (Rom 14:14; I Cor 8:7; Tit 1:15)!
  9. Reader! Do you grasp the guilt of sin against any light (14:22-23; Tit 1:15-16; Jas 4:17)?
  10. For the laws codified by Hammurabi ... [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Code\\_of\\_Hammurabi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Code_of_Hammurabi).
  11. For laws 300 years earlier than Hammurabi ... [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Code\\_of\\_Ur-Nammu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Code_of_Ur-Nammu).

***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;)***

- A. *Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts.*
1. The Gentiles, by their general and universal approval of good conduct and punishment of bad conduct, show God's moral law written in their hearts with the basic knowledge of it.
  2. Paul already revealed and taught that Gentiles know sins and capital punishment (1:32).
  3. God will hold this internal law of nature against Gentiles in the Day of Judgment (2:16).
  4. See the comments on the previous verse (2:14) for examples of Gentile understanding of a moral law from both inside the Bible and outside the Bible.

5. These verses (2:14-15) do not present an illustrative case of unconverted regenerate elect.
  - a. Context must be our guide before taking any text to prove a positive point of doctrine.
  - b. It is a travesty of Scripture to hunt for proof texts without context, even if for truth.
  - c. A text without its context is a pretext. We should not be so simple and so deceptive.
  - d. The large context is condemnation for Gentiles and Jews (1:18 – 3:20), not salvation!
  - e. The small context here is obviously and only the guilt and condemnation of Gentiles, by virtue of which every Gentile without exception will be judged to death (2:6-12).
  - f. The small context is all about judgment (2:12,16), not salvation. Get this straight.
  - g. The words are inside the parentheses, thus they are strictly limited to what is outside the parentheses as the main thought, which is clearly the condemnation of all Gentiles
  - h. Unconverted elect among the Gentiles would not serve Paul's obvious purpose to condemn all Gentiles as condemned and guilty before God and the day of wrath.
  - i. Since sin cannot be imputed without a law (5:13; I John 3:4), and the Gentiles would be judged sinners worthy of death (2:12-13), Paul must identify and prove the law that makes them sinners (2:14-15). This is obvious to anyone without a sacred cow.
  - j. These cannot be unconverted elect, for Paul's argument is justification (or condemnation) by works of the law (2:13), not free salvation by the work of Christ applied to the elect by the Holy Spirit! Partial obedience, which is the best that the best of God's elect ever achieve, is outside the whole argument, for obedience in this context must be perfect, perpetual, and passionate to achieve eternal life (2:7-10)!
  - k. The language is similar to the new covenant only in sound (Jer 31:33; Heb 8:10; 10:16), but we must rightly divide sound from sense (II Tim 2:15). If there were no divisions, it would not be written we must rightly divide to avoid doctrinal shame!
  - l. There is no necessity for similar words to teach identical doctrine, as we often find.
  - m. The justification here is legal justification and not merely the evidence of it, but which no man can achieve or approach, for he sins against the law he received (2:13).
  - n. There is no Jew or Gentile that has ever perfectly obeyed any law for legal justification or even for the evidence thereof, as the law in the heart is imperfectly obeyed, whether by nature or by the new covenant.
  - o. The two verses here, consistent with the context, speak about all Gentiles, not just a subset of them as the elect of God ... or are all Gentiles unconverted elect?

**B. *Their conscience also bearing witness.***

1. Your conscience is God's candle to help make right-wrong decisions in life (Prov 20:27), and even the unregenerate have one, though it may be ignorant, seared, ignored, etc.
2. You may keep your conscience ignorant at times to save sin and grief (I Cor 10:25-28).
3. Even men with knowledge of the truth can have their consciences seared (I Timothy 4:2).
4. Jesus delivered an adulteress when her accusers were stricken by consciences (John 8:9).
5. The only way 1:32 and this place can be understood is by conscience and natural law.
6. Reader! Do you grasp the guilt of sin against any light (14:22-23; Tit 1:15-16; Jas 4:17)?
7. For more about the conscience from Prov 20:27 ... [http://www.letgodbetrue.com/proverbs/20\\_27.htm](http://www.letgodbetrue.com/proverbs/20_27.htm).
8. For more about the conscience ... the author's "A Pure Conscience" from April, 1992.

C. *And their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another.*

1. The laws of ancient and heathen nations show knowledge of the law similar to Moses.
2. See the comments on the previous verse (2:14) for examples of Gentile understanding of a moral law from both inside the Bible and outside the Bible.
3. The Gentiles knew enough to observe the actions of others and either accuse them of evil or excuse them for doing well in most any civil, criminal, business, or social matter.
4. God will use this internal law to judge the Gentiles, for it is sufficient to prove guilt of presumptive rebellion, though not against a written law from heaven, yet an internal standard of righteousness written in the heart and mind of man.
5. They knew ... they know ... and we know ... that doers of 1:29-31 deserve death (1:32)!

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

A. *In the day.*

1. This verse connects back to 2:12, for 2:13-15 was explanatory, supplemental material.
2. English allows, even commends, that a sentence be read without parentheses to identify the continuing thought without the detailed explanation of the supplemental information.
3. Therefore, connecting 2:12 and 2:16, we can see that Paul condemned Gentiles and Jews by respective standards to the judgment of Jesus Christ in the great day of God's wrath.
4. Both Gentiles and Jews, without or with a written law, shall die in this Day of Judgment.
5. The whole universe is moving toward a day of wrath – when God shall be Judge (2:5), which shall reveal all the knowledge, truth, and purpose for the existence of the world.
6. Paul was not ashamed or concerned to tell Greek philosophers of this day (Acts 17:31).

B. *When God shall judge.*

1. All men will be judged impartially by their deeds in this God's day of wrath (2:2,5-6,11).
2. Our God is a God of judgment (Psalm 50:1-6; 96:10-13; 98:4-9; Isaiah 30:18; Mal 2:17).
3. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Heb 10:31). Believe it!
4. If you ask why He has taken so long to judge, He waits for you to repent (II Pet 3:1-10).
5. No matter your tears or pleas, sinner, you will be judged according to your deeds (2:6).
6. No matter your position or reputation on earth, He will have no respect for you (2:11).
7. No matter whether Gentile or Jew, you will be judged by the law He revealed to you.

C. *The secrets of men.*

1. You may hide much from other men like yourself, but nothing from the omniscient God.
2. Solomon included your secrets when concluding his book of philosophy (Eccl 12:13-14).
3. Young man! You are not getting away with any sin, just accumulating wrath (Eccl 11:9).
4. If a bird can reveal your secret curse of authority (Ec 10:20), how much more certain will it be found in God's books and recalled for your everlasting ruin and shame (Rev 20:12)!
5. Reader! Even the thoughts and intents of your heart are naked to His eyes (Heb 4:12-14)!

D. *By Jesus Christ.*

1. God has put all judgment into the hands of Jesus Christ (Matt 25:31-46; John 5:22,27; Acts 10:42; 17:31; Rom 14:10-12; II Cor 5:9-11; II Thes 1:7-9; II Tim 4:1; Re 20:11-12).
2. The effeminate, hermaphrodite, John-Lennon-look-alike that is so popular in Catholic churches and Baptist churches has no relation to the Jesus Christ of the Bible at all.
3. If God's elect believe such, they are deceived with another Jesus (II Cor 11:3-4,13-15).
4. For more about the real Jesus ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/bible/heresies/revelation-3-20-reclaimed.htm>.

E. *According to my gospel.*

1. The gospel that Paul preached, though not his personally, included news about judgment.
2. The gospel, the good news or glad tidings, includes preaching about the day of wrath.
3. When with Greek philosophers in Athens, he did not modify the message (Ac 17:30-31).
4. When he taught Felix regarding faith in Christ, Paul taught the judgment (Acts 24:24-25).
5. Regarding final judgment, he used the terror of the Lord to persuade men (II Cor 5:9-11).
6. Forget God changing – He is a consuming fire today, like yesterday (He 12:28-29; 13:8).
7. There is a day coming that should strike terror into unbelievers and carnal (Re 20:11-15).
8. The coming day of fiery wrath should change our lives to live for Him (II Peter 3:10-14).

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

A. *Behold.*

1. Paul grabs the attention of his Jewish readers and hearers by this imperative form of the verb to look at something and consider it carefully. Compare Mal 3:1, Gal 5:2; etc.
2. Paul had dealt subtly and covertly with the Jews from 2:1 to 2:16, but now it was time to take off the gloves by naming them openly and proceeding to condemn their false hope.
3. Now Paul expressly addressed Jews openly, even in a mixed church, for the heresy he had to oppose in every place – Jewish legalism of saving confidence in Moses' religion.

B. *Thou art called a Jew.*

1. The value of chapter two will be fully appreciated by those who grasp its Jewish context, for Paul wrote to oppose what we call Jewish legalism – the family heritage, nationalistic pride, and religious arrogance that caused Jews to think they were saved by birth, citizenship, and modest obedience to a compromised form of Moses' religion.
2. He had been addressing the Jews covertly by use of the singular pronoun identified here (2:1,3), by the distinction between Jews and Gentiles (2:9,10,14), and by the argument against external religious arrogance and hypocrisy, of which the Jews were notorious.
3. The Jews were happy to be called Jews, the name coming from Judah, because they knew they were God's people by His sovereign choice and incomparable national blessings.
4. **Jew.** A person of Hebrew descent; one whose religion is Judaism; an Israelite. Orig. a Hebrew of the kingdom of Judah, as opposed to those of the ten tribes of Israel; later, any Israelite who adhered to the worship of Jehovah as conducted at Jerusalem. [OED.]
5. What a blessed privilege, while it lasted (Deut 4:7; Ps 135:4)! But then (Deut 28:37)!
6. Paul will list some of their many blessings as the people of God later in this book (9:4-5).
7. But they took such unjustified and foolish confidence in their natural lineage that both John and Jesus had to rebuke and warn them (Matt 3:7-12; John 8:33-34,39-40,41-42).
8. The modern heresy and Jewish fable still holds the natural Jews as God's special people, when in fact it is the spiritual elect from Jews and Gentiles that are God's people.
9. For more about true Jews ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/bible/prophecy/who-is-the-seed-of-abraham.pdf>.
10. For more about the true Jews ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/pdf/true-israel.pdf>.

C. *And retest in the law.*

1. For 2:17-20, Paul identified the Jewish mind and its arrogant confidence by repetitive propositions that would be well received by Jews, though likely given with some irony.
2. The Jews rested in the law ... had confidence they were the elect and saved children of God by virtue of having Moses' law and obeying a modified version of it within reason.



3. The giving of the Law of Moses on Sinai is one of the most dramatic events recorded in the Bible (Ex 19:1 – 20:26; Deut 33:2; Ps 68:17; Acts 7:53; Gal 3:19; Heb 2:2; 12:18-21).
4. It would be one thing if they had Moses' law and kept it, but they did not keep it; and they were not confident by keeping it, but rather merely by having and hearing it.
5. Remember that Paul already corrected their objection that they *heard* the law (2:13).
6. Jesus rebuked their confidence in the law by *obedience* to a modified interpretation (Matt 5:19-20,21,27,33,38,43; 9:13; 12:1-7; 15:3-6; 19:16-22; 23:16; Luke 10:25-37; etc., etc.).
7. Jesus corrected their proud *wearing* of the law in phylacteries and borders (Matt 23:1-7).
8. Jesus rebuked their trust in Moses and the scriptures by saying their law prophesied of Him and would condemn them in the end (John 5:39,45-47).
9. The Jews foolishly thought the Ark of the Covenant would help in battle (I Sam 4:1-11).
10. Jeremiah condemned the false hope of Israel in Solomon's glorious temple (Jer 7:1-10).
11. Ezekiel condemned a similar arrogance among the Jews about the land (Ezek 33:23-29).
12. Micah condemned a similar cavalier attitude about sin and God Himself (Micah 3:8-12).
13. It is our duty to examine ourselves and remove any confidence in religious ordinances themselves, rather than the righteousness they require, declare, or symbolize.
14. We confidently rest in the King James Bible, but do we read, learn, and obey the KJV?
15. For more of false trust in scripture ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/pdf/bible-cannot-profit.pdf>.
16. For more about false trust in religious relics ... the sermon outline entitled, "Nehushtan!"

D. *And makest thy boast of God.*

1. They were confident of their superiority to Gentiles by virtue of having a superior law to anything the Gentiles had and knowing that God had revealed Himself to them only.
2. With a heritage as the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and all God's favors shown to them in Egypt, the wilderness, Canaan, Babylon, etc., it is not hard to grasp their pride.
3. Jesus had to deal with their arrogant boasting in God during His ministry (John 8:41-42).
4. Pride comes from a combination of human depravity and God's rich goodness, which Paul had already identified that they were despising by their wicked lifestyles (2:4-5).
5. Consider how Micah blasted the Jews for presuming on God's presence (Micah 3:8-12).
6. The error is not boasting in God or of God, for we should boast of God (Ps 34:2; 44:8); the error that Paul will proceed to identify is to have a lifestyle that does not match.
7. We boast of our sovereign God and election ... but do we live as the elect (I Thes 1:2-4)?

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

A. *And knowest his will.*

1. For 2:17-20, Paul identified the Jewish mind and its arrogant confidence by repetitive propositions that would be well received by Jews, though likely given with some irony.
2. The infinite God of heaven did reveal many things to the children of Israel that He did not reveal to other nations (Deut 29:29; Amos 3:7).
3. We claim to know God's will in many things ... do we live His will in all things known?

B. *And approvest the things that are more excellent.*

1. In all matters of religion, morality, politics, philosophy, or any related field of study, the scriptures of the Jews, the Old Testament, contained a wealth of superior teaching.
2. The Jews truly knew what was more excellent, in writing, than did any other nation.
3. They could analyze world news in light of scripture and approve things more excellent.

C. *Being instructed out of the law.*

1. Reading and explaining Moses' law was a mainstay of Jewish worship (Ac 13:27; 15:21).
2. "The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul" ... and much more (Ps 19:7-11).

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

A. *And art confident that thou thyself.*

1. For 2:17-20, Paul identified the Jewish mind and its arrogant confidence by repetitive propositions that would be well received by Jews, though likely given with some irony.
2. The Jews were certain, and it was certainly true, that they had light no other nation had.

B. *Art a guide of the blind.*

1. Who were the blind that Jews were confident they could guide? The Gentiles, of course.
2. While Moses endorsed such (Deut 4:5-8), they should have read further (Deut 4:9)!

C. *A light of them which are in darkness.*

1. Who were those in darkness that the Jews were confident to give light? The Gentiles.
2. While the law of God did bring light (Is 8:20), they should have read Isaiah 58:8-11!

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

A. *An instructor of the foolish.*

1. For 2:17-20, Paul identified the Jewish mind and its arrogant confidence by repetitive propositions that would be well received by Jews, though likely given with some irony.
2. The Jews rightly thought that scripture could make them wise to instruct Gentile fools, but they should have learned the fact that true wisdom includes hating evil (Prov 8:20).

B. *A teacher of babes.*

1. The Jews were sure they were the mature ones able to teach the babes of the Gentiles.
2. A babe in scripture is one without full knowledge of God's word (I Cor 3:1; Heb 5:13).

C. *Which has the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.*

1. The form of a thing, like knowledge or truth, is the character of the law that included knowledge and truth, as "the form of sound words" (II Tim 1:13) are those of a wholesome character and nature, as Paul taught elsewhere (I Tim 6:3; Titus 2:1,8).
2. The law did provide knowledge and truth for the Jews, but they did not obey the law.

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

A. *Thou therefore which teachest another.*

1. For 2:21-23, Paul exposed and rebuked the Jews with five questions about hypocrisy.
2. The Jews exalted all manner of scribes, lawyers, rabbis, doctors of the law, Pharisees, etc.
3. The Jews were zealous missionaries, though Jesus said with very evil results (Mat 23:15).
4. The Jewish leaders were notorious for living differently than their teaching (Matt 23:1-5).
5. The error here is not teaching, nor should teachers modify their boldness at all; the error is teaching others and not teaching yourself to be an example of holiness by your life.
6. The heresy of the Jews was to arrogantly teach others and presume eternal life based on their possession and teaching of scripture, without living the righteousness of scripture.

B. *Teachest thou not thyself.*

1. Though the Jews exalted teaching highly, Paul forced them to self-examination as to their personal degree of righteousness in light of their emphasis on teachers of Moses' law.
2. Every teacher is a sinner, and this cannot modify the message or the bold manner of delivery, but it must force every teacher to constantly examine his life and repent of sin.
3. Paul warned Timothy to take heed to himself as essential to save his hearers (I Tim 4:16).
4. James warned about being a teacher and the consequences of presumption in it (Jas 3:1).

C. *Thou that preachest a man should not steal.*

1. The error here is not preaching, nor should preachers modify their boldness at all; the error is preaching to others and not preaching to yourself to live the life of holiness.
2. No wonder Paul warned Timothy to take heed to himself to save others (I Timothy 4:16).

D. *Dost thou steal.*

1. While you are so intent on knowing and teaching God's law regarding personal property, are you as diligent in observing every aspect of his law regarding property?
2. The Jews were notorious for stealing (Psalm 50:18; Isaiah 56:11; Ezek 22:12-13,27; Hosea 12:7; Amos 8:4-6; Micah 3:11; Matt 21:12-13; 23:14).
3. Oh, brethren, we open our mouths with great zeal for righteousness in many areas of life. Are we as zealous in examining ourselves and departing from the evil we find at home?

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

A. *Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery.*

1. For 2:21-23, Paul exposed and rebuked the Jews with five questions about hypocrisy.
2. The Jews loved adultery, and it is brought against them many times (Ps 50:18; Jer 5:7-8; 9:2; 29:23; Ezek 22:11; Mal 3:5; Matt 5:27-32).
3. Jesus had to deal with secret adultery by fantasy (Matt 5:28) and divorce (Matt 5:31-32).

B. *Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?*

1. They may have left off idolatry after the Babylonian captivity, but how compromising were they in their personal zeal for God's worship (Mal 1:6-8; etc.)?
2. They had ridiculous laws that profaned the divine nature of the temple (Matt 23:16-22).

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

A. *Thou that makest thy boast of the law.*

1. For 2:21-23, Paul exposed and rebuked the Jews with five questions about hypocrisy.
2. As he had conceded earlier to set the trap, the Jews rested in the law for salvation (2:17).
3. Paul continued to maintain the singular pronoun to make this quite personal to each Jew.
4. They boasted of the law ... their possession of it, reading of it, wearing of it, teaching of it, superiority for having it, superior precepts and judgments, superior lives, etc.

B. *Through breaking the law dishonourest thou God.*

1. Why is this formed as a question? Because the Jews did not find their sins offensive or dishonoring to God, just as their fathers callously profaned Him, for they presumed on external privileges as covering their wickedness, though it exceeded that of Gentiles.
2. See their cavalier attitude about sin elsewhere (Jer 7:1-10; Mic 3:8-12; Mal 1:6-14; etc.).
3. This question requires a positive answer – breaking the law dishonored God, no matter how much they boasted of His law, as the next verse boldly and plainly declares.

4. Actions speak louder than words, which Solomon gave as a rule of life (Proverbs 20:11).
5. John, the apostle of love, blasted hypocritical professors as liars (I John 1:6; 2:4; 4:20)
6. No matter how much you boast of knowing God, it is your life that declares the truth.
7. To make a claim of knowing God's will and then living otherwise is the height of profane hypocrisy, and it causes many to justly resent and reject Christianity (I Tim 4:16).
8. "I thought you were a Christian ..." is a rebuke from the world that declares two things – you have opened your mouth to profess Christianity, but your life does not agree with it!
9. For more about an exemplary life ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/pdf/actions-speak-louder.pdf>

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

**A. For the name of God is blasphemed.**

1. No longer gently using rhetorical questions, Paul blasted the Jews for overall wickedness.
2. Paul had been answering haughty objections of Jews that being judged just like Gentiles was not fair, and he brought this section to a close with a summary condemnation.
3. Here is the summary truth of Jews compared to Gentiles – the Jews were wicked sinners and brought reproach upon Jehovah by their actions, even in the eyes of pagan Gentiles!
4. Gentiles knew both the God and law of the Jews, and combined with the reputation of the Jews for wickedness and judgment contrary to their law, Jehovah was profaned by them.
5. Jehovah's religion had been made to stink among the nations by profane Jewish conduct.
6. If they had taught themselves better (2:17-23), they might have saved Him the dishonor.
7. We cannot forget that our sins blaspheme God's name (II Sam 12:14; I Tim 6:1; Tit 2:5)!
8. If we take the name of God e.g. children of God, or the name of Christ e.g. Christian, it is our sacred duty to avoid profaning either by our conduct (I Tim 5:14; I Pet 2:12; etc.).
9. For more of good conduct... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/pdf/things-becoming-sound-doctrine.pdf>
10. For more of adorning conduct ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/pdf/actions-speak-louder.pdf>

**B. Among the Gentiles through you.**

1. For this reason, Peter exhorted Jews scattered abroad to live holy lives (I Peter 2:11-12).
2. For this reason, Paul exhorted Gentiles to live holy lives before the world (Phil 2:15-16).

**C. As it is written.**

1. It was not only true in Paul's day, but this had been the Jews' reputation for a long time.
2. Though not quoted directly, two passages supply the matter (Isaiah 52:5; Ezek 36:20,23).
3. It is written enough times in the New Testament for us to carefully and diligently live holy lives to adorn and defend the true gospel. See the two links in the comments above.

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

**A. For circumcision verily profiteth.**

1. The coordinating conjunction *for* ties in the previous argument or arguments that the Jews were as much condemned as sinners before God as the Gentiles were (2:1-24).
2. The previous context taught that everything depended on obedience to the law (2:1-24).
3. Here is the first, but not last, mention of this religious rite of the Jews in this epistle.
4. It was an important rite first given by God to Abraham (Genesis 17:1-14,23-27; 21:4).
5. Paul will wisely pursue the matter of Abraham's circumcision shortly (Romans 4:9-12).
6. Paul opposed Jewish infatuation with this rite through his life (Ac 15:1-2; Ga 2:1-5; etc.).

7. Look for Paul's wise concession (it could definitely be profitable) ... his limitation (only if you kept the law) ... and his distinction in verses ahead (between external and internal).
  8. If a man had God's covenant sign and lived up to it, then God's greater blessings came.
  9. As a Jew obedient in body and spirit, a man could have the best relationship with God.
- B. *If thou keep the law.*
1. Circumcision was a sign of God's covenant of works for salvation, and the covenant required keeping Moses' law perfectly, as Paul taught (10:5; Gal 3:10; 5:3; Jas 2:8-11).
  2. No Jew could perfectly keep the law for justification, so Paul's argument here is to show that the outward sign of circumcision by itself was entirely inadequate to save.
  3. The only value that circumcision might have depended on keeping the law, for then the sign of the covenant of works would agree with the actual keeping of the covenant.
  4. The lesson of this and the following verses in this chapter are to destroy confidence in the external rite of circumcision in the matters of justification and salvation. This is key!
  5. However, there was general conduct that was in agreement with the law or against the law, and God would and did bless general conformity to Moses with natural blessings.
  6. Baptism only means something if our lives agree with it ... to walk in newness of life ... otherwise a carnal and worldly life is not better than that of unbaptized pagans.
- C. *But if thou be a breaker of the law.*
1. Since there was no Jew that could keep the law completely or perfectly, then the outward ritual of circumcision was rendered null and void as any condition of saving grace.
  2. Any circumcised Jew that did not keep the law perfectly was as if he were uncircumcised.
- D. *Thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.*
1. The outward sign of the righteousness of Abraham's faith and covenant is undermined and destroyed by the actions or lifestyle that does not match up to Abraham.
  2. To break God's law that circumcision was a visible sign of was to undo the ordinance!
  3. God considered a disobedient Jew to be no different than an Ethiopian (Amos 9:7).
  4. Get the sense clearly: all men, including Jews, break the law, which nullifies circumcision, proving that the presence of circumcision cannot save.
  5. Practice is far more important than privilege; internal religion is far more important than external worship; actions are far more important than words; holiness is far greater than ceremony; pure religion is much more important than ritual; etc., etc.

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

- A. *Therefore.*
1. What is the conclusion here? It is Paul's argument that righteousness trumps ritual, or as just stated, unrighteousness confounds and destroys ritual, or sin profanes ceremony.
  2. If verse 25 is true, in that sin defiles circumcision and makes the external ritual of no value, then obedience to the law by an uncircumcised person is as good as circumcision; and if this is true that Gentiles have as much right to heaven, though unable, as do Jews.
- B. *If the uncircumcision.*
1. This is another name for Gentiles, whom the Jews despised for their presumed inferiority.
  2. Paul did not argue for or against Gentile salvation here, for his goal in this chapter is condemnation of the Jews, so a hypothetical or illustrative argument should be assumed.
  3. No one, Jew or Gentile, can keep the righteousness of the law perfectly, which the law demanded as a means of justification before God, thus the inspired *if* is hypothetical.

4. This hypothetical or illustrative argument indicated by *if* is entirely different from the axiom about Gentiles stated earlier by *when* (2:14-15).
  5. See 5:27 for another *if* in Paul's argument about the Gentiles to condemn the Jews.
- C. *Keep the righteousness of the law.*
1. No Jew or Gentile could keep the law perfectly, so discard any such sense in other than a hypothetical or illustrative way, for Paul sought to ruin Jewish trust in circumcision.
  2. However, the Gentiles in general based on Paul's recent teaching in 2:14-15 were keepers of the law in many general respects by their law-taught consciences.
  3. The Jews were well aware of "Gentiles" like Abel, Seth, Enoch, Noah, Mechizedek, etc.
  4. The Jews were well aware of saved "Gentiles" like Rahab, Ruth, and others of the O.T.
  5. The Jews were well aware of good Gentiles in their generation (Luke 7:4-5; Acts 10:22).
  6. The Jews Paul addressed were sitting next to men with foreskins still intact that lived holy and righteous lives by the grace of God through Jesus Christ.
  7. The argument and lesson here is not about Gentiles, so stop inquiring about what Gentiles and how much of the law they kept, but rather grasp Paul's reduction of circumcision to nothing without the righteousness of the law by obedience.
- D. *Shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision.*
1. An uncircumcised Gentile keeping the law was more acceptable to God than a circumcised Jew breaking the law, for circumcision was a sign of the covenant of works.
  2. This is only a lesson for the mind of the Jew, for no personal compliance or obedience could make a Gentile reprobate an elect and true Jew.
  3. Paul's argument shows the utter vanity of trusting external ordinance of minor surgery.
  6. Get the sense: any man, even a Gentile, keeping the law, the only basis for justification (2:6-13), is as if he were circumcised, proving that the lack of it could not condemn.
  4. It is a changed life that is the real matter before God (Gal 6:15; Phil 3:3; II Cor 5:17).
  5. For more of a changed life ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/pdf/love-of-christ-constraineth-us.pdf>

***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?***

- A. *And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature.*
1. In Paul's day, Gentiles remained in the natural state of their birth, with a foreskin.
  2. The natural condition of Gentiles, born and living uncircumcised, did not hinder their salvation, if they fulfilled the righteousness of the law. Remember the hypothetical point.
  3. Greeks despised circumcision, and Greek oppressors and their nude games exposed any Jew or proselyte, so that surgery was invented to replace the foreskin (Cp I Cor 7:18).
- B. *If it fulfil the law, judge thee.*
1. No one, Jew or Gentile, apart from the Lord Jesus Christ, has fulfilled the law of God.
  2. Observe the use of *if*, as in verse 26, indicating a hypothetical or illustrative argument, in contrast to the axiom concerning Gentiles in 2:14-15, where *when* was used.
  3. The Jews were to consider that uncircumcised Gentiles keeping the law would bring greater judgment on them, for the Jews had the greater external privileges of the law and the ritual surgery, but neither could help them, if they were breakers of the law (2:6-13).
  4. See 2:26 for at least five categories of Gentiles that fulfilled the law for the hypothetical case, if you do not take the plainest course and assume perfect obedience to the law.
  5. Paul will take up Abraham's righteousness before circumcision in another place (4:9-12), which should have been grasped by Jews seeing Rahab and Ruth in David's lineage!

C. *Who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law.*

1. Notice the terminology – by the letter and circumcision – here are words for both the written law and the rite of circumcision, the two issues Paul dealt with from 2:17 to 2:29.
2. Uncircumcised Gentiles keeping the law would be justified before circumcised Jews breaking the law, thus adding to the condemnation of the Jews for their greater privileges.
3. Reader! An unbaptized believer is better off than you, if you are a baptized unbeliever!

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

A. *For he is not a Jew.*

1. Paul used this second chapter to condemn Jews as guilty before God, and this text is simply to show that outward claims to Jewry by lineage or circumcision could not save.
2. The Jews were confident that their external lineage and/or circumcision would save them.
3. Jesus condemned merely nominal Jews as devil worshippers (John 8:44; Rev 2:9; 3:9).
4. True Jewishness in the sight of God had always been an internal matter of the heart, whether Jew or Gentile (Lev 26:40-42; Deut 10:12-16; Jer 4:4; John 8:39; Gal 3:9).
5. The issue in this verse is not regeneration as much as it is the changed life of conversion, though we know from many others places that regeneration must precede our conversion.
6. The context of the preceding verses will not allow us to fatalistically interpret or limit this and the following verse to be a description of God's sovereign work of regeneration.
7. The topic of this chapter is condemnation, not salvation or regeneration; and Paul's argument is simply to destroy all Jewish confidence in outward circumcision (2:25-29).

B. *Which is one outwardly.*

1. The mere outward trappings of a Jew, involving the lineage, citizenship, and worship, are not the proper identifying marks of a true Jew, or elect child of God, in the sight of God.
2. Paul had declared that it was only obedience that mattered before God (2:1-3,6-10,13,25).

C. *Neither is that circumcision.*

1. The minor surgery of removing the foreskin is not the circumcision that counts with God.
2. The only circumcision God valued was internal circumcision of the heart (De 10:12-16).

D. *Which is outward in the flesh.*

1. External religion, or doing things outwardly with your body, is not what counts with God.
2. Though God had commanded and required outward circumcision, He had also required many other ceremonies and sacrifices that He considered inferior to a broken heart and obedient life (Ps 50:7-15,23; 51:16-17; Isaiah 1:10-20; 58:1-14; Micah 6:6-8).
3. The Jews were so deceived by their literal, legalistic, and letter approach to the law that they missed the spiritual, significant, and saving aspect of godly character and conduct.

**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.***

A. *But he is a Jew.*

1. Paul used this second chapter to condemn Jews as guilty before God, and this text is simply to show that outward claims to Jewry by lineage or circumcision could not help.
2. The issue here is not regeneration nearly as much as it is the changed life of conversion, though we know from many others places that regeneration must precede our conversion.
3. The true Jew, in this sense, was always an elect, regenerate, and faithful child of God, Jews and Gentiles, as Abel, Enoch, Noah, Melchisedec, Rahab, Ruth, Cornelius, etc.

4. Since Jews loved being Jews, Paul defined a true Jew according to God's opinion.
- B. *Which is one inwardly.*
1. There is an inward love of God and righteousness totally different than outward religion.
  2. The only Jews God ever truly approved of were those with inner love of Him (Deut 6:5).
- C. *And circumcision is that of the heart.*
1. The issue here is not regeneration nearly as much as it is the changed life of conversion, though we know from many others places that regeneration must precede our conversion.
  2. The intent and priority of inward religion and circumcision was clearly taught in the O.T. to the Jews, but most had missed it (Deut 6:5; 10:12-16; I Sam 15:22-23; Psalm 51:16-17; Isaiah 1:11-20; Jeremiah 4:4; Hosea 6:6; Micah 6:6-8; etc.).
  3. Stephen addressed this very point to the law-adoring Jews that stoned him (Acts 7:51-53).
  4. Reader! Have you circumcised the foreskin of your heart to love the Lord thy God?
  5. For more of a changed life ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/pdf/love-of-christ-constraineth-us.pdf>.
  6. For more about heart religion ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/pdf/a-pure-heart.pdf>.
- D. *In the spirit.*
1. Jesus had earlier identified the true worshippers of God as those who worship internally by involving their spirits as opposed to strictly literal or external worship (John 4:20-24).
  2. Where do we get the words ... the *spirit of the law* or *letter of the law*? Likely right here!
  3. What is the spirit of any law? What the Legislator or legislator intended by that law.
  4. Those who keep the spirit of a law are those who understand and fulfill that law's intent.
- E. *And not in the letter.*
1. Where do we get the words ... the spirit of the law or letter of the law? Likely right here!
  2. What is the letter of a law? The literal interpretation of writing while missing the intent.
  3. Jesus knew the spirit of Moses' law trumped the letter (Matthew 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28).
- F. *Whose praise is not of men.*
1. Is this the true Jew praising, or being praised? The answer interprets the last three words.
  2. Is this the true Jew praising God instead of men (objective-genitive), or is it God praising the true Jew instead of men praising the true Jew (subjective-genitive)?
  3. There is nothing in the genitive case of the noun phrase to independently prove the sense.
  4. The issue of this chapter and the recent verses is not so much the object of man's praise, but rather a changed life to obtain God's approval, of which the Jews falsely boasted.
  5. Always determined by context, objective-genitive means the object of the preposition, or the noun in the genitive case, is the object of the action, or receives the action; and subjective-genitive means the object of the preposition, or the noun in the genitive case, is the subject of the action, or produces the action.
  6. We choose the latter, subjective-genitive, where God praises the true Jew for his internal sanctification and righteousness, on the basis of a negative reason and a positive reason.
  7. The negative reason considers the proclivity and propensity of natural Jews to seek the praise of men, of which vice the Jews were infamous, as the scriptures reveal.
    - a. Consider the negative aspect of the Jew's fondness for seeking praise from other men.
    - b. The Jews loved to be praised by men for external religion and holiness (John 12:43), rather than to be praised by God for conforming their lives to His holy standard.
    - c. Much of the Jews' religion was to be seen of men for their reward (Matt 6:1-2,5,16).
    - d. Jesus condemned the hypocrisy and profanity of such religious motives (Matt 23:5).
    - e. They justified themselves before men, which God found abominable (Luke 16:15).
    - f. The issue – they had things reversed from what the true Jew would desire (John 5:44).



8. The Jews were not so guilty for praising other men, as for seeking praise of other men.

G. *But of God.*

1. The purpose of this chapter and recent verses is not so much the object of man's praise, but rather a changed life for praise from God, of which the Jews falsely boasted.
2. The positive reason for choosing the subjective-genitive considers the inspired wisdom revealed in scripture of seeking praise from God by a changed heart and life for His sake.
  - a. Consider the positive aspect of the true Jew's desire and need for praise from God.
  - b. Paul taught men, especially ministers, to wait for coming praise from God (I Cor 4:5).
  - c. Paul cared not for men commending him; he wanted God to commend (II Cor 10:18).
  - d. Paul conducted himself in the gospel to please God, not to please men (I Thess 2:4-6).
  - e. Paul labored not to be accepted by men, but rather to be accepted by God (II Cor 5:9).
  - f. It is our goal to have faith worthy of praise by Jesus Christ at His coming (I Pet 1:7).
  - g. What is this praise? "Well done, thou good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:21,23).
  - h. God Himself will honor those who overcome difficulties of serving Christ (Jn 12:26).
4. What a goal as we close this chapter ... the praise of God and Christ for your godly life!

**For Further Study:**

1. Sermon about judgment seat of Christ ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/pdf/judgment-seat-of-christ.pdf>.
2. Sermon about doing rather than hearing ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/pdf/doers-of-the-word.pdf>.
3. Sermon about false confidence in Bible ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/pdf/bible-cannot-profit.pdf>.
4. Sermon about actions above words ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/pdf/actions-speak-louder.pdf>.
5. Sermon about adorning conduct ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/pdf/things-becoming-sound-doctrine.pdf>.
6. Sermon on Galatians 2 about circumcision ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/pdf/galatians-two.pdf>.
7. Sermon on Galatians 5 about circumcision ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/pdf/galatians-five.pdf>.
8. Sermon outline about the true Israel of God ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/pdf/true-israel.pdf>.
9. Document about Abraham's Seed ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/bible/prophecy/who-is-the-seed-of-abraham.pdf>.
10. Sermon for new creatures in Christ ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/pdf/love-of-christ-constraineth-us.pdf>.