

The School of Biblical Law

Introduction to Law and Grace

Lesson Thirty Six: "Understanding the Law from Romans – Part 2"

In the second chapter of Romans, the Apostle Paul continues to challenge both Jew and Gentile with the demands of "the just shall live by faith" (1:17). To be in right standing with God via His covenant grace requires living righteously and doing the works of righteousness. Having framed his message of covenant life for both Jew and Gentile, Paul continues tearing down any unbiblical lines of differentiation.

1. Paul begins by stating, "Therefore, thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judges" (Rom.2:1).

In Chapter 1, Paul revealed that all men have the knowledge of God revealed to them but unfaithful men repress that knowledge in favor of being their own God and their own lawgiver.

All men likewise know that lawless, unrighteous, and sinful deeds are worthy of God's judgment yet they do them and have pleasure in others that do them (1:32)

Therefore, they are without excuse to judge or condemn someone's unrighteousness when they are likewise guilty of unrighteousness (2:1-6).

God will judge both Jew and Gentile by their deeds and whether they are faithful to God's righteousness or contrary to it (2:6-11)

2. "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" (Rom.2:12).

Without the law was a term that Jews of the day applied to the Gentiles to whom the written law of Moses was not given.

Gentiles have the work of the law written in their hearts (vs. 14-15).

Jews, who have the Mosaic law, will have their deeds judged by the law (for the just must live by faithfulness to the covenant). Paul's argument is not one of ethnicity but of religion.

3. The Jews often boasted of their privileged place (vs.17-29).
 - a. Their covenant with God gave them an advantage over other people.
 - b. They relied upon God's laws and were instructed out of those laws.
 - c. Knowing God's will, they were meant to be a light to those who were in darkness and to guide the blind.
 - d. They were proud of their heritage in the law.
 - e. The law indicted them when they did not live in faithfulness to the law.

4. Paul contrasts the life of faithfulness to God's covenant with reliance upon the sign of covenant life.

To hold a sign of circumcision while manifesting ungodliness makes the man as one who is uncircumcised.

True circumcision is of the heart or in the spirit rather than in the letter or external observance.

Mere performance of a rite does not make a new creation.

Paul summarizes his thought by stating that the true Jew, the true covenant man, is not found through natural birth or human lineage nor through a religious rite such as circumcision. The true covenant man has received the power of God unto salvation and has been made just by the blood of Jesus. This covenant man, the Jew first and then the Gentile, shall live by faith (Rom. 1;16-17).