

## Romans Chapter 2

Please circle the correct answer. In Romans chapter 1 we learned that:

- a. the Gentiles have many valid excuses for not getting saved.
- b. the Gentiles are already saved but don't know it yet.
- c. the Gentiles are without excuse and are under God's wrath.

**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.**

**inexcusable** - This is the same word used in 1:20 - ἀναπολόγητος anapologētos - *without defense, without excuse, indefensible, can not be defended, inexcusable*. Paul is doing two things. **1.** He ties his argument in Romans 1 to his argument in Romans 2 by using the same word to condemn Gentiles and Jews. **2.** He makes the same point about the guilt of the Jews that he made about the guilt of the Gentiles in chapter 1 - both are guilty.

We all have a bit of the Pharisee in us. We all are prone to judge and we should judge. Paul is most assuredly NOT condemning all kinds of judging in 2:1. For example, verse 1 isn't aimed at Christians who witness and tell people they're going to hell if they don't get saved. Sharing the gospel in such a way that lost people know they are lost and under the wrath of God is not the issue in Rom 2:1. The context is not saved people who witness for Jesus. The context is lost Gentiles and lost Jews who judge others.

Telling a man he is going to hell if he doesn't get saved is not judging him. Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3:18 - "*He that believeth not is condemned already.*" Every unsaved person thinks he is perfectly fine right now. Unsaved people believe they will get a chance on judgment day to argue their case before God. They are wrong.

1. Are the unsaved already condemned, John 3:18, 36? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Is it judgmental to present the gospel? Yes - No
3. Is Rom 2:1 talking about saved folk or lost folk? \_\_\_\_\_

4. The default position for every lost person is: they are already condemned, John 3:36, and they are already under God's w\_\_\_\_\_.

Lost people are already on death row awaiting execution. On judgment day, the angels are not going to put your good deeds in one pile and your sins in another pile and let you into heaven if your good deeds outweigh your bad deeds. Everyone you know who is unsaved is already condemned, already on death row, one heartbeat from hell. That truth ought to make us witness more faithfully and fervently.

Follow Paul's logic. Everyone loves to judge the sins of others and especially sins that we don't struggle with. The Jews didn't do some of the dirty things the Gentiles did so it was easy to find fault with those dirty Gentiles. So Paul says: You're as bad as they are because you do the same things.

**for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; -**

Think it through. Paul's reasoning is: Don't act innocent; you lost people already know right from wrong. You're judging others and condemning them for doing wrong. That means you know what is right and what is wrong. This continues Paul's argument from chapter 1.

1. Are lost folks one heartbeat from heaven or one heartbeat from hell? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Does people judging others prove they know right from wrong? \_\_\_\_

**for thou that judgest doest the same things.** - Unsaved people use this part of the verse to condemn Christians for witnessing and preachers for preaching against sin. Should Christians judge others? Should Christians judge things or words or activities or attitudes?

Yes, of course Christians are supposed to judge. We believe, obey and apply what we read in the Bible to everything we encounter in life. Only foolish Christians refuse to judge. The Bible is clear in 1 Thess 5:21. *"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."* Prove means (1) to test, examine, prove, scrutinize (to see whether a thing is genuine or not), as metals; (2) to recognize as genuine after examination, to approve, to deem worthy. Yes, Christians are supposed to judge, including judging doctrine. We are supposed to judge whether someone is a false teacher. Do not support false teachers with your

influence or your money. If you support false teachers and unsaved ministries with your money, that is not being a good steward.

1. Why should Christians judge? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What should Christians judge? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How should Christians judge? \_\_\_\_\_

Many Christians recoil in horror at the idea that they are supposed to judge anything. Their anti-judging belief comes from a snippet of Matthew 7:1 taken out of context, where Jesus says: "*Judge not.*" People get this quotation from Jesus wrong because they ignore context. In the context of Matt 7, Jesus is talking about legalistic, mean-spirited, unloving and hypocritical judgment. He warns the Pharisees that if they judge like hypocrites, Matthew 7:3-5, they will be judged as hypocrites.

Jesus is not telling us we should never judge anything. He is not saying we should never judge anyone's false teaching. He is not telling us we should never make a distinction between right and wrong. He is not talking about honest discerning judgment from a loving heart. In Matthew 7, Jesus is correcting abusive judgment as practiced by the Pharisees. In the same way, in Romans 2:1, Paul is not telling Christians they should never judge anything or anyone.

*"Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy."* - Proverbs 31:9, KJV

*"Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment."* - Jesus in John 7:24, KJV

God designed us to make judgments every day. Is this taco too spicy? Is that mocha frappe too sweet? We judge style, color, taste, odor and sound. We judge whether we want to be friends with someone based on their honesty and kindness or whether we feel accepted and safe around them. Making judgments is a normal part of honest productive life.

Because words have meaning, Jesus and Paul cannot possibly be saying Christians are never to judge anyone or anything. The "I must

never judge anyone or anything” belief indicates an absence of rational thought. Notice that Jesus encourages us to judge in Matthew 7:6.

*“Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.”*

Jesus expects us to judge whether someone is a dog or a pig in order to obey His command in Matthew 7:6. Therefore Jesus Himself illustrates his *“Judge not”* command by telling us to judge with discernment by judging ourselves first, Matthew 7:3-5. The danger Jesus warns against is unfair, unloving, unrighteous, mean-spirited judgment.

## **How Christians Should Judge**

### **1. We should not judge in an unloving, legalistic or hypocritical way.**

*“Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.”* John 7:24. Jesus encourages us to use discernment when we judge.

### **2. Christians should judge based on what the Bible says in context.**

*“Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.”* *“But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.”* 1 Cor 2:13-15

1. Explain comparing spiritual things with spiritual. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Do spiritual Christians refuse to judge? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Is it sinful to make judgments based on what the Bible says in context? \_\_\_\_\_

This is the essence of discerning judgment. We discern the true facts of a situation and judge based on facts, truth and genuine love. In the Pauline context, a spiritual man is someone who is saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone, Ephesians 2:8-9. We are

*born of the Spirit, John 3:6, we are justified by faith, Romans 5:1, we are already seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, Ephesians 2:6.*

Christ Jesus has already been made unto us "*wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption,*" 1 Cor 1:31. We "*walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit,*" Romans 8:1. *We have the mind of Christ,* 1 Cor 2:16.

Based on these truths, we judge things with a loving heart, based on how the Holy Spirit leads us according to the written words of God, 2 Timothy 2:15, 3:15-17. We judge carefully, when necessary and we remember that we do not have all the answers and we are not perfect. Yet as imperfect human beings who are saved by grace alone, washed *in the blood of the Lamb,* Revelation 1:5, 7:14, led by God the Holy Spirit, John 16:13, we judge righteous judgment, John 7:24, because Jesus, God the Son, told us to.

1. Are Christians supposed to have a biblical world view based on what the Bible says in context? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Is our judging supposed to be based on what the Bible says in context? \_\_\_\_\_
3. To judge that way, do we need to know what the Bible says in context? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What is the best way to know what the Bible says in context?  
\_\_\_\_\_

### **3. We should not judge in a contemptuous unloving way.**

*"But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ... Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way."* Romans 14:10-13.

Loving and gracious discernment is the key to judging fairly. We have no right to put a heavy burden of legalism upon our brothers and sisters, Acts 15:10, 24. And we have no right to enforce on others, standards we refuse to live up to ourselves.

1. Have you ever been unfairly judged by someone? \_\_\_\_\_

2. How did it feel to be judged unfairly, unkindly? \_\_\_\_\_

#### **4. We should judge matters of immorality in the church, 1 Cor 5:10-11.**

*"For what have I to do to judge them that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?"* (within the church). 1 Corinthians 5:12

The heterosexual divorce epidemic and the gay hook up app epidemic and the pervasive porn epidemic ravage the body of Christ in the twenty-first century. According to Jesus, God has already judged and condemned the world, John 3:18, 36. Christians are supposed to keep our own lives clean by judging ourselves and judging in the church when necessary and dissociating from sexually immoral believers, 1 Cor 5:1ff. And just for the record, gay marriages are not immoral.

1. Is unfaithfulness in marriage a godly way to behave? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Does it matter if we are unfaithful to the one we love? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Is it godly to use hook up apps to find sex partners? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Should Christians watch porn? \_\_\_\_\_
5. How can a Christian break the porn habit? \_\_\_\_\_

#### **5. We should judge common sense things which affect the church and our lives.**

*"Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?"* 1 Corinthians 6:2-3

Judging right and wrong is part of normal life. Christians should judge things in our own lives yet our judgment should be based on what scripture says in context.

#### **6. We must reject unloving legalistic judgment which attempts to put us under Old Testament law.**

*"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days."* Colossians 2:16. No one has the right to judge us for not keeping Jewish law so

Paul says, Don't let anyone judge you about that. The teaching here is that because we are not under Old Testament law, Romans 6:14, 10:4, we should not allow anyone to psych us into living as if we are under OT law nor allow anyone to guilt-trip us into living according to their unbiblical opinion.

### **Correct judging is biblically-focused and loving**

1. Correct judging begins with self-examination, Matt 7:2ff., 1 Cor 11:28-31,
2. Correct judging is not hypocritical, Romans 2:1-4
3. Correct judging is always loving and truth-based, Eph 4:15
4. Correct judging is not constant condemnation
5. Correct judging is not constant criticism
6. Correct judging is not mean and hateful
7. Correct judging is always discerning
8. Correct judging is always scriptural
9. Correct judging is not belittling
10. Correct judging is not nagging

In general, we do not judge the motives of others because we are not able to *"discern the thoughts and intents of the heart,"* Hebrews 4:12. That is God's job. Only God can judge someone's heart because God can see the heart, 1 Samuel 16:7. God alone knows the secrets of the heart, Psalm 44:21. God alone can weigh motives, Proverbs 16:2. Finally, God alone *"will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ,"* Romans 2:16. For that reason, we are careful about judging motives. We trust God to do that on His schedule, 1 Corinthians 4:5.

**2:2 - But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.** - Read Rom 1:32. Even unsaved pagan Gentiles know that idolatry and rebellion against God warrants the death penalty. Paul, reasons, Surely you refined moral Jews have as much insight as pagan Gentiles. Paul is being truthful yet sarcastic. If pagan Gentiles know this, then morally clean educated refined Jews who have God's written law surely know that such sins are worthy of death. *We are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth.*

1. If the judgment of God is according to truth, does that mean God's judgment is fair? \_\_\_\_\_ Discuss.
2. Do we have a right to complain when God judges us? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Why do we take God's grace and mercy for granted instead of giving Him thanks? \_\_\_\_\_

**2:3 - 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?** - The Jews believed they had the inside track with God because: **1.** they were descended from Abraham, and **2.** they had been given the land of Canaan, and **3.** the Law of Moses. **4.** God gave Jews the Hebrew scriptures in which He revealed Himself to Israel, and God also gave them **5.** the temple, **6.** the Aaronic and the Levitical priesthoods and **7.** the promises, Romans 9:4.

For those reasons, they thought God would give them a pass, even when they sinned. They thought they inherited salvation, regardless of what they did. The Jews thought they were born into God's favor. An example of that pride is found in Luke 18:11.

1. Who will escape the judgment of God? \_\_\_\_\_ Discuss.
2. Is anyone saved because of who or how they were born? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Is it easier for good moral people to get saved? \_\_\_\_\_

**2:4 - Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?** - This seems like an entirely different argument from Paul but it is a common OT viewpoint. In chapter 1 it was wrath and judgment. Now Paul appeals to the goodness of God, Psalm 33:5, 52:1, 111:4, 119:68, 145:9, 17, because the Jews as a nation had experienced the riches of God's goodness and grace for 1400 years.

Some people misinterpret the goodness of God. They think God is not serious about judging sin. They think God doesn't hate sin and sinners, Psalm 5:5, 7:11, 9:5, 17, 11:5, 81:15-16. 950 years before the birth of Christ, Solomon wrote this truth about Jews and all of the human race. *"Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil."* Ecclesiastes 8:11.

In spite of the riches of God's goodness, many people falsely accuse God of being mean, hateful, unloving, insensitive, unkind because He does not stop bad things from happening to them or because He does not give them what they want or because He does not cater to their flesh. Instead of giving thanks for God's amazing grace, the human race accuses God of sin. The sin of the Gentiles in Romans 1:21 was not being thankful - "*neither were thankful.*"

God gave Israel the land, the law, the priesthood, the promises and the scriptures and the temple, so when the Jews sinned, they sinned against much greater light than the Gentiles had, therefore they are more guilty when they despise and ignore those blessings of God.

1. Why does receiving those things make the Jews more guilty than the Gentiles? \_\_\_\_\_ Discuss.
2. Does failure to give thanks equate to despising God's goodness? \_\_\_\_\_ Discuss.
3. How does the goodness of God lead someone to repentance? Discuss. \_\_\_\_\_

**Common Grace** - Is the love and mercy of God experienced by all the human race, saved or lost, as undeserved unearned blessings like sunshine, rain, fruits of the field, life and health, friends, delayed judgment (Paul calls it goodness, forbearance and longsuffering, 2:4). Common grace also includes the presence and influence of the Bible, the Holy Spirit and the church, as well as science, music, medicine, art, intelligence, peace and an active working conscience.

**Prevenient grace**, meaning: grace which goes before salvation, is an aspect of common grace. Prevenient grace is God's loving action in every human heart which enables sinners, though fallen, to use their freewill to obey the gospel call and receive Christ as Savior, Lev 22:18, 21, 23, 2 Chron 31:14, Psalm 119:108, to obey God's gospel call, John 1:11-12, 6:40, 45, 47, 12:31, Acts 16:30-31, Rom 1:16, 12:3, 1 Tim 2:4-7, 4:9-10, Psalm 50:23.

Christians also view the power of the gospel itself, Romans 1:16, as God's provision of prevenient grace in that a sinner who hears the gospel is divinely enabled to respond affirmatively to it without first being regenerated against his will as Calvinism teaches. Prevenient

grace does not guarantee salvation but simply enables a man to respond to the gospel call, thus making salvation possible for him through the grace of God. We are so accustomed to God's goodness and grace that we take it for granted and forget that God's judgment is also waiting, whenever His grace and patience run out.

God's wrath is a reality but God's goodness and grace are also realities and should lead us to repentance. Even the Jews, who had the land, the Law, the priesthood, the promises, the scriptures and the temple, Rom 3:2, 9:4, needed to repent and receive their Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Do you thank God daily for His grace and goodness to you? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Have you forgotten to be thankful? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Have you made a list of things for which you are thankful? \_\_\_\_\_
4. In your own words, briefly define prevenient grace. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Is anyone saved by prevenient grace? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What does prevenient grace do? \_\_\_\_\_

**2:5 - 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;** - Paul returns to wrath. Like a man who treasures up money into his retirement account each month, lost folk are making deposits into their wrath account. This teaches us that God is keeping track of what we do. In these verses, remember that Paul is talking about unsaved folks who go against their conscience instead of obeying the pleadings of their conscience. Since the judgment of God is according to truth, God will judge people based on truth about their life and their interior dialogue with their conscience and the decisions they made by their own freewill. God keeps track of what we think, say and do. Remember, there's an eye up on high watching you! "*Thou God seest me.*" Genesis 16:13-14.

*"For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings. His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins."*  
Proverbs 5:21-22.

1. Should lost folks change their bad attitude toward God? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Why is God righteous when He judges us? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Is God merciful to all who call upon Him, Ps 86:15? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Are lost people slaves of their sin? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Can saved people be slaves of their sin? \_\_\_\_\_

**hardness and impenitent heart** - Most of the time, we are our own worst enemies. If we could learn not to harden our hearts, how much easier our lives would be. Jesus said the Jews had hard hearts and Paul points out the same problem with the Jews, Matt 19:8, Mark 3:5, 6:52, 8:17, Heb 3:7-8, 15, 4:7.

1. In those verses, what does it mean to harden your heart? \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. A hard heart = Obedience. b. A hard heart = Disobedience.
2. Is disobedience the essence of a hardened heart? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Are you being disobedient to God in your life? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Is obedience better than sacrifice, 1 Sam 15:22? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Are you willing to surrender to God and be obedient? \_\_\_\_\_

**the day of wrath** - This describes judgment day, when God sits upon His great white throne, Rev 20:10-15, to judge all the lost folks who rejected Him. Paul in Romans has now been warning Gentiles and Jews about this day for almost 2000 years. Why is it called the day of wrath?

- A. Matthew 13:41-43 Jesus - *"a furnace of fire.. wailing"*
- B. 2 Thess 1:7ff. - *"in flaming fire taking vengeance"*
- C. 2 Peter 3:7 - *"reserved unto fire against the day of judgment"*
- D. Jude 6 - *"reserved in everlasting chains under darkness"*

1. Is the day of wrath in the past or in the future? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Is the day of wrath for the saved or the unsaved? \_\_\_\_\_
3. In the day of wrath, will unsaved people have a chance? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What is scariest about the wrath of God? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Is there any appeal from God's judgment? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Why does God warn us of His wrath? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Should we warn the lost of God's wrath? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Are Christians under the wrath of God, Romans 5:9, 1 Thess 1:10, 5:9? Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Where was God's wrath poured out upon our sins? \_\_\_\_\_

10. How do we know or what proof do we have that God accepted Jesus' payment on the cross for our sins? Circle one.
- a. our spiritual intuition
  - b. our good works
  - c. our logical thinking
  - d. the resurrection of Christ

### **The Old Account Was Settled Long Ago**

There was a time on earth, when in the book of Heaven  
An old account was standing for sins yet unforgiven;  
My name was at the top, and many things below,  
I went unto the Keeper, and settled long ago.

The old account was large, and growing every day,  
For I was always sinning, and never tried to pay;  
But when I looked ahead, and saw such pain and woe,  
I said that I would settle, I settled long ago.

When in that happy home, my Savior's home above,  
I'll sing redemption's story, and praise Him for His love;  
I'll not forget that book, with pages white as snow,  
Because I came and settled, I settled long ago.

O sinner, trust the Lord, be cleansed of all your sin,  
For thus He hath provided for you to enter in;  
And then if you should live a hundred years below,  
Up there you'll not regret it, you settled long ago.  
*-Wesleyan Methodist pastor Frank Graham, 1859-1931*

### **2:6 - Who will render to every man according to his deeds:**

1. Does that seem like a fair way to handle things? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Did Jesus teach what Paul taught, Matthew 16:27? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Discuss how the law of sowing and reaping factors into this judgment, Galatians 6:7-9? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Is what Paul teaches in Romans 2:6 similar to OT teaching? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Isaiah 3:10-11 - Judged according to? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Jeremiah 17:10 - Judged according to? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Where do saved people get judged, Rom 14:10? \_\_\_\_\_
6. How are the saved judged, 1 Cor 3:8-15? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Where are the lost judged, Rev 20:11-12? \_\_\_\_\_
8. How are the lost judged, Rev 20:12-13? \_\_\_\_\_

9. If judgment is by works, does that mean salvation is by works? \_\_\_\_

**According to Jesus, a man's actions, deeds and works** infallibly define his character, Matthew 7:16-20, John 8:39-44. OT and NT teach judgment by works yet nowhere does the Bible teach salvation by works. New Testament salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ alone. Please memorize and discuss the next two lines. Two practical examples illustrate the timeless truth of Romans 2:6 - Acts 10:1ff. and 13:38ff.

**Salvation is not a reward for the righteous.  
It's a gift for the guilty!** Romans 4:5-6

**2:7 - To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:** - God is faithful to get His truth to everyone who seeks it by obeying his God-given conscience. When an unsaved man obeys his conscience, he is patiently continuing in well doing and seeking for glory and honour and immortality. God will then get truth to that man and save him, thus giving him eternal life.

1. Did God do that for the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Did God do that for the Centurion in Acts 10-11? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Do the following verses teach that God will get His truth to everyone who seeks truth? \_\_\_\_\_

Ps 50:23, 145:17-20, Ex 20:6, 2 Chron 16:9, 6:14, 32, Job 33:26-28, 34:10-12, Pro 28:18, Jer 17:10, Matt 7:21, Mark 3:35, Jn 3:21, 8:9, Rom 2:15, Acts 10:35.

**2:8 - But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,** - Paul describes an unsaved man who disobeys his conscience or who goes against his conscience or ignores the law written on his heart. Every man's will is free to rebel against God. One of the most striking characteristics of sinners is that we contend with God and do not obey the truth. How many times have we known God's will and made a conscious decision not to obey the truth? Remember: God reveals Himself in: **a.** Creation - Rom 1:20 and **b.** Conscience - Rom 2:15

1. Does "not obeying the truth" sometimes mean you are ignoring your conscience? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Is a contentious man rebelling against his conscience? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Discuss how an early sign of spiritual heart problems may be getting contentious with God. \_\_\_\_\_
4. If we ignore or disobey our conscience, whose fault is it? \_\_\_\_\_

**2:9 - Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;** - Paul has in mind Psalm 78:49, where God excoriates the Jews for their willful sin and rebellion. Tribulation and anguish are judgments from God, in this life, designed to produce repentance and salvation. Everything God does has purpose and plan but our rebellion, stubbornness and self-will can thwart God's will, Acts 7:51, 2 Peter 3:9.

1. If Paul thought the Old Testament was important to know about and quote, what lesson can we learn from his example? \_\_\_\_\_
2. According to Romans 2:9, what brings tribulation and anguish upon Jews and Gentiles? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Why does Paul say, Upon the Jew first? \_\_\_\_\_

Everyone suffers in this life but lost folks and saved folks suffer for different reasons. The suffering of the lost is designed to point them to Calvary, to show them their need of Jesus because God doesn't want them to go to hell, 2 Peter 3:9, Acts 17:30-31. The greatest proofs of hell may be the awful things God allows to happen to people to keep them from going there. God is not a Calvinist. God is a good and loving God who will have all men to be saved because Jesus died for everyone, 2 Peter 2:1. Did Jesus die for unsaved false teachers? \_\_\_\_\_

Saved people experience suffering and trouble for different reasons than lost folks. Paul refers to misery of every description inflicted upon impenitent sinners, on Jews first because they had greater revelation and upon Gentiles next because they had sufficient knowledge to have obeyed God: distress, pain, heartache, sorrow, defeat, loss, privation, disappointment, frustration, broken hearts - all have a wise purpose in God's plan for us, Ephesians 2:10.

## Why does God allow trouble in my life?

### Discussion Topics

**1. Troubles are to make you think.** God does not allow us to choose our troubles. They come from His hand, made especially for us, to refine and mold us into His image, Jeremiah 18:1-6, Malachi 3:3.

**2. Troubles are designed to make you judge your sin** and get right with God, 1 Cor 11:31.

**3. Troubles are to teach you sympathy** for the hurts and sorrows of others so you can comfort them, 2 Cor 1:3-6.

**4. Troubles and disappointments are to keep you humble** before God, trusting His strength in your weakness, Gal 2:20, 2 Cor 12:9-10.

**5. Troubles are designed by God to sanctify you,** so you live a holy life because the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, Job 28:28, Psalms 111:10, Pro 9:10.

**6. Troubles are designed to get you praying,** seeking God and trusting Him for help, Phil 4:6-7.

**7. Troubles are to keep you focused on heaven,** to help you live heavenly minded, to make you homesick for heaven, Ephesians 2:6, Phil 3:20, 2 Pet 3:13.

**8. Troubles are often an indication that you are saved,** not that God hates you, is persecuting you or is punishing you, Deu 8:5-6, Psa 94:12-14, Pro 3:11-12, Heb 12:5-13, 1 Cor 11:32. If you are saved, Jesus already bore all of your punishment on Calvary's Cross and reconciled you to God, 2 Cor 5:19.

**2:10 - But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:** - Read this as people responding to and obeying their God-given conscience, Rom 2:15. Grace and mercy and salvation are available to all who receive them. Peace is the free gift of God to the heart of every penitent sinner who comes to God by grace alone through faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ alone, Rom 5:1.

**2:11 - For there is no respect of persons with God.** - No one gets into heaven because he was born a Jew. No Gentile goes to hell because God refused him sufficient grace to believe or because God decreed in eternity past that he was not elect or was not included in the atonement and therefore, could never be saved. God is not a Calvinist and does not affirm or promote Calvinism.

**2:12 - 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;** - Without law refers to Gentiles or Greeks or the heathen; anyone who is not Jewish. They don't have the Law of Moses, they don't have the Ten Commandments, they don't know anything about Jesus but they have the law written in their hearts and they have a conscience to know the difference between good and evil.

Gentiles are not judged for what they don't know. They are responsible for how they responded to whatever light they had. The more truth you receive and obey, the more truth God shows you. If Gentiles obey their conscience and the law written in their heart, God gets more truth to them. If they sin against their conscience and reject what God shows them, God holds them accountable.

Our condemnation, the fact that we are under the wrath of God, rests on the fact that we have sinned against the light we have, not against the light we never received. Most Gentiles did not receive the full revelation of Moses' Law in the Old Testament but they did receive enough illumination to know what was right, Genesis 20, and they were wont to do wrong anyway. Heathen Gentiles are condemned because they sin against truth they have, not truth they didn't have.  
Discuss.

1. Will God condemn us for what we didn't know, for knowledge He never revealed to us? \_\_\_\_\_ Discuss.
2. Will God judge the innocent heathen who have never heard about Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_ Discuss.

The answer is, **there are no innocent heathen.** Every man has sinned against the light he had and all will be judged according to what they knew, not what they didn't know, Romans 2:11-12, Jer 10:25.

**2:13 - (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.** - Justified as Paul uses it here, is a forensic term. It expresses the judicial declaration of a judge, that the accused is not only not guilty, the accused is legally declared innocent - the NT wording is, righteous. This judicial declaration is possible because God Himself paid the penalty the accused should have paid, Romans 3:26.

Paul's argument is: Jews boasted about keeping the law but don't really keep it. It's not enough for Jews to have the law or hear the law or know the law. In the OT, you had to keep the law because keeping OT Law counted as your personal righteousness, Deu 6:24-25, Luke 1:6, 1 Kings 8:32, 2 Chron 6:23, Job 27:6, Ps 18:20, Isa 38:3, Ez 18:20, 22.

**A man devoid of religious rituals may be more truly righteous than a man devoted to them.**

On the grace side of Calvary, in AD 58, about twenty five years after the resurrection of Christ, Paul isn't telling anyone to keep the OT Law to get saved. He is contrasting law and grace. In the New Testament salvation is clearly not by keeping the law. According to scripture, what must you do to have eternal life, John 3:16, 3:36, 6:47, 5:24, 11:25-26, Acts 16:30-31? \_\_\_\_\_

Throughout His life, Jesus perfectly and sinlessly kept the law for us, Matt 5:17, Luke 24:27, Rom 10:4, Heb 4:15, 2 Cor 5:21, Heb 4:15, 1 John 3:5, and paid the penalty of the law, Gal 3:13, dying as us for us, in our place, as our substitute. Because Jesus perfectly kept the Law of Moses, He can impute His perfect righteousness to us when we receive Him as our Savior from sin, hell, the wrath of God and from OT law, Romans 5:17. This is called justification by faith, Romans 5:1.

Notice that Paul in Rom 2:13 and James in James 1:22, 2:14 are not in conflict about justification by faith. Paul writes to a Gentile church in Rome yet also addresses unsaved people, Rom 2:12, which included unsaved Jews in Rome, Acts 28:17ff. James writes to the twelve tribes of Israel, a group which contains saved Jews, James 2:1. Paul writes about the law and justification by faith from a doctrinal viewpoint but James writes about the law and justification from a practical viewpoint.

When Paul speaks of justification, he is referring doctrinally to Christ's righteousness imputed to believers, Rom 4:20-25. When James speaks of justification, he refers to practical Christian living, the righteousness of Christ being lived out in the life of a believer, not God imputing a righteousness someone earned by good works or law keeping.

In Romans 2, Paul is saying the ground is level at the foot of the cross; everyone is equal at Calvary, 2:11, because there is no respect of persons with God. In James 2, James is rebuking saved Jews for their partiality toward rich folks. He speaks about practical justification, not doctrinal justification. James tells them to be like God in the way they relate to others and stop having respect of persons, Rom 2:11.

In Romans 2, Gentiles and Jews have sinned against their conscience and are therefore guilty. In James 2, Jews have sinned against the law and are therefore guilty. The context of James isn't an unsaved Jew trying to get saved by keeping the law. The context of James 2 is a saved Jew who is learning the OT and trying to live up to what the OT tells him, in plainer words, practical justification or practical Christian living, not salvation by works and not salvation by keeping the law.

1. Does James teach salvation by works? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Is James 3 in the context of an unsaved Jew keeping the law to get saved? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Would God rather save Jews instead of Gentiles? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Does God respect the rich more than poor? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Getting saved is always by grace but staying saved requires us to keep the law by doing good works. T or F - Discuss.

**2:14 - 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:** - Gentiles are under conscience. They don't have the law of Moses written down on scrolls like the Jews have it but the law is written in their hearts and that helps them differentiate good from evil. If they obey their conscience, their conscience will lead them to Christ. Jews are under law, meaning, if they heed what the law says, the law will lead them to Christ, Gal 3:24-25.

**2:15 - 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;)** - Hearts, conscience, thoughts - Paul explains how the law written on their hearts works in a practical rubber meets the road way.

1. A man's heart is the courtroom.
2. A man's conscience is the judge.
3. A man's thoughts are the witnesses.

Conscience refers to our moral nature, our capacity to differentiate good from evil. Your conscience isn't designed to help you pick winning lottery numbers or place winning bets on sports teams. The conscience God gave us works just fine precisely as God intended it to work. That is why no man can say he didn't know any better. The fact that men have a conscience plus God's gracious gift of prevenient grace, makes salvation possible for everyone who obeys his conscience and answers God's universal call to salvation. Conscience comes from the Greek word, *syneidēsis*, pronounced *sūn-ā'-dā-sēs*, meaning, with knowledge. Your conscience provides you with enough knowledge from God to make a decision. Making a succession of right decisions leads eventually to salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul encourages us to obey our conscience, Rom 13:5, 1 Cor 8:7, 12, 10:25, 28-29, 2 Cor 4:2, 5:11, 1 Tim 1:5, Heb 9:9, 14, 10:2, 22, 13:8, 1 Pet 2:19, 3:16, 21.

1. Did Paul believe and practice what he wrote about the conscience? Acts 23:1, 24:16, Romans 9:1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. What does it mean when it says: "*their conscience also bearing witness?*" \_\_\_\_\_ Discuss.
3. Does your conscience ever testify against you, 2 Cor 1:12? \_\_\_\_\_
4. When your conscience bears witness or testifies against you, how do you respond? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Are you responsible for how you respond to your conscience? \_\_\_\_\_

**2:15 - their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;** - Your conscience performs two tasks, accusing or else excusing you. Your conscience is worthless if you ignore it. What kind of conscience do you have?

- a. A good conscience, 1 Tim 1:19
- b. A pure conscience, 1 Tim 3:9, 2 Tim 1:3
- c. A seared conscience, 1 Tim 4:2
- d. A defiled conscience, Titus 1:15

1. Discuss a common sense method to fix a seared conscience and a defiled conscience? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Does God reward our obedience to His leading? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Does your conscience sometimes accuse you? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Does your conscience sometimes excuse you? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Do you obey or disobey your conscience? \_\_\_\_\_

Gentiles are judged based on how they respond to their conscience. Jews are judged based on how they respond to their conscience and the written law. Both groups desperately need the only Savior in God's entire universe, the Lord Jesus Christ! Do you know Him today?

### **Gentiles are condemned for three reasons.**

1. Creation - Rom 1:20, Ps 19:1ff. - They know enough.
2. Conduct - They know good from evil, right from wrong.
3. Conscience - accuses or excuses them, Romans 2:15

**2:16 - In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.** - Judgment is an important theme of Paul's preaching. It isn't popular but all of us need to be reminded that we're going to be judged, Acts 17:30-31. Some people look holy and appear holy but inside they are full of secret sins, more difficult to spot, 1 Tim 5:24. God will not overlook or ignore our inner sins, hidden sins, secret sins. Judgment is coming, all will be there; each one receiving justly his due. Hide in the sin cleansing, soul saving blood; And I will pass, will pass over you! Are you saved by the blood of God's holy Lamb?

1. Are hidden sins, secret sins less defiling than open sins? Discuss.
2. Why are secret sins so bad for us that they hinder our spiritual growth? Discuss the verses and answers below.

### **I. Because secret sins are not hidden from God.**

1. Who sees and knows our heart, 1 Sam 16:7? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Who will judge hidden things in the OT, Eccl 12:14? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Who will judge secrets of men in the NT, Rom 2:16? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Who keeps track of what we say, Luke 12:2-3? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Should we try to cover up our secret sins, Prov 28:13? \_\_\_\_\_

**II. All sin comes from the fall of Adam and the sin nature we inherited from Adam, Rom 5:12.** Are all sins equally serious or are there degrees of sin? \_\_\_\_\_

1. Hatred equals murder, 1 John 3:15? Discuss.
2. Lust equals adultery, Matt 5:27-28? Discuss.
3. Covetousness equals idolatry, Colossians 3:5? Discuss.
4. Are some sins worse than others, John 19:11? Discuss.

God intends us to understand that anger, hatred, murder, adultery and lust are rooted in the same moral defect, our fallen nature. We are not naturally good. Children don't need to be taught to lie. They do that naturally. Children and adults need to be taught to tell the truth.

**III. Hidden sins stay hidden because of hypocrisy** or intentionally hiding our sins. Hiding our sins is harmful in that it predisposes us against true repentance, Prov 28:13. Hypocrisy is the leaven of the Pharisees, Luke 12:1ff. Hypocrisy is claiming to have moral standards or beliefs, to which one's own behavior does not conform; a pretense of having a virtuous character one does not really possess; saying one thing and doing another. Your real character, who you are in private, in your own mind, when you are alone - that's the real you, Prov 23:7. God knows who you really are because nothing is hidden from Him, Psalm 44:21, 139:2. Discuss.

**2:16 - my gospel** - Paul's gospel is the only gospel real Christians preach today because it is the only gospel for the church age. Paul also mentions his gospel in Rom 16:25, 1 Cor 15:1 and 2 Tim 2:8. Paul's gospel is also called "*the gospel of the grace of God,*" Acts 20:24 and "*the gospel of his Son,*" Romans 1:9. Scripture defines Paul's gospel as a particular set of facts: *the death, burial and resurrection of Christ from the dead according to the scriptures,* 1 Corinthians 15:1-8.

Paul's gospel is not the gospel of the kingdom that Jesus preached, Mark 1:14-15, or the everlasting gospel preached by an angel during the tribulation, Revelation 14:6-7. Paul's gospel is aimed at Gentiles and Jews after the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. Paul's gospel is neither charismatic nor cultic nor Jewish nor legalistic. For example, the Mormons preach another gospel, a false gospel and a false Jesus.

"As man now is, God once was:  
"As God now is, man may be."  
- Lorenzo Snow, Mormon Leader, Nauvoo, IL, 1840

"In its fulness, the gospel includes all the doctrines, principles, laws, ordinances, and covenants necessary for us [Mormons] to be exalted in the celestial kingdom. The Savior has promised that if we endure to the end, faithfully living the gospel [working to earn salvation], He will hold us guiltless before the Father at the Final Judgment, 3 Nephi 27:16." The Bible is clear that the curse of God is upon *another gospel*, Gal 1:6-9, i.e., the false gospel of Mormonism, Quote from lds.org

Jesus in His earthly ministry was the Jewish Messiah physically present and preaching the gospel of the kingdom to Israel. The everlasting or creation gospel in Revelation is also for Israel since the tribulation is "*the time of Jacob's trouble*," Jer 30:7, Micah 2:12, Rev 14:6-7.

**2:17 - Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God,** - Knowledge equals responsibility, Luke 12:48. For at least five reasons, the Jews had great responsibility.

- 1.** The law was given to the Jews, who were its God-appointed custodians. It was not given to the Gentiles in written form. Jews grew up knowing God's Law and had an obligation to keep and live the law.
- 2.** Their relationship with God as recipients of the law was a source of pride.
- 3.** They knew God's will for them was holiness because the scriptures told them that.
- 4.** They viewed themselves as superior because they tried to keep the law or parts of it. They boasted that they didn't live like dirty Gentiles, at least not openly. Micah 3:8-12 warns that Israel will be judged for her wickedness.

**2:18 - And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law;** - **5.** They were instructed out of (or from) the law and knew God's will for them was holiness. There is a difference between making moral judgments and your personal moral conduct. If your moral judgments are right but your personal moral conduct is wicked, you Jews are living like the Gentiles you condemn. The Jews knew what was right and what God required so they had no excuse for their disobedience and idolatry.

**2:19 - And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness,** - There may be an element of sarcasm here. Jews saw themselves superior to every other nation, as guides to spiritually blind Gentiles. They weren't teaching Braille or passing out white canes or providing seeing eye dogs. Jewish synagogues often had Gentiles in attendance, including proselytes or would be proselytes, called God fearers, Acts 13:16, 26, 43, 14:1.

Romans 2:19 may also be self-referential. Saul was a ferociously confident Pharisee who, before he got saved, led the persecution of Christians. He was absolutely certain he was serving Jehovah by attacking Christians, stoning Christians, torturing Christians and compelling Christians to blaspheme, Acts 26:11. Saul was not going after or persecuting pagan Gentiles. He thought he had the light but he was spiritually blind and his religious service as a Pharisee was all darkness. When God saved Saul/Paul, He struck him blind for three days so that he was physically blind but no longer spiritually blind.

Jews saw themselves as *a guide of the blind* in the sense of pointing Gentiles to Judaism. Paul the Christian wanted to point Jews and Gentiles to Christ (instead of Judaism) so he always began his evangelization efforts in synagogues, Acts 9:19-20, 13:5, 14, 14:1, 18:4, 8, 19, 19:8-10, city after city, year after year, missionary journey after missionary journey because some of the people in the synagogues were already predisposed to believe the gospel and receive Christ and capable of believing the gospel by freewill, by the enabling power of the gospel, Romans 1:16 and by prevenient grace.

Evangelizing Gentiles had its roots in God's plan for Israel in the OT, specifically Gen 12:3, 1 Kings 8:43, Isaiah 9:1-2, 45:22, Jer 1:5, 10, 22:29. Israel was to be a missionary guide, a light to the Gentiles, to those who *sat in darkness and the shadow of death*, Matt 4:14-16, 28:18-20, Ac 1:8. What irony that God's judgment upon unbelieving Israel is to make them spiritually blind (instead of a guide to the blind), Romans 11:25, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

Although they suppose themselves to be a guide to the blind, Jews as a nation in the first century were greatly confused, John 8:33. Pride caused them to view with unwarranted optimism, their station as vassals of Rome. Standing toe to toe, eyeball to eyeball with their

Messiah, they rejected Him. Later, when he betrayed Jesus, Judas Iscariot kissed the Son, Psalm 2:12, Luke 22:48. After his lips touched God's eternal blood, Acts 20:28, Luke 22:44, Judas still died and went to hell, to his own place, Isaiah 14:9, Acts 1:25, Revelation 9:1-11.

Close proximity to Jesus - Judas was personally chosen by Jesus as one of the original twelve apostles, Matthew 10:4, or close proximity to a great work of God or to the great power of God doesn't save anyone. Southern preachers used to preach: "You need to get your own shout! Don't try to live off someone else's shout!" Discuss.

Don't make the mistake of thinking you're saved and on your way to heaven because you grew up in church or your Daddy was a good Christian or your best friend is a Christian. Jesus said: "*Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*" John 3:3.

Nicodemus, before he got saved, John 3:1ff., was as spiritually blind as Saul before he got saved. Getting saved is personal. Are you spiritually blind? Who or what are you trusting for your salvation? If you trust by grace alone through faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ alone, you can know for sure that you are saved, 1 John 5:13.

As you read Romans, remember that Paul writes not only from deep and profound personal knowledge of God's grace but also from a deep and profound personal experience of God's grace. If God could save Paul, He can save anyone, Acts 9:1ff. Saul was keenly aware of God's awesome saving power, Acts 6:7. It must have disturbed him greatly that so many Jewish priests were getting saved. Perhaps that is what energized Saul's initial zeal, ferociously persecuting the church and killing believers, Acts 7:58, 22:3-5, Gal 1:13-14, and yet, Saul/Paul the persecutor ended up getting saved too. Discuss the lessons we can learn from Paul as our example.

- a. Don't shy away from praying for folks who scare you.
- b. Don't shy away from witnessing to folks who scare you.
- c. Expect God to save the most improbable characters.
- d. Remember God can save religious fanatics and zealots.

Modern Jewish teaching about messianic passages in the OT, such as Isaiah 53, is that Israel is God's suffering servant. Jews ignore Jesus

their Messiah in their understanding of the OT, teaching that Jesus is not God's suffering servant. They make Isaiah 53 about Israel as a nation, suffering, as *a guide to the blind*, to bring Gentiles to the knowledge of Judaism. Jesus is the real suffering servant. Israel is not the suffering servant.

1. Was God's plan for OT Israel to evangelize the Gentiles? \_\_\_\_\_
6. According to Jews, who is the suffering servant? \_\_\_\_\_
7. According to Isaiah, Who is the suffering servant? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What is a guide to the blind? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Who did Jews think they were guiding? \_\_\_\_\_

**2:20 - An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.** - This instruction took place in the synagogues, where interested Gentiles, called God-f\_\_\_\_\_, were welcomed. First century Judaism had an exclusivist racial and religious outlook which placed Jews far above Gentiles, Psalm 147:19-20, because God had given Jews His law. Remember, the purpose of the law was to lead Jews and everyone else to Jesus their Messiah, Gal 3:24-26. It wasn't to exalt themselves above unclean Gentiles. You are all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus or Messiah Jesus! Jesus addressed the same topic in Matthew 23:15. Jews focused on converting Gentiles to their complex rabbinical system instead of converting Gentiles to belief in Messiah so their converts became *twofold more the child of hell*, Matt 23:15, than they were. That is probably what Paul has in mind here.

**2:21 - Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?** - This is almost as in your face as Jesus in Matt 23 and John 8. Matt 23:3 - Jesus said about the scribes and Pharisees: "*they say and do not.*" Paul asks here: Are you saying but not doing? Again, Paul is not making up stuff. He mentions, *Thou shalt not steal*, Exodus 20:15, because the OT prophets warned Israel not to steal, Josh 7:11, Psalm 50:18, Ez 22:12, Amos 8:5-7, Mal 3:8-9, Matt 21:13. Why do God's prophets preach to Israel about stealing? \_\_\_\_\_

**2:22 - Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?** - Is Paul just spitballing here or does he have a

definite purpose for talking about financial sins in v. 21 and sexual sins in v. 22? Rome was a lust-fueled city and God's Jewish people always had a problem with lust. Jesus taught against visual and mental lust or adultery, Matt 5:28, and divorce and remarriage, Matt 19:9.

Paul asks if they're living what they teach about money and adultery and idolatry because teaching the Bible brings great responsibility. God holds teachers to a higher standard, James 3:1-2, John 3:2 - "*Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher,*" a didaskalos, "*come from God.*" Compare Luke 20:28. Master is from the Greek word, διδάσκαλος didaskalos, meaning, teacher. Rabbi is a title used by the Jews to address their teachers. Rabbi means Master or teacher.

The message of God's prophets to OT Israel was, Stop your adultery and your idolatry and get right with God! In the ongoing downrush of Jewish history, the OT is full of examples of Israel committing spiritual adultery instead of worshiping God. Eventually God divorced Israel (but not Judah) for her spiritual adultery and idolatry, Isaiah 50:1, 54:5, Jeremiah 6:2, 2:11, 20, 23, 25, 3:1-8, 20, 31:32, Ezekiel 16:15-26, Hosea 2:16.

So that no one gets the wrong idea, God is not through with Israel and will save and restore His people Israel to the place of blessing when the fulness of the Gentiles is come in, as we will see in Romans 11:23-36, Isaiah 11:11ff., Jeremiah 31:31-34.

**dost thou commit sacrilege?** - According to Deu 7:5, 25, Israel could not keep or use silver or gold from idols. Instead, idols with their silver and gold, had to be destroyed, Josh 7:1ff., 2 Sam 5:21, 2 Ki 11:18, 2 Chron 31:1. Some Jews may have been robbing pagan temples and some were robbing God, Malachi 3:8, and their own temple, Mark 7:9-13, Lev 27:9-25, under the guise of giving a gift.

**2:23 - Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?** - Paul seems to echo Jesus in Matt 21:31 - "*Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.*" If you teach God's law but also break God's law, your law teaching never sanctifies your law breaking.

**2:24 - For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.** - Paul quotes Isaiah 52:5, that God's name is blasphemed by the Egyptians and Assyrians who took Israel into captivity. Another example is King David's sin with Bathsheba, 2 Sam 12:14. Christians are often the worst ambassadors for Jesus. When we walk in the Spirit and live for Jesus, Christians ought to be the best ambassadors for our Lord.

1. Why are Christians such bad examples? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How can we do better? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What changes do we need to make in our personal lives to do better? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Will we suffer loss at the judgment seat of Christ if we continue in our sin, Rom 14:10-12, 1 Cor 3:10-15? \_\_\_\_\_

**2:25 - For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.** - Circumcision was the token of the covenant God made with Abraham, Genesis 17:9-14. It symbolized the law God gave to Moses on Mt. Sinai 430 years later, Gal 3:17, Exodus 19:1ff. Jews could not separate circumcision from keeping the law. Having the token of circumcision and breaking the law profits you nothing.

This is tough talk from Paul yet Moses taught the same thing, Deu 27:26, so Paul isn't breaking new ground here. He is reminding Jews of what Moses taught. First century Jews were so caught up in their **Oral Talmud** or what the NT calls the traditions of the elders, that they gave that more force in their thinking than they gave to the **Written Torah**, the actual words Moses wrote. Jesus rejected the Oral Talmud, aka, the traditions of the elders when He said:

*"And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God (the written Torah), that ye may keep your own tradition (the Oral Talmud)." Mark 7:9.*

*"Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye." Mark 7:13.*

**The Oral Talmud** around the time of Christ was human wisdom not inspired by God, also known as Jewish oral tradition or the traditions of

the elders, Jewish commentary by Rabbis on Moses' writings: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

**The Written Torah** at the time of Christ was the scriptures given by inspiration of God, 2 Tim 3:16-17, the words of God written down by Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

If you break God's law, Paul says, your circumcision doesn't count. If you have circumcision (the token or symbol of Judaism) but lack the substance (keeping the law), the symbol is meaningless. The inward contents of your heart or keeping the law of Moses from an obedient heart, must match your outward label of circumcision. The substance of keeping the law is obedience. Without obedience to the law, Jewish circumcision is meaningless because it represents nothing.

Circumcision was the token of that obedience yet if the Jews were disobedient, the token didn't symbolize their obedience and therefore, meant nothing. The true mark of a God follower is not the outward token of circumcision but godly obedience from the heart. Today many Christians talk a good talk but don't walk the walk. They're all mouth and no heart, all hat and no cattle. That is what Paul is telling the Jews. Every circumcised Jew was a debtor to keep the whole law, Galatians 5:3. Our Lord Jesus wasn't kidding around. He expected them to keep His law, Galatians 3:10.

1. Which is more important, the token of circumcision or the law which circumcision represents? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Which speaks louder, your actions or your words? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Circumcision describes: Jews or Gentiles
4. Uncircumcision describes: Jews or Gentiles
5. For Jews, why must the inward condition of the heart match the outward token of circumcision? Discuss. \_\_\_\_\_
6. OT Jews got saved by circumcision. T or F
7. Does God expect us to believe from our heart, Rom 10:9-10? \_\_\_\_\_

**2:26 - Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?** - When Paul says the uncircumcision, he is talking about Gentiles who keep the moral law of the Ten Commandments. His point isn't that many Gentiles keep the moral law. He is making a

common sense argument to reach the hearts of the Jews. God gives a Gentile who keeps the law the same blessings as a Jew who keeps the law. Obedience is the real issue, not circumcision, which was only a token or symbol of the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants.

8. If an uncircumcised Gentile obeys the command, *Thou shalt not commit adultery* and a circumcised Jew disobeys that command, which one kept the law? \_\_\_\_\_

9. Who is God pleased with, a circumcised Jew who breaks the law or an uncircumcised Gentile who keeps the law? \_\_\_\_\_

10. What does it mean, *shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?* \_\_\_\_\_

11. Is God more accepting of a Gentile who keeps the law than of a Jew who breaks the law? \_\_\_\_\_

12. For God, outward appearances are more important than obedience from the heart. T or F

**2:27 - 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?** - Gentiles who are uncircumcised by nature, by keeping the law from their hearts, judge and condemn circumcised Jews who have the law but don't keep it. God is interested in obedience, not outward tokens and symbols or putting on a show. God judges things as they are, not as they appear to be, so we are confident that God's judgment is according to truth, Romans 2:2. Compare and Discuss Acts 10:34-35. Be a lifeboat Christian, not a showboat Christian. Tell people about Jesus instead of putting on a show.

1. Is the bottom line of Paul's argument that God wants all of us to be obedient from the heart, to live it instead of just talking about it?

\_\_\_\_\_ Discuss.

2. How can we apply this discussion of Jewish circumcision vs. keeping or not keeping the law to modern Christians?

a. What does God want from us? Discuss.

b. How can we be pleasing to God? Discuss.

c. Is it easy to please God from our hearts? Discuss.

**2:28 - For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:** - Circumcision is the outward token of the Abrahamic covenant, Gen 17:9, and for Jews under the law of Moses, Ex 4:25-26 (Ezekiel 3:9 a stone of flint like native Americans and other tribal cultures used to knap arrowheads and knives), Ex 12:44, 48. If there is nothing inwardly in the heart (the outward token of circumcision but no obedience from the heart), God doesn't consider that authentic Judaism. In plainer words, being a Jew isn't about ritual - it's about reality, having an obedient heart toward God. It's about substance, not symbol.

**2:29 - 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.** - Jews who didn't keep the law were said to have an uncircumcised ear, Jeremiah 6:10, because they refused to listen to and obey the law, and an uncircumcised heart, Lev 26:41, Deu 10:15-16, Jer 4:4, 9:25-26, Acts 7:51, because they refused to obey their conscience and God's law. That is another way of saying they are unsaved and outside the covenant, Genesis 17:9, even though they had the token of the covenant.

Every OT Jew could get a circumcised heart by exerting his will, i.e., by obeying what God said to do, Psalm 37:4, 40:8, Isa 58:13-14. If you obeyed God, you had a circumcised heart. If you disobeyed God, you didn't. That is the OT situation Paul addresses in Romans 2. When a circumcised Jew lives like the devil, God treats that Jew the same way He treats an unsaved Gentile dog, Matt 15:26-27, Phil 3:2, Revelation 22:15. Calling Jews or Gentiles dogs expressed contempt, 1 Sam 17:43, 2 Kings 8:13. Because Gentiles were not included in the law covenant, Jews called them dogs. A Jewish man had in his flesh, the token of the covenant, circumcision, yet, that did not save him. God is looking for reality, not ritual, for substance, not symbol.

When an unsaved Gentile dog obeys God's law from his heart, God treats that obedient Gentile like a believing Jew. Remember, Paul isn't telling anyone to keep the law to get saved. Paul wrote Romans about twenty five years after the resurrection. He addresses Jews who were still trying to keep the OT law as their means of righteousness, Deu 6:24-25, instead of trusting by grace alone through faith alone in the

righteousness of Christ alone, Romans 5:17, 10:1-4, 1 Cor 1:30, with no human or religious works in the mix.

Remember the difference between law and gospel. Law tells you what God requires but provides no power to help you do it. The grace of God in the gospel tells you what God requires and then provides all you need to do it, including freewill, enabling by the power of the gospel, Romans 1:16 and prevenient grace.

Run, John, run, the law commands,  
But gives me neither feet nor hands;  
Far better news the gospel brings:  
It bids me fly and gives me wings.  
- John Bunyan, 1628-1688

A rigid matter was the law,  
Demanding brick, denying straw (Exodus 5:7);  
But when with gospel tongue it sings,  
it bids me fly and gives me wings.  
- Ralph Erskine, 1685-1752

**circumcision is that of the heart, v. 29** - As part of New Testament salvation, every believer in Jesus Christ is spiritually circumcised, Col 2:6, 11ff., an inward spiritual circumcision made without hands. In the OT, a man's physical circumcision was outward, in the flesh and was made by someone's hands. In the NT, after the resurrection of Christ, every believer's spiritual circumcision is inward, performed by the Holy Spirit (*made without hands*) when He spiritually baptizes you into the body of Christ, 1 Cor 12:13 and permanently spiritually indwells your physical body as His temple, 1 Cor 6:19-20.

Spiritual circumcision is not an action you perform on yourself. It is something God does as a result of the new birth and the position He gives you in the body of Christ, Eph 1:22-23. Spiritual circumcision is an inward operation, which cuts your soul loose from your body. In Colossians 2:12, your spiritual circumcision is called *the operation of God*, not referring to a surgical operation but to God Himself doing it. Spiritual circumcision is one of the spiritual blessings God gave you in Christ when He saved you, Ephesians 1:3.

**As a result of your spiritual circumcision,  
you are no longer an errand boy for a corpse.**

You are dead to sin, Rom 6:11, and made free from sin, Rom 6:18-22, Gal 2:20, 5:1, because your soul is cut loose from your physical body. As physical circumcision was the token or outward symbol, both of the Abrahamic covenant and a Jew's position as an Israelite, John 1:47, Rom 11:1, descendent of Abraham, Genesis 17:9ff., so spiritual circumcision marks our spiritual relationship, not as Jews and not as Gentiles but as members of *the church of God*, 1 Cor 10:32, or, *the church which is his body*, Ephesians 1:22-23, where saved Jews and Gentiles are one body in Christ, Eph 2:14-16. Spiritually speaking, in the church of God, we have put on Christ, Galatians 3:27. In Christ, "*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.*" Galatians 3:28.

In ancient Israel, physical circumcision as a token of the covenant was only for men, not for women. After the resurrection of Christ, spiritual circumcision is for every born again believer in Jesus Christ, whether male or female. The physical circumcision of Christ the Jewish Messiah is counted as our circumcision, in a similar way that His death, burial and resurrection are counted as ours, Rom 6:3-11, Colossians 2:11. As born again believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we are as identified with Him in spiritual circumcision as we are identified with Him in His death burial and resurrection.

*"In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:" Colossians 2:11.*

**Doctrinal Note:** Romans 2:28-29 - Often used by Calvinists and Catholics to steal OT promises God gave to Israel so they can apply them to the church, as if those promises no longer apply to Israel, as if the church has replaced Israel. This is sometimes called replacement theology. It is also sometimes referred to as continuity or covenant theology in contrast to discontinuity or dispensational theology. Keep this in mind about the false teaching of Calvinists and Catholics.

1. The Church has not replaced Israel in the plan of God. Paul never says it has and Romans 2:28-29 never says it has.
2. God has not transferred His promises from Israel to the Church. The Church has not become Israel. Christians have not become Jews.
3. Israel is a nation of individual Jews but the Church, instead of being a nation, is a group of individuals from every nation, Rev 5:9.
4. Historically, Israelite people are genetic descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob yet most Christians have no genetic relationship to Abraham.
5. You get born into Israel through physical birth to Jewish parents. You get born into the body of Christ through the spiritual new birth.
6. Israel's worship centered on the Jewish temple in Jerusalem but Christian worship centers on the Lord Jesus Christ and the body of every believer is the temple of the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor 6:19.
7. The nation of Israel included everyone born into the nation, whether they were believers or unbelievers while the Church which is his body, Eph 1:22-23, contains only born again believers.
8. Paul isn't teaching that Gentiles become spiritual Jews and therefore Gentiles get all the physical promises God made to Israel.
9. Paul isn't redefining what a Jew is and he isn't negating all of the OT promises to Israel or transferring those promises to the church which is his body, Ephesians 1:22-23.

## Chapter 2 Review Questions

1. Did Jews in the OT get saved by being circumcised? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Did Gentiles in the OT get saved by being circumcised? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Was Judaism about outward ritual or inward reality? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Could a Jew be circumcised and still not be saved? \_\_\_\_\_
5. If a Jew was circumcised (the outward token of the covenant) but was not saved, what did he need to do to get saved? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What does it mean to have an uncircumcised ear? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What does it mean to have an uncircumcised heart? \_\_\_\_\_
8. How could an OT Jew get a circumcised heart? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Jews and Gentiles are made righteous by keeping the law. T or F
10. Getting saved is by a combination of grace and good works. T or F
11. Getting saved is 99% grace and only 1% by works. T or F
12. Must Christians get physically circumcised to be saved? \_\_\_\_\_
13. Are all Christians spiritually circumcised? \_\_\_\_\_
14. Does spiritual circumcision cut your soul loose from your body? \_\_\_\_
15. In the OT, was physical circumcision for Jews or for Gentiles? \_\_\_\_\_
16. In Romans 2:28-29, is Paul stealing God's promises to Israel and giving Israel's promises to the Church? \_\_\_\_\_
17. In Romans 2:28-29, does Paul say that God is all through with Israel and so, Israel has no future in God's plans? \_\_\_\_\_
18. Is God going to save and restore Israel at some point in the future, Romans 11:25-27? \_\_\_\_\_