



YES, RELIGIOUS PEOPLE NEED THE GOSPEL TOO (PT 2)

Romans 2:12-29

I. Is Merely Having the Law Enough to Save You? (v.12-16)

**The Jews thought their possession of God's law gave them a decisive advantage

A. No, Because it is *Doing* the Law, Not Just Hearing It, that Matters (v.12-13)

- o Paul introduces the word "justify" (dikaio,w) which means "to be declared righteous by God"

**The key issue in Romans is "How can a person be justified?"

- o Jews cannot be justified by the Law, says Paul, unless they keep it perfectly

B. No, Because the Gentiles Have the Law Too (v.14-16)

- o The Gentiles have the demands of the law "written on their hearts"
- o They have broken these demands and their conscience "accuses" them

II. Are External Religious Actions Enough to Save You? (v.17-29)

**The Jews thought their external religious activities gave them an advantage

A. Some People Trust in Heritage (v.17-24)

- o The Jews relied on a number of aspects of their heritage in v.17-20. What are some of them? Are these *bad* things?
- o Paul's Response: Your Heritage Just Makes Your Breaking of these Same Laws That Much Worse

**The Jews thought that their heritage was an advantage. But Paul is saying their heritage makes their participation in these same sins that much more egregious!

**Key point: One's heritage cannot take away the guilt of their sin.

B. Some People Trust in Ritual (v.25-29)

- o The Jews looked to circumcision as the ultimate sign of God's favor



- Circumcision was the outward sign of all God's covenant promises given to Abraham. It was a religious rite that marked someone as part of God's people.
 - What parallels to circumcision exist in the church today?
 - o Paul's Response: Ritual is only meaningful if it reflects what is already in the heart.
 - God gave circumcision to mark a person as part of God's people. But, says Paul, if that person lives a life of disobedience, then that circumcision means nothing.
 - Likewise, external actions like baptism or the Lord's supper mark the people of God, but they don't *make* a person part of the people of God. They are an external sign of an inward reality.
 - Does this mean baptism or the Lord's supper (or circumcision) is irrelevant?
- **Big point:** true followers of God are followers inwardly not only outwardly.



Discussion Groups

1. We have learned that having the law doesn't save a person. But, why might studying the law intently still be a good and positive thing?

2. In what ways do you find yourself trusting in your heritage today? How can you acknowledge the good aspects of your heritage without trusting in them?

3. In what ways do you find yourself trusting in rituals today? How can you acknowledge the good aspects of religious rituals (like baptism and communion) without trusting in them?

