

***Romans***  
***Message 30***  
***The Morality Cults 07, Jews and Gentiles***  
***Rom 2:11-29***

- 11 For there is no respect of persons with God.
- 12 For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law;
- 13 (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.
- 14 For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:
- 15 Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)
- 16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.
- 17 Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God,
- 18 And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law;
- 19 And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness,
- 20 An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.
- 21 Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?
- 22 Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?
- 23 Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?
- 24 For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.
- 25 For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.
- 26 Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?
- 27 And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?
- 28 For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:
- 29 But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God. KJV

Any discussion of how God deals with humanity both now and in eternity ultimately raises a question, “what about the Jews?”

Our scriptures contain a long and elaborate, colorful story about the offspring of one man, Abraham, and of God’s promises to him and his descendants.

There was a promise made to the man which seems to guarantee the blessings of God upon his family forever. The Promise was repeated to him several times and included the land upon which Abraham lived (Canaan) as an everlasting possession but also a covenant for his children to worship God alone, along with a sign or seal of that covenant, the physical circumcision of all the male children of that family.

Some 400 years later, God gave them another covenant, different from the first, which gave them the Moral Law of God as well as a worship system. It also clarified to them that their ownership of the land promised to Abraham was conditioned upon their obedience to God's Law contained in this covenant.

So, we follow these people in the OT for well over 1000 years, from their founding through Abraham and their early history, Isaac and then Jacob and his family. Then we watch them move to Egypt with Joseph ultimately to become the slaves of Pharaoh and then we see them delivered by God through the leadership of Moses.

The OT leads us through the story of the giving of the Law Covenant at Sina, the 40 years in the wilderness, the death of Moses to the conquest of Canaan under the leadership of Joshua. There they settled to be ruled over by their tribal patriarchs and a series of Judges that God raised up to deliver them from frequent invasions by their enemies. These were judgments of God for Israel's continual lapses into idolatry and gross departures from God.

We are told about the kings that God gave them and the kingdom with the great kings David and Solomon. The OT describes for us the division of that kingdom into Northern and Southern or Israel and Judah. Ultimately the Northern Kingdom was carried away by the Assyrian Empire and scattered while their land was resettled by people from another part of the empire. The Southern Kingdom continued for a while but then were carried away into Babylon for 70 years. Jerusalem, including Solomon's Great Temple were ransacked and destroyed.

All during this time of the kingdoms, the captivity and ultimately the return from captivity, God was sending prophets, one after another, to remind the Jews of their covenant duties, His love for them and the impending danger caused by their disobedience.

They did return from captivity and, after a fashion, rebuilt Jerusalem, the temple and the country but only as a shadow of what they once were. Then, the record goes silent for almost 400 years until the arrival of John the Baptist and then Jesus Christ. The NT tells us of the ministry of Jesus, His crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection and ascension back to heaven.

The Great Day of Pentecost came and Jews were converted to Christianity by the thousands. But then comes Paul and the carrying of the Gospel to the Gentiles, the non-Jewish world. Many questions now come to be raised but none greater than the one Paul chose to explore here.

Really, it is quite necessary for the Jews and Gentiles to understand fully this whole issue of Justification, how a person is made right with God, in such a way that there is crystal clarity about the meaning of the whole story of the Jews and how it fits into the NT narrative.

It is obvious from our text that the Jews, at least, did not fully comprehend this whole issue. They were holding onto the idea that there was some intrinsic difference between Jews and Gentiles which affected the way they would relate to God and ultimately would be declared Righteous or not by Him.

The entire history of the Jews had been marked by being clearly and plainly distinguished from all of the other people groups of the world. Part of that distinction, a most important part, in fact a great emblem of it, was the rite of circumcision that Paul mentioned here. It was such a big deal that it was used to specifically identify the Jews in the literature as ‘the circumcision.’ When one used that term it was very understandable that he was talking about the descendants of Abraham and when one said ‘the uncircumcision’ it was clear that he was talking about non-Jewish people.

It is truly very difficult for us to grasp how profound this issue was and, thus, the question, “what about the Jews?” to the Jews of Paul’s world and especially to those at Rome.

Some think that Paul had the Jews in mind from the beginning of chapter two but we have shown that these words are applicable to any of the Morality Cults. When he wanted to focus on the Jews there were specific words and terms which he used.

He began to reference them directly in v.12 after saying in v.11 that God, when the Day of Judgment comes, will not care who a person was. His racial identity will not matter.

V. 12 speaks of those who have sinned “without Law” and those who have sinned “in the Law.” Without doubt Paul was referencing the Law of Moses. We can clearly understand the idea of sinning “in the Law” and realize that it meant people sinning against God who plainly knew what His Word and His Law said about their behavior.

Being judged “by the Law” means that the consequences of v.9 are visited upon those who sin in this way and there is no escaping this judgment. Again, the identity of the sinner does not matter.

But then Paul deals with the questions which has plagued many across time, “what about those who did not have the benefit of God’s revelation and did not know what His Law said?”

Many have suggested over the centuries that such people will not be condemned, that God will not hold them guilty because of their ignorance. But this is not the position that Paul took.

His explanation in vs.14,15 argues that these people have a level of knowledge sufficient to hold them accountable absolutely before God. He said that they have “the work of the law written in their hearts” then he went on to reference their “conscience” and their “thoughts.” One might be tempted to ask, “who wrote the Law into their hearts?” but, of course, there is only One Who could do that and only He could do it in such a way that the consequences would stand in His eyes on that Great Day of Judgment.

So, are the non-Jews of the world sufficiently informed as to be condemned before God for failing to heed the warnings of their minds and their consciences?

I thought of a report I read this week from a missionary in Europe who had an opportunity to speak to a group of gypsies. None of them were Christians but several of them were profoundly struggling. One was a man who makes his living by lending money on the street at a very high interest rate. He knows that what he is doing is wrong but it is a fairly easy way for him to make money. Yet, he is grieved with himself and his conscience is troubled. How does this happen? His is not from a religious environment and I am sure that he has not learned in church that such behavior is wrong. But, there he is struggling and grieving in his soul over behavior that his conscience tells him is wrong. What will he say to God on that day if he does not repent? Another, the missionary said, is terrified of dying. He is nervous to take a trip because he might find himself having a heart attack and be too far from a hospital to get there in time.

Logic would dictate that these men cry out to God for help, to guide them to someone or to bring someone to them to tell them how they might be right with God. And God has brought someone to them but they did not heed his words so as to be able to stand Justified before God. Will the Lord of Heaven spare them in the Judgment? I think not.

Paul, at the time of writing to the Romans, had encountered many pagans and had seen many of them come to Christ in repentance. He, no doubt, had conversed with them about what their lives were like before he had come with the gospel. It seems that the condition was universal, so much so that he could make a blanket declaration like this. It seemed to him that God's judgment upon those who sinned against their own consciences in this way was a perfectly acceptable principle upon which to work.

And, how do we know that they understand? According to the formula Paul worked into this entire passage, we know because they criticize others who do wrong but then do the same thing themselves. They know that their deeds are wrong, their own behavior testifies against them.

So, then, what did all of that history about the Jews mean?

Rom 2:17-24

- 17 Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God,
- 18 And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law;
- 19 And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness,
- 20 An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.
- 21 Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?
- 22 Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?
- 23 Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?
- 24 For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written. KJV

As we said earlier, the Covenant at Sinai explained that those who refused to keep it would be rejected by God and the judgment of God would fall upon them.

Deut 32:22-26

- 22 For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains.
- 23 I will heap mischiefs upon them; I will spend mine arrows upon them.
- 24 They shall be burnt with hunger, and devoured with burning heat, and with bitter destruction: I will also send the teeth of beasts upon them, with the poison of serpents of the dust.
- 25 The sword without, and terror within, shall destroy both the young man and the virgin, the suckling also with the man of gray hairs.
- 26 I said, I would scatter them into corners, I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men: KJV

Deut 32:29

- 29 O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end! KJV

At the time that Paul was writing there was only about 10 years left to the Jewish nation. The judgment of God that Jesus prophesied in Matt 24 was about to fall. Jesus said it this way in one place.

Luke 11:49-51

- 49 Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute:
- 50 That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation;
- 51 From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation. KJV

Then, Paul revealed one of the most astonishing truths of the Gospel message.

Rom 2:25-29

- 25 For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.
- 26 Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?
- 27 And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?
- 28 For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:
- 29 But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God. KJV

Verses 28 and 29 are almost totally ignored by many in our world. In reality, in light of the judgment and one's walk with God, racial identity, even the identity of being a Jew is meaningless.

He who hears and obeys God, he who repents of his sins and commits with the whole heart as a follower of Jesus Christ..... ***is a Jew, period, end of story.*** This is the only circumcision that God cares about at all.

What does that mean for us? It means that all of the nonsense about those people in the Middle East who are occupying that piece of ground once promised to Abraham are ***not Jews.*** Sending money to them, supporting them, holding them high, gains you no praise from God. Even if they are genetic Jews, which is doubtful, they have rejected the Gospel and are clinging to other things as their hope of Justification before God.

We are all in the same boat, which is what Paul is going to prove in chapter 3. We are all sinners, under condemnation and without hope apart from Jesus Christ. Jew and Gentile, we are all the same.

Those that are converted, those that are in Christ, are likewise, Jew and Gentile, the very same. There is no distinction. That ended with the destruction of the Jewish genealogies in 70 A.D.

Eph 2:11-16

- 11 Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;
- 12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:
- 13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.
- 14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;
- 15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;
- 16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: KJV

Your concern today has nothing to do with your racial origin nor that of anyone else. Your concern is just this question, "Am I in Christ?"