

Romans: Verse-By-Verse

Romans 2:26-29

Student Notes:

- **Redefining “Jewishness”** -- one who lives out the link between the mark of circumcision and obedience to the Law of Moses

Continuing the argument: Verse 26: “If those who are not circumcised keep the law’s requirements, will they not be regarded as though they were circumcised?”

The fuller question: “If a man is not marked with the mark of the Jewish covenant – and yet he keeps the law’s requirements – is not fulfilling the role of that mark?”

Example: Peter and Cornelius (Acts 10)

Peter’s Revelation: “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right. You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.”- Acts 10:34-36

Cornelius Legacy: Not a Jew by birth, but he has God’s ear and God’s attention. He is a Jew in his behavior, but a Gentile in his heredity and nationality.

- **Reviewing The Point of Romans 1 & 2:**

- 1). A righteousness apart from the Law of Moses has been revealed.
- 2). The wrath of God against all wickedness and those to reject the knowledge of Him is being revealed.

Ultimately: All humans are under the wrath of God because none can keep the Law perfectly.

- **Who Will Sit In the Seat of Judgment? -- Verse 27:**

“The one who is not circumcised physically and yet obeys the law will condemn you who, even though you have the written code and circumcision, are a lawbreaker.”

This inference was not only profoundly shocking to Paul’s own people, but deeply offensive as well. Why? The Jews imagined the day when they would stand in judgment of their Gentile neighbors.

Through this redefinition of “Jewishness” Paul not only suggests that God will accept a Gentile because of obedience to the Law – but that the Gentiles will actually stand in judgment of the Jews.

The Point: The Gentiles had neither the mark of the covenant or the Law – but they would stand in judgment of those who did – because they themselves obeyed the Law.

Paul’s Echo of Jesus’ Warnings: See: **Matthew 12:41**; Luke 10:14

- **Continuing a Redefinition of what it is to be a Jew: Verses 28-29.**

“A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man’s praise is not from men, but from God.”

Greek Reading: “A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly – “en to phanero”- “in the open or visibly”. “Nor is circumcision merely outward – again, “en to phanero” (in the open or visibly) and physical – literally, “in the flesh”.

For the sake of his argument about Jewish consciousness and Jewish pride Paul says true Jewishness is not about an external mark. It is not about the outward, but the inward.

God gave Abraham the sign of circumcision; no, it was not intended to replace a heart of obedience and love toward God. See: **Leviticus 26:40-42; Deuteronomy 10:16; Deuteronomy 30:6**

- Moving from the external and physical to the internal and spiritual:

“No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code.”

Paul looks beyond the circumcision of the flesh and sees a circumcision of the heart that not only replaces the old rite, but surpasses it in every way: “By the Spirit, not by the written code”.

Paul’s forecast of Romans 7:6 and 8:3-4. Let’s take a glance at those verses:

- **Romans 7:6:** “But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.”
- **Romans 8:3-4:** For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.

The Contrast: The “gramma” or letter of the Law with the “pneuma” -- the Spirit. The primary difference between the old covenant (an external law) and the new – the inward work and gift of the Holy Spirit.

- **The Praise of God: (approval)** -- Verse 29: “Such a man’s praise is not from men, but from God.”

The “play on words”: The Jews took their name from their ancestor, “Judah”. Hebrew: “Judah” has the root word, “praise”. (The name, “Judah” came from his mother’s words at his birth: “Now I will praise the Lord” - Genesis 29:35)

Point: A Jew is not one who only bears the mark of circumcision and possesses the Law. A “real Jew” receives his praise from God because God is pleased with his obedience.

Summarizing verses 24-29:

- To have the mark of covenant but not walk in obedience to God is to invalidate the very purpose of circumcision.
- The essence of being Jewish can be demonstrated by those who have not been circumcised.
- True circumcision involves the heart, not the flesh only.
- The New Testament model involves a work done inwardly by the Holy Spirit – not a keeping of the external code. That works finds God’s approval in one’s life.