

Sin and Condemnation: The World's need to get right with God

(59)

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[Romans 1:18-3:20](#)

(Continuation from 03/05/17)

D. God's Case against the Religionist (Jew), [Romans 2:17-29](#)

[\(Romans 2:17-29\)](#) **Introduction— Religionist— Jew:** this passage is an excellent study of the Christian religionist or church member as well as of the Jew.

God's case against the Christian religionist **includes four points.**

1. **The religionist professes religion (v.17-20).**
2. **The religionist fails to live what he professes (v.21-24).**
3. **The religionist believes that a ritual (circumcision) is the way to secure God's approval (v.25-27).**
4. **The religionist misses the whole point: a true religionist is a man who is righteous inwardly (v.28-29).**

1. [\(Romans 2:17-20\)](#) **Religionists:** the religionist (Jew) professes religion.

Romans 2:17-20 (NASB)

¹⁷“But if you bear the name “Jew” and rely upon the Law and boast in God,
¹⁸and know *His* will and approve the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law,
¹⁹and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness,
²⁰a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, having in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth.”

He accepts the name of his religion whatever it may be, whether Jew, Moslem, or Buddhist; and he shows enough interest in his religion to give him security.

Jewish and **Christian** religionists **make ten mistakes.**

1. The religionist “**relies upon the law,**” that is, in the Word of God ([Romans 2:17](#)).

Romans 2:17 (NASB)

¹⁷“But if you bear the name “Jew” and rely upon the Law and boast in God.”

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He possesses the Scriptures (Bible); he.....

1. has it in his home.
2. sometimes reads it.
3. carries it with him to church.
4. honors it as the Word of God.

Because of this, he feels that he pleases God. He rests upon the fact that he possesses God's Word. By having God's Word, he feels he has God's approval and acceptance. But this is the very mistake of the religionist: God does not accept a person because he happens to have God's Word in his possession. God approves and accepts the person who *does* the Word of God, who lives and obeys the law of God.

Romans 3:1-2 (NASB)

¹“Then what advantage has the Jew [Christian]? Or what is the benefit of circumcision [baptism]?”

²Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God.”

2. The religionist professes God. To “profess” (*kauchasai*) means “to boast, to glory, to feel proud about one's profession of God and religion”. The idea is that one *openly* professes that he believes in God. He is not ashamed of his belief and religious affiliation. He believes in God and he feels safe and secure in his belief. He confesses God and he feels that God accepts him because of his profession.

However, this is *the mistake* of the religionist. God is not interested in a man's profession but in a man's life. God wants a man living for Him, not just professing and talking about Him.

Romans 10:2-4 (NASB)

²“For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge.

³For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.

⁴For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.”

3. The religionist knows God's will (**Romans 2:18**). He is familiar with the law and the commandments of God. He knows what God wants done; he knows right from wrong. Therefore, he feels he has God's approval.

However, the religionist fails to see something: **knowing God's will is not enough—a man must do God's will.**

Ezekiel 33:31-32 (NASB)

³¹“They come to you as people come, and sit before you as My people and hear your words, but they do not do them, for they do the lustful desires expressed by their mouth, and their heart goes after their gain.”

³²“Behold, you are to them like a sensual song by one who has a beautiful

voice and plays well on an instrument; for they hear your words but they do not practice them.”

4. The religionist approves the excellent or better things in life ([Romans 2:18](#)).

Romans 2:18 (NASB)

¹⁸“And know *His* will and approve the **things that are essential**, being instructed out of the Law.”

He not only knows God’s will, right from wrong; but he.....

1. is able to discern the more excellent, the better things to do.
2. approves, expresses, and proclaims pleasure in the right things.

Because he supports and pushes and approves the better things in life, the religionist feels he pleases God. But this is his mistake. God is not interested in man’s approval of the better things in life. Most men do approve and talk about the better things of life. God wants man living out the better things, living on the level of the more excellent.

1 John 3:18 (NASB)

¹⁸“Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.”

5. The religionist is taught God’s law and Word ([Romans 2:18](#)).

Romans 2:18 (NASB)

¹⁸“And know *His* will and approve the things that are essential, **being instructed out of the Law.**”

He is instructed by family, teacher, preacher, and friend. The religionist learns God’s Word from someone, and because he knows God’s Word he feels he has a right relationship with God. But again, God’s concern is not in what a person knows, but in what a person does. God expects a person to take what he has learned and put it into practice. God expects a person to live as he has been taught.

Jeremiah 32:33 (NASB)

³³“They have turned *their* back to Me and not *their* face; though *I* taught them, teaching again and again, they would not listen and receive **[practice]** instruction.”

Ephesians 4:20-22 (NASB)

²⁰“But you did not learn Christ in this way,
²¹if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus,
²²that, in reference to your former manner **[behavior]** of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit.”

6. The religionist is sure he is a guide to the blind ([Romans 2:19](#)).

Romans 2:19 (NASB)

¹⁹“And are **confident** that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness.”

The word “**confident**” (*pepoithas*) means “**persuaded and sure**”. The religionist is convinced that religion is true, that religion is the way men should live. He believes that a man who does not believe in God and live a religious life is blind and needs to be guided to the truth.

By living a religious life, he feels.....

1. he is an example to men.
2. he is a guide to help men find God.
3. he can cure men of their blindness to God and religion.

However, being “**confident**” that one is a guide of the blind does not mean that one is a true guide. A person must be sure that he himself is following the truth, Jesus Christ ([John 14:6](#)).

John 14:6 (NASB)

⁶“Jesus said to him, “**I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.**”

There are many guides in the world who are leading people down the wrong road. They are blind guides, the blind leading the blind ([Matthew 15:14](#)).

Matthew 15:14 (NASB)

¹⁴“Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit.”

Luke 18:9 (NASB)

⁹“And He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt.”

Hosea 10:13 (NASB)

¹³“You have plowed wickedness, you have reaped injustice, You have eaten the fruit of lies. Because you have trusted in your way, in your numerous warriors.”

7. The religionist is sure he is a light to those in darkness ([Romans 2:19](#)).

Romans 2:19 (NASB)

¹⁹“And are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in **darkness**.”

The word “**darkness**” (*skotei*) means “**those who stumble about searching for the light, but are unable to find it**”. The religionist feels he has found the light; therefore, he is a light to

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those who are searching for it. However, the religionist makes a serious mistake. Religion is not the light of the world—Jesus Christ is.

John 9:41 (NASB)

⁴¹“Jesus said to them, “If you were **blind**, you would have no sin; but since you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.”

Revelation 3:17 (NASB)

¹⁷“Because you say, “I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,” and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and **blind** and naked.”

8. The religionist is sure he is an instructor of the foolish (**Romans 2:20**).

Romans 2:20 (NASB)

²⁰“A corrector of the **foolish**, a teacher of the immature, having in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth.”

The word “foolish” (*aphronōn*) means “thoughtless, senseless, undirected”.

It refers to people who walk through life giving no thought to life’s purpose, as to.....

1. where they have come from.
2. why they are here.
3. where they are going.

The religionist is persuaded that religion answers all these questions, the basic questions of life. Therefore, he can help the foolish discover meaning and purpose and significance in life. The critical point for the instructor or the religionist is to make sure that his instruction is true. What he instructs must be the truth or else it is all for naught.

1 Corinthians 10:12 (NASB)

¹²“Therefore let him **who thinks he stands** take heed that he does not fall.”

Proverbs 28:26 (NASB)

²⁶“He who trusts in his own heart **is a fool**, But he who walks wisely will be delivered.”

9. The religionist is sure he is a teacher of the immature (**Romans 2:20**).

Romans 2:20 (NASB)

²⁰“A corrector of the foolish, **a teacher of the immature**, having in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth.”

The word “babes” (*nēpiōn*) means “the infant, the immature, the novice, the proselyte, the new church member”.

The point is the same: a religionist is not mature in God just because he.....

1. has been baptized and has been a church member for a long time.

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2. thinks he is mature.
3. serves as a teacher.

What makes a person mature and capable of teaching the immature of the world is experience with Christ, having walked and served with Christ for a long time.

Mark 7:6 (NASB)

⁶“And He said to them, “Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: ‘This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far away from Me.’”

Isaiah 29:13 (NASB)

¹³“Then the Lord said, “Because this people draw near with their words And honor Me with their lip service, But they remove their hearts far from Me, And their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned *by rote*.”

10. The religionist has the law of God, the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth (**Romans 2:20**).

Romans 2:20 (NASB)

²⁰“A corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, having in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth.”

The religionist has the Scriptures, the Word of God, at his disposal. He has every opportunity in the world to know the truth. But again, having and knowing and thinking that one can instruct and teach another is not enough. God accepts and uses only those who live the Word, who keep the laws and commandments of God. This is the mistake of the religionist, of the person who professes and does not live.

Matthew 23:23 (NASB)

²³“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.”

Acts 28:27 (NASB)

²⁷“For the heart of this people has become dull, And with their ears they scarcely hear, And they have closed their eyes; Otherwise they might see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart and return, And I would heal them.”

2 Timothy 3:5 (NASB)

⁵“Holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these.”