

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

(62)

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

(Continuation from 03/26/17)

## 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).**

3. [\(Romans 2:25-27\)](#) **Religionists:** the religionist believes that *a ritual* is the way to secure God's praise or approval (for example, circumcision, baptism, and church membership).

**Romans 2:25-27 (NASB)**

<sup>25</sup> For indeed circumcision is of value if you practice the Law; but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.

<sup>26</sup> So if the uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?

<sup>27</sup> And he who is physically uncircumcised, if he keeps the Law, will he not judge you who though having the letter *of the Law* and circumcision are a transgressor of the Law?

Just take the word circumcision and substitute whatever ritual a church says is essential for salvation and the meaning of the passage becomes clear. For example, take the ritual of *church membership*.

“Church membership profits a man if he keeps the law: but if he breaks the law, his church membership is made or counted as **unchurch** membership.”

04-02-17

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If a religionist does not keep (*prassō*, practice) God's law and Word, then his ritual does not count.

**The man becomes.....**

1. unbaptized
2. unchurched
3. uncircumcised
4. unwhatever

**The point is obedience, not ritual.** A person is acceptable to God because he lives for God and obeys Him, not because he has undergone some ritual.

The next two verses make this pointedly clear ([Romans 2:26-27](#)).

**Romans 2:26-27 (NASB)**

<sup>26</sup> So if the uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?

<sup>27</sup> And he who is physically uncircumcised, if he keeps the Law, will he not judge you who though having the letter of the Law and circumcision are a transgressor of the Law?

1. “The uncircumcised man **keeps** the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision [that is, acceptable to God]” ([Romans 2:26-NASB](#)). A man is not acceptable to God because he has been baptized or joined some church. He becomes acceptable to God because he obeys God, and God's basic commandment is clear, unquestionably so:

**1 John 3:23 (NASB)**

<sup>23</sup> This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.

2. The uncircumcised man who keeps the law actually judges the man who has been circumcised and breaks the law ([Romans 2:27](#)).

**Romans 2:27 (NASB)**

<sup>27</sup> And he who is physically uncircumcised, if he keeps the Law, will he not judge you who though having the letter of the Law and circumcision are a transgressor of the Law?

The basis of judgment is not to be a ritual, whether baptism or church membership; it is to be obedience. No ritual will ever save a man if he transgresses the law, and no ritual will ever cause a man to be lost if he keeps the law. (See [Deeper Study # 3—Romans 2:11-15](#), see below for more discussion.)

**DEEPER STUDY # 3**

**(Romans 2:11-15) Judgment—Obedience—Doers—Hearers:** the judgment of God—of the only living and true God—is without respect of persons. God's judgment will be executed with absolute impartiality, showing no favoritism whatsoever. God has no favorites.

God does not show partiality; He does not favor the.....

1. moralist
2. outstanding
3. honorable
4. educated
5. wealthy
6. religionist
7. benevolent
8. famous

God favors no one. All men stand on an equal footing before God's judgment. *God loves and cares for all*, but He has no favorites and shows no partiality. Therefore, in the Great Day of Judgment, all will be judged by the same rule and by the same principle.

1. The man who sins without the law and the man who sins in the law will both be judged. Again, sin is the basis of judgment. Men will be judged *for sin*.

a. The man who sins “**without law**” (*anomōs*) will also perish without law. The word for law is a general word.

It refers to the law of God in both the Scriptures and nature. Therefore, the man who does not have the law of Scripture *does have* the law of nature to guide him. If he sins against the law of nature, he will still be judged and perish. He had the opportunity to know through nature itself (see [Romans 1:19-20](#)).

#### **Romans 1:19-20 (NASB)**

<sup>19</sup> **Because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.**

<sup>20</sup> **For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.**

b. The man who sins “**in the law**” will be judged by the law. His judgment, of course, will be greater, for he had every privilege and opportunity imaginable.

#### **Acts 10:34-35 (NASB)**

<sup>34</sup> **Opening his mouth, Peter said: "I most certainly understand *now* that God is not one to show partiality,**

<sup>35</sup> **but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him.**

**Acts 15:9 (NASB)**

<sup>9</sup> And He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith.

**Romans 2:11 (NASB)**

<sup>11</sup> For there is no partiality [respect of persons] with God.

**Romans 10:12 (NASB)**

<sup>12</sup> For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same *Lord* is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him.

2. The doers and not the hearers of the law will be justified. It is not enough to have the law or the Word of God; it is not enough.....

1. to hear and see it
2. to understand and know it
3. to possess and profess it
4. to proclaim and teach it

A person must be a doer of the law; he must obey and live the law. The law was not given just to sit on a bookshelf or on a table, not given just to be heard and to secure verbal agreement.

The law was given to be obeyed and lived out, to govern and control life so that life could be lived to the fullest. Therefore, those who only hear the law will not be justified before God, but the doers of the law will be justified.

**Thought 1.** Possessing, having, hearing, and even proclaiming the law (the Word of God) is not enough to save a person. A person must keep the law; he must live and do the will of God.

**Matthew 7:21 (NASB)**

<sup>21</sup> Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*.

**Matthew 12:50 (NASB)**

<sup>50</sup> "For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother."

**Luke 6:47-49 (NASB)**

<sup>47</sup> "Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and acts on them, I will show you whom he is like:

<sup>48</sup> he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid a foundation on the rock; and when a flood occurred, the torrent burst against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built.

<sup>49</sup> "But the one who has heard and has not acted *accordingly*, is like a man who built a house on the ground without any foundation; and the torrent burst against it and immediately it collapsed, and the ruin of that house was great."

**John 13:17 (NASB)**

<sup>17</sup> If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

**Romans 2:13 (NASB)**

<sup>13</sup> For *it is* not the hearers of the Law *who* are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified.

**James 1:22 (NASB)**

<sup>22</sup> But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.

**James 4:11 (NASB)**

<sup>11</sup> Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge *of it*.

**1 John 2:17 (NASB)**

<sup>17</sup> The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

**Revelation 22:14 (NASB)**

<sup>14</sup> Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city.

3. The heathen has a **threefold witness**, a witness that is strong enough to lead them to God.

a. Men have their nature—the nature of man that speaks loudly and clearly—that points toward God.

Note exactly what the verse says.

1. Men may not have the law (the Scriptures)...
2. But they can do the law by nature.
3. They can become "a law unto themselves."

There is that within man, within his nature (*phusei*), that can stir him to do the law. Man, has within him an instinctive knowledge of right and wrong. His very nature gives him the opportunity to do what is right.

Something else is meant here as well. Man, can look at nature (**creation**) and see that he is part of it. He can instinctively see by nature the great eternal power and deity of God. (See **Romans 1:20** for a list of the things nature reveals about God.)

**Romans 1:19 (NASB)**

<sup>19</sup> Because that which is known about God is evident within them [**within them, in their consciences, in an inner moral sense**]; for God made it evident to them.

**Romans 1:20 (NASB)**

<sup>20</sup> For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

b. Men have their consciences that bear witness to what is right and wrong. When they do right, they sense approval; when they do wrong, they sense reproach. Man's conscience gives him the opportunity to live righteously and to do good.

**Hebrews 9:14 (NASB)**

**<sup>14</sup>How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?**

**Hebrews 10:22 (NASB)**

**<sup>22</sup>Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled *clean* from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.**

**Romans 13:5 (NASB)**

**<sup>5</sup>Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake.**

c. Men have their thoughts, their reasoning ability which can approve or disapprove, excuse or accuse them and others. Men's thoughts bear witness to how they should and should not live, whether their behavior is **excused** (acceptable) or **accused** (condemned).

Now note **two critical points**.

**First**, men can learn a great deal about God and about right and wrong through their nature, conscience and thoughts. Men can look at themselves and creation and learn that they are to live.....

1. by order and law and rules.
2. in obedience and respect and peace.
3. giving recognition and honor and esteem.
4. being clean and pure and moral.
5. showing care and concern and love.
6. without stealing and lying and cheating.

**Second**, men cannot be saved apart from Jesus Christ. No matter how morally they may live—whether they live by law or by nature—they do not live a sinless and perfect life. They sin and come short of God's glory. Therefore, no matter how morally men live, they have to be *perfected* in the “**righteousness of God**” which is in Christ Jesus Himself.

**John 14:6 (NASB)**

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

**Acts 4:12 (NASB)**

**<sup>12</sup>“And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.”**

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**1 Timothy 2:5 (NASB)**

<sup>5</sup> For there is one God, *and* one mediator also between God and men, *the* man Christ Jesus.

**1 John 2:1 (NASB)**

<sup>1</sup> My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

**1 John 4:14 (NASB)**

<sup>14</sup> We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son *to be* the Savior of the world.

**Matthew 7:21 (NASB)**

<sup>21</sup> Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*.

**Matthew 12:50 (NASB)**

<sup>50</sup> "For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother."

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