

THE BOOK OF ROMANS

"Reality Judgment"

Romans 2:17-29

Sept 9 1984

INTRODUCTION

1. Scripture declares the total depravity of the total world of mankind (Rom. 1). This obviously includes both Jew and Gentile (Rom. 2).
2. Because sin is against a holy God, it is righteous for Him to judge those who refuse the substitutionary death of Christ. The principles by which He will judge are listed in this chapter. They are: a. Truth (v. 2). b. Accumulated wrath (vv. 4, 5). c. Deeds and life-choice (vv. 6-10). d. Impartiality (vv. 11-15). e. The Gospel (v. 16).
3. Now we come to the final principle. It is reality. The Jew is used as an example. In essence, this principle argues: it is not what one professes, but what one possesses. Study the text:-

1. ADVANTAGE vv. 17-20.

Scripture here outlines the acknowledged advantage of the Jew. Mark the list:

- a. His name. The passive verb is only used here in the N.T. The verb and the emphatic pronoun are important.
- b. His law. "Rest" is only found twice in the N.T. (here, Lk 10:6). It is a double prefixed compound.
- c. His boast. Emphasis seems to be on a system, but not the person of God. They reckoned God was private property.
- d. His knowledge. This came through the law and resulted in discernment.
- e. His confidence. Four items of ability: guide blind, light darkness, correct senseless, teach babes.

N.B. the big professed advantage of the Jew is magnified to show the ridiculous situation. Paul uses terms they would use to describe themselves. Now the apostle turns it all on the Jew.

2. FAILURE vv. 21-24.

The Jewish failure found Him turning to others. Consider the series of questions. They are devastating to the Jew who professed, but hardly possessed.

a. Basic question

What you teach another, do you not in fact teach yourself. What a huge condemnation!

b. Specific questions

- 1) About stealing

- 2) About adultery
- 3) About idolatry
- 4) About the law

Result: God's Name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of Jewish behavior. What a sad situation. Profession was not possession. God demands reality.

3. REALITY vv. 25-29

a. About circumcision v. 25

Paul's argument is clear. There are two groups: Jews (circumcision) and Gentiles (uncircumcision). This all relates to the sign for the Abrahamic Covenant (cf. Gen. 12 and 17). All is in the flesh.

b. About practice v. 26.

When a circumcised Jew breaks the law (Greek: transgressor), his fleshly circumcision becomes (perfect tense!) uncircumcision. In effect--useless! Practice disproves profession! In like manner when an uncircumcised Gentile guards (so Greek) the law, his practice is reckoned (counted as such) as circumcision. What a fantastic argument.

c. About judgment vv 27, 28.

Succinctly: the Gentile in effect judges the Jew who has the Scriptures (letter) and the sign (circumcision). A reality Jew is one who is such right to his core and not merely externally. The visible must agree with the invisible (hidden).

CONCLUSION

A true Jew has three characteristics related to his circumcision: 1. It is of the heart i.e. inward. 2. It is of the Holy Spirit i.e. spiritual and not observances. 3. It is God approved i.e. heaven delights in its reality. Amen.