

(12) For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law. For it is not the hearers of the Law who are righteous before God --- but the doers of the Law who will be justified!

(14) For when Gentiles --- who do not have the Law --- by nature do what the Law requires, they are a Law to themselves, even though they do not have the Law. They show that the work of the Law is written on their hearts while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them on that day when, according to my Gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.

(17) But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the Law, and boast in God, and know His Will, and approve what is excellent because you are instructed from the Law;

(19) And if you are sure that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those in darkness, an instructor to the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and truth ---

(21) You then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal?

(22) You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? *You who boast in the Law dishonor God by breaking the Law!* For, as it is written, “The Name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.”

(25) For circumcision indeed is of value **IF** you obey the Law, but if you break the Law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision. So, if a man who is uncircumcised keeps the precepts of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? Then he who is physically uncircumcised but keeps the Law will condemn you who have the written code and circumcision but break the Law.

(28) For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.

NOTE: In this passage, circumcision often equates to “Jews,” contrasted with uncircumcision referring to “Gentiles,” rather than the actual physical act of circumcising a man or not circumcising him.

Think on These Things:

- 1) Is a “sin is a sin is a sin” true? How will “sinners” without God’s Word to be judged (v. 12a)? How will “sinners” with God’s Word be judged (v. 12b)? Who do you think has it harder, and why?

Sin --- is sin --- whether done by Jews or Gentiles. Gentiles will be judged without the Law, and Jews will be judged according to the Law. Those “with” the Law will be judged according to God’s rules and standards; they can’t plead, “I didn’t know...”. In that respect, they may have the tougher time. V. 13 says it is the “doers” of the Law who are righteous!

- 2) From vs. 14-16, on what basis will those without God’s Word be judged?

Gentiles have --- by nature --- the essence of the law (right and wrong behavior) within their own hearts, and God will use that truth to pronounce judgment upon them according to how they lived by their consciences.

- 3) In vs. 17-20, we get a glimpse of ourselves as modern-day Christians. We have God's Word, and we claim to be members of Christ's body, His Church. We live in a world that chooses to live without God. Do you think we fall in the same trap as Paul accuses the Jews of? List some of the traps.

Do we as Christians serve as a "godly conscience" for our communities and nation? Do we say we know the right ways to honor God, and what wrong ways dishonor Him? Then, yes, we can certainly fall into the same trap Paul exposes here. It's not so much on a collective level, but on an individual level. Are we trying to stand up for godly opinions and behaviors? Then we CANNOT afford to be found guilty of the very things we oppose. Many high-profile Christian failures have blackened the eyes of God's faithful and harmed God's Name....

- 4) What is the sin described in vs. 21-22? How does my sin in this way affect God's Name and the Church (v. 23-24)?

Speaking out God's TRUTH but personally living a "lie" secretly is called hypocrisy (saying one thing but doing another). Jesus condemned it pretty much everywhere He went. When we are correctly found out and judged to be hypocrites, we are 'blaspheming' God's Holy Name.

- 5) The most common complaint is that the church is full of __hypocrites__, and that Christians are always __judging__ others. Are either of these accusations true of you?

- 6) What do you think is the main point of v. 25? What value is it for you to be a Christian?

Again, referring back to v. 13, only DOERS of God's Law are considered righteous. If I am born into a Jewish (or Christian) family, and I am taught God's truth but choose NOT to obey it, my "advantage" is of no value --- I'm just like all the other ungodly, unsaved people in the world.

- 7) Vs. 26-27 carry the thought of God on this matter. If those without God's Word have a clean conscience in God's eyes at the Judgment, what will happen to/for them?

Those obedient to God's Laws and Precepts will be "God's own," regardless of upbringing.

- 8) Looking at v. 28, we might carry the thought that "no one is a Christian who is one outwardly." S/he might go to church each week, tithe regularly, be baptized (wear a uniform), participate in church life and governance, etc... Can we be fooled by these outward behaviors? Can God?

Yes, people can be fooled by what they see in others. However, God will not be fooled.

- 9) Who is a true Jew (Christian, v. 29)? Circumcision IS a cutting away of the flesh. Here Paul shows that it is not a "male ceremony" at 8 days, but a matter of what, male or female? Who does this work with us, and Who praises that it is done?

True Jews/Christians are those whose "hearts" (selves) have been circumcised. They have put to death their sinful flesh to fully live by their Born Again nature created by the Holy Spirit. It is God who praises such children.

People and situations I want to pray for this week: