

ROMANS CHAPTER 2

Introduction

Paul has clearly and convincingly shown that the **HEATHEN** man is lost and without excuse before God (Romans 1:17-32). Now in the first part of chapter 2 he will show that the **MORAL** man is lost and without excuse. Later in chapter 2 and in chapter 3 he will show that the **RELIGIOUS** man (the Jew) is lost and without excuse.

There is a **KEY WORD** found in the first 16 verses of chapter 2. It is the word "JUDGE" or "JUDGMENT" (see verses 1,2,3,5,12,16). In verse 1 we have man sitting in judgment, but starting in verse 2 we have God on the throne of judgment which is proper and right. God is the perfect and righteous JUDGE, and in these first 16 verses we will discover several PRINCIPLES OF JUDGMENT. These important principles will help us to understand what kind of a Judge God is and how He carries out and exercises His judgment.

Principle of Judgment #1: The moral man is rendered inexcusable before God the righteous Judge

Romans 2:1

Inexcusable means "without any defense" (compare Rom. 1:20). He has nothing to say, he is silenced (compare Romans 3:19); he is guilty and he knows it!

This verse is talking about a person who is passing judgment on another, condemning the actions of another. Hence, it is talking about **the moral person** (the person with moral discernment, the person who passes a moral judgment on someone). There is a difference between the moral man and the heathen man. In Romans 1:32 the heathen man APPROVES and APPLAUDS sinful conduct but in Romans 2:1 the moral man DISAPPROVES and JUDGES sinful conduct.

The moral man condemns another for sinful conduct but since he himself is guilty of the same thing he is in effect condemning himself. This principle can be illustrated in three ways:

1. Judah (Genesis 38:12-26). Did Judah pass judgment on someone (v.24)? Was Judah guilty of the very same thing? Was Judah silenced and left without excuse and without anything to say (v.26)? In condemning her, did he condemn himself?
2. David (2 Samuel 12:1-9 and see 2 Samuel 11 for the context). Did David pass judgment on someone (2 Sam. 12:5-6)? In making this judgment was he actually condemning himself (v.7)? Was David forced to acknowledge his guilt (v.13)?

3. **John 8:1-11.** These Jews passed judgment on a guilty woman but they soon learned that she was not the only guilty one! These religious and moral men had to walk away with nothing to say! **THE PRINCIPLE:** The reason we so easily recognize sin in others is because we are so used to it in ourselves. When we point the accusing finger at someone there are three fingers that point right back at the accuser!

Romans 2:2

Principle of Judgment #2: God's Judgment is according to truth.

We are sure = we know

A human judge is limited when it comes to knowing the truth and ascertaining the true facts of any case. He must depend upon the testimony of men, many of whom will lie even under oath. People may fail to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, but this is no problem to God. The true facts of every case are naked and open before Him. He needs no witnesses and no jury because He has personally witnessed every crime and every sin that has ever been committed. He knows all the facts (see Hebrews 4:12-13). He never misrepresents a person's case! We can be sure that God's judgment is always according to truth.

Romans 2:3

Principle of Judgment #3: God's judgment is inescapable!

The answer to the question of this verse is obvious: NO! There is no escape! If any person thinks that he will escape God's judgment, he is thinking wrong! There is no such thing as "the perfect crime." Men may escape human justice but they will never escape divine justice (compare Amos 9:1-3).

Romans 2:4

Principle of Judgment #4: Men should not run away from God (v.3 -- "escape" is impossible) but they should run to God (v.4 -- "repentance" is essential).

Goodness = kindness, generosity. God's goodness extends to all men (see Matthew 5:45 and Acts 14:17).

Forbearance = holding back. God holds back His Judgment; God delays His punishment; He does not judge sin immediately.

Longsuffering = long time before getting angry, slow to anger. This does not mean that God never gets angry, but it does mean that He is slow to anger. His longsuffering will not last forever.

The fact that God is good and forbearing and longsuffering ought to lead men to repentance! Men ought to run to God seeking His mercy! But instead men despise God, harden their hearts and refuse to repent! Today, during this age of grace God's goodness and grace and mercy abound towards all men, but men still refuse to repent. In the tribulation period, God's severity and judgment and plagues will abound towards all men, but men will still refuse to repent (see Rev. 9:20-21). However, when a sinner does repent, whether now or then, there is great joy in heaven (Luke 15:7,10).

Romans 2:5

Principle of Judgment #5: There will be a final day of judgment for the ungodly.

This day of judgment is described as "the day of wrath and revelation (unveiling) of the righteous judgment of God." This final day of judgment for the ungodly is also described in 2 Peter 3:7 ("the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men") and Revelation 20:11-15.

Hardness: the hearts of men get harder and harder as they refuse to respond to God's goodness and forbearance and longsuffering.

Impenitent: describing a person who refuses to repent (compare the two criminals on the cross -- one was penitent or repentant and the other was impenitent).

Treasure up unto (for) thyself wrath = treasuring up wrath, misers of wrath. Instead of laying up treasures for heaven (Matthew 6:19-20), they were treasuring up wrath from heaven (storing it up for that final day).

Principle of Judgment #6: God's Judgment is perfectly righteous!

It is called the "righteous judgment of God." God the righteous Judge makes no mistakes! See Genesis 18:25 and Romans 9:14. When the divine Judge arrives at a verdict, it must be RIGHT. The punishment (penalty) must be right also. God makes no mistakes. The Judge of all the earth will do right. He cannot do wrong. Every occupant of hell will be fully deserving.

Romans 2:6

Principle of Judgment #7: God's judgment is just -- every man will get exactly what he deserves.

"(God) will render (give back) to every (each) man according to his deeds (works)." Here we have perfect justice at work. God evaluates a man's works and judges accordingly. The penalty will perfectly fit the crime. Every man will get his due reward, whether good or bad.

This same teaching is found in the following passages: Matthew 12:36-37 (men will be judged according to their words); Matthew 16:27 (every man will be rewarded according to his works); Romans 12:19 (God will repay men for the evil they have done); 2 Timothy 4:14 (God will reward this evil man according to his works); Revelation 18:4-6, Judges 1:7 ("as I have done, so God hath requited me"); 2 Samuel 3:39; Psalm 28:4; Psalm 62:12; Psalm 94:1-2; Proverbs 22:12; Lamentations 3:64 and Jeremiah 17:10.

Thankfully, God is not only a God of JUSTICE but He is also a God of GRACE. According to JUSTICE sin must

be judged and punished. According to GRACE sin can be pardoned and forgiven (see Psalm 103:3 and Ephesians 1:7). God is a God of judgment but He is also a God of grace (Psalm 103:8). Psalm 103:10 is true only because of the GRACE OF GOD. The wonderful truth of the gospel is that God can be gracious to sinful men WITHOUT COMPROMISING HIS JUSTICE. The Lord Jesus died for our sins, and thus God has dealt with Christ after our sins and God has rewarded Christ according to our iniquities (compare Psalm 103:10)! God remains **JUST** (because He poured out His judgment and wrath upon Christ) and at the same time He is able to graciously **JUSTIFY** the sinner who trusts in His Son (Romans 3:26; 4:5)! Praise God!

Romans 2:7-10

Principle of Judgment #8: God punishes those who do evil and rewards those who do good.

Notice the structure of these verses (chiasm or inverted parallelism):

Verse 7 -- this is how God will reward those who do good A₁

Verse 8 -- this is how God will reward those who do evil B₁

Verse 9 -- this is how God will reward those who do evil B₂

Verse 10 -- this is how God will reward those who do good A₂

[For a lengthy discussion of inverted parallelism, see our studies entitled [ENGLISHMAN'S GREEK](#)].

Here is some help with some of the words:

"**Render**" (v.6) = give back, pay back, reward (give a person just what he has earned)

"**Contentious**" (v.8) = selfish, self-seeking

"**To the Jew first**" (v.9) -- Why were the Jews "first" in judgment? Because according to Luke 12:48, "unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required." The Jews had been given much (see Rom. 3:1-2 and Romans 9:1-5). Those who have been given much will be held more accountable. It is not unreasonable for the Judge to ask, "What have you done with all the light and truth which I have given you?" *Example:* An unsaved person who lives next door to a Bible believing church in America is much more accountable than an unsaved person who lives in a jungle tribe where there is no gospel testimony. This does not mean that the tribesman will not be judged, but God's judgment will be more severe toward the person who had such opportunity and privilege. Concerning the question: Are the heathen lost? See our notes of [Romans 1](#).

Theological Problem

It might seem that Paul is saying that A PERSON EARNS eternal life BY DOING GOOD. "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" At first glance Paul's answer seems to be, "to earn eternal life you must patiently continue in well doing" (v.7) or "to earn eternal life you must do good" (v.10). In order to solve this theological problem, consider the following points:

1. According to the Scripture, what must a person do to have eternal life (John 3:16; 3:36; 6:47;

5:24; 11:25-26; Acts 16:30-31, etc.)?

2. According to the Scriptures, is eternal life something that a person must earn by doing good works and good deeds or is eternal life a FREE GIFT that even a sinner can receive by faith (Romans 6:23; 5:16-18; Ephesians 2:8-9)?
3. Paul's teaching elsewhere in the book of Romans is that a person cannot get to heaven by his own good works (Romans 3:28) but only by putting his faith in Jesus Christ (Romans 4:5).
4. A very common misconception that people have is that **GOOD PEOPLE GO TO HEAVEN BUT BAD PEOPLE GO TO HELL**. But consider the following:
 - a) How many good people are there (Romans 3:10,12)?
 - b) How many bad people are there (Romans 3:19,23; 5:12)?
 - c) The Pharisee described in Luke 18:9-13 was religious, morally upright and one who practiced many good deeds. According to verse 14, will this "good" man be in heaven?
 - d) The penitent criminal who died next to Christ was certainly a "bad man", and yet, would he go to heaven (Luke 23:42-43)?
 - e) Will ungodly people be justified and saved (Romans 4:5; 5:6)? Will any sinners be saved and go to heaven (1 Tim. 1:15)? YES, HEAVEN WILL BE POPULATED WITH "SINNERS SAVED BY GRACE." If our hopes of heaven depended on how good we have been, NONE OF US WOULD MAKE IT!
5. We must keep in mind what Paul's purpose is in Romans 2:7-10. This section does not deal with SALVATION, it deals with JUDGMENT. In this section Paul is not showing men how to be saved; he is showing men that they are lost and condemned before a righteous Judge. Paul is simply pointing out a fundamental principle of judgment: THAT GOD PUNISHES EVIL MEN AND REWARDS RIGHTEOUS MEN. In this section Paul does not discuss HOW MEN CAN BECOME RIGHTEOUS. He will do this later in Romans when he discusses the wonderful doctrine of justification (see Romans 3:24; 3:28; 4:5; 5:1 etc).
6. In Romans 2:7-10 Paul discusses and describes two groups of people:

<u>CLASS #1</u>	<u>CLASS #2</u>
"Those who patiently continue in well doing" (v.7)	Those who do not patiently continue in well doing (by implication.)
Those who are not selfish (by implication)	Those who are "contentious" (selfish) (v.8)
Those who do not obey unrighteousness (by implication)	Those who "do not obey the truth" (v.8)
those who do not obey unrighteousness (by	Those who "obey unrighteousness"

implication)	
Those who do not do evil (by implication)	Those who "do evil" (v.9)
Those who do good works(v.10)	Those who do not do good works (by implication)

Compare John 5:29 which also sets forth two classes: 1) those that have done good (LIFE); 2) those that have done evil (DAMNATION).

1. JOHN 3:19-21 sheds much light on our problem. Here we are told that those who do evil are those who hate the light (Jesus Christ) and who refuse to come to the light (Jesus Christ). In other words, those who do evil are unbelievers. IN GOD'S SIGHT, the person who does good or "does truth" is the person who COMES TO THE LIGHT (Jesus Christ).
2. 3 JOHN 11 is also very important. "He that doeth good is of God (he belongs to God, he has been born of God, he is a believer in Christ) but he that doeth evil hath not seen God (compare 1 John 3:6: the person who does evil is an unsaved person who has never been born again).

Therefore we must conclude from these passages that CLASS 1 (see above) is made up of born again believers and CLASS 2 (see above) is made up of those who are unbelievers and who have refused to come to Christ.

3. No person in and of himself can do good (Romans 3:12). All of our righteousnesses are as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6). Apart from faith and without faith we cannot please God (Hebrews 11:6 and Romans 8:8). In other words, apart from saving grace, every single person would be in CLASS 2 (see above)!
4. When a person is saved and born again, a wonderful thing happens! God makes it possible for the saved sinner to DO GOOD! This is because God now lives in this person and works through this person to accomplish His good pleasure. (Philippians 2:13). The saved person is able to perform good works (Ephesians 2:10). The believer performs good works not in order to be saved but BECAUSE HE IS SAVED. Good works are the result of salvation not the cause of salvation. As Matthew 7:17-19 clearly teaches, every saved person WILL DO GOOD and every unsaved person CANNOT DO GOOD. For a helpful chart illustrating this see **The Relationship Between Good Works and Salvation**

CONCLUSION: Paul is setting forth the simple principle of judgment that God rewards the good and punishes the evil. Paul is dealing here with how people are judged, not how people are saved. In Romans chapters 3 and 4 Paul will proclaim the good news that God is able to save wicked people by His grace. We will then learn how men are saved.

"**Respect of persons**" = literally, "to receive (a person's) face." God does not deal with a person on the basis of his "face" (surface considerations such as nationality, race, color of skin, wealth, etc.). God looks deeper than the surface. The goddess of Justice in the Greek system had a bandage over her eyes so that she could not see the person who came before her for judgment!

Principle of Judgment #9 -- There is no partiality with God.

Romans 2:12

This continues the thought of verse 11. God is not partial in judgment. In His judgment God does not favor the Jews (His chosen people) over the Gentiles. Both Jews and Gentiles will be judged fairly.

Those who are "without law" (see Romans 2:14) are the Gentiles. Those who had the law (compare Romans 2:17-20) are the Jews. God never gave the law to the other nations (such as Egypt, Assyria, etc.). The law was given exclusively to the nation Israel (see Exodus 19:3-5; 20:2; 34:27 and compare Deuteronomy 4:1-8 and **Romans 9:4**).

According to the first part of verse 12, what will happen to the Gentiles (heathen people) who have sinned without law? (This sheds light on the question, "Are the heathen lost?") According to the last part of verse 12, what will happen to the Jews who sinned even though they had the law? Notice the expression "as many as have sinned." How many have sinned (see Romans 3:23 and 3:9)?

Paul's point, simply stated is this:

IGNORANCE OF THE LAW WILL NOT SAVE THE GENTILE.

POSSESSION OF THE LAW WILL NOT SAVE THE JEW.

Both are condemned before God the righteous Judge!

Principle of Judgment #10 -- A Person is judged according to the light which he has.

To whom much is given, much also is required (see Luke 12:48). The Jew had been given much light. The Jew possessed the law of God in written form (the Ten Commandments, etc.). The Jew will be judged by that law which he has. The Gentile who does not have the law will not be judged by that law. He will not be held accountable for what he does not have. But the Gentile does have something. He has been given some light and he will be judged according to the light which he does have. The Gentiles did not have the law of Moses but there was another law which they did have (as we will see in verse 15).

Romans 2:13-15 (The Parenthesis)

Verses 13-15 are parenthetical (to see this, read verse 12 and then go directly to verse 16). The structure here is that of inverted parallelism (also known as CHIASM) and can be simply explained as follows:

A₁ Verse 12a -- refers to the Gentiles (who do not have the law)

B₁ Verse 12b -- refers to the Jews (who have the law)

B₂ Verse 13 -- refers to the Jews**A₂ Verses 14-15 -- refers to the Gentiles**

[For other examples of chiasmus or inverted parallelism see our notes entitled Englishman's Greek. There is chiasmus in Philemon 5 and in Acts 20:32. Can you identify these grammatical structures?]

Verse 13 -- This verse refers to the Jews who had the law and who heard the law. It is not enough just to have the law. It is not enough just to hear the law. A person must **DO** (keep, obey) the law. Paul's argument is very simple: The Jews had the law (possessed it), they heard the law, but they did not do the law, and therefore the Jews are condemned!

Consider the expression: "THE DOERS OF THE LAW SHALL BE JUSTIFIED" (v.13). Does this mean that a person can get to heaven by keeping God's law? Consider the following facts:

1. Don't forget the purpose of these early chapters in Romans. Paul is demonstrating that all men (Jews and Gentiles alike) are lost and condemned before God. Paul is showing that all men are condemned. Later in Romans he will show what a person must do to be saved (compare Romans 3:28; 5:1; 10:9-13 etc.).
2. Later in the book of Romans Paul makes it very clear that a person is not saved by keeping the law (see Romans 3:20).
3. "THE DOERS OF THE LAW SHALL BE JUSTIFIED" -- let's admit that this is a true statement. Those who keep the law will be saved. Theoretically this is true but practically it will never happen! As men stand before the holy Judge, all lawkeepers will be justified and all lawbreakers will be condemned. The problem is that there is no person who is a lawkeeper, no, not one (compare Romans 3:10-12).

It is possible (theoretically) to gain eternal life by keeping the law. Let's consider what the Bible says about this:

A) In Romans 10:5 we learn that the person who does the things contained in the law shall live (compare Leviticus 18:5).

B) In Matthew 19:16-19 the Lord Jesus taught that to have eternal life you must keep the commandments. In Luke 10:25-28 we have a similar message: Keep the commandments and you will have eternal life.

The problem: Is it possible for a sinful man to keep God's holy law? Has anyone ever kept the Ten Commandments perfectly? Has anyone loved God and loved his neighbor perfectly (compare Matthew 22:36-40)? Is anyone truly a lawkeeper or are we all guilty lawbreakers?

C) Galatians 3:10-13. The man who keeps God's law perfectly is blessed. The man who fails to keep God's law perfectly is cursed and condemned and worthy of death. The good news of the gospel is that Christ died for lawbreakers (Gal. 3:13) and He

took our curse upon Himself.

Thus, Paul's argument: "Listen my Jewish brothers, it is not enough to hear the law. You must obey the law perfectly or else you are under the curse and condemnation of God!" Those who wish to be justified by the law must keep the entire law and must keep it perfectly.

Romans 2:14-15

The Gentiles do not have the written law of God. They do not have the law of Moses. But according to these verses they have God's law WITHIN THEM, "written in their hearts." Although they have never seen a copy of the Ten Commandments, they know that it is wrong to murder, steal, lie, etc. And their conscience condemns them when they do such things. Here are two examples: 1) Acts 28:3-4. These barbarians never saw the Ten Commandments but somehow they knew that murder was wrong and that it was punishable by death! 2) Genesis 26:6-11. This heathen king had never seen the Ten Commandments yet he knew that adultery was wrong.

"**Accusing**" = "You're guilty! What you did is wrong!"

"**Excusing**" = "You're not guilty! What you did is right!"

When they do RIGHT their conscience applauds and cheers. When they do WRONG their conscience condemns them and says "You are guilty!"

Thus, the Jew sinned by failing to do what the law of Moses commanded him to do. The Gentile sinned by failing to do what his conscience told him to do. Both Jew and Gentile failed to live up to the light God had given. Both are condemned before God.

Romans 2:16

(This sentence is continued from verse 12)

"**In the day**" See verse 5 which also describes this day.

"**Secrets**" = hidden things

Principle of Judgment #11 -- Nothing is hidden or kept secret from the Judge.

Compare Hebrews 4:12-13 and Matthew 10:26. In Revelation 20:12 we learn that the books will be opened and all secrets will be revealed. God keeps accurate records of everything that we have ever thought, said or done!

"**By Jesus Christ**" = the final Judge of men will be none other than Jesus Christ Himself (see John 5:22,27). God the Father has committed all judgment to His Son.

Principle of Judgment #12 -- Jesus Christ will be the final Judge before whom all men shall stand.

"**According to my gospel**" -- the gospel which Paul preached included the JUDGMENT OF GOD (compare Romans 1:16-18 and Acts 17:31). The gospel is not presented correctly if nothing it said about the judgment of

God.

Romans 2:17

Paul is now dealing with the JEW, or **THE RELIGIOUS MAN**. Paul's purpose in the early chapters of Romans is to show that all men are condemned and in need of a Saviour (see Rom. 3:9,19,23). In this section he will demonstrate that the religious Jew is condemned. *Note*: Religious people are often self-righteous and generally it is very difficult to convince them that they are condemned and guilty before God (compare Luke 5:29-32; 18:9-14).

Key word in these verses = **the LAW** (see Rom. 2:17,18,20,23,25,26,27). The Jews, in contrast to the Gentiles, possessed God's written law. Since they are accountable for what they have been given, the Jews WILL BE JUDGED BY THIS LAW (Rom. 2:12). As Paul has already told them, it is not enough just to possess the law and hear the law, but what else is necessary (Rom. 2:13)?

"**Called a Jew**" -- These people took great pride in the fact that they were children of Abraham (see Matt. 3:9; John 8:33,39). "Since we are Jews we are better than everyone else. We are God's chosen people!" Some seemed to think that being a Jew would guarantee them a place in heaven. But it is obvious from God's Word that being a JEW does not make a person JUST before God. Being a Jew externally is one thing (being a Jew physically and racially) but being a TRUE JEW spiritually and internally is something else (see Rom. 2:28-29).

"**Restest in the law**" -- relying on the law, resting comfortably. Paul's job in this section is to DISTURB THEIR REST! He is going to pull the comfortable bed out from under them.

"**Boast of God**" = boast in God, "we worship the one and only true God whereas all the other nations worship false gods and idols."

Romans 2:18

"**Knowest His will**" -- The Jews had God's Word and thus they knew His will (compare Luke 8:21 with Matt. 12:50 where we see that doing God's Word is equivalent to doing God's will). It is one thing to KNOW God's will, but it is quite another thing to DO God's will.

"**Approvest the things that are more excellent (superior)**" -- they had a keen sense of moral discernment; they could clearly discern what was right and what was wrong. However, it is one thing to know what is right, and it is another thing to DO what is right. Note: Believers need to have good discernment (compare Phil. 1:9-10).

"**Being instructed (taught) out of the law**" -- they were certainly not ignorant of God's revealed truth. But having God's holy law does not make a person holy! Having God's righteous commandments does not make a person righteous! The key question in the book of Romans is this: HOW CAN A PERSON BE RIGHTEOUS BEFORE A HOLY GOD? It is not by the works of the law (see Rom. 3:20).

Romans 2:19-20

"**Confident**" -- notice the words that Paul has been using to describe these people: resting comfortable, boasting, confident, etc. Paul needs to humble these people, disturb their rest and bring them very low (compare Luke 18:14). It is very difficult to break through religious pride. Religious people are trusting in themselves and not Christ. They are far too comfortable!

"**Confident**" = convinced, persuaded. These two verses paint a picture of the Jew as feeling far superior to others. They were convinced that their perspective was correct. If their hearts had been right with the Lord, then they would have been faithful witnesses to the Lord (Isaiah 43:10-12 and see Deuteronomy 4:6-9), and although not superior to others, they would have been able to be a great help to them in this way:

"We have spiritual sight and are able to help those who are blind."

"We have the light and everyone else is in darkness."

"We are wise and we alone can help those who are foolish."

"We are spiritually mature and are able to help those who are babes."

Paul is setting them up for the big blow! He will bring them very low!

"Form" = refers to what is outward and external (compare 2 Tim. 3:5). Their life looked very good on the surface and their religion seemed fine externally. They could rattle off the Ten Commandments, tell you which animals were clean and which were unclean, etc. But as Paul will point out, a mere formal, external, outward religion is not enough (Rom. 2:28). It needs to be real and internal and "of the heart" (Rom. 2:29). Being outwardly religious does not make a person **RIGHT WITH GOD**.

Romans 2:21-22

Paul is now ready to knock the props right out from under these religious Jews. These people **had** God's law and they **heard** God's law but they did not **DO** God's law (verse 13) and thus they will be judged by God's law (verse 12). Instead of being law-keepers they were law-breakers (verses 23,25).

Before we teach others we need to first teach ourselves (v.21). This is especially true when teaching God's Word. Make sure the message first hits home to your heart before you teach it to anyone else. These Jews failed to practice what they preached: "Your actions speak so loud that I can't hear your words!" What flowed from their life contradicted what flowed from their lips. They taught the commandments but they did not keep the commandments. Compare the religious Jews as described by the Lord in Matthew 23:1-3. Did Jesus tell His disciples to follow their teaching? Did He teach them to follow their actions? Compare also the positive example of Paul in Philippians 4:9 and 1 Cor. 11:1.

Romans 2:23

The Jews thought that they were excellent witnesses for the Lord (see v.19) but they were actually terrible witnesses. They **DISHONORED** God (v.23) by breaking God's holy law. This is explained further in verse 24.

Romans 2:24

"The Name of God" -- The Name of God stands for God's Person and for His Reputation. The Jews were very careful about how they used the Name of God, especially the name JEHOVAH or YAHWEH. They considered this Name to be so sacred that they would not even pronounce it. They would substitute another word for God instead. Yet by the way they lived, they dishonored God's Name.

"As (just as) it was written" -- Paul was thinking of something in the Old Testament which said this very same thing. Consider the following two passages: : 1) Isaiah 52:5; 2) Ezekiel 36:21 (and read also verses 22-23). There is nothing that God is more concerned about than His Name (His Reputation, His glory) and when the Jews were not living right, that did not make God look very good before the nations. If the nations see Israel as a sinful people, then how can they think of Jehovah as a holy God? God's people will always reflect upon God, for better or for worse. A **WITNESS IS ONE WHO FORCES OTHERS TO THINK RIGHTLY ABOUT GOD BY LIFE AND BY LIP**. See the study entitled **What Is a Witness?**

Romans 2:25

"Circumcision" -- the Jews rested comfortably in the fact that they were circumcised. The Jews highly valued circumcision as stated in their Old rabbinical writings: "No circumcised man will be lost." In the days of Paul there was a saying that Abraham stood at the gates of Hades to make sure that no circumcised man was ever cast into Hell. Remember, circumcision was merely an **OUTWARD RITUAL**. It was meant to be an outward sign or seal (Rom. 4:11) of an **INWARD REALITY**. The outward ritual profits a person only if it is accompanied by the

inner reality. The outward rite is worthless (of no benefit or advantage) apart from the inward reality. Apart from this, it is just ritual with no reality, a symbol with no substance.

Romans 2:26-27

"**Uncircumcision**" = this refers to the Gentiles, those who do not have the outward ritual of circumcision.

If the Gentile has the inward reality, then he has the one thing that really counts. **Baptism illustration:** Is it better for a person to believe on Christ and not be baptized or for a person to be baptized and not believe on Christ? If you must choose between the RITUAL and the REALITY, choose the REALITY! Of course, ideally there should be both. The true believer should be baptized in obedience to Christ's command and to show what happened to him the moment he was saved. Our point is simply that it is better to be an unbaptized believer than to be a baptized unbeliever! **Wedding Ring illustration:** the ring is just a sign and symbol of a commitment made before God to be faithful to one's spouse. What would you rather have, a husband that has a ring and is running around with five other women or a husband that has no ring but who is faithful to his wife? The symbol (ring) without the reality (faithfulness) is worthless. Paul's point: LACK OF CIRCUMCISION DOES NOT CONDEMN THE GENTILE AND POSSESSION OF CIRCUMCISION DOES NOT SAVE THE JEW (see Galatians 5:6 and 6:15).

Romans 2:28-29

Note the contrasts found in these verses (outward-inward, flesh-heart, letter-spirit, men-God). It's one thing being a **RACIAL JEW**; its another thing to be a **REGENERATED JEW** (a real Jew!). What is on the inside is what really counts. Paul is preparing us for Chapter 3 where we will see what we are really like on the inside (cf. 3:10-18). For "heart circumcision" see Deut.10:16; 30:6; Jer. 4:4; 9:25-26; Jer.6:10 (circumcise your ear!), Acts 7:51,57; Joel 2:13; Phil.3:3; Psalm 51:6.

Please note: In verse 28, Paul is talking about a Jew (**not a Gentile**) who is a Jew outwardly. He has been circumcised and he is a descendant of Abraham, but he is not a believer (his heart is not right with God). He is a Jew outwardly and physically, but he is not a Jew inwardly and spiritually. In verse 29, Paul is talking about a Jew (**not a Gentile**) who is a Jew inwardly. That is, he is a Jew who believes in God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. He is not only a child of Abraham, but he is a child of God. In verse 29 Paul is not saying that Gentiles are Jews inwardly. Saved Gentiles are never referred to as Jews and they are never referred to as "Israel." For a detailed study of this important distinction, please see **The Use of the Term "Israel" in the New Testament**. "This passage does not teach that all believers are Jews, or that the church is the Israel of God. Paul is talking about those who are born of Jewish parentage and is insisting that the mere fact of birth and the ordinance of circumcision are not enough. There must also be inward reality" (MacDonald, p. 1685).

"Whose **praise** is not of men, but of God." This is a play on words. The term "Jew" is from the name "Judah" (one of the twelve sons of Jacob) which means "may He be praised."
