

Romans 2:13~16

¹²For **as many as have sinned** without law shall also perish without law: and **as many as have sinned** in the law shall be judged by the law;

Verse 12 is a reference to the only two kinds of people in the world...those who have knowledge of the written law of God, and those who do not. The passage identifies them as Jews & Gentiles. The Jews, God's chosen people, the ones whom He has hand selected to give "written revelation of God," the "oracles of Moses." A Gentile is "anyone" who is not a Jew...we beloved, are Gentiles.

In our day, a "Gentile" would be best described as the "un church'd"...the "bible illiterate"... Those who have had little or no affiliation with scripture. And no doubt, this number far outweighs those who do.

But even so...it will have no bearing on God's judgment on them. For God will still pour out his wrath upon ***every soul that has sinned***, with or without the law!

How is that fair? It seems that those who have knowledge of "God's written law" would have a much greater advantage.

Well, in a sense that is true... Something that Paul speaks to beginning in chapter 3:1...

¹What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? ²***Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.***

In one sense, they had a "much greater advantage" because they held in their possession, the mind and will of God! If anyone should have known that salvation came by "God's Grace and Mercy", it should have been the Jews...

In the case of the "Law," the Jew Paul is speaking too, did not have an "advantage" over the Gentile, but rather was at a "disadvantage." Having a thorough knowledge of the law, he had a "much greater responsibility". They had a higher standard to live up to. And Paul reminds him of this fact...

¹³(For not the hearers of the law are just before God, **but the doers of the law** shall be justified.

Having a more thorough knowledge of God's law, only made them more accountable!

Illus: 2 People (1 has to follow 3 commands, while the other has to follow 12) The one with the greater number of commands, has considerable more to do to be considered faithful. So in one sense, the Jews were fighting a losing battle... For them, there was no hope of salvation! They had been given the "written revelation of God!" But along with that privilege, came a responsibility to keep it.

Thus the weight of their burdens were crushing! Thus, that makes what Jesus said in Matthew 11, come alive in our hearts! ²⁸***Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*** ²⁹***Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*** ³⁰***For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.***

(Vs 14~15) ¹⁴For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, (written law of God) do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: ¹⁵Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)

¹⁴*For when the Gentiles ... He uses the Gentiles as an illustration.*

The point of his illustration is to convince the man he is talking too, of how ALL men are guilty of sinning against God!

The Jew “*boasted*” in the written law of God... They saw themselves as “*superior*” to the Gentiles who had not such knowledge. But Paul’s point here in verse 13, is that to have a “*knowledge*” of the law of God, does not justify a person... What declares a man innocent before God is the “*keeping*” of those laws!

Paul reminds him...

¹³*(For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.*

Do you think your great knowledge, your great theological mind; makes you exempt from God’s judgment?

I don’t know whether you know this or not, but “*Knowledge*” has a way of what the bible calls “*Puffing*” you up! Meaning it makes you think your something that your not...

That’s exactly what James said... ²²*But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.* ²³*For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: ²⁴For he beholds himself, and goes his way, and straightway forgets what manner of man he was.*

“*Knowledge*” has a tendency to puff us up! We’d call that “*Having the big head...*” It’s usually best illustrated in someone who has a lot of “*book smarts...*” And usually, that same person who is so “*book smart*” has little or no “*commonsense.*” He may be able to tell you all about the galactic, seismographic neutrons, and yet not have sense enough to get in out of the rain.

Knowledge of God’s law is not the issue... ***Obedience is...***

(Vs 14~15) Paul is pointing to an amazing truth here... The majority of society, those who do not possess the written law of God, are people who don’t steal, don’t commit adultery, don’t kill, they support good... Mind you, these are people who serve no religion! It testifies to the fact, that they contain an internal law that they follow, a law they conform their lives to. A law placed there by God himself...

Paul declares... The “*Law of God*” is just another aspect in the biological make-up of the human being.

¹⁴*For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:*

God’s law is not something imposed on us from without, but woven into the very fabric of our creation.

(Need illustrations of animal instincts)

When God created man, he instilled in him the law of God... It’s the internal hard wiring of man...

Think about man’s senses...

“*Feeling...*” How do you know how something feels? God has placed nerves in our outer extremities, that when we touch something cold, we sense cold, and the same way with hot, and sharp, etc...

“*Smell...*” How do you recognize different smells? How do we differentiate between popcorn and pizza?

“Hearing...” How do you distinguish between sounds? The eardrum is an amazing thing; it senses vibrations and then turns that into data to send to the brain.

Taste...” Same mouth, same tongue, but think about the difference between a juicy stake and castor oil.

When God created all of our “unique” characteristics, hands, nose, ears, eyes... He created with them everything needed for each one to carry out its function.

The same is true with our minds... When God created man’s mind, he created it so, that it would know what is right and wrong. We have the capacity to know the difference between good and evil...

Paul describes this characteristic of man as his conscience...

That “*little voice*” each of us have... And by nature, we tend to follow it...

Sometimes, it “*Confirms*” what you are doing is **Ok**...

Sometimes, it “*Condemns*” what you are doing as **Wrong**...

What Paul says...¹⁵ Which shows the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)

The finished work of the law will result in “*Justice being served.*”

The law does it’s work by condemning the guilty, and or vindicating the innocent!

Paul says that every “*living soul*” knows the difference between right and wrong...

Why does a child lie when questioned about something they did?

For the same reason an adult does...

It reveals, that they consciously know what they did was wrong!

There’s no reason on earth for one to lie, unless your trying to hide something... right? A child lies for fear of punishment, which they know is justice for what they have done. They lie to try and cover error.

Turn with me to John 8...¹Jesus went unto the mount of Olives. ²And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them. ³And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, ⁴They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. **Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what say thou?** ⁶This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with *his* finger wrote on the ground, *as though he heard them not.* ⁷So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, **He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.** ⁸And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. **And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.** ¹⁰When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, **Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?** ¹¹She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, **Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.**

I find it extremely interesting that Jesus never had to point out “*their sins*...”

Their own conscience did the work. Jesus merely mentioned “*Let the sinless*” cast the first stone...and immediately, the conscience went to work, bringing up the guilt of each man in his own mind, and one by one they walked away.

God has placed within every living soul a “*Conscience*”, the written record of what is right and wrong, what he should do and shouldn’t do.

Just as a word of caution... As good as the conscience is, the conscience alone cannot be trusted. Over the years we have greatly damaged it. The conscience is only as good as what it contains and its condition... over the years, many of us have “*seared* ours” thus making us numb to certain things that do no glorify God! So the human conscience alone cannot be trusted.

(1 Timothy 4:2) Paul warns of false teachers who have destroyed their minds with false doctrine!

¹Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; ²Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience **seared with a hot iron**;

The Conscience plays a major role in the life of a Christian...

(Acts 24) Clear Conscience... ¹⁶And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and *toward* men.

(1Peter 3) ¹⁵But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that ask you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: ¹⁶Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

(1 Timothy 1:5) ⁵Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and *of* faith unfeigned:

I wander tonight...if there be anyone here with a “*Guilty Conscience?*”

Maybe there’s something you’ve been packing around for years... Maybe it’s something that has haunting you for some time... Maybe you’re here tonight, and your walking at a guilty distance...

In closing... **What can wash away my sin?**

(Hebrews 9:13~14) ¹³For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies to the purifying of the flesh: ¹⁴How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Nothing but the blood of Jesus... I no longer walk in GUILT of my past...

God has given me a clear conscience, which is only possible through Jesus Christ. Christ has set me free from my guilt and shame!

I have PEACE with God...And as a result, I serve him out of gratefulness...

¹⁶In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.