

34:19

## **SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

Jews, God, Paul, verse, law, sinners, people, sin, heaven, saved, idols, believer, Jew, condemned, gentiles, confidence, gospel, false, question, teach

## **Table of Contents**

Introduction.....	- 1 -
1. The False Confidence of the Jews.....	- 2 -
2. The Final Condemnation of the World.....	- 7 -

## **Introduction**

We are in Romans, chapter 2:17, and we're going to be going all the way through chapter 3:20. As we saw last week, Paul addressed the Romans and told them the bad news, bad news about sinners. And this week, he's not done with his bad news. He's still got more bad news for sinners. Last week, he told us that God is a God of wrath, and that every person is a very bad sinner. Every sinner is held accountable for his sin. And every sinner will stand before God one day without excuse, remember, that's his argument. And everyone is without excuse for denying God, as creation tells us that there is a God.

We saw how Paul condemned the Gentile sinners and showed us how immoral they are, and how they not only sin against God, but also give hearty approval to others who sin as well. All of the Jews would have stood up and they would have applauded Paul. They would have said, Yes, that's right, condemn those wicked Gentiles. Let them know Paul.

Then we come to chapter 2. In chapter 2, Paul turns to the Jews, and he says, you who are Jews are no better than the Gentiles. Why? Because they were practicing the very sins that they were condemning the Gentiles of. And he addresses these Jews from their moral standing. They thought that they were morally upright Jews. And so Paul addresses them from their moral standing because they thought that morally, they were better than the Gentiles. But it wasn't just that they thought that they were better morally, but the Jews also thought that they were better religiously as well. Which is what Paul is going to address in our passage here tonight.

And so we're going to break this passage down into two sections for you. Two sections.

1. First, The False Confidence of the Jews -- we'll see in chapter 2:17 - 3:8. The False Confidence of the Jews.

2. And secondly, we'll look at The Final Condemnation of the World. The Final Condemnation of the World, in chapter 3:9 - 3:20

## 1. The False Confidence of the Jews

So, let's look at our first point here tonight, the False Confidence of the Jews. Look at what Paul says in chapter 2:17.

But if you bear the name "Jew" and rely upon the Law and boast in God, 18 and know *His* will and approve the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law, 19 and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, 20 a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, having in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth, (Rom 2:17-20)

Paul here is addressing the Jews, and Paul's addressing their false confidence that they had, and what they were relying upon for their own salvation. And what was it? What did they put their confidence in for salvation? The Jews?

1. Well first, they had confidence in their heritage. They had confidence in their heritage. That's why he says in verse 17, but if you bear the name, Jew, and rely upon the law, as a Jew, they're relying upon their heritage. They thought that because they were Jews, they were in. They're God's chosen people, so, because they're born a Jew, they get a pass... to heaven, their ticket is punched, and they're on their way to heaven. And they would have told people well, we are of Abraham. We are God's chosen people and based on that heaven is ours. Because we're God's chosen people. They had a false confidence in that.
2. Second, they had confidence in their knowledge of the law of God. They had confidence in their knowledge of the law of God. And they did have a knowledge of the law of God. Remember, God gave the law to Moses, right? He gave the law to Moses, the Jews had the Old Testament Scriptures, and not only did they rely upon the law, but they would know the will of God. And they would approve what God said in His Word. The Jews would do that. They would know exactly what the will of God is, because it's revealed here in the Scriptures, and they were very knowledgeable about the Scriptures that they had.

And you would think that Paul would be giving a commendation to them for this. But as we'll see, Paul is not giving them praise here for their knowledge of the law but condemns them because they don't live out the law that they preach... or that the law that they are supposed to know and preach. Paul saying here, it's not enough just to know about God's Word, you must know God. You must have a relationship with God, through faith in Jesus Christ.

3. Third, they had confidence in the fact that they could teach others the law. They had great confidence. They were great teachers, Paul says, You're a guide to the blind, a light to those in

darkness, an instructor of the foolish, and a teacher of children. They had so much knowledge about the Bible, but they didn't obey it. They didn't obey it, just as James says,

Do not be a hearer only, but be a doer of the Word. (James 1:22)

Paul would tell us here, Do not be a teacher of the Word only, but be a doer of the Word. Don't teach only... you must be a doer of the Word. And James will go on and will say that teachers are held responsible to a higher accountability for what they know and what they teach. (James 3:1)

And the Jews had the true knowledge of God right in their very hands in their Scriptures. But what did they do? They'd corrupted it. They'd corrupted the Word of God, not only by their disobedience to it, but also with the teachings of the rabbis that they had added to it. They added the teachings of the rabbis that had been passed down. And so it was no longer the pure Word of God. But it was their own traditions, that they would add to the truth of God's Word. And so they defiled the truth with their own teachings. And they taught their traditions as the Word of God, which were not the Word of God. And God hates that. He says, Do not add to My Word.

Don't add to it, and don't take away from it. These Jews, these Jews, were confident, they were confident that they were going to heaven because of all of these things. It was a false confidence that they had. Paul then turns on them and begins asking them a series of questions to break them of this false confidence. Look at what he says in verse 21.

*you, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that one shall not steal, do you steal? 22 You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? (Rom 1:21-22)*

and on and on he goes, asking these questions. And what is Paul doing here as he continues to ask these questions? Basically, he's calling them hypocrites. You're a bunch of hypocrites. Sure, you know the law of God. You teach the law of God to other people.

Paul even lays out some of the commandments here. Notice what he says, You teach people do not steal. You teach people don't commit adultery. You even go to the first commandment, you shall have no other gods before me, no other idols. But the Jews had taught the people, that people should not do these things. They practice them themselves. Sure...they taught true doctrine. The Jews did teach some truth. They taught true doctrine in the sense that they would teach the 10 commandments. As we learned this last Sunday, what did they do? They added to it right? 610 more commandments to it.

They taught the 10 Commandments, but then they didn't do them. They didn't obey them. They didn't practice the very doctrine that they taught. They were as Paul would call them hypocrites. They were hypocrites.

Now, just a note on this robbing temples here. Remember, in the Old Testament, when kings came into rule, what did the righteous kings do? What did they do that showed that they were righteous kings? Well, they were the ones who came in and they took down the idols. The righteous kings would come in and take down the idols, listen to what Josiah did and 2 Kings 23:6,

... He brought out the Asherah from the house of the LORD outside Jerusalem to the brook Kidron, and burned it at the brook Kidron, and ground *it* to dust, and threw its dust on the graves of the common people. (2 Kings 23:6)

What did he do he destroyed the idols of the pagans. And the Jews would have known that that should be done. How do they know this? Listen to Deuteronomy 7:25.

God says the carved “images of their gods you are to burn with fire; you shall not covet the silver or the gold that is on them, nor take it for yourselves, or you will be snared by it, for it is an abomination to the LORD your God. (Deut 7:25)

Then the Babylonians come in, we have the Babylonian captivity, God punished Israel for their sin. And we see then more of an abhorrence of idolatry. It says if after the captivity of Babylon, the Babylonian captivity, after that they had learned their lesson. The Jews had somehow learned their lesson. And we even saw this a few weeks ago, as we've been working our way through Mark, right? With the coins that had Caesar on them. The Jews hated that. It was idolatry to them, idol worship. So, it seems as if they have learned their lesson, they hate idols.

But Paul says, *You who hate idols, do you rob temples? (Rom 2:22)* What does he mean by this? Well, it's very possible that Paul has in mind here, what the Jews would do, and that they would go and plunder pagan temples, because they knew that it was wrong to worship those idols. And so, the Jews would say, they're going to do God's work. We're going to do God's work, and we're going to go in and we're going to plunder the temples. But instead of destroying the idols, what the Jews would do is they would then sell the idols to the Gentiles for profit.

How would the Gentiles then view the Jews for doing this? They would see the Jews as hypocrites, and they would conclude then that their God is false. And the Gentiles would blaspheme the name of God, because of the witness of the Jews, because the Jews did not live up to what they were teaching.

How often do we hear about this today? You read of scandal after scandal of pastors and Christians today who are living in disobedience to God. And the unbeliever will look at us and look at our witness of our God. And they would conclude, why should I worship their God? They're no different than we are. Why should we worship their God?

Christian, do you live out what you believe? We're called to live out what we believe. That's Paul's indictment against these Jews. But he's not done. Not only does he bring an accusation against them because of what they don't practice, but now he's going to attack what they do practice, namely the ceremony of circumcision. See, Paul can hear the protest of the Jews are saying, Well, okay, so we're not perfect. Okay, Paul, we're not perfect. But we are descendants of Abraham, because we're the circumcised ones.

So that gets us into heaven, right? In verses 25-29, Paul addresses this false confidence that they had because of their religious practices. Now, the Jews took the ceremony of circumcision very seriously. Why? Because of the covenant that God made with who? Abraham. Paul says,

For indeed, circumcision is of value if you practice the law (Rom 2:25)

In verse 25 there. And circumcision was a value, what was the value of it? It was a constant reminder of their covenant relationship with God, that God made a covenant with Israel. God made a promise. When God makes a promise, God does not break his promises. He is faithful to His promise. But the Jews were lawbreakers, and therefore the ceremony was of no value to them. It's as if they had become uncircumcised, meaning that these Jews were no better than the pagan Gentiles. They're no better.

In fact, a Gentile who was uncircumcised, but a believer in God, and then therefore obedient to the law of God is greater than these religious Jews who were circumcised and who didn't obey God. Because it's not the outward flesh that makes someone a Christian. It's the heart that is born again, by the Spirit of God, that brings someone into a relationship with God.

How does this apply today? How does this apply to us today? There's a lot of people today who think that they are Christians because they were baptized as a child or grew up in some denomination. And some church. And if I can just be frank here for a moment. This is a very popular view here in our state. Here in Minnesota, everyone's either a Catholic or a Lutheran, or a Christian. And it seems because of something that's happened to them when they were a child, or something they were born into. Baptism, confirmation, they said a prayer when they were little, whatever it is, it's as if all Minnesotans are Christians, and all Minnesotans are getting into heaven.

And I believe that this is a lie that Satan has many people believing here in our state. It's a lie straight from Satan. It's the Doom of religion. It's as if we don't like to think that our friends and our neighbors and our children are lost sinners who are going to hell. But the reality is they are. That's the reality.

And listen, they're not on a faith journey. The only one that's on some kind of faith journey is believers in Christ, who have faith in Him. Not all people are on a faith journey. You're either in or you're out. You're either saved, or you're unsaved. But Satan wants us to believe that neighbors, and all of these people that are born into religious systems are all going to heaven. They're not. They're not.

And what is so bad about believing that? If we believe that, then will we ever go and preach the gospel to them? We won't. But that's their greatest need. Listen, Christian, your neighbor, your family member, who is an unbeliever, their greatest need is the gospel. Don't think that because they're born into your family, that they're getting into heaven. That's not how it works. And that's what Paul is addressing with these Jews here. Nope, that's not how it works Jews, and you were even specifically chosen by God, as a nation. That's not how it works. And we can't believe that.

Because if we do, then we will never share the gospel with them. But that's their greatest need. And so we have to understand, we have to have a biblical mindset. And an understanding that when we talk

with someone, what we should believe about them is, first of all, that they are an unbeliever. Don't think that they're a believer first. Because if you think that way, will you ever get around to the gospel?

You won't. Look at them as an unbeliever who needs the gospel. And then when you begin to share the gospel with him, if they really are a believer, what will they do? embrace you. Well, I believe the same thing... I'm a brother or sister in Christ, and then you know, alright? We're together.

I had coffee with a man less last week, who was a Catholic. I sat across the table from him. And I asked him, how does someone get into the kingdom of God? And he said, through baptism, and I said, false, wrong. Let me tell you how somebody gets into the kingdom of God, and I shared the gospel with him. And I told him, I said, Listen, you and I are not on the same team. We're not together. And we'll never be together unless you repent of your sin and put your faith in Jesus Christ.

You see if I saw this man, as someone who was a believer, because he's a very religious man, who serves his Catholic Church greatly, but if I saw him as a believer, I would never have given him the gospel. But that's his greatest need, because he thinks that he's going to earn his way into heaven through baptism. It's a false gospel, and a lot of people are believing it.

We have to have a biblical understanding and a biblical mindset as we talk with people and realize and recognize that there are many religious people in our state that are not getting into heaven, because they're not believers. But our job is to give them the gospel and tell them how they can get into heaven. That's our job.

Well, Paul here, he could hear his accuser saying, Oh, well then was God's choosing of us meaningless then, since God chose us Jews was His choosing meaningless? And so, Paul continues on in chapter three. And he asked another question, then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision? And what's his answer? Look at what he says in verse 2. He says, [great in every respect. \(Rom 3:2\)](#)

Now is Paul telling them here that they are saved? No, he's not telling them that they're saved. But he's telling them that they have an advantage over the Gentiles because they have been entrusted with the oracles of God. They have the truth from God. They have God's law, they have the truth that the Gentiles did not have.

Again, did this save them? Them having the oracles of God? Is that what saved them? No, it didn't. You owning a Bible doesn't save you. You reading your Bible doesn't save you. It's repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. Faith in Him alone, that saves someone.

But Paul here anticipates that he's going to get some pushback from some saying, Well, if Jews are not saved, then doesn't that mean that God is not faithful in His promise? Because remember the promise that God made to Abraham? Which is a good question to ask because they want to stand for the integrity and the faithfulness of God. But here's the thing, when God made the promise to save Israel, He was not talking about every individual Jew being saved. He was talking about national Israel being saved.

That's the salvation that God is talking about. We'll get into that Romans chapter 9-11, about God's future plan to save national Israel. But that doesn't mean that every Jew just because he's born, a Jew is automatically getting into heaven. Just like everyone, even as a pastor, my boys are not automatically getting into heaven because dad's a pastor. It's not how it works. They need the gospel. And eternal life is only through faith in Jesus Christ, not being born into a religion.

Paul then responds in verse 4, responding to their accusation, God not being faithful, because Jews are going to go to hell for not believing. Look what he says in verse 4, he says,

May it never be rather let God be found true, though every man be a liar. (Rom 3:4)

What he's saying here is God is faithful, and God will save national Israel. He promised that and God cannot lie. But you individually must repent and place your faith in Christ in order to be saved.

Now in verses 5-8, Paul anticipates these unbelieving Jews disagreeing with him. And notice that he's anticipating their foolish, carnal questions, which is why notice what he says at the end of verse 5, where he says,

I'm speaking in human terms. (Rom 3:5)

He's saying to them, "Look, I know how foolish you are, I know your carnal mind. So I'm going to speak to you and in carnal terms, to help you understand this and grasp this." And here would be their argument, Paul's anticipating the argument. And here's what he would anticipate them saying this: Paul, are you saying that the God then is glorified through Israel's sin? And if so, then why does God punish sinners? Wouldn't that be unrighteous of God to do that? And if sin brings glory to God, then shouldn't people just sin more, so that God can get more glory?

How does Paul answer, Paul says, look, God is faithful. And He will punish the sinner because He's a holy and righteous God. That's why God punishes sinners. And for those of you who are claiming that I'm telling you to sin more so that God can be glorified more. Look at what he says there. He says, your condemnation is coming.

It's on you. That's not what I'm saying here. God is faithful, to always fulfill His promises, and you are accountable for your sins. That's what he's saying to the Jews here. Every one of you is accountable for your sins, all of the Jews are. And just because someone is a Jew, or a religious person, doesn't automatically get them into heaven. So that's the false confidence of the Jews.

## **2. The Final Condemnation of the World**

Let's look at our second point here tonight, the final condemnation of the world. Paul now turns to address the Christians in Rome, who are the recipients of this letter. Notice in verse 9, he says, "We". Notice that there "we" no longer "you" -- talking to the Jews, you Jews -- but "we"...Christians. And up to



this point, here's what Paul has done so far in his letter, he's condemned the immoral pagans. He's condemned the moral Jew and the moral Gentile, and he's condemned the religious Jews now.

So he asked another logical question, what then? Are we better than they? That is to say, are we Christians better than those groups of people that you have just condemned, Paul? Are we better than them? And implied in this question is, is our human nature better than theirs? Are we morally superior to them? And that is why we were led to salvation?

What's his answer? Not at all. No, don't think that. Not at all. For we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin, everyone's under sin. Everyone is guilty of sin. Don't think that you're somehow morally superior, because you're now in a relationship with God because you've repented of your sin and put your faith in Christ. Because you understand what salvation is, you're not morally superior to anyone. And so don't think that.

And then he proves it by quoting from the Old Testament, both from the Psalms and from Isaiah. Which means what? This is not new, right? This is not new teaching. been around for a long time. God has already told us all the way back in the Old Testament about this, which means the Jews should have known this as well. What has God said here?

1. First, says there is none righteous, not even one. There is none who understands there is none who seeks for God. All have turned aside, together, they have become useless. There is none who does good, there is not even one.

Basically, in a nutshell here, man is unable to know God and comprehend His truth. Man can't do it. It's impossible for man. Man does not seek after God but seeks after self-gratification. Not a single one of us in this room sought after God. Because what Paul is doing here is universally condemning sin, and sinners and saying "We are all sinners, and no one in here has sought after God. You know what happened? God sought after us. God changed our hearts. We didn't change our hearts. God is the one who did it."

That's why this lovely hymn Amazing Grace...you know, the lyrics... I once was lost, but now I am, what? Found by who? God, He found me. I was a lost wretched sinner. And God was the one who radically changed my heart. He's the one who did a work in me to save me. I didn't do anything. I did nothing to earn my salvation. I did nothing to deserve it. God is the one who did it. Because I wasn't seeking after God. Notice the writer of the hymn, doesn't say I once was lost, but I found God. Not what he says. I once was lost, but now I am found... because no one seeks after God.

2. Second, verse 13.

**"THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE,  
WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING,"  
"THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS";  
14 "WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS"; (Rom 3:13-14)**



To paraphrase this, what comes out of man's mouth is not good because his heart is not good. Remember, that's exactly what Jesus said in Matthew 12:34,

for the mouth speaks out of that, which fills the heart and the inner man reeks of an awful stench, like an open grave.

And we as people, we devour other people because we love ourselves. We as fallen sinners, love to go and attack other people because it builds us up and makes us feel better. That's what Paul is saying here. That's how wretched we are. We are wretched sinners.

3. Third he says in verse 15.

“THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD,  
16 DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS,  
17 AND THE PATH OF PEACE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN.” (Rom 3:15-17)

This has to do now with man's actions. And if you want to see this put on display just turn on the news tonight. You'll see this very thing put on display. In fact there's a case right now where they're looking for a man who fiancé was found dead. Just turn on the news and you'll see the depravity of man right before your very eyes. There it is.

Where does this come from? It comes from the heart of man. And why does man act out in this way? Look at what he says in verse 18. This is key. Look at this, verse 18,

There is no fear of God before their eyes. (Rom 3:18)

That's why man does what man does, because man has no fear of God. That's the true spiritual condition of all fallen men. They do not fear God. There's no reverence for God, and there's no dread of violating God's law. There's absolutely no fear of God. It's like those people who run from the police. No fear of authority, no fear of consequences. Life is all about them. There's no fear. And Paul is saying to a greater degree. The reason why man is in this place, it's because man has no fear of God.

But we must fear God. We must be people who fear Him. Then Paul finishes up his condemnation in verses 19 through 20.

Now we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law so that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may be accountable to God. (Rom 3:19)

What does he conclude here? Everyone is guilty, and everyone's accountable. And everyone is going to stand before God, no one will be able to escape the judgment of God, not a single person ever will. And he concludes, no one is justified by being good. Because no one is good. That's what he's just concluded. No one is good. None. Absolutely. No one is good. Everyone has broken God's law, and therefore all of us are guilty.

And then he closes with this last phrase, which one might ask, if no one can be saved by the law, then what's the purpose of the law?

We can't be saved by keeping the law, then why did God give us the law? What's his answer? To show us we're sinners, to show us that we are sinners. And what should that do then in us? It should drive us to Christ. That should then be our response. When we look at the law and we go, I can't do this God, He goes, That's right. You can't. I can't save myself, God. That's right. You can't. But I can. And I'm willing, if you come to Me, repent of your sin, and put your faith in Jesus Christ, and you will have eternal life. That's the purpose of the law.

Now, will Paul ever get to the good news of the gospel? Come back next week, and we'll find out.

Let's pray. Father, thank You for our time here this morning and studying these truths of Your Word. Father it does put a mirror up to us. And it shows us that we're guilty. But Father, we thank You that You didn't leave us in that state. But that You sent Your son Jesus, to die for our sins, to be buried, and to rise again on the third day, so that we can say that there is no victory of death, death has no victory over us. Death, where is your sting? There is no sting because we will be with You for all of eternity, not because of what we have done but because what You have done in our hearts. Thank You for the amazing, amazing, good news of the gospel and what You have done in our hearts and I pray that You would help us to live out these truths. To bring glory and honor to Your name Your name alone. Please be with us now as we go to small group. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.