

Romans Chapter 2: (17- Chapter 3 verse 8)

Lesson Plan

1. Integument of the Jews
2. Condemnation of rigid formalism
3. Answering some objections and dispute objections from the Jews

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,

So here Paul turns his attention to the Jews. He is writing a letter to the Roman Christian whom he has never met and there in Rome the Christianity usually starts with the synagogue with people who are Jews and then there will be gentiles joining them. So we have indicted gentiles in chapter 1 verse 18 to about 31, talked about judgment last week in general and now He homes in on the religious people, the people who are Jews and he talks about who they are, “you call yourself a Jew”. The new Jew means praise to Yahweh, the elected chosen ones. So when we talk about Jew it is basically praise to Yahweh. There are about five covenantal blessings that we will talk about here. In the old days there was William Norman Ewer who basically was a journalist; he was rather sarcastic of the Jews. He said, “How odd of God to choose the Jews.” Someone else replied, “But not so odd as those who choose a Jewish god yet spurn the Jews”

This is scandal of particular narratee. Someone wrote, “it is scandalous that in some way God cares for the Jews more than anyone else. This is known as scandal of particular narratee. That it was through a particular nation that God especially made himself known, but then there was also at a particular time in a particular place and a particular person that God fully revealed His purposes and presence. What people don’t get and don’t like. If you talk to non-Christians is that why the Jews. People are not happy, this is not fair, why would God choose a particular people, particular time and give them all this privilege and this is Exodus 19. It is after God has saved them from Egypt.

5 ‘Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine;

6 and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’

So it is true God chooses them as a special nation. They will be a kingdom of priest and a holy nation. It is a special privilege. Mark Twain in 1899 said had these words to say which are quite interesting,

"If the statistics are right, the Jews constitute but one quarter of one percent of the human race. It suggests a nebulous puff of star dust lost in the blaze of the Milky Way. Properly, the Jew ought hardly to be heard of, but he is heard of, has always been heard of. He is as prominent on the planet as any other people, and his importance is extravagantly out of proportion to the smallness of his bulk.

His contributions to the world's list of great names in literature, science, art, music, finance, medicine and abstruse learning are also very out of proportion to the weakness of his numbers. He has made a marvelous fight in this world in all ages; and has done it with his hands tied behind him.....

The Jew saw is now what he always was, exhibiting no decadence, no infirmities, of age, no weakening of his parts, no slowing of his energies, no dulling of his alert but aggressive mind. All things are mortal but the Jews; all other forces pass, but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality?"

He is talking about one of the most persecuted race on the face of the earth. For almost 2000 years they do not even have a country of their own except in 1948 where they reconstituted. Six million of them were massacred by Hitler and time and time the Persians wanted to massacre them and then time and time again and today they still are there and all powerful. It is unbelievable, the Romans have passed away, the Greeks have passed away, and their great empires but the Jews still remain. So the fact is this is the Abrahamic Covenant and we studied in Genesis. Jews are actually a testimony to God's faithfulness.

1. So they are chosen by God.
2. They rely on the law

The most important thing can give you is the law. The law is an expression of who He is and what you should be because you belong to Him. This is what Psalm 19 expresses about the law.

7 The law of the Lord is perfect,
reviving the soul;
the testimony of the Lord is sure,
making wise the simple;
8 the precepts of the Lord are right,
rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the Lord is pure,
enlightening the eyes;
9 the fear of the Lord is clean,
enduring forever;
the rules of the Lord are true,
and righteous altogether.
10 More to be desired are they than gold,
even much fine gold;
sweeter also than honey
and drippings of the honeycomb.
11 Moreover, by them is your servant warned;
in keeping them there is great reward.

The law enlightens, it changes us. To the people we are suppose to be and that is why the most important calling of Israel being given, chosen by God is that God gave them His law. So therefore the other covenantal blessings that they boost in God, very personal relationship with God. They know his will, because they know His law, so therefore in any given situation when you get a crisis, you know what to do because you know His will. That is why when we teach you the bible here, you go back to your groups and in your groups you will do case histories. Because the case histories are expression of God's will, you apply the law into the will. So there are five covenantal blessings of the Jews and then because they are chosen, because they have the law, because they boost in God, because they are told of His will, they know what is right. Because of these things this is what happens to them in relationship to other people

19 and if you are sure that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness,

20 an instructor of 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?

23 You who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law.

24 For, as it is written, "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you."

Now here basically their ministry to others is that there are guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, instructor of the foolish, teacher of children, these are all metaphors based on their intrinsic benefit. So there is a purpose. God gave them these benefits for a particular purpose. When we look in Exodus, if therefore you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant you shall be my treasured possession among all the peoples to be kingdom of priest and holy nation.

Isaiah 2

2 It shall come to pass in the latter days
that the mountain of the house of the Lord
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and shall be lifted up above the hills;
and all the nations shall flow to it,

3 and many peoples shall come, and say:
"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
to the house of the God of Jacob,
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths."
For out of Zion shall go the law,

and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

4 He shall judge between the nations,
and shall decide disputes for many peoples;
and they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war anymore.

It means they are the one who will bring light to the whole world according to the Abrahamic Covenant. So out of Israel the whole world will be blessed. I give you as a covenant for the people a light for the nations to open the eyes of the blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon from the prison of those who sit in darkness. So Israel is to bring the knowledge of God to the world that was the plan. They do not have the law just to keep it to themselves. The vision of God is still the same. He calls one man, one family, 12 tribes to the whole world and the whole idea is to open up the eyes of those who are blind. So we will have general revelation as we are non-pagans, general revelation and conscience in Jews but the Jews have extra, they have special revelation. Now despite that they have double standards.

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?

23 You who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law.

So at every single point where they were supposed to be a light to nation instead they are terrible embarrassment. This is indictment of the Jews.

24 For, as it is written, “The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.”

This actually is taken from Isaiah 52 which says

4 For thus says the Lord God: “My people went down at the first into Egypt to sojourn there, and the Assyrian oppressed them for nothing.

5 Now therefore what have I here,” declares the Lord, “seeing that my people are taken away for nothing? Their rulers wail,” declares the Lord, “and continually all the day my name is despised.

So the people of Israel are taken into oppression by Egypt and Assyrian and when the Egyptian took Israel into captivity they were blaspheming God, because in those days if your nation lost against another nation that means your God is not so strong, your God is supposed to protect you. So, therefore God’s name is lost because of this sinfulness of his people and they are all be taken under oppression. So the original intent, Isaiah 43

3 For I am the Lord your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.

I give Egypt as your ransom,
Cush and Seba in exchange for you.

4 Because you are precious in my eyes,
and honored, and I love you,
I give men in return for you,
peoples in exchange for your life.

5 Fear not, for I am with you;
I will bring your offspring from the east,
and from the west I will gather you.

6 I will say to the north, Give up,
and to the south, Do not withhold;
bring my sons from afar
and my daughters from the end of the earth,

7 everyone who is called by my name,
whom I created for my glory,
whom I formed and made.”

So it is actually of special people whom he loves, whom he wants to treasure and instead they bring disgrace. There was a Barna study in US in 2013 and they gave an interview of about 1000 over people on what they thought about Christians, Christ like behavior. Only about 14% of people thought Christians had Christ like attitude and behavior, the rest thought that they are hypocrites or legalistic. So Christians actually if they suppose belong to God, you actually bring disrepute to God like the Jews. Their sins will still be judged, whether you got election, you have the law, you have special relationship with God, your sins will still be judged. You cannot run away from that. That is what Paul is saying.

The other one is formalism.

25 For circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law, but if you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision.

26 So, if a man who is uncircumcised keeps the precepts of the law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?

27 Then he who is physically uncircumcised but keeps the law will condemn you who have the written code and circumcision but break the law.

So the sign of the covenant is circumcision and according to the Jews, no circumcised person will go to hell. This is a quotation from Rabbi Levy, 1830. ‘At the last Abraham will sit at the entrance to Gehenna (hell) and will not let any circumcised man of Israel go down there.’

This is how they were actually dependent on circumcision at the time. So formalism is condemned.

Verse 25 states that circumcision of value if you obey the law, but if you break the law your circumcision becomes uncircumcision. This is a spiritual saying. So basically they are in the

same boat, whether you have got special revelation or you don't have special revelation, you are both in the same boat, they are sinful.

26 So, if a man who is uncircumcised keeps the precepts of the law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?

This means that if you keep the law you really do not need circumcision.

27 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.

29 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.

Imagine you have got one person, who wears his wedding ring all the time, but he is a serial adulterer, another man is married but he does not wear his wedding ring and he is faithful to his wife. So the one without the wedding ring actually is like wearing the wedding ring, even though we do not see it. So that is what he is saying. So circumcision is a sign of belonging to the chosen people of God, is a matter of the heart and the matter of spirit. So now he introduces in chapter 2 this idea of spirit, which was not been mentioned before and you will see him pickup this mention of spirit much later on when you go to chapter 8, when it talks about how the spirit moves in our hearts and makes us follow him, but meanwhile when it looks spiritual, let me give you some background to this.

Deuteronomy 30:

6 And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.

So if we are talking about Jews in those days, just depend on circumcision that is not true. Moses has already written in Deuteronomy that there is a circumcision of the heart. There is actually a spiritual transection in the heart which he expects and that is a sign that you will love God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might. Circumcision of the heart that is where he looks forward to.

Ezekiel 36:

It has groundbreaking prophecy. It is based on this that we receive the Holy Spirit. There are not many other references in the Old Testament like this.

25 I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you.

26 And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

So now Ezekiel years before Paul is actually talking about a time where he will clean them, he will forgive them and he will put his spirit inside and the purpose of the spirit is what. When reading Old Testament time and time again God deals with Israel. One of the biggest problem is Israel is disobedience. Every prophet is known as covenant enforcer, like a sheriff come in. Every time they always break. The entire Old Testament is a story of failure again and again and again, until God get so fed up and he says, "One day I will come, I will give you the spirit". The purpose of the spirit was not just to speak in tongues and prophesize and everybody likes you, and you heal people.

27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

Judgment is based on our works. If we do not walk according to his statues, you do not obey his rules, you die. Whether you got the law, those with the law will die with the law, those without the law will die without the law, but either way because you are a Jew, you are a Christian, you do not escape. The whole purpose of the spirit is that you walk according to the law and a lot of people have forgotten that.

The problem with religion, most religion like the Jews. Three things:

1. it emphasizes physical over the spiritual, circumcision,
2. it emphasizes secondary matters while ignoring the matters of primary importance.
3. it promotes self-interest above all.

This is common to every single religion even Christianity and we need to be very careful because like the Jews they fell into this trap. For example, it emphasizes physical over the spiritual. Dalai Lama said, "You cannot look for prostitute, you cannot go to prostitute pay them money and have sex but if someone else can pay for you it is fine".

So they emphasized physical over the spiritual. If we look at the Talmudic Jews, the Talmud is the commentary on the Torah. They do not work on Sabbath but they pay somebody else to do it. So this is physical. They say, the murder of a Jew is a capital offence and one of the three most highness sins, the other two being idolatry and adultery. So they are against murder. So if we look at what they write in the Talmud.

when it comes to a Gentile, 'one must not lift one's hand to harm him, but one may harm him indirectly, for instance by removing a ladder after he had fallen into a crevice ... there is no prohibition here, because it was not done directly:

Can you imagine a Jew believing in that, it is Talmudic Jew and there are people alive. A Jew who murders a gentile is guilty only of sin against the laws of heaven, not punishable by court of law. Can you understand why they start shooting Palestinians there, because they will not be punishable in the eyes of religious people or by court, it was only heavens. It is a horrible-horrible hypocrisy. Shiite Muslims will beat themselves in order to get closeness to God. Many-many years ago a ship was called a Good Ship Jesus. This ship was used to ship slaves, it was owned by Sir John Hawkins by appointment from the Queen of England and they put all these slaves and they called this ship, Jesus. The ship will never sink. All over

the same, you are driving car you put Jesus there or you have a tattoo of Jesus, we prioritize physical over spiritual, this is hypocrisy. There is a Jesus brigade in Iraq today, there is no police there so they all formed a brigade and they are fighting the ISIS.

The other things that religion emphasizes secondary matters while ignoring matters of primary importance.

There is a Holy Door, once in 25 years the pope will open the door, and Pope Francis actually opens it and if you go inside there you will receive salvation.

Holy communion, Joseph Prince, if you have ever been to a New Creation Church, they will tell you to take Lord's Supper every day and the reason why you do Lord's Supper every day is

29 For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself.

30 That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died.

He is saying without discerning without understanding and eating and drinking of the body and blood of Christ will bring health, wealth and holiness. What is there to lose? So actually people of New Creation Church take Lord's Supper very often because they confer health to you. So what he has done he has distorted it, basically ignoring primary matters. We take Lord's Supper as a matter of remembrance, not for our own selfish health.

There is celibacy. The Bible never talked about celibacy and yet there are certain churches that talk about celibacy to make you closer to God.

Seven Day Adventist believe that in 1844 Jesus Christ went into the Holy of Holies in in heaven and is now conducting investigation, it is like the 1MDB investigation, into the lives of all who have ever professed belief in Christ. He is judging all their works, by the standard of God's Law. All those whose lives fail to measure up to the standard of the Law are rejected and condemned as not having true faith. Those whose lives meet that standard and thus manifest the perfect character and righteousness of Christ are recognized as having true faith, and so their sins are "blotted out." So, therefore Jesus Christ is upstairs investigating you, taking affidavits, taking to witnesses to find out whether you measure up, whether you are naughty or nice or whether you stick to the Seven Day Adventist diet and they have shown that Seven Day Adventist live longer than most of us. Average age they die is like 80 something, very healthy. So again it is secondary things which are important to them. Food and laws but actually the primary thing of Christ is ignored.

There was Pope Urban who started the first crusade to the Holy Land. He said, "Killing of non-Christians is a holy act which will cleanse the killer's sins. ISIS has the same motto nowadays. So they borrowed it from Pope Urban. So again secondary matters are important.

Religion promotes self-interest above all things.

One in 50 priests is a pedophile is a fact and they do not care about the children they look after. This is common. The Buddhist monk also in Amsterdam, a big scandal erupted some time ago and a lot of them were involved in molesting children of the opposite sex and also

children of the same sex. In UK there was a recent article in 2013 reviving temporary marriages. If you are a Shiite Muslim, you can have Nikah Mut'ah, which means you get married for 10 minutes, because they do not want prostitution, they do not want immorality, so therefore you say you can marry for 10 minutes or one hour and after that you can divorce after that and the British Muslim wants it. Why they want it, because they cannot go dating? Their parents don't allow go dating. So we get Nikah Mut'ah, we go and have date and have sex and whatever and come back and divorce. So this is really odd.

It promotes self-interest above all things. There is a picture of ISIS and a testimony of a woman who was raped, it shows *"any captive woman will become Muslim if 10 ISIS fighters rape her"*. So all fighters are running to rape her, so that she becomes Muslim.

This is what they write, *"Enslaving the families of the kuffar [unbelievers] and taking their women as concubines is a firmly established aspect of the Sharia Law [Islamic law] that if anyone were to deny or mock, he would be denying or mocking the verses of the Qur'an and the narrations of the Prophet."*

This is actually not true, but they are using it for self-interest. Interestingly enough in Indonesia they said Aceh had Sharia Law. Sharia says to never touch non-Muslims right, today they whack one poor woman 30 times, she is a non-Muslim, for selling alcohol. They always say start with a Muslim but it will come to all of you eventually. Crossover Project, he takes church money to help his wife pop career and they call this is called evangelism. If our evangelist campaigns were like that I think a lot of people will turn up. So again personal interest, all the time is personal interest.

Creflo Dollar wants donations for 65 million dollar private jet, so this is where our missions offering should be going. Everything is always-always personal. The first crusades were all about politics. They were never about spiritual things. So this is religion, you cannot avoid religion, because human beings are wired, it is always self-interest, it is always secondary matters more important than primary, it is always physical over spiritual, that is our default mode and many of us are exactly like that. If you say you are not like that, you are lying. You depend on your own efforts, so therefore Romans chapter 2 breaks it down for us that we too need to avoid such thinking.

What about the Jews? To begin with the Jews were entrusted with the auricles of God which is the Bible,

3 What if some were unfaithful? Does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God?

4 By no means! Let God be true though every one were a liar, as it is written,

**"That you may be justified in your words,
and prevail when you are judged."**

So therefore basically it is not true that God has abandoned Jews. The benefit is that they have all people of the world have received the law of God.

What if some were unfaithful? So therefore here is God, here is the covenant and that is Israel. What he is arguing is that if they are unfaithful because of their failure to keep the covenant to accept the Messiah does that make God fail at all. So the unfaithful Jews are

condemned and in condemning them are we saying God is unfaithful by no means. The general nature of God versus human being is not only that God is faithful when some of them are unfaithful but He remains true even if every person should prove unreliable. So by no means that God be true though everyone is a liar. So therefore even though they have broken the covenant God does not break his covenant and he writes that you may be justified in your words and prevail when you are judged. This actually comes from Davidic Psalm 51, verse 4 after his confession of adultery with Bathsheba. Now this is a very strange verse. Okay what he is saying is that David sinned against God by having sex with Bathsheba and he was punished for it and he is saying that you may be justified in your words to prevail when you are judged. So therefore what he is saying is that God is faithful and righteous and His faithfulness and righteous shows loyalty, He saved the Jews but God is also faithful and righteous when He does judgment and He condemns the Jews. For example, you say to your child to not touch that person's hair then you whack your child because your child has touched the hair. Let say you touch that person hair and do not whack your kid, are you righteous? You are not righteous; you will still love the child. So there is a tension, we believe on this part if God is loyal he will save us, he will be with us but we do not believe that this judgment is actually loyalty. It does not matter who you are, if you mess up, God is going to punish you basically. So some people try to twist it around.

5 But if our unrighteousness serves to show the righteousness of God, what shall we say? That God is unrighteous to inflict wrath on us? (I speak in a human way.)

It means he is just postulating someone say, which means a robber makes a cop look good. That is not true.

6 By no means! For then how could God judge the world?

7 But if through my lie God's truth abounds to his glory, why am I still being condemned as a sinner?

8 And why not do evil that good may come?—as some people slanderously charge us with saying. Their condemnation is just.

So basically this is not true. God's righteous, His faithfulness and promises are reflected in two sides of a coin, one is salvation and one is judgment, which means are we God's chosen people, are we the church, given the auricles of God, are we on a highway to heaven or going to hell. If you are going to heaven gravity does not apply to us, is that true? What he is saying is that God's glory is shown when you have salvation and when you are also judged. If we look from a human point of view, God's glory is shown when I get salvation. When we are not saved, is God's glory been shown, no that is a humanistic approach to the gospel. A proper approach to the gospel starts from God that God is totally correct. He is totally just. So therefore what Paul is saying is that if you stand on God's promises. Do you know the promises have got judgment and salvation. In Old Testament when they have a covenant, on one side of one mountain and the other mountain and they stand right in the middle and then God says on one side if you obey me you will be blessed. You go and disobey me you be cursed. When you stand on the promises of God, you are standing on both sides. Most of us think that we are standing on the promises of being blessed. The faithfulness of God is reflected in judgment as well as salvation, very-very-very-very important understanding. So this God that you walk away from in Chapter 2 now is a scary God. He is only interested in one thing, His glory, why? Because He is almighty God. His glory is the only glory that

matters. None of you matter compared to Him. He may love you and we will talk about that in chapter 3 but chapter 2 establishes the glory of God is so important that is the number one thing where the whole world revolves around, nothing else is more important.