



Religious but Lost!

Romans 2:17-29

Introduction

- In Romans 2:1-16 we learned the standards by which God will judge each person when we stand before Him.
- He will judge: 1) by the Truth (vs. 1-5); 2) by our Works (vs. 6-10), and 3) by the principle of Impartiality (vs. 11-16).

Introduction

- His judgment, fair to all, is based on the light each person has received (12-15), and He will examine the motives (“secrets”) of each person (16).

Introduction

- In today's passage we are looking at the religious person who is trusting in his religious background, training, and religious activities to save him.
- There is probably no one harder to help spiritually than a religious person.

Introduction

- The religious person mentioned in these verses is Jewish.
- Paul shows that neither correct belief nor religious rituals will save a person.

Correct Belief will not save you!

Correct belief presupposes **ACCESS** to the truth.

- Paul mentions three ways the Jews had access to the truth.
 - I. They were **connected** with the truth by birth (2:17a)
“Indeed you are called a Jew,”

Correct Belief will not save you!

- The Jews had the religious privileges that came by birth within the covenant nation of God.
 - The prophets were Jewish.
 - The Scriptures were written by Jews.
 - Jesus was a Jew.

Correct Belief will not save you!

1. They were **connected** with the truth by birth (2:17a).
 2. They were **confirmed** in the truth by training (2:17b-18).
- “and rest on the law, and make your boast in God, ¹⁸ and know *His* will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law,

Correct Belief will not save you!

- **“and rest on the law,”** - they were trusting in their possession of the law to show their favored position with God.
- **“and make your boast in God”** - the Jews took great pride in their monotheism and in their role as God’s chosen people.

Correct Belief will not save you!

- ¹⁸ “**and know *His will*,**” – the revealed will of God as given in Scripture.
- “**and approve the things that are excellent,**” – they agreed with God’s viewpoint in the Law.
- **being instructed out of the law,** - they were taught the law.

Correct Belief will not save you!

1. They were connected with the truth by birth (2:17a).
2. They were confirmed in the truth by training (2:17b-18).
3. They were confident of the truth because of their privileges (2:19-20)

Correct Belief will not save you!

¹⁹ and are confident 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 babes, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law.

Correct Belief will not save you!

ACCESS to God's truth (the Law – the Pentateuch) brought to the Jewish people many privileges!

- **CONNECTED** with the truth by birth;
- **CONFIRMED** in the truth by teaching;
- **CONFIDENT** of the truth because of training.



Correct Belief will not save you!

ACCESS to God's truth (the Law – the Pentateuch) brings with it –

ACCOUNTABILITY to the Truth
(2:21-24)

- Religious privileges, as priceless as they are, will not save you

Correct Belief will not save you!

- Religious privileges will only compound the judgment on you if you do not assume the responsibility that comes with privilege.
- **Luke 12:48** “For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required.”

Correct Belief will not save you!

- Because of their spiritual privileges, having access to the truth, they were accountable to the truth.
- This left the privileged Jewish people guilty of two serious sins:
 - I. **They are charged with SPIRITUAL INSINCERITY (21-23)**

Correct Belief will not save you!

²¹ You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal?

²² You who say, "Do not commit adultery," do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?

Correct Belief will not save you!

²³ You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law?

- By knowing the truth and being able to tell others how to live, but failing to exemplify it in themselves, they are guilty of insincerity.

Correct Belief will not save you!

1. They are charged with **SPIRITUAL INSINCERITY** (21-23)
2. They are charged with **SPIRITUAL INSENSITIVITY** (24)
 - A “nice ” sinner who makes no pretense of being a Christian, is better than a unsaved “professed” Christian!

Correct Belief will not save you!

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

Correct Belief will not save you!

- What impact is your life making on those around you?
- Remember, correct belief, knowing God's truth, will not save you unless you also live in accordance with the truth.

Religious Rituals will not save you!

- The religious person usually feels that he has a special standing before God not only because he has **correct beliefs**, but also because he has participated in certain **religious rituals** he believes are important.

Religious Rituals will not save you!

- In Romans 2:25-27 Paul mentions one religious ritual: circumcision.
- By application, it could also have been baptism, the Lord's supper, or any other religious practice.

Religious Rituals will not save you!

- The value of a religious ritual is directly related to two things:
 1. The Law that God has given (v 25)
25 For circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law; but if you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.

Religious Rituals will not save you!

- A religious practice is meaningful only if it is truly the outward expression of an INWARD EXPERIENCE.
- If it is not expressing true love and devotion to God inwardly, the outward expression may be kept, but it has no value with God.

Religious Rituals will not save you!

- The value of a religious ritual is directly related to two things:
 1. **The Law that God has given (v 25)**
 2. **The Light that a person has (26-27)**

Religious Rituals will not save you!

²⁶ Therefore, if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision?

Religious Rituals will not save you!

²⁷ And will not the physically uncircumcised, if he fulfills the law, judge you who, even with *your* written *code* and circumcision, *are* a transgressor of the law?

Religious Rituals will not save you!

- If a religious person disobeys the clear teaching of the Word of God, in effect, that person cancels everything for which a divinely given ritual stands.

Religious Rituals will not save you!

- On the other hand, a person, who has never received or practiced an outward ritual of his faith due to lack of knowledge or training, **if his heart is right with God**, he is really enjoying all that the ritual stands for.

Religious Rituals will not save you!

The value of a religious ritual is controlled by the **condition** of a person's heart (2:28-29).

²⁸ For he is not a Jew who *is one outwardly*, nor *is* circumcision that which *is outward in the flesh*;

Religious Rituals will not save you!

²⁹ but *he is* a Jew who *is one* inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise *is not* from men but from God.

Religious Rituals will not save you!

- Paul tells us who is a “Jew” in the sense that he/she is a true follower of God like Abraham and therefore right in the eyes of God.
- It is the person who has had their heart “circumcised” – put their faith in Jesus and is “born again.”

Religious Rituals will not save you!

- What ultimately matters to God is what is true about our “heart.”
- Has there been a deep, thorough, inward work of the Spirit in our hearts to change us?

Religious Rituals will not save you!

- The real Christian, like the real Jew, from God's point-of-view depends on what has happened inwardly, not just outwardly.
- The practice of religious rituals has value only as it reflects an inward reality!

Conclusion

- Today we looked at the religious person who is trusting in his religious background, training, and religious activities to save him.
- There is probably no one harder to help spiritually than a religious person who is not truly born again.

Introduction

- We have seen that that neither **correct belief** nor **religious rituals** will save a person.
- We are saved only by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ. (Eph. 2:8)
- If we are saved, our lives will show it by our obedient biblical lifestyle!



Religious but Lost!

Romans 2:17-29