



3 Aug 2025

Chapter 2:12-29



### God's Judgment and the Law

<sup>12</sup> For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. <sup>13</sup> For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified. <sup>14</sup> For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. <sup>15</sup> They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them <sup>16</sup> on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus. <sup>17</sup> But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God <sup>18</sup> and know his will and approve what is excellent,

v13: Hearers vs Doers? Does this imply that faith is less than works?

v14: law to themselves - "is a stereotyped expression used by Greek writers with reference to the man of superior virtue who does not need the guidance or sanctions of external law."<sup>1</sup>

v15: excuse – in the sense of defending or making a defense against false accusations. Note the natural reality that "both" accuse and excuse occur in the conscience.

v14-16: How does Paul's argument also demonstrate a natural knowledge of God apart from His Word?

<sup>1</sup> Middendorf, M. P. (2013). [Romans 1-8](#) (D. O. Wenthe & C. P. Giese, Eds.; p. 183). Concordia Publishing House.

<p>because you are instructed from the law;<sup>19</sup> and if you are <u>sure that you yourself</u> are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness,<sup>20</sup> an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of <u>children</u>, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth—<sup>21</sup> you then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal?<sup>22</sup> You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?<sup>23</sup> You who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law.<sup>24</sup> For, as it is written, “The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.”<sup>25</sup> For circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law, but if you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision.<sup>26</sup> So, if a man who is uncircumcised keeps the precepts of the law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?<sup>27</sup> Then he who is physically uncircumcised but keeps the law will condemn you who have the written code and circumcision but break the law.<sup>28</sup> For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical.<sup>29</sup> 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.</p>	<p>v19: literally: “you have persuaded yourself and remain convinced.”</p> <p>v20: children – Greek literally means “infants” but also can mean the immature.</p> <p>v17-20: buttering them up for what is to come.</p> <p>v21-24: c.f. Matthew 23:1–4 &amp; Matthew 7:1–5</p> <p>How do these gospel stories help us understand the attitudes that Paul is talking about here?</p> <p>v29: apart from receptive faith, the intended blessing of circumcision is forfeited.<sup>2</sup></p> <p>v29: c.f. Hebrews 12:1–3 (run with endurance); Matthew 6:1–4 (don’t practice righteousness to be seen); &amp; Colossians 3:23–24 (work for the Lord not for man)</p>
--	---

Perhaps Paul might rework this section for Christians today to read something like this:

If you bear the name “Christian” and rely upon your own works and even boast in what a good person you are before God, I want to ask you, “Do you really do all that God requires?” (cf. 2:17). True, “Baptism now saves you” (1 Pet 3:21) through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Rom 6:1–4), but your Baptism is of value only if the faith given you in your Baptism is alive and so generates a desire to do God’s will (2:25). If not, even unbelievers who do carry out the good which God requires will turn to condemn you (2:27). So who is a real Christian? One who has been baptized merely on the outside and makes an outward show of going to church and doing good? No, a true Christian is one who has the Spirit and faith in Christ on the inside, where no one but God can see. Such a person does not do good to receive praise from people, but in humble response to the gracious God, who will then offer his word of praise on the Last Day: “Well done, good and faithful servant” (Mt 25:21, 23; cf. Rom 2:28–29).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Middendorf, M. P. (2013). [Romans 1–8](#) (D. O. Wenhe & C. P. Giese, Eds.; p. 208). Concordia Publishing House.

<sup>3</sup> Middendorf, M. P. (2013). [Romans 1–8](#) (D. O. Wenhe & C. P. Giese, Eds.; pp. 214–215). Concordia Publishing House.