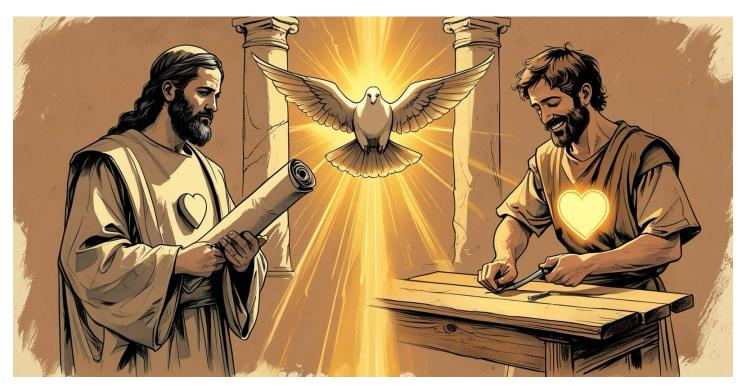


Proclaiming God's righteousness
Our New life in Christ
God's Faithfulness to Israel
& Our response to God's mercies

3 Aug 2025 Chapter 2:12-29



God's Judgment and the Law

¹² 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. ¹³ For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified. ¹⁴ 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. 15 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 ¹⁶ on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.

¹⁷ But if <u>you</u> call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God ¹⁸ 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."

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?

¹ Middendorf, M. P. (2013). *Romans 1–8* (D. O. Wenthe & C. P. Giese, Eds.; p. 183). Concordia Publishing House.

because you are instructed from the law; 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."

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. 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.

v19: literally: "you have persuaded yourself and remain convinced."

v20: children – Greek literally means "infants" but also can mean the immature.

v17-20: buttering them up for what is to come.

v21-24: c.f. Matthew 23:1-4 & Matthew 7:1-5

How do these gospel stories help us understand the attitudes that Paul is talking about here?

v29: apart from receptive faith, the intended blessing of circumcision is forfeited.²

v29: c.f. Hebrews 12:1–3 (run with endurance); Matthew 6:1–4 (don't practice righteousness to be seen); & Colossians 3:23–24 (work for the Lord not for man)

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).³

² Middendorf, M. P. (2013). *Romans 1–8* (D. O. Wenthe & C. P. Giese, Eds.; p. 208). Concordia Publishing House.

³ Middendorf, M. P. (2013). *Romans 1–8* (D. O. Wenthe & C. P. Giese, Eds.; pp. 214–215). Concordia Publishing House.