

Romans 2:17 – 3:8

Introduction.

- A. The scope of the first three chapters.
 - 1. Condemnation of the heathen (1:18-32).
 - 2. Condemnation of the moralist (2:1-16).
 - 3. Condemnation of the religious (2:17 – 3:8).
- B. Paul's main task.
 - 1. To show the whole world under sin.
 - 2. To show God's saving grace.

I. Religious status does not account for salvation (17-24).

- A. The Jew depends on his status before God (17-20).
 - 1. "Jew" first used in 2 Ki. 16:6 ("men of Judah" NIV).
 - a. Near the time of the exile.
 - b. A term of national and religious pride.
 - 2. The chosen people.
 - 3. Characteristics.
 - a. Relies on the Law.
 - b. Boasts of his relationship with God.
 - c. Is instructed by the Law.
 - i. Knows God's will.
 - ii. Approves the superior things (cf. 1:32).

- d. Has, in the Law, the embodiment of knowledge and truth.
 - i. He is a guide to the blind.
 - ii. He is a light for those in darkness.
 - iii. He is an instructor for the foolish.
 - iv. He is a teacher of infants.

B. The failure of the religious man (21-24).

1. Does not practice what he preaches (cf. Mt. 23).

- a. Condemns theft, yet steals.
- b. Condemns adultery, yet commits adultery.
- c. Abhors idolatry, yet robs temples.
 - i. Destroys heathen temples but keeps the silver and gold.
 - ii. Forbidden in Dt. 7:25-26 (cf. Acts 19:37).
- d. Brags about God's law yet dishonors God.

2. Causes the name of God to be blasphemed.

II. True status before God 25-29).

A. The sign of circumcision.

- 1. Established with Abraham (Ge. 17).
- 2. A sign of the covenant.
 - a. Through the faith of Abraham (Ge. 15:6).
 - b. By the grace of God.

B. Physical circumcision alone is inadequate.

- 1. Gentile believers obey the law in the manner of Abraham.
- 2. The uncircumcised, therefore, become as though circumcised.

C. True circumcision is of the heart – spiritual (Ps. 51:17).

1. Signifies the close relationship with God.
2. Established by the Holy Spirit.
3. Seeks God's approval, not man's.

III. God's faithfulness (3:1-8).

A. The advantage of being raised in a home and among a people where the Law is known.

B. Parental unfaithfulness does not nullify God's faithfulness.

1. To his character.
2. To his truth.
3. To his righteousness (cf. Ps. 51:4)

C. "My sin magnifies God's righteousness."

1. Sin is always condemned.
2. God brings good out of evil, but never excuses evil (Lk.17:1).
3. God glory doesn't need the help of sinful man.

IV. Conclusion: all mankind stands condemned before God.