

RELIGIOUS, BUT LOST

Romans 2:17-3:8

For yrs we've heard about educational crisis:

"Children don't read as well as they used to!"

"They can't add or multiply like they used to either!"

Solution: Get ***"back to the basics!"***

Similarly, God's people have to understand what we believe and why

That's Paul's concern writing Rom—about Gospel

Teaching ***"good news"*** begins with ***bad*** news.

We all deserve God's judgment.

That's why good news is so good!

We've considered

Pagan people who live for themselves and just want God to leave them alone!

Good, morally upright people who try to do what's right.

1 **Pagans who reject God & truth are guilty**

2 **People who try to do good are guilty**

None of us can earn our way with God!

WHAT ABOUT RELIGION? *Won't that help us?*

JUDGMENT OF RELIGIOUS PEOPLE 2:17-3:8

Based on experience of ***Jewish*** religious people.

If anyone had a basis to make it, Israel did.

They're chosen & set apart by God, as His own people.

Jewish people have enough knowledge of God to condemn them, but not enough to save them.

Cause of *their* Judgment:

External conformity without internal transformation

Privileged External Internal
Position + Ritual ≠ > Transformation

Privileges & rituals can't change us inside!

PRIVILEGED POSITION OF RELIGIOUS PEOPLE 2:17-

20 [p. 1554] *"If you call yourself a Jew; if you rely on law & brag about your relationship to God; ¹⁸if you know his will & approve of what is superior because you are instructed by the law; ¹⁹if you're convinced you're a guide for the blind, a light for those in the dark, ²⁰an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of infants, because you have in the law the embodiment of knowledge & truth..."*

8 qualifications Jewish people claim, to brag about privileged relationship with God

(1) You call yourself a Jew; 17

(2) You rely on the law

(3) You brag about your relationship with God;

(4) You know God's will 18

(5) You approve what's best (superior) because

(6) You're instructed by the law;

(7) You're a guide for the blind; 19-20

...light in dark, instructor of foolish, teacher of infants

Attitude re. *outsiders*: blind, foolish, babes, in darkness

People who don't know way turn to you for help

(8) You have, in the law, knowledge & truth

GUILT OF RELIGIOUS PEOPLE 2:21-29

"So, let me ask you..." 5 Crucial Questions 21-24

You teach others, do you teach yourself? 21

You preach against stealing, do you steal?

**You say people shouldn't commit adultery,
do you commit adultery?**

You hate idols, do you rob temples?

[Jacob–Rachel rob from Laban;

Hate idols; but aren't above taking to *sell* to others?

You brag about law, do you dishonor God breaking it?

They're guilty of the things they speak against.

**Summary: 24 “God's name is blasphemed among pagan
Gentiles because of you.”**

Their lifestyle is worse than pagans around them!

Foolishness of trusting external ritual: 25-29 *“Circum-cision has value if you observe law, but if you break law, you've become as though you'd not been circumcised. ²⁶So then, if those who're not circumcised keep the law's requirements, will they not be regarded as though they're circumcised? ²⁷The one who isn't circumcised physically, yet obeys the law will condemn you who, though you have the written code & circumcision, are a lawbreaker. ²⁸A man isn't a Jew if he's only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward & physical. ²⁹No, a man's a Jew if he's one inwardly; & circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by written code. Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God.”*

Circumcision is symbol: we belong to God's family.

Wedding band doesn't make us married. It's a sign we are married. No value to wear symbol on finger, when out with another woman. *Symbol's* only meaningful if our heart is

committed to our spouse.

Circumcision can't get us into God's family.

It's a *symbol* to show we already belong to God.

If heart isn't committed to God, symbol's meaningless.

That's why **PAGANS MAKE FUN OF GOD'S PEOPLE!**

Like unfaithful husband with wedding band, they're playing around with God, but not committed to Him

Whether symbol's circumcision, baptism, Lord's supper, anything we do in Jesus' name.

Symbols have no power to save us.

They're outward signs of what's inside.

External ritual can't change internal condition

So what's point of being religious? (Specifically *Jewish*)

3 ?s raised as objection to his view of religious people

ADVANTAGE OF RELIGIOUS PEOPLE 3:1-4

(1) If this is true, ...what's value of being Jewish?

1-2 "What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision? ²Much in every way! ^{1st}, they've been entrusted with the very words of God"

Jews DO have an advantage:

They're entrusted with God's Word.

They're chosen by God to spread His Word to world

They know more about God than Gentiles do.

–makes them proud–But doesn't change hearts.

(2) If this is true... what's effect of Israel's failure?

Does their failure negate God's ability to keep His

promise? 3-4 *“What if some didn’t have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God’s faithful-ness? ⁴Not at all! Let God be true & every man a liar. As it’s written: “So that you may be proved right when you speak & prevail when you judge.”*

“If they don’t fulfill their part, is God’s promise useless?”

God remains faithful, no matter how we respond!

[=> 3rd question, presented as excuse: =>]

EXCUSE OF RELIGIOUS PEOPLE 5-8 *“If our un-righteousness brings out God’s righteousness more clear-ly, what shall we say? That God’s unjust in bringing his wrath on us? (I’m using a human argument) ⁶Certainly not! If that were so, how could God judge the world? ⁷Someone might argue, “If my falsehood enhances God’s truthfulness & increases his glory, why am I still con-demned as a sinner?” ⁸Why not say—as we’re being slanderously reported as saying & as some claim we say—“Let us do evil that good may result”? Their con-demnation is deserved!”*

**(3) If God’s glorified through our failure,
how can He judge us? =>**

Our failure isn’t God’s fault!

We can’t claim: since God’s righteousness is seen by our failure, we shouldn’t be condemned.

“God’s being glorified through it! He should be grateful!”

God will be glorified through response to our rebellion.

That doesn’t excuse rebels for rejecting Him.

Conclusion: What difference does it make?

It drives us back to same conclusion:

Whether we're religious or pagan...

Whether Jews, Gentiles, Baptist, Methodist or Catholic

...we all have a problem!

God says we're ALL "**UNDER SIN!**"

Privileged + External ≠ Internal

Position

Ritual

Transformation

It can't produce *righteousness*

Religion isn't the answer.

Religion will *never* make us good enough!

The flesh is just as ugly when it's dressed for church, as when it's dressed for the jungle!

Religion doesn't solve the problem of the flesh!

Israel had *God's* revelation!

God spoke to them. *You can't get better than that!*

When we put self in the center, it doesn't work!

...we all have a problem! We're "**UNDER SIN!**"

HOW SHOULD MESSAGE AFFECT OUR LIVES?

It should make us realize: ***we can't make it on our own.***

It should drive us to Jesus

Religion won't cut it with God.

We must come to Jesus! Are YOU trusting Him?