

Studies In Romans

(Romans 2:17-29)

1. Were there Jews in the church in Rome that rested in the Law of Moses?

Yes: *"Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God"* (Romans 2:17).

- They were called Jews, which had become a dangerous confidence builder (Matthew 3:7-10 and John 8:31-47).
- They rested in the Law (John 5:45 and John 9:28-29).
- Boasting of being of God while not living up to that boast was not a new problem (Isaiah 48:1-8).
- As we proceed in this lesson, let's remember that the Jews were God's people under the Old Law (Zechariah 8:23). Now, under the law of Christ, there is no designation of them being above anyone else (Romans 10:12 and Galatians 3:26-29).

2. Did they know the Lord's will at least from the Old Law?

Yes: *"And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law"* (Romans 2:18).

- Knowledge is not good if you're not doing it (John 13:17 and James 1:21-25).
- "Approvest" (Strong's # 1381) is translated "discern" in a context which has application to this point: *"(54) And he said also to the people, When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it is. (55) And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass. (56) Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time? (57) Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right"* (Luke 12:54-57)?
- The good that you can take from this is that, though they did not live it, they were capable of proving out what was right (Ephesians 5:10 and I Thessalonians 5:21).
- The fact that they were instructed out of the Law was not their downfall (II Timothy 3:15-17).

3. Were these Jews confident that they could lead and teach others?

Yes: *"(19) And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, (20) An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law"* (Romans 2:19-20).

- These aren't the only Jews that thought they were guides when they really were not (Matthew 15:14 and Matthew 23:16-26).
- Taking on the role of a teacher is a serious matter (James 3:1).
- You have to live up to the role (I Timothy 4:13-16 and Titus 2:7-8).

4. Were these Jews practicing what they taught?

No: *“(21) Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? (22) Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege” (Romans 2:21-22)?*

- It is hypocrisy to teach the truth if you’re not practicing it (**Matthew 7:1-5**).
- There are those who say and do not (**Matthew 23:3-5** and **Luke 11:46**).
- These Jewish teachers were stealing, which could be taken in several ways (**Micah 3:11** or **Matthew 23:14**, etc.) while teaching rightfully against stealing (**Ephesians 4:28**).
- While committing adultery, which again can be literal or a figure of speech (**Jeremiah 7:9-10** or **I Chronicles 5:25**) they rightfully taught against it (**Exodus 20:14** and **Romans 13:9**).
- Idolatry was another area of hypocrisy that they should have fled from (**I Corinthians 10:14**).
- “Sacrilege” is the act of robbing temples (Strong’s # 2416). This could be taken in several ways too (**II Kings 24:10-13**, **Malachi 3:8**, or **Matthew 21:12-16**).

5. Though they boasted of the law, did they keep it?

No: *“Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God” (Romans 2:23)?*

- Through breaking the law they dishonored God and caused others to err (**Amos 2:4**).

6. How was the name of God blasphemed among the Gentiles because of these Jews?

In that the Jews boasted of keeping the law, but broke it, therefore the conduct of the Gentiles judged them because they did what was right naturally (were more faithful though not under the Law): *“(24) For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written. (25) For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. (26) Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? (27) And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law” (Romans 2:24-27)?*

- When God’s people act foolishly God is made to look bad (**II Samuel 12:1-14** and **Ezekiel 36:20-23**).
- They needed to learn about circumcision, but they were not alone in that (**Galatians 5:3-6** and **Galatians 6:15**)?
- Circumcision was one thing that denoted the difference between God’s people and those who weren’t (**Ephesians 2:11-12**).
- Those on the outside judging God’s people (**Ezekiel 16:48-52** and **Matthew 12:38-42**).

7. Did God want them to be Jews outwardly or inwardly?

Nope: *“(28) For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: (29) But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God” (Romans 2:28-29).*

- The outward matters (**Matthew 5:14-16**), but not as much as the inward (**I Samuel 16:7** and **Luke 11:37-39**).
- What is going on inside of you is what will shine through your actions (**Proverbs 4:23** and **Matthew 12:34-35**).
- God had always wanted inward results through His word (**Deuteronomy 30:6**, **Jeremiah 4:4**, **Ezekiel 18:31**, **Acts 7:51**, and **Colossians 2:10-12**).
- Praise ought to be of God rather than man (**John 5:44**, **Galatians 1:10**, and **I Thessalonians 2:4**), but many Jews seemed to be stuck here (**John 12:40-43**).