

SALT Church

Romans 2:17-29

“Praise from God, not Men”

August 17, 2025

“The Greatest Book Ever Written”

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Recap:

- In Romans 1 we learned
 - Paul has a desire to visit the church in Rome.
 - He speaks of their great reputation throughout the world **as a gospel teaching and evangelistic church.**
 - He expresses his desire to visit so that both **he and they would be encouraged.**
 - The first half of chapter 1 is filled with pleasantries, hope, and power in the gospel.
 - Then things change
 - In the second half of chapter one Paul expresses The Lords judgement against sin.
 - It was in this second half that we began to feel the weight of this letter.
 - It was also there that we learned about the wrath of abandonment.
 - Basically stated, it is the earthly judgement on man when he rejects truth and refuses to repent.
 - It begins with:

- Rejection of the knowledge of God. (The rejection of truth)
- The creation of your own god (A god that agrees with you on everything)
- The perversion of the mind and body (Why? Because you determine morality)
- This eventually leads to a depraved mind which is the wrath of abandonment.

Romans 2

Paul continues to build upon his opening statements

- This chapter is directed at two different groups.
- The first group are the hypocrites or the moralist
 - The pretenders
 - This group spends an incredible amount of time making sure that what people see is they want them to see.
 - They hope that they will be judged by what others see rather than what is really going on in their hearts.
 - Pastor Devin taught us about the danger found in the moralist point of view
 - It will be used against them on judgement day because they knew the truth and continued in sin.
 - **So, the first part of chapter 2 was aimed at the moralist or the hypocrite now the last half will be aimed at those who draw security in their Jewish heritage.**

Romans 2:17-29

¹⁷ But if you bear the name “Jew” and rely upon the Law and boast in God,

- As I sat and pondered this verse many thoughts flooded my mind.
- It seems to me that the Jews do not enjoy the name Jew as they once did.
 - It seems that the world now refers to them more as Israelis rather than Jews.
 - Perhaps this is left over from WWII when the term Jew seemed to be said in a negative since.
- **It is clear that Paul who is a Jew doesn’t see the term “Jew” in the negative since, unless he does... (more on this in a moment)**
 - Antisemitism seems to be on the rise as the Jews are being blamed for economic issues and global threats of war.
 - I need to remind you that sin is at work and as it completes its work more and more destruction will occur.
 - We know this because we have studied the book of Revelation.
 - We know how this will end, and we know the role that the Jewish people will play.

The name “Jew” comes from one of the 12 sons of Jacob.

- That son’s name was Judah which means “praise”.
- God’s chosen people are supposed to be people who praise His great name.

Like I said before, it seems that the Jews identify more with the name Israeli.

- Meaning that they identify more with the land rather than their God.
- Some of you may remember that Jacob's name was changed by God after he refused to release Jesus in a divine encounter in Exodus 32.
- From that encounter Jesus renamed Jacob, and his new name became Israel.
 - Israel means “**fights or wrestles with God**”
 - It seems that the Jews have been fighting or wrestling with God for a very long time.
 - **BACK TO OUR TEXT**

¹⁷ But if you bear the name “Jew” and rely upon the Law and boast in God,

- This as you know is the mindset of the Jew.
 - “***We are God's chosen people, for He has given us the Law***”
- Boasting in God is good and righteous but relying upon the law is a death wish.
 - The law cannot save.
 - There are 613 different laws given in the Old Testament.
 - All 613 of them only have the power to condemn.
 - There is no grace and no mercy in any of them.
 - There is great wisdom, peace, and protection in them but break one and you are condemned to an eternity separated from God in the lake of fire.
- So, what we see is Paul setting the hook for his Jewish reader.

- He understands them for he once was just like them.

¹⁷ But if you bear the name “Jew” and rely upon the Law and boast in God, ¹⁸ and know His will and approve the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law,

- Listen to these key phrases already used by Paul to set the hook:
 - “Bear the name”
 - “Rely upon the law”
 - “Boast in God”
 - “Know His will”
 - “Approve of essential things”
 - “Instructed in the Law”
- To the Jewish reader, they would be agreeing with Paul in all of this.
- In their minds this would be good and more importantly what was expected of them.

We continue:

¹⁷ But if you bear the name “Jew” and rely upon the Law and boast in God, ¹⁸ and know His will and approve the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law, ¹⁹ and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, ²⁰ a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, having in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth,

- I don’t know about you, but I am nervous for these guys.
 - *What if Paul was writing this letter to us, to me?*

- ***But if you bear the name Christian, know the Word of God, claim to love Him, claim to approve and agree with what is in the Bible, are confident in your understanding of the Bible, a teacher to those who do not understand, a corrector of those who are immature in the faith, and embody the knowledge of truth...***
 - If Paul had written this to me, I am immediately on the defensive because I know this is a set up. (A TRAP)
- Does Paul know more than he is letting on?
 - Are the Jews taking liberties that they should never take?
 - Are they boasting in their heritage and pretending to be followers of God while at the same time practicing evil?
 - It feels that way doesn't it.

Paul has set the hook and now he will help them swallow the hook.

²¹you, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself?

You who preach that one shall not steal, do you steal?

- This was a real issue within the Sadducees and the Pharisees.
 - Apparently, they would receive offerings and keep some if not all of the offerings for themselves.
 - In my observation the top three reasons men lose their ministries are:
 - Money
 - Sex
 - Power

- King Solomon said in Ecclesiastes that “there is nothing new under the sun!”

Back to Romans 2

²² You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery?

- The religious leaders of Paul’s day got around this by granting divorces for almost any reason.
 - In one list I read it included that it was permissible to divorce your wife if her cooking was bad!
 - Jesus said that the only permission for divorce was adultery meaning a sexual encounter outside of the marriage.
 - He would go on to say that if you lust after someone who is not your spouse you have already committed adultery in your heart.
 - So, we see the religious Jews lowering the standard while Jesus was raising the standard.

²² You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?

- Apparently this was another issue within the Jewish community.
 - They would rob pagan temples in the name of the Lord then turn around and sell the idols for a nice prophet.
 - If you have ever studied the Old Testament you know how God feels about that.

²³ You who boast in the Law, through your transgression of the Law, do you dishonor God? ²⁴ For “the name of God is

blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,” **just as it is written.**

- What in the world Paul?
- This is a far cry from Romans 1:8

⁸First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world.

- **What do we do with this?**

- Who taught Paul this way of correction?
 - **“What do we do with this?”**
 - We receive it as a warning.
 - No matter what God does in this church we must remember that ***pride always goes before destruction.***
- “Who taught Paul this way of correction?”
- Paul tells us in Galatians 1

Galatians 1:11-19

¹¹For I make known to you, brothers, that the gospel which I am proclaiming as good news is not according to man. ¹²For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

¹³For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. ¹⁴And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being far more zealous for the traditions of my fathers. ¹⁵But when God, who had set me apart from my mother’s womb and called me

through His grace, was pleased ¹⁶ to reveal His Son in me so that I might proclaim Him as good news among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, ¹⁷ nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus.

¹⁸ Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Peter and stayed with him fifteen days. ¹⁹ But I did not see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother.

So, we see that Paul was disciplined directly by Christ and based upon his confession of a three-year period before he visited with the other Apostles, we believe that it took approximately **three years of discipleship** for Paul which was **the same amount of time Jesus poured into the other Apostles.**

The next question is why would Paul build the Roman church up before he mentioned the things that they were doing wrong?

- The simple answer is “Jesus did it this way”

Revelation 2:2-5 (Jesus speaks to the Church of Ephesus)

² ‘I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot bear with those who are evil, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false; ³ and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, you also have not grown weary. (That is the build up)

4 But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. 5 Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first. But if not, I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place, unless you repent.

- We see the Biblical pattern of correction.
 - Praise, point out the sin, call to repentance.

So far, we are still in the ***“point out the sin phase”***

We continue with our text.

25 For indeed circumcision is of value if you practice the Law, but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.

- What in the world Paul?
 - How did we jump from “dishonoring God among the gentiles” to circumcision?

Circumcision is a big deal to the Jews.

- Circumcision was a big deal to God.

When God went to Abraham and made a covenant with him to bless him and all of his seed (The Jews) Abraham’s requirement and every male that came after him was required to be circumcised.

- If they chose not to be circumcised they were cut off and cursed by God.

Genesis 17:9-12

⁹ God said further to Abraham, “Now as for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your seed after you throughout their generations. ¹⁰ This is My covenant, **which you shall keep, between Me and you and your seed after you: every male among you shall be circumcised.** ¹¹ And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you. ¹² And every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations, one who is born in the house or one who is bought with money from any foreigner, who is not of your seed.

- ***What an odd requirement.***
 - Why only men?
 - Who is going to see it?
 - Wouldn't a tattoo work better?
 - What's the point?

Without going into too much detail allow me to express it this way.

- I do believe that this is another way of expressing the spiritual leadership of the family has been placed upon the men.
 - This is why there was no requirement for the ladies.
- What's the point?
 - Circumcision expresses this very important fact:

- ***Without the tearing away of the flesh and the shedding of blood there can be no forgiveness and no salvation.***

We need to get back to our text but allow me to remind you that when Abraham received this command from God when he was 99 years old.

- He also had a 13-year-old son and many male slaves, meaning there was **much convincing and work to be done.**
 - Just imagine if this was a requirement for joining the church today.

Back to Romans 2

²⁵ For indeed circumcision is of value if you practice the Law, but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.

- Who cares that you have a Christian tattoo if you live like a son of Satan?

Paul continues:

²⁶ So if the uncircumcised man observes the righteous requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision?

- Who is the real Christian?
 - The guy with the tattoo or the guy who walks with God?
- What is Paul, through the power of the Holy Spirit doing?

- He is destroying one of the most sacred acts commanded by God in the Old Covenant.
 - Why?
 - Because the purpose of the act of circumcision was to point to a biblical truth.
 - What is that truth?
 - Hold on because Paul is going to answer this most important question.

²⁶ So if the uncircumcised man observes the righteous requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision?

- **Absolutely!**
 - **The guy who walks in obedience is the real Christian**
 - **Not the guy who claims Christ but walks in active, willful disobedience.**
 - Why did I say it that way?
 - Because we all sin!
 - When we sin the obedient thing to do is confess, ask for forgiveness, turn away from our sin.

If we justify our sin aren't we just creating a god of our own liking?

²⁷ And he who is physically uncircumcised, if he fulfills the Law, will he not judge you who, through the letter of the Law and circumcision, are a transgressor of the Law?

- What's the point?
 - The letter of the Law cannot save you.
 - But how could anyone fulfill the law, Pastor?
 - 613 rules, only Jesus was able to keep the law.

The key words here are “Keep and Fulfill”

- You and I are not capable of keeping the Law.
 - But we are capable of fulfilling the Law through Jesus Christ.
 - **You see, when we admit that we are sinners, walk in humility, pursue holiness while knowing that we will not ever achieve it on this side of Heaven, then and only then can we achieve the righteous requirement of the Law.**
 - We must remember that Jesus said that He did not come to abolish the Law but to fulfill the Law.
 - The Law requires obedience and justice.
 - We are justified through our faith in Jesus Christ.
 - Our faith then produces the greatest form of worship which is obedience.
 - This is what Paul is expressing to us and his Jewish reader.

Back to our text:

²⁸ For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh.

²⁹ But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.

- The circumcision of the heart is one in which the Lord has tore away the flesh, has shed His blood, and we are forgiven.
- This circumcision of the heart then produces a new heart, sensitive to His Holy Spirit, desiring the things of the Lord.
- This circumcised heart produces a righteous life lived by faith filled with a deep satisfaction in the love of God the Father.

○ Does the circumcised heart walk away from the Law?

▪ No, it sees the Law in a new way.

- It sees the Law as a precious protector of God's people.
- It sees the Law as insight to the heart of God the Father.
- It sees the Law bringing praise from God and does not worry with the praise of men.

We close with this truth:

- Our only hope is in the power of the gospel.

Romans 1:16-17

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹⁷ For in it *the* righteousness of God is

revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “**But the righteous will live by faith.**”

Communion

We close today with one of the most powerful symbols of the gospel “communion.”

- **Commanded by Jesus to be done until His bride the church is united to Him forever.**
- **Communion is the gospel for it represents**
 - **His broken body**
 - **His shed blood**
 - **The new covenant between God and man for the forgiveness of sins.**