

**Bible Study Guide – Romans 2:1-29**

Pleasant View Church of Christ – Winter/Spring 2023

*Who is Paul addressing when he says "you?"  
Is there any evidence in the text? (v. 17)*

An auditor, endorsing the verdict concerning the Gentiles from chapter 1, failing to realize his own plight.

I. The Jews and Judgment (1-16)

Matthew 7:1-5

Why are we tempted to pronounce judgment on others? What is our goal? (Gal 6:1-5)

Ecc 8:10-13  
II Peter 3:8-9

How do we reconcile what Paul says about works here against what he says later in the letter?  
\*Rom 3:19-20  
\*Eph 2:8-10  
\*James 2:14-26

<sup>1</sup> **Therefore** you have **no excuse**, O man, every one of you who **judges**. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the **judge**, practice the very same things.

<sup>2</sup> We know that the **judgment of God** rightly falls on those who practice such things.

Rom 1:24-31

<sup>3</sup> Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the **judgment of God**?

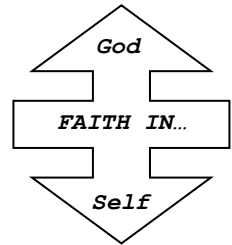
<sup>4</sup> Or do you presume on the riches of his **kindness** and **forbearance** and **patience**, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to **repentance**?

Wrath - Rom 1:18

<sup>5</sup> But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up **wrath for yourself** on the day of wrath when **God's righteous judgment** will be revealed.

(v. 7) Seek for Glory...

<sup>6</sup> He will render to each one according to his works:



<sup>7</sup> to those who by patience in well-doing **seek for glory** and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life;

(v. 8) Self-seeking...

<sup>8</sup> but for those who are **self-seeking** and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury.

<sup>9</sup> There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the *Jew first and also the Greek*,  
<sup>10</sup> but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the *Jew first and also the Greek*.

<sup>11</sup> For God shows **no partiality**.

How could Paul say that God shows no partiality when he dealt with Jews and Gentiles differently with regard to the law?

<sup>12</sup> **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.

James 1:22-25

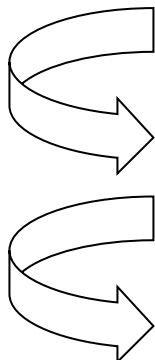
<sup>13</sup> For it is not the **hearers of the law** who are righteous before God, but the **doers of the law** who will be justified.

<sup>14</sup> **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.

How would Gentiles instinctively do the things in God's law without the law? How does this relate to what Paul said in Chapter 1?  
\*Rom 1:19-20, 32  
\*Acts 10:1-2

<sup>15</sup> 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

<sup>16</sup> on that day when, according to my gospel, God **judges** the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.



**Bible Study Guide – Romans 2:1-29**  
Pleasant View Church of Christ – Winter/Spring 2023

All Jews are under sin and worthy of death  
-Rom 3:9

**II. The Jews and the Law (17-24)**

**Their Claims**

17 **But** if you call yourself a Jew and *rely on the law* and boast in God  
18 and know his will and approve what is excellent, 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—

What was the Jewish view of the Law? How does Paul characterize their relationship to the Law? (Rom 3:2)

**IRONY**

**Their Conduct**

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.”

Compare to Matt 23:1-36

From Isaiah 52:5 (c.f. Eze 36:20-21)

**III. The Jews and Circumcision (25-29)**

25 **For** *circumcision* indeed is of value if you **obey the law**, but if you break the law, your *circumcision* becomes *uncircumcision*.

What was the Jewish view of circumcision? What was the original purpose of circumcision?  
\*Gen 17:9-14

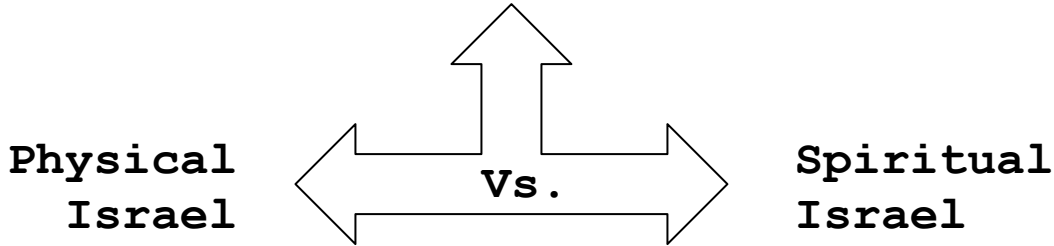
How can circumcision become uncircumcision?

How can the uncircumcised be regarded as circumcised?

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.

\*Phil 3:3  
\*Col 2:11-13

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.



**Romans Chapter 2 - Questions for Discussion**

**Memory Verse:**

*Romans 2:1 (ESV)*

*<sup>1</sup>Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things.*

**Judgment (vv. 1-16) - (vv. Matthew 7:1-5)**

1. Who is Paul addressing in verses 1-16? Is there any evidence in the text? (v. 17)

**Man's Judgment**

**God's Judgment**

2. *What qualities make us ineffective judges?*    3. *Why is God an effective judge of man?*

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4. Why are we tempted to pronounce judgment on others? What is our goal? How does Paul answer this? (vv. 1-3; Gal 6:1-5)

5. Why does God show patience and kindness toward sinners? (vv. 4,5; Ecc 8:10-13; II Peter 3:8-9)

6. Will Jew and Gentile be judged differently? Why is this a major point to make to the Jews? (vv. 6-12)

7. How would Gentiles instinctively do the things in God's law without the law? How does this relate to what we studied in chapter one? (vv. 13-16; 1:19-20,32)

**Bible Study Guide – Romans 2:1-29**  
Pleasant View Church of Christ – Winter/Spring 2023

***Jews and the Law (vs. 17-29)***

\_\_\_\_\_ Israel                      vs.                      \_\_\_\_\_ Israel

8. What was the Jewish view of the Law? How does Paul characterize their relationship to the Law? (vv. 17-24; 3:2)

9. Compare and contrast the Jews failures with the Gentiles failures. (vv. 17-24; 1:19-32)

*Circumcision - (vv. 25-29; Genesis 17:9-14; Philippians 3:3; Colossians 2:11-13)*

10. What was the Jewish view of circumcision? What was the original purpose of circumcision?

11. What does it mean...

a. That circumcision can become uncircumcision? (v. 25)

b. That the uncircumcised will be regarded as circumcised? Who are “the uncircumcised?” (v. 27)

12. Is the physical act of circumcision necessary under the new covenant? The inward change?

13. Can we infer from this section that all outward acts commanded by God can be ignored as long as the inward change is present?

14. What is Paul’s overall argument, or point, in this chapter?

**Bible Study Guide – Romans 2:1-29**  
Pleasant View Church of Christ – Winter/Spring 2023

**Judgment:**

**Matthew 7:1-5 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup>"Judge not, that you be not judged. <sup>2</sup>For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. <sup>3</sup>Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? <sup>4</sup>Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? <sup>5</sup>You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

**Romans 1:18-32 (ESV)**

<sup>18</sup>For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. <sup>19</sup>For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. <sup>20</sup>For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. <sup>21</sup>For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. <sup>22</sup>Claiming to be wise, they became fools, <sup>23</sup>and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. <sup>24</sup>Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, <sup>25</sup>because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. <sup>26</sup>For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; <sup>27</sup>and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. <sup>28</sup>And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. <sup>29</sup>They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, <sup>30</sup>slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, <sup>31</sup>foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. <sup>32</sup>Though they know God's decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.

**Galatians 6:1-5 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup>Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. <sup>2</sup>Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. <sup>3</sup>For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. <sup>4</sup>But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. <sup>5</sup>For each will have to bear his own load.

**Bible Study Guide – Romans 2:1-29**  
Pleasant View Church of Christ – Winter/Spring 2023

**Ecclesiastes 8:10-13 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> Then I saw the wicked buried. They used to go in and out of the holy place and were praised in the city where they had done such things. This also is vanity. <sup>11</sup> Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed speedily, the heart of the children of man is fully set to do evil. <sup>12</sup> Though a sinner does evil a hundred times and prolongs his life, yet I know that it will be well with those who fear God, because they fear before him. <sup>13</sup> But it will not be well with the wicked, neither will he prolong his days like a shadow, because he does not fear before God.

**2 Peter 3:8-10 (ESV)**

<sup>8</sup> But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. <sup>9</sup> The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. <sup>10</sup> But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

**Romans 3:19–20 (ESV)**

<sup>19</sup> Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. <sup>20</sup> For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

**Ephesians 2:8–10 (ESV)**

<sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

**James 2:14–26 (ESV)**

<sup>14</sup> What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? <sup>15</sup> If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, <sup>16</sup> and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? <sup>17</sup> So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

<sup>18</sup> But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. <sup>19</sup> You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! <sup>20</sup> Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? <sup>21</sup> Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? <sup>22</sup> You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; <sup>23</sup> and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as

## **Bible Study Guide – Romans 2:1-29**

Pleasant View Church of Christ – Winter/Spring 2023

righteousness”—and he was called a friend of God. <sup>24</sup> You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. <sup>25</sup> And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? <sup>26</sup> For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.

### **James 1:22–25 (ESV)**

<sup>22</sup> But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. <sup>23</sup> For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. <sup>24</sup> For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. <sup>25</sup> But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

### **Acts 10:1–2 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of what was known as the Italian Cohort, <sup>2</sup> a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people, and prayed continually to God.

### **The Law:**

### **Romans 3:1-2 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision? <sup>2</sup> Much in every way. To begin with, the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God.

### **Matthew 23:1–36 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, <sup>2</sup> “The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat, <sup>3</sup> so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice. <sup>4</sup> They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people’s shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger. <sup>5</sup> They do all their deeds to be seen by others. For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, <sup>6</sup> and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues <sup>7</sup> and greetings in the marketplaces and being called rabbi by others. <sup>8</sup> But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers. <sup>9</sup> And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. <sup>10</sup> Neither be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ. <sup>11</sup> The greatest among you shall be your servant. <sup>12</sup> Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

<sup>13</sup> “But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people’s faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in. <sup>15</sup> Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea

## Bible Study Guide – Romans 2:1-29

Pleasant View Church of Christ – Winter/Spring 2023

and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.

<sup>16</sup> “Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘If anyone swears by the temple, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.’ <sup>17</sup> You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that has made the gold sacred? <sup>18</sup> And you say, ‘If anyone swears by the altar, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gift that is on the altar, he is bound by his oath.’ <sup>19</sup> You blind men! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? <sup>20</sup> So whoever swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. <sup>21</sup> And whoever swears by the temple swears by it and by him who dwells in it. <sup>22</sup> And whoever swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by him who sits upon it.

<sup>23</sup> “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. <sup>24</sup> You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!

<sup>25</sup> “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. <sup>26</sup> You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean.

<sup>27</sup> “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people’s bones and all uncleanness. <sup>28</sup> So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

<sup>29</sup> “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous, <sup>30</sup> saying, ‘If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ <sup>31</sup> Thus you witness against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. <sup>32</sup> Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers. <sup>33</sup> You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell? <sup>34</sup> Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, <sup>35</sup> so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. <sup>36</sup> Truly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.



**Bible Study Guide – Romans 2:1-29**  
Pleasant View Church of Christ – Winter/Spring 2023

**Isaiah 52:5 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> Now therefore what have I here," declares the Lord, "seeing that my people are taken away for nothing? Their rulers wail," declares the Lord, "and continually all the day my name is despised.

**Ezekiel 36:20–21 (ESV)**

<sup>20</sup> But when they came to the nations, wherever they came, they profaned my holy name, in that people said of them, 'These are the people of the Lord, and yet they had to go out of his land.' <sup>21</sup> But I had concern for my holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations to which they came.

**Circumcision:**

*25–27 If the law was the major distinctive of the Jews, a close second was circumcision. As with the law, so with circumcision, the nation was guilty of placing unwarranted confidence in the rite. **Jewish tradition pictures Abraham as sitting at the gate of Gehenna to insure that no circumcised person be allowed to enter perdition (Gen R xlviii).** The view that only circumcised children shared in the world to come was commonly held. Circumcision was to Jewry what baptism is to those who maintain baptismal regeneration. In dividing men into two classes, circumcised and uncircumcised, the Jews were in effect indicating those who were saved and those who were not.<sup>1</sup>*

**Genesis 17:9-14 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup> And God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations. <sup>10</sup> This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. <sup>11</sup> You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. <sup>12</sup> He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring, <sup>13</sup> both he who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money, shall surely be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. <sup>14</sup> Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant."

**Philippians 3:3 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup> For we are the real circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh—

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<sup>1</sup> Harrison, E. F. (1976). Romans. In F. E. Gaebelin (Ed.), *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 10: Romans Through Galatians* (F. E. Gaebelin, Ed.) (34). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

## **Bible Study Guide – Romans 2:1-29**

Pleasant View Church of Christ – Winter/Spring 2023

### **Colossians 2:11-13 (ESV)**

<sup>11</sup>In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, <sup>12</sup>having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. <sup>13</sup>And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses,