

Lesson 4 ~ Romans 2:17-3:8

NIV

2:17 Now you, if you call yourself a Jew; if you rely on the law and brag about your relationship to God; **18** if you know his will and approve of what is superior because you are instructed by the law; **19** if you are convinced that you are a guide for the blind, a light for those who are in the dark, **20** an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of infants, because you have in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth— **21** you, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself? You who preach against stealing, do you steal? **22** You who say that people should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? **23** You who brag about the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law? **24** As it is written: “God’s name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.” **25**

Circumcision has value if you observe the law, but if you break the law, you have become as though you had not been circumcised. **26** If those who are not circumcised keep the law’s requirements, will they not be regarded as though they were circumcised? **27** The one who is not circumcised physically and yet obeys the law will condemn you who, even though you have the written code and circumcision, are a lawbreaker. **28** A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical.

29 No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man’s praise is not from men, but from God.

3:1 What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision? **2** Much in every way! First of all, they have been entrusted with the very words of God.

3 What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God’s faithfulness? **4** Not at all! Let God be true, and every man a liar. As it is written: “So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge.”

5 But if our unrighteousness brings out God’s righteousness more clearly, what shall we say? That God is unjust in bringing his wrath on us? (I am using a human argument.) **6** Certainly not! If that were so, how could God judge the world? **7** Someone might argue, “If my falsehood enhances God’s truthfulness and so increases his glory, why am I still condemned as a sinner?” **8** Why not say—as we are being slanderously reported as saying and as some claim that we say—“Let us do evil that good may result”? Their condemnation is deserved.

NLT

2:17 If you are a Jew, you are relying on God’s law for your special relationship with him. You boast that all is well between yourself and God. **18** Yes, you know what he wants; you know right from wrong because you have been taught his law. **19** You are convinced that you are a guide for the blind and a beacon light for people who are lost in darkness without God. **20** You think you can instruct the ignorant and teach children the ways of God. For you are certain that in God’s law you have complete knowledge and truth. **21** Well then, if you teach others, why don’t you teach yourself? You tell others not to steal, but do you steal? **22** You say it is wrong to commit adultery, but do you do it? You condemn idolatry, but do you steal from pagan temples? **23** You are so proud of knowing the law, but you dishonor God by breaking it. **24** No wonder the Scriptures say, “The world blasphemes the name of God because of you.” **25** The Jewish ceremony of circumcision is worth something only if you obey God’s law. But if you don’t obey God’s law, you are no better off than an uncircumcised Gentile. **26** And if the Gentiles obey God’s law, won’t God give them all the rights and honors of being his own people? **27** In fact, uncircumcised Gentiles who keep God’s law will be much better off than you Jews who are circumcised and know so much about God’s law but don’t obey it. **28** For you are not a true Jew just because you were born of Jewish parents or because you have gone through the Jewish ceremony of circumcision. **29** No, a true Jew is one whose heart is right with God. And true circumcision is not a cutting of the body but a change of heart produced by God’s Spirit. Whoever has that kind of change seeks praise from God, not from people.

3:1 Then what’s the advantage of being a Jew? Is there any value in the Jewish ceremony of circumcision?

2 Yes, being a Jew has many advantages. First of all, the Jews were entrusted with the whole revelation of God. **3** True, some of them were unfaithful; but just because they broke their promises, does that mean God will break his promises? **4** Of course not! Though everyone else in the world is a liar, God is true. As the Scriptures say, “He will be proved right in what he says, and he will win his case in court.”

5 “But,” some say, “our sins serve a good purpose, for people will see God’s goodness when he declares us sinners to be innocent. Isn’t it unfair, then, for God to punish us?” (That is actually the way some people talk.)

6 Of course not! If God is not just, how is he qualified to judge the world? **7** “But,” some might still argue, “how can God judge and condemn me as a sinner if my dishonesty highlights his truthfulness and brings him more glory?” **8** If you follow that kind of thinking, however, you might as well say that the more we sin the better it is! Those who say such things deserve to be condemned, yet some slander me by saying this is what I preach!