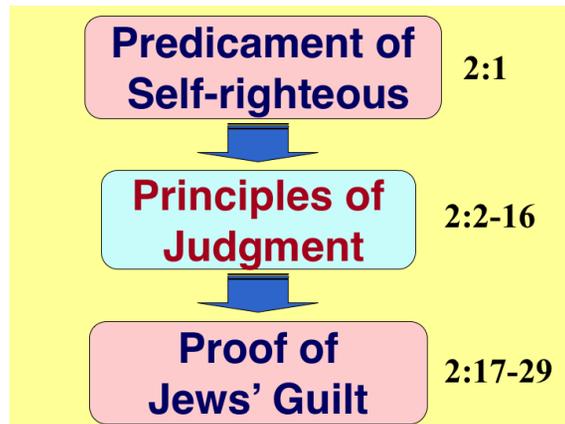


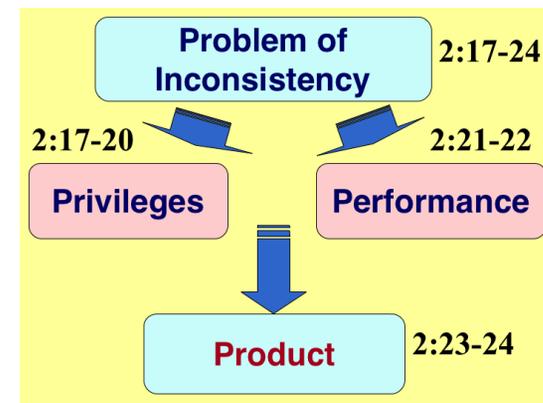
[Romans 2.17 Jewish Privilege 036b]



I. Introduction	1.1-17
II. Provision of God's Righteousness	1.18-8.39
A. Condemnation	1.18-3.20
1. Guilt of Humanity	1.18-32
2. Guilt of Jews	2.1-3.8
a. Predicament of Self-Righteous	2.1
b. Principles of God's Judgment	2.2-16
c. <u>Proof of the Jews' Guilt</u>	2.17-29
1) Failure of Inconsistency	2.17-24

Now, Proof of the Jews' guilt. They need to know the importance of the gospel message which we just looked at, they need to know that they are not going to escape the judgment, they need to know that God is going to deal with them *first*, they need to know that it is based on truth, on their conduct, and on every level this should awaken them. ('Wow, I'm in trouble!') And, now he is going to 'bring it home', in verses 17-29, and then he will deal with their objections or protests.

They had a higher view of themselves than what they were, especially regarding their relationship with God Himself. They are going to see very clearly a failure of Inconsistency. Another chart will help us keep from getting lost in it all:



They are inconsistent with what they have been provided with, 17-26. There is an inconsistency that *proves* that are guilty before a holy God.

Two parts of this inconsistency: first the tremendous privilege that the Jews enjoy; this was *their* emphasis—Paul is taking what they would outline as the reason why God is going to say, 'Well, you are in, in the group, the elite; you are privileged.' They were privileged, but it did not mean that it was automatic that they had a 'free ticket' into God's presence or into what we normally call heaven (17-20). Then, beginning in 2.21, he is going to evaluate their performance. Because they were privileged, God expected certain things from them. 'How do they measure up?' (21-22)

Finally, he will show what the end product is of their inconsistency, (23-24).

c. Proof of the Jews' Guilt	2.17-29
1) Failure of Inconsistency	2.17-24
a) Privileges of the Jews	2.17-24
(1) Personal Privileges	2.17-18

He is breaking it down into two more parts that pertain to them personally, and the second deals with the privilege that God had given them in relationship to others.

First, personal privileges, their heritage as Jewish people. The passage goes further, but you might say there is a stopping point with the first question—you can see the question mark at the end. And it is one of Paul's long sentences—that one can get lost in.

2.17 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, 21 you, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that one shall not steal, do you steal?

He starts with the word ‘if’—which is a conditional clause, and dependent. He continues with a kind of list, ‘if...and...and...and’—not repeating the ‘if’ every time. All this, through verse 20, is a dependent clause.

2.17 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, 21 you, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself?

Then, in verse 21, ‘you’, therefore, ‘who...’ (another subordinate clause), ‘do you not teach yourself?’ referring largely to the list of activities in verse 20, just before the question. The essence is he is confronting them and he uses a typical technique of the Greek culture, and even the Jewish culture, in that he asks a series of questions; he is probing, a kind of diatribe. He is asking them these probing questions to say ‘this is how you view yourself’ because they would answer ‘Yes’ to all of them. Then he ‘sticks the dagger in’, saying ‘You are inconsistent with who you are.’

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

But ‘if’: in Greek there are different conditional clauses. This is a first class condition which clearly assumes the premise. That is, ‘if you bear the name ‘Jew’, and you do, you would agree...’ That is the kind of clause this is. Every one of these: ‘if you...and if you...and...’ they would agree, then ‘Why are you not living up to it?’ This is the point he is making: why are you falling short of it and being condemned?

He is proving to them, by asking a series of questions, just like a parent. A parent knows very well what the child did. But he or she asks the question to bring the child’s awareness to the point of ‘Yup, I did it; I shouldn’t have done it, I’m wrong.’ rather than all the excuses that the child could come up with. That is his method, standard in the Greek culture and effective. He doesn’t just point a finger and accuse them; he brings these questions into their thinking so that they accuse themselves. ‘Yup, you’re right; I am guilty.’

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

Yes, you are a Jew, you have the blood line, you have the name associated with the Jewish tribes, you have the lineage and a distinguished heritage which identified them with Abraham, with the Abrahamic covenant, with God Himself.

Privilege

1. Distinguished Heritage - Jewish Trusted in blood line
not relationship

They were proud of it and thought that the heritage meant that they would be omitted from judgment. He has already explained that they are not, but he is ‘bringing it home’, in such a way that they would have to agree: ‘I’m depending on that heritage.’ In fact they were trusting in a blood line, not in a relationship with God.

There is an application to draw here, particularly with children; if you raised them in the church and you, as parents are both Christians, sometimes in the thinking of children, they think that it is automatic that they also are Christians. That is why Jesus says, ‘You must be *born again*’. And that is why Paul says there is a need for *regeneration*.

In other words, every person has to trust for himself and personally, individually receive salvation. So children are not automatically into the family of God; it is an individual thing. Sometimes adults have grown up not realizing this even as adults. This was true in the first century amongst the Jewish people. ‘I’m Jewish, I’m in the blood line of Abraham, that’s enough. I can live however I want to; I don’t have to regard anything else—I am automatic.’

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

The second thing: ‘you rely upon the Law’. Tremendous privilege. God granted the Mosaic Law. They had special revelation. They had what no one else had—the experience at Mt. Sinai where God verbally spoke, they heard Him speaking audibly. The mountain shook. The nation of Israel was given revelation that no one else was given, and God entered into a covenant with them on Mt. Sinai, and afterwards the people had the privilege of the Law. They read it every sabbath; it was there, available, part of their background and culture. But where did they fail? They trusted in the possession of the Law as a community of God but they omitted the *doing* of it.

And, by way of application, is that danger still among us? Yes, you have the Bible on the coffee table; you have it, it is available and you sit in church and hear it, but does it have impact on you?

Privilege

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------|--|
| 1. Distinguished Heritage - | Jewish | Trusted in blood line
not relationship |
| 2. Special Revelation - | Law | Trusted in possession of
Law, not doing |

In the Jewish community, this is what Jesus confronted more often than not: their *hypocrisy*. They knew it, it was in their heads, but they did not live it. He is now talking to the unbeliever; they had the Torah, the Law, the entire Old Testament, but they did not apply it. They didn't look at the sacrificial system and realize that it condemned them and they needed the ultimate sacrifice. And particularly in the first century, Jesus had announced that He was the sacrifice. And they rejected Jesus. Jesus points this out in John 5.45.

John 5.45 *“Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; the one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have set your hope.*

Jesus told them that he was not accusing them—but *Moses* did. They just needed to open it up and read it. Moses and the Law condemn you. Yet they were prideful that they possessed it. Their hope simply was set; we have the Bible. But Moses was going to show them that they were lost.

Not only that, they were ‘boasting in God’, the people of God; we are the people that God called to Himself. We have tremendous privilege.

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

So the third thing: They had ultimate access—to the Creator of the universe. They had access but it is not automatic. They must appropriate what God has provided for them through, in the OT, the sacrificial system, and now in the first century, what God has provided in the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus Christ. It is not automatic.

And we have that revelation in the Bible and, with Christ on the cross, also the ultimate access to God. Great privilege for us as well. But sometimes we also fail to live according to the knowledge that we have. And we fail to listen to the teaching of the Holy Spirit in His word. And like the Jews we do not obey and fail to restore our relationship with Him and even fail to reach others with the gospel—the blessing that was promised in Genesis.

Privilege

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------|--|
| 1. Distinguished Heritage - | Jewish | Trusted in blood line
not relationship |
| 2. Special Revelation - | Law | Trusted in possession of Law,
not doing |
| 3. Ultimate Access - | God | Trusted that God was
theirs alone |

Where did they fail? They trusted that God was theirs, they owned Him almost. It is the Gentiles that don't have God. So they have God but maybe they don't have Him individually.

Notice what Jeremiah says about the idea of boasting in God:

Jeremiah 9.24 but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,” declares the LORD.

Let anyone who *knows Me*—that's an intimate, personal relationship... God delights in knowing us in a personal relationship type of knowledge and as Savior.

The greater the PRIVILEGE the greater expectation!!!

[Romans 2.17-22 Privileges of the Jews 037]

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

Jew Ἰουδαῖος (you-dáh-yos)

196 times in the NT

1. Jesus - as King of Jews: Pilate, sign on the Cross.
2. Israelites in Judea - bloodline and nationalistic connotations, at that time under the rule of the Roman Empire.
3. Israelites in diaspora - In Acts, there were people from other regions, i.e., in the diaspora, not of the nation but of the bloodline of Abraham.
4. Jewish leaders opposed to Christ - opposition to Christ, in the gospels. But it doesn't occur as many times in the synoptic, mainly in John and Acts and significantly in Paul's writings.
5. Jews who believed in Christ - The word Hebrews referred more to their culture and language.

2.17 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,

Many were devoted to understanding the word. They knew the principles that God had given. They had the tremendous privilege of *essential knowledge*, knowing God’s will, having very specific instructions concerning what God desires. And the Mosaic Law is extremely explicit, very detailed. It was a privilege to know God’s will but they did not follow it.

Privilege

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|----------|---|
| 1. Distinguished Heritage - | Jewish | Trusted in blood line not relationship |
| 2. Special Revelation - | Law | Trusted in possession of Law, not doing |
| 3. Ultimate Access - | God | Trusted that God was theirs alone |
| 4. Essential Knowledge - | His will | Trusted in knowing not doing |

James then tells us:

James 4.17 *Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.*

Not doing what we know to be the right thing *is sin!* Sin is not just those things that we overtly do but it includes knowing the right thing to do but not following through and doing it. That condemns everyone. There are lots of things we know we should do but fail to do them. Sins of omission—just as real as sins of commission. James was written very early in history of the church, has a very heavy Jewish flavor to it, so it is talking about observance of God’s principles.

2.17 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,

Verse 18 says, know His will ‘and approve the things that are essential.’ What are these? They had a sharp understanding of right and wrong. They had a sense of God’s absolutes and they *approved* of them. They had a sense of what God had specified in terms of the entire moral realm; and they could make sharp distinctions. In fact they were known for debating the minutia, even so much so that they over-emphasized some of the minutia. Jesus condemned them for that and

for omitting. They overlooked some of the more important things, Moral Distinctions—or the word ‘essentials’ in the Biblical text.

And their failure was that they trusted, again, in knowing but not obeying. That is the main theme throughout all of these tremendous privileges.

Privilege

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|------------|---|
| 1. Distinguished Heritage - | Jewish | Trusted in blood line not relationship |
| 2. Special Revelation - | Law | Trusted in possession of Law, not doing |
| 3. Ultimate Access - | God | Trusted that God was theirs alone |
| 4. Essential Knowledge - | His will | Trusted in knowing not doing |
| 5. Moral Distinctions - | essentials | Trusted in knowing but not obeying |

We have the Moral Distinctions as well and need to obey them.

2.17 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,

Then the verse concludes, ‘being instructed out of the Law’, kind of summarizing all of them. They all come from the Law which instructs concerning access to God, moral principles and absolutes; it teaches concerning God’s will. All of those privileges come out of the Law and you can derive them from the Old Testament. In fact you can derive them from the first five books, the Pentateuch, which is called the Law of Moses. And, even more specifically, you can derive all this from the Mosaic Covenant.

We can apply it to our culture on a broad basis; it is applicable to the entire culture and would include both unbelievers and believers. If Paul were writing to our culture today, you could say that we have a Distinguished Heritage as well as US citizens. Unfortunately, there are many who do not appreciate our heritage, nor the Constitution that godly men put together in the founding of our country. There is disrespect, even in the sports realm, to the flag and our country. We have a distinguished heritage, and much like the Jewish community of the first century, that also makes us accountable—as a culture, as a nation, as a people. If we tear it down—and God may allow some to tear it down—it will be to the detriment of the whole culture and to that

extent we are seeing it and suffering from the consequences of that disrespect.

We also have access to the whole Bible; the nation of Israel in the first century only had the Old Testament and predominately the Mosaic Law. We have the revelation of the New Testament and that has been proclaimed openly and broadly throughout our country since our founding. So it is a tremendous privilege that we have as American citizens. If you travel in foreign countries you see a lack of that; sometimes believers are hungry for the word. In the word we have access to the Creator and Judge of the universe. In our culture, Romans one says, 'we are without excuse'.

And we have Moral Distinctions—mainly that between a believer and an unbeliever. Unfortunately some churches distort it and make it cloudy as to how we come into the relationship. It is important to explain the message that man is lost and in need of what God has provided and the only means of coming into that relationship is by trusting what God has done, not what we attempt to do.

We can apply this to ourselves, having been grafted in to the privileges of Israel. And we are declared righteous, sinless—not that we no longer have it but from God's perspective we are viewed as separated from sin, *saints*, we have the righteousness of Christ. We are called citizens of heaven already and nothing can remove us from that. We have all the heritage of Christ: heirs, also in the future.

Privilege

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Distinguished Heritage | US citizen with heritage |
| 2. Special Revelation | OT & NT |
| 3. Ultimate Access | Creator & Judge |
| 4. Essential Knowledge | Access to Gospel |
| 5. Moral Distinctions | Salvation |

We are actually 'true Jews' with all these privileges. We have special revelation and the Holy Spirit to enable us to understand the Old Testament. In fact the unbeliever has access to the word, but not the illuminating work of the HS until he trusts in Jesus Christ. He does have the convicting work of the HS to tell him that he is lost. The HS can make him realize that the only solution to his lostness is trusting in Christ. But he doesn't understand the principles of the Scriptures yet. The word of God is not a closed book for us because we have that illumination of the HS.

And we have Ultimate Access. We can cry out 'Abba, Father', 'Daddy', if you will, because we have that close relationship that He has established giving us ultimate access to the Father who is Creator and ultimate judge as well. But because Christ bore all our sins on the cross we don't face Him as judge in terms of eternity. There is a

βῆμα (báy-mah) (judgment seat) where we will give account of our Christian walk, but not in terms of eternal destiny, heaven or hell although it does have something to do with the Millenium Kingdom.

believer Privilege

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Distinguished Heritage | True Jew |
| 2. Special Revelation | Illumination |
| 3. Ultimate Access | Father |
| 4. Essential Knowledge | Complete will |
| 5. Moral Distinctions | Ministry |

And with Essential Knowledge we have the complete will of God because we have the complete oracles of God revealed to us. And, He has even given us a glimpse, in some detail, of what He is going to do in the future. We call that *eschatology*. So we have a complete revelation of God's will.

Then we have Moral Distinctions that gives us the privilege of doing what God is doing on earth and being used as His instruments to accomplish what He is doing. This is where sometimes we can fall short—we can fall short in all of these privileges, not living as true Jews, grumbling like they did in the wilderness. We are not appreciating all the blessings and all the privileges the have. And sometimes we don't trust in the HS to teach us from His word; we neglect getting into it.

Sometimes we break that relationship with the father and need to confess sin in order to restore it. And, sometimes we don't obey, just like the Jews. We are accountable for that and there are consequences that have nothing to do with eternity but they do exist. Perhaps our main failure is to minister to others the things that God has given us.

And this brings us to the next section in terms of the privileges that the Israelites had and the implications of that with regard to the gentile world.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------|
| c. Proof of the Jews' Guilt | 2.17-29 |
| 1) Failure of Inconsistency | 2.17-24 |
| a) Privileges of the Jews | 2.17-24 |
| (1) Personal Privileges | 2.17-18 |
| (2) Privileges for Others | 2.19-20 |

God gave them tremendous privileges but it was not to be self absorbed. It was not to create in their thinking 'We are a better people', because they were no different than gentiles. Yes, they were privileged but that implied that God had a plan for them to have an impact on the rest of the world.

When God called Abraham out of Ur of Chaldeans, there were many nations. What God did was to call one individual to Himself, with the purpose to use that one individual and his descendants. He entered into a covenant with Abraham from the beginning; they were to be a blessing to everyone else. That was the main purpose of the nation of Israel.

So in verse 19: he says to the Jews, you 'are confident that you yourself are a *guide to the blind*'. They boasted in these things. What did Jesus do with the scribes and pharisees in Matthew 23? 'Woe to you scribes and pharisees' because they were blind guides—they were blind, guiding others. They would both fall into the ditch!

2.19 and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness,

For Others

1. Unique Privileges

That was a *privilege*; they were to be guides to the blind and they took that position but they were actually blind themselves—because they were not applying what God had given them. The 'blind' were the gentiles; they were not witnessing to them.

This passage in Deuteronomy was given to them when not yet even a nation; they hadn't even entered the land. They were a people that had been united with the experiences of Egypt and the Exodus and 40 years of wilderness experience, but what does it take to be a nation?

There are three aspects: common *people*, common *constitution*, and Deuteronomy was preparing them to enter into the *land*. And in this book, even before they are a nation he spells out what He intends for the nation of Israel. He referred to the Law: they were to keep it, obey it, not just boast in it, not just memorize, not just teach it, but DO it.

Deuteronomy 4.6 "So keep and do them, for that is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' 7 "For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as is the LORD our God whenever we call on Him? 8 "Or what great nation is there that has statutes and judgments as righteous as this whole law which I am setting before you today?"

Then he added that if you apply it that is your wisdom and understanding 'in the sight of the peoples', that is, all the people around. They are not going to read a Bible; the only thing they will

read is your life. And, if in fact you do this, all who hear these statutes will say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' They were to be a light to the blind who can only see your life, not the specifics of the Mosaic Law. It was to be visible, lived out.

2.19 and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness,

The key was their relationship to God—it was to be visible. They were to depend on Him, 'call on Him', verse 7.

Or what great nation would have statutes and judgments as righteous as this whole Law? There was not in existence a law better than the Mosaic Law; if they lived according to it, it would outshine any other code that existed. He closes saying that he is setting it before them that day—this was the second giving of the Law, this time to the second generation. Deutero = second. Nômos = law. This was 40 years after Sinai and the ten commandments were repeated.

This verse is almost like synonymous Hebrew poetry; a line followed by a similar one:

19 guide to the blind	—>	a light...in darkness
20 corrector of the foolish	—>	teacher of the immature

Jesus calls us to be 'a light to the world'. The world should see the difference, not just how we say it, but how we live. That was a failure in the first century.

For Others

1. Unique Privileges

2. Illuminators, be an impact in the world around them.

Then, this is later in their history, when the nation is crumbling and Isaiah is predicting the fall of the nation because they failed to do what Moses specified in Deuteronomy:

Isaiah 42.6 "*I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness, I will also hold you by the hand and watch over you, **And I will appoint you as a covenant to the people, As a light to the nations,** 7 To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the dungeon And those who dwell in darkness from the prison.*"

They were to have a relationship with the people. And, as a 'a light to the nations',—their purpose. He is predicting way in the

future when it is going to be true; there will come a time when Israel will in fact be a light—even future from our time. To ‘*open blind eyes*’;—note the parallelism; Paul is probably, in chapter two, alluding to this passage itself. ‘*To bring out prisoners from the dungeon*’; in other words, people are locked up spiritually. They are to bring people out of bondage, prisoners out of dungeons, from the darkness of prison.

The Great Commission in Matthew 28 is what we are to do: make disciples, after leading them to Christ, teaching them both OT and NT and showing them how to walk. Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, says we are the light of the world; we are the light and the salt. Jesus has re-commissioned the church, giving us the same mission. But when He restores Israel, Israel will take on their original purpose.

2.19 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,

A ‘corrector of the foolish’: these are all referring to the gentiles. They are blind; they are foolish. These are common phrases that the Jews of the first century would have used. ‘All those foolish gentiles, they are in darkness. Those blind gentiles.’ Paul is bringing their own words, their own language, to allude to those OT passages, and then in verse 21 he will say, ‘What about you? You are no different than they are.’ You are blind, you need correction, you are in darkness. They had privileged Opportunities.

For Others

1. Unique Privileges
2. Illuminators
3. Privileged Opportunities to minister to the people.

2.19 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,

He continues: teacher of the immature. They have life answers; they should know how to live life before a holy God.

For Others

1. Unique Privileges
2. Illuminators

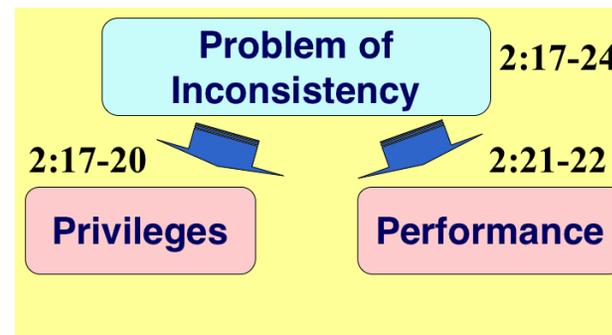
3. Privileged Opportunities

4. Life answers

2.19 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,

All of this is from the Law, the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth, but it is not to be held as a possession that is a possession of privilege; it is to be utilized in reaching out to the lost world. And we can apply the Scriptures to us today.

These are the privileged, but they are Inconsistent in that their performance doesn’t match the privilege and the opportunities that God has given them. For us it means not just taking notes, but looking at them and asking: how does this impact me today?



- c. Proof of the Jews’ Guilt 2.17-29
 - 1) Failure of Inconsistency 2.17-24
 - a) Privileges of the Jews 2.17-24
 - (1) Personal Privileges 2.17-18
 - (2) Privileges for Others 2.19-20
 - b) Performance of the Jews 2.21-22
 - (1) Failure of Application 2.21

There are a series of questions, rhetorical, not asking for an answer but they are to bring to the surface where they are. Like a father dealing with a child: Did you break the lamp? The father knows because the pieces are there and the child’s finger prints are all over it. It’s not for information; Paul is not wondering—he doesn’t need an answer. He is

bringing questions so that they will come to the realization that ‘This applies to me and I am convicted.’ Eventually He wants them to realize that they need to trust in the Messiah—the Messiah that the nation put on the cross.

[Romans 2.21-24 Performance of the Jews 038]

Does Performance match Privilege? And Self-assessment? 5 Rhetorical questions

Using rhetorical questions Paul compares their performance with all those privileges that they had. It is another example of their inconsistency. He starts with ‘therefore’.

2.21... you, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself?
You who preach that one shall not steal, do you steal?...

He had started the sentence with ‘if’, verse 17, that is: **If**, in fact all these things are true, and they are (assuming the premise because it is a 1st class condition): if in fact they are Jews, they possess the Law, boast in God, (not saying they trusted in Him) and all the other things... **therefore**, you assume all things and you proclaim all these things—and this is your assessment—how does your life match up?

In following verses there is an end product of this inconsistency: in verse 23, they have dishonored God with the way they have lived, having lost even their main purpose for all of the privileges they had been given. As a result, instead of being a light to the blind, an instructor of the foolish, they, in fact, are a blasphemy before the gentiles, verse 24. That is the product.

So we begin with their performance, 21 and 22, with a series of four things—questions; and then another question relating to the product.

Starting with ‘therefore’, something should follow, something should be true, but because it is not, he condemns them—which is their performance. Does it match their privilege? And does their Self-assessment match it? The answer he gives is ‘Absolutely not!’ In fact, he does not even have to say; he only has to raise it in their thinking and their conscience.

2.21 ... you, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself?
You who preach that one shall not steal, do you steal?...

Therefore, ‘who teach another, do you not teach yourself?’ That is rather all-encompassing, the broad principle he is going to bring forward and then he will give three or four specifics. This beginning one is kind of a summary and so is the fifth question.

Their purpose was to be a light in a dark world, as we read in Isaiah 42.6, a light to the gentiles in the OT. What about the situation in the first century? They were known as rabbis, *teachers*. So he asks, ‘do you not teach yourself?’ In other words, ‘Do you apply the Scriptures that you are teaching others to follow?’ And the implied answer is ‘No.’ Some may have even reached out to the gentiles, having a knowledge of the word and ability to communicate it. But they have a failure to apply it.

It is very common in Bible-teaching churches. There are a lot of people in evangelical churches where the Bible is somewhat, if not overtly, proclaimed, people know, have a lot of doctrine, a lot of background, a lot of understanding; their theology is correct, their knowledge is at a higher level, they are Biblically literate, but it is real easy not to take those principles, that teaching, and apply it in an everyday, outside world experience. That’s the temptation we all face and we always have to battle with it. It was certainly true among the nation of Israel.

We have examples in the NT. Jesus, in Matthew 23.27, primarily rebuking ‘Woe you scribes and pharisees’, rebuking the leadership of Israel because they, in general, failed to apply the things that they were teaching others.

Sins condemned

1. Failure in doing Matthew 23.27 *“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness. 28 “So you, too, outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.”*

A basic hypocrisy, a basic failure to truly live it out, that is, it is all superficial, external. All for appearance, there is no reality. They are perfect in their attendance at the synagogue, prayers, etc., but their was no inner reality which was true of the leadership. That is who He was condemning in Matthew 23. Jesus was scathing in that chapter, more so than any other in the NT.

The application is pretty clear: doing the Word. Doers of the Word, as in James two, not merely hearers. It was a problem in the first century and it is always a problem. For those of us involved in the Word of God, it is one of the biggest temptations—not to apply the things we are learning.

Applications

1. Doing the Word Failure to apply it.

- c. Proof of the Jews' Guilt 2.17-29
 - 1) Failure of Inconsistency 2.17-24
 - a) Privileges of the Jews 2.17-24
 - (1) Personal Privileges 2.17-18
 - (2) Privileges for Others 2.19-20
 - b) Performance of the Jews 2.21-22
 - (1) Failure of Application 2.21
 - (2) Failure of Dishonesty

2.21... you, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself?
You who preach that one shall not steal, do you steal?...

The next failure is *dishonesty*. 'You who preach'—and notice the emphasis here: teaching, preaching. It's almost Hebrew poetry. But in this context: 'that one shall not steal, do you steal?' It's the same inconsistency: teaching one thing and doing another—failing to apply the very specific thing. He is going to give three violations that were very common in the first century. In fact, the first one was common in all of world history, even before the nation of Israel existed. It was common in the first century in the church—which is why James speaks of doing, not merely hearing--and common amongst Jewish people in the first century: The issue of honesty. It appears in subtle ways—not that they were breaking into houses—but perhaps not giving a full day's work for a day's wage. There are hints of this in Matthew 23.14, 25:

Sins Condemned

- 1. Failure in doing Matthew 23.27-28
- 2. Failure of 8th Commandment Matthew 23.14 generosity
"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense you make long prayers; therefore you will receive greater condemnation....²⁵ "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence.

They didn't necessarily break into widows' houses, but, in some way they were cheating them, defrauding them, perhaps putting pressure on them to tithe, beyond their capability even. He is looking at heart issues. They were profiting in some way, unbiblically, and cheating others at least in subtle ways. And this was common in the first century which is why Jesus is rebuking the leadership. And it would trickle down to the common people as

well. This is a failure of the 8th Commandment, violating the 10 Commandments, the very basis of all the Law fundamental to God's justice.

Applying it to our culture, we would probably be subtle as well. One way might be how generous we are with those who are in need. Are we generous to others with need? Or do we have to have the tax deduction first? Or do we respond in a generous way? Remember the James passage: If we know of a need and don't fulfill it, that is sin. It all begins with heart attitudes.

The third questions deals with immorality

Applications

- 1. Doing the Word
- 2. Generosity

- c. Proof of the Jews' Guilt 2.17-29
 - 1) Failure of Inconsistency 2.17-24
 - a) Privileges of the Jews 2.17-24
 - (1) Personal Privileges 2.17-18
 - (2) Privileges for Others 2.19-20
 - b) Performance of the Jews 2.21-22
 - (1) Failure of Application 2.21
 - (2) Failure of Dishonesty 2.21
 - (3) Failure of Immorality 2.22

2.21 ...you, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself?
You who preach that one shall not steal, do you steal? 22 You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?

Verse 22: 'You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery?' This was overt. In the 1st century was relatively common amongst Jewish people to violate this commandment.

2.21 ...you, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself?
You who preach that one shall not steal, do you steal? 22 You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?...

As a matter of fact, there are sources outside the Bible that mention that adultery was common then. Another passage that treats this Matthew 12.39.

Sins Condemned

1. Failure in doing Matthew 23.27-28
2. Failure of 8th Commandment Matthew 23.14, 25 generosity
3. Failure of 7th Commandment Matthew 12.39 adultery

But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet;

Adulterous: a kind of general category classifying the Jewish community adulterous. From the lips of Jesus again, accusing them of being an adulterous generation. It is also referring to the roots of it, idols of gods, but it manifests itself in an external way as well. But the roots in terms of whatever comes out of the heart. So I think it deals with both and historically we do know that this was common.

Applications

1. Doing the Word
2. Generous with others
3. Purity of life We have to guard our lives also.

- c. Proof of the Jews’ Guilt 2.17-29
 - 1) Failure of Inconsistency 2.17-24
 - a) Privileges of the Jews 2.17-24
 - (1) Personal Privileges 2.17-18
 - (2) Privileges for Others 2.19-20
 - b) Performance of the Jews 2.21-22
 - (1) Failure of Application 2.21
 - (2) Failure of Dishonesty 2.21
 - (3) Failure of Immorality 2.22
 - (4) Failure of Idolatry 2.22

2.21...you, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that one shall not steal, do you steal? 22 You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?...

They are becoming more intense, more severe. Verse 22: ‘You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?’ This is more difficult to interpret and there are a variety of views: They robbed pagan temples? General irreverence toward the Jerusalem temple? Literal stealing from the Jerusalem temple? (There was a lot of money of tithes.) Misuse of articles taken from pagan temples? Jews profited from stolen goods? In Acts 19.37 it sounds like it was a common practice to rob pagan temples: “*For you have brought these men here who are neither robbers*

of temples nor blasphemers of our goddess. They were not robbers of temples nor blasphemers of their goddess Artemis.

Sins Condemned

1. Failure in doing Mateo 23.27-28
2. Failure of 8th Commandment Mateo 23.14, 25 be light to world
3. Failure of 7th Commandment Mateo 12.39 adultery
4. Failure of 1st & 2nd “ Mateo 21.12 God first

And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all those who were buying and selling in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves. 13 And He said to them, “It is written, ‘MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER’; but you are making it a ROBBERS’ DEN.”

They had made the Jerusalem temple a den of robbers. These would have been Jews defaming the temple, profiting from the temple and probably exacting exorbitant fees from those that came from long distances and had to buy an animal, ‘robbing them’, during feast days. And anything that violates the temple violates God Himself, the presence of God manifest in the temple. It is a violation of the 1st and 2nd Commandments—at least the spirit of them, the most important part of the Commandments. Paul could point a finger and say: ‘You have failed; you are guilty before a holy God. You are in need of the saving work of the Messiah.

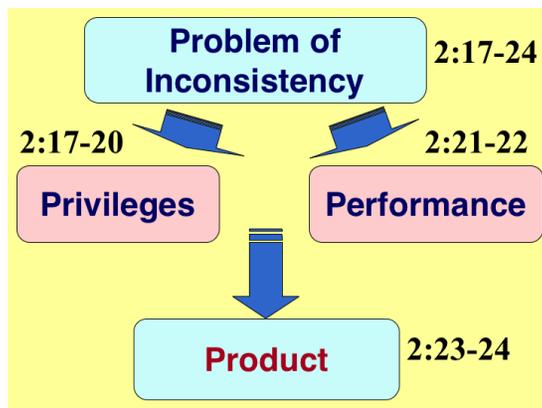
Applications

1. Doing the Word
2. Generous with others
3. Purity of life
4. God’s will priority

We can say that anything that substitutes our committing our hearts, minds and actions for the things of God—in putting something before Him—is a definition of idolatry. Anything that replaces the one true God is idolatrous. God has to be the priority. So they are guilty. Just Paul’s raising these questions would have made them think of these things. Some would have been overtly involved in at least one of these.

The *product* of all this is the fifth rhetorical question.

- c. Proof of the Jews' Guilt 2.17-29
 - 1) Failure of Inconsistency 2.17-24
 - a) Privileges of the Jews 2.17-24
 - (1) Personal Privileges 2.17-18
 - (2) Privileges for Others 2.19-20
 - b) Performance of the Jews 2.21-22
 - c) Product 2.23-24
 - (1) Dishonoring of God 2.23



2.23 You who boast in the Law, through your breaking the Law, do you dishonor God?

They boast in God, as though they owned Him. And they also boast in the Law; they know it, they claim it, they teach it, they guide the foolish, etc. But they are breaking the Law—at least four of the Ten Commandments. The question: Do you dishonor God?

Purpose

- 1. Boasting - God (1) & Law (23)
- 2. Purpose of All - glorify God
- 3. Purpose of Law - Deuteronomy 4.6-8 be light to the world

It is not bad to boast in the Law; the problem is inconsistency. We read in the Jeremiah nine passage that God delights in us boasting in Him that we know Him—and that was their failure because they didn't know Him. Furthermore, their lives were inconsistent with what they proclaimed. It is a good thing to boast: In a word study, there are several categories of which Paul boasted in his ministry—not that it was *he* that was doing it, but God was using him. And, in fact, half the

time the word is used by Paul, half of about 36 times, some of them about his ministry. It is very common in 2Corinthians where he is defending his apostleship. There are a lot of good things to boast about in the right spirit with the right attitude knowing that God is the one producing these things. So it is not a negative thing. The problem is the inconsistency.

And, this moves us to the purpose of all things—to glorify God. And we just saw the purpose of the Law—Deuteronomy 4.6-8—even before Israel existed as a nation.

Deuteronomy 4.6 “So ***keep and do them***, for that is your wisdom and your understanding in the ***sight of the peoples*** who will hear all these statutes and say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’ 7 “For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as is the LORD our God whenever we call on Him? 8 “Or what great nation is there that has statutes and judgments as righteous as this whole law which I am setting before you today?”

You should keep the Law because that is your wisdom and understanding as you do it which will be seen by the gentiles. They will see how it is having an impact on your life, and they will say that surely you are a wise and understanding people. After all, what great nation has a god so near to it as Jahweh when we call on Him? They had an active prayer life and were given the whole Law. That was the purpose of the Law: to give wisdom and understanding so that a people could be a light of the gentiles, the world. That is the purpose of studying the Bible, that we may be the light of the world because we can reflect what God can do in one life.

2.23 You who boast in the Law, through your breaking the Law, do you dishonor God?

2.23 You who boast in the Law, through your breaking the Law, do you dishonor God?

They dishonor God because they have violated, not only the Ten Commandments, but the spirit of the whole Law, and before the gentiles God is dishonored.

Purpose

- 1. Boasting - God (1) & Law (23)
- 2. Purpose of All - glorify God
- 3. Purpose of Law - Deuteronomy 4.6-8 be light to the world
- 4. Dishonor - ἀτιμάζω (ah-tee-máhd-zo) falla completa = culpable

The Greek word means ‘a complete failure’ which declares them guilty—and in need of justification—which is the next major topic Paul will deal with.

- c. Proof of the Jews’ Guilt 2.17-29
 - 1) Failure of Inconsistency 2.17-24
 - a) Privileges of the Jews 2.17-24
 - b) Performance of the Jews 2.21-22
 - c) Product 2.23-24
 - (1) Dishonoring of God 2.23
 - (2) Blaspheming of God 2.24

The last verse goes even beyond this: They blaspheme God. This is the end product. You boast in the Law and by breaking it you dishonor Him. So God is blasphemed...

2.23 You who boast in the Law, through your breaking 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 is the conclusion? The name of God is blasphemed among the gentiles because of them!
2.23 You who boast in the Law, through your breaking 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.

He quotes from Isaiah and Ezekiel. They were going to be taken into captivity. And His name was blasphemed because the Jewish people of that time were idolatrous.

Purpose

1. Boasting - God (1) & Law (23)
2. Purpose of All - glorify God
3. Purpose of Law - Deuteronomy 4.6-8
4. Dishonor - ἀτιμάζω (ah-tee-máhd-zo) complete failure = guilty
5. Blaspheme - Isaiah 52.5 “*Now therefore, what do I have here, declares the LORD, “seeing that My people have been taken away without cause?” Again the LORD declares, “Those who rule over them howl, and My name is continually blasphemed all day long.*
Ezekiel 36.20 “*When they came to the nations where they went, they profaned My holy name, because it was said of them, ‘These are the people of the LORD; yet they have come out of His land....”* 22 “*Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am*

about to act, but for My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went.

Ezekiel wrote at the time of the Babylonian captivity. So God was acting in judgment for His own name. The readers of Paul’s letter to the Romans would have been reminded of these to passages—and would have been declared guilty.

2.23 You who boast in the Law, through your breaking 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.

At the end, ‘just as it is written’; he was either quoting or paraphrasing these two passages.

Talk, the talk AND walk the walk!!!