

Romans 2:17-28

Place: Letter to the Roman church. Most of the ethnic Jews had been banished from the City, those who had remained had converted to Christianity. Christians were not seen at this time as a threat to the Romans.

These proselyted Jews still had an elite's view of the Law.

It was the one thing that set them apart from the rest of the world.

A common element in Judaism is the requirement to be set apart. The Laws set down by Moses were the defining method of making them different. There was one set of rules and all others must be subservient to these primary difference makers. There is nothing wrong with social and ethical rules. The law kept them separate from their peers. Even after accepting Jesus as the Messiah, they kept up their moral superiority.

- God's love of the Jews was seen as a great thing
- It was God's grace poured out
- It was God's unmerited favor (accident of birth)
- **But it morphed from unmerited to merited**
- **They saw themselves as deserving salvation**

So Paul speaks out in this section talking about the place of God's law.

What place does God's law have in your own belief systems?

I have heard it said that the Law has no importance. I live under grace.

These Jewish Christians proclaimed loudly within the congregation they were special because of the Law.

- They believed that Jesus was the Messiah
- They believed that Jesus was the mediator to God
- But they also believed that the Law was just as important.

The proudly wore badges of their belief system that represented the honored name of Jew.

- "Your possession of the law gives you confidence"
- "You glory in the fact that you worship the true and living God"
- "You understand his will"

Do you don't understand is that privilege brings greater responsibility.

Does the Law remain valid in the New testament dispensation?

Three things:

1. Knowing God's will is not enough to save us 17-24
2. Doing God's will is what is required 25-26

3. The fulfillment of God's will is promised 27:29

KEY for this portion of Romans: Every time you see the word Law substitute Gospel, Every time you see the word Jew substitute the word Christian.

1. Knowing God's will is not enough to save us 17-24

If I am free in Christ. If I live by faith and not works. If I keep all the explicit laws of man and God. Is everything else OK to do?

Is it OK to smoke. Where does it say it is not?

Is it OK to wear your pants down around your knees?

Is it OK to be an idiot in a social setting?

IF I AM SAVED BY GRACE, DON'T I HAVE FREEDOM TO DO WHAT I WANT?

DOES FREEDOM RELEASE ME FROM THE LAW?

Romans 6:15-16 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Absolutely not! **16** Do you not know that if you present yourselves as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or obedience resulting in righteousness? **17** But thanks be to God that though you were slaves to sin, you obeyed from the heart that pattern of teaching you were entrusted to, **18** and having been freed from sin, you became enslaved to righteousness.

Freedom is the ability to fulfill the Will of God. Our Freedom is not the right to do what I want but is the power to do as I should.

You preach not to steal.

- Less than honest with others
- Rob God for his offerings
- Take God's time for other things.

You say not commit adultery

- You look upon others
- The very mind that betrays you

You who abhor idols

- Anything that takes place of God

2. **Doing God's will is required**

Doing God's will is what is required 25-26

Converted Jews of Rome circumcision has value IF you observe the law

And if you use your freedom to keep the law you are regarded as circumcised.

Keeping the law is clearly an inward matter.

All the detailed precepts of the Torah are not what is required. It is an inner life that frees to do what God expects of us as revealed by the Holy Spirit.

"Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" a lawyer asked Jesus. "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matt. 22:36-40).

How is Love the pointer of all the commandments?

The love of God is the purpose of the law

The love of our neighbor is purpose of the law.

3. Fulfilling God's will is promised

The fulfillment of God's will is promised 27:29

What is the will of God for you. It has been debated, it has divided the church, it has divided people, it has been used as an excuse for license, it has both liberated and chained. It has been subject to perversion and misunderstanding. **But it is a good and holy gift of God.**

It points to true relationship between God and man.

We are justified by Grace "apart from the law".

When we live by the grace bestowed upon us we are heirs of all the promises to the special people the Jews.

God has a holy satisfaction for his grace filled, grace lived people. As opposed to Jewish vanity.