



# PASSIONFORTRUTH

WHERE NEW LIFE BEGINS

## Decoding Romans: Chapter 2 - Justified by the Law

*Jim Staley 2025*

0:00:00 Almost every single pastor of every Christian denomination that's out there believes that Paul is speaking against the law of God and that it's not relevant for Christians today. But right here in **Romans**, chapter two, Paul says the only way to be justified and righteous before God is to be a doer of the Word. So we're going to uncover this. What is going on? Jesus himself says He didn't come to destroy it—He came to fulfill it. And if you teach against it, you're least in the kingdom. I don't know about you, but I don't want to be least in the kingdom. I want to be greatest in the kingdom. And Paul tells us exactly how to do that. Let's break it all down as we dive into the book of **Romans**, chapter two, right after this.

0:00:48 Hello, everyone. Jim Staley, Passion for Truth Ministries, and welcome to today's broadcast. As we are moving to chapter two of the most systematic theological book that Christianity has ever laid their eyes on—that's right, we're in the book of **Romans**, written by Paul himself, Rabbi Shaul, as they say—we are going to deconstruct chapter two. This is going to be a controversial chapter, without a doubt. So, if you're into controversy, if you're into being challenged, then this is absolutely for you. This is all about theology. This is about doctrine. We do what we believe, and we are going to uncover the ancient mysteries that are found in the book of **Romans** when we put them back in their original historical context and culture. So strap on your seat belts, my friends, and open your notebooks. We're going to dive into the original Hebraic culture and the idiomatic expressions. You're going to learn about first-century Judaism here on this channel.

0:01:54 With this particular series that we're going through, we just finished the book of **Acts**, going verse by verse. We are now working through the book of **Romans**, and we have already begun to see that there is a big gap between traditional Christian theological understanding and the original Hebraic context that Paul was writing in. Remember, Paul was not a Gentile; he was a Jew. In fact, he was a Jew of Jews, a Rabbi of Rabbis, who sat under Gamaliel. And we are going to look into what he has to say. In the meantime, do us a favor: **hit subscribe** and click the

notification button so you don't miss a single video broadcast that we put out here at Passion for Truth. If you're all about finding and doing Bible things in Bible ways, then that's what this channel does. We dissect the scriptures to discover what they mean in their original Hebraic Jewish culture, the culture they were written in.

0:02:44 So here we go. Let's dive in. We have so much to talk about, so let's just get right to the Scriptures. **Romans**, chapter two, is all about the Jewish believers in Rome. So, before we dive into it, it's important to know that chapter one was really written to the Gentile Roman believers, and chapter two is now switching gears and discussing and talking directly to the Jewish believers. Now, again, it's important to remember this is not about unbelieving Jews or Gentiles. Paul is not writing to the Roman kingdom. He's writing to the churches in Rome that are comprised of Jewish and Gentile believers. Now, Paul has not been to Rome at this point. He did not start any of these churches. He's literally writing blindly, and this part of the book of **Romans** is really called a diatribe. What is a diatribe? A diatribe is where Paul is really going to have a conversation with himself. He's going to pick out some positions of the opposition, and then he's going to pull down or tear down those positions to state his position. He's having a one-way argument, and that's the best argument to have because you always win!

0:03:58 So let's talk about **Romans, chapter one**, real quick. We end chapter one talking about the horrible things that the Gentiles were doing here in Rome, and he was concerned that the Gentile Romans might fall into these same practices of being violent, proud, boasters, homosexuals, unloving, unforgiving, and unmerciful. Who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death—not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them. So, we're talking about a judgment here. Paul is going to say, “Look, you Gentiles do not have the right to judge because there are all kinds of sins that you're likely involved with, and you don't have the right to judge if you're doing any of these.” And he lists out so many of these that, without a doubt, there are Gentiles involved in one or more of these sins. This chapter and chapter two are all about humility, and it's all about what is the righteous judgment—that God is the only judge. So everybody, be quiet, back off, and stop judging everyone. Focus on your own righteousness and pray for those that you believe are not following God's law the way that you would want to follow it.

0:05:20 So, with that in mind, let's dive into **chapter two**, where it's talking specifically to the Jewish people. All right, let's go to the Scriptures. Here we go: ***“1 Therefore, you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are to judge, for in whatever you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.”*** Now, this sounds eerily familiar to **Matthew, chapter seven**, when he says, ***“Do not judge, lest you be judged. For with the same standard that you judge, you will be judged.”*** This whole issue of judgment, which is found today in Christianity and religious circles, was found all the way back then as well. Judgment and pointing the finger at other people were prevalent, and he says,

"Look, stop it. Stop judging. You're not the judge, you're not the king, and you have sin in your life. So, if you want to be judged in your own life, then you probably shouldn't be judging someone else. Because the moment you judge someone else, unless your life is perfect, you're going to invoke judgment on yourself."

0:06:24 All right, so **verse two** says this: **"<sup>2</sup> But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things. <sup>3</sup> And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God?"** Now, listen very carefully as I go through here. It's going to get thicker and thicker, and more controversial and more controversial. I'm not here to bring controversy. I'm here to break the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Controversy simply means we've misunderstood the text, and it's controversial to today's denominational bias. So, if you come into this study with a denominational bias and an understanding of what you think the Scriptures might mean from a construct of American, Western, 21st-century seminary, then you're likely going to get offended at the text when it's put back in its original Hebrew context. Because it's first-century Middle Eastern text from a Jewish perspective—a Torah-law perspective. And so, if you don't know anything about the Torah, you don't know anything about the law of God, you don't know anything about the oral law or the Talmud, or the Mishnah, or the Gemara, or the two schools of thought of Hillel and Shammai, the Sanhedrin, and its impact on early Christianity as Pharisees began to get saved and come into Christianity, and then Gentiles as they rose to power and displaced Jews, and the destruction of the temple in 70 AD—if all of that is foreign to you and just went way over your head, then you are likely going to read into the text what you already believe, what you've been told. What we're going to do is go back and *understand* the fullness of the culture so that we can fully understand what Paul is talking about.

0:08:12 So, what's going on here right off the bat in **Romans, chapter two**, is that the Jewish people themselves had a background in a fundamental, foundational belief system. Their philosophy was that, because we are Hebrews, we are Jewish, and therefore we are in right standing with God. Period. It didn't matter what they did. It didn't matter how they lived. The mere fact that they were Jewish put them in a good position. The second fundamental belief that Jews had in the first century was that Gentiles, who were out of covenant, were of the nations. They were not of the Jewish nation. They were not of Israel or the stock of Israel. Therefore, they were bad. They were oppressors. They were evil, and they were the ones awaiting judgment.

0:09:02 This is a critical, critical historical backdrop—understanding a cultural nuance that's important for you to absorb. Because Paul is nailing this false theology and philosophy in chapter two. And if you don't know that, it can be confusing to think, **"Well, how could they think they're okay just because of circumcision?"** Well, that's exactly what they believed. They believed, just like there are Americans today who believe that they are Christian because they're American—that they're

going to heaven because they are American. As ludicrous as that might sound to a Bible student or a Christian who knows the Bible, there are real people out there who believe that just because they're American, they're Christian. And in the same way, in the first century, there were people who believed that just because they were Jewish, circumcised on the eighth day, they were better than everybody else, that God was blessing them, and they could not be judged. Judgment was for the Gentiles. So that's our theological construct.

0:10:05 Okay, let's go back to the Scriptures. Here we go. **Verse 5: <sup>5</sup>But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart, you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, <sup>6</sup>who will render to each one according to his deeds.**" Now, I love this because Paul is quoting here directly from **Job, chapter 34:11**, where it says, **<sup>11</sup>For He repays man according to his works.**" So Paul is using the Old Testament as his foundation, evidence that God is going to judge you for your works, not what you believe. God doesn't care what you believe. He cares what you do. What you do is what you believe. That's why I teach all the time: if you have a teenager who has a belief problem, you're going to find there's a behavior problem. Fix the belief problem, and you fix the behavior problem. In all of us, we're the same way.

0:11:06 Let's continue. **Verse 7: <sup>7</sup>Eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, <sup>8</sup>but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, <sup>9</sup>tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek. <sup>10</sup>But glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. <sup>11</sup>For there is no partiality with God.**" All right, this is really important here. I want to go back up to verse 7, where it says: *"Eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good."*

0:11:45 Now, this is really important because, in traditional Christianity, there's an entire major leg of Christianity that believes salvation comes by faith, through grace, not of works, lest any man should boast. Paul is actually the one who says that, and we will talk about that in the future. But for now, there is a confusion—there is a misunderstanding, I should say—on what this means. Because Paul is saying right now that eternal life is sought by those who *patiently continue in doing good*. So, in the mind of Rabbi Paul, who grew up understanding that the Torah is all about works, the Torah is all about the law of God, it's all about things to do. It's an instruction manual—it's actually what Torah means. It means "instructions." It doesn't mean "law."

0:12:37 Everybody has instructions. Every house has a Torah. Every marriage has a Torah. And husbands, you know when you break your wife's Torah from a half a mile away! You will know. Everything in any kind of covenant, there are things to do

inside that covenant that cause the relationship to grow closer. So, inside the covenant of Israel—that is defined as God and those who want to be part of God's kingdom, His people—there is a covenant with covenant laws and covenant instructions. That's why Paul says: "Look, if you want eternal life, you have to continually and patiently do good. Your doing good is what proves what you believe. If you don't do good, then you're doing evil, and you're proving that you're not following the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." So, there is no concept in Judaism of believing in God and then not doing what He said. And this is going to be a *huge* building block for the book of Romans and how traditional Christianity has removed the building block of righteousness built upon doing things. There are multiple kinds of righteousness, as we talked about last week. There is the righteousness of Christ that is salvific, meaning we can't do anything to attain salvation. Salvation is 100% because of the faith and obedience of Christ. And that's it. His grace, our faith—that's it.

0:14:13 But our works are what prove that the faith actually embedded itself into our heart. Our life is changed. It's the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony. And our testimony is specifically built around *what we do in every situation*. We have a situation where something really bad happens to us. Our testimony is how God delivered us from that, how God trained us, brought us, resurrected us, and redeemed us from that situation. ***"That God works all things together for good for those who love the Lord and are called according to His purpose."*** So, at the end of the day, this is a really important Scripture. We're going to see a lot more of them moving forward. But in Paul's mind, doing good is part of the faith. And I know that, for some, it sounds basic—like 101—but for the majority of Christianity, this is not the case. There are those who believe, "Hey, I'm saved through faith; I don't have to do anything after this." And believe it or not, there are millions—hundreds of millions—of Christians who believe that. This is just not what Paul believes.

0:15:10 All right, let's go back to the text. We're going to start getting thicker and thicker here. **Verse 12: *"<sup>12</sup> For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law."*** This is where it's going to get a little sticky. We're going to have to define some things. **Verse 13: *"<sup>13</sup> For not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified."*** Now, holy smokes, we have some serious, serious weighted comments here by Paul that are theologically thick. So, we're going to get out our shovels and dig into this to really uncover what it means. Let's go back to verse 12 here and unpack it.

0:16:04 All right, first things first. Let's deal with a very serious myth—we'll even call it a lie—that has permeated Christianity as it relates to this particular Scripture and the context of Chapter Two. One of the most prevalent misconceptions out there, dealing with the book of Romans or the Jewish people in the New Testament, is that the Jew is under the law of God—they are the ones who have to keep the law

of God—and the Gentiles only have to keep the law of love. This I have heard so many times: **"We're under the law of love; the Jews were under the law of God."** Now, this is not only illogical, but it also doesn't exist anywhere in theology in the New Testament at all. As a matter of fact, as we're going to find out, Paul is *advocating* for all of these Jewish believers to keep the law. In the book of Acts, they said in **Acts, Chapter 20**, that there was a false accusation against Paul that he was against the law of God. And he said: "No, not at all. I'm going to do all of this stuff. I'm going to do sacrifices. I'm going to pay for these four young men to prove that I am absolutely zealous for the law of God. I keep the law of God. I am a law-keeper. I'm not a lawbreaker, and I'm not teaching the Jews and the Gentiles to forsake the law of Moses." James makes that extraordinarily clear. Romans is going to be a continuation of that sentiment—times 10—as we walk through here.

0:17:31 So, it's important to see that this idea of, **"What's sin for me is not sin for you,"** or, **"The Jews keep the law of God, and Christians keep the law of love,"** is a big problem theologically. You know why? Because we have no definitions of love or sin outside of the Bible. And sin is defined in [1 John 3:4](#) as the transgression of the law. There is no other definition of sin in all the Bible. So, if we remove the law of God as the standard of sin, then there is no definition of sin. If there's no definition of sin, then there's no one who is a sinner breaking the law of God. If there's no sinner, then there's no one under a curse. And if there's no one under a curse, then there's no need for a Savior. You see how it all fits together?

We have:

- You break God's law, you become a sinner.
- You're under the curse of the law.
- You need a Savior.

And that's where Christ comes in. If you remove all of that, there is no need for the blood of Christ because it's all predicated on a law that the entire world has broken—which we're going to find out in just a moment. So, it's important to know that there is only one law.

0:18:42 As a matter of fact, let's go over to **Numbers, Chapter 15, Verse 15**, and it says this: **"<sup>15</sup> One ordinance shall be for you of the assembly and for the stranger who dwells with you, an ordinance forever throughout your generations. As you are, so shall the stranger be before the Lord. One law and one custom shall be for you and for the stranger who dwells with you."** Now, before you believe that all this was just for Israel, this is a Scripture that's in the Torah. It's in the law of God, and it's just for Israel—you would be highly mistaken. **The word there for "stranger" is Gentile; it is goyim.** So, there is one law for native-born Israel *and* for the Gentile that follows along with them. If there's a Gentile who wants to follow the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, there's one law because there's one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

- 0:19:41 That is what **Romans 11** is going to be all about—the grafting into the olive branch, into the olive tree, and coming into the commonwealth of Israel. **"You once were strangers, but now you're brought near to the commonwealth of Israel."** He would not be using that terminology for Gentiles if they were not coming into Israel. They're joining Israel. They're not separate from Israel. But Christianity has created this replacement theology that says: "Hey, the Jews are over here, and they've got the law of God in the Torah. The Gentiles are over here, and we've got... well, we're not really sure. We've got seminaries—that's what we've got—and we've got all the Christian doctrines. We've got the law of love, but there's no definition of the law of love." Love is defined by the law of God. That's why it says you cannot lay down a man with a man or a woman with a woman—it's not love. Who gets to decide that? The One who made man and woman. So, if you remove the law of God, you remove the definition of love. Then everybody gets to do whatever's right in their own eyes. And that's exactly what's happening today.
- 0:20:49 Okay, you even see the same thing in **James, Chapter 4, Verse 11**. Let's read it real quick: **"<sup>11</sup> Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. There is one Lawgiver who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?"** This is a really important passage because we're going to see the congruency from author to author in the New Testament concerning this concept of what Paul is talking about regarding the law. As a matter of fact, in **Verse 13**, when he says: **"<sup>13</sup> For not the hearers of the law are righteous before God, but the doers of the law,"** that's a direct quote from James. James says the same thing, as we'll see shortly.
- 0:21:47 But what I want to bring up here in **James, Chapter 4**, is the fact that he says: **"Look, if you judge one another, you are literally speaking evil of the law."** Now, think about this. James is the president of the church—what we would consider the church, what they would consider the assembly or the **Ecclesia**. The Messianic church in the first century was headed up by James. And James is making a halakhic decision, a judgment here, and he's saying: "Look, if you judge one another and you speak evil of one another, you're speaking evil of the law." By default, that means that he's putting the law in a position of authority here. The law was the guide; it was the lamp unto their feet, the light unto their path. It's the very thing that Satan has convinced the Christian church is bad, ugly, and a curse. "You know, we're not obliged to it any longer," they say. But all the Scripture in the New Testament—including Paul, as we look through here—seems to say the complete opposite.
- 0:22:48 As a matter of fact, in **Timothy**, it says: **"All Scripture is worthy for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for ways of righteousness."** And in the first century, there was no New Testament. So, when they say that "all Scripture," it's specifically talking about the instructions of what we would call the Old Testament—what they

called the Hebrew Scriptures, or the Tanakh. At the end of the day, there is one Lawgiver, and he's setting this up. *One Lawgiver for everybody*. And that Scripture in James is talking to the Gentiles and to the Jews. There's no separation. There's no Jew and Gentile, male or free. There are just people of God with one constitution under God. That's it. Not two constitutions—one. There are blessings if you keep God's commandments and curses if you don't. That's just what the Bible says.

0:23:41 So, if we get back to the Scriptures here—because I know I'm already stepping on some toes—Jim, are you saying that Christians have to keep the law of God? I'm here to say what Paul is saying. So far, he is saying that as many as have sinned without the law—specifically talking about Gentiles—they will perish without the law. In other words, if they don't have the law of God, they're going to die and perish anyway. They're going to be judged. Period. As many as have sinned in the law—that's an idiomatic expression. That means with the law, they grew up with the Torah. Yours might say "under the law." That is an incorrect translation. That Greek word for "under" is not in the text. It should be "in." "Without anomos" means without law, okay? So, it should be "inside of the law." If they grew up in the Torah, they're going to be judged by the law, okay?

0:24:35 The reason he's saying this, my friends—he's not saying this for the depth of how we've tried to create theology out of this. He's simply saying: "Look, you Jews believe that you're better than the Gentiles because you have the law of God. I'm here to tell you that your judgment will be by the nuances of the law of God. If you are so into the law of God and that is your salvation, your judgment will be by the very law that you espouse as your Savior. But if you don't have the law of God, you're going to be judged anyway. You're going to die anyway." But what he's trying to say is nobody is better or worse here. Everyone is going to be judged by God, okay? And then he capitalizes on this in the next verse. Listen to **Verse 13**. It goes against every single Christian pastor out there, virtually on the planet, because almost every Christian pastor believes that Christians are not subject to the law of God—not at all. That was for the Old Testament. "We're under the law of love," they say. But here, he says, right here: "For not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified."

0:25:53 Now, this Greek word here is not "justified." It's not just. It should be "righteous." Righteous. Or more accurately, it should be something like "righteous and righteoused." So: **"For not the hearers of the law are righteous in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be made righteous."** In other words, God is not concerned about whether or not you're just a Jew, born in Israel, circumcised on the eighth day, or if your father was a Jew, or your grandfather was a Jew. He's saying: "I don't care about that." What He's saying is God is concerned about what you do. Are you doing the law of God? This is really, really important because it fully breaks Christian thought in half—like, this breaks the whole wheel. The whole



transmission just comes to a halt and doesn't know what to do with this because Paul is literally saying the hearers of the law of God...

- 0:26:53 By the way, what does that mean? That is also a Jewish idiom. In the first century, the hearers of the law were the ones in the synagogue. This is not a temple-based system; this is a synagogue-based system. By the time Paul was writing this, everyone was learning the law not at the temple like before but in the synagogues. Every **Shabbat**, every Saturday afternoon, they were going to the synagogue. Then the Christians, which were the **Way**, a sect of Judaism, were meeting Saturday night when the sun went down—which happens to be the first day of the week. When the sun goes down, that's when a new day begins. That's when they would begin to commentate—Paul or the leaders would commentate on the Torah portion or the Scriptures that were read inside the synagogue. So, they're hearing the law inside the synagogues.
- 0:27:48 What Paul is saying is: "Look, that's great. You're going to church—that's great—but it's not about going to church. It's not about hearing the law; it's about doing it. That is what's going to make you righteous before God. That's what's going to turn God on." And it's the same today. We have Christians showing up at church each and every week, but they're not following the Scriptures. They are once-a-week Sunday Christians, but they're not doing the things that God has asked them to do.
- 0:28:19 As a matter of fact, let's go over to James and see what he has to say, as he's saying the same thing that Paul is saying right here. Chapter 1, Verse 22. Let's read it together. It says: **"But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word..."** What's the word? There is no other word in the first century than the law of God—the Torah, the Prophets, and the Sayings. He's like: "Stop being a hearer of the word and deceiving yourself only. He's like a man observing his natural face in a mirror, for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty..." Guys, do you hear what he just said? He's defining the Torah of Moses as liberty. In other words, God is the one that gave liberty to the Israelites by bringing them out of Egypt and giving them His perfect law. It's a lamp under their feet. It's a light on their path. It's the guardrails for life. It shows them how to be blessed. It shows them the pitfalls—what happens if you want to be cursed. He's showing them how to live, and that is what they call liberty.
- 0:29:29 Now, there's not—there's not very many pastors today that would say that God's law is liberty. They would call it bondage because of another scripture that Paul uses where they misunderstand what he's actually talking about in bondage. Paul would never say that God's law is bondage. He upholds it. [Romans 3:31](#), as we're going to see next week. But right here, James says: **"Look into the perfect law of liberty and continue in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work."**

**This one will be blessed in what he does."** In the mind of James, in the mind of Paul—in doing the law of God, following God's commandments—in other words, just doing what God said to do. That is the work of God. That's what causes a man to be blessed, and that is what causes the blessings of God to flow.

0:30:15 So, let's go back to Chapter 2 here in Romans. Alright. So, **Verse 14**, it says: *"<sup>14</sup> For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law or the Torah, are a law to themselves, <sup>15</sup> who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them <sup>16</sup> in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel."* Alright. So, now this is important because what some people interpret this as is that, look, the Gentiles who don't have the law—they're doing a better job than the Jews who have the law. So, therefore, the law really doesn't matter. It's written on their hearts in some sort of, you know, natural Noahide way. That is not at all the heart of Paul. That's not what he says in other books that he wrote. He's not going to contradict himself after he quotes and says that, look, there's only one law for the Jew and the Gentile. Matter of fact, there's no Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female. There are the people of God, and there's a constitution of God. It's called the law of God. It's the very thing that I want to do that I don't do, and the very thing that I don't do is what I want to do—and that's keep the law of God. But he finds another law inside of him—the law of sin and death.

0:31:35 Now, I'm getting ahead of myself in **Romans Chapter 7**, but I'm just bringing this forward to show you that, in Paul's mind, what he's simply saying is this: "You Jewish believers have gotten so prideful and so arrogant that you're just Jewish, and you make it into the Kingdom, and you don't have to do anything." Which is absolutely what they believed in Judaism of the first century. They all have a participating part in the life to come just because of their bloodline. And Paul blows this out of the water and says: "Look, if you Jews have the law and you're not keeping it, yet these Gentiles are getting saved—they barely understand what God's law is, and they are starting to be conformed by the renewing of their mind in Christ Jesus and the Holy Spirit." And they're starting to do the foundational principles of the law, and they don't even know what they are. But because they're falling in line with love, and everything is being based out of love, they're following a lot of the Torah commandments. So much so, Paul says, that they don't even have the law, and they're keeping it better than you.

0:32:50 Now, what's fascinating is the academic Christian community is not seeing the focal point of what Paul is saying. Keeping the law is good. That's what he's saying. It's good. It's so good. He's saying that the Gentiles are doing a better job at keeping it than the Jews. There's nothing in here that says the Gentiles shouldn't keep the law of God. He's expecting them to. Thereby, he's stating the obvious: You Jews are giving yourselves a free pass. You have the law, but you

don't keep it. The Gentiles—they don't have the law because they're scattered all over the place. They have no idea really what the Torah is, but they're slowly learning it. How do we know that? Because [Acts, Chapter 15, Verse 21](#), says that, hey, every week they're going to go to Shabbat service on Saturday, and they're going to hear the Torah being preached. They're going to learn it. So, there is an expectation by the president of the early church, James, in Acts, Chapter 15 (which we covered extensively—you can click the link in the description or above here to see [Acts, Chapter 15, explained](#)). But there is an understanding and expectation that the Gentiles are going to be going to church, if you will, in the synagogues every Saturday on Shabbat, and they're going to learn the law of God. And Paul is making the obvious point here that, hey, the Gentiles are keeping it better than you are. Therefore, at the end of the day, he says: You don't have to worry about anything, because God is going to judge everybody. So, stop judging the Gentiles. And the reason, again, why this is so important is that he's talking to Gentiles that are believers and Jews that are believers. And the Jews are judging the Gentiles, even though they're believers.

0:34:39 It's like **Family Feud** happening already in the first century. The Jews are disposed and predisposed to looking down on Gentiles. So, even though the Gentiles are saved and coming into the church, they are being looked down upon by their Jewish counterparts. And Paul says: "Stop it, all of you. All." That's why he's going to say in the next chapter: **"Everybody has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. So stop judging each other. God is going to be the judge."** And then he just points out the mere fact that, hey, by the way, the Gentiles are keeping the law of God better than you.

0:35:12 Alright, let's move forward. Here we are running out of time, and we need to hit the rest of this chapter. *"<sup>17</sup> Indeed, you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God, <sup>18</sup> and know His will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, <sup>19</sup> and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind..."* Now, he's being sarcastic: *"...a light to those who are in darkness, <sup>20</sup> an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law. <sup>21</sup> You, therefore, who teach another, why don't you teach yourself?"* Is what he's saying. *"<sup>22</sup> You preach that a man should not steal—do you steal? You who say, 'Do not commit adultery'—are you committing adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?"* Which, by the way, is important because the Torah made a very specific command: "Hey, when you guys go out for war, you are not allowed, when you ransack the temple of the foreign gods, to take the idols or any of the silver or gold that's found in the temples of those gods. That is defiled, and you are not to take it."

0:26:17 So, obviously, he's making a point here to say: "Look, you abhor idols, but you're robbing the temples, stealing the silver and the gold." Perhaps that was an issue back then; I don't know. But in **Verse 23**: *"<sup>23</sup> You who make your boast in the*

**law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law? <sup>24</sup> For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you, as it is written.**" Again, the Jews had a horrible reputation among the Gentiles, and God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because the Jews weren't keeping God's law. Now, I know that might seem to be a shock to some of you because, when you think of Jews in the first century, you think of the Orthodox, and you're thinking of Pharisees and Sadducees. But they were a very, very small point—a very small part of Israel. They were the religious.

0:27:09 But all of these Jews that were coming and getting saved were not religious Jews by almost any stretch of the imagination. They were becoming religious, but they were using their background in Judaism—thinking: "Hey, I'm good just because I'm a Jew." And he's saying: "Look, you are breaking the law of God, and it's making everybody look bad. It's making the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob look bad." So, let me ask you a question. I know I've been passionate so far—24 verses in a row. Passionate to get back to doing Bible things in Bible ways. But what about you? Are you making the name of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob look bad by the way that you live your life, by the way that you talk to your spouse?

0:27:53 Husbands, by the way that you talk to your wife, do your children—who are the Gentiles in the house—look at Dad's theology and go, "That's the God that I want to serve," or do they look at Dad's theology and go, "I don't want anything to do with that"? Dad's a hypocrite. On Sunday or Saturday, whenever he goes to church, he pretends to be a God-fearer. But the way that he treats us, the way that I hear him treat other people, the way he talks and curses, the movies he watches—you know your own vices. Your children know about them. This is a huge indictment for us today: that we should never be judging anybody that is out there and around us, because our own lives are so filled with failure on every level. We just don't have the right. What someone else's weakness is might be our strength, but we have our own weaknesses. And we don't want other people to know about them, and we certainly don't want God to judge our weakness because we chose to judge someone else's weakness. That's why it says, man, just pray for them, because we've all fallen short of God's glory. Amen?

0:29:08 Alright, let's get back to the Scriptures. We're almost done with this chapter. Now we're gonna move towards circumcision. What in the world is Paul talking about here? He says, "<sup>25</sup> **For circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law; but if you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.**" What's he talking about here? Circumcision is an idiom for the Jewish people, so he's talking about those that were circumcised on the eighth day. You're the stock of Israel. You are Jewish. Then your circumcision is profitable if you keep the law. So, this is a powerful statement, because in Christianity today, Paul is accused of saying that circumcision is not important. But he says right here, circumcision has huge value. Being Jewish has huge, huge value. If you keep the law of God, then you are in a status as a people of God, and you are being a light

to the Gentiles. So, therefore, being circumcised means something. Being of the people of God means something—if you keep the law. But if you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. In other words, your Jewishness, your tie to Israel, has become untied. You've become like a Gentile that's out of covenant with the nations and has nothing to do with Israel.

0:40:35 So, he's trying to make this argument: "Your circumcision means nothing unless you actually keep the covenant." And today, Paul would say it like this: "Believer in Christ, believer in Messiah, listen to me carefully. Your church attendance means nothing. Your Bible reading means nothing. Your baptism means nothing unless you *actually keep the covenant*, unless you are in the image of Christ, unless you are following in the footsteps of Christ—this Jewish Rabbi who kept the law of God perfectly. Unless you seek to know His ways and follow them, your baptism means nothing." Whether you got a little sprinkle when you were an infant, whether you were baptized at 12, or whether you were baptized when you recommitted your life to Christ—or committed your life to Christ for the first time—it doesn't matter if you don't back it up. None of it means anything. All of it means nothing.

0:41:40 ***"<sup>26</sup> Therefore, if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision?"*** Now, Paul is not saying, "Look, if you are a Gentile and you keep the law of God, then you're Jewish." That's not what he's saying at all. He is making a metaphorical connection to say: "Look, because you're looking down on the Gentile, if the Gentile is actually keeping the Torah, and you, who are circumcised, are not, the Gentile is better than you. He's basically taking your place as the people of God." It's basically what he said. He said: "Look, if you think that you're special just because you're circumcised and you don't keep the commandments, a Gentile that keeps God's Torah is more righteous than you. Will he not be looked at by God as God's people?" And again, you have to understand: in Judaism, they did not believe Gentiles could ever be God's people. So, this is a really big deal for Paul to make the statement. "Look, to be God's people you've got to believe in Christ, but after that, if they're keeping God's law, they're going to be looked at by God as more a part of His people than you are."

0:42:59 All right, ***"<sup>27</sup> And will not the physically uncircumcised, if he fulfills the law, judge you who, even with your written code and circumcision, are a transgressor of the law? <sup>28</sup> For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; <sup>29</sup> but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter, whose praise is not from men but from God."*** Now look, this is really, really important, because what Paul is not saying is that circumcision is not important. He's saying that y'all are focusing so much on the physical commandment of circumcision that you're missing the greater point that Moses told you. Moses was the one that told you, through God, that He wants you to be circumcised in the heart. It's no different than baptism, okay? For the believer in Christ, baptism is a

symbol of what's been happening in the heart. So when one comes out of the water, and he has now resurrected a new life, his life is supposed to reflect the death of the flesh that went under the water. In the same way, in early Judaism, circumcision was an outward sign of the destruction of the flesh—the literal cutting of the flesh. It's what **covenant** means. In Hebrew, it literally means “**to cut**.” When you covenant, you're cutting something. An animal is going to die; it's going to be cut in half, and the two parties are going to walk between the two parts of the covenant, and they're going to eat each other's part. They're going to **cut covenant**, as they said it.

0:44:39 In the same way here with circumcision, there was a cut of flesh. You're cutting covenant with God, and it's expected that your life—your heart—is going to change after that because you're making a very big decision. You're deciding to get circumcised. Well, they did it, according to the Scriptures, on the eighth day. But they forgot to teach their children that the reason why we circumcised you is to bring you into covenant, and now you keep the covenant restrictions and the commandments and the instructions so that we can be blessed. They just forgot that part. They just settled in on, “Hey, we're circumcised, so we're good to go.” And Paul's point is, look, circumcision is not on the outward only; it's on the inward side. That's what he's looking for—circumcision of the heart. And by the way, when he says that, in ancient Judaism—biblical text here—the **heart** is not the seat of the emotions. That's not like it is today, where we're talking about feelings when we mention the heart. Right? In biblical times, the heart was the thought process. It was really the **mind**. The heart was the center of your thinking. It was who you are. It was the foundation of your whole process of how you make decisions.

0:46:02 I know that sounds strange, but that's biblical culture. And so it's important for you to know that when he says that circumcision is that of the heart, he's saying, “I want your entire frame of reference—how you make decisions, how you think through things, what your mind thinks about—to be directly related to this organ that they call the heart.” And he says, “I want that to be circumcised. That's what's most important to God—circumcising the heart, not just the flesh.” My friends, I know that this might be difficult. This might be brushing up against a lot of your theology that Christianity has nothing to do with the law of God. But right now, we've got a book that's written to Gentile believers and Jewish believers in Rome, and it's all about the law of God. Listen to some of the counterparts here in **Romans, chapter three, verse 19**, which we're going to read next week. It says, **“<sup>19</sup> Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.”**

0:47:14 My friends, the entire world is guilty before God. It says because they're subject to the law of God—they're under it. You cannot be guilty before God, as the pagan world is, if they haven't broken the law of God, which by default means the whole world is subject to the law of God. Which is, by the way, why they are sinners.

James, chapter two, says, <sup>“10</sup> ***For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of it all.***” James is the president of the early Messianic Christian church, and he is literally saying the law of God is so central to Christian theology in the first century. He says that if you break one part of it, you're guilty of all of it.

0:47:58 Well, look, if the law of God was not applicable to early believers at that point, he wouldn't even be bringing it up at all. But he's saying that you're guilty of breaking all of it if you break one part. And, of course, the context there is he's talking about salvation by grace, that you cannot earn your salvation. So if the Jewish believers are focusing on the law of God like they've been taught as their salvation, and they break one part of it, they're guilty before God of all of it. If the law of God weren't applicable, they couldn't be guilty at all of anything because the law of God wouldn't be alive. It wouldn't be applicable in any believer's life. But he makes it clear that it is. The world is so subject to God's law. The prophets themselves even bring it up.

0:48:46 **Isaiah, chapter 24, verse 5**—let's read it together as we're almost finished here. It says, <sup>“5</sup> ***The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants, because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.***” Now, I know the everlasting covenant is also referenced to the Noahide covenant, but this law here is all the way back to Abraham. It is Isaac, Jacob, it's Noah, it's David, it's all the laws of God. The earth is defiled because it's broken God's law. This is the very reason why it needs a Savior.

0:49:24 If you go to **Titus, chapter 2, verse 11**, and we'll end with this: ***“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.”*** Did you catch that, my friends? This scripture is saying that He's redeeming us from every lawless deed. And I know I just promised that we're going to end the broadcast there, but let's end in **Matthew, chapter 5**. If you've not ever read this, it's extraordinary. Jesus Himself says the entire kingdom of heaven—the rewards—are predicated on the law of God and how well we keep it.

0:50:29 It says right here, let's read it together. **Matthew 5:17** and following: <sup>“17</sup> ***Do not think that I came to destroy the law or the prophets. I did not come to destroy, but to fulfill.***” And that Greek word there, “fulfill,” is plural, and it means to fill up, to give full meaning. It does not mean to destroy. Fulfill does not mean destroy at all. Because in [chapter 3 of Matthew](#)—you can go check it out—it says that Christ fulfilled all righteousness. And the word there is the same Greek word “**pleroo**.” Christ is not doing away with righteousness; He's filling it

up. He's giving it full meaning. It's like a glass. A glass fulfills its purpose when the water, or the liquid, is all the way to the brim. In the same way, when a husband comes together with a wife, she fulfills him. She's not doing away with him. She's giving him fuller meaning by being the hand and the glove. That's why He says, "I didn't come to destroy, but to fulfill."

0:51:35 **Verse 18: <sup>18</sup>For assuredly I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till everything is fulfilled."**

And the last time I checked, heaven and earth are still here, and everything is not fulfilled. **"Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."**

0:52:02 So, as we close out this broadcast, brothers and sisters, listen to what Jesus Himself is saying. It goes and flies in the face of virtually all the major denominations within Christianity proper today. Jesus says, "Look, man, I didn't come to get rid of the law like you're teaching people. I came to give it better meaning. I came to put it back in its proper context and get rid of the traditions and doctrines of men." I know you're not going to understand it all. It's designed so that you won't understand it all, that you will seek Me and you'll find Me and create a deeper, intimate relationship. It's not for salvation, but it is for relationship. It shows me that you love Me first. **John 5** says, **<sup>3</sup>Here are those who love God, those who keep His commandments. His commandments are not burdensome."** It's the only way that God knows we love Him: we do what He asks us to do. And that's why He says that not until heaven and earth pass away, "My law is not going anywhere." Don't believe this serpent that's going to find its way into pulpits all over America, Western civilization, and, quite frankly, across the globe. It is going to teach that My law is done away with because the serpent's motivation is to indict you. It's to curse you. And how does he do that? The same way that Balaam would curse the Israelites by coming to King Balak and saying, "Hey, all you got to do is send out your beautiful women and they will marry them and break God's law, and they will curse themselves."

0:53:35 *That* is the purpose of the serpent: to convince us, "Don't worry about keeping God's law." Didn't he do that in the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? "God didn't really mean what He said." And He's saying it today again, "God didn't really mean what He said." Jesus didn't really mean what He said here when He says, "If you teach the least of these commandments can be broken, you will be least in the kingdom of heaven." Did you catch that? That doesn't mean that you're not saved if you want to teach against God's law. By all means, do it—but do it with the risk knowing that you will be least in His kingdom and ashamed of it as well. God is looking for people that will be teaching His commandments, teaching how to be blessed—not to be in bondage, not in legalism like they did in the first century, or even legalism like they do today in many cases, but to follow it in simplicity of spirit and in truth.



- 0:54:29 So today, in Romans, chapter 2, to recap, He's talking to Jewish believers. He's saying, "Look, you have no arrogance or pride against your Gentile counterparts. They're following the Torah better than you." Glad that you're following the Torah, but understand that your salvation is not built in it. Your salvation is built on Christ. God's going to judge everybody, and He's going to judge based on His law.
- 0:54:53 My friends, thank you for joining us in today's broadcast. Next week, we are really going to dive in. It just gets thicker and thicker, but it's important that we understand the Jewish framework from which it was written, or we will not understand the Bible at all. All right, my friends, I'm Jim Staley with Passion for Truth Ministries. Thanks for sharing some time with us in this week's broadcast. I'll see you in the next video.

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