**Having the Law and Being Circumcised (Lesson #5)**

**Romans 2:6-2:29**

***2:6 He will render to each one according to his works: 7 to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; 8 but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. 9 There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, 10 but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. 11 For God shows no partiality.***

Notice the **chiastic arrangement** (a literary structure in which words are repeated in reverse order) (this is common in Greek literature):

A. God will judge equitably Vs 6

B. Those who do good will attain eternal life Vs 7

C. Those who do evil will suffer wrath Vs 8

C. Wrath for those who do evil Vs 9

B. Glory for those who do good Vs 10

A. God judges impartially Vs 11

**A familiar example of chiastic arrangement:**

*“Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.” (Mt 23:12 ESV)*

**PRINCIPLE #3 –** Men will be judged according to their works! Stated differently, God judges according to the evidence!

But there is a second thing (by way of application) that I need you to see from the structure. As we review these verses, clearly there are only two fates for all mankind (Jew and Gentile):

In the positive expressed in verses 7b and 10. **To those who (vs 7)** by ***patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality,*** **to** **(vs 10)** ***everyone who does good...***

**7b -** ***he will give eternal life;*** **10** - ***glory and honor and peace***

In the negative expressed in verses 8b and 9. **To (vs 8) *those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness,*** **(vs 9)** ***for every human being who does evil***.

**8b - *wrath and fury;* 9** - ***tribulation and distress***

Notice in both cases, Paul is clear. For the Jew and also the Gentile.

**As you couple those four together, one thing should be crystal clear; God’s intense anger for those who have a greater knowledge of God, find fault in others, but never see the fault in themselves.**

**Vs 6 – Notice, God will pay**, each one, **according to their works! So, men will be judged by their works, their deeds.** This is the testimony of the entire Bible (Old and New Testaments) and that is Paul driving point:

*“Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.” (Ga 6:7 ESV)*

*“For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.” (Col 3:25 ESV)*

**\*\* Now these verses are interpreted a number of different ways by different teachers. \*\***

In context of Paul’s current argument only two make sense:

1. **God is impartial and he will judge impartially based on actual merit (works). If you are perfectly righteous you will be acquitted. If not, you will be damned.**

1. **Paul is saying, in a round-about way that good works follow faith. He is saying, in a round- about way, that when a person is born again, he has a new character and a new nature thus he is righteous and that is what Paul is saying.**

**I find the first explanation to make the most sense (in context) with what Paul is saying at this point in his argument, although both are true!**

I agree (in part) with men like Missler, MacArthur, and Whitmer while I believe scholars like Moo, Thielman, and Wilson, nail it:

**Chuck Missler:** “Paul is not explaining to us how to be saved, but rather the character of those who are saved.”

**John MacArthur:** “Paul’s point in the present passage is that a person who possesses the life of God will reflect the true character of God, and that it is on the basis of that reflected godly character that he will be judged.”

**John Witmer:** “A person’s habitual conduct, whether good or evil, reveals the condition of his heart. Eternal life is not rewarded for good living; that would contradict many other Scriptures which clearly state that salvation is not by works, but is all of God’s grace to those who believe (e.g., Rom.

6:23; 10:9-10; 11:6; Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5). A person’s doing good shows that his heart is regenerate. Such a person, redeemed by God, has eternal life. Conversely a person who continually does evil and rejects the truth shows that he is unregenerate, and therefore will be an object of God’s wrath.”

**Frank Thielman:** “Paul is articulating a theological principle that he believed to be true… This principle is that God does not judge people on the basis of their intellectual grasp of his requirements or their possession of a physical mark such as circumcision but on the basis of whether they obey what they know about his requirements from the heart.”

**Douglas Moo:** “Paul sets forth biblical conditions for attaining eternal life apart from Christ. Understood this way, Paul is not speaking hypothetically. But once his doctrine of universal human powerlessness under sin has been developed (see 3:9 especially), it becomes clear that the promise can, in fact, never become operative because the condition for its fulfillment-consistent, earnest seeking after good-can never be realized.”

**Geoffrey Wilson:** “It must be remembered that this is not an exposition of Paul’s gospel, through it is an essential preliminary to it.”

**Do not miss what is happening:** The apostle is teaching the full rigor of the law, to those who sought to be justified by it!

**God’s righteousness so far has been set forth in three principles:**

* **PRINCIPLE #1** – **God judges according to truth**; it is according to the reality of the matter! God is an impartial judge!
* **PRINCIPLE #2 –** **There is a judgement day coming for everyone!** There is a day of wrath coming for all men and women. God allows us to repent, or He allows us to pile up wrath.
* **PRINCIPLE #3 – Men will be judged according to their works! Stated differently, He judges according to the evidence!**

**Vs 11 -** Here is **verse 11**, we see the **first principle repeated**. God is impartial. **God shows no partiality in judgment**. God is inflexible and impartial when it comes to sin.

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***12 For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. 13 For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified. 14 For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. 15 They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them 16 on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.***

**Vs 12-** This is a key verse to keep before us. The light you have (general revelation, special revelation, or both) is the light that will condemn you!

If you have the light of nature and the light of conscience and you sin without the written code, you will perish under the wrath of God, without a written law.

If you are seeking to be justified by the law, you must be a doer of the whole law, all the time, with perfection, or the law will judge you!

**Now this is not a formula, but rather a tutor (Gal 3:24) to cause us to cry out to God!**

**Vs 13** – This is a **stinging condemnation against the Jews**. They had the law yet acted like the people groups around them. Paul warns, it is not in hearing that men will be justified.

The Greek word translated justified is **δίκαιος (dikaios)**, it means **right**, **righteous**, **innocent**, or **guiltless**. It is a **right standing before God**.

Now these two verses have been used to teach that salvation can be obtained by obeying the law:

* **First,** that goes completely against all the Bible says about sin and the impact on the human family.
* **Second,** it confuses the purpose of the law.
* **Third,** Paul has been building the universal point of man’s guilt before God. This is Paul once again saying, if you are going to get there by obedience, then it must be perfect obedience, but you will not get there by simply having the law and disobeying it. That is his larger argument!
* F**orth,** it means that Jesus did not need to come and die for our sins, if through our obedience we can save ourselves.

**Vs 14-15 -** Remember how Paul built the case in chapter 1, that man was **suppressing the natural revelation** of God, that God placed in the very creation itself.

Here we learn additional information, namely, within every man and woman, God has written **right and wrong in their hearts**. At the core level, men and woman, although fallen and sinful, because they are made in the image of God (although that image has been marred by the fall), have God’s righteous demands written in their hearts.

When the Gentiles, from time to time, do what the law demands, in spite of not having the written law, they show that God has written it into their hearts and Paul reminds us that God also provided them with a conscience. This conscience is also bearing witness to right and wrong. Further, Paul says that men and women, engage in moral reasoning about their actions and whether they are right or wrong.

Even their thoughts accuse at times, or excuse at other times, their conduct. **All of this leaving them without escape on judgement day!**

**Vs 16 –** The heavens declaring the glory of God, the law being written in the heart, the conscience, and moral reasoning will all accuse or excuse ***on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.***

Here we see the **fourth principle** about God’s judgment.

**PRINCPLE #4 - He will even judge the secrets of our hearts!**

If you are not a believer, **this statement should be horrifying!**

Even the secrets of the heart. Even the thoughts that no one knows about? Yes, even those.

It is here we also see a fifth principle. Not only is Jesus the lone Savior, but He is also the ultimate judge.

**PRINCIPLE #5 - God judges, by Jesus Christ!**

*“The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son,” (Joh 5:22 ESV)*

*“And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man.” (Joh 5:27 ESV)*

*“****38*** *how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.* ***39*** *And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree,* ***40*** *but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear,* ***41*** *not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.* ***42*** *And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead.” (Ac 10:38-42 ESV)*

*“because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."” (Ac 17:31 ESV)*

**We tend to think of Jesus as Savior only. He is of course the only Savior, but He is also the judge, and the one to whom all men will bow!**

*“****5*** *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,* ***6*** *who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,* ***7*** *but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.* ***8*** *And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.* ***9*** *Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,* ***10*** *so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,” (Php 2:5-10 ESV)*

**Vs 16 -** Here it is again… **“On that day”** when, ***according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.* The Greek word for day is ἡμέρα** (hemera), it is in the singular form.

**Now, as we are here, under the full weight of the righteousness of God…**

* The heavens declare His glory: **We suppressed it!**
* Our hearts knew right and wrong: **We often excused it!**
* Our conscience spoke silently to us: **We regularly sinned against it!**
* We have been given moral reasoning: **We at times we twisted it!**
* And on top of it all (for the Jew of Paul’s day or the religious person of today), we have been given the law of God: **We frequently disobeyed it!**

**We are guilty! Every place where we might look for excuse, Jew or Gentile, we will find only condemnation!**

**This is the Righteousness of God,** this is the weight of the law, this is the purpose of the law, this is what the law can and does do. **One misstep - CONDEMNATION!**

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***17 But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God 18 and know his will and approve what is excellent, because you are instructed from the law; 19 and if you are sure that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, 20 an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth —  21 you then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? 22 You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? 23 You who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law. 24 For, as it is written, "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you."***

Before we unpack these verses, it is clear that Paul’s “example Jew” makes some very impressive claims about being a Jew and about knowing what God wants from his people.

In summary, Paul takes up this argument against his “example Jew” that allows him to make broad sweeping claims that would touch all Jews. So let’s follow his arguments and logic.

The Jew’s were claiming to possess a status based on their covenantal relationship with Yahweh, that put them in a totally different position that the Gentiles on judgment day. Paul is going to unpack this belief and show his Jewish readers the folly of such a belief.

Now before we even go there, Let’s look at what God said to Abraham:

*“****17*** *The LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do,* ***18*** *seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?* ***19*** *For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring to Abraham what he has promised him."” (Ge 18:17-19 ESV)*

**Vs 17** - **Now notice the three privileges in descending order:**

1. **Call yourself a Jew**
   1. Discuss the use of the term
2. **Rely (some translations read rest) on the law**
   1. The idea is to lean on something for support, either physically or metaphorically. The Greek word is only used twice in the New Testament.
   2. Possession of the law of God was a blessing
      1. But God never had in mind having it but not keeping it!
      2. Have you ever met someone who keeps a Bible open on the coffee table in their living room, but never reads that Bible?
3. **Boast in God (special relationship) with God**
   1. Again, what a blessing, Yahweh had revealed Himself to the Jewish nation.

**Paul continues, adding two more distinguishing marks of the Jewish person.**

**Vs 18 – 1) You know His will**

* 1. What an amazing blessing, from the word of God, you have learned and indeed **“know”** God’s will.
  2. The Greek word **“know”** is **γινώσκω** (ginosko), it means to **know**, to **understand**, to have **knowledge**.

1. **You approve the things the law says**… You not only know them, but you also give heartly approval, claiming them indeed to be genuine, because you have been taught by the law.

\*\*\* In verses **19-20** Paul shifts from discussing advantages the Jews had because of the covenant relationship with God to outline **five prerogatives**, (all with second person singular verbs) thus **five rights**, **five duties** that the example Jewish person, and thus all Jewish people had, and would have acknowledged that they had!

**Vs 19-20 – 1) You are sure**, that you are a **“guide to the blind”**

**2) You are sure**, that you are a **“light to those who are in darkness.”**

**3) You are sure**, that you are to be an **instructor of the foolish**

**4) You are sure**, that you are to be a **teacher of children.**

**5) You are sure**, that in the “law” you have the ***embodiment of knowledge and truth —***

The word Paul uses here, translated **“embodiment”** is only used twice in the New Testament. It is translated ***form*** (NKJV), ***grasp*** (Philips) ***full expression*** (HCSB).

Because you **have the law**… **The embodiment of knowledge and truth! This was the Jew of Paul’s day, and the self-righteous person of our day.**

This is Paul’s example Jewish person, and many in the congregation would likely have given a hearty “amen.” Yes, that is me a Jewish person who is all of these things!

**Hang on!** Paul now asks four rhetorical questions that are devasting to the Jew of His day and the legalistic or self-righteous person of our day.

**Vs 21 –** You see the question, **you teach others, are you teaching yourself** (rhetorical question, the answer is no, and Paul is about to prove it).

**Vs 21b –**You teach against stealing, **do you steal** (rhetorical question).

**Vs 22-** You **preach against adultery**; **do you commit adultery** (rhetorical question)!

**Vs 22b –** You hate idols, **do you rob temples** (rhetorical question)?

Temple robbery was common in antiquity and profiting from goods stolen from temples was also common.

The exact point Paul is making is not clear and is contested by commentators. But I suspect this point harkens back to what God told the nation as they were entering the promised land in Deut 7:25:

*“The carved images of their gods you shall burn with fire. You shall not covet the silver or the gold that is on them or take it for yourselves, lest you be ensnared by it, for it is an abomination to the LORD your God.” (De 7:25 ESV)*

It seems the accusation that Paul is making is that you (Jewish example person) hates idolatry, but has no problem in profiting from the sale of items taken from Gentile temples. **This behavior is condemned by God, in the same breath as idolatry.**

**Vs 23 –** You boast in the law, the idea is you who boast in the law or your possible obedience to the law.

Actually, **dishonor God by breaking it! Yet you do not keep the law!** You are a lawbreaker, you seem to think possessing the law, and not keeping it will save you on judgment of God!

**Not only is that untrue, but this whole issue is much worse that we might imagine!**

**Vs 24 –** Then Paul drives the point home! Because of you, because of what you are doing, **The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles!**

Your conduct in this matter is exposing the thrice holy God to **ridicule** among the Gentiles. You are causing his **“name”,** his **reputation,** and his **status** to be blasphemed among the Gentiles. The Greek word is **βλασφημέω (blasphemeo).** It means to **revile**, to **speak evil of**, or to **speak reproachfully** about.

**You envision yourself as a guide, a light, a teacher to the Gentiles and quite the opposite is happening!** **Your conduct is causing the name of God to be blasphemed among the Gentiles!**

**This is a quote from Is 52:5, Eze 36:20 or 36:23.** I want to read this charge from Ezekiel:

*“****16*** *¶ The word of the LORD came to me:* ***17*** *"Son of man, when the house of Israel lived in their own land, they defiled it by their ways and their deeds. Their ways before me were like the uncleanness of a woman in her menstrual impurity.* ***18*** *So I poured out my wrath upon them for the blood that they had shed in the land, for the idols with which they had defiled it.* ***19*** *I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed through the countries. In accordance with their ways and their deeds I judged them.* ***20*** *But when they came to the nations, wherever they came, they profaned my holy name, in that people said of them, ‘These are the people of the LORD, and yet they had to go out of his land.’* ***21*** *But I had concern for my holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations to which they came.* ***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 the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came.* ***23*** *And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Lord GOD, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes.” (Eze 36:16-23 ESV)*

**Here is the charge… Israel was meant to reflect God’s glory, instead they profaned his name, even in front to the Gentiles!**

**The Promise from Ezekiel…** **God will vindicate His great name**, and He will do it before their eyes….

Now at this point, we would think Paul is done. Jew and Gentile stand rightly condemned before a thrice Holy God. He is not even close to finished!

**APPLICATION:** It is easy to level these charges against the Jews, none who are among us. But these can apply to self-righteous people today.

Keep in mind, it is not that every Jew commits all these sins. It is that Paul, in one way or another has caught all his Jewish readers in a rhetorical trap that they will not be able to escape from on their own!

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***25 For circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law, but if you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision. 26 So, if a man who is uncircumcised keeps the precepts of the law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? 27 Then he who is physically uncircumcised but keeps the law will condemn you who have the written code and circumcision but break the law. 28 For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. 29 But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.”***

**Vs 25 -** Paul addresses the mark of the covenant; he now gets to one of the big points for the Jews and he blows their minds!

**Circumcision, like the law was a sign of Jewish privilege, as a member of God’s covenant people, but neither sign (having the written law or circumcision) protected them from judgment day.**

**This is where the typical Jew was completely confused. They had the law, so that they knew God’s desires and commands and did not obey them.**

If you boast is in circumcision, if you confidence is in circumcision, it indeed has value, **if you keep the whole law.** This has been Paul’s ongoing point. If you plan to stand before God based on your works your performance must be without error, it must be perfect.

**Vs 25b - *but if you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision.***

This idea of heart circumcision is not new to Paul:

*“****25*** *"Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will punish all those who are circumcised merely in the flesh —* ***26*** *Egypt, Judah, Edom, the sons of Ammon, Moab, and all who dwell in the desert who cut the corners of their hair, for all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in heart."” (Jer 9:25-26 ESV)*

**Vs 26 – If an uncircumcised person, should keep the righteous demands of the law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?**

Get Paul’s point. Here is his question to the Jews in the audience. Imagine if a person lived a sinless life before God, but the person was not a Jew and thus had never been circumcised. **Would not his righteous life, count for circumcision?** Do not forget the principles we learned about God’s righteousness that apply here; **God judges according to truth**; **There is a judgement day coming for everyone; Men will be judged according to their works!**

**Now Paul, takes his readers to the next logical conclusion…**

**Vs 27 -** **You thought to condemn men because you had the law and did not keep it.** Here is the truth the man who does not have the law, if he should keep it, will **condemn you.**

**It is nothing about possessing the law… It is about doing the law…** Again, Paul is using the full **weight of the righteousness of God** and the **full weight of the law**, to prove that all need Jesus, all stand condemned before God!

Then Paul makes a statement that would have blown the minds of the Jews, and it still creates some anxiety today, although it is the testimony of the entire Bible!

**Vs 28-29** - Contrary to everything his modern-day hearers believed. Paul claims that true Jewishness and genuine circumcision are not ethnic or physical!

Think about the wicked kings we experienced in I Kings, did circumcision protect them from the judgment of God? **The obvious answer… NO!**

**The mark of a true Jew is one who is circumcised in his heart (new birth) and who seeks the praise that comes from God and not man!**

**At this point, in the room there were a number of small explosions, as Paul, blew-up the minds of his readers!**

This is not just Paul; Jesus in speaking to Jews in John 8, he is in a long discourse with them and he says:

*“****37*** *I know that you are offspring of Abraham; yet you seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you.* ***38*** *I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father."* ***39*** *They answered him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham’s children, you would be doing the works Abraham did,”(Joh 8:37-39 ESV)*

**There are a number of points that are crystal clear from this dialogue:**

1. I know that you are the offspring of Abraham. I know that you are a Jew.
2. Yet, you are trying to kill me.
3. The reason, my words have no place in you.
4. I am sharing with you what the Father has shared with me.
5. You are doing what you see of “your father.”
6. **They quickly responded…** Hold up, Abraham is out Father. Jesus had already acknowledged that **in the flesh** they did indeed descend from Abraham. He is not denying that, in fact, He said it first.
7. Jesus responds with his main thesis: Although you physically descended from Abraham, you are not Abraham’s spiritual (legitimate) (ultimate) descendants. If you were you would be doing the works of Abraham.

In verse 41, Jesus tells these descendants of Abraham:

*“You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.” (Joh 8:44 ESV)*

**Having only a literal sign in your flesh, does not make you a Jew, any more than being baptized alone makes you a Christian!**

Stephen, is brought before the Sanhedrin on trumped up charges by false witnesses, he preaches an awesome sermon, but let’s cut to the chase. As he is speaking to a council made up of 71 Jewish men and he says this:

*“****51*** *¶ "You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you.* ***52*** *Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered,* ***53*** *you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it."” (Ac 7:51-53 ESV)*

Paul writing to the church in Galatia:

*“28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise.” (Ga 3:28-29 ESV)*

*“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.” (Ga 5:6 ESV)*

*“For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.” (Ga 6:15 ESV)*

**If you boast is in having the law, if you boast is only in your descent from Abraham, if your boast is only in the fact that you have been circumcised. YOU WILL BUST HELL IN HALF!**

Frank Thielman:*“The true Jew and the true circumcision are invisible characteristics, gifts of God’s Spirit, not of the Mosaic law.”* This is Paul’s point!

**Vs 29a ­-** ***But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit…***

Interestingly enough circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit is referred to a promised future circumcision that God Himself would accomplish for His people:

*“17 Therefore say, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: I will gather you from the peoples and assemble you out of the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.’ 18 And when they come there, they will remove from it all its detestable things and all its abominations. 19 And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, 20 that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God.” (Eze 11:17-20 ESV)*

*1 "And when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God has driven you, 2 and return to the LORD your God, you and your children, and obey his voice in all that I command you today, with all your heart and with all your soul, 3 then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have mercy on you, and he will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you. 4 If your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there he will take you. 5 And the LORD your God will bring you into the land that your fathers possessed, that you may possess it. And he will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers. 6 And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.” (De 30:1-6 ESV)*

Paul is clear. Your nationality alone, your circumcision alone, will not deliver you on the day of judgement.

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**This brings us to the close of chapter 2, this is by far the longest discussion of sin in the entire New Testament as well as the entire Bible. But Paul is not done.**