

THE ROMAN REVEALING
Theme: The Reign of Righteousness
From the Sermon Notebook of Dr. Doyce H. Nolan

SUBJECT: THE WORLD OF JUDAISM

SCRIPTURE: ROMANS 2:17-29

Sermon No. 6

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Introduction

I know of nothing that speaks to the conditions and needs of our day as this amazing Epistle of Romans! Paul began from the very rock bottom, that God's righteousness is required in the World of Paganism; he then moved up to the World of Moralism, and now he shows us that righteousness is required of man in the World of Judaism if man is to be right with God!

We shall observe two tremendous facts.

1. The Acknowledged Religiosity in the World of Judaism. 17-20.
2. The Abandoned Responsibility of the World of Judaism. 21-29.

**I. THE ACKNOWLEDGED RELIGIOSITY IN THE
WORLD OF JUDAISM. 17-20.**

When Paul wrote these words he knew that the Jews represented the oldest, the purest and the strongest form of religion known to the world. So, the word "Jew" here takes in the concept of pure religion. *Paul describes three areas where the Jews was religious.*

1. The Jews Was Positionally Religious (17). Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God.

The word “Jew” comes from the word “Judah” which means “praise”. The Jew was appointed to celebrate the praises of God; they were chosen to be the confessor of God; the Jew was selected to render thanksgiving to God for His many benefits, while others were passed by.

Because of this the Jew had taken occasion to study and to understand the law of God, like no other nation upon the face of the earth! *So, positionally the Jew was a religious person...*

2. The Jew Was Instructionally religious. (18). And knowest His will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law.

The phrase “Knowest His Will” means that the Jew had a clear understanding of the will of God. From infancy Jewish children were instructed in the law of God and therefore were in a position to approve the things that were excellent. *The Jew was instructionally religious..*

3. The Jew Was Vocationally Religious (19-20). And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of truth in the law.

From the very beginning the Jews had a great heritage of ministry and stewardship. They had the responsibility to guide blind Gentiles out of darkness, and to correct the foolish and to instruct those who were but children in their knowledge of God. *So, it is evident that the world of Judaism was a world of acknowledged religiosity.*

II. THE ABANDONED RESPONSIBILITY OF THE WORLD OF JUDAISM. 21-29.

No people were more privileged than the Jewish nation. They had received the law of God and had been chosen to serve. With these two privileges came great responsibilities to man and God.

1. The Jew Had to be Right With Man (21-23).

To be right with man the Jew had to face up to some searching examinations. And if you and I are to be right with man then we too are faced with the same examination. Paul places these examinations in the form of four searching questions.

1) The Jew Had to be Personally Right (21a). Thou therefore that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? The Jew had no right to expect from others what he did not expect from himself. This is a common fault in churches today. We have no right to teach and train others unless we live up to the standard ourselves!

There is nothing more hypocritical in the church today than words without deeds. Sunday School teachers need to demonstrate what they teach by examples of faithful living and commitment. The same goes for deacons and preachers. If you have words without deeds you are a hypocrite! You are not personally right, and God has an indictment against you! *The Jew had to be personally right..*

2) The Jew Had to be Ethically Right (21b). Thou that preachest a man should not steal, doest thou steal? The word “preachest” refers to someone who is a herald, proclaiming the message of someone else and as the representative is under the authority of another. The Jew is here charged that he is not practicing what he preaches. This cuts right to the quick of some church-goers today.

We preach that thou shalt not steal, and yet in terms of time, talent and tithe, we are forever robbing God! As Christians these people are not ethically right with God! *The Jews had to be ethically right.*

3) The Jew Had to be Maritally Right (22a). *Thou that sayest a man should not connit adultery, doest thou commit adultery?* Adultery is the sinful prostitution of the marriage vows which God has forever sanctioned and sanctified. The sin of adultery was being committed again and again in the life of that nation. This speaks loud and clear to our nation today where adultery has become a common occurrence. *The Jew had to be maritally right..*

4) The Jew Had to be Spiritually Right (22b). *Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou committ sacrilege?* An idol is a thing or a person who takes the place of God. No nation was more aware of God's hatred of idols then the Jewish nation, and yet idols was found among them. God not only complained of the immorality and idoltry but also of their sacrilege. They had robbed God of His tithes and offerings, and sacrificed to Him that which was unworthy.

Nothing is more common in our day then this kind of idoltry and sacrilege. We have made idols of our wealth, of our fame, and of our education. We have withheld the best from God and offered Him the least. Spiritually we have sinned as deep as the Jews of Paul's day! *No wonder Paul's says..*

In verse 23 *Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonorest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.*

Folks, any criticism that the world has of the church in a valid one! When the early church emerged under the power of the Holy

Spirit, people outside the church feared them! People don't fear the church today! People laugh and make fun of the church today because of the kind of lives the people inside the church are living!

The Jews were not only custodians of God's law, they were to be ministers of that law! But they failed and caused the nations around them to blaspheme the name of God! I tell you my friends, the sham, fictitious and phony religiosity of Christianity today is the reason for the rebellion against the church! *The responsibility of the Jew was not only to be right with man..*

2. The Jew Had to be Right With God (25-29). Paul deals with two aspects of man's relationship with God.

1) The Reality of the Outward Life (25). *For circumcision verily profit, if thou keep the law: but if thy be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.* Circumcision was the ritual which all the privileges of the Jewish nation was acknowledged. The Jews fixed a high importance on circumcision in relation to God.

Paul states to the Jews that when it comes to the requirements of God in man living righteous lives, circumcision has no value whatsoever! Circumcision will not produce salvation! The mutilation of the flesh means absolutely nothing when it comes to salvation! Paul states that just because they were born Jews and practiced circumcision was in no way an entrance into righteousness.

Do you understand this message for us today? To have Christian parents does not make you a Christian! To be brought up in the church does not make you a Christian! To have been baptized into church membership does not make you a Christian! *Outward rites is of no use in a man's living the righteous life.*

2) The Reality of the Inward Life (28-29). For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God. Paul states that what really matters is not circumcision of the flesh, but circumcision of the heart! What makes a person righteous is not outward profession, but inward possession of the life of God in Jesus Christ! Your religiosity may be praised by man, but God looks at your heart! Paul says, You are not a Christian unless you live out that name in daily life, living out the Christ-man, living out the Christ-woman. The Jews had abandoned this responsibility, have you?

The Jew, just like the pagans and moralist, through their religiosity was in need of divine mercy. This is the religious situation of our day. We boast of our religiosity in that we were born in America referring to Christianity. But with all of our religiosity we do not have the corresponding responsibility of living out the Christian life. Just like the Jews, we have failed God personally, we have failed God ethically, we have failed God morally, we have failed God socially, we have failed God spiritually, we have failed God Nationally! In our day religion has become an outward profession without an inward possession!

The fact of the matter is that we cannot hide this from God! Those who only have an outward profession will all stand condemned before a Holy God! There is only one way to be real with God and that is through our relationship with Jesus Christ our Lord! Through Him and Him alone can we know the reign of righteousness in our life!

It was to a very religious man that Jesus said, "Ye must be born again!" This rebirth can only come through faith in the crucified,

risen and returning Christ! Your religion without Christ is nothing but a dead corpse! The Bible says, **If any man be in Christ he is a new creation, behold, all things become new.**

Conclusion

The challenge is to everyone of us, whoever you are, to search your heart as to whether or not you have Christ or you merely have religion! God knows your religious sham and so do you! Your only hope is Christ the Lord!