

## **In Search of True Jews** (Romans 2:17-29)

### **I. Welcome / Review / Intro**

A. Opening Illustration

B. Today's Big Idea: God is searching for True Jews

C. Today's outline:

- (17-20) False Jews are fooling themselves, building their house on sand
- (21-24) False Jews are hypocrites, who by their deeds dishonor the name of God
- (25-29) True Jews are people circumcised in heart by the Spirit of God, who see their sin and humbly depend upon the light God has given; they are building their house on the Rock.

### **II. (17-20) False Jews are fooling themselves, building their house on sand**

A. The Jews Paul has in view here are proud, self-righteous religionists, who boast about their name (17), their knowledge (18), and their superiority over the Gentiles (19-20)

B. Had they been men like Zachariah, or John, or Nicodemus, or women like Elizabeth, Mary, or Anna—people who knew themselves to be unworthy sinners but at the same time the objects of God's mercy and grace—all these things might justifiably have been said about them.

C. But they were not; like the proud Pharisee in Jesus' parable, they were blind and self-righteous, and so completely deluded: Their spiritual lives, unbeknownst to themselves, were built on sand.

### **III. (21-24) False Jews are hypocrites, who by their deeds dishonor the name of God**

A. Jews who indulged these sins (vv. 21-24) apparently thought God would overlook them since they were sons of Abraham, and so God's favored ones.

B. And indeed, they WERE favored: Favored with the knowledge of the truth that would save them, IF, with a spiritually circumcised heart, they strove to obey the law in every particular, and then cast themselves upon the mercy of God when they fell short of it. This they would do through going to the priests with offerings for sin, and hope in God's Kingdom mercies, their through the coming Messiah (Rom. 3:1-8)

C. Moral: If we Christians are *not interested in knowing and keeping the commandments of God*, but instead are wholly relying on our (supposed) election, “sinner’s prayer”, water baptism, church membership, etc., *it is proof positive that we, like these false Jews, are false Christians.*

**IV. (25-29) (25-29) True Jews are people circumcised in the heart by the Spirit of God, who see their sin and humbly depend upon the light God has given; *they are building their house on the Rock.***

A. (25) A True Jew is someone who sincerely tries to practice the law/commandments of God

B. (26-27) A Gentile who sincerely tries to practice the Law of God written on his heart—and realizes how far short he falls, and so humbly cries out to God for mercy—is way better off than the false Jew who is self-deluded hypocrite:

- Certain centurions of Jesus’ day seem to have filled this bill: the one who loved his servant (Mt. 8), the one who declared that Jesus was surely a righteous man (Mt. 23), and Cornelius (Acts 10). Possibly there were others like them in the Gentile world, men and women who loved light, truth, righteousness—and grieved at how far they fell short of attaining them. Possibly, in accordance with ancient world-wide custom, they sincerely offered sacrifices for sin. Were such folks saved, while deluded, self-righteous Jews were not? God knows.

C. (28-29) The True Jew

- Is one inwardly, not outwardly
- Is one who is more concerned about the attitude of his heart than the letter of the law (he is gracious rather than legalistic)
- He cares little about the praise of men, but cares much about the praise of God
- Note: In Hebrew, the word for Judah (the basis of Jew) means praise.
- Note: All that the false Jew thinks and says in vv. 17-20 is actually true of a True Jew, for he is humbly grateful for all that God has done for him by his grace.

V. Conclusion

A. Are you a True Jew?

B. If not, realize that only through personal faith in Christ does anyone every have a circumcised heart, a heart that is humble, teachable, compassionate, loving, merciful, and longs every day for a fuller experience of life in the Spirit; and boasts in Christ alone!

C. If so, God’s got his eye on you (2 Chron. 16:9, John 4:23-24), and is boasting about you even as we speak!