

Prayer:

Slide # 1
Romans

Theme: The Righteousness of God – The Gospel of God

Outline:

- **Prologue:** 1:1-17
- **Doctrinal:** 1:18-8:39
God’s holiness – man’s sinfulness – 1:18-3:20
Justification by grace through faith – 3:21-5:21
Sanctification of the believer – 6:1-8:39
- **Dispensational:** 9:1-11:36 (The place of Israel and the church)
- **Practical:** 12:1-15:33 (Duties and privileges of the believer)
- **Epilogue:** 16:1-27

In Romans 1:1-17 Paul introduces himself as an apostle and his gospel. Romans presents the most systematic presentation of the gospel that we have in the NT. But before Paul gets to the gospel “proper” he extensively deals with the issue of SIN. You first need to know you are a sinner to appreciate the fact of the Savior!

Paul first shows that the pagan who suppresses the truth of God is under the condemnation of sin. In that suppression, God eventually gives them over to a depraved mind that can no longer make proper moral judgments.

Slide # 2

Imagine if you are lost in the wilderness and you asked for help and the response you got was, “You are your own compass.” That doesn’t make you feel more found. It makes you feel more profoundly lost.

– **Jeff Myers**

This is the condition of the person given over to a debased mind. It exhibits itself in all manner of sexual and moral perversion. It no longer has God as a moral guide and therefore tracks into moral insanity – which is a commentary on our culture today. The further we go from the God the crazier it gets – defying even the most basics of common sense in keeping with God’s created moral order.

The hypocritical moralist applauds the condemnation of the overt pagan. But the problem with this moralist is that he is a HYPOCRITE because in truth, in secret, he is guilty of the same type of sins – only he does it in a covert way that is more hidden. However, Paul says that on judgment day God is going to reveal all the secrets and the hypocritical moralist will also be found guilty under the condemnation of sin.

And that brings us to the third category of people that Paul addresses in relationship to the issue of sin – and that is the hypocritical religionist as exemplified in the religious Jew. You see this religionist has “religion” and thinks because of it he is all right with God. Paul points out this is wrong. The hypocritical religionist is also under the condemnation of sin.

Probably the religious person is the hardest to reach with the gospel. There is nobody too bad for Jesus Christ to save, but there are millions who think themselves too good. It is with this class of people that God is concerned in this section of Romans. The orthodoxy, ordinances, and objections of religious people, as epitomized in the Jew, are now examined. – **John Phillips**

Slide # 3

Romans 1:18 – 3:20

The Whole World Guilty Before God

- 1:18-32 – Depraved Pagans
- 2:1-16 – Hypocritical Moralists
- 2:17-3:8 – ***Self-Righteous Religionists***
- 3:9-20 – The Whole Human Race

The Jew prided himself on being religiously superior to the rest of the world on the basis of three key things. First, was his heritage as a Jew tracing his esteemed roots back to Abraham and through the promised son Isaac (cf. Jn. 8:33). Second, was his possession of the law of Moses. No other people in the world had a moral code like this one. Third, was the rite of circumcision which represented the mark of God on them as a special and chosen people.

Paul is going to address each of these and dress the Jew down by showing that none of these outward things make a person right with God. The religious Jew is also found to be under the condemnation of sin.

Paul now in Rom. 2:17-20 presents a list of 8 things in which the Jew prided himself in a sense of superiority over the Gentiles, and then in verses 21 through 24 he exposes the hypocrisy of the self-righteous Jew.

Romans 2:17–29 (NKJV)

17 Indeed you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God,

The main emphasis in verses 17-24 is that the Jews prided themselves on their relationship to God's law. However, Paul begins with the fact they are called a Jew. In the conclusion of the matter, he will return to this in verses 28-29 and deal with who is really a Jew indeed.

There are three terms that came to be used essentially interchangeably in relation to the Jews and they are the terms Hebrew, Israelite, and Jew. Abraham was called a Hebrew in Genesis 14:13. It may have carried with the idea of a wanderer or nomadic traveler. In Genesis 32:28 God changed Jacob's name to Israel. The basic meaning of Israel is "He who struggles with God and prevails".

The word Jew comes from the word Judah. It did not really come into use until the time of the Babylonian Captivity. At that time the tribe of Judah was prominent. The term Jew then developed as a shortening of the word Judah. After the captivity, it came to refer to the race as a whole that descended from Abraham through Isaac.

Paul called himself a "Jew" in Acts 21:39; an "Israelite" in Romans 11:1; and a Hebrew in Phil. 3:5. So all three names refer to the same people, but there are specific nuances in relation to each word.

Slide # 4

Hebrew – (Heritage related to Abraham)

Israelite – (Heritage related to Jacob)

Jew – (Heritage related to Judah)

The Jews took great pride in their heritage – in being called a Jew. As such they were the covenant people of God.

Furthermore, as proud Jews, they rested in the law in the sense that as the favored people of God they possessed it. They knew the law and trusted in their knowledge of it for their standing before God (cf. Jn. 5:45).

And they boasted in God – but not in a proper sense. They thought since they were God’s chosen people that by itself was good enough. They were special to God and had an ego because of it. Thus, they boasted in their covenant relationship with God but in a self-oriented way (cf. Jer. 9:24).

**18 and know His will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law,
19 and are confident 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 babes, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law.**

As Jews who had the Word of God, they knew the revealed will of God and were thereby able to discern what is best and live accordingly – being instructed out of the law.

Being so instructed, they were self-confident that they could serve as moral guides to others who had no such insight – being a light to those who are in darkness.

They saw themselves as instructors of the foolish (unlearned) and teachers of the immature “***having the form of knowledge and truth in the law.***”

The word “***form***” means “semblance” or “outline”. It is found in only one other place in the NT and that is in 2 Tim. 3:5 where it speaks of those who have a “***form of godliness***” but not the real thing.

The Jews had a SEMBLANCE of the knowledge of the truth in the law – but only a semblance of it. They didn’t really get it! Because if they had really seen the truth of the law for what it was they would have seen their sinfulness and their need of a Savior. Galatians 3:24 says “***The law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.***” But the Jew in general failed to see this. Instead of the law showing them their need - they thought mere possession of the law was good enough and therefore were very self-righteous. They didn’t see that they didn’t live up to the holy standard of God’s law.

These proud claims by the Jews as seen in verses 18-20 all rested upon their possession and supposed knowledge of the Mosaic Law. However, these realities never really changed their lives as Paul will go on to show, but only served as a means of pride related to “race, religion, and knowledge, without any corresponding transformation.” (William MacDonald)

Paul now presents 5 rhetorical questions showing in general the Jew's hypocritical inconsistency.

21 You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal?

Verse 21 begins with a touch of sarcasm. “***Oh great teacher haven’t you taught yourself? Look at your inconsistency.***” Mere head knowledge divorced from a life of obedience is bogus before God. God is not impressed with how much a person knows – the issue is how do they live.

Paul says to the Jews, “***You preach a person should not steal – do you steal?***” The question is really a rhetorical statement implying that indeed they do steal.

Slide # 5

Everyone knew of cases where the most orthodox had left loopholes in their business dealings for a little “refined stealing.”

– R. Kent Hughes

22 You who say, “Do not commit adultery,” do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?

Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount that whoever even looks on a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart (Mt. 5:28). Implied here is that indeed they do commit adultery.

Yes, they hated idols, but he asks “***do you rob temples?***” Some have taken “***rob temples***” to perhaps refer to the profane commercialism that took place at the Jewish Temple. While it is true that they did this, that is probably not in view here. For one thing “***temples***” is plural.

A better view is that the Jews in the name of hating idolatry would often rob pagan temples where large amounts of wealth were stored. When Ephesus was in an uproar over the ministry of Paul the city clerk sought to quiet the crowd by saying these men are not “**robbers of temples**” as seen in Acts 19:37. This suggests that it was not uncommon for Jews to be accused of doing this.

It was good that they hated idolatry, but the Mosaic law also forbade the making of personal gain from idols seized by the Jews.

Slide # 6**Deuteronomy 7:25 (NKJV)**

25 You shall burn the carved images of their gods with fire; you shall **not covet the silver or gold** that is on them, **nor take it for yourselves**, lest you be snared by it; for it is an abomination to the LORD your God.

23 You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law?

What a contradiction! They boasted in the law, and yet at the same time dishonored God by breaking the law. This practice of all talk and no walk would not stand the test of God's judgment.

"Your walk and walks and your talk talks, but your walk don't walk like your talk talks" – certainly applied to the Jews. They were religious all right – but hypocritically so.

24 For "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you," as it is written.

This is a quote from the OT as found in Isaiah 52:5.

Slide # 7**Isaiah 52:5 (NKJV)**

5 Now therefore, what have I here," says the LORD, "That **My people are taken away** for nothing? Those who rule over them Make them wail," says the LORD, "And **My name is blasphemed continually every day.**

Why were the Jews taken into captivity?

Slide # 8**2 Chronicles 36:16 (NKJV)**

16 But they mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, **till there was no remedy.**

The Jews thumbed their nose at the law of God and when the prophets called them to repentance they refused to listen. Finally, God in judgment allowed them to be taken into captivity.

And in captivity, the Gentiles blasphemed the name of God in putting Him down for allowing this to happen to His “chosen people” – the Jews. They mocked Him for being a lesser God than their more powerful gods as seen in the fact He couldn’t prevent the Jews from being taken captive.

Slide # 9

Ezekiel 36:20 (NKJV)

20 When they came to the nations, wherever they went, they **profaned My holy name**—when they said of them, ‘**These are the people of the LORD, and yet they have gone out of His land.**’

Thus, the Gentiles blasphemed or spoke evil of the God of Israel. They defamed His reputation. And the reason for this was Israel's continual sin and perpetual breaking of God’s law which caused God to judge them – but in turn, it made Him look bad before the nations (cf. 2 Sam. 12:14). But the cause of this was clearly the Jews. The responsibility was on them – as verse 24 says it was “***because of you***” – meaning the Jews.

Not only did the Jews pride themselves on their heritage and their relationship to God’s law, but also on the mark of circumcision. This was a defining mark. To be Jewish was to be circumcised for religious reasons. So strong was this practice that the term commonly used to define the Jews as a people was the word “circumcision”.

After addressing the Jewish pride in the law at length in verses 17-24, Paul now addresses the practice of circumcision in verses 25-29.

25 For circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law; but if you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.

Circumcision was originally given to Abraham as a SIGN of God’s covenant relationship with him as seen in Genesis 17:9-14. It was then later made to be a part of the Mosaic Law covenant as seen in Lev. 12:3.

On the eighth day after birth, every Jewish male child was to be circumcised as a sign of their covenant relationship with God. It was administered as part of the Mosaic Law.

The word “circumcise” literally means “***to cut around***”. It was the removal of the foreskin on the male organ.

Circumcision basically symbolized two things. 1) It symbolized separation from worldliness; and 2) it symbolized a softness and submission toward God.

But here is the point. It was only an outwardly testimony. It was an outward testimony of the Jew's covenant relationship with God involving separation from the world and dedication to God.

Now this testimony is fine as long as you keep the law. But if you are a law-breaker then the testimony of your circumcision is worthless because it is then saying something that is not true. Violation of the law breaks the covenant turning circumcision into non-circumcision in the eyes of God.

Slide # 10

In other words a Jewish lawbreaker, is just like a Gentile lawbreaker; the Jews' rite of circumcision counts for nothing.

– The Bible Knowledge Commentary

What the Jews failed to realize is that the outward circumcision was simply an external outward SIGN (or testimony) that meant nothing if there was no inward corresponding HEART reality.

The Jews had a religion of religious externals. They came to think it is all about outward rituals, rites, and regulations. They failed to realize that what God really wants is INWARD heart commitment. In contrast, they thought that just going through the outward religious motions as ordained by God was good enough.

In fact, the Jews came to essentially have a superstitious confidence in the saving power of their circumcision. They taught that no circumcised Jewish man would ever see hell. One Rabi taught, ***"In the Hereafter Abraham will sit at the entrance of HELL and permit no circumcised Israelite to descend therein."*** So you can see this ritual of circumcision in the Jewish mind came to be seen as a guarantee of salvation. But in reality, it produced a FALSE assurance.

The Jews came to put their FAITH in the "magic ritual" of circumcision instead of in the Lord. Paul in Romans 4 at length deals with this issue of circumcision, showing that LONG before Abraham was circumcised he was first saved by faith. He shows that Abraham was saved by faith alone and not by circumcision. Circumcision made no contribution whatsoever.

Here is the universal problem – nobody keeps God's law – whether it be the law of conscience, the moral law, or the mosaic law which all overlap at some point. ALL are guilty of breaking God's law!

Slide # 11

The Pagan...

Romans 1:32 (NKJV)

32 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.

The Moralist...

Romans 2:1 (NKJV)

1 Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.

The Religionist...

Romans 2:25 (NKJV)

25 For circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law; but if you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.

Before the law of Moses, the Jewish law breaker stands in the same place as the Gentile as condemned because all break the law of God. That is Paul's point. We know this is his point because at the end of this discussion he tells us his conclusion.

Slide # 12**Romans 3:9 (NKJV)**

9 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin.

Romans 3:19 (NKJV)

19 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.

26 Therefore, if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision?

Paul is here making a theoretical point. If the uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements of the law (which he can't do – but if he does – theoretically) then his uncircumcision will be counted as circumcision before God.

Let me illustrate...

Commonly cans or bottles have labels on them to indicate what is inside. Circumcision was a label and implied that the Jew was separated to God and obedient to Him. However, if he was not completely obedient the label was not only worthless but misleading.

On the other hand, if a Gentile was completely obedient to God's moral law the absence of the label of circumcision did not matter before God. The contents of the can are what really matter before God, not the label. And the content that God is looking for is obedience!

The Jew put the emphasis on the label and not the contents! Paul's point is that disobedience brings condemnation, while perfect obedience theoretically brings salvation, regardless of whether one is a Jew or a Gentile. It's all about the content of OBEDIENCE!

Paul is showing that the Jews are not superior to the Gentiles. Both are equally accountable for obeying God's moral law. This goes back to Paul's statement in verse 11 where he said, “***there is no partiality with God.***” The Jews thought that just having possession of the law put them above the Gentiles, but in this they were wrong!

Furthermore Paul says...

27 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?

Theoretically, if the uncircumcised person fulfills the law his life stands as a standard of judgment over the Jew who has the written code of the law and circumcision. The obedience of the uncircumcised trumps the disobedience of the religionist. Paul's point is that God is looking for obedience. The Jew is not right before God just by possessing the law and circumcision.

Slide # 13

Circumcision minus obedience equals uncircumcision, while uncircumcision plus obedience equals circumcision. – **John Stott**

The main point Paul is making is that God is looking for obedience – and this standard applies equally to both Jew and Gentile.

And this brings Paul to the crux of the matter as seen in verses 28-29.

28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh;

29 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.

What the Jews failed to realize is that salvation is not a matter of outward performance. It's not a matter of outward ritual as found in circumcision. It's not a matter of something that is done in the flesh. That completely misses the point. And the point is no one can be obedient enough outwardly in the flesh to please God! We are all total failures.

It doesn't matter how much law you have – you fail. It doesn't matter how many rituals you perform – you fail. It doesn't matter how ordained of God these things are – we fail! When it comes to doing we all fail!

A Jew is one who claims to have acceptance with God – this is what his circumcision proclaims. It professes to be set apart to God! But there are a lot of bogus Jews in the sense that they have no real saving relationship with God – because for them it is just about outward legalism and ritual. That will never make a person right with God. As Paul says in Rom. 9:6, “they are not all Israel who are of Israel”.

In contrast, a true Jew (a completed Jew who has an authentic relationship with God) is a Jew who is one inwardly. And right there is the KEY word – that word “**inwardly**”! The Jews put a great emphasis on the outward but true relationship with God is ultimately about the HEART. Everything flows out from the HEART!

Slide # 14

Matthew 23:25–26 (NKJV)

25 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the **outside** of the cup and dish, but **inside** they are full of extortion and self-indulgence.

26 Blind Pharisee, **first cleanse the inside** of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also.

This is the very point Paul is emphasizing. A true Jew (one in a saving relationship with God) is right with God internally and then the outward is just a testimony to that reality. The Jews had it backward. They were all concerned about the outward, when God is really concerned about the inward. And if the inward is right then it will demonstrate it outwardly.

Paul then goes on to describe the inward spiritual reality that defines those who are in a right relationship with God. They have come to have a circumcised HEART. Now right there is the HEART of the issue (pun intended).

This was not a new concept. Repeatedly in the OT God called His rebellious people to circumcise their hearts.

Slide # 15

Deuteronomy 10:16 (NKJV)

16 Therefore **circumcise the foreskin of your heart**, and be stiff-necked no longer.

Jeremiah 4:4 (NKJV)

4 **Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, And take away the foreskins of your hearts,** You men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, Lest My fury come forth like fire, And burn so that no one can quench it, Because of the evil of your doings.”

This metaphorically describes repentance. Earlier in Romans 2:4 Paul said that the goodness of God leads to repentance. Here in verse 29 he describes the nature of true repentance.

Circumcision of the heart is the idea of cutting off the hardness of rebellion and being soft and responsive to the Lord. It is a spiritual reality that takes place in the heart. This defines a true completed Jew who has a truly spiritual relationship with God (cf. Lev. 26:41; Deut. 10:16; 30:6; Jer. 4:4; 9:26; Acts 7:51).

When Stephen confronted the spiritual leaders of Israel he told them exactly what their problem was.

Slide # 16

Acts 7:51 (NKJV)

51 “You **stiff-necked** and **uncircumcised in heart** and ears! You always **resist the Holy Spirit**; as your fathers did, so do you.

Stiff-necked signifies rebelliousness and resistance signifies unyielding. An uncircumcised heart is rebellious and refuses to submit to the truth of God. In contrast, one who has a circumcised heart has repented and humbled themselves before God, yielding to His truth in the HEART!

What Jews failed to realize is that there is an inward circumcision of the heart and there is also an outward circumcision of the flesh. The real important thing is the inward circumcision of the heart of which the outward physical circumcision was merely a testimony. We are not saved by an outward testimony – we are saved by an inward reality.

Slide # 17

Inward = Reality
Outward = Symbol

Inward = Substance
Outward = Shadow

Inward = Actuality
Outward = Testimony

The outward only has meaning if the inward is a reality. Outward physical circumcision only had real meaning if it corresponded to an inward circumcision of the heart.

Paul spent a huge amount of time battling with those who tried to make outward circumcision a part of what saves a person. He called them “the mutilation” (Phil. 3:2) and went so far as to say he wished they would emasculate themselves in Galatians 5:12. He accused them of propagating a false gospel with the double call for anyone who preaches another gospel to be accursed (Gal. 1:8-9). So, for Paul this was a really HUGE deal. It was all about the true gospel of God’s grace versus a works salvation.

This is a prominent issue in the book of Galatians...

Slide # 18

Galatians 5:6 (NKJV)

6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.

Galatians 6:15 (NKJV)

15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.

Slide # 19

Colossians 3:11 (NKJV)

11 where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.

Application: Just as the Jews focused on the outward ritual of circumcision and rested their salvation upon it – so likewise many in Christendom have believed that the rite of physical baptism is involved in saving a person. This is the very same error dressed up in slightly different clothes.

Slide # 20

Circumcision was to Jewry what baptism is to those who maintain baptismal regeneration. – **Expositors**

You can see the similarities. Both circumcision and baptism were ordained of God. But to take an outward physical ordinance and make it part of salvation is a damning thing. Paul in standing so hard for the gospel of grace wrote the letter of Galatians concerning this very issue. Nothing physical, nothing external, nothing we do is part of how we are saved.

Slide # 21

Philippians 3:3 (NKJV)

3 For we are **the circumcision**, [the true covenant people of God] who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,

One of my great battles through my almost 4 decades of ministry has been the battle over baptismal regeneration. Of course, Roman Catholicism ties in baptism with an errant works for salvation theology. But then so did Martin Luther. He said great things about faith alone – but yet also confusingly held to baptismal regeneration. Years ago I wrote a long Earnestly Contending Letter called, “*Martin Luther’s Sacramental Gospel*”.

Slide # 22

"To put it most simply, the power, effect, benefit, fruit, and purpose of Baptism is to save. No one is baptized in order to become a prince, but as the words say, to 'be saved.' To be saved, we know, is nothing else than to be delivered from sin, death, and the devil and to enter into the kingdom of Christ and live with him forever."

-- **Martin Luther** (Quoted from The Large Catechism)

By the way if you want to read the full article just google my name and Martin Luther or Martin Luther’s Sacramental Gospel and you can read the whole thing.

But then other Protestants also have a problem...

No doctrine has been more instrumental in persuading lost people that they are really saved than the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. Here, Rome has taken the lead, but many Protestant churches have followed that lead using “covenant theology” as their justification for doing so. – **John Phillips**

Covenant theologians often speak of what God does through a sacrament rather than what the sacrament itself does – as if that avoids the problem. They talk in terms of the sacraments being a “**means of grace**”. It is crazy how covenant theologians try to explain that salvation is by faith alone and yet mediated through the sacraments. That makes no sense to me.

Slide # 23

If salvation is by faith alone, it seems to be double-speak to say that a sacrament, a physical ritual, is a part of the process. These tensions within the Reformed doctrine of infant baptism result from the fact that Reformed theologians view baptism as a covenantal “seal”.

– **Daniel C. Lane**

And then there is the Church of Christ which is overt in their baptismal regeneration and its cousin the Christian Church which is more subtle about it.

But in truth all of these groups that make the physical rite of baptism a part of salvation are flying in the face of the truth in Romans 2:29.

Many commentators point out that Christian readers should remember that what is said here of circumcision applies with equal force to baptism. – **Leon Morris**

I don't call baptism a sacrament which is the idea of a means of grace. Baptism is not a sacrament, rather it is an ordinance as ordained by God for believers. The NT teaches "believers baptism". You don't get baptized to get saved, you get baptized as a testimony that you are already saved.

The one who is a true Jew before God, that is one who is truly in a saving relationship with Him, "*is one inwardly* (literally in secret – that is in the hidden place of the heart) *and circumcision is that of the heart*".

And then Paul says "in the Spirit, not in letter". More literally what Paul says is, "***in spirit not letter***". Certainly, the Holy Spirit is involved here, but the emphasis at this point is that this takes place in the sphere of the spirit (in the hidden place of the heart) and not in the sphere of the letter – which is to say the outward legality in conformity to the letter of the law.

And finally, he says, "***whose praise is not from men but from God.***" The Jews' emphasis was on being showy so as to receive the approval and praise of men.

Slide # 24

John 5:44 (NKJV)

44 How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God?

The heart that is truly right with God seeks God's approval and not that of man. This is indicative of true faith! Faith at its core is between a person and God. Heb. 11:6 says, "***without faith it is impossible to please Him***". The first thing one ever does to please God is to put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. God approves of this. This is what those who are right with God ultimately care about. It only matters what God thinks. We are ultimately concerned about an audience of ONE!

In Galatians 1:10 Paul said, ***“If were still trying to please people, I would not be a slave of Christ.”***

Slide # 25

2 Corinthians 5:9 (NKJV)

9 Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, **to be well pleasing to Him.**

Hebrews 11:6 indicates that indicative of truth faith is believing that God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. True believers characteristically ***“seek for glory, honor, and immortality”*** as noted in Romans 2:7. And on some level, 1 Cor. 4:5 says, ***“Then each one’s praise will come from God.”***

Down deep in the heart of every true believer we want to please God. We want Him to be pleased with us. We crave His approval and thus we are God-oriented in our perspective.

There seems to be a play on words here in verse 29 that is not as obvious in the English translation. The word ***“Jew”*** comes from Judah which means ***“praise”*** in Hebrew (cf. Gen. 29:35; 49:8). So the sense is a real Jew (one who truly has a saving relationship with God) ***“is one whose character is such as to receive praise from God”*** (William MacDonald) because they have put their FAITH in God and that pleases God. Thus, a truly converted Jew would be one who spiritually lives up to the name that he bears.

This section started in verse 17 with ***“Indeed you are called a Jew”*** and ends with ***“he is a Jew who is one inwardly”***. It is this “Jew” whose praise is from God – which is the fulfillment of the name “Jew” which literally means “praise”.

Note what defines the one who is a true spiritual Jew – that is one who truly belongs to the Lord ...

Slide # 26

Authentic Covenant Relationship with God...

Inward – not Outward
 In the Heart – not the Flesh
 In the realm of spirit – not in letter
 Is approved by God – not human beings

Footnote: Paul does not intend to say there is no longer any national or ethnic distinctions between Jews and Gentiles or between Israel and the Church. That is made clear in Paul's extensive treatment of Israel and the Church as laid out in Romans 9-11.

Rather, what Paul is doing in this section is first of all showing that the Jew in his outward emphasis on the law and circumcision is still under the condemnation of sin in that state. But then in contrast he shows the essence of a true relationship with God is internal and invisible in the realm of the heart, in the realm of the spirit involving a true life-changing repentance.

Slide # 27

A man is not saved by faith in what Christ has done and by faith in what he can do, whether that involves circumcision, baptism, or any other sacramental work. When some deed is added as a requirement for heaven, that action demonstrates that the person has not exercised the type of faith which the Bible demands. Saving faith trusts Christ only and repudiates any attempt of man to produce a meritorious work. – **Robert Gromacki**

At the end of the day what I want you to take away from this message is that a **true saving faith in an inward reality totally!** Any time anything external is added you have a false gospel! True relationship with God starts **in the HEART**. As Paul will say in Romans 10:9-10 it is with the heart that one believes unto righteousness. The heart of the matter is that it's all about the heart!

James Parker of Plainfield, N.J., was visiting a hospital, when a nurse indicated a bed surrounded screens, and whispered, "The poor man is dying. The priest has been here and administered the last sacrament. He cannot live long." Mr. Parker begged to go inside the screen, and permission was granted. As he looked down upon the dying man he observed a crucifix on his bosom. He stooped over and lifted it up. The sick man lifted his eyes and looked distressed. "Put it back," he whispered, "I want to die with it on my breast." The visitor pointed to figure pictured on the cross, and said fervently, "He's a wonderful Savior!"

"Yes, yes, I love the crucifix. Put it back, please. I hope it will help me to die well."

"Not the crucifix," was the reply, "but the One Who died on the cross, the Lord Jesus, He died to save you."

The man looked bewildered, then his face brightened: “Oh, I see, not the crucifix but the One Who died for me. I see, sir, I see. I never understood it before.”

It was evident that faith had sprung up in his soul. Mr. Parker replaced the crucifix, offered a brief prayer, and left. In a few minutes he observed the body being wheeled out of the ward. – **H.A. Ironside** in Full Assurance, p. 108

“Not the crucifix, but the One Who died on the cross!” Not the shadow but the substance; not the outward symbol but the inward reality; not the outward testimony, but the inward actuality; not the ritual, but the HEART! For us as true believers, “Christ is all and in all”.

Who is Jesus to you?

The heart of the matter is that it's all about the HEART!

In your **HEART** believe on the Jesus as your Lord and Savior and you will be saved! And if it's real in the heart it will then show in the life!