

Romans 2 (Conrad Bowman) (May 14, 2008)

Romans 2, and I want to start in the middle of Romans 2 and then press on, and we get into chapter 3 before we're through. Good evening, Sir Phil. Good to see you. Ok. Let's have a word of prayer before we begin.

Father we just thank You so much for the opportunity to unfold Your word as delivered to us through the Apostle Paul. And we pray Father that You direct us through the Spirit. Help us to see the Word in the Word, and to understand it, with an understanding that comes from beyond ourselves. Your Spirit to our human spirit, and implanted in our souls and lives. And we thank You for it, in Christ's name, for His sake, because He paid for it. Amen.

Now, we're in chapter 2. I'm going to start right at the first of chapter 2, and just kind of race through down to verse 12 where we left off – those who've sinned – dealing with the Law.

1. Therefore you have no excuse, every man of you who passes judgment,

Do you believe on the basis of that verse Christians should not judge other people? Yes? No?

Evelyn Wamble. Is it alright to evaluate? [Laughter]. I don't want to pass judgment on anybody, but I will evaluate them.

Conrad Bowman. I love you Evelyn Wamble because you always jump right into the fire. With both feet, there she comes. Alright. We can evaluate. You know, Scripture says that the man of God judges all things, and that includes other people. What it says here, what it says here,

1. ... you're without excuse, every man of you who passes judgment for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.

So it says, you've got to be careful if you're judging other people for things that you're doing yourself; but, the man of God evaluates, or judges, or discriminates, in everything. You have the perfect standard against which to evaluate all those things, right here in you hand. All you need is to know it. Ok. But you ought to consider yourselves in a position of being able to judge all things. That pulls the

chickens home to roost, doesn't it? Because it says you have to be prepared to do that. That's what it means when it says, study to show thyself approved unto God a workman who needs not to be ashamed rightly dividing the Word of truth. If you can do that, you have the perfect standard to apply to all things, and all circumstances, and all people. Ok? Including – starting with yourself, and then moving out from there. So, in that you judge another, if you're doing the same things, you condemn yourself. But you who judge practice – *prasso* – the same things.

2. And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those [who *prasso*], who practice those things.

So if you're in the habit of doing the very things you're judging another man for doing, you're in trouble.

3. Do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment upon those who *prasso* such things [practice them] and do the same things yourselves, that you're going to escape the judgment of God?

It's not going to happen. Ok.

4. Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?

See what it says. Do you presume upon the grace of God? I used to laugh about this. I've heard people get up and give as an example of faith in God being so busy at home and so occupied with the kids and what they need to do that they're late leaving the house; and they've got a class to teach; and they're on their way to a prayer meeting, and they're just praying their little heart out for a parking place up close so they wouldn't have to look around and walk across the parking lot in order to get there on time. That's presumption on the grace of God. You can't excuse the neglect of your time, and diddling around at home and leaving late, and then expect God to make up the difference by giving you a close parking place. That's presumption on the grace of God, isn't it? Now how much of our prayer life is spent doing just that? Asking God to make up the difference between our walk, what it should be, and our needs in order to glorify Him. Just because we want to glorify Him does not make us right. It doesn't. That's presuming upon grace. What it says here,

Do you think so lightly of the riches of His kindness and His forbearance and His patience not knowing that the kindness of God should lead us to repentance?

From neglect of the things that we ought to be doing to order our lives. So we get up fifteen minutes late and expect God to control the traffic so we get to work on time. Did He fail when the light turned red? I don't think so. You see how easy it is to slip into a mode where we want God to make up our human shortcomings. Well, it doesn't work that way. That's not the way it works. To repent means to change not only your mind but your method of operation. Set the clock fifteen minutes earlier! It doesn't mean drive fifteen miles faster. [Laughter]. Let's kill that one before it gets out of the net. Ok. It doesn't mean that. No sir. No sir. Drive faster and God will protect us. He'll keep all the highway patrol busy giving other people tickets. Won't work. Verse 5.

5. But because of your stubbornness [that caught me] and unrepentant heart [our minds are made up] you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,

Because He's going to judge on an absolute standard.

6. who WILL RENDER TO EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS:

And we are not excepted from that. When He judges our deeds at the Bema Seat of Christ, all of those that we did are going up in smoke. The only thing that's going to be left are the works He did in our life, for which He rewards us handsomely; far beyond what we deserve. Now,

7. to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life awaits;

8. but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth [and that's the Gospel, or Christ Himself], but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation surely await.

9. There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first but also of the Greek.

See, the Jew was first in line for blessing because it was by the Jew that the gospel and the Son of God came; and the Greek was second in line.

10. but glory and honor and peace to every man who does good,
to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Is it possible for a man to do good? Let's touch on this before we leave this. Is it possible for a man to do good? Can you actually, by yourself, all alone out there – can you do good?

Evelyn Wamble. Not in our own strength.

Lady. Not in us.

Conrad Bowman. It's not in us, is it? No. What we can do to do good is turn loose of that moment in our life, that circumstance in our life, turn it loose, and let God take it; and He will do the good work in that circumstance, and then bless you for it. You jump in and try to do it on the basis of your own strength, or your own energy, of your own ingenuity, of your own will, and it won't happen. It just will not happen! It's too much of you involved in it. You like it. Ok? If it works out good [Conrad pats himself on the back]. Yeah. We take credit for it. Its in our nature to do that. Our old sin nature within us, has an area of strength, and its called, Attaboy Conrad. You did really good. Man, that old sin nature will stroke me and tell me how good the work was. Ok. But its got an area of weakness also. And that area of weakness said, boy you can do this. You just keep on doing it. You can do it. And that area of weakness just drags us back, and keeps us from reaching for the work of God; and allowing the Holy Spirit to turn loose His power in our life. We don't like that, because there's no credit for us in that, is it? Its all God's credit. And in the final analysis, we like credit for our work. That's human. Ok. Now, does that make all human ambition wrong? No it does not. And we're going to talk about that as we move through chapter 2 and into chapter 3. Now, its God

6. who will render to every man according to his deeds.

7. to those who by perseverance in good seek glory and honor and immortality, they get eternal life [that's what they're aimed at];

8. but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation surely await.

9. There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first but also of the Greek,

10. but glory and honor and peace to every man who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

That's it. It hangs out there. But how many of us can actually do the good? There you go. If you could, then glory and honor and peace would be your sure reward on the basis of your own work. But it's not possible. He was the only one who could do good. And so he wins all the reward. It goes to the Lord Himself. And He gives it to you when you let Him do His work in your life; and then He rewards you. And that crown of reward becomes yours; and before the Bema Seat of Christ, you realize that you are His Bride; and that reward is your dowry; and your dowry is what you're going to place at His feet; and He's going to take that dowry that you place at His feet, and He's going to give it to His Father in all honor and glory; because that's what the Son, the Only Begotten Son, does. Always He honors His Father, and the circle is closed; because the blessing started with the Father. Came through the Spirit. Showed up in your life on that basis; and the Son saw that and rewarded you for it; and you give it back to Him, and He gives it back to the Father where it started. And the Father, because of that, wraps His loving arms around you and takes you to Himself just as He takes His Only Begotten Son to Himself. That's the closed circle of grace. Ok. And that's the only way to get there. Now,

11. There is no partiality with God.

In verse 11. And then you go to 12 and 13 and 14 and 15, and in every case – I want you to watch this – there's a "the" before "Law" in the English text. And in most of your Bibles, there's a "the" there. Now understand, there is only the "the" in the Greek text. It's the definite article. And the definite article in the Greek text calls attention to the specificity of the noun that follows it. "The" Law calls attention to the specific law that God gave, and that was the Mosaic Law which He gave on Mount Sinai. There is no "the" before "law" in these verses. There's just "law." It reads,

12. For all who have sinned without Law will also perish without Law, and all who have sinned under Law will be judged by Law;

13. for it is not the hearers of Law who are just before God, but the doers of Law will be justified.

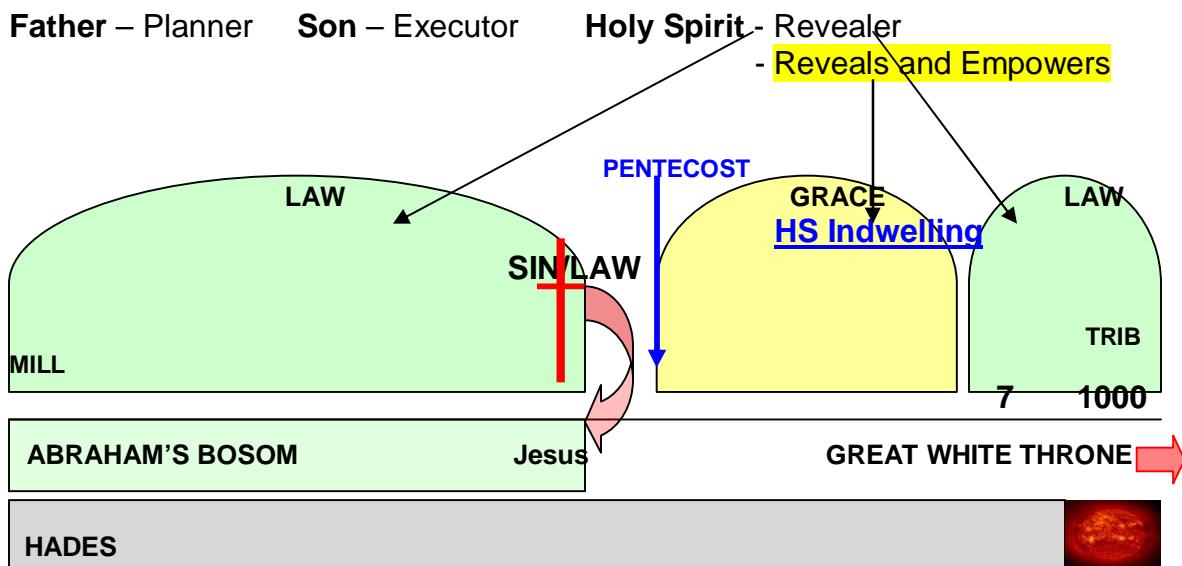
Now what does that mean? It means we're not talking about the Mosaic Law here. We're talking about "law" as a very principle. The principle of law.

All who have sinned without Law as a principle will also perish without Law as a principle, and those who have sinned under Law as a principle will be judged by principle of law.

So that means all law. We're not judged by the Law of Moses. We're judged by "law" as a principle. The Law of Moses is not to be found in 12, 13 and 14. This is not talking about the Law of Israel. It's talking about "law" as a concept. Does that mean we are lawless creatures? No. It means we're not judged by law as a standard. Our standard is the life of the Lord Jesus Christ; and its not the life that He lived on His way to the cross. Its the life that He lives now on this side of the resurrection and ascension. Now I want to make sure you get that. Ok. And I want you to see it in graphic form.

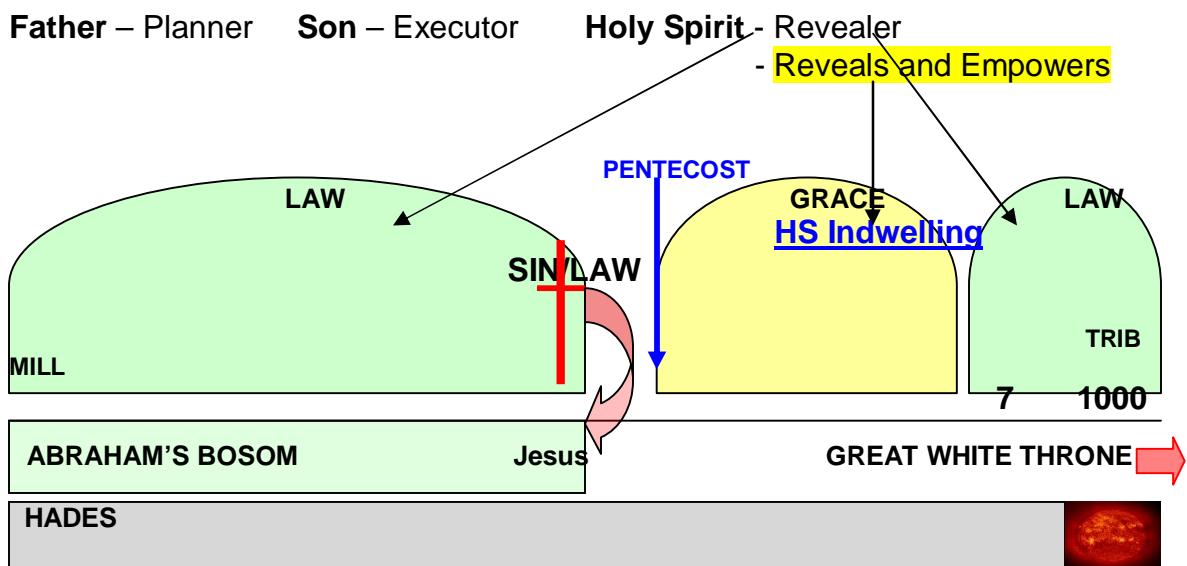
[Conrad draws depiction on the Board].

THE CONFLICT OF THE AGES



Because too many people see their life as this. This is history. This is the cross. This is the life of Christ for three years – thirty-three years actually – but in that approach to the cross, where on the cross, He who knew no sin was made to be sin for us. When Christ went to the cross “to be made to be sin,” this is the life that he lived. That’s not the life that we’re to emulate. We’re to emulate the life that He lives now. He went from the cross into the grave and Abraham’s Bosom; and He captured all of those in Abraham’s Bosom – the Old Testament saints; and when He rose, He took them with Him – three days after this; and they lived on earth until forty days after this – day forty; on day forty He ascended, and took all of those in Abraham’s Bosom with Him to heaven to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Ten days later, on day fifty, the Holy Spirit descended on earth and filled one hundred and twenty Galileans in the upper room and every believer since then is stilled indwelled by the Holy Spirit. That’s the *sine qua non* of the Christian life during this Age of Grace. This is what Paul is saying. We live our life in the Age of Grace, not on the basis of the pattern that Christ gave us here, on His way to the cross, but on the pattern of His life as He lives it from the throne on high today. This is the life we’re emulating. So when we say, abide above, and our life is based on heavenly principles, that’s what we’re talking about. Our life today is to fit the standard of the Son – the Only Begotten Son of God; the man Jesus, who sits on this throne here; who is the Groom of the Church; awaiting the time when He comes and gets His Bride and takes His Bride back to the Marriage Supper, which is going on even as we speak. Now you can see why Law doesn’t have any hold on us. Because when we were joined to Christ, we were joined to Him where? In His death. Here’s where we were joined to Christ, right here in the grave. [Interruption – marker empty].

THE CONFLICT OF THE AGES



So we were joined to Christ here in the grave. That's what Romans 6 is going to tell us when we get there. Though you're not, any of us joined to Christ, joined to Him in His death. And just as Christ rose from the grave, so shall we have risen to newness of life. We were joined to Christ as dead men. We were raised as new creation believers. New life. And that new life has nothing to do with anything on that side of the cross. It has to do with this, on this side of the cross. The risen Christ, who reigns on high today. Let His life flow in a torrent through us and out to a thirsty world. This is the life we live, that comes from here. This is the death in which we participated that comes from here. You don't want to let your Christian life start and end here. If its emulating this pattern of life, it will never get past the cross; and you will forever find in your walk as a Christian that you're constantly faced with a need to bring your sins back to Him; to bring your life back to Him; to rededicate it back to Him. Because you're living over here. You won't find freedom until you move forward in that experience to here. There are believers that live constantly over here, trying to emulate and copy the human life of Christ on His way to the cross. Now I want you to think about this a minute. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John speak of the walk and work of Christ from here, in His incarnation, to here. And only at the end of it does it begin to talk about His life here, and going into the grave. If you want to find out what His life is like today, you have to get into the Pauline epistles. Now think about it. The first group to make that trip was one hundred and twenty Galileans in the upper room, and that's what you study in Acts chapter 2. One hundred and twenty of them. Ok. And the Holy Spirit came there. Filled them up. Boom. Indwelled them. And they began to see things. And Acts chapter 2 says, there were in those days in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. Every nation under heaven was there. Soon they left town. They saw Pentecost. They saw the mighty unfolding of the Spirit across Acts; and they left Jerusalem, and got in their caravans, mounted their camels, and went back to the countries from which they came. And they got back there, and where they went to worship, was the place that was there when they left. It was the synagogue. They went to the synagogue. And the only works they knew to do were the works they were doing when they left. So James wrote them a letter. Dear, dear people, he said. You have to have new works to go with that new faith. You found this new faith when you saw the work of the Spirit; and the change that came over these believers; and the birth of the Church. Now, you have to have new faith, you have to have new works to go with that new faith. You can't – can you go back and finish by works that which you started by faith? You can't do that. You've got to go back to those places, and you've got to find new work to go with that new faith. You believed in Christ. Messiah has come. That part has closed. You can't go back to the old works of anticipating Messiah's coming. That

moves you back all the way over here. You've got to have new works that go with that faith you found in the risen Messiah; because faith without works is totally sterile. It's non-productive. Its dead, is what James said. Ok. That does not mean you have to work your way through the Christian life. Its talking about the kind of work you occupy yourself with. It means you cannot work your way into God's good graces, like the Jew was told to do. He was given the Law and all these works to do in order to be in good graces with God. James is saying, you are in good graces with God, because of the work Christ did on the cross. Your works have changed. You've got to have new works to go with that new faith; otherwise that new faith is sterile; its not going anywhere. And what James was doing was trying to pull that first generation Jew who claimed and professed belief in Christ – pull them into the arena of grace where they could satisfy a loving Father. You see that happening? Are there any questions about that? Yeah, Jeff.

Jeff Little. I heard someone say that Christ had to become the Suffering Servant before He could become the Messiah, which was his explanation of why every time Christ did a miracle, it was like, well don't tell anybody because its not yet time. So what's your take on that.

Conrad Bowman. Well, He didn't have to do anything. My only argument with that would be that He was the Suffering Servant of God before He was incarnate as man. He was the Suffering Servant of God when He laid aside His prerogatives as deity and took on Himself the limitations of a man; and that was done in heaven before He ever hit earth. So that contract was fulfilled before He was born as a baby.

Jeff Little. Suffering Servant?

Conrad Bowman. Yeah. Yeah.

Jeff Little. [Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. Yep. Yep. Yep, it sure was.

Jeff Little. I don't understand that. How did He ...

Conrad Bowman. Because He gave up His prerogatives as God the Son and laid them aside. He stripped Himself of all His prerogatives as God, when He decided to accept His position as the Only Begotten Son of God, which is His human title. And that happened in eternity past; not when He was born.

Jeff Little. But He was fully God and fully man. Right?

Conrad Bowman. Fully God and fully man.

Jeff Little. One hundred percent both.

Conrad Bowman. Yes, but He laid aside all His prerogatives as God. Now understand this. He took on humanity when He got here; He never put it down again. Scripture never tells us that He took on His prerogatives as God again. He never did that. He stays the glorified man in heaven forever; joined to His Bride. Understand what He gave up for us. There's the Suffering Servant. What He endured as a man is a drop in the bucket to what He endured as God laying aside His prerogatives and taking on the limitations of humanity. There was where the Suffering Servant experienced His strongest change in being. Right there.

Jeff Little. Limitations of ...

Conrad Bowman. The limitations of humanity.

Jeff Little. Humanity. Hunger and

Conrad Bowman. No. No. Death. Not hunger. Hunger is the smallest part of it. Hunger is something you and I share with Him; pain is something you and I share with Him; but death, as innocents, that's not anything we'll ever share with Him, because we're not ever innocent. Whatever happens to us, we're guilty.

Jeff Little. So when Christ died, then He was fully alive spiritually.

Conrad Bowman. That's right.

Jeff Little. His Spirit was still fully alive for three days before He took up His body again and rose.

Conrad Bowman. That's right. That's right.

Jeff Little. And henceforth He would always be mind, body and soul.

Conrad Bowman. That's right. Forever. Forever. One with us. That's staggering. That's absolutely staggering; that the Son of God, who became the Only Begotten Son of God, would lay aside His prerogatives as God and take on the limitations

of you; and me. That's the extreme extent to which Christ loved us and was willing to give up what He had for us. When it says, husbands love your wives as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for her, that's what it's talking about. He gave up everything He was for her; and that's me and you. We can't wrap ourselves around that. I don't understand that kind of love. I don't understand it. I just don't understand it, you know. We vest so much in who we are, in what we are, in being what we are. And a man's got to do what a man's got to do; and a woman's got to do what a woman's got to do; and that's where we strap on our guns and we go to war. Ok. The Lord Jesus laid it all aside; just put it all away. For you. And for me. That staggers you. It catches right here, doesn't it? You can hardly say the words, without it hanging in your throat. When you think about the magnitude of that price. That's what this Book is unfolding for us. Its not because of the Law. Its not because of the existence of law. Not natural law. Not the laws of physics. Not the laws of science. Not the laws of religion. No law at all shapes our lives. The life that Christ lives from where He is poured into us is the only shaper of our life.

14. When the Gentiles who do not have law, do instinctively the things of law; these not having law, become a law in themselves.

So it says, mankind, Jew or Gentile, can take Jewish Law, or law in principle, and adopt those laws if we want to, it's a stupid thing to do; but we can do that and they become a law unto themselves; and those applied to us will condemn us. That's self-condemnation by any standard. That's not God condemning you. That's you condemning you on the basis of the law that you adopt; one the basis that they show a law written in their hearts, or in their minds. You know what Scripture says about "minds." Ok. The heart, the mind, the center of where you think, is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Who can know it? That's what goes on between your ears. Right there. Its desperately wicked, and deceitful of all things. Who can know it? It will deceive you. Your own thoughts.

15. ... their consciences bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them ...

Conrad Bowman. Sounds like law, doesn't it John?

John Young. Definitely.

Conrad Bowman. And the practice thereof.

16. on the day when, according to my gospel [and Paul – underscore "my gospel." Paul was talking about his specific gospel], God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.

17. But [contrast] if you bear the name "Jew" and rely upon law [as principle] and boast on God,

18. and know His will and approve the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law [and that's the first time it occurs],

19. and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness,

20. a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, having in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth,

21. you, therefore, who teach another [still talking to Jews], do you not teach yourself? You who preach that one shall not steal, do you steal?

22. You say you should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?

23. You who boast in the Law, through your breaking the Law, do you dishonor God?

24. For "THE NAME OF GOD IS BLASPHEMED AMONG THE GENTILES BECAUSE OF YOU," just as it is written.

25. For indeed circumcision is of value [that's what makes you a Jew] if you practice the Law; but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.

And you've cut yourself off from your Jewishness.

26. If therefore the uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?

So it says here the Gentile who keeps the requirements of the Law, will by his very keeping be regarded as circumcision.

27. Will not he who is physically uncircumcised, if he keeps the Law, will he not judge you who though having the letter of the Law and circumcision are a transgressor of the Law?

28. For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, neither is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh.

29. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by means of the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.

So it says the only Judgment and the only evaluation that counts is the evaluation of God, not that of men.

1. Then what advantage

Yes?

Jeff Little. One more question here. Sounded like you were discussing verse 15. They showed that what the Law requires ... [inaudible]. You made it sound like, when you condemn yourselves, you made it sound like the Law is a bad thing, but if I understand this passage, and the way that you resolved it up there in verse 26, so that the uncircumcised keep the Law

Conrad Bowman. Its not talking about the Law in verse 14 and 15. Its talking about the consciences of the Gentile who took on the works of the Law. So its not talking about the Law at all. Its talking about the Gentile who works.

Jeff Little. Because they're own consciences are telling them the right thing to do. so they're really keeping the Law without knowing the Law.

Conrad Bowman. That's right. They're keeping the standard of their conscience.

Jeff Little. Because God has given them His will and they're listening to it. In their consciences? Right?

Conrad Bowman. No, I'm not sure what you mean by that, because God has given them His will. Its no. They have looked at the Jew, and the walk, and the Law, and they've decided to take the Law on as their standard; and their conscious is telling them to do that. So they're following their conscience. Ok. And the law that they're constructing has nothing to do with the Law of God

because God writes the pure law on their heart; but He hasn't done that, so they're following a law they've constructing in their own consciences.

Jeff Little. But they're applying the Law without even knowing the Law.

Conrad Bowman. They have nothing to do with the Law. They're abiding in law. It's the same thing as when the leaders of our country say, that the Bible is the basis of our judicial system. Well, they can't say that because they don't know what it's the basis of. They don't know this. What they're doing is looking at what they believe Scripture says and they're reconstructing their own conscious; something they're calling the law of Scripture. And they're following that. So they're following the construct of their own conscious; not the actuality of the Law, whether the law to Gentiles or the law to Jews. They're not following either one. They're following a construct of their own conscious.

Jeff Little. But in doing so they're keeping the requirements of the Law, according to verse 26.

Conrad Bowman. Doesn't matter what they're keeping. It isn't going to get them anywhere. That's what its saying right there. It doesn't matter what they're keeping. Because what they're keeping is only going to condemn them.

Jeff Little. So its not that the Law is so bad. It's just that the Law is so good that we can't keep it.

Conrad Bowman. No. No. You're jumping ahead and trying to make the Law something that's righteous. Don't do that. We're not even there yet. Don't do that. But when we get there, that'll be wrong. [Laughter].

Jeff Little. The Law is not righteous?

Conrad Bowman. No. That the Law is not righteous as you're trying to make it righteous. The Law was a standard for Israel. Ok. You're not a Jew. And if you were, you're outside the bounds of Law's effectiveness by about two thousand years. So Law has no effect.

Jeff Little. As a Christian we still have

Conrad Bowman. As a Christian, the Law ought to be the farthest thing from your mind.

Jeff Little. The great commandment. Love God with all your heart. And the second commandment, love your neighbors as yourself.

Conrad Bowman. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. He did. He was a Jew.

Jeff Little. And under all these

Conrad Bowman. Right. He was a Jew, and He was bound to the Law. He lived His life entirely under the Law, and at the end of His life, the Law condemned Him and killed Him.

Jeff Little. But

Conrad Bowman. Now no "buts." No "buts." Put the "buts" in your pocket and them there until we get to that point. [Laughter]. Just tuck it away right there; and when we get over there, to 8, 9, 10 and 11, up into 12, this is going to come up. It's just going to come up. Ok. It will. It's right there. But right now we're dealing with Gentiles and their conscious.

17. Now, if you bear the name "Jew", and you rely upon the Law boasting God,

18. and know His will and preach the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law,

Look at that list.

19. if you're confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in the darkness,

20. a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, having in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth [which you can't have],

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

And then it goes through the list.

24. For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles

Because of you who are attempting to be law keepers. Ok.

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

25. For indeed circumcision is of value if you practice the Law [and maybe you do and maybe you don't – third class]; but if you are a transgressor of the Law [first class, and you are], your circumcision has become uncircumcision.

Your whole Jewishness has been reversed on you.

26. If, therefore, the uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?

So the Gentile who wants to practice the Law is going to be judged as a Jew.

27. And will not he who is physically uncircumcised ...

That just gives me pain, every time I think about it.

... Will not he who is physically uncircumcised, if he keeps the Law, will he not judge you, though having the letter of the Law and circumcision are a transgressor of the Law?

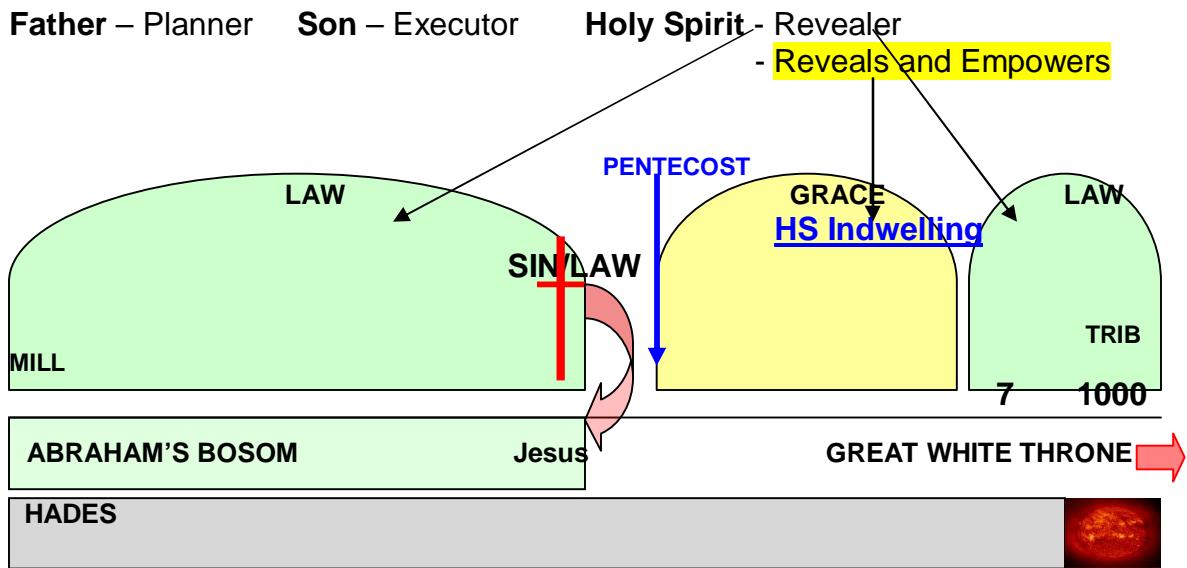
So it doesn't matter how pious you are in keeping the Law. The man who does not – who is physically uncircumcised who keeps the Law; its going to be your judge if you break one iota of the Law.

28. For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, neither is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh.

29. But if he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.

And what Paul does in chapter 2 is draw a solid line of demarcation between the Christian who claims an identity in Christ, and the Law who is on the other side of that great gulf. And he says you can't cross that gulf. Leave the Law over there where circumcision has something that means something. Leave Law over here.

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And leave uncircumcision and grace over here. You can't pull Law forward and make it any kind of monument that means anything on this side in the Age of Grace. It has no place in the Age of Grace. None. Its to be left over there, where conscious was effected. Not over here where the life of Christ, revealed by the Holy Spirit to our spirit, is the effective means of bringing us under God's intentions; not Law. Romans chapter 2 does that. It draws a solid line between Law, over here; and grace, which began with the advent of the Holy Spirit. And the reason for that is, not one person, prior to Pentecost in the upper room; not one person in the entire history of mankind was indwelled by the Holy Spirit as a matter of being, on this side of Pentecost. Not one. It was not possible. On this side, where the Spirit in residence, keeping the Law was possible; because Christ Himself was the only human being ever united on a permanent basis with the Holy Spirit Himself. And Christ Himself as a human being was fed continually by the Holy Spirit. Every shred of information that He needed to know was given to His human spirit by the Holy Spirit that indwelled Him. No other individual in history had ever had that. So Christ Himself could walk over here with a pure and undefiled conscience and went to the cross a sinless individual. The only possible sinless individual that the world has ever seen. No body else ever saw that. Now understand this, brother – and sisters; who raised the level of attractiveness in this class. Otherwise we'd be sunk. [Laughter]. I get to edit this tape. John's going to send it to me, and I get to edit it. So I can get by with that.

Beginning with that one hundred and twenty in the upper room, there's not one believer taken into fellowship and put into union with Christ that does not have that same Holy Spirit within him. Not one. Now you look around this room. Ok. As does every person who claims the name of Christ in this room has that same Holy Spirit within that filled the Lord Jesus Christ, and enabled Him to do what He did. And that same Spirit is within you. No wonder the bar is set so high for our behavior. No wonder the demand on us to study to show ourselves approved unto God; workman who needed not to be ashamed; no wonder its set so high. No wonder He chases us down and gets us in His hammer-lock in order to say to us: I want you as My own. You belong to Me. You see that? He did it because He filled you full of Himself, by means of that Spirit within. He took your conscience and He bent it until it was subordinate to His own beautiful will; and then He turns that will loose in your mind, to rattle around from ear to ear; and back to front, until His will can fill your mind and your mind's eye; because He loved you that much. He could separate His Son from Himself on the cross and turn His back on His Son so that His Son might experience death and humiliation and separation. And He did that in order to be able to walk up next to you and put His arms around you and draw you to Himself. Lord, I don't understand that. I can't begin to understand that. But to what lengths will it drive me to show her that kind of love. Or show my daughter that kind of love. Or to show my friends that kind of love. Ok. And that's what He expects of us, isn't it? That's what He demands of us. But His demand is not a harsh, blasting, screeching demand. It's a soft loving call, isn't it? Just to take the next step and follow Him, one more step; and one more step. Now I believe the Lord's coming back soon. I had the pleasure of telling my mother that today. She's ninety-four, and I had the pleasure of telling her that today. She wasn't feeling good yesterday. You know. She's in a nursing home in Alabama; and she's on oxygen and her legs are swelling a little bit. Today she's sitting up and feeling pretty good. Waiting for lunch – impatiently. Where's lunch? The apple doesn't fall far from the tree, does it? [Laughter]. And I had the pleasure of sharing that with her today; and she's ready to go.

Evelyn Wamble. I'm interested in her comment?

Conrad Bowman. Huh?

Evelyn Wamble. I'm interested in her comment, when you told her you felt that the Lord would be coming soon.

Conrad Bowman. Oh, she thinks so too.

Evelyn Wamble. She agreed.

Conrad Bowman. She said, you think He'll get here before I go? And I said yes. I do. You know. I don't know how many days we've got left, but I'm looking forward to it, Mom. I'm looking forward to taking you by the hand and stepping into the presence of Dad. He's been out there a few years now, and we'll all get there at the same time. That's the Blessed Hope of the believer. That's our loving His appearing. Ok. That's what Paul knew right down in the depths of his soul, and that's what he's communicating to us here. The Law was for people on earth. We are a heavenly Church. Our life is lived here. There is no Law there. Law was here, and for a people destined to live on earth forever. That's not bad. That's what God promised Israel, and David, and all the rest of them. But you – He promised something altogether different. You are the Bride of Christ. The Bride of Christ, joined to Christ forever, as His Bride. Children of the Father. That's you, and that's me. Ok. Now we need to live like that. And you can't live like that by trying to walk in the dust of Israel. You've got to live like that by walking on the goal of our heavenly home; and realizing that, your love of God to that extent. Now if we get there, we can take chapter 3 apart. I'm out of juice. We're going to have to stop. Ok.

Thank You, Father, just for the time You give us. Just for the blessedness of loving us, and letting us know that You love us to such an extent. Guide us next week through chapter 3, and our further studies. Just open us up to the truth of our position in Christ; loved for eternity, and destined for our heavenly home, that's even now prepared for us. We thank You, in the name of the Son who paid for it by giving up everything but us. Amen .