



## THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS "The Dangers of Religion" Romans 2:17-3:8

No. 281

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Having exposed the condition of pagan society, Roman and Greek, Paul turned his attention to the religious society of the Jewish people. Although he was a Jew, and proud of it, Paul did not hesitate to expose the spiritual danger inherent in religious profession.

### I. The Dangers of Profession Without Performance. vv. 17-24

#### A. Profession. vv. 17-20

1. A special name—"Call yourself a Jew."
2. A special foundation—"Rely on the law."
3. A special relationship—"Your relationship to God."
4. A special insight—"You know His will...."
5. A special conviction—"You are convinced...."

#### B. Performance. vv. 21-24

1. Teaching without learning. v. 21a
2. Preaching without practicing. vv. 21b-22
3. Bragging without behaving. v. 23

#### C. Possibilities.

1. Suffering from spiritual myopia.
2. Causing others to stumble.
3. Bringing dishonor to God's Name.

### II. The Dangers of Ritual Without Reality. vv. 25-29

#### A. Ritual. v. 25a

1. The establishment of covenant. Genesis 17:10
2. The institution of circumcision.
3. The erosion of commitment. Deuteronomy 10:12-22

#### B. Reality. vv. 25b-29

1. External sign is not substitute for internal intention.
2. External sign gives no freedom for unfaithfulness.
3. External sign in flesh portrays inner work of Spirit.

#### C. Repercussions.

1. Circumcised lawbreakers are condemned by uncircumcised pagans.
2. Uncircumcised pagans who obey receive God's praise.
3. Circumcised lawbreakers receive man's praise.

Note: "Judah" = "Praise."

### III. The Dangers of Privilege Without Perception. 3:1-2

- A. The danger of abusing privilege—"The very words of God."
- B. The danger of disregarding responsibility.
- C. The danger of exaggerating personal importance.

### IV. The Dangers of Objections Without Objectivity. 3:3-8

#### A. Objections.

1. If the religious are so bad, how can they still be privileged?
2. If they aren't still privileged, God is unfaithful.
3. If our sin proves His justice, He is using us.
4. We may as well sin more and make God look better!

#### B. Objectivity.

1. Objectivity requires an acknowledgment of sin.
2. Objectivity demands a recognition of hypocrisy.
3. Objectivity projects a reverence of God.

**Conclusions:** Pagans suppress what they know of God. Religious know more but still come short.