

# 2020-2021 Bible Study

## #22

3/2/21

# Review of our Last Class

- Last week, we returned to **Acts 19** where we found the movements of Paul from *Ephesus* to *Corinth* (where he wrote the Letter to the Romans)
- While in *Ephesus*, he discovered members of the “new way,” who had only received the Baptism of John the Baptist, and had to be baptized into Jesus using the trinitarian formula
- Next, we were introduced to the biblical basis for our use of “relics”
- **Acts 19** ended with a series of exorcisms and the destruction of magic books
- **Acts 20** set the stage for Paul’s writing his Letter to the Romans

# Review of our Last Class (Cont)

- In an overview of Romans, we saw the lack of information concerning the founding of the church in Rome
- Paul wrote this letter to introduce himself to the people of the evenly divided Roman church (Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians) whom he had never met
- It is a detailed catechetical instruction on Paul's theology (Kerygma) that was very different from his letter to the Galatians
- Then in **Romans 1** (after his opening thanksgiving segment), we saw him address both groups (as it would appear the Jewish Christians were trying to make the Gentile Christians be circumcised and practice Kosher)

# Review of our Last Class (Cont)

- Father pointed out that the only truly Jewish things (those in Rome) one could practice was circumcision, the kosher, and sabbath laws
- Paul had met some of these Jewish Christians in other parts of the Roman empire during their expulsion from Rome (49-53 AD) and discovered some of the areas he discussed in his letter
- He also pointed out that both Jews and Gentiles came from a less than perfect background, and had received God's blessings via the natural law (Gentile) and special revelation (Jew) as God supported both groups equally

# Romans 2

# Romans 2

- **Romans 2:1-6** *“Therefore, you have no excuse,...For he will render to every man according to his works”*
  - Paul pointed out that when one condemned someone, he condemned himself
  - He asked his Jewish Christian audience if they condemned the Gentile Christians for not keeping the Law
  - Then, he pointed out that the Jews did not always keep the Law themselves
  - He told them that they would be judged based on what they had done regardless of their background
  - He said that whether one worshipped the golden calf or the god Moloch, they were committing the sin of idolatry

# Romans 2 (Cont)

- He said that what they had done will affect their judgment
- First the Jew, and then the Greek (Gentile)
- The Jews were more culpable than the Gentiles because they were given the “special revelation” (Mt. Sinai)

# Romans 2 (Cont)

- **Romans 2:12** *“All who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law”*
  - Wherever you see the word “law” know this means the “Torah”
  - Paul told them that all who sinned without the Torah will be punished without the Torah
  - This means that the Gentile who sinned without the law, will still perish
  - Also, all who have sinned under the law, (Jews) will be judged by the law



# Romans 2 (Cont)

- He told his listeners that the Gentile Christians did not need the law to do what by nature the law required
- What the Torah required was written on their hearts, and was the same as the natural law
- The “special revelation” was intended to supplement or direct a man back to what the natural revelation was intended to reveal
- Due to the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, man turned from the beauty of natural revelation to the worship of a creature instead of his creator
- Thus, God supplemented his revelation via the “special revelation”

# Romans 2 (Cont)

- So, whether one was a Jew or a Gentile and was apart from Christ, he would be under the wrath of God
- If one has sinned against God, whether it was against the natural law or the Law of Moses, with or without the Torah, he would be under His wrath

# Romans 2 (Cont)

- The Torah was designed to give more clarification so that they could be sure of what God was saying, “do not worship pagan gods”
- Father said that this was the message of the Torah in a nut shell
- This information was designed to answer the questions posed by the Jewish Christians in Rome as to whether the Gentile Christians needed to be circumcised and keep kosher
- Paul asked, what was the purpose of the Torah?
- It was to direct them back to God
- So if someone (Jew or Gentile) had already been brought back to God, (were in communion with Him) why would they need circumcision and kosher

# Romans 2 (Cont)

- **Romans 2:13-16** *“For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God,...God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus”*
  - Paul said that listening to the law did not make one righteous
  - One was made righteous by “doing” what they heard (what the law told them to do)
  - Paul then demonstrated how he was a master rhetorician by debating this point
  - Father said that it was sad that most people, due to their respective beliefs, miss the beauty and depth of the text in the letter to the Romans

# Romans 2 (Cont)

- **Romans 2:17-24** *“But if you call yourself a Jew and rely upon the law...The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you”*
  - Again, Paul is talking to the Jewish Christians in the church of Rome
  - To understand this letter, we must remind ourselves that Paul was writing to a divided church, and therefore his letter goes back and forth between the two groups
  - This letter would have been read out loud in front of the entire congregation at a Sabbath meeting
  - At this point, he is talking to the Jewish Christians who thought that they were better than the Gentile Christians

# Romans 2 (Cont)

- So, Paul asked them if the law kept them from sin?
- Since it did no such thing, he reminded them that the law only showed them what was the right thing to do
- Further, the Gentile was potentially able to do what was right even though he did not have the Torah

# Romans 2 (Cont)

- **Romans 2:25-27** *“Circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law;...and circumcision but breaks the law”*
  - Father pointed out that Paul was not concerned with “faith versus good works” here
  - He was talking about circumcision in the Torah
  - This was the same issue that we saw in **Acts 15** (the Judaizer heresy)
  - He was speaking of the Law of Moses to Christians in Rome, knowing that there was no way any of them could keep it

# Romans 2 (Cont)

- They were thousands of miles from the temple in Jerusalem, so the best they could do was to avoid work on the Sabbath, wear a yarmulke and not eat pork
- Without the temple, they could not participate in any of the sacrificial requirements



# Romans 2 (Cont)

- **Romans 2:28-29** *“For he is not a real Jew who is one outwardly,...His praise is not from men but from God”*
  - Moses, in **Deuteronomy 10**, told his people to *“be circumcised in your hearts, O Israel”*
  - He asked if someone had a circumcised heart did they need to be physically circumcised as well?
  - Thus, he asked, what was the point of physical circumcision for the Gentiles
  - He was telling the Jewish Christians that they were in a church with Gentile Christians who were worshipping the one true God

# Romans 2 (Cont)

- The whole point of the Torah was to change the hearts of believers and this has already happened
- He pointed out that these practices did not automatically change their hearts
  - He referred to the sin of David with Bathsheba, and the golden calf incident
- The Torah did not change a person, for it was only a lamp by which one walked
- If the Gentiles have already reached their objective, they had no need of the lamp of the Torah
- This continues in **Romans 3**