

# Romans 2 D

Rom 2:14-15 LITV For when **nations** not having Law do by nature the things of the Law, they not having Law are a law to themselves, (15) who show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience witnessing with them, and the thoughts between one another accusing or even excusing,

Who is it that Paul is referring to?

1. Pagans who fulfill G-d's Torah and merit His favor by some "natural" moral law?
2. Gentiles who keep Torah out of "conscience".
3. Pagans that have a "hidden" faith?
4. Gentile believers (see 11:13 and 15:9) who have not been trained in Torah show a humbleness and willingness to live according to Torah?

Numbers 1 and 2 are inconsistent with Paul's teaching. Number 3 is not valid because Paul's point is that there is only one way to salvation.

Paul is describing those who have a right standing before G-d hence regardless of the reference to the Torah, they must be believers in Yeshua!

A key here is to determine whether the phrase "by nature" (Greek φυσικῶς – naturally) is to be read with the preceding clause of the following clause.

**Preceding** = For when **nations** not having Law **by nature** do the things of the Law, they not having Law are a law to themselves,

**Following** = For when **nations** not having Law do **by nature** the things of the Law, they not having Law are a law to themselves,

How does Paul use this word/phrase?

Rom 2:27 LITV And will not the uncircumcision **by nature** by completing the Law judge you, the one who through letter and circumcision becomes transgressor of Law?

Gal 2:15 LITV We, Jews **by nature**, and not sinners of the nations,

Eph 2:3 LITV among whom we also all conducted ourselves in times past in the lusts of our flesh, doing the things willed of the flesh and of the understanding, and were **by nature** the children of wrath, even as the rest.

**It is clear in these verse that Paul uses the term to refer to ethnic or family connections.**

Tim Hegg paraphrases this passage as follows:

“For the Gentile believers, - though they do not have the heritage of the Torah and were not taught to live the life style through the perspective of the Torah – these believers, when they do the things of the Torah even though it was not their natural possession or part of their cultural upbringing, show that they have acquired the Torah as their very own possession, and thus demonstrates their genuine faith.”

So we see that these Gentile believers demonstrate their faith is genuine.

Jer 31:31ff Rom. 2:27, 29; 7:6; 2Cor 3:1ff

“Conscience”

Συνειδησεως suneidesis

the soul as distinguishing between what is morally good and bad, prompting to do the former and shun the latter, commending one, condemning the other

Knowledge shared with oneself.

This can **not** be the conscience of an unbeliever. TH makes the point that the unbeliever is not bothered in their conscience about righteousness but are concerning being found guilty.

V. 15

- who show the work of the Law written in their hearts,
- their conscience witnessing with them,
- and the thoughts between one another accusing or even excusing,

This passage only makes consistent sense when we see the “Gentiles” as being Gentile believers. None of the consequences Paul points out are operative in the lives of the unbelieving.

V. 15

- who show the work of the Law written in their hearts,
- their conscience witnessing with them,
- and the thoughts between one another accusing or even excusing,

This is a powerful description of what Paul speaks of in Rom 7:15-21  
LITV

For what I work out, I do not know. For what I do not will, this I do. But what I hate, this I do. (16) But if I do what I do not will, I agree with the Law, that it is good. (17) But now I no longer work it out, but the sin dwelling in me. (18) For I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwells no good. For to will is present to me, but to work out the good I do not find. (19) For what good I desire, I do not do. But the evil I do not desire, this I do. (20) But if I do what I do not desire, it is no longer I working it out, but the sin dwelling in me. (21) I find then the law, when I desire to do the right, that evil is present with me.

It is imperative that in the preceding verse we DO NOT fall into the Gnostic error.

Paul is not saying that there is a battle between his physicality and his spirituality.

Paul is saying that “in the flesh” – that is **our prideful self efforts** – there is no “good.” they are meaningless and futile.

Vs 21 of Romans 7 is critical: I find then the law (not the Torah ms) when I desire to do the right, that **evil** is present with me.

Many translations translate this word κακός kakos as “sin” however the basic meaning is an adjective carrying the application of:

- 1) of a bad nature
  - 1a) not such as it ought to be
- 2) of a mode of thinking, feeling, acting
  - 2a) base, wrong, wicked
- 3) troublesome, injurious, pernicious, destructive, baneful

## Some thoughts:

### "Yetzer"

- (m.; pl."Yetzarim"); desire or inclination; as in "Yesh l'Adam shenai **yetzarim**," "A person has two **inclinations**."

### "Yetzer HaRa"

- (m.); "evil" inclination, desire to commit sin; as in "Yoseph Ha**Tzaddik** cavash et ha-**yetzer ha-ra** shelo," " 'Joseph the Righteous' conquered his **"evil" inclination**."

### "Yetzer HaTov"

-(m.); "good" inclination, desire not to commit sin; as in "Lekol echad yesh **Yetzer HaTov**," "Everyone has a **"good" inclination**."

Yetzer hara is not a demonic force that pushes a person to do evil, but rather **a drive toward pleasure or property or security**, which if left unlimited, can lead to evil (cf. Genesis Rabbah 9:7). When properly controlled by the yetzer hatov, the yetzer hara leads to many socially desirable results, including marriage, business, and community.

Rom 2:16 LITV

in a day when God judges the hidden things of men, according to my gospel, through Jesus Christ.

“the day” Isa. 13:6, 9 Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11, 31

“according to my gospel” Rom. 18:25; 2 Tim. 2:8; 2 Cor 4:3; 1 Thes. 1:5; 2 Thes. 2:14

As Paul teaches that there is but one single salvation so he teaches that there is a common standard of judgment.

The ones who have sinned without the knowledge of Torah or having received the revelation of G-d’s holiness and His way of justifying sinners are judged as sinners because they have not lived by Torah's standards for righteousness.

The gospel that Paul teaches states that Jew and Gentile are “saved” in the exact same manner and that they will be judged in the exact same manner.

## Rom 2:17-20 LITV

Behold, you are called a Jew, and rest in the Law, and boast in God, (18) and know the will, and approve the things excelling, being instructed out of the Law, (19) and persuading yourself to be a guide of blind ones, a light to those in darkness, (20) an instructor of foolish ones, a teacher of infants, having the form of knowledge and of the truth in the Law.

**Note:** There is nothing is wrong about anything Paul says here for this is what those called “Jews” were to be for the blessing of the world. One wonders however if Paul isn’t setting the readers up for correction. Indeed the following verse reveal that this is what he does.

First, however, let’s look at some specifics in this passage.

“bear the name Jew” Ἰουδαῖος Ioudaios

From the name Judah יהודה yehûdâh yeh-hoo-daw'

By the time of this writing the term had come to have both a religious and national meaning –

“relying upon the Torah”

Relying = ἐπαναπαύομαι epanapauomai

1) to cause to rest upon anything

2) to rest upon anything

3) to settle upon, fix its abode upon

Law = νόμος nomos Note: there is no article in the Greek.

Rom 9:31a LITV but Israel following after a Law of righteousness. . . .

Paul questions following the Torah apart from faith.

“boast in G-d”

Boast = καυχῶμαι kauchaomai

- 1) to glory (whether with reason or without)
- 2) to glory on account of a thing
- 3) to glory in a thing

The term is neutral. Paul uses this word group often. See: Rom. 2:23; 3:27; 4:2; 5:2, 3, 11; 15:17

From what follows it appears that Paul is using the terms in a critical sense in that it expresses the sense in which the Jews asserted some kind of “exclusive rights” to G-d. i.e G-d is the G-d of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – period!

“know His will” γινώσκω ginōskō

- 1) to learn to know, come to know, get a knowledge of perceive, feel
  - 1a) to become known
- 2) to know, understand, perceive, have knowledge of
  - 2a) to understand
  - 2b) to know
- 3) Jewish idiom for sexual intercourse between a man and a woman
- 4) to become acquainted with, to know

Paul is surely using the idea behind the Hebrew word ratzon which presents the **sense of “doing”** The Greek term is a verb – and active term – not a state of being term.

It appears that in the 1<sup>st</sup> cen. The Jews (not every) assumed that they knew G-d’s will apart from a consistent submission to it. The teachings of the Rabbi’s further complicated this by adding their interpretive applications to the Word (the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees). This is a trap of arrogance and pride.

“and approve the things excelling,” δοκιμαζεις τα διαφοροντα

Δοκιμάζω dokimazō

- 1) to test, examine, prove, scrutinize (to see whether a thing is genuine or not), as metals
- 2) to recognise as genuine after examination, to approve, deem worthy

Διαφέρω diapherō (the things excelling)

- 1) to bear or carry through any place
- 2) to carry different ways

2a) to carry in **different** directions, to different places

2a1) of people who are carried hither and thither in a ship, driven to and fro

2b) **to differ**, to test, prove, the good things that differ

2b1) to **distinguish between good and evil**, lawful and unlawful, to approve of things that excel, to differ from one

2b2) to excel, surpass one

2c) impersonally, it makes a difference, it matters, is of importance

**Note:** Preferred translation: “distinguishing between things that differ”

“ being instructed out of the Law” κατηχουμενος εκ του νομου

This is the reason they could make the distinctions. However, historically we see that the Sages tended to interpret the text of Torah **in a manner that supported their particular bent** (not unlike “christian” theologians and commentators).

The midrash used a hermeneutic (either the art of interpretation, or the theory and practice of interpretation) that often overshadowed the meaning of the text.

“ and persuading yourself to be a guide of blind ones, a light to those in darkness, ”

Isa 42:6-7 LITV I, Jehovah, have called You in righteousness, and will hold Your hand, and will keep You, and give You for a covenant of the people, for a Light of the nations; (7) to open blind eyes, to lead out the prisoner from the prison; those who sit in darkness from the prison.

**But**

Mat 15:12-14 LITV Then coming, the disciples said to Him, You know that hearing the Word, the Pharisees were offended? (13) But answering, He said, Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted shall be rooted up. (14) Leave them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind; and if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit.

TH points out the irony in that Israel, in forsaking Torah, “made herself the goal rather than G-d and His Messiah.

Note that in this passage the focus is on the Jews themselves – spiritual pride? This is not a fault limited to just the “jews” we see it in the “church” as well.

Rom 2:20 LITV an instructor of foolish ones, a teacher of infants, having the form of knowledge and of the truth in the Law.

- instructor (corrector) of foolish:
- a teacher of infants (immature)
- having the form of knowledge and of the truth in the Law

“The treasure of Torah is in the hands of Israel, and the selfish attachment which Israel made to the Torah as being her own light rather than the light of G-d she was to share with the world.” TH

## Five Key Confrontations

Rom 2:21-23 LITV

- Then the one teaching another, do you not teach yourself?
- The one preaching not to steal, do you steal?

Rom 2:22 LITV

- The one saying not to commit adultery, do you commit adultery?
- The one detesting the idols, do you rob temples?

Rom 2:23 LITV

- You who boast in Law, do you dishonor God through transgression of the Law?

