

The Religious and Their Need for the Gospel
Romans 2:17-29

“There are those who are attached to form, ceremony, liturgy, religious precepts and practices, and all the attitudes that go with such attachment, and who are yet alien to the grace of God. They have ritual without redemption, works without worship, form of service without the fear of God in its proper sense, and thus they come under the condemnation of God.

It makes no difference what name they go by, the principle is the same. In the day the New Testament was written the argument was against the religious Jews. Today it would be against zealous Roman Catholics of the fervent Fundamentalist just as much as it was against the Jew in Paul’s day. The profession of religion, even though it be divinely revealed religion, is not enough if the one who professed the religion is not in some sense transformed by it.” Donald Grey Barnhouse

- I. Paul explains in chapters one and two of Romans man’s reasoning for not believing in the true gospel of Jesus Christ. First, they love sin more than God’s truth, so they suppress his truth and ignore him (Rom. 1:18-32). Second, they make their own system of morality thinking that whatever they do is not near as bad as what others do, therefore who needs repentance (Rom. 2:1-16). And third, they embrace religion to make them feel spiritual and in right standing before God (Rom. 2:17-29).
 - A. Religion is defined as “a personal set or institutionalized system of religious attitudes, beliefs, and practices: a cause, principle, or system of beliefs held to with ardor and faith” (Merriam-Webster). A person can be ardently religious, but still go to hell because of their refusal to **fully embrace** the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Rom. 2:17- 20

- B. A person can be ardently religious, but still suppress the truth of the gospel by not receiving a righteousness that comes from faith in the gospel of his Son. The result is a lifestyle and heart attitude that blasphemes God before others.

Rom. 2:21-24

Exodus 20:3-4

Rom. 2:1-4

- II. Religion doesn't change the heart. It can only be changed through the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit upon salvation. The true sign of the circumcision of the heart is seen in having a relationship with Jesus that is shown in humble obedience to his commands, without an inkling of any kind of spiritual superiority over others.

Rom. 2:25-29

Gen. 17:10-14

1 Samuel 16:7 *"Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."*