

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, April 1, 2012

Passage: Romans 2:17-24

Memory Passage: Romans 8:11

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Rom. 2:17-24 & Rom. 5.** Romans 2:17-29 is a section of Scripture in which Paul discusses what it means to be a true Jew. We will examine it over 2 sermons, but notice the connection between v. 17, “But if you call yourself a Jew . . .” and vs. 28 & 29, “For no one is a Jew who . . . But a Jew is one . . .” Let’s answer some standard contextual questions first: How does this text connect with what has preceded? With what follows? What is the specific relationship between vs. 17-24 & 25-29? How does it advance the argument Paul is making from 1:18-3:20?

(b) Is Paul intending to be sarcastic by listing the privileges in vs. 17-20 (e.g. “you *claim* to rely on the law, and all you do is brag about God, but . . .”), or are these genuine privileges the Jew possessed over the Gentile? Now consider your answer, and explain how this interpretation fits the context of vs. 17-24 (remember that Paul is using diatribe, a literary device in which, among other things, he posits objections from an imaginary opponent, in this case a Jew, and answers these objections).

(c) Write down any questions you have about vs. 17-24. Be ready to share these in class on Sunday, either with answers you find throughout the coming week, or as questions for which you still have no answer.

(d) *Family:* Tell your family that you are going to continue your study of Romans using diatribe (a literary device which includes anticipating & answering objections of one’s hearers as if the objectors were actually speaking aloud). You might say something like, “Tonight we are going to continue our study of Romans. You might think we have been in Romans forever, but it has really only been about 3 months, and you might also be thinking that Romans is a little confusing, but that is why we are studying it!” Then explain that you tried to answer possible objections during your introduction, and Paul is doing the same thing in Romans 2:17-29: He is answering possible Jewish objections to Paul’s statements about all men & women being judged by God. **Read Rom. 2:17-20**, and then re-read it inserting statements like, “But Paul, I am a Jew, I rely totally on the law and boast only in God . . . and therefore you just can’t be correct in saying that I will be judged by God!” List on your whiteboard (& save for day 4) all the privileges the Jews have, and explain that you will be examining them this week.

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Rom. 2:17-24, Jer. 9:23-24 & Rom. 6.** How should a good Jew “rely on the law?” Was it arrogant or humble for a Jew to “boast in the Lord?” (Note that Paul quotes Jer. 9:23-24 in 1 Cor. 1:31 & 2 Cor. 10:17).

(b) Paul is speaking of the privileges of the Jews and saying that all of these privileges bring with them more responsibility to obey God, and since they are not obeying God they stand accountable in light of the light they possessed. If Paul were talking to the Bible Church of Cabot he might have said, “But if you call yourself a Christian and rely on the Scriptures and boast in God . . .” What would be his message to us (see vs. 23-24)? Would lost people around you say, “You call yourself a Christian, but because of the way you live your life I think your God is a sham!” or would they say, “You call yourself a Christian and because of the way you live your life I want to know more about what that means!”

(c) Though it is easy to say, “I rely on the Scriptures,” in what ways does your life reflect this truth? In what ways does it discount this truth? When you bring the truth of Scripture to those around you, including your children, are they predisposed to listen to what you have to say because the same Scriptures you teach affect the way you live your life?

(d) What about boasting? Is your boast in yourself & your abilities or in the Lord and His provision & sustenance? In what ways is your “boasting in God” encouraging those around you to rely on Him? How much more do you say sentences that begin, “I did/accomplished/provided . . .” than sentences that begin “God did/accomplished/provided . . .”

(e) *Family:* **Read Rom. 2:17-24** and lead your family through a discussion of (b), (c), & (d) above. Use examples from your own life, both wise & foolish, both God-centered & self-centered, to illustrate and encourage discussion.

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Rom. 2:17-24 & Rom. 7.** According to v. 18, how do Jews, “know (God’s) will and approve what is excellent?” How are *you* to, “know God’s will and approve what is excellent” (see Rom. 12:2)? Even though v. 18 is true of the Jews, how would their individual lives “dishonor God by breaking the law” (v. 23) in these areas? In what ways is your life in need of improvement with regard to “knowing God’s will” & “approving what is excellent” because you are instructed in the Scriptures? What strategies will you implement today to aid in your sanctification in these areas?

(b) Paul is clearly stating that the Jews were, as a matter of fact, instructed in the law (v. 18). In what ways are you instructed in the Scriptures? In what ways are you involved in instructing others in the Scriptures? In what ways do you intentionally make sure you are ready to receive & obey what you are taught from the Scriptures?

(c) *Family: Read Rom. 2:17-18 & 12:2.* Tie these 2 passages together by instructing your family how to know God's will and approve what is excellent by being transformed through renewing our minds with Scripture. Bring practical examples that will be easy for each member of your family to apply to their daily life.

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Rom. 2:17-24, Is. 2:1-4, 42:6-7, & 49:6.** Were the Jews correct in thinking of themselves as “guide(s) to the blind and a light to those who are in darkness” as well as “instructor(s) of the foolish and teacher(s) of children?” On what basis do you form your answer? In what ways were they failing in this calling and guilty of Paul's assessment in vs. 23-24?

(b) In what ways are NT believers guides, lights, instructors, & teachers of the nations? In what ways are you faithful to fulfill this mandate (cf. Matt. 28:19-20)? In what ways will you more faithfully fulfill this mandate starting tomorrow?

(c) Is Paul in the second half of v. 20 spelling out another privilege of the Jews or summarizing all he has said so far? What does this sweeping statement about the law mean for Jews who are guilty of denying all the privileges mentioned in vs. 17-20 (and we know they are guilty, because this is Paul's point!)? What does this truth mean for you as you witness, teach, and obey the gospel in your daily life?

(d) *Family:* Return to the list of privileges you made on your white board on Day 1 and review them with your family, assessing their understanding of both Paul's claims against the Jews and your family's application of the same principles.

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Rom. 2:17-24, Deut. 7:25-26, & Isaiah 52:1-6.** In 2:21-23 Paul says, “So you have all of these privileges, and yet you don't learn what you teach others (v. 21a) or obey what you know (vs. 21b-23)!” Of what is Paul accusing the Jews in 22b? Is he speaking metaphorically or do they actually rob temples? How does the context inform your answer? How does Deut. 7:25-26 inform your answer?

(b) Verse 23 sums up Paul's argument, and v. 24 says the Jews are fulfilling Is. 52:5. What is the context of Is. 52:1-6? Who is causing God's name to be despised, and why? Who is causing God's name to be blasphemed in Rom. 2 and why? How do you explain this difference when Paul writes, “As it is written” in 2:24 and says the current situation in Rome fulfills Is. 52:5?

(c) Think of your own life, the life of your family, and the life of the Bible Church and answer the following 3 questions for all 3: (1) In what ways do you/your family/BCC “boast in the law” and yet “dishonor God by breaking the law” and therefore cause “the name of God (to be) blasphemed among the Gentiles?” (2) In what ways do you/your family/BCC live so that lost people around you/us “see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 5:13-16)? (3) Write down several ways you can lead yourself, your family & your church to move from the disobedience of question (1) to the obedience of question (2).

(d) *Family: Read Matt. 5:13-16* and teach your family these verses, drawing attention to the “light” idea found both here and in Rom. 2:19. Press the fact that we have God's word (just as the Jews had the law), and as we are obedient to it in our daily lives we become both salt (preserving and seasoning our culture) and light (preaching & reflecting God, His character, and the gospel of Jesus to the darkness around us) and when lost people see our obedience (good works) they will give glory to God! Make a list of ways that your family can increase its influence by being obedient to the Scriptures in your daily lives.

DATE: April 1, 2012

PASSAGE: Romans 2:17-24

Who Is the True Jew? (Part I)

In Romans 2:17-29 Paul identifies 2 marks of a true Jew and shows that a true Jew is one who possesses true inward change not mere outward privilege.