



¹¹ For God shows no partiality. ¹² For 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. ¹³ (For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified. ¹⁴ For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. ¹⁵ They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them) ¹⁶ on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus. (ESV – *parenthesis added*).

3 mistakes people make when interpreting the parenthesis

- Is Paul, based on verse 13, teaching that the man who keeps the law is justified by that?
- Is Paul saying that the Mosaic law is written on the hearts of all pagans?
- Is Paul saying that the Gentiles, who have never heard the gospel, can, and do, save themselves, by living up to the light (excellent moral teaching) they have?

Paul is not teaching about the justification of either Gentile or Jew. What is he teaching?

Can anyone actually keep the law and thereby be justified? (Rom. 3:10, 19, 20, 23)

Verse 13 tells us *what the law demands* not what anyone does. How does this accord with someone who says, “I will go to heaven. I am a good person. I have lived a good life. I do good. I am highly moral.” (Rom. 10:5)

What is this law? (Matthew 22:36-39)

To the foolish and ignorant Jew who thinks he has kept the law and will therefore be justified... (James 2:8-11)

Verse 14 tells us that the Gentiles may *do* some of the things the law requires, but not all. They are no more capable of fulfilling the law than the Jews. If you offend in one point, you have offended in all. Man’s flesh is too weak. He cannot keep the law. (Rom. 3:20; 8:3)

Verse 15 says, the *work of the law* is written on their hearts, *not the law of Moses*. They understand do not murder, nor commit adultery, nor steal. The 1st great obligation of the law though is to God. They understand God as Creator, but have no knowledge of His Person, His character, or His being. They do not have that, so of course they could not have the law of Moses written on their hearts!

If the law was written on their hearts, they would have a knowledge of the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-33; Heb. 8:10)!

All Paul is claiming is that the Gentiles have a certain moral sense and moral consciousness.

The light that the Jew has is the law of the law given through Moses – and none of them live up to it.

The light that the Gentile has is this moral consciousness – and none of them live up to that either.

If we say we can save ourselves by living up to this light, then there is no need for the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. He need not have ever left heaven, nor come into the world, nor died on a cross on Calvary’s hill.

There is no salvation outside of Christ (1 Tim. 2:5)