



¹⁷ But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God ¹⁸ and know his will and approve what is excellent, because you are instructed from the law; ¹⁹ and if you are sure that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, ²⁰ an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth— ²¹ you then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? ²² You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? ²³ You who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law. ²⁴ For, as it is written, “The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.” ²⁵ For circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law, but if you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision. ²⁶ So, if a man who is uncircumcised keeps the precepts of the law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? ²⁷ Then he who is physically uncircumcised but keeps the law will condemn you who have the written code and circumcision but break the law. ²⁸ For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. ²⁹ But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God. (ESV).

You are not done preaching until you apply your teaching (17-29)

Practice what you preach! (James 3:1)

The general characteristics of hypocrisy

- A general and theoretical and intellectual interest in the truth
 - The Jews enjoyed a good argument on the law.
 - Today people love a good argument about religion or theology as long as it is purely intellectual.
- Complacency
 - Self-satisfied, pleased with himself, and never aware of any deficiencies in himself
 - No humility (Luke 18:11)
- Never examines himself
 - He relies on the law and makes his boast in God
 - He is not aware of his sin and believes he is doing wonderful things and God is quite pleased with him.
 - He does not preach to himself (v. 21)

Do you apply the truths of the Bible to yourself? What is your motive in reading the Bible? Are you showing off your knowledge to win arguments? Do you allow the Scripture to search you?

Verse 24: The Gentiles were judging God by what they saw in the Jews. How would a ‘Gentile’ judge God if he were observing you? People judge not only God and Christ by you, they judge the truth of God in the same way. How do they see you when you are ill, when a loved one is ill, when you have lost a job, when there is trouble in the family, when someone you love is going to die?

You tell others they are in the dark and you have this marvelous revelation. Do you act like it? Do you act like a follower of Jesus only when the sun is shining? When they see you, do they see you holding on to the promises we read in Scripture (John 4:13-14)?



They judge the power of God by what they see in us (v. 24 taken from the Septuagint Isaiah 52:5). See also Ezekiel 36:20-23.

The children of Israel were defeated and taken into captivity because of their sin. God allowed the enemy to defeat them as part of their chastisement. But the Gentiles don't see it this way, do they? How about us? When you are suffering trials, does the world say, 'Look at that miserable Christian!' (Heb. 12:6)

The world looks at us and says, 'What sort of God would leave his people in such misery, defeated by circumstances and trials?' And so, we dishonor God and bring His name into disrepute, just as the Jews did.

Verse 25 - So, the argument for salvation based upon the law is defeated. What about circumcision? After all, it was given through Abraham and predates the law (Gal. 3:17).

How can the Jew be under the wrath of God? He has the sign and the seal of circumcision!

Paul answers with verse 25. Circumcision is an outward sign of something inward.

Verse 26 – Hypothetically, if a Gentile man were to keep the law, he would be holy and one of God's people. *Being circumcised or uncircumcised is immaterial. God wants holy people.*

Verse 27 – The Gentile, who keeps the law, lives to the spirit of the law, though he doesn't have the written law and so puts the Jew who has the written codified law to shame, because the Jew merely has possession of the law, but has not kept the law.

Verses 28-29 – What makes a man a Jew is not that he belongs to a particular nation, it is internal, a matter of the heart and spirit. The same holds true for circumcision. Being a Jew and circumcision are signs of inward grace, merely external, given to help the people.

The Pharisees loved their external displays (Luke 16:15).

What makes a man a Jew is his **relationship** to God, and nothing appeals to God except holiness (Heb. 12:14; Mt. 5:8).

Does church attendance, baptism, the eucharist (sacrament of the Lord's Supper), make you a Christian? No more than circumcision makes a Jew holy.

The law can't save, circumcision can't save, belief in the gospel can't save, your faith can't save. Is there fruit in your life? Is there proof of the divine existence within you? The inward reality must be present. These things are just signs. Only Jesus Christ can save.

You can believe, teach, and preach to others, be highly moral, and well versed in Scripture and be damned. You must be born again! Examine yourself! (1 Cor. 11:28-32)