

## Notes on the Greek New Testament Day 195 – July 14<sup>th</sup> – Romans 2:1-24

### Works frequently referenced in these notes on Romans

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- Dunn, JDG      *Romans*, Word Biblical Commentary Vols 38A, 38B, Dallas, Word, 1988.
- Moo, Douglas, J      *Romans: The NIV Application Commentary*, Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2000.
- Murray, John      *The Epistle to the Romans*, 2 Vols, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1959 & 1965.
- Wright, NT      *The Letter to The Romans*, The New Interpreter's Bible, Vol 10, Nashville, Abingdon Press, 2002.

#### Romans 2:1-11

Paul shifts from using third person plural verbs to second person singular. "In fact, Paul here begins to use a popular ancient literary form, in which a speaker or writer instructs his audience by letting them listen in on a discussion between himself and the representative of another viewpoint." (Moo). Some (e.g. Calvin), think Paul has in mind educated pagans who thought themselves superior to others, but most think Paul is now beginning to address Jews (so Murray and Moo). Moo writes, "By the time Paul writes Romans, he has been preaching the gospel for at least twenty-two years. He knows exactly how people will respond to the various points he makes. How often must Paul have condemned the Gentiles for their sin only to note Jews in the audience joining in with his criticism and priding themselves on being far superior to them. Thus, we can almost see Paul at the beginning of chapter 2 fixing his gaze on these self-satisfied Jews and blasting them in the same way he has condemned the Gentiles..." "To be sure, Paul does not directly address his 'opponent' as a Jew until 2:17. But the language he uses in verses 1-5 points unmistakably to a Jewish situation. Paul has shown in 1:21-32 that Gentiles have suppressed the truth that God revealed to them in nature and that they therefore have 'no excuse' before God. He now begins to show that Jews also suppress the truth God has given them and that they, too, are 'without excuse.'"

Moo suggests that there are strong parallels between Romans 1:21-32 and Wisdom of Solomon 12:23-14:31. In reading the latter part of the first chapter the Gentile Christians among the church at Rome may have been "upset that Paul, apostle to the Gentiles, repeats the standard Jewish diatribe about Gentiles" while the Jewish Christians may have been "tempted to gloat... But the reaction of both groups takes a dramatic turn when they begin reading Romans 2."

#### Verse 1

Διὸ ἀναπολόγητος εἶ, ὃ ἄνθρωπε πᾶς ὁ κρῖνων· ἐν ᾧ γὰρ κρίνεις τὸν ἕτερον, σεαυτὸν κατακρίνεις, τὰ γὰρ αὐτὰ πράσσεις ὁ κρῖνων·  
 διο therefore, for this reason

διο can be taken with what precedes or with what follows. If the latter, it means in effect, 'for this reason (which I will now give you)...' Moo suggests it points *back* particularly to the universal indictment of 1:18-20, "Jews are without excuse because they are, along with all people, guilty of suppressing the truth."

ἀναπολόγητος, ον without excuse  
 ὃ O!  
 κρινω judge, condemn  
 ἕτερος, α, ον other, another, different  
 σεαυτου, ης reflexive pronoun yourself  
 κατακρινω condemn, pass judgement on  
 πρασσω see 1:32

The basic charge here, which is applied chiefly to the Jews, is that of hypocrisy: failure to recognise in themselves the sins they condemn in others. Not that idolatry or homosexuality were common among Jews in the first century, but they did commit many of the sins Paul lists in 1:29-31.

**Verse 2**

οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστὶν κατὰ ἀλήθειαν ἐπὶ τοὺς τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντας.

οἶδα (verb perf in form but with present meaning) know, understand

Some MSS read οἶδαμεν γὰρ rather than οἶδαμεν δε. Metzger argues that δε is both better supported and better fits the context – δε implies a new point whereas γὰρ would imply continuation of the previous point.

κρίμα, τος n judgement, verdict  
ἀληθεια, ας f truth, reality

God's judgment corresponds with the reality of the situation. "There is no hiding place at the last assize." Wright.

τοιουτος, αυτη, ουτον correlative pronoun and adjective such, of such kind, similar

**Verse 3**

λογίζη δὲ τοῦτο, ὃ ἄνθρωπε ὁ κρίνων τοὺς τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντας καὶ ποιῶν αὐτά, ὅτι σὺ ἐκφεύξῃ τὸ κρίμα τοῦ θεοῦ;

λογίζομαι reckon, calculate,  
ὦ O!

ἐκφεύξῃ Verb, fut midd dep indic, 2 s  
ἐκφευγω escape, flee, run away

The impossibility of escape rests on the fact of God's righteous judgement (v.2).

**Verse 4**

ἢ τοῦ πλούτου τῆς χρηστότητος αὐτοῦ καὶ τῆς ἀνοχῆς καὶ τῆς μακροθυμίας καταφρονεῖς, ἄγνοῶν ὅτι τὸ χρηστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς μετάνοιάν σε ἄγει;

ἢ or

πλουτος, ου m & n riches, wealth  
χρηστοτης, ητος f kindness, goodness,  
mercy

ἀνοχη, ης f forbearance, tolerance

Only here and 3:25.

μακροθυμια, ας f longsuffering, patience

God is not quick to judge (see Neh 9:17) but that does not mean he will not judge.

καταφρονεω despise, treat with contempt  
ἀγνοεω not know, be ignorant, fail to understand

χρηστος, η, ον kind, loving, good; το χ. kindness

μετανοια, ας f repentance, change of heart, change of way

See 2 Peter 3:9. Paul here opposes a view current among any Jews that their election delivered them from God's wrath. "God's kindness, Paul says, was intended to lead 'you toward repentance.' Instead, apparently, the Jews were regarding it as a carte blanche to sin with impunity. As a result, concludes the apostle, the Jews are 'storing up wrath' against themselves, a wrath that will be inflicted on the day of God's coming righteous judgment (v.5)." Moo.

**Verse 5**

κατὰ δὲ τὴν σκληρότητά σου καὶ ἀμετανόητον καρδίαν θησαυρίζεις σεαυτῷ ὀργὴν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὀργῆς καὶ ἀποκαλύψεως δικαιοκρισίας τοῦ θεοῦ,

σκληροτης, ητος f hardness

ἀμετανοητος, ον unrepentant, obstinate

God's longsuffering should melt the heart into repentance, but here it is spoken of as having the opposite effect of hardening the unrepentant heart.

θησαυρίζω store up, save, put aside  
σεαυτου, ης see v.1

ὀργη, ης f wrath, anger

The passage of time does not make the prospect of judgement less likely but rather heaps up the weight of judgement to come.

ἀποκαλυψις, εως f revelation

δικαιοκρισια, ας f righteous judgement

**Verses 6-11**

Paul makes the point that God assesses Jews and Gentiles on the same basis. The structure is chiasmic – A B C C' B' A'. The main point is in the opening and closing statements (A=v.6, A'=v.11)

**Verse 6**

ὃς ἀποδώσει ἐκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ·

ἀποδιδωμι give, give back, repay

ἐκαστος, η, ον each, every

Paul is quoting from the OT, cf. Prov 24:12 also Ps 62:12; Eccles 1:14; Hos 12:2. Moo considers the various views on whether, in this and the following verses, Paul is affirming salvation by works. He hesitantly endorses the view of Murray to the effect that, "Paul may not be referring to anyone in particular. His purpose here is to enunciate the basis on which, outside of Christ, God judges people. Whether anyone actually persists in good works adequately enough to earn salvation Paul simply does not say. His subsequent argument reveals that, in fact, no one can do so (see 3:9, 20)."

Wright comments, "This deep-rooted Jewish tradition is not denied by Paul, but rather celebrated. If one of the purposes of the letter is to show that God's justice upstages that of Caesar and Rome, we could expect nothing less. We must reserve for a later point the important question of how this final judgment according to works, described as 'justification' in v. 13, relates to the 'justification by faith' spoken of in chap. 3 and elsewhere."

### Verse 7

τοῖς μὲν καθ' ὑπομονὴν ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν ζητοῦσιν ζωὴν αἰώνιον·

ὑπομονη, ης f patience, endurance  
ἀγαθος, η, ον good, useful, fitting

'To those that by patience in good work seek glory and ...'

δόξα, ης f glory

Cf. 5:2; 8:18,21,30.

τιμη, ης f honour, respect, price  
ἀφθαρσια, ας f imperishability, immortality  
ζητεω seek, search for, look for  
ζωη, ης f life

"Works without redemptive aspiration are dead works. Aspiration without good works is presumption." Murray.

### Verse 8

τοῖς δὲ ἐξ ἐριθείας καὶ ἀπειθοῦσι τῇ ἀληθείᾳ πειθομένοις δὲ τῇ ἀδικίᾳ ὀργὴ καὶ θυμός,

ἐριθεια, ας f selfishness, selfish ambition

There is some debate over the meaning of this word. Murray argues that its meaning is 'contention' and that the thought is that of rebellion against God. Most, however, understand it to mean concern for personal gain (self-seeking):

ἐριθος a hireling

ἐριθευειν act as a hireling

ἐριθεια the mind of a hireling

ἀπειθεω disobey, be an unbeliever

ἀληθεια, ας f truth, reality

πειθω pass obey, be a follower of

ἀδικια, ας f wrongdoing, evil, sin

ὀργη see v.5.

θυμος, ου m anger, rage, fury

Emphasises the intensity of God's wrath.

### Verse 9

θλίψις καὶ στενοχωρία, ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ψυχὴν ἀνθρώπου τοῦ κατεργαζομένου τὸ κακόν, Ἰουδαίου τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλλήνου·

θλιψις, εως f trouble, suffering

στενοχωρια, ας f distress, trouble

ψυχη, ης f 'soul', living being, person

κατεργαζομαι do, accomplish

κακος, η, ον evil, bad, wrong, harm

πρωτον adv. first, first of all

Ἑλληνη, ης f a Greek, non-Jew

Cf. 1:16. The priority of the Jew applies to judgment and condemnation as well as to salvation.

### Verse 10

δόξα δὲ καὶ τιμὴ καὶ εἰρήνη παντὶ τῷ ἐργαζομένῳ τὸ ἀγαθόν, Ἰουδαίου τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλληνι·

δοξα δε και τιμη cf. v.7

ειρηνη, ης f peace

The Semitic concept of peace, Shalom, here replaces the Greek ἀφθαρσια of verse 7.

ἐργαζομαι work, do, perform

ἀγαθος, η, ον good, useful, fitting

### Verse 11

οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν προσωπολημψία παρὰ τῷ θεῷ.

προσωπολημψια, ας f favouritism, treating one person better than another

### Verse 12

Ὅσοι γὰρ ἀνόμως ἤμαρτον, ἀνόμως καὶ ἀπολοῦνται· καὶ ὅσοι ἐν νόμῳ ἤμαρτον, διὰ νόμου κριθήσονται·

Paul now turns to the topic of the law.

ὅσος, η, ον as much as; pl. as many as, all

ἀνομως adv without the (Jewish) law

I.e. Gentiles.

ἁμαρτανω sin, commit sin

ἀπολλυμι destroy; midd perish, die

There is no support for the notion that ignorance of the law may excuse sin.

κρινω judge, pass judgement on, condemn

"The law is no talisman calculated to preserve those who possess it, it is an instrument of judgment." Barrett. The reason is provided in v.13.

### Verse 13

οὐ γὰρ οἱ ἀκροαταὶ νόμου δίκαιοι παρὰ τῷ θεῷ, ἀλλ' οἱ ποιηταὶ νόμου δικαιοθήσονται.

ἀκροατης, ου m hearer

δικαιος, α, ον righteous, just

ποιητης, ου m one who does or carries out, doer

δικαιω justify, acquit, declare & treat as righteous

"Whether or not there are such perfect ποιηται του νομου the apostle does not say in this passage, but only opposes the true standard to the false standard of the Jews that ἀκροαται του νομου are just before God. The entire reasoning of the Roman epistle tends to this conclusion, that no man is by nature such a ποιητης του νομου, or can be." Philippi. Cf. the note from Moo at v.6. Wright comments, "It will take him [Paul] eight or ten more chapters to explain finally what he means by 'doing' Torah, and we must follow the argument through to understand him at that point (see on 8:1-4; 10:5-11). For the moment, he is content to assert the point: Israel's ethnic privilege, backed up by possession of Torah, will be of no avail at the final judgment if Israel has not kept Torah. Justification, at the last, will be on the basis of performance, not possession."

#### Verses 14-15

It is perhaps best to link vv 14-15 to v.12 (so Calvin, Hodge, Murray, Moo) and regard it as providing the answer to the question arising from v.12, namely: If the Gentiles are without the law how can they be regarded as having sinned? For "Where there is no law there is no transgression" (4:15; 5:13).

Wright considers the various interpretations of vv.14-15. On the one hand are those who suggest that Paul is putting up a purely hypothetical case which in has no genuine exemplars. On the other hand there are those who suggest that Paul did not really believe in the universality of human sin. Wright thinks both these options untenable and adds, "The third way though is that, just as in chapter 1 Paul was hinting at Jews sharing in the judgment that would fall on pagans, a theme waiting to be explored more fully in due course, so here he is hinting at a theme he will explore later in the letter, namely that the people in question are *Christian* Gentiles (vv. 14-15) – indeed, Christian Jews and Gentiles alike (vv. 7,10). There are problems with this reading, too, but they are not so insuperable as sometimes supposed."

"... Paul's view, to anticipate the later argument, is that those who are in Christ, who are indwelt by the Spirit, do in fact 'do the law,' even though, in the case of Gentiles, they have never heard of it. The law, in Paul's view, pointed to that fullness of life and obedience to God which comes about in the Messiah; those who attain that fullness of life and obedience are therefore 'doing the Torah' in the senses that, to Paul, really matter. He is well aware that this is really paradoxical, but well aware also that to say anything else would be to imply, which he never does, either that the Torah was a bad thing, now happily left behind, or that Gentile Christians are second-class citizens in the kingdom of the Messiah. He will have it both ways; they are not under the Torah, but at the same time they are essentially doing what Torah really wanted."

#### Verse 14

ὅταν γὰρ ἔθνη τὰ μὴ νόμον ἔχοντα φύσει τὰ τοῦ νόμου ποιῶσιν, οὗτοι νόμον μὴ ἔχοντες ἑαυτοῖς εἰσιν νόμος·

ὅταν when, whenever, as often as  
ἔθνη Noun, nom & acc pl ἔθνος, οὐς n  
nation, people; τα ἔ. Gentiles  
φύσει Noun, dat s φύσις, εως f nature,  
natural condition

Wright links φύσει to the words preceding it rather than following it. Paul is speaking about Gentiles who, in the nature of the case, do not have the Torah.

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/her/itself

"Their moral nature, with its voice of conscience commanding and forbidding, supplies to their own Ego the place of the revealed law possessed by the Jews." Meyer. "For the Greeks, the 'natural law' or 'unwritten law' was an important idea, establishing the basis for universal moral norms and for the 'positive' law enacted in the city-states. The Stoics, a school of philosophers influential in Paul's day, rooted this law in nature. Jews familiar with this tradition then used *physis* in a similar way to demonstrate the universal applicability of the moral standards found in the law of Moses. Paul clearly reflects this tradition in 2:14, and first-century readers would immediately have understood that he was endorsing this widespread tradition about the unwritten universal moral law." Moo. These are an example of 'doers of the law' who are not 'hearers' of it.

**Verse 15**

οἵτινες ἐνδείκνυνται τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου  
 γραπτὸν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν,  
 συμμαρτυροῦσης αὐτῶν τῆς συνειδήσεως καὶ  
 μεταξύ ἀλλήλων τῶν λογισμῶν  
 κατηγορούντων ἢ καὶ ἀπολογουμένων,

οἵτινες Pronoun, m nom pl ὅστις, ἥτις, ὅ τι  
 who, which

Here, bears the sense of "These ... "

ἐνδεικνυμαι show, give indication of, do  
 γραπτος, η, ον written, inscribed

Murray points out that it is not the law which is written on their hearts (a phrase used of the believer) but the *works* of the law. John Owen suggests that this is the remnant or remaining spark of 'inbred law' which was present in unfallen man and is renewed in the Christian. Wright, however, reads this as the fulfilment of the new covenant promise of Jeremiah 31:33 etc., adding, "Paul clearly believed, and elaborated this at various points, that the covenant had been renewed, according to this promise, through Jesus, and that this renewal was being implemented by the Spirit in those who were 'in Christ.' This phrase is a further indication that he has Christian Gentiles in mind."

συμμαρτυρεω show to be true, give  
 evidence in support of  
 συνειδησις, εως f conscience, awareness  
 μεταξύ prep with gen between, among  
 ἀλληλων, οις, ους one another  
 λογισμος, ου m thought, reasoning

μεταξυ ἀλληλων των λογισμων 'among their various/conflicting thoughts' either within one person or between one Gentile and another. The reference to conscience suggest the former (so Barrett).

κατηγορεω accuse, bring charges against  
 ἢ οἱ  
 ἀπολογεομαι defend oneself, excuse

**Verse 16**

ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὅτε κρίνει ὁ θεὸς τὰ κρυπτὰ τῶν  
 ἀνθρώπων κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου διὰ  
 Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ.

This verse seems not to follow on simply from verse 15, but to look back to verses 13 or 12 (so NIV which treats vv. 14 and 15 as a parenthesis) and to the main argument of this whole section, cf. v.5. However, Moo suggests "It is better to take verse 16 with the final verbs in verse 15. The constant self-criticism of the Gentiles finds its ultimate meaning in the judgment of God at the end of history. That judgment, Paul affirms, takes place 'through Jesus Christ,' whom God has appointed as the arbiter (see, e.g., 'the judgment seat of Christ' in 2 Cor 5:10). This Christologically oriented judgment is fully in accord with the gospel Paul preaches." (So also Barrett.)

Wright comments, "God's justice will be revealed, fulfilling scriptural promises and putting all other justice (Caesar's included) to shame. Why so? Not least precisely because this revelation will expose and assess the secrets of all human hearts. Just as Jews cannot hide from the judgment by pleading their Jewishness, so no human can hide from the judgment by relying on outward appearances and covering up the secrets of the heart."

ὅτε conj when, at which time  
 κρυπτος, η, ον hidden, secret, private

These inner conflicts (v.15) and judgments are now made public and are ratified by the judge of all the earth.

εὐαγγελιον, ου n good news, gospel

The proclamation of God's judgement is also an aspect of the Gospel, cf. 1:18.

**Verses 17-29**

The remainder of this chapter focusses on the two distinctives of Judaism: possession of the law, vv. 17-24; and circumcision, vv. 25-29. "In discussing their value in these verses, then, Paul is discussing the ultimate value of being Jewish." Moo.

Wright comments, "We now arrive at the point to which the whole section has been building up. Israel, resting on God's special vocation, has not fulfilled that vocation, and must face the challenge from those who, though not ethically Jewish, are now inheriting Israel's role in God's purposes..."

"The passage, then, is not simply part of a long demonstration that all humans are sinful. That is indeed one of the major thrusts of the section 1:18-3:20, but within that overarching purpose these verses introduce a quite different idea. Faced with a general denunciation of the pagan world, many educated Jews – including, presumably, Paul himself in his pre-Christian life – would say that this is of course true of pagans, but that God has chosen Israel as the light to the nations and has given Israel the Torah so that it can fulfil this role. Israel is the solution to the world's plight (see, among countless possible examples, 2 Bar 48:20-24). The problem he is outlining at this point in the argument, and to which he will offer a solution in the section beginning at 3:21, is not simply that all are sinful and in need of salvation, but that the bearers of the solution have become part of the problem. Israel, called to be the light of the world, has become part of the darkness. How then can God's covenant plan be fulfilled? The problem of Israel is thus also a problem for God. It is, in fact, a further dimension of God's righteousness. Only if we appreciate this will the transition from chapter 2 to chapter 3 make sense."

### Verse 17

Εἰ δὲ σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ἐπονομάζη καὶ ἐπαναπαύῃ νόμῳ καὶ καυχᾶσαι ἐν θεῷ

The TR, following most minuscules, reads Ἴδε σὺ rather than Εἰ δε σὺ; the latter text is strongly supported.

ἐπονομάζομαι call oneself

Ἰουδαῖος "The term *Jew* originally referred to a person from the region occupied by the descendants of Judah, but it was applied generally to Israelite people after the exile. By Paul's day, the term was widely used in this more general sense. The name signified that one belonged to that people, distinct from all others, whom God had chosen to be his own. All other benefits flow from this fundamental one." Moo. Paul returns to this theme in vv 28-29 when he defines what really constitutes a Jew – i.e. what really makes someone a member of the people of God.

ἐπαναπαυομαι rest upon, rely on

"It is a matter of finding security and comfort, not a matter of using the Torah as a ladder of good works, up which to climb to a position of moral superiority or a self-earned salvation. The attitude Paul describes would say: 'God gave Israel the Torah; our possession of it is the rock on which we stand; it is what makes us Jews God's special people.'" Wright.

καυχᾶσαι Verb, pres midd/pass dep indic, irreg 2 s καυχασμαι boast, boast about, celebrate

Cf. Mic 3:11.

### Verse 18

καὶ γινώσκεις τὸ θέλημα καὶ δοκιμάζεις τὰ διαφέροντα κατηχούμενος ἐκ τοῦ νόμου, θελημα, ατος n will, wish, desire

το θελημα here meaning the revealed will of God – i.e. they knew the Scriptures.

δοκιμαζω test, examine, approve, discern  
διαφερω be worth more than, be superior to

'approve what is superior'

κατηχεω inform, instruct

I.e. and so be in a position to instruct the nations.

### Verse 19

ἐπειθᾶς τε σεαυτὸν ὀδηγὸν εἶναι τυφλῶν, φῶς τῶν ἐν σκότει,

ἐπειθᾶς Verb, perf act indic, 2 s πειθω persuade; perf have confidence, be confident

σεαυτου, ης reflexive pronoun yourself

ὀδηγος, ου m guide, leader

τυφλος, η, ον blind

φως, φωτος n light

σκότει Noun, dat s σκοτος, ους n darkness

It has been suggested that this verse reflects the Servant Songs of Isaiah (cf. Is. 42:6-7; 49:19). Paul seems to be saying that Israel, who considered herself the Servant of the Lord, did not live up to the description given in the Servant Songs.

### Verse 20

παιδευτὴν ἀφρόνων, διδάσκαλον νηπίων, ἔχοντα τὴν μὀρφωσιν τῆς γνώσεως καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας ἐν τῷ νόμῳ –

παιδευτης, ου m teacher, one who disciplines or corrects

ἀφρόνων Adjective, gen pl ἀφρων, ον γεν ονος foolish, ignorant

διδασκαλος, ου m teacher

νηπιος, α, ον baby, infant, child

μορφωσις, εως f outward form,

embodiment

γνωσις, εως f knowledge, understanding

ἀληθεια, ας f truth, reality

"Paul is acknowledging, and endorsing, a remarkably high, almost incarnational, view of Torah, which should be kept in mind during subsequent discussions." Wright.

"Paul breaks off his conditional sentence at the end of 2:20... He does this so that he can get the maximum rhetorical effect from the charge that he now levels against the Jews. By repeating in summary form some of the privileges he listed in verses 17-20, Paul highlights effectively the contrast between claim and reality." Moo.

### Verse 21

ὁ οὖν διδάσκων ἕτερον σεαυτὸν οὐ διδάσκεις;  
ὁ κηρύσσων μὴ κλέπτειν κλέπτεις;

διδασκω teach

ἕτερος, α, ον other, another, different

σεαυτου, ης see v.19

κηρυσσω preach, proclaim

κλεπτω steal

There are two possible ways of interpreting this and the following verse:

- i) Literal – Paul knows of immorality among the Jews and is making the general point that they are no more moral than the Gentiles;
- ii) Metaphorical – they commit heart sins which correspond to the outward sins they condemn in others.

Barrett comments, "When theft, adultery and sacrilege are strictly and radically understood, there is no man who is not guilty of these."

Wright comments, "Remembering that the 'you' in question is not 'every Jewish individual,' but 'Israel as a whole,' the answer must be: Israel has squandered its inheritance. Like the biblical prophets, one of whom he will presently quote, Paul charges Israel with infidelity (see also Ps 50:16-20 and the other passages quoted in 3:10-18)."

### Verse 22

ὁ λέγων μὴ μοιχεύειν μοιχεύεις; ὁ βδελυσσόμενος τὰ εἰδωλα ἱεροσυλεῖς;

μοιχευω commit adultery

βδελυσσομαι detest

εἰδωλον, ου n idol

ἱεροσυλεω commit sacrilege, rob temples

If taken metaphorically, adultery could refer to unfaithfulness to God (cf. Hos 1-3; Jer 3:8 etc.), 'robbing temples' could refer to self-assertion, making oneself God, the ultimate idolatry.

Wright, however, comments, "One is unlikely to demonstrate to the watching pagan world that there is a better way of being human by stealing from pagan temples. This practice, though probably not widespread, was not unknown. Some Jews had evidently used the scriptural polemic against idols to argue that, since idols have no real existence, things given to them are nobody's property, and hence may be taken with impunity. Paul's point is that the practice exists and brings discredit on Israel precisely among the people to whom 'the Jew' is supposed to be acting as a light to the world."

### Verse 23

ὃς ἐν νόμῳ καυχᾶσαι, διὰ τῆς παραβάσεως τοῦ νόμου τὸν θεὸν ἀτιμάζεις;

καυχᾶσαι see v.17

παραβασις, εως f transgression,  
disobedience, sin

ἀτιμαζω treat shamefully, dishonour

This verse is punctuated as a question though many prefer to read it as a statement (punctuation is secondary).

### Verse 24

τὸ γὰρ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ δι' ὑμᾶς βλασφημεῖται ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, καθὼς γέγραπται.

Wright comments, "This opens up the substance of the charge. The real problem is Israel's failure to bring God worldwide honour. That was the purpose for which the Torah had been given. What Israel has done with Torah has instead brought dishonour: the pagan nations scorn the true God on the basis of the behaviour of the covenant people."

ὄνομα, τος n name, person, reputation  
βλασφημεω speak against, slander, insult  
ἔθνεσιν Noun, dat pl ἔθνος, ους n nation; τα  
ἐ. Gentiles

γέγραπται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s γραφω

See Is 52:5 "Although blaspheming God's name in Isaiah comes about because of pagan oppression of Israel, Paul creates an ironic twist by attributing this blasphemy to Israel's sinfulness in the midst of pagans. But he is still fair to the larger context from which he draws the quotation, for Israel's oppression by pagan nations is itself a result of her sin." Moo. In Wright's words, "Israel's 'exile' is still continuing, not in a geographical, but in a theological, spiritual, and moral sense." See furthermore Ezek 36:20.