

In our verses for this week, Paul is continuing to show how all humanity is guilty before God. Having exposed the guilt of both the “bad” person, as well as the “good”, his focus now turns to the irreligious and the religious, and contains several surprises...

1. Jesus is our just judge

Paul reminds us that an important part of the gospel message is that Jesus will judge each one of us, and do so impartially, based on what we know and how we live in the light what we know. By dividing the world up into Jews who have the Law of God (the Old Testament), and Gentiles (who do not have the Law) Paul points out our universal failure to live up to the standard we know. And reminds us that each one of us will stand before Jesus and be judged fairly

2. Therefore religious people need the gospel too

Paul turns his focus to the religious Jew and shows how in spite of their many religious privileges they are not to think God will turn a blind eye to their guilt... in particular their failure to practice what they preach. His point is simple: What good is having the law, if you do not keep it?

He then considers circumcision too and raises a similar question: What good is bearing the mark of God’s people, if you do not live as God’s people?

Here then is a warning to anyone who considers their religious heritage, knowledge or activity a sufficient reason for God to excuse their failure to honour Him as they should in their hearts.

But it is not all bad news...!

3. Because through the gospel, God’s Spirit changes our hearts

The remarkable thing is that through the work of God’s Spirit, each one of us can be changed inwardly (our hearts can be `circumcised`) when we respond to the gospel. And the result is astonishing! The person who receives God’s Spirit through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, no longer stands condemned on judgment day, but rather receives the praises of God!