

# Eleutheros Newsletter

March 2025

## Thoughts on Romans

**2:20-21** *An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast a form of knowledge and of the truth in the Law, Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?*

Earlier in this chapter the Apostle Paul explained that although Jews and Gentiles have totally different understandings about the Law, they are both guilty before God ([2:12](#)) because they “are contentious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness” ([2:8](#)); that many “excuse one another” for their sin ([2:15](#)); and that many Jews “make thy boast of God” ([2:17](#)) and are arrogant (“And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness” ([2:19](#))).

In these verses he goes on to reveal the foolishness of trusting in man-made rules, religious ideals not based on the truth God has given to mankind, and attempting to teach others these damning doctrines. The word “instructor” (παιδευτής in the Greek) sometimes is used to mean “instructor” (as in Plato, the classical philosopher) and other times used to mean “corrector” or “chastiser” (as in [Hebrews 12:9](#)).

Teaching can involve indoctrination in falsehood and oppression. Consider the attitude of the Pharisees, scribes, and Sadducees of the first century. They had instituted numerous man-made rules and insisted that people live up to them. Examples of this can be found in their literature regarding Sabbath laws:

“The *MAIN* classes of work are forty save one: sowing, ploughing, reaping, binding sheaves, threshing, winnowing, cleansing crops, grinding, sifting, kneading, baking, shearing wool, washing or beating or dyeing it, spinning, weaving, making two loops, weaving two threads, separating two threads, tying a knot, sewing two stitches, tearing in order to sew two stitches, hunting a gazelle, slaughtering or flaying or salting it or curing its skin, scraping it or cutting it up, writing two letters, erasing in order to write two letters, building, pulling down, putting out a fire, lighting a fire, striking with a hammer and taking out aught from one domain into another. These are the main classes of work, forty save one” (*Shabbath* 7. 10-20).

Simple questions: Were there gazelles in Israel in those days? And what Jew would DARE to even think of having a gazelle, dead or alive, anywhere on his property!?

Paul knew how ridiculous rules like these were, having been “circumcised the eighth day of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, as to the Law, a Pharisee” ([Philippians 3:5](#)).

Having condemned such foolishness and legalistic attitudes, he then asks simple questions: “teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?”

Not only does depending on the Law or man-made rules produce rebellion, arrogance, foolishness, and oppression, it also, when looked at honestly, produces uncomfortable issues, especially what actual results are there from these things: have those who promote this learned any good thing? And have they become any less sinful than those whom they condemn?

The answers are clear, but so many have failed to accept the truth.

Religions kill, but Jesus saves!

May we present the glorious Gospel, not mere religious opinions and mandates to others who desperately need to hear the truth!