

A Glaring Example of the Hypocrisy of the Teacher of the Law (vv. 17-24)

VERSE 17 But if you bear the name "Jew" and rely upon the Law and boast in

God (δὲ σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ἐπονομάζῃ καὶ ἐπαναπαύῃ νόμῳ καὶ καυχᾶσαι ἐν θεῷ [*part. ei if; 1st class condition; conj de + pro.nom.m.s. su + adj.nom.m.s. Jew + pres.mid.ind.2s. eponomazomai call oneself; "bear the name" + conj kai + pres.mid.ind.2s. epanapauomai rely upon + noun dat.m.s nomos law + conj kai + pres.mid.ind.2s. kauchaomai boast*]),

VERSE 18 and know His will and approve the things that are essential, being

instructed out of the Law (καὶ γινώσκεις τὸ θέλημα καὶ δοκιμάζεις τὰ διαφέροντα κατηχούμενος ἐκ τοῦ νόμου [*conj kai + pres.act.ind.2s. ginosko know + d.a.w/noun acc.nt.s. thelema will + conj kai + pres.act.ind.2s. dokimazo approve + d.a.w/pres.act.part.acc.nt.p. diaphero be superior to; "that are essential" + pres.pass.part.nom.m.s. katacheo instruct + prep ek + d.a.w/noun abl.m.s. nomos*]),

VERSE 19 and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to

those who are in darkness (πέποιθάς τε σεαυτὸν ὁδηγὸν εἶναι τυφλῶν, φῶς τῶν ἐν σκότει [*pf.act.ind.2s. peitho be confident + part ti but also + pro.acc.m.s. seautou yourself + noun acc.m.s. odegos guide + pres.act.infin. eimi + adj.gen.m.p. tuphlos blind + noun acc.nt.s. phos light + d.a.gen.m.p. "to those" + prep en + noun loc.nt.s. skotos darkness*]),

VERSE 20 a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, having in the Law

the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth (παιδευτὴν ἀφρόνων, διδάσκαλον νηπίων, ἔχοντα τὴν μόρφωσιν τῆς γνώσεως καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας ἐν τῷ νόμῳ [*noun acc.m.s. aideutes corrector; also at Heb. 12:9 + adj.gen.m.p. aphon foolish + noun acc.m.s. didaskalos teacher + adj.gen.m.p. nepios child; immature + pres.act.part.acc.m.s. echo have + d.a.w/noun acc.f.s. morophosis full content; outward form [2 Tim. 3:5]) d.a.w/noun gen.f.s. gnosis*

knowledge + conj kai + d.a.w/noun gen.f.s. aletheia truth + prep en + d.a.w/noun loc.m.s. nomos law; “in the Law”]),

VERSE 21 you, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself (ὁ οὖν διδάσκων ἕτερον σεαυτὸν οὐ διδάσκεις; [conj oun therefore + d.a.w/pres.act.part.voc.m.s. didasko teach + pro.acc.m.s. heteros another + pro.acc.m.s. seautou yourself + neg ou + pres.act.ind.2s. didasko teach])?)

You who preach that one shall not steal, do you steal (ὁ κηρύσσων μὴ κλέπτειν κλέπτεις [d.a.w/pres.act.part.voc.m.s. kerusso preach + neg me + pres.act.infin. klepto steal + pres.act.ind.2s. klepto])?)

VERSE 22 You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery (ὁ λέγων μὴ μοιχεύειν μοιχεύεις; [pres.act.part.voc.m.s. lego say + neg me + pres.act.infin. moicheuo commit adultery + pres.act.ind.2s. moicheuo])?)

You who abhor idols, do you rob temples [ὁ βδελυσσόμενος τὰ εἰδωλα ἱεροσυλεῖς [d.a.w/pres.pass.part.vom.m.s. bdelussomai commit idolatry; also at Rev. 21:8; “abhor idols” + d.a.w/noun acc.nt.s. eidolon idol + pres.act.ind.2s. heirosuleo commit sacrilege; rob temples; lx])?)

VERSE 23 You who boast in the Law, through your breaking the Law, do you dishonor God (ὃς ἐν νόμῳ καυχᾶσαι, διὰ τῆς παραβάσεως τοῦ νόμου τὸν θεὸν ἀτιμάζεις [pro.nom.m.s. hos who; “You” + prep en + noun loc.m.s. nomos + pres.dep.ind.2s. kauchaomai boast + prep dia through + d.a.w/noun gen.f.s. parabasis violation; “breaking”; at Rom. 4:15; 5:14; Gal. 3:19; 1 Tim. 2:14; Heb. 2:2; 9:15 + d.a.w/noun gen.m.s. nomos + d.a.w/noun acc.m.s. theos + pres.act.ind.2s. atimazo dishonor])?)

VERSE 24 For "THE NAME OF GOD IS BLASPHEMED AMONG THE GENTILES

BECAUSE OF YOU," just as it is written (τὸ γὰρ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ δι' ὑμᾶς βλασφημεῖται ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, καθὼς γέγραπται [*conj gar + d.a.w/noun nom.nt.s. onoma name + d.a.w/noun gen.m.s. theos + prep dia through; "because" + pro.acc.pl. su you + prep en + d.a.w/noun loc.nt.p. ethnos Gentile + conj kathos just as + pf.pass.ind.3s. grapho write*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSES 17-24

1. The thrust of this section is to provide a glaring example of Jewish hypocrisy that was current in Paul's day.
2. The two sins specified are: stealing (8th commandment) and adultery (9th commandment).
3. These two sins were greatly aggravated by the fact that the Jew committing these sins was a man who touted himself as a teacher of the Law.
4. In verses 17-20 Paul exposes the sins the general population of Jews were guilty of to demonstrate that Jews do the same kind of things Gentiles were condemned for.
5. But here, Paul singles out an individual Jew who had a name for being a teacher of the Law.
6. The purpose here is to add to the record an example of Jewish duplicity and hypocrisy.
7. Verse 17 opens with a 1st class condition—"But if you bear the name Jew"—and you rightly do.
8. "Jew" as a designation for the Jewish race was first used in 2 Kings 16:6 (Judeans/Jews) in the 8th century BC.
9. From then on it was used by Gentiles to designate the Jews living in Judea (Jew 31x; Jews 237x; Jews' 1x; Judeans 1x; Judean 4x).
10. Again, Paul is singling out a specific Jewish individual(s) who had the responsibility to instruct others in proper behavior—an instructor of the Mosaic Law.
11. In verses 17-20 (long sentence ends at v. 21b) Paul lists the credentials of a Jewish teacher of the Law, not taking issue with the interrelated things specified.
12. The first item is: "you bear the name Jew" (and do so, proudly and rightly; v. 17).
13. The second item: "you rely on [the] law: (and he does—his interpretation; v. 17).
14. The third item: "and boast in God" (and he did, but vainly; v. 17).
15. The fourth item: "and know the will of God" (he knew what was right and wrong, but not what the Law pointed to; v. 18).
16. The fifth item: "and approve the things that are essential" (expounding on item 4, but missing the crucial thing; v. 18).
17. The sixth item: "being instructed out of the Law" (he himself was a student of the Law; v. 18).
18. The seventh item: "and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness" (he was self-assured teacher of the blind; but he himself was a blind guide leading the blind; v. 19)
19. The seventh item is expanded on in v. 20a: "a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature."
20. The blind, the foolish, and the immature are three interrelated descriptions of the students he was instructing.

21. The above designation for his students would especially apply to Gentiles.
22. As for the designation “the blind”, it was a case of the blind leading the blind as the religious Jewish teacher was oblivious to the way of eternal salvation.
23. He taught a works-based system of salvation.
24. All the features listed in vv. 17-21a are essential to any competent teacher of the WOG.
25. These features include: relying on and boasting in God (v. 17); know God’s directive will, having first been instructed (v. 18); a confident guide and light to the spiritually blind (v. 19; cf. parable of Lk. 11:33); a teacher of the spiritually ignorant and immature (babes in Christ; v. 20a); and possessing the assurance that the WOG is the embodiment of all essential knowledge and truth (v. 20b).
26. False confidence with respect to the Bible is widespread among ministers and academics at so many levels (error and omission).
27. In verses 21-23 Paul once again springs the trap, having set up the self-righteous, hypocritical, blind teacher of the Law.
28. He does so in a series of five rhetorical questions.
29. In so doing Paul exposes a particular Jewish sinner in a specific situation.
30. All the things in vv. 17-20 that were held to be true by this teacher(s) would have had him nodding and smiling in approval.
31. But in v. 21a Paul indirectly charges him with failing to instruct himself with the same intensity he taught others.
32. The first rhetorical question “You, therefore, who teach another, do you, not teach yourself?” sets him up for what follows.
33. The second rhetorical question charges him with the sin of stealing.
34. The third question charges him with adultery.
35. The fourth charges the one who detests idols with robbing temples.
36. This specifies the nature of his sin of stealing.
37. He was guilty of entering a pagan temple and stealing items of value (or looting the treasury).
38. Jews were forbidden from taking objects of intrinsic value which was forbidden as per Deut. 7:25-26.
39. From time to time Jews would raid pagan temples, and loot the treasury, and rape the temple prostitutes.
40. Jews were encouraged to do this by their leaders from time to time.
41. But what of the adultery charge?
42. It is reasonable to assume, that he, from time to time, had sex with temple prostitutes (cf. Gen. 38:21-22; Deut. 23:17; Job 36:14; Hos. 4:14; cp. 1 Kgs. 14:24; 15:12; 2 Kgs. 23:7)!
43. He no doubt rationalized this extreme behavior since the victims were Gentile pagan idolaters.
44. Was this activity common among religious Jews when paganism was widespread?
45. How could a certified teacher of the Law do this and not suffer any shame?
46. The answer: scar tissue of the soul.
47. The fifth and final rhetorical question (v. 23) puts the lie to all the things this kind of Jew imagined about himself in verse 17-20).
48. His boasting in the Law in the face of his egregious violation of the 8th (adultery) and 9th (stealing) commandments of the Decalogue is laughable by any standard of proper behavior!

49. The final conclusion—he dishonors God whom he boasts in, which renders him unfit to conduct his profession.
50. This section concludes with a quote from Isa. 52:5
51. This citation is within the context of Israel's eviction and dispersion by God for cause.
52. The Gentile world completely misinterpreted Israel's plight, asserting that Israel's God was unable to prevent Israel's dispersion, when in fact God orchestrated it, using a pagan world powers to fulfill Lev. 26:33 (5th cycle).
53. This maligning of the God of Israel was, and is, widespread among uninformed Gentiles.
54. Had Israel followed the Law as it was intended, the nations could not have bad-mouthed Israel's God in this fashion.
55. This quote informs the reader that Israel was in part to blame for Gentile blasphemy.
56. Israel's plight, and the reasons for it, resulted in Israel being a stumbling block to the nations.
57. God's reputation is unaffected by the failures and sins of His people.
58. An observation: The extremely egregious conduct of this violator of law is in the same category as the Gentile who is guilty of abnormal sexual behavior in chapter one.