**Romans 2:12-29**

**Paul’s Argument against Nomianism**

Nomiansim – The pursuit of righteousness by means of observing laws (or rules)

Good people are those who keep the rules, bad people are those who break the rules. When good people keep the rules, they will be rewarded, when bad people break the rules, they will be punished.

Many people find this concept appealing, it just makes sense, especially those of us raised in a Greek-thinking, western culture. We want this in human society and Nomianism largely holds true in human society but presents a fatal flaw when attempting to explain God’s standard for heaven.

Two major world religions follow this false philosophy: Catholicism and Islam.

These two religions state you must follow certain laws or certain rules to get into heaven or earn God’s grace which makes sense and is very appealing to people who grew up in this western thinking culture where we are taught to respect law and order and that playing by the rules is the right way to achieve what we want. We are raised to appreciate hard work and to expect that our efforts deserve reward. Again, this is normal and accurate in our society but extremely false when trying to apply it to God’s salvation. Ephesians 2:8-9 destroys this concept alone but let’s look at what Paul says in Romans about it.

**Romans 2:12-13**

Verse 11 says there is no partiality with God. Everyone will be judged if they were presented the law or not. People who die and are standing before God that never heard the Gospel message, never read the Bible, was never presented the law, or even knew who Christ was, will still be judged like everyone else who did receive those things.

**Romans 2:14-16**

God did not give everyone the written law, but He did give everyone a conscience. Your conscience accuses and defends you in the end at the judgement. Your conscience knows what sin is and will alert you to sin even if you never read the Bible or know what the standard is. Every conscience is the same, accusing everyone of the same sins and defending everyone of the same good choices they make. This is called objective morality. **(Next slide)**

Objective Morality:

* A standard of morality that every human being knows without ever being told it.
* Everyone knows killing people is bad, stealing is bad, lying is bad, committing adultery is bad.
* Our conscience tells us these things. **(Next slide)**

Objective vs. Subjective:

* Objective = fact
* Subjective = opinion
* The car is white = objective (all people everywhere know the car is white)
* I like white cars = subjective (everyone has an opinion about white cars) **(Next slide)**

Objective morality exist, meaning there is a standard of what is good beyond humans that every human everywhere knows instinctively, therefore, humans did not set this standard.

Back to the text

Romans 2:17-24

This is essential in the Christian faith. As Paul is writing about the immoral, irreligious gentiles who indulge themselves in sexual immorality, in orgies, drunkenness, rape, incest and murder, the readers who are reading this are thinking: Yea, I don’t do those nasty things, I’m a better person than those gross people. Paul in verses 17-24 says hold on, you do these same things. Everyone does these same things. How can that be? I don’t murder, I don’t have orgies, I don’t rape people. Paul says you do. Bear with me for a second.

Paul who was the second most influential person in Christianity, second to Jesus Himself, put himself on the same line as these people. **(Next slide)**

**1 Samuel 16:7** “But the LORD said to Samuel, do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”

**Romans 2:25-29**

“Inwardly”, “circumcision is that which is of the heart” God sees the heart and the heart only. Our hearts have the same sinful human nature that the people in Sodom and Gomorrah had, the same sinful nature that the people Paul describes in Romans 1:18-32. We have the same sinful nature in our heart that Adolf Hitler had in his heart.

**Matthew 5:21-22**

What is in the heart that drives someone to murder someone else? What emotions? Hatred and anger usually. Have you ever hated someone? Have you ever been angry at someone? You’ve committed murder. I’ve committed murder.

“You good for nothing” is looking down on people. If you have ever looked down on someone or a lot of people, like people in third world countries, you’ve murdered them in your heart. **(Next slide)**

A person physically murders someone. I’ve only been angry at someone or looked down on someone. We are both murderers in God’s eyes.