

In Romans 2:14 Paul writes: "Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law . . ." Of which law is Paul speaking? Well, in 2:10b he makes a distinction between the Jew and the Gentile. And in verse 12 he says "All who sin apart from the law" and contrasts them with "all who sin under the law."

It would appear that Paul is speaking of the Mosaic Law. The Gentiles do not have this law. This is confirmed in verse 14, where he speaks of "Gentiles, who do not have the law," and where he says, "they do not have the law."

Yet in verse 14 Paul says that Gentiles "do by nature things required by the law." Paul is speaking of the Mosaic Law, and says that Gentiles do things required by it. But how can they do things that the Mosaic Law requires if they don't have the Mosaic Law?

The answer lies in the fact that they do these things by nature; i.e., from what they are. And what are they? They are persons, created in the image of God, and as such they are moral beings, with moral principles woven into their nature. These moral principles written into their nature express themselves in various ways that at least externally are in agreement with what the Mosaic Law requires, and in this sense they do the things of the Mosaic Law.

The link that connects these moral principles that were written on mankind's nature at creation and the moral principles that were written on tablets of stone at the giving of the Mosaic Law is the fact that both are forms of the law of God.

In verse 15 Paul says that the Gentiles show that "the requirements of the law are written on their hearts." This is so because (as in verse 14) they do by nature the things required by the Mosaic Law.

In verse 15b Paul states that the consciences of the Gentiles bear witness to their actions and judge them as wrong or right.

Therefore since the Gentiles do not have the Mosaic Law, they cannot be judged on the basis of obedience or disobedience to it.

Yet there is a standard for God's judgment of them. It is the law of God written on their hearts and their conscience, judging for God and bearing witness to the rightness or wrongness of their actions.

Is this then God's yardstick for salvation – doing the best you can with the light that you have? On the day of God's righteous judgment, will this be the