

yardstick that God uses for those who do not have the Mosaic Law and have never heard the gospel? Will God save people on the basis of whether they have done the best they could according to their own moral standards, and whether they have lived by the light of their own conscience? If so, will anyone be declared righteous on the basis of this yardstick? Or will sinful human beings be found to be only unrighteous?

These questions press us to move to yet another yardstick.

D. YARDSTICK #4 is perfect obedience to the law of God

In Romans 2:13b Paul states that "it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous." This clearly implies that those who disobey the law of God will be declared unrighteous on the day of God's righteous judgment. Here Paul is speaking not of the Mosaic Law alone but of the Law of God in both its original form written on mankind's nature and its republished form written on tablets of stone.

Thus both Jews and Gentiles will be judged by the yardstick of obedience or disobedience to the law of God. Those who obey God's law will be declared righteous; those who disobey God's law will be declared unrighteous.

What kind of obedience to God's law is required for a person to be judged righteous? This question presses us to spell out the principles of interpretation of the law of God. Let us consider these principles.

The overall principle to remember is that we are speaking, not of man's law (even though it was given by God through Moses), but of God's law. This in turn has some important implications:

First, God's law is perfect and requires perfect and perpetual obedience.

Second, not only outward actions but inward thoughts and heart attitudes and intentions are included.

Third, not only actions themselves but everything leading up to them is included.

Fourth, not only actions specifically commanded or forbidden but all of the same kind are included.