

Red Herrings

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I. Introduction.

- A. Text: Romans 2:17-3:8.
- B. God is an utter realist—He sees all areas of our life.
- C. Man uses red herrings to try to get God to leave him alone.

II. A proper creed.

- A. The biggest boundary that man can create between him and God is religion, strangely enough.
- B. God is not impressed by religious activity that does not affect a person.
- C. Satan can use a light dose of Christianity to keep one from living a holy life.

III. Rituals.

- A. Paul dealt with the ritual of circumcision.
- B. Today people take security in things like Baptism.
- C. However, these rituals do not add anything to one's righteousness.
- D. Rituals are saying something to God only if it is genuine from the heart.

IV. Privileged positions.

- A. The Jews were concerned that their heritage was being undervalued, but Paul counters that the Jewish heritage was important.
- B. However, Paul rebuked them because the Jews were not faithful in sharing the revelation that was given them.
- C. God does not play favorites.
- D. Privilege only increases responsibility in God's sight—He will not withhold judgment based upon heritage.
- E. God has no spiritual grandchildren.

V. The ends justify the means.

- A. It is true that God will work out all of His plans even through the opposition of His enemies.

B. However, if He let everyone off on this basis, God could not judge and would be proven unjust.

C. God cannot pass over evil—God sees us as we are.

D. God undermines all the righteousness of man that He might give him the righteousness of God.

Application questions:

1. Which red herring have you found yourself prone to use the most?

2. How would you respond to someone who argued that he was secure because he was raised in the church?

3. How can God be forgiving and just at the same time? Explain.
