

- I. A Review of Paul’s Argument So Far: Developing the Theme of God’s Revelation
  - A. The Revelation of God’s Righteousness in the Gospel (1:16–17; 3:21–26)
  - B. The *Present* Revelation of God’s Wrath in Handing Sinners Over to Their Sin (1:18–32)
  - C. Paul’s First Debate Partner (2:1–16): A Contrast Between What is Presently Seen and Unseen

He hypocritically judges others because he sees God’s *present* patience towards him, in contrast to God’s *present* wrath towards others. He does not see the *future* day when God’s righteous judgment will be revealed and his wrath will be poured out on this man for his sins. God’s patience should lead him to repentance.
  - D. Paul’s Second Debate Partner (2:17–29): Another Contrast Between What is Seen and Unseen
  
- II. Paul’s Second Debate Partner: The Jewish Teacher (2:17–20)
  - A. Claims in Verses 17–18: He Claims Superiority Based on His Knowledge of the Law
  
  - B. Claims in Verses 19–20: He Claims Superiority Based on His Circumcision
  
- III. Paul’s Response (2:21–29)
  - A. The Teacher’s Hypocrisy Revealed in Breaking the Law (2:21-24; 1:24-26; 2:5-11; Isa 52:5)
  
  - B. Visible Circumcision is Worthless without Obedience (2:25-27; 2:12-16)
  
  - C. The Hiddenness of True Spirit-Wrought Heart-Circumcision (2:28-29)
    - 1. Revelation: The Jew is Not Outwardly Seen but rather is Hidden (2:5, 16; 8:19)
  
    - 2. Location: The True Circumcision is not in the Flesh but of the Heart
  
    - 3. Power: True Circumcision is not Wrought by the Letter but by the Spirit (2 Cor 3:3-6; Rom 7:5-13)
  
    - 4. The End Result: Not Praise from Men but from God (Matt 6:1-6, 16-18)

“<sup>28</sup> For a Jew is not outwardly-visible, nor is circumcision that which is outwardly-visible in the flesh; <sup>29</sup> but rather, a Jew is hidden, and circumcision is of the heart, by the spirit, not by the letter, whose praise is not from men but from God.” —Alternate translation of Romans 2:28–29, highlighting the four contrasts of outwardly-visible vs. hidden, flesh vs. heart, spirit vs. letter, and men vs. God.

Except from Rev. Dr. Marcus A. Mininger, *Uncovering the Theme of Revelation in Romans 1:16–3:26*:

Table 4. Parallel Topics and Order in the Two Halves of Romans 2

	<i>Rom 2:1–16</i>	<i>Rom 2:17–29</i>
<i>Interlocutor</i> : What is visible	God’s present patience (vv 1–4)	Embodiment of knowledge and truth (vv. 17–20)
<i>Paul</i> : What else is or will be made visible	Future revelation of God’s righteous judgment (vv. 5–10)	Transgression and dishonor of the interlocutor (vv. 21–24)
<i>Paul</i> : Disjunction between what is visible and what is ultimately true	Impartiality and three examples of disjunction between present and future (vv. 11–15)	Three examples of disjunction between circumcision and truth possession (vv.25–27)
<i>Paul</i> : What presently remains hidden	The secret things of a person (v. 16)	The Jew and circumcision (vv. 28–29)

Reflection and Application Questions (for personal reflection and family conversation):

1. What is the significance of the theme of *revelation* here in Romans 1–3? What specifically has God revealed? What is awaiting the future for full revelation? What visible and hidden things does Paul highlight in 2:17–29?
2. Why does the Jewish teacher see himself as superior to those who are presently experiencing God’s wrath in Romans 1:18–32? How is he like the first debate partner in 2:1–16? What is he seeing, and what is he missing?
3. What would be the Christian equivalent to the Jewish teacher’s mistake today?
4. Where does your confidence before God come from? Do you base your confidence in something visible in you or what you have done, or in the new birth/heart-circumcision wrought by the Spirit within you?