

The Heathen Know!

Romans 2:12-16

God's righteous standards are built into man, so that he is without excuse.

Unsaved men know what is right and what is wrong. Even those who do not have the Ten Commandments have the law "written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness" (Rom. 2:15).



Scripture gives us two fascinating examples of pagan men who clearly knew right from wrong even though they did not have God's law. The first example is from Genesis 26:6-11. Because of a famine, Isaac and Rebekah went into Philistine territory where King Abimelech ruled. One day this king happened to see Isaac "sporting with" (caressing) his wife, and this pagan king knew that such activity was inappropriate outside the framework of marriage. Thus Isaac's lie, that Rebekah was merely his sister, was exposed. [How many today have their consciences so seared that they fail to recognize how wrong such activity is outside of marriage?] Abimelech also knew that if one of his men would have had relations with Rebekah, a married woman, then he himself would have been guilty of a great sin. He had to rebuke Isaac for his dishonesty.

The second example is from Acts 28:1-6. The barbarians on the island of Melita witnessed Paul being bit by a venomous snake, normally resulting in death. They saw what they thought was the penalty (death), so they assumed the crime: "No doubt, this man is a murderer." They had never read the sixth commandment ("Thou shalt not murder"), but they knew that murder was wrong, and they knew that murderers deserve to die (compare Gen. 9:6). They were amazed that Paul suffered no harm from the snakebite, and in their eyes Paul went from being a murderer to being a god! [How many today have their consciences so seared that they fail to recognize that murderers deserve to die?]

~George Zeller: www.middletonbiblechurch.org

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