

Romans Chapter 2

Having demonstrated the sinfulness of the immoral pagan in chapter (1:18-32), Paul presents his case against the religious moralist, Jew or Gentile, by cataloging 6 principals that govern God's judgment.

- (1) Knowledge (verse 1);
- (2) Truth (verses 2-3);
- (3) Guilt (verses 4-5);
- (4) Deeds (verses 6-10);
- (5) Impartiality (verses 11-15);
- (6) Motive (verse 16).

Romans 2:1 "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things."

It is very easy for us to see sin in other's lives when many times we are unable to see the very same sin in our own life. Many ministers have the attitude that they are exempt, because they preach. The same law applies to us all. There are not 2 sets of rules; one for the congregation and one for the preacher. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God". Everyone needs Jesus as Savior and Lord.

Both Jews who was Paul's primary audience here, and moral Gentiles who think they are exempt from God's judgment because they have not indulged in the immoral excesses described (in chapter 1), are tragically mistaken. They have more knowledge than the immoral pagan and thus a greater accountability.

"Condemn thyself:" If someone has sufficient knowledge to judge others, he condemns himself, because he shows he has the knowledge to evaluate his own condition.

"Doest the same things:" In their condemnation of others they have excused and overlooked their own sins. Self righteousness exists because of two deadly errors.

- (1) Minimizing God's moral standard usually by emphasizing externals; and
- (2) Underestimating the depth of one's own sinfulness.

Romans 2:2 "But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things."

God will not punish anyone on hear-say evidence. God judges in Truth. He knows what the Truth is even before we begin.

"According to the truth": The meaning is 'right.' Whatever God does, is by nature right.

Romans 2:3 "And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?"

This was covered in depth in verse one above.

“Condemn thyself:” If someone has sufficient knowledge to judge others, he condemns himself, because he shows he has the knowledge to evaluate his own condition.

Romans 2:4 "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"

“Despisest”: Meaning to despise or to think down on, thus to underestimate someone’s or something’s value, and even to treat with contempt.

“Goodness”: This refers to “common grace,” the benefits God bestows on all men.

“Forbearance”: This word, which means “to hold back,” was sometimes used of a truce between warring parties. Rather than destroying every person the moment he or she sins, God graciously holds back His judgment. He saves sinners in a physical and temporal way from what they deserve, to show them His saving character, that they might come to Him and receive salvation that is spiritual and eternal.

“Longsuffering:” This word indicates the duration for which God demonstrates His goodness and forbearance, for long periods of time.

Together these three words speak of God’s common grace, the way He demonstrates His grace to all mankind.

“Repentance”: The act of turning from sin to Christ for forgiveness and salvation.

Romans 2:5 "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;"

The English word “sclerosis” (as in arteriosclerosis, a hardening of the arteries), comes from the Greek word. But here the danger is not physical, but spiritual hardness.

“Impenitent heart”: A refusal to repent and accept God’s pardon of sin through Jesus and cling to one’s sin is to accumulate more of God’s wrath and earn a severer judgment.

“Day of wrath ... judgment”: Refers to the final judgment of wicked men that comes at the Great White Throne at the end of the Millennium.

Although Scripture everywhere teaches that salvation is not on the basis of works, it consistently teaches that God’s judgment is always on the basis of a man’s deeds.

Paul describes the deeds of two distinct groups: the redeemed (in verses 7 and 10), and the unredeemed as shown (in 8-9). The deeds of the redeemed are not the basis of their salvation but the evidence of it. They are not perfect and are prone to sin, but there is undeniable evidence of righteousness in their lives.

Romans 2:6 "Who will render to every man according to his deeds:"

We are all storing up things in heaven now. Some who walk in the Light of Jesus are storing up good treasures in heaven.

Matthew 6:19-21 "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:" "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:" "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

If our deeds are evil, the wrath of God will be our just payment. If we are working for God, only a warm welcome awaits us, and the statement (well done thy good and faithful servant). In (verse 7), we see the rewards awaiting the believer.

Romans 2:7 "To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life:"

Notice that even though eternal life is a free gift; we must continue walking in the salvation Jesus has provided for us. We must continue walking in the Light. We must be doing the Word and not just hearing the Word.

Verse seven is not simply speaking in duration, because even unbelievers will live forever, but also in quality. Eternal life is a kind of life, the holy life that the eternal God has given to believers.

We see (in verse 8), what awaits those who are not walking with Jesus in His Light.

Romans 2:8 "But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,"

God is not unaware. He will punish those who do not obey. From Genesis to Revelation, we see blessings for those who live for God and curses to those who are the children of disobedience.

Romans 2:9-10 "Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;" "But glory, honor, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:"

Just as the Jews were given the first opportunity to hear and respond to the gospel, they will be first to receive God's judgment if they refuse. Israel will receive severer punishment because she was given greater light and blessing.

Romans 2:11 "For there is no respect of persons with God."

God is not impressed with our worldly wealth, importance, position, influence, popularity or appearance. We are what we are, because God chose for it to be that way. If you are jealous of some one's wealth or place in society, blame God. The real reason might be that God could not trust you with the wealth or importance. It might even be for your own good.

We do not even choose our own nationality, God does. We were born and raised in a particular family because God arranged it that way. Why should anyone be so proud of themselves, this being the case? The only wealth that really amounts to anything, is what we have stored in heaven.

Romans 2:12 "For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law;"

“Sinned without law”: The Gentiles who never had the opportunity to know God’s moral law will be judged on their disobedience in relationship to their limited knowledge as we studied (in chapter 1:19-20).

“Sinned in the law”: The Jews and many Gentiles who had access to God’s moral law will be accountable for their greater knowledge.

To those whom much is given much is required.

Luke 12:48: "But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few [stripes]. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."

The Lord is a just God. He judges each according to their knowledge. If we know to do good and do it not, it is counted sin to us.

3 John 1:11 "Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God."

We mentioned before that even nature tells you of God. Our conscience tells us when we are sinning. We all know right from wrong. The Jew had the law, so they will be judged by their law, if they do not receive Jesus. All will be judged guilty of sin, who have not accepted complete pardon through Jesus Christ our Lord. All deserve death. We receive our life in Jesus Christ who is Life.

Romans 2:13 "(For not the hearers of the law [are] just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified."

Just to hear the law and to do nothing about it would not help at all, or just hearing about Jesus will not save you either. We must act upon what we hear. The burden is laid on the person receiving salvation to accept it. We have a free will which God will not violate.

Romans 10:9-10 "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

Romans 2:14 "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:"

Without knowing the written law of God, people in pagan society generally value and attempt to practice its most basic tenets. This is normal for cultures instinctively to value justice, honesty, compassion and goodness toward others, reflecting the divine law written in the heart.

“Law unto themselves”: Their practice of some good deeds and their aversion to some evil ones demonstrate an innate knowledge of God’s law, a knowledge that will actually witness against them on the day of judgment.

Romans 2:15 "Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and [their] thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)"

“Work of the law”: Probably best understood as “the same works the Mosaic law prescribes.”

“Conscience”: Literal meaning “with knowledge.” That instinctive sense of right and wrong, that produces guilt when violated. In addition to an innate awareness of God’s law, men have a warning system that activates when they choose to ignore or disobey that law.

Paul urges believers not to violate their own consciences or cause others to, because repeatedly ignoring the conscience’s warnings desensitizes it and eventually silences it.

Romans Chapter 2 Questions

1. Therefore thou art ____ O man, whosoever thou art that judgest another.
2. Why is this true?
3. Do ministers have some special agreement with God where they can sin and not be guilty?
4. How are our sins washed away?
5. What is God's judgement according to?
6. Who will be judged of God?
7. What does 2nd Peter chapter 3 verse 9 tell us about the second coming of Christ?
8. Those with hardness and impenitent hearts treasure up what unto themselves?

9. God will render to every man according to his _____.
10. What does Matthew chapter 6 verses 19 through 21 tell us about treasures?
11. What does every Christian want to hear from God?
12. Verse 7 says, to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek what?
13. What awaits the contentious who do not obey?
14. What opposites do we see from Genesis to Revelation about God's judgement?
15. To the _____ first and also to the _____.
16. What 3 things await every man that worketh good?
17. What is verse 11 really telling us about God's attitude toward mankind?
18. Those who had the law will be judged by what?
19. Where do you find (For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required)?
20. What does 3 John 11 tell us about who is of God?
21. Who will be judged guilty of sin?
22. Not the hearers of the law are just before God, but who?
23. Where do we find what we must do to be saved?
24. Who had the law?
25. Where does Jesus write the law, if we are Christians?
26. What bears witness of guilt or innocence?
27. Galatians chapter 3 verse 24 tells us the law was what?
28. Hebrews 10:16 tells us Jesus will put his law 2 places, where are they?
29. Why are the secrets just to man?
30. Does God judge our deeds or our heart?