

Rom. 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.

“Therefore” - based on the facts presented in the previous verses.

No man has the right to judge another man with spiritual condemnation, because he is just as guilty before God as the man he is presuming to judge. All men can at some time in their lives be found guilty of sinning as described in one or more of the sins listed at the end of the previous chapter.

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

God, on the other hand, is an impartial judge. He is no respecter of persons and is the embodiment of truth. Any judgment of God against man for his sin will be based on truth and righteousness; He cannot be deceived.

Psalm 44:21 Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.

The Greek for the word *judgment* is a reference to condemnation and damnation. That would seem to be a reference to God’s judgment regarding a man’s eternal destiny based on the practice of sin in a person’s life.

Rom. 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?

Paul is encouraging those who receive and hear this letter to look within themselves. My paraphrase - Don’t you realize that you are going to be judged by the same impartial, righteous God for the same sins for which you are condemning others?

Rom. 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?

Webster’s definition of *despise* included the word undervalue. Paul is basically saying, “Don’t you realize the value of the abundance of God’s goodness and kindness, His forbearance / self-restraint and longsuffering / patience in His dealings with man? Those attributes of God are intended to bring you to a position of repentance.” Peter affirms this in his epistle:

2Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Again, Webster included a quote in his definition for *repentance* that I liked: “Repentance is the relinquishment of any practice from the conviction that it has offended God.” – Rambler

Rom. 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;

Rom. 2:6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds:

In context, Paul is still talking about those who have made the truth a lie—unbelievers. By your stubbornness and unrepentant heart, you are adding to the case against you that will be presented at God’s judgment of each man’s eternal destiny based on actions in his lifetime.

Revelation 20:12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

The standard against which these works will be judged will be the law of God; and scripture tells us that if you are guilty in one point of the law, you are guilty of it all.

James 2:10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.

Only through faith in Jesus Christ can we escape the condemning judgment of God and ensure that our name is in the book of life.

John 3:16-18 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. **He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already**, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Rom. 2:7 To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:

This verse describes the first of two categories into which men will fall according to God’s judgment. “Patient continuance in well doing” is not possible without the Spirit working in and through you.

Philippians 2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

It’s not in our nature to do good.

Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

Scripture tells us that there is no one that does good.

Psalm 53:3 ... there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

Ecclesiastes 7:20 For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.

What motivates these people who practice a life of good deeds. They are seeking for glory (praise and honor), honor (to be considered of value, precious) and immortality or eternal life (an undecaying, unending existence). How can a sinful human being attain such a position? Through faith in Jesus, the Son of God, as stated in John 3:16 above.

This doesn't mean that the person in this group never sins; it means that he doesn't practice sin as a way of life—it's an aberration in his life, an action or inaction that brings him to repentance before the Father.

In context, the glory and honor being sought is in the eyes of God the Judge.

Rom. 2:8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,
Rom. 2:9 Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;

The second group of people that will fall into condemnation in judgment includes the following two groups:

- those who are contentious—cause strife and provoke anger
- those who do not obey the truth

In the Greek, *obedience* is connected with belief and *disobedience* with unbelief. In fact, the Greek for “do not obey” says specifically “to disbelieve (willfully and perversely).” *Unrighteousness* references that which is morally wrong. Webster defines *indignation* as “The feeling excited by that which is unworthy, base, or disgraceful; anger mingled with contempt, disgust, or abhorrence”; and the Greek adds the idea of passion to the point of sacrifice/killing. The Greek for the word *wrath* includes a violent passion fueled by anger, vengeance, and desire.

God is the embodiment of truth; and obedience to the truth equates to obedience to God just as disobedience to the truth equates to disobedience to God.

Deuteronomy 32:4 He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.

Psalm 33:4 For the word of the LORD is right; and all his works are done in truth.

John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

As I continue to meditate on this verse, I am realizing that there is really only one group because those that are contentious are also those who are disobedient to the truth.

In verse 9 this group of people is classified as “every soul of man that doeth evil.” This is referencing a group of people that practice sin as a way of life. Paul is saying that this group of people will suffer *tribulation* (affliction, trouble) and *anguish* (calamity, distress). The Greek for both words references the word *narrow* as feeling pressed into a tight place.

Paul is careful to list the Jew first in responsibility to the truth since they were chosen by God to declare Him to the Gentile world, but their failures in that respect do not excuse the Gentiles from responsibility for their own disobedience.

Rom. 2:10 But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:

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

Now Paul addresses the benefits of belonging to the first group—those who practice well-doing, obedience to the truth. They will receive glory, honor, and peace. The *glory* and *honor* directly respond to what they were seeking in verse 7. The word *peace* references prosperity, rest, and to be set at one again (in relationship with God) which are all descriptions of the immortality associated with eternal life. Again, Paul makes a distinction of priority given due to the position of responsibility and privilege—Jew, then Gentile.

Verse 11 makes it clear that judgment for everyone—whether Jew or Gentile—will be based on obedience vs. disobedience, belief vs. unbelief.

Rom. 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;

Rom. 2:13 (For not the hearers of the law *are* just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.

Rom. 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:

Rom. 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;)

I couldn't break these verses apart, because I needed the truth of the last verse to help explain the facts of verse 12.

Those without the law = the Gentiles

Those with the law = the Jews

At first reading of verse 12, it doesn't seem fair that those who didn't have the privilege of access to the law of God would perish in the same way as those who were condemned because of their disobedience to that law. Paul realizes that and goes into a deeper explanation.

First of all, just hearing the law doesn't put you in *just* (innocent) standing before God; you actually have to obey the law—to live by it. The Gentiles may not have been given the law, but God has given them an awareness of right and wrong (the things contained in the law); He has written it in their hearts. Based on that *conscience* (moral awareness), they make judgments as to right or wrong actions in themselves and others. Webster defines *conscience* like this:

“The faculty, power, or **inward principle** which decides as to the character of one's own actions, purposes, and affections, warning against and condemning that which is wrong, and approving and prompting to that which is right; the moral faculty passing judgment on one's self; the moral sense.”

Rom. 2:16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

After clarifying his statement in verse 12, Paul continues his thought. The judgment of mankind will take place “...by Jesus Christ.” We established in verse 2 that man can have no secrets from God—no hidden sin; He knows our thoughts.

1Chronicles 28:9 ... for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts:

Psalms 94:11 The LORD knoweth the thoughts of man....

Ecclesiastes 12:14 For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

The day of judgment was discussed in commenting on verse 6. I think this verse is directly connected to the teaching of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount where He establishes that it is the attitude of the heart that establishes the fact of our sin—our inner thoughts and motives.

Point needs to be made that the Father has designated Jesus as the Righteous Judge.

John 5:22 & 26-27 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son....For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

Then Paul adds that this judgment of sin is according to the gospel that he has been declaring all along. Jesus came into the world as God in flesh to provide the perfect sacrifice necessary to redeem man and save him from condemnation in this judgment if he will just choose to place his faith in the resurrected Jesus and accept that redemption as a gift from the Father.

Rom. 2:17 Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God,

Rom. 2:18 And knowest *his* will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law;

Rom. 2:19 And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness,

Rom. 2:20 An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.

Paul is definitely targeting his message to his Jewish audience at this point. As the text continues, it is obvious that Paul is addressing Jewish hypocrites. They think that just because they know the law and are one of God's chosen people by birth, that they are in position to tell others how to live according to God's will. They feel well qualified to teach those who are in spiritual darkness and are ignorant of the law. They give the appearance of knowing and understanding the truth of the law.

Rom. 2:21 Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?

Rom. 2:22 Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?

Rom. 2:23 Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?

Now Paul asks that same Jew some thought-provoking questions. An honest answer to these questions will be quite revealing.

1. As you teach someone else about the law, are you practicing what you teach?
2. You teach that a man should not steal; do you steal?
3. When you teach that a man should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery?
4. You say you hate idols; do you have any idols in your own life?
5. You boast that you know the law; do you ever dishonor God by breaking the law?

Each of these questions takes on a more significant meaning, when you realize that whether or not you are guilty is found in your heart—not in the overt act.

Rom. 2:24 For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.

Where is it written?

Isaiah 52:5 Now therefore, what have I here, saith the LORD, that my people is taken away for nought? they that rule over them make them to howl, saith the LORD; and **my name continually every day is blasphemed.**

Because of their continued disobedience and refusal to repent, God had to judge His people. This, of course, gave cause for those who had conquered them to ridicule their God. The reputation of God was and is directly affected by the actions of His people.

The sad thing is that we are no better than they; we haven't learned from their mistakes. The "church" is its own worst enemy because people judge our God by watching us. Very few who call themselves Christian actually reflect Jesus as Lord of their life. There are even those who serve in positions of leadership in the "church" who deny the truth and authority of God's word.

Rom. 2:25 For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.

Circumcision was established by God with Abraham as a token of the covenant between Abraham and God.

Genesis 17:9-11 And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.

The circumcision was a sign of commitment to keep covenant with God. So, if the Jew was circumcised and honored God with his life, that circumcision placed him in a special position as one of God's chosen people. On the other hand, if the Jew was circumcised and did not live his life in honor before God according to His law, he was no different than a Gentile in the eyes of God.

Rom. 2:26 Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?

Using the same logic, if a Gentile accepts God in faith as Lord of his life and lives according to the law of God, in God's eyes he is considered set apart as a chosen vessel of God just as surely as the obedient circumcised Jew.

Rom. 2:27 And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?

Paul is referencing the instinctive knowledge of the law of God that He has written in the hearts of the Gentiles. He is basically saying that the Gentiles who live their lives according to God's law have put themselves in position to rightly judge the Jew who is disobedient to the law.

Rom. 2:28 For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:

Rom. 2:29 But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

Now Paul gets to the conclusion of this point. It's not being born a Jew or circumcision of the flesh that makes you a true Jew. It's the circumcision of the

heart and the spirit, the desire and effort to follow God in faith and obedience that makes you a Jew—one of God's chosen people.

Deuteronomy 30:6 And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.

In Galatians Paul states it a bit differently: *Galatians 5:6 For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.*

The last statement in verse 29 makes me think of the Pharisees who prided themselves on obeying the letter of the law in order to hear the praise of men; but they were hypocrites and had not earned the praise of God.

Matthew 23:1-7 Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.