



A Study of Romans

Romans Chapter 2

The Judgement and the Law of God



Overview

In Chapter 1, Paul addresses the issues of idolatry and the immorality of man by specifically calling out 23 attributes of man's debased mind. In Chapter 2, Paul addresses the natural instinct of man to condemn his fellow man who demonstrate these human character flaws (among additional flaws that we may find in others). Paul emphasizes that sin committed by Gentiles as well as Jews provokes the wrath of God. Circumcision does not bring salvation to those who are sinful; just as the absence of circumcision and the Law does not bring into consideration for the salvation of the righteous.

1. The Just Judgement of God (2: 1-11)

- 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.***
- 2 But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.***
- 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?***
- 4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?***
- 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;***
- 6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds:***
- 7 To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:***
- 8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,***
- 9 Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;***
- 10 But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:***
- 11 For there is no respect of persons with God.***

Key Points:

- God's impartial judgement leaves no room for man's sense of moral superiority
- God's kindness will lead you to repentance
- Nobody escapes God's judgement

Questions:

1. Throughout the first chapter, Paul referred to sinners in 3rd-person ("they", "them"). Suddenly in Chapter 2, he refers to sinners in the 2nd person (thou or "you"). Why do you think Paul makes this immediate change in pronouns to his audience?
2. Paul's writing is a diatribe. Why do you think Paul uses such harsh language?

3. Why does Paul say in 2:1: “you have no excuse” about passing judgement on others when it condemns yourself?
4. Why do you think Paul declares in 2:10: glory, honour, and peace... *first for the Jew, then for the Gentile*, and then he says in 2:11: God does not show favoritism?

2. The Doers of the Law (2:12-16)

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;

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

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:

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;)

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

Key Points

- The Law of Moses is introduced for the first time in the letter.
- Wicked Jews (who know the Law) and Gentiles (who don't know the Law) both deserve condemnation because both are aware that they are sinners.
- Jews have Mosaic Law and Gentiles have a “natural” law for themselves.
- God sees people's secrets and He has appointed Jesus Christ to judge us all.

Questions

- 1 What is meant by “*as many as have sinned without the law shall also perish without the law*”?
- 2 Why do you think Paul separates sinners with and without the law having the same fate?
- 3 Referring to Gentiles, what do you think is meant by the phrase “*the work of the law written in their hearts*”?
- 4 What is meant by God “*judging the secrets of men*”?

3. The Law and True Circumcision (2:17-29)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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?

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

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.

Key Points

- A challenge to the religious snobbery of boastful Jews
- Exposure of Jewish hypocrisy in reference to Mosaic Law
- Outward signs are nothing without inward realities of faith.

Questions

1. What issue is Paul addressing when he writes about a being a “guide for the blind”, an “instructor of the foolish”, a “teacher of little children”?
2. Paul asks 5 incriminating questions asked about Jewish behaviors. Why?
3. What is meant by being Jewish “inwardly” and “outwardly”?
4. What is meant by “circumcision of the heart”?

----- **END OF LESSON** -----

NEXT MONTH – read Romans 3:1- 31

Covering: Faithfulness and Justice of God; Universal Domination of Sin; Righteousness of God Manifested; Justification by Faith