

## REST ASSURED JUDGMENT'S FOR EVERYONE

### **Romans 2:1-16**

The theme of **Romans chapter two** seems all too obvious even to the casual reader. Yet, anyone and everyone would be very unwise if they read **Romans chapter two** casually.

The theme of this particular chapter is the fact that judgment is for everyone. It is not just for the condemning, the self-righteous, or the religious. It is certain for all! We find Paul sets this truth before his readers two times in **verses 9 and 10** where we find him saying that judgment is sure for both “the Jew...and...the Gentile.”

In this chapter, not only do we learn that judgment is sure for everyone, we are also introduced to at least four principles of the judgment awaiting all of us. A principle is defined as being: “a fundamental truth or proposition that serves as the foundation for a system of belief or behavior or for a chain of reasoning.”

Those principles are stated in:

**verse 2** where judgment is “according to truth”

**verse 6** where judgment is “to every man according to his deeds”

**verse 11** where judgment is with “no respect of persons”

**verse 16** where judgment is “according to my (Paul’s) gospel”

The subject of judgment Paul is dealing with in this chapter is not whether or not a Christian is to judge or not. No, that is not at all the subject matter being considered here. The question of whether or not a Christian is to judge is a subject for another time. The subject matter of judgment being considered in this chapter is the fact that everyone, both the Jew and the Gentile, will face a righteous judgment. A righteous judgment that is based on the light one has been exposed to and how one has reacted to that light.

**Verse 1** reaches back to the previous chapter with the word “Therefore” and connects us to what the apostle was dealing with in chapter one and, in my opinion, he does so with an appropriate statement of caution. We find in chapter two Paul warning both Jew and Gentile against performing a self-righteous judgment. This truth can be seen especially in light of the fact he uses the phrase “whosoever thou art that judgest.” It seems to me that he may have been thinking of the Jew before he thinking of the Gentile. In fact, being Jewish himself, I imagine he knew just

how inclined his people were at being judgmental because of the privileges which had been extended to them as the chosen of God. They were guilty of seeing themselves in an manner that was not healthy for them as a people. It seems they felt because they had been given the law through Moses, that that was enough. They failed to understand that having the law was not enough. When God gave them the law, He also expected them to keep the law.

To this idea John Phillips writes: **“The sin of hypocrisy is that of being indignant at other people’s shortcomings and sins while not being indignant of our own.”** I doubt the problem being addressed here by Paul could be stated any clearer than how Dr. Phillips has stated it.

Before moving into our comments on the content of this chapter, the bottom line before us is this: God is going to judge us all by His standard and not ours! And, according to **Romans 3:23** “we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God” nothing else needs to be said.

In the first verse of the chapter we ought to pay attention to at least three words. The first is “inexcusable.” It comes from the Greek word “*anapologētos*,” which means “(being) without apology or defense.” The next word worthy of consideration is the word “judge” which refers to censorious criticism and judgment. This speaks or refers to one making an appraisal of someone else’s character. It speaks of “pronouncing or determining a judgment on another without first considering one’s own personal needs relating to character. It means to judge others with a sever censorship without considering (first) one’s own character and its obvious flaws.”

The last word to consider in this verse is the word “same.” This word is *NOT* referring to the same deeds. It refers to one’s failure to live up to the privileges which has been made available to them by the light which they have been exposed to. This truth is an extremely important truth to understand. Why? Well, although their deed, were not the same in kind as far as performance, they were seen as the same in kind in God’s sight, because they were sins against light or privilege.

So, Paul declares both the Jew and the Gentile are “without excuse.” Both parties are in need of salvation. Both had light and both have committed great sins against that light. Even though the Jew had received the law of God through Moses and

excused themselves as being free from guilt, Paul declares, without apology, his own people guilty of being sinners in need of what only the gospel could give.

**Verse 2** continues by setting forth the first of at least four principles connected with the judgment of God given in this passage. The first statement made here is so clear that anyone can understand what Paul is saying. He is saying, in reality, rest assured, judgment for all men will be according to the truth of God and not truth according to man. It will not be according to what *we* think about it or especially what we *feel* about it, **but “according to truth.”** And, again, this is referring to God’s truth!

Like it or not, man is heading for a righteous and personal judgment that will affect his eternity according to what Paul preached on Mars Hill in **Acts 15:31**. In that message, Paul stated that because Jesus came out from among the dead judgment is a sure thing! And, if I understand the Word of God correctly, this truth has been revealed to every man whether he admits it or not.

**Verse 3** is like someone asking a question that needs no answer. Even the Jew, who wrongly thought himself to be above judgment because of the privilege they have received, discovers, in this verse, that judgment is certain, even for them. As Oliver B. Greene stated: “Paul is (here) showing them (the Jew) that crime is crime, evil is evil, wherever committed—and those who profess to be “people of God” have no license to sin.” Maybe what Elihu said in **Job 32:8** will prove helpful here. I quote: “...there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.”

As Paul continues his argument in **verse 4** he does so by asking: “Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?” Although Paul is directing this question to the Jew, don’t you think we should take note of the verbiage used in this verse as well?

Under inspiration of the Holy Spirit the great apostle refers to the “goodness, forbearance, (and) longsuffering” of God. May I simply say here that it is clearly God’s will for all men to be saved! (**1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9**) It is not God’s will for men to be lost and damned for eternity. But they will be, and justly so, if they reject the goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering of a merciful God.

The idea behind the word “goodness” seems to be that instead of God coming forth with righteous judgment, He chooses rather to continue to send them blessings of many kinds and daily supply them with both rain and sunshine (**Matthew 5:45**). The idea behind the word “forbearance” seems to be that instead of God coming forth with His righteous judgment He rather chooses to hold back or restrain manifesting His displeasure against sin. The idea behind the word “longsuffering” seems to be that instead of God coming forth with His righteous judgment He graciously allows His creation to continue in sin without punishing them immediately knowing He will eventually punish them in a righteous manner in due time (**Ecclesiastes 12:13-14**).

The contrast presented between **verse 4** and **verse 5** is somewhat startling. In light of and in spite of God’s goodness displayed in the multiple ways He has and continues to display it, **verse 5** begins with the word “But” which sets forth a contrast. A hard and impenitent heart is a heart that seems to not be affected in any appreciable manner concerning sin. It speaks of a heart that does manifest any sorry for its sin.

In fact, this verse tells us that the person who fails to be sorry or remorseful for their sin, will actually “treasure up unto thyself (themselves) wrath against the day of wrath...”! This is saying they are laying up God’s wrath by their choices and actions in light of their obvious understanding of what they are doing and the outcome they know to be certain! This says they are fully aware of the fact that when God brings judgment upon them, it will be a totally righteous judgment.

This is amazing to me! Paul is saying they understand they have been brought face to face with the goodness of God and in spite of that fact, they rather choose to rebel against a God of grace and goodness in order to pile up damnation and wrath of a righteous God against them for their day of judgment! And in that day, they will come face to face with a God who’s judgments are right and righteous.

Please note how the writer emphasizes this very fact in what he says in **verse 6** and also adds another of the principles of judgment that are found in this chapter. The second principle given here states that, God will judge and “render to every man according to his deeds.”

The “every man” here refers to every man whether saved or unsaved. This is a principle stated in every place the Word of God deals with the judgment of man

whether it refers to the Beams Seat of Christ for the believer as addressed in **2 Corinthians 5:10** or it refers to the judgment of the lost as addressed in **Revelation 20:11-15**. In both of those judgments (or in the other judgments spoken of in the Scriptures), judgment will be according to light which was available at the time and what man chose to do in spite of that light. For the most part, the light was refused. When light is rejected and opportunities are turned down or God's goodness is ignored, there is nothing left to be known but the righteous judgment of God.

May I add one more thought here? Rest assured God deals with all men according to His righteousness and His truth. We actually find a sentiment found in other places in the Bible stated clearly in **Psalms 19:9** which states; "the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

This brings us to an important statement we all would be wise to consider and understand. When men, regardless of their location or status in life, go to Hell, they do so for one specific reason. The fact they die and go to Hell is not attached to their privilege. Privilege differs from man to man even those living in the same geographic location during the same frame of time. Why men die lost is the fact all men are born in sin! They inherit a fallen nature from the parents. They are born sinners and they prove they are sinners by the choices they make and the life they live. And because they refuse to act on the light and privilege they have been given, they will, one day, sadly, open their eyes in Hell as did the rich man of **Luke 16**.

That is the bad news. The good news is, if they but realize they are lost and by faith receive Christ as Savior, they can be saved and know the joys of that place Jesus has gone to prepare. A place we know as Heaven!

As we look at **verses 7** through **10**, we find something a bit unusual. Paul begins to set forth a great truth in **verse 7** and doesn't complete it until **verse 10**. But before he does complete the thought, he interrupts himself with what we find in **verses 8** and **9**. The word "But" in **verse 8** introduces the contrast.

**Verses 7** and **10** refers to those "who by patient continuance in well doing seek...glory honor, and peace." Whereas those introduced in **verse 8** and **9** identifies those who "do not obey the truth" and that rather "are contentious...obey...unrighteousness, indignation...wrath, tribulation and

anguish.” And **verse 10** closes with the statement that it matters not to God whether they be Jew or Gentile! The principle stated above in **verse 2** that “the judgment of God is according to truth....”

From **verses 7, 8, 9, 10** we easily conclude God allows man to choose what his eternal destiny will be. Man may either seek after rewards that come from living a life spent pleasing the Lord and laying up treasures in Heaven or, instead, they may choose a life that lays up treasures of divine wrath sure to be given to them on the day of judgment.

Isn't it rather an odd thing that sinful man would rather contend with the Almighty, resist His claims, and rebel against His law than submit to His goodness, His forbearance, His longsuffering, and His righteousness all available for free? Aren't men strange creatures?

Have you noticed the third principle of judgment given in **verse 11**? It is something of extreme importance. Paul states that judgment and its outcome is without “respect of persons” on the part of God. Meaning, His judgment will be meted out, first to the Jew and, also, to the Gentile. His judgments are, remember, “true and righteous altogether.” He does not judge according to the face regardless of the kind of face it is. He sees beyond the external into that which internal, in the heart. In fact, that is what “no respect of persons” means. (Although this is not considered by scholars and theologians, it is considered by this theologian as one of the principles of judgment. Maybe they ought to think of it as being one too.)

To try to explain this a little further, this means that although God gave the covenants and promises to Abraham and his descendants, it was God's intent that the Gentiles be brought under the blessings that came to mankind through those covenants. He never had a plan that was not inclusive of the Gentile world although He did not choose them to be the way and means through which the ultimate blessing to mankind would come which refers to Jesus being the Saviour of the World. (**Genesis 12:1-3**)

From this we can infer that God is no respecter of persons either in blessings or judgment. A born again Gentile has as great a privilege as a Jew that has been born again. And, a Gentile that dies in his sins because he has rejected God's only means of salvation, will be judged as just and righteously as a Jew that dies in his sins because he has rejected God's only means of salvation.

This truth is taught clearly in **Deuteronomy 10:17** where Moses states: “For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a might, and a terrible, which regardeth not person, nor taketh reward.”

From what has been stated and is about to be boldly stated, whether Jew or Gentile that has sinned under the Law perish because the fact of the matter is “the wages of sin is death” **Romans 6:23**.

In fact, **verse 12** continues with a sweeping statement: “For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law.” This statement means all! And it is apparent that the truth being communicated here is easily so easily understood it needs no comment. But, please notice something significant here, and that is the emphasis the Holy Spirit places upon the “law” in the next four verse beginning with **verse 12**. In those verses Paul refers to two different kinds of law. One is the Law of Moses as received at Sinai. The other is the law of nature which has been received by every one of the descendants of Adam and Eve.

Look at the declaration being made here. We find that it does not matter whether one does or does not have the law. Whether Jew and Gentile, both will perish because of the fact they have sinned against a Holy God! If it is a Jew, he will perish with the law. If it is a Gentile, he will perish without the law. Again, the issue is not in the fact that one does or does not have the law. Both Jew or Gentile will perish with or without the law.

The statement is clear in **verse 12**: “For as many as have sinned without the law shall also perish without the law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law.”

It is obvious to all: the judgment of God is righteous. Paul is saying that it does not matter what relation a man has to the law! He will either perish without the law because he has sinned without the law. Or, he will be judged by the law seeing he has sinned in the law. Either way, he will be judged and perish because he is a sinner.

In **verses 13-15** the writer, in a parenthetical manner, sets forth the truth presented in **verse 12**. In truth, **verse 13** continues the thought in **verse 12** by stating something that should be apparent but, apparently, it is not apparent. And it is this:

it is “not the hearers of the law (that) are just before God, but the doers of the law (that) shall be justified.”

Would not logic teach us that having the law is not the same as doing the law? Would it not be easy to understand that hearing the law is not the same as doing the Law? Could not a child realize that having the Law is not the same as meeting the requirements set forth in the Law? Man must realize that in order to be saved by the Law (which no man can be), he must do the Law!

In **verses 14-15** we discover something new is introduced into this argument. It is a truth that is somewhat amazing in itself. Although the Gentile was not given the Law of Moses as were the Jews, they had a law nonetheless. Paul called it “the law of nature.” and it goes back to the scripture quoted above from **Job 32:8**.

You see, the Law of Moses, which God gave to the children of Israel, was not something new. In fact, the very essence of the Law of Moses already existed in the heart and the conscience of man having been instilled in man by their Creator from the beginning. It was, in truth, the Law of God from the beginning. This law was not exhibited as was the Law of Moses in ceremony and sacrifice per-say, but was in their hearts and was exhibited unconsciously in the moral decisions they made and the actions they performed. Before the giving of the law, man was knowing and doing both right and wrong even though they had not the Law of Moses inscribed in stone.

Instead of having the law written in stone, they had it written in their hearts. It was that, that we can assume that made them morally conscience. This is a truth that cannot be denied or disposed of because the “work of the law (was) written in their hearts” while at the same time “their conscience (was) also bearing witness.” In other words, they agreed together, that is their heart and their conscience.

We can therefore summarize that although the Law of Moses had not been written in their hearts, a divine work was still present in men. Even in men that lived before the Law of Moses had been written.

We will bring this part of our **Romans chapter two** study to a close with the fourth principle of judgment as presented in this great passage. Paul states it as follows: “In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to the Gospel.”



As already noted above, God has given undeniable evidence that the judgment of all men, Jew and Gentile alike, is certain! He told us it is sure in **Acts 17:31**. The evidence for this truth is anchored in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The scriptures are clear that the only ones who will be able to stand in “the day” or that day oft mentioned, are those who have been declared righteous by the grace of God. Those who will be able to stand are those recipients of the imputed righteousness of God as the result of repenting of their sins and being made new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is the result of an act of faith by the one who was a sinner but “...hath been delivered ...from the power of darkness , and hath (been) translated...into the kingdom of his dear Son” **Colossians 1:12** by the grace and mercies of a just and righteous God.

Oh my friend! Whether you are a saint or a sinner, it is imperative you have a proper understanding of the judgment of a Holy and Just God. From the scriptures, we know that judgment will be one of righteousness because God is righteous and, therefore, He can be or do nothing less.

It is a day which has been ordained and set by God Himself. It is has yet to arrive but it will arrive soon enough and it behooves us all to be ready or prepared for that day!

So, I close with this wonderful truth. We all can be ready! Totally ready, in light of “the gospel:” both its message and its power! Proper preparation for the day of judgment is not contingent on whether or not we have kept the Law of Moses or have even been subject to the law written in our heart or our conscience. But rather have we believed the message of the gospel of God?

Our salvation or deliverance does not depend on what man can work up but on what God has brought down in the giving of His Son. **John 1:17** says: “For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” Except for the shedding of the precious blood of the “Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” there would none prepared to stand in that day when the secrets of men’s hearts are revealed!

It is in light of the blessed fact that God, in His unattainable wisdom, entrusted lumps of clay, “clay vessels” with a treasure. That treasure is, actually, the message of the gospel of the grace of God that contains the power God is able to redeem men and deliver them out of the kingdom of darkness and place them into

the kingdom of light! It is a marvelous thing that God has so ordered and ordained that men carry the good news of the gospel to a world of lost men, women, boys, and girls!

Why would He do such a gracious and glorious thing? Because He knew, on our own, without Him, none of us could be saved. And His will is to “have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.” His will is that He is “not willing that any perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

So, because of that great truth, we have “the gospel of God” or the gospel of the grace of God that teaches and declares that “whosoever will” may have everlasting life if they but “believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God” **John 20:31**.

Dear one, have you yet believed? Please do so now! Jesus said He would save anyone and everyone that would call on His name, **Romans 10:13**. It worked for me. It has worked for a multitude of others just like you and me. It will work for you if you will but call on God with a broken spirit and a contrite heart.

Tom Price, 2023