

Romans 2: 1-16

After Paul introduced himself to the church at Rome, he was led of the Holy Spirit to set down the basic principles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

He began by declaring in Romans 1:16, **"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."**

Which begs the question, does everyone need to be saved?

Well, the answer is a decided yes.

In fact, the Holy Spirit has devoted the rest of this chapter, all of Chapter 2, and part of Chapter 3, to prove this very fact.

First of all, the immoral unconverted Gentile was dealt with, which was the subject of our last lesson.

Next, God deals with the moral Gentile, and finally His own Chosen People Israel.

In each case, the verdict remains the same. The whole world is guilty before God.

And how did God arrive at this conclusion? Well, a short summary of His case against mankind is as follows:

Chapter 1: 21-32 shows conclusively that the immoral Gentile, because of his gross sins, is condemned by God.

Chapter 2: 1-16 (where today's lesson is found) shows us that the moral unbelieving Gentile, although he has not slipped to the same depths of sin as the first group, is nevertheless under the judgment of God.

Chapter 2: 17-29 and on into chapter 3 deals with the Jew, and then God draws His final conclusion: Mankind is guilty before God.

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Today we will be covering Romans 2: 1-16, God's case against the moral unbelieving Gentile.

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I don't think any of us had a difficult time accepting God's conclusion in Chapter one.

Certainly wickedness, murder, and deceit are gross sins, quite capable of bringing down God's righteous judgment.

But what about the moral unbelieving Gentile who we rub shoulders with every day? What about our neighbours and the people we work with?

They're not wicked. They're not murderers.

Yes, it's going to be hard for us to accept

God's final verdict in Romans 3:12 when it applies to them.

Somehow God's words "**there is none that**

doeth good, no, not one" doesn't seem to apply to them.

Granted, they're not perfect, but they're

certainly not the murderers and haters of God that we observed in Chapter 1.

For the most part, they seem to be pretty good citizens.

However, as we will soon find out, God sees

them completely differently than we do.

And that's not too surprising.

As far as mankind is concerned, we can look

at the very same thing and still come up with a different answer.

Depending on whether we're an optimist or a pessimist, or anywhere in between, our attitude, not what we actually see, makes all the difference.

No, men cannot even agree among themselves, and when it comes to man and God, the possibilities for disagreement are even greater.

That's because not only is our attitude completely different than God's, but what we actually see is also completely different.

Yes, in most cases, God and man see two different things.

And that, by the way, is why we might have a problem with God's conclusions in Chapter 2.

Let me give you an example of this unusual phenomenon before we get into this chapter.

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Samuel was a godly judge, right?

However, this fact didn't necessarily mean that his viewpoint and God's were always the same.

Let's turn to 1 Samuel 16, and we'll check this out.

God had commanded Samuel to anoint a new king for Israel, and He had already narrowed it down to one family.

So the only question was, Which one of Jesse's sons would it be?

As we look in on this scene, Jesse's eldest son is passing before Samuel for his consideration.

1 Samuel 16:6 **"And it came to pass, when they were come, that he (that is Samuel) looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the LORD's anointed is before him."**

Now remember, Samuel was a godly man, walking in the ways of the Lord.

However, the interesting thing about his choice was Eliab was very much like the present King whom God was replacing.

Yes, Eliab was tall and handsome, just like King Saul, and Samuel was impressed.

He said to himself, *He's got to be the one. He just looks like a leader.* But he was wrong.

V 7 **"But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man**

seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart."

So you see, it wasn't too surprising that God and Samuel had come up with different answers.

The fact is, they were looking at two different things.

Samuel was looking at a tall, handsome man, while God was looking at a rebellious heart.

However, if Samuel had been able to spend some time with Eliab, I think he would have seen God's point of view.

You see, even man can sometimes see the heart, that is, if he keeps his ears open long enough.

In fact, Jesus said, in Math. 12:34 "--- **out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.**"

So let's take a look at Eliab's heart.

In 1 Samuel 17, we find David delivering food to his brothers who are out on the battlefield.

David didn't have any ulterior motives for making this trip. He was simply obeying his father.

However, this was the reception that he got from Eliab.

1 Samuel 17:28 **"And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness**

**of thine heart; for thou art come down
that thou mightest see the battle."**

Yes, **"out of the abundance of the heart the
mouth speaketh."**

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As I have already mentioned, none of us
would have a problem understanding why
God would be angry with
unrighteousness, fornication,
maliciousness, and murder.

But with the moral man, the outward
appearance is not too bad.

However, Romans 2 is not about the outward
appearance.

It's about God's point of view, and it's
about the heart.

So, in Chapter 2, we will find it essential
to look at the moral unbeliever through
God's eyes.

Romans 2:1-3 **"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?"

So God's answer to the moral man, the man who is confident of his own standing before God, is this: -- **"thou art inexcusable."**

Why? --- Because, **"wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for**

thou that judgest doest the same things."

Wait a minute. These people don't do the same things as the ones in Chapter 1:

Unrighteousness

Fornication

Murder

Etc.

I don't understand!

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Could it be that we are still looking at things from our point of view rather than God's?

Remember, God is looking at the heart.

And we must also consider what Jesus said in Matthew 5:27-28 -- **"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:**

28 But I say unto you, That whosoever

**looketh on a woman to lust after her
hath committed adultery with her
already in his heart."**

And we must remember that Jesus is God in
the flesh.

So, this is God speaking.

And Jesus also said in Matthew 5:21-22 ---

**"Ye have heard that it was said of them of
old time, Thou shalt not kill; and
whosoever shall kill shall be in danger
of the judgment:**

**²² But I say unto you, That whosoever
is angry with his brother without a
cause shall be in danger of the
judgment:"**

So, is lusting the same as adultery, and
hatred, the same as murder?"

Jesus says it is, and that's God's viewpoint
on the subject.

Why? Because He's looking at the heart.

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So now that Jesus has enlightened us somewhat, let's take another look at Romans 2.

V 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."**

Makes more sense now, doesn't it.

Let's go on. --- V2-6 **"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:"

So that's God's viewpoint, and it's the
right one.

Or, to put it in the words of V 5, it is
"the righteous judgment of God."

And by the way, it is also the viewpoint by
which we have been judged.

What a blessed relief it is to know that
Jesus has taken our place.

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V 5-11 "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."

V 7 almost looks like salvation by works, doesn't it?

"To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life."

And actually it is.

If we could continue in well doing, then salvation could be gained by works, but as we all know, we can't.

And if we can't, then what is V 7 really talking about?

I believe what we have here is a simple statement that shows how **"the righteous judgment of God"** works.

God will, as V 6 tells us, ---"**render to every man according to his deeds.**"

Also, as V 11 warns us, there are no favourites --- "**For there is no respect of persons with God.**"

So the bottom line is this. Apart from the grace of God, there is only God's Law. And be it God's written word, or God's law written in our conscience, if we don't measure up, then we're lost.

V 12-16 "**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, (other than in their

conscience) **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."**

In these few verses, the written Law and God's natural law are compared.

As we all know, the Jew had the written Word of God --- **"being instructed out of the law."**

On the other hand, the Gentiles, who didn't have the written law, still had the law of God written in their *conscience*.

So then in their hearts, and, after all,
that's what God sees, they both knew
what God expected of them.

However, knowledge is only the first step,
for it is **"not the hearers of the law
(that) are just before God, but the
doers."**

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Also, when you read this passage, you will
understand the message contained in
V 12 much better if you temporarily
leave out the brackets and go straight
to V 16.

So here's V 12 and V 16 without the
brackets:

**"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;" --- V16 "In the day**

**when God shall judge the secrets of men
by Jesus Christ according to my
gospel."**

And did you notice the words -- "**the secrets
of men**"?

That's the heart view, isn't it?

And to illustrate the heart view, let me
tell you about an incident in my own
life when I was a paper boy.

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In those days, you didn't talk back to your
elders, parents or others.

I had a good paper route, delivering 87
papers without traveling too great a
distance.

That's because I delivered a local paper,
and almost everyone was a customer.

And it was especially easy in good weather.

You could ride across the lawns without even stopping, and twirl your folded paper through the air onto the porch.

Now, that was OK in good weather, but on rainy days, and particularly in windy weather, you shouldn't really do that.

In bad weather, you should get off your bike at each house and put the paper in between the doors.

What a drag that was.

So the temptation was to continue throwing the paper onto the porch if the weather wasn't really too bad.

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I had one customer that was an old-maid schoolteacher who tutored students for a living.

Actually, she looked like an old-maid
schoolteacher, and a very stern old-
maid schoolteacher at that.

At least that was the opinion of her paper
boy.

Her house had an open porch with fancy
spindles.

They looked quite nice, but they gave
absolutely no protection from the
wind.

I bet you can see it coming, can't you?

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I always collected the paper money on
Saturday mornings, and one morning
when I knocked on her door, she
looked at me very sternly, and said,
"I hardly feel like paying you at all
this week. Twice the paper has blown
all over the porch, and it also got

wet. From now on, I want you to put it where its not going to blow around."

Of course, I would have never thought of talking back to any adult, and especially not that lady, but inside, I was mad.

And to be honest, I was mad because I knew I was wrong.

Yes, I had cut too many corners, and got caught.

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I'm telling you this story to demonstrate the secrets of man's heart.

I couldn't talk back, and I knew I was wrong, but I still wanted to get even.

Now you're looking at my heart, and it's not a pretty picture, is it?

I said to myself, *All right, lady. You're not going to lose your paper this week.*

So every day, I folded her paper into a 3-inch packet and jammed it in between the rails.

And every day, when I jammed that paper in between those rails, I felt better, that is, until Saturday morning came around.

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Her storm door was solid tongue and groove cedar, so after you knocked, you couldn't see her until you were nose to nose.

The suspense was killing.

Every minute, as I waited for that door to open, I wished I hadn't jammed those papers in between those rails.

She opened the door, and I waited for the
blast.

But it didn't come.

Instead, she smiled, and said "My, that was
such a smart thing you did. I never
missed one paper. You must do that
every day from now on."

So, every day, rain or shine, I had to get
off my bike and jam her paper in
between the rails.

Had I gotten away with it?

I'm not sure.

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But the point is, this little story
illustrates the fact that man looks
on the outward appearance, but God,
who looks on the heart, always sees
the truth.

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So the bottom line is this. Even the moral unbeliever (who thinks he can plead his righteousness and be accepted by God), is wrong.

Not only will he be judged by his deeds, but as V 6 tells us, God " -- **will render to every man according to his deeds,**" but he will also be judged by the motive behind those deeds "**in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men ---**" V 16.

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C. I. Schofield has made some interesting comments here concerning the nature of God's judgment.

First of all, he says --- His judgment will be according to truth:

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

(2) It will be according to our deeds:

V 6 **"Who will render to every man according to his deeds."**

(3) It will be according to the light enjoyed:

V 11-15 **"For there is no respect of persons with God.**

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"** (and so on until we get to V 15.)

(4) It will be according to the Gospel, that the secret thoughts and motives of men will be judged:

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

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Certainly truth, man's deeds, and the light enjoyed would all have their proper place in a court of law.

But what about this last part, **"the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel"**?

What's that got to do with justice?

Well, actually, it doesn't have anything to do with justice, at least as far as man is concerned.

It's got to do with mercy.

Please turn with me to Revelation 20.

V 11-15 **"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and**

there was found no place for them.

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.

¹³ And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

¹⁴ And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

¹⁵ And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

The "**books**" most certainly would contain the evidence against those on trial, and they will be "**judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.**"

This is proper court procedure, and this is justice.

But what is the "**book of life**" doing here?

The other books, containing a record of their deeds, would be necessary because this is a court of law, and evidence must be provided.

But the book of life is not a book of evidence. It is a book of pardon.

We see the book of life referred to in Philippians 4:3.

Paul, speaking to a believer, says, "**And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me**

**in the gospel, with Clement also, and
with other my fellowlabourers, whose
names are in the book of life."**

Yes, the book of life is a record of those
who have been pardoned because of Jesus
Christ.

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♪♪ *Is my name written there on the page
bright and fair?*

*In the book of God's Kingdom,
Is my name written there?"*

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Unfortunately, on that awful Day of
Judgment, the evidence written in the
other books will only lead to
condemnation.

For Romans 3:23 says **"For all have sinned,
and come short of the glory of God."**

So someone might ask, *Then why bother with the evidence? The outcome is certain.*

Well, for one thing, the Great White Throne Judgment is a court of law, and evidence must be provided.

But also, and again because this is a court of law, the evidence provided in those books will be used to determine the degree of punishment.

Well, that all makes sense, but we still haven't answered the question, *What place does the book of life have in a court of law?*

Actually, it has a very ominous place.

It is the evidence that everyone standing there has not availed themselves of God's grace.

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as

**scarlet, they shall be as white as
snow; though they be red like crimson,
they shall be as wool."**

However, by this time, the Age of Grace has
passed, and there is a blank where
their name could have been.

And their good works cannot fill in that
blank.

In Matthew 7:22-23, Jesus says **"Many will
say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have
we not prophesied in thy name? and in
thy name have cast out devils? and in
thy name done many wonderful works?**

²³ **And then will I profess unto them,
I never knew you: depart from me, ye
that work iniquity."**

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Let me close by going back to our study in Romans 2, and reread V 12 and 16, leaving out the brackets.

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

If you have not accepted God's viewpoint already, you should do it without delay.

Yes, you should do it before that Day of Judgment arrives and **"the books"** are opened.

In that day, the question will not be, *Are your good works good enough?* but it will be, *What have you done with My*

*offer of pardon that I purchased with
the blood of My own dear Son?*

No response will be needed, for the answer
will be found in the book of life.

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Next week, the subject will be the Jew, and
God's final diagnosis of mankind.