

Romans

Bible Study

Wrath and Judgment

Romans 2:1—6

Romans chapter 1 is a condemnation of all mankind. It exposes our true hearts as being absolutely corrupt and degenerate, unable to understand anything spiritual. At the fall of man, when Adam disobeyed God and ate of the fruit that was forbidden, we were all affected, as was the entire universe. The spiritual connection that Adam had with God was broken and that broken state is handed down to all mankind so that we are all born into a hopeless spiritual condition. Since our nature is corrupt (our Adamic sin nature), we can't help but demonstrate our inner condition by sinning. This is why, left on his own, man only gets worse and worse. This condition is described by Paul in the first chapter of Romans, beginning with verse 18. While man prides himself on being wise, it is actually the spiritually energized (those who are saved and therefore are indwelt by the Holy Spirit) who are wise, according to the Bible.

Romans chapter 2 begins with the word *therefore*, which connects the previous chapter with what Paul is about to say. In spite of God revealing Himself to the world, man has completely turned away from Him and traveled his own path. Man is without excuse in his denial of God. When standing before God at the Great White Throne, all men who have spent their life rejecting God's offer of salvation will have no defense for doing that. They stand totally condemned because they wanted to do things their own way. At the end of time, God will allow them to go their own way, which unfortunately leads them to eternal damnation. A person who has spent a lifetime rejecting God will certainly not feel comfortable being in God's presence for all eternity after death.

It's interesting that most people condemn others for the same thing they are guilty of. Not only are they judging others, but are doing so about things that they are just as guilty. This is being self-righteous. This is very evident in the Pharisees who pretended to be so very righteous, but were called out by Jesus as being worse than the ones whom they were condemning. They would put heaven burdens of their own laws on the people, but they would not follow them. They would manufacture loopholes that would excuse them from following the Mosaic Law while keeping the people under not only the Mosaic Law, but their additional laws. They were characterized as straining out a gnat while swallowing a camel (Matthew 23:24).

Paul asks a question in verse 3, concerning those who practice things that they condemn others for. How do they think they will escape God's judgment? All men will come under God's judgment, however, there is a different type of judgment for those who are saved. The believer will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ (Romans 14:10). This judgment will not lead to wrath, but will be one of reward. According to 1 Corinthians 3:10—15, we will be judged according to how faithful we have been in holding to the doctrine Paul taught. When carefully read, we see Paul is calling himself a masterbuilder, building his foundation upon Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is actually a common cornerstone to Israel's foundation and the preaching of the Kingdom, and the church's foundation and the preaching of Grace by Paul. The cornerstone is set into place as a reference to the rest of the foundation, which ultimately determines the rest of the structure. From Christ, as Cornerstone, comes two structures, one for Israel under Prophecy, and another for the Church, under the Pauline Mystery (For Israel: Isaiah 28:16; Matthew 21:2 For the Church: Ephesians 2:20).

It's important to understand that we need to build our doctrine on the correct foundation. Paul gives us the information we need to properly build on what was revealed to him by Jesus Christ. Since Paul is our masterbuilder, it only makes sense that we build on what he teaches. If we build an

improper structure by building outside of the foundation that Paul laid down, then all that will be burned up as waste when we are judged. However, if we are faithful in following and building on what Paul teaches, then we will be rewarded. Building a ministry on Pauline doctrine has eternal value.

In contrast to believers, unbelievers will be judged according to their deeds. This is clearly shown at the Great White Throne judgment of Revelation 20:12—13. Those who have not acted according to God's moral law will be condemned. Those who stand at the Great White Throne judgment rejected Jesus Christ as their mediator, standing alone to defend their own deeds and to prove their own righteousness. Unfortunately, their sin and sins prove they are unrighteousness which will convict them to eternal damnation.

Although God separates His plans for Israel from that of the Church, he acts as Mediator for both groups. For Israel, He is the mediator of the New Covenant (Hebrews 12:24), while in this Dispensation of Grace He acts as the Mediator between man and God for salvation (1 Timothy 2:5). In that same vein, He is also the Advocate for the Little Flock of believers in Israel under the Kingdom program (1 John 2:1). Those who sinned once brought a sacrifice to cover their sins, but after Jesus Christ died, was buried and resurrected, they came to Him as the perfect sacrifice for their forgiveness. The Little Flock of believers will use Jesus Christ as they advocate during the Tribulation. However, their sins will not be forgiven until the Second Coming (Jeremiah 31:34).

The important thing to understand is that Jesus Christ is common between Israel's Prophetic program and the Church, the Body of Christ's Mystery program. God treats both programs separately even though His work on the cross is common to all mankind. He is the Cornerstone with Peter having laid down one foundation and Paul another. Each foundation needs to be built upon according to different specifications.

Going back to the future of the unbeliever, They are the despisers of God's goodness, forbearing and long-suffering. They are putting their trust in themselves while turning away from God. As they continue on this path, their hearts become increasingly hardened and unrepentant, and in so doing, they are building up evidence against themselves that will condemn them. This will happen at culmination of the Day of God's Wrath, which will be at the revelation of the righteous judgment of God at the Second Coming. At Jesus' first coming, He did not come to judge (John 12:47), however, at His Second Coming He will come to judge the world (John 12:48; 2 Thessalonians 1:7—9).

Day of Wrath vs. Judgment of God

Notice in verse five that there are two events listed, wrath and judgment. They are connected in that they are directed toward those whom rejected God's kindness in offering salvation to mankind. God will display His wrath visibly during the Tribulation. In this Dispensation of Grace, God is very quiet, choosing not to reveal Himself in a public manner. This will change during the Tribulation as He shows the world His power and wrath (Psalm 110; Isaiah 13:9—13; Zephaniah 1:14—15; Luke 21:23; Revelation 6:17).

After the Day of God's wrath comes a time of His Judgment. God's judgment cannot be separated from His wrath for it is His wrath that leads to His final judgment of unbelievers. The ungodly men are warned about this coming judgment so there will be no excuse for those who are declared guilty (2 Peter 2:9; 3:7; 1 John 4:17). This judgment is not limited to mankind, for fallen angels will also be judged and punished in this day of judgment (Jude 6).

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