

# Romans

## Bible Study

### How God will Judge

#### Romans 2:1—6

Having completely condemned mankind in chapter 1, Paul continues in chapter 2 to explain the consequences. Since man has broken God's laws, a price must be paid. Determining if the price has been paid is what God's judgment is all about. Just as a jury passes judgment on a person who breaks the law, God will act as Judge and Jury and pass judgment on us for our deeds. The good news is that those who have lived perfect lives have nothing to worry about. The bad news is that no one has ever lived a perfect life, because we are all born with Adam's sin nature. This guarantees that we will sin, proving that we have a corrupt nature. Keep in mind that Paul is speaking about the unbeliever in these first chapters of Romans.

#### **The self-righteous**

It is the self-righteous man that is in view in the first part of chapter 2. Later in this chapter, Paul will deal with the Jew concerning their religion. These self-righteous people think they are better than every one else. They point their finger of condemnation toward others, not realizing that by doing so, they are actually condemning themselves. The self-righteous person sees no need to follow God since they think they know better. They probably won't say that, but their actions speak louder than words.

#### **God as Judge**

Scripture says that we will all be judged by God, but what is the basis for God judging the unbeliever? As our Creator, He is the only One who knows our inner most thoughts. He is the only One who is qualified to set up the rules that we need to live by, and therefore He alone has the authority to judge us.

Scripture tells us that all things belong to God (Psalm 24:1). This give Him the right to do as He pleases. Fortunately for us, He is a loving God who desires that all men to come to Him. Scripture also tells us that He is completely fair and impartial (Acts 10:34; Romans 2:11; Ephesians 6:9). He is not a respecter of persons and therefore, He is unbiased, never showing favoritism of one person over another.

His omniscience also qualifies Him as our perfect Judge. Since He knows everything, including the thoughts and intents of the heart (Matthew 9:4; Hebrews 4:12), He can judge accurately by knowing and understanding the full picture.

#### **Basis of God's judgment**

God has identified for us how the unbeliever will be judged. When the unbeliever stands before the Great White Throne judgement at the end of time, they will know that nothing will be missed and that the judgment will be completely fair.

#### **According to truth** (verse 2)

Man will be judged according to truth. So often, in our judicial system, the truth is not fully revealed, leading to a skewed verdict. Those standing in judgment, at the Great White Throne, can rest assured that God will only judge them by the truth. He knows in detail what they did and why they did it. The unbeliever will have absolutely nothing to add to or remove from what is revealed because every bit of it will be accurate and complete. He will have no defense.

#### **Ignoring revealed "light"** (verses 4—5)

God has revealed Himself in creation and in His word. He has made Himself known to those who follow the light given to them. When Jesus came into the world, He was the Light given to all men (John 1:4—9). Those who continually reject God keep their backs turned on His goodness, forbearance and long-suffering. Those who have rejected the revealed light are building up more and more of God's wrath

against them. The more God's offer is rejected, the more responsible the rejectors are to respond to those testimonies of God reaching out to them, and therefore, the greater their punishment.

**According to deeds** (verse 6)

Most people believe that a person is able to get to heaven by being good and doing good deeds. The problem with this is that they are grading on the curve, comparing bad with worse. The Bible makes it clear that there are no good men (Jeremiah 17:9; Matthew 19:17; Romans 3:10—23). When men judge themselves by their deeds, they make up their own grading scale, making themselves appear good and holy.

God, however, can see the inner man and the evil contained therein. He demands perfection and anything short of that calls for condemnation. Fortunately, believers are seen as being perfected because we are in Christ Jesus (Matthew 5:48; Colossians 1:28; Hebrews 5:9). Since we are perfect in Christ, we will see no condemnation (Romans 8:1). Those who will be judged by their deeds will experience God's wrath and eternal punishment. They will be punished according to their deeds (Luke 20:45—47; Matthew 11:20—22; Luke 12:47—48).

**Regardless of position** (verse 11)

When it comes to judgment, God will not be looking at the external makeup of a person, rather He will be evaluating the heart and actions driven by the heart. It will not matter if a person is Jewish or Gentile, a slave or a free man, a man or a woman, intelligent or average, homely or handsome, or even if they are active in their church or not. God will evaluate the unbeliever by how worthwhile their deeds were in light of eternity. Everything done without Christ is worthless and therefore all deeds will fall short of bringing a person to Christ, and it won't matter who that person is.

**According to conscience** (verse 13—15)

Every person has a built-in conscience that knows right from wrong. If this were not so, then man's evil heart would run rampant to satisfy his evil heart. Good deeds would also become extinct, since people would only live for themselves. This built-in conscience is a law unto itself, because it gives witness to man having come from a moral Creator. All men have basically the same idea of what is right and wrong. Going against your conscience is to go against the built-in law that has been given to each one of us by our Creator. This will be used by God to judge and condemn the unbeliever.

**According to Paul's gospel** (verse 16)

Finally, man will be judged by the standard set forth in Paul's gospel. Paul's gospel clearly shows God is the Judge of all men (Acts 17:31; Romans 2:3, 12; 3:6). How is it possible that all men will be held accountable by a gospel that was revealed through the Apostle Paul? Is it possible to judge someone by a gospel that they never heard?

Many have scratched their head contemplating what Paul meant. Most seem to understand that according to what Paul wrote, God will judge all men. This is a bit nonsensical since Paul has just told us that God will judge all men. It is not necessary for him to tell us he wrote it in his gospel. What he is saying is that men will be judged according to the contents of his gospel.

Paul says that God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ [in accordance to] my gospel. Those saved in the past were saved by faith, just as we are, however, their sins were only covered, not forgiven. According to Paul, these sins of the past were taken care of at calvary (Romans 3:21—25). Believers in times past have their sins dealt with through Christ's death, burial and resurrection. Paul's gospel is the only gospel that spells out the implications of Christ's sacrificial death, not only for us in this Dispensation of Grace, but also to everyone who died before Paul was saved (1 Corinthians 15:1—4).

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