

The Last Day

Romans 2:1-16 is written in view of the last day, the time when God will judge the secrets of men's hearts manifest in their works. Every person who breathes is accountable to God, and all people who reject him are inexcusable. Whether you were a Jew who thought God would never judge you because you have his law, a pagan who practiced obviously detestable behaviors, or a high-minded follower of "stoicism" who felt confident in their own moral goodness, **everyone is under God's righteous eye**. But people object to God's judgment, choosing instead to compare their goodness against that of others: "As long as I'm doing better than my neighbor, I'm doing well." But the question is not whether it offends people, but whether it offends a holy and righteous God.

2 Kinds Of Sinners

- 1. Those who vent their fleshly passions by breaking all the rules*
- 2. Those who vent their fleshly passions by keeping all the rules and feeling superior*

Some people think, "I know my own badness and I love it," while others think, "I know my own goodness and I love myself." This is not how God thinks. We must realize that whether we are fraudulently moral or blatantly immoral, all were dead in sin. The lowest tax collector and the highest pharisee alike need Jesus' gracious love to make them righteous. The gospel is the power of God for salvation to ALL who believe.

The Goodness Of God

The fact that God pursues broken people who have viciously spurned him shows his patience towards mankind. And though he gives us the space to repent, he will not let evil prevail forever. He hasn't turned his back on his creation, but rather, he desires to save the very ones who have turned their backs on him. People who think nothing of this don't understand his goodness is supposed to lead us to repentance.

Unredeemed Tendencies

We ought to read this section knowing that it is about all of us. Though we are righteous in Christ and will not be condemned in the last day for our many hypocrisies, this was true of us before coming to Christ, and even now in our redeemed state we still have sinful tendencies we must continue to turn from. Recognizing our status without God can help us to appreciate his love and mercy more. Let us not read chapter 2 harshly judging those around us, saying "Amen! This is about those horrible people!"

Compassion For The Perishing

Compassion is not affirmation of evil. Jesus was moved with compassion on the multitudes, yet when he told them that he was the bread of life, many were offended. In fact, to avoid telling people there is something greater than our own interiority (feelings) would be hating them. However, it is vital that we do not proclaim this message from a standpoint of superiority. We all need Christ and are lost without him.

Chapter Highlights

VERSES 1-3

To break part of God's law is to be guilty of the whole law. People who think they're better than others judge their fellow man, and yet they do the same things in their hearts. Maybe you don't murder, but do you hate? Maybe you haven't abused yourself sexually with mankind, but are you unthankful? So you do the same thing. Whether the crime against God be heinous or petty in your eyes, all men are lawbreakers.

Those who point at others' badness only prove themselves guilty because they show they can discern between right and wrong and yet still don't always do the right thing. Our standards are flexible and comparative, but God's judgment shows forth absolute truth. If we excuse ourselves, we put ourselves in the judgment seat instead of God. We tend to be lenient with ourselves and hypercritical of others, but God does not judge with respect of persons. **We were accepted by Jesus because we recognize we are not good, not because we are better than others.** As Christians, we should be marked by patient mercy towards others. If we are bitter, using harsh and quick judgment, it only points to our own continual need for Christ.

VERSES 4-6

Other religions teach, "If I do good enough, I'll be accepted." But my own goodness is not the answer. Rather, it is the treasures of God's goodness leading hard-hearted people to repentance. Those who remain hard-hearted treasure up inescapable wrath for themselves in the last day. They presumptuously think that because he hasn't judged yet, he never will, so they continue to take advantage of the opportunity God gives them to change. Their god is their belly, and having no authority higher than their own selves, they essentially say, "I don't want him and I don't need him." We still are tempted by these same tendencies even after becoming Christian. 30 years after his conversion Paul still says "I *am* chief of sinners." **The recognition of our need for Christ produces deep thankfulness for grace.** While it is now partially veiled, God's perfect antagonism against evil will be shown.

VERSES 4-6

Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed speedily, the heart of the children of man is fully set to do evil. Though a sinner does evil a hundred times and prolongs his life, yet I know that it will be well with those who fear God, because they fear before him.

ECCLESIASTES 8:11-12

VERSES 7-11

God's judgment will be a public declaration of what actually is, unlike the world's justice which so often judges without knowing the full truth. Everyone will get impartial and equal judgment – you cannot bribe him.

2 OUTCOMES

God Will Judge Each One By His Works

1. For those who reject truth, contentiously striving against it and working unrighteousness:

They will have trouble and anguish – the opposite of eternal life. They will be forever destroyed from the presence of God. They will not exist.

2. For those who accept the truth and do good:

They will receive honor and glory, experiencing His presence, approval, and peace in eternal life. They have harmony with God forever.

VERSE 12 -16

God has the right to judge, and he is right to judge. Every human being belongs to God, and to some extent, all people know God's law. Everyone has an innate sense of morality, having his imprint on their conscience. Some know more about him than others, but he will hold all people accountable for what they do know. The law of Moses made God's special people especially accountable to be both hearers and doers, even if some Jews thought it made them exempt from God's wrath. But the Gentiles also have the law of their conscience written in their hearts that they too disobey. Their thoughts will accuse or excuse them in the last day.

Conclusion

So how is anyone to stand in judgment? God will judge all men by one man, Jesus Christ. There is one righteous man who persisted in the way humans were meant to, and who loved God with all his heart. This one is fit to judge, and he is the only way to be deemed good. Jesus Christ is how God shows the world how to be a human being. God has appointed a day which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man he ordained, and he has given faith to all people (something to believe), in that he raised Jesus from the dead.

He will vindicate the perfection of Jesus. He will not let evil remain. He will reign. He will judge the earth, and he has committed all judgment to his son.