

God and Judgment

Romans 2:1-16

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Part of Paul's Letter to the Romans Chapters 1-2

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No one likes to be judged, but, if we're honest, sometimes we may find some delight in judging others.

We can and must judge whether the actions of others are ones we should be following or imitating, but to judge the value and worth of the individual person is a problem in God's eyes.

Paul is using a figure of speech called a "diatribe," where he holds an imaginary conversation with one *individual*, representing all his readers.

Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things. We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things. Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?

—Romans 2:1-4 (ESV)

“When you point one finger, there are three fingers pointing back to you.”

Jesus: for God will judge you in the same way you judge others, and he will apply to you the same rules you apply to others.

—Matthew 7:2 (TEV)

God’s judgment is always right; it’s based on reality, on the truth.

God sees everything, including our hearts, and so He not only knows *what* we do, but He also knows *why* we do what we do.

If we think we can get away with being judgmental to others and their sins while we ourselves are also guilty of sin, we’ll find ourselves *facing* the “judgment of God.”

“...God’s kindness is meant to lead you to repentance.”

But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God’s righteous judgment will be revealed. He will render to each one according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality.

—Romans 2:5-11 (ESV)

When our heart is wrong, we are “storing up wrath” for ourselves when Jesus returns in glory and judges every individual.

Paul says in vs. 6 that God “will render to each one according to his works.”

*What [Paul] is affirming is that, although justification is indeed by faith, judgment will be according to works. The reason for this is not hard to find. It is that the day of judgment will be a public occasion. Its purpose will be less to determine God's judgment than to announce it and to vindicate it. The divine judgment, which is a process of sifting and separating, is going on secretly all the time, as people set themselves for or against Christ, but on the last day its results will be made public. **The day of God's wrath** will also be the time **when his righteous judgment will be revealed** (vs. 5b).*

—John Stott

When Jesus returns, all our works will be exposed and judged to demonstrate either that we lived by faith, or we didn't.

Now someone may argue, "Some people have faith; others have good deeds." But I say, "How can you show me your faith if you don't have good deeds? I will show you my faith by my good deeds." You say you have faith, for you believe that there is one God. Good for you! Even the demons believe this, and they tremble in terror. How foolish! Can't you see that faith without good deeds is useless?

—James 2:18-20 (NLT)

It's not that our good works save us, but there *must be good works present*, if there's time, to demonstrate faith, and if there aren't good works, then the Bible says the answer is that therefore isn't true faith.

God is absolutely impartial - He ultimately shows no favoritism.

For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified. For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are

a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.

—Romans 2:12-16 (ESV)

The law itself has no power to save.

Paul is implying that in our created nature, that's part of each one of us, is some sense of law, of right and wrong, of morality.

Neither the law nor conscience save - rather, each serves to alert the individual that they aren't doing right, they are breaking God's law.

Works don't save us, but they do impact how God judges us at the end of time.

And I [John] heard a voice from heaven saying, 'Write this down: Blessed are those who die in the Lord from now on. Yes, says the Spirit, they are blessed indeed, for they will rest from their hard work; for their good deeds follow them!'

—Revelation 14:13 (NLT)

Next Week: *Romans 2:17-29*

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