**Romans 1:20-2:16**

**The Righteous of God on Full Display! (Lesson #4)**

***Vs 21 - For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Vs 22 - Claiming to be wise, they became fools, Vs 23 - and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. 24 Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, 25 because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. 26 For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; 27 and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. 28 And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. 29 They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, 30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 31 foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. 32 Though they know God’s righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.***

**Vs 21a -** Although **God had made Himself known**, and they **“knew”** God.

This highlights the guilt of man and reminds us that man is created in the image of God, has been given a conscience and at his core he knows there is an all-supreme God! Equally, as Paul has already established in (1:20) God’s eternal power and divine nature are on display in the creation (Ps 19:1-4).

They did not **honor Him as God**. The Greek word is **δοξάζω** (dox-ad’-zo) – It is to **praise**, **extol**, **celebrate**, or **magnify**.

**Charge #2 -** They knew from **general revelation** that a powerful God existed, equally, as **Paul is implying** and will later develop, they also know it **because man is made in the image of God** and is created with a **sense of morally right and morally wrong** built within him. Men (and women) are given a conscience and the ability for moral reasoning.

Yet they (men) did not honor or praise that God as they should have.

Man suppresses the knowledge of God and does not worship God as he was created to do.

You will see this in a moment, but it is not that man does not worship, it is that he does not worship the one thing worthy of worship, which results in man worshipping any and everything!

**This bring us to charge #3…**

**Vs 21b - Charge #3 –** **Nor did they give thanks.**

A **magnificent**, **kind**, and **loving God**, who created everything, man suppresses the knowledge of Him, mankind did not honor him, **nor were they thankful for all that he had done**.

All lost mankind has done this, and it is good that God is letting us in on the secret.

**APPLICATION:** When we talk to people, we know for sure, that in their conscience they are suppressing the knowledge of God. Keep this in mind as you talk to people, in each of them there is a still small voice, (their conscience) that is whispering, I think there may be an all-powerful God!

Quote the scriptures (for they are God breathed) and point them to the gospel (for it is the power of God).

But know, when they tell you they do not believe in God... Deep down inside, they have serious doubts about their doubt.

**21c** - **Suppressing** and **rejecting** God, **not honoring** God, **not being thankful** to God we read about the result:

1. **Futile thinking (empty, void, vain, folly).** This word is only used one time in the New Testament.
2. **Their hearts were darkened heart.** (devoid of light)

This is what sin does, it blinds as it binds. It darkens as it enslaves.

**Vs 22-23 - Charge #4 – They exchanged the glory of the immortal God, for idols.**

**Worship was corrupted and they began to worship everything except the true, living and immortal God!**

Mankind, apart from faith in God. Exchanges the glory of the immortal God, for the corruption of corruptible things. **How silly, how foolish.**

So, we have seen the four charges against all mankind:

1. **They suppress God’s truth (Vs 18-20)**
2. **They do not honor him as God (Vs 21)**
3. **They are not thankful for all he has done (Vs 21)**
4. **They worship the creation, rather than the Creator (Vs 22-23)**

**The Question: Does God do anything in response to man’s rebellion against Him? Does God respond to man’s ingratitude and idolatry?**

In verse 18a we had previously read: ***For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven***

I told you that was a present tense, indicative mood (statement of fact). But Paul did not tell us how God’s wrath, is being revealed. He has explained why (the four charges) but not how.

Paul is talking about a wrath; this is being revealed (present tense) as he was writing and even being revealed today. **He is talking about a wrath that is a response to man’s widespread rejection of Him.**

**So, how is God’s wrath being revealed (unveiled) (present tense)?**

**We saw the four charges against man, now we will see what God does, and what man does in response to what God does.** Let me first show you for it comes in three waves or three movements:

***Vs 24 - Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts…***

***Vs 26 - For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions…***

***Vs 28 - And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up…***

**Sin leads to greater sin and darkness, which leads to greater sin and darkness! Sin is the cause and sin is the effect.**

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**Vs 24 -** Here we see that **God’s wrath**, according to Paul, can be seen as God **gives people over** **to do whatever they desperately love and desire to do** which is accompanied by **the consequences of those choices**.

Here is what lost men and women fail to understand, **real freedom is in worshipping the creator**, the most **horrific bondage imaginable** lies on the path of worshipping other things.

These things do not free us, instead we find ourselves in bondage to them!

**This is a giving over of people**, in this life, to go their own way. **MacArthur calls it the wrath of abandonment, Sproul used a similar term when he called it “judicial abandonment.”** (Examples in the OT include Sampson - Jud 16:18-21; Judg 10:13-14; Pro 1:24-31; Hos 4:17; Mat 15:14, Acts 14:16).

We saw this with Israel and if we go back to II Kings we will see it with Judah. He removes His restraining hand of grace as men and women push back against his **existence** and **authority**.

This is God’s right and righteous response to man’s sin. God gives them up to their desires that their hearts are desperately craving!

**APPLICATION: I do not want us to miss the larger point here.** When God handed the nation of Israel over to her enemies, and we saw this various times in the Old Testament; **what was the purpose?** To bring them to repentance. The horror of their current situation was meant to drive them to cry out to God. It was judicial (because of their sins), yet at the same time it was mercy filled.

**I would argue such is the case here, and this is where many commentators miss, what I believe is the larger point.**

The word translated **“lusts”** is the Greek word is **ἐπιθυμία** **(epithumia)**. It literally means **“over desire.”** An **all controlling desire**, and **all controlling longing**.

Those **deep-seated desires** can become the **driving forces** and the **motivating factors**, that can get out of control in our lives!

**God lifts his hand of restraint and allows mento be led away by the lusts of their own hearts which is always accompanied by the consequences of their choices.**

Now, we should not view God as passive in this. To use an analogy. Imagine a boat, being pulled along by the stream, but it has a headline tied to a dock, so although the water is tugging, the boat is not moving downstream. Imagine God untying the boat and also nudging it into the current. I believe that is the picture Paul would have us see.

Men begin to dishonor their bodies (all because they have reversed everything)!

They chose not to honor God, in response, God gave them over to dishonor their own selves like they had dishonored God!

**Sin is the cause and the effect, and the next cause and the effect, and the next cause and the effect!**

**We could say that Paul is saying, widespread idolatry, leads to widespread sexual immorality.**

**Vs 25 –** Because of their **continued rebellion against God**, they are worshipping the creature rather than the creator. They are driven by widespread sexual lusts.

**For this reason,** God gives them over to the very things they so desperately wanted, to **dishonorable passions**. **Impurity among themselves (vs 24) gives way to dishonorable (vile) passions (vs 26)!**

That is further explained: **First women exchanged the natural relationship** for those that are **against nature**. They dove headlong into homosexuality.

**Widespread acts of dishonorable passions, giving up that which is natural and being consumed with passion and** committing **shameless acts of passion** with one another.

**Notice Vs 27b** – Receiving in themselves the due penalty of their error. Paul seems to be saying that sexual sin, the sin that it against the body, is often accompanied with the **“due penalty”** the **just reward** of that sin**!**

This is not the unpardonable sin. This is the result of resisting and suppressing God. But they are not too far gone to be saved! **Never forget… The gospel is the power of God to salvation, to all that believe!**

**Vs 28 -** God hands men and women over to the worthless way of thinking that resulted in their decision to consider God worthless. This is the third and final time.

He gives them over to a **“debased” mind.** The reprobate or debased mind, one that does not stand the test and they begin doing those things that ought not be done!

**Vs 29-31 -** Notice, they are filled with ­(“manner” is not in the Greek), with four general vices: unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, and malice.

They are full of (you see the five items) (full of envy…).

They are (what they are practicing) and you see the 12.

**By the way, we have no reason to believe this list is exhaustive, rather representative.**

**Theologians tell us that this highlights the total depravity of man.**

Do not misunderstand, all men are not as bad as they could be. **But all are sinners, all are (to various degrees) resisting and suppressing the knowledge of God. As Isaiah tells us:**

*“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned —  every one —  to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” (Isa 53:6 ESV)*

These are God’s fourfold charges against man, and God’s response to man’s rebellion. What started in context as open idolatry, has resulted in every form of sin (including sexual), which in-turn has resulted in a debased mind and out of control sin!

**This is you and I before Christ, this is America, this is man (regardless of the group) when he begins to resist and suppress the knowledge of God.**

***Vs 32 -* What a charge.** Men and women at their core, know what they are doing is wrong, and that they deserve God’s judgment.

They not only continue on in their rebellion but give hearty approval to others who do the very same things!

At this point, Paul would have had his **Hebrew readers** in full agreement with the **awful charges against the Gentiles**, he would have had them saying **“amen”** this is what the Gentiles have done!

**Paul brings us at this point in his letter to a conclusion that cannot be missed or mistaken. Human beings (Jew or Gentile, Greek or barbarian) have enough access to the truth about God and that God punishes unrighteousness to be justly responsible the punishment that they receive.**

**APPLICATION:** Christians (especially when sharing the gospel) are often tripped up with questions about some far-off tribe, in some distant country, who never heard about Jesus. I hope we understand God’s response to that question.

To be honest, this supposed issue has nothing to do with those distant people, who they have never met, in that far off land to which they have never traveled. Instead, it has everything to do with them right there and at that moment.

Paul’s unstated point, that will be developed in coming weeks: **The Gospel is the only answer for man’s illness. It is the only treatment, the only medicine, it is the only prescription, the only medication, it is the only remedy, the only pill, the single inoculation, the sole jab, the ONLY CURE for man’s sin problem.** **All mankind is not HIV positive, they are SIN positive! ALL MANKIND!**

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***2:1 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. 2 We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things. 3 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? 4 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? 5 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.***

Here the **finger of God, pointed squarely at the Gentiles**, now begins to **slowly turn**, it now begins to point to those who had been given the law, those who better than the Gentiles understood the laws demands and the law’s charges against those who practice such thing deserve to die!

Today this also applies to the religious man or woman. In Paul’s day this principally applied to those who had the law of God, had the testimony of God, had the word of God, and did the very same things!

As we unpack these verses, keep in mind what Paul is doing. **He is using the full weight of the law to condemn all men and women (Jew and Gentile), but in particular his focus is on the Jews.**

**One more thing:** Here in chapter 2 Paul is going to provide us with principles about God’s righteous. Foundational Truths about our God and His righteousness, that we will unpack as we go.

\*\*\* Paul had been speaking in the **third person plural**, since **verse 18 of chapter 1 to the end of the chapter**: There we see the English pronoun **they** is used 12 times and the English pronoun **them** is used 7 times.

**But now notice what happens beginning in verses 1-5 of chapter 2:**

**In five verses we see you, your, and yourself used a total of 13 times!**

It is as if, Paul who has been speaking about a supposed, but understood “them”, likely Gentiles, now shifts to first person singular “you.” It has the rhetorical feel like he is **speaking to a specific person**, I submit to you the rhetorical device is meant to shift focus from (those Gentiles) to (you Jews).

**Vs 1-** In doing this Paul has not only shifted the finger of blame, but he has sprung a **rhetorical trap** on the Jews who have been following along!

This **“example Jewish person”** that Paul has constructed, I suspect is meant by Paul, to be applied to every Jewish reader.

First, we see that Paul’s example person is passing judgment on others, while doing the same things himself!

You pass judgment on others and you (the judge) do the same things.

The Greek word translated for judges and judgment is **κρίνω *(krino).*** It can mean **separating** and **determining right or wrong.** In context the idea is **judging that something is wrong** and **then doing that very thing!**

**Notice when a person does this,** they **κατακρίνω (katakrino)** bring judgement **down upon themselves!** They are self-condemned.

**APPLICATION:** I think we all understand this charge. When we judge others for doing what we are doing. We are setting ourselves up as judge and begging God to bring judgment upon us.

**OBSERVATION:** When it comes to sin in our own lives. One of three things generally happens. One we **repent**, God convicts us and we repent, sometimes right away, sometimes with a delay. But we repent! Two we stop talking about that **sin (ashamed)** or third we excuse ourselves while we condemn others. It is not just the Jews, believers can get caught in this trap (judging others for what we ourselves are doing).

**The Bible would call us to the first option… REPENT!**

**Vs 2 -** Did you see the pronoun shift from what “you” (as the example Jewish person) are doing to what “we” (example Jewish person along with Paul) know can cause the just and right judgment of God to fall on “those” who do such things.

**Vs 3 -** Paul asks the rhetorical question in verse 3: Do you suppose (think), the Greek word translated for judge is once again **κρίνω *(krino*)**, and do the same things, that you will escape the “judgement” of God.

The word translated judgment is the Greek word **κρίμα (krima)** and it is being used here in a **negative sense**. We could translate this: **Do you think you will escape the condemnation of God?**

**PRINCIPLE #1** – **God judges according to truth**; it is according to the reality of the matter! **God is the impartial judge.**

Have you ever seen the outcome of a trial, a verdict, and then wondered, wow, was justice really served here, or is this a case of a lawyer arguing his way out of the truth. I suspect we all have. Not so with God. His verdicts are all according to the truth! In fact this is the testimony of the entire Bible:

*“But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart."” (1Sa 16:7 ESV)*

*“"I the LORD search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds."” (Jer 17:10 ESV)*

**Vs4 –** Paul asks another question:

*“Are you, perhaps, misinterpreting God’s generosity and patient mercy towards you as weakness on his part? Don’t you realize that God’s kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?” (Ro 2:4 Philips)*

The Jews were guilty of this very point. God’s kindness is not meant to be perceived as **acceptance of sin**, but rather a **reminder of patience** and **kindness** that is meant to **move people to repentance.**

The riches of God’s kindness and forbearance that he showed to the Jews was meant, not to lead of self-righteousness, but instead lead them to repentance!

**APPLICATION:** The same is true for us. We should never perceive God’s patience over our sin as a **lack of concern** or a **lack of ability to respond.** **Rather see it as grace and repent and walk with him.**

**Vs 5 -** Again, imagine this imaginary Jewish man, proud that he has the law, and Paul is saying this: **Because of your hardened and unrepentant heart.** The Greek word translated “hard” is the Greek word **σκληρότης (sklerotes).** It is where we get the English word sclerosis.

Paul then uses abanking metaphor, in response to their hardened and unrepentant heart, they were **depositing sins** in the **piggybank of life** and in so doing we are **“storing up”,** they were **treasuring up,** they were **laying up… WRATH FOR THEMSELVES!**

Now, this is very tough language, regardless of who you attach it to. For it indicates a person around God and people of faith, who sees the sins of others, condemns those sins in others, then goes off and practices the exact same things and in so do in storing up (compounding interest) on WRATH for themselves!

**Here, I believe Paul has in mind the ultimate wrath… HELL!**

**Vs 5b -** Notice they are storing up wrath, ***on the day of wrath when God’s righteous judgment will be revealed.***

This brings what Paul calls the **“day of wrath”** and that bring us to another principle.

**PRINCIPLE #2 –** **There is a judgement day coming for everyone!** God calls all men to repent, or He allows men to **pile up**, to **store up**, to **treasure up**… **wrath**. We could add, not only is there is a judgment day coming for everyone, **NO ONE skips out and no one escapes!**

Now as Paul talks about the day of wrath, some of you may start making **eschatological** jumps. **Two things:**

1. **Paul is not trying to establish any points of eschatology.**
2. **Judgement day (singular) is very common language in the New Testament (some examples):**

**All of the examples I will show you (below) are the same two Greek words, Judgment -** **κρίσις** (krisis) and **Day** (singular) - **ἡμέρα** (hemera):

*“Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on the* ***day of judgment*** *for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town.” (Mt 10:15 ESV)*

*“But I tell you, it will be more bearable on the* ***day of judgment*** *for Tyre and Sidon than for you.” (Mt 11:22 ESV)*

*“I tell you, on the* ***day of judgment*** *people will give account for every careless word they speak,” (Mt 12:36 ESV)*

*“then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the* ***day of judgment****,” (2Pe 2:9 ESV)*

*“But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the* ***day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly****.” (2Pe 3:7 ESV)*

*“By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the* ***day of judgment****, because as he is so also are we in this world.” (1Jo 4:17 ESV)*

*“And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the* ***judgment of the great day****— ” (Jude 1:6 ESV)*

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***6 He will render to each one according to his works: 7 to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; 8 but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. 9 There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, 10 but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. 11 For God shows no partiality.***

Notice the **chiastic arrangement** (a literary structure in which words are repeated in reverse order) (this is common in Greek literature).

A. God will judge equitably Vs 6

1. Those who do good will attain eternal life Vs 7

C. Those who do evil will suffer wrath Vs 8

C. Wrath for those who do evil Vs 9

1. Glory for those who do good Vs 10
2. God judges impartially Vs 11

**A familiar example of chiastic arrangement:**

*“Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.” (Mt 23:12 ESV)*

**PRINCIPLE #3 –** Men will be judged according to their works! Stated differently, He judges according to the evidence!

But there is a second thing (by way of application) that I need you to see from the structure. As we review these verses, clearly there are only two fates for all mankind (Jew and Gentile):

In the positive expressed in verses 7b and 10. **To those who (vs 7)** by ***patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality,*** **to** **(vs 10)** ***everyone who does good...***

**7b -** ***he will give eternal life;***

**10** - ***glory and honor and peace***

In the negative expressed in verses 8b and 9. **To (vs 8) *those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness,*** **(vs 9)** ***for every human being who does evil***.

**8b - *wrath and fury***

**9** - ***tribulation and distress***

Notice in both cases, Paul is clear. For the Jew and also the Gentile.

**As you couple those four together, one thing should be crystal clear, God’s intense anger for those who have a greater knowledge of God, find fault in others, but never see the fault in themselves.**

**Vs 6 – Notice, God will pay**, each one, **according to man’s works! So, men will be judged by their works, their deeds.** This is the testimony of the entire Bible (Old and New Testaments) and that is Paul driving point:

*“Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.” (Ga 6:7 ESV)*

*“For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.” (Col 3:25 ESV)*

**\*\* Now these verses are interpreted a number of different ways by different teachers. \*\***

In context of Paul’s current argument only two make sense:

1. **God is impartial and he will judge impartially based on actual merit (works). If you are perfectly righteous you will be acquitted. If not, you will be damned.**
2. **Paul is saying, in a round-about way that good works follow faith. He is saying, in a round- about way, that when a person is born again, he has a new character and a new nature thus he is righteous and that is what Paul is saying.**

**I find the first explanation to make the most sense (in context) with what Paul is saying at this point in his argument, although both are true.**

I agree (in part) with men like Missler, MacArthur, and Whitmer while I believe scholars like Moo, Thielman, and Wilson, nail it:

**Chuck Missler:** “Paul is not explaining to us how to be saved, but rather the character of those who are saved.”

**John MacArthur:** “Paul’s point in the present passage is that a person who possesses the life of God will reflect the true character of God, and that it is on the basis of that reflected godly character that he will be judged.”

**John Witmer:** “A person’s habitual conduct, whether good or evil, reveals the condition of his heart. Eternal life is not rewarded for good living; that would contradict many other Scriptures which clearly state that salvation is not by works, but is all of God’s grace to those who believe (e.g., Rom. 6:23; 10:9-10; 11:6; Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5). A person’s doing good shows that his heart is regenerate. Such a person, redeemed by God, has eternal life. Conversely a person who continually does evil and rejects the truth shows that he is unregenerate, and therefore will be an object of God’s wrath.”

**Frank Thielman:** “Paul is articulating a theological principle that he believed to be true… This principle is that God does not judge people on the basis of their intellectual grasp of his requirements or their possession of a physical mark such as circumcision but on the basis of whether they obey what they know about his requirements from the heart.”

**Douglas Moo:** “Paul sets forth biblical conditions for attaining eternal life apart from Christ. Understood this way, Paul is not speaking hypothetically. But once his doctrine of universal human powerlessness under sin has been developed (see 3:9 especially), it becomes clear that the promise can, in fact, never become operative because the condition for its fulfillment-consistent, earnest seeking after good-can never be realized.”

**Geoffrey Wilson:** “It must be remembered that this is not an exposition of Paul’s gospel, through it is an essential preliminary to it.”

**Do not miss what is happening:** The apostle is teaching the full rigor of the law, to those who sought to be justified by it!

**God’s righteousness so far is set forth in three principles:**

**PRINCIPLE #1** – **God judges according to truth**; it is according to the reality of the matter! God is an impartial judge!

**PRINCIPLE #2 –** **There is a judgement day coming for everyone!** There is a day of wrath coming for all men and women. God allows us to repent, or He allows us to pile up wrath.

**PRINCIPLE #3 – Men will be judged according to their works! Stated differently, He judges according to the evidence!**

**Vs 11 -** Here is **verse 11**, we see the **first principle repeated**. God is impartial. **God shows no partiality in judgment**. God is inflexible and impartial when it comes to sin.

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***12 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. 13 For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified. 14 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. 15 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 16 on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.***

**Vs 12-** This is a key verse to keep before us. The light you have (general revelation, special revelation, or both) is the light that will condemn you!

If you have the light of nature and the light of conscience and you sin without the written code, you will perish under the wrath of God, without a written law.

If you are seeking to be justified by the law, you must be a doer of the whole law, all the time, with perfection, or the law will judge you!

**Now this is not a formula, but rather a tutor (Gal 3:24) to cause us to cry out to God!**

**Vs 13** – This is a **stinging condemnation against the Jews**. They had the law yet acted like the people groups around them. Paul warns, it is not in hearing that men will be justified.

The Greek word translated justified is **δίκαιος (dikaios)**, it means **right**, **righteous**, **innocent**, or **guiltless**. It is a **right standing before God**.

Now this verse, and others like it has been used to teach that salvation can be obtained by obeying the law:

* **First,** that goes completely against all the Bible says about sin and the impact on the human family.
* **Second,** it confuses the purpose of the law.
* **Third,** Paul has been building the universal point of man’s guilt before God. This is Paul once again saying, if you are going to get there by obedience, then it must be perfect obedience, but you will not get there by simply having the law and disobeying it. That is his larger argument!
* **Forth,** it means that Jesus did not need to come and die for our sins, if through our obedience we can save ourselves.

**Vs 14-15 -** Remember how Paul built the case in chapter 1, that man was suppressing the natural revelation of God, that God placed in the very creation itself.

Here we learn additional information, namely, within every man and woman, God has written right and wrong in their hearts. At the core level, men and woman, although fallen and sinful, because they are made in the image of God (although that image has been marred by the fall), have God’s righteous demands written in their hearts.

When the Gentiles, from time to time, do what the law demands, in spite of not having the written law, they show that God has written it into their hearts and Paul reminds us that God also provided them with a conscience. This conscience is also bearing witness to right and wrong. Further, Paul says that men and women, engage in moral reasoning about their actions and whether they are right or wrong.

Even their thoughts accuse at times, or excuse at other times, their conduct. **All of this leaving them without escape on judgement day!**

**Vs 16 –** The heavens declaring the glory of God, the law being written in the heart, the conscience, and moral reasoning will all accuse or excuse ***on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.***

**PRINCIPLE #1** – **God judges according to truth**; it is according to the reality of the matter!

**PRINCIPLE #2 –** **There is a judgement day coming for everyone!** There is a day of wrath coming for all men and women. God allows us to repent, or He allows us to pile up wrath.

**PRINCIPLE #3 – Men will be judged according to their works! Stated differently, God is impartial in judgment. He judges according to the evidence!**

Here we see the forth principle about God’s judgment.

**PRINCPLE #4 - He will even judge the secrets of our hearts!**

If you are not a believer, if you plan to stand before God on judgment day, **this statement should be horrifying!**

**Even the secrets of the heart. Even the thoughts that no one knows about? Yes, even those.**

It is here we also see a fifth principle. Not only is Jesus the lone Savior, He is also the ultimate judge.

**PRINCIPLE #5 - God judges, by Jesus Christ!**

*“The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son,” (Joh 5:22 ESV)*

*“And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man.” (Joh 5:27 ESV)*

*“****38*** *how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.* ***39*** *And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree,* ***40*** *but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear,* ***41*** *not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.* ***42*** *And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead.” (Ac 10:38-42 ESV)*

*“because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."” (Ac 17:31 ESV)*

*“I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom:” (2Ti 4:1 ESV)*

**We tend to think of Jesus as Savior only. He is of course the only Savior, but He is also the judge, and the one to whom all men will bow!**

*“****5*** *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,* ***6*** *who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,* ***7*** *but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.* ***8*** *And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.* ***9*** *Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,* ***10*** *so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,” (Php 2:5-10 ESV)*

**Vs 16 -** Here it is again… **“On that day”** when, ***according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.***

**The Greek word for day is ἡμέρα** (hemera), it is in the singular form.

**Now, as we are here, under the full weight of the righteousness of God…**

* The heavens declare His glory: **We suppressed it!**
* Our hearts knew right and wrong: **We often excused it!**
* Our conscience spoke silently to us: **We regularly sinned against it!**
* We have been given moral reasoning: **We at times we twisted it!**
* And on top of it all (for the Jew of Paul’s day or the religious person of today), we have been given the law of God: **We frequently disobeyed it!**

**We are guilty! Every place where we might look for excuse, Jew or Gentile, we will find only condemnation!**

**This is the Righteousness of God,** this is the weight of the law, this is the purpose of the law, this is what the law can and does do. **One misstep - CONDEMNATION!**

1. A reminder: **Romans 1:16-17:**

*“16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, ‘The righteous shall live by faith.’” (Ro 1:16-17, ESV)*

1. A reminder of what is ours in Christ Jesus: **Romans 8:1-2:**

*“1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.” (Ro 8:1-2, ESV)*

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