

**The Epistle to the Romans  
(Special English Edition)**

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**The Sin of Self Righteousness**

**Reading assignment: Romans 2**

**Introduction**

Keep in mind that the section of Romans relating to “Condemnation-Righteousness Required” extends from Romans 1:18 to Romans 3:20.

The stinging accusation we saw in Romans 1 continues into Romans 2. In Romans 2 we see two classes of people who despise and condemn others.

- In Romans 2:1-16, we see the Gentiles who thought they were more righteous. They thought they were better because they were Romans. They thought they had a better way of life, better education, and lived under better circumstances. They thought they were more pure in their way of living than other nations.
- In Romans 2:17-29, we see Jews who thought they were righteous. They thought they were better than other nations because they had a better religion.
- In Romans 1, we saw the unrighteousness of man. In Romans 2, we shall see the self-righteousness of man.

In this lesson, our study will cover the entire second chapter of Romans.

**Importance of this Lesson**

- It is impossible for a person to understand the need for the righteousness of God until he sees himself as God sees him. In these early chapters of Romans, God shows man’s complete sinfulness and need for the righteousness that only God can give him.
- It is important that we see this clearly. In studying Romans 2, two things must be kept in mind.
  1. In Romans 2, Paul is not talking about the way of salvation and he is not talking about how a person can receive eternal life. He talks about the judgment of God and the standards by which God makes that judgment.
  2. God’s judgment of the lost is for punishment, it is not to see whether they are saved or not.

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**THE LESSON**

- ◆ *Romans 2 talks about those people who say, “I’m not so bad,” “Romans 1 is not for me,” “I do the best I can,” “I live a good life, I go to church, and so I am better than a lot of other people.” However, Romans 3:10 says, “there is none righteous” and Romans 3:12 says, “there is none that doeth good.”*
- ◆ *Romans 2 is the greatest portion of the Bible that talks about the standards God uses in judging people. This portion of the Bible also talks about how God will judge people. Read also Romans 3:19 where God says that the whole world is guilty. Also read Acts 17:31 which states that God will judge the whole world.*

- I. SEVEN PRINCIPLES, WHICH GOVERN GOD'S JUDGMENT OF MEN.** The first six principles refer generally to the respectable, self-righteous Gentiles who rejected the knowledge of God they had. These six principles are as follows:
- A. Romans 2:2, *...the judgment of God is according to truth...*
1. Remember that God sees and knows everything we do. He knows who we are. He knows our secrets and our reasons for doing the things we do (Psalm 139:1-10; Hebrews 4:13).
  2. Romans 2:1 shows us that many people condemn others for the things, which they are guilty of themselves. It is clear that we usually do not see ourselves as God sees us.
- B. Romans 2:5, the judgment of God is according to accumulated wrath *...treasurest up unto thyself wrath against (in) the day of wrath...*
1. This world that rejects Christ, loves sin and rejects the truth is going to feel the anger of God when He pours it out on people. Read Revelation 6:17, 15:1, 16:1, and 16:12-17.
  2. Sinners condemn others unfairly and think they are better than others (Romans 2:3). At the same time they reject the goodness of God, His patience, and they refuse to repent (Romans 2:4). Thus, sinners actually gather up the anger of God for themselves. God will show this anger in the future judgment.
    - ◆ *How foolish of sinful people to think that they can escape the judgment of God (Romans 2:3)!*
    - ◆ *All people can see how rich God is in His goodness to them. This should cause them to repent quickly (Romans 2:4).*
    - ◆ *Millions of people who have more than they need of worldly goods allow all these touchable things to make them blind concerning their need for spiritual things.*
- C. Romans 2:6, the judgment of God is according to what a person does in this life.
1. God has a record of everything anyone says or does. Note Romans 2:16; Matthew 12:36; Revelation 20:12.
  2. A sinner will sometimes foolishly say, "All I ask of God is justice." That is what we see in this verse. God will render perfect justice at the judgment. What all people need is mercy!
- D. Romans 2:11, God will not consider one person more important than another in the judgment.
1. Romans 2:7 and 10 state that God will reward the righteous person.
  2. Romans 2:8 and 9 teach that God will punish the person who rebels against Him and who does not obey Him. God will not consider one person above the other, whether Jew or Gentile.
    - ◆ *Please remember: Paul here is not telling us HOW to be saved. He does not state how a person can become righteous before God.*  
*Romans 3:12 clearly states that "there is none that doeth good."*  
*Romans 3:20 states that "...by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified..." Note also Romans 4:4.*
    - ◆ *Salvation is never presented in scripture as a reward that is earned because a person does something. It is a valuable gift (Romans 6:23).*
    - ◆ *What we have in these verses is simply a statement that there is a reward for the person who is already right with God and that there is punishment for the wicked "without respect of persons."*
- E. Romans 2:12-15, God's judgment will be according to the things people do.
1. Romans 2:12 indicates that every person will be judged according to the knowledge they have. Two things must be noted here:
    - a. No one except Christ has ever kept the law. Read Matthew 5:17, James 2:10, and Galatians 3:10.
    - b. The Bible does not teach that living up to the knowledge people have saves them. God's judgment will be determined by what they did with that knowledge.
  2. If it were possible for a sinful person to keep the whole law of God, the law would justify him. But every person who tries to be saved by keeping the law is actually under a curse (Galatians 3:13). Romans 8:2-4 explains how the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us.
  3. James Denney said, "no degree of familiarity with the law avails if it is not done."

- F. Romans 2:16, God's judgment will be according to the secrets people keep in their hearts.
1. "In the day" – Revelation 20:11-15. This talks about the judgment of the "Great White Throne."
  2. "The secrets of men" – We cannot hide anything from God. Read 2 Chronicles 16:9 and Proverbs 15:3.
  3. "By Jesus Christ" – Christ will be the judge in Revelation 20:11. Read John 5:22, 27.
  4. "According to my Gospel" – Here again we see Paul's special connection to the Gospel. Part of that Gospel message was the certainty of judgment.

- ◆ *This concludes the six principles on which God's judgment is based for self-righteous Gentiles who rejected the knowledge they had.*
- ◆ *In the rest of this lesson, we see the self-righteousness of the Jews. They thought they were better because they thought their religion was better than the religion of other people.*

## II. THE SEVENTH PRINCIPLE WHICH INFLUENCES GOD'S JUDGMENT OF MANKIND

(Judgment that is according to whether a person is really a believer or not. It does not depend on what a person says.)

- A. These verses apply especially to religious Jews, but they also apply to every person who boasts about his religion but does not practice it.
- B. Romans 2:17-18 – *Thou restest in the law and makest thy boast of God* (that the law came from God.)
- C. Romans 2:19 – They were spiritually blind themselves but they were proud that they were a *...guide of the blind...* It was a case of the blind leading the blind. See Matthew 15:14. Compare the Laodicean church of Revelation 3:17.
- D. Romans 2:20-21 – They said they were teachers, *teachers of babes*. O, yes! They knew all the right answers. They had *the form of knowledge*. Note 2 Timothy 3:5.
- E. Romans 2:22-24 – Because they were guilty of the very things for which they condemned others, they caused the Gentiles to curse God. Note the illustration of David in 2 Samuel 12:14.
- ◆ *Christians who are living according to the standards of the world and do not obey God are just as guilty as the self-righteous Jews.*
- F. Romans 2:25 – *circumcision* – The word means "the nation of Israel" as compared to the "uncircumcision," which means "the Gentiles." In Genesis 17:9-14, circumcision became the sign of the agreement God made with Abraham. It separated Israel as a special people of God. A nation specially chosen by God.
- G. Romans 2:25-26 – In these verses the Lord is saying that being a real child of God is important– only outward ceremony does not count with God. If the Jews did not obey the law, their circumcision was nothing. They were no better than Gentiles who were not circumcised.
- ◆ *There are many people today who have never received Christ as Savior, but they depend on some religious ceremony like baptism or on their church membership to get them into heaven.*
- H. Romans 2:27-29
1. A Gentile who believes and who sincerely tries to obey the law, may judge a Jew who says that he has the law but does not obey it.
  2. In these verses, we need to understand what Paul writes in Romans 9:6-7. *...For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children....*" So, who is a real Jew? Not he who is one outwardly and knows what the law says, but he whose spirit and heart have been changed.

**THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS**  
**EXAM - LESSON 6**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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1. The type of people seen in Romans 2:1-16 are: (Open Bible) (Value 5 points)
  - a. self-righteous Jews.
  - b. righteous people.
  - c. self-righteous pagans.
  
2. The people mentioned in Romans 2:17-29 are: (Open Bible) (Value 5 points)
  - a. self-righteous Jews.
  - b. righteous people.
  - c. self-righteous pagans.
  
3. The first three chapters of Romans very clearly teach: (Value 6 points)
  - a. the sovereignty of God.
  - b. the sinfulness of man.
  - c. the love of God.
  
4. The important theme of Romans 2 is: (Open Bible) (Value 5 points)
  - a. the sinfulness of homosexuality.
  - b. the love of God for all men.
  - c. God's judgment and the principles by which He judges.
  
5. Often it is true that people judging others: (Value 5 points)
  - a. judge according to truth.
  - b. are often guilty of the same things for which they are judging others.
  - c. are showing love to the other person.
  
6. Romans 2:7 and 10 tell us that: (Open Bible) (Value 6 points)
  - a. God will have mercy on every person in the world.
  - b. God will reward the righteous.
  - c. God will punish people who rebel against Him no matter whether they are Jew or Gentile.
  
7. What did Christ do that sinful man cannot do? (Value 5 points)
  - a. Be crucified.
  - b. Please God the Father.
  - c. Keep the law.
  
8. What does it mean that God will judge "according to the secrets of men"? (Value 5 points)
  - a. That man cannot hide anything from God.
  - b. That there will be a Great Judgment Day.
  - c. That God will judge people in secret.

9. According to Romans 2:17, the people who thought they could obtain salvation by keeping the law were: (Open Bible) (Value 5 points)
- the Gentiles.
  - the Jews.
  - the Romans.
10. The persons in Romans 2:19 were proud of the fact that they were leading the blind, but they: (Open Bible) (Value 5 points)
- were Gentiles.
  - were Jews.
  - were blind themselves.
11. Most important in biblical Christianity is: (Value 6 points)
- receiving Christ as Savior.
  - being baptized.
  - being a member of a church.
12. What are the six principles by which God judges? (**Match** – put the letter in front of the Bible reference on the line in front of the principle) (Open Bible) (Value 42 points)
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|--|-------------------|
| ___ The judgment according to truth  | a. Romans 2:6     |
| ___ The judgment according to accumulate wrath   | b. Romans 2:2     |
| ___ The judgment according to deeds  | c. Romans 2:12-15 |
| ___ The judgment without respect of persons  | d. Romans 2:11    |
| ___ The judgment according to the light a person has   | e. Romans 2:17-29 |
| ___ The judgment according to what men have done in secret   | f. Romans 2:5     |
| ___ The judgment according to whether or not a person is a real believer and not a false professor | g. Romans 2:16    |

### Decision Time

I have learned that I cannot escape the judgment of God. I stand guilty as charged in Romans 2 and do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. I understand I am bound for eternal punishment and separation from God. Knowing all this, I am repenting of my sin at this moment and by the power of God I am forsaking them. I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who died for my sin and rose again from the dead on the third day. I believe He is living in heaven at this time.

Therefore I \_\_\_\_\_ receive Him as my personal Savior on this

\_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_