

Circumcision of the Heart

Romans, Chapter 2

Romans 2:

1 Wherefore, defenseless are you, O man, everyone who is judging, for in what you are judging another, you are condemning yourself, for you who are judging are committing the same things.

2 But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who are committing such things.

3 Yet are you reckoning on this, O man, who are judging those committing such things, and are doing the same, that thou will escape the judgment of God?

4 Or are you despising the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience; not knowing that the kindness of God is leading you to repentance?

Paul is stating that these people are guilty of the most abominable wickedness. "They ought to know better," is the almost involuntary exclamation. "They do know better," is Paul's reply, or, at least, they have a chance to know better, and they do know that they are not doing right. "They are without excuse."

Acknowledging Guilt

"Then comes the crushing rejoinder: 'Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whosoever you are that judgest; for wherein thou judgest another, you condemn yourself; for you who are judging are doing the same things.' We are caught, and cannot escape. If we know enough to condemn the unrighteous deeds of others, we by that very judgment acknowledge ourselves to be without excuse for our own misdeeds." Waggoner on Romans, p 2.39

Therefore, since all men are alike sharers in one common human nature, it is evident that whosoever in the world condemns another for any misdeed thereby condemns himself; for the truth is that all have the same evil in them, more or less fully developed.

A robber often cries out, "Stop thief!" after some other man, in order to direct pursuit away from himself. So people condemn sin in others, in order that it may not be suspected that they are guilty of the same things.

“Is it not most unreasonable for the sinner to suppose that God’s judgment of him will be less searching than his condemnation of the sins of his fellow men?”

Concordant Commentary, p 231

God sometimes allows us to see sin in others so we will know how better to pray for them, not so we can condemn them.

The Goodness of God

It is not the threat of hellfire (a concept that never appears in the original Bible but has been written into the Bible by the translators), that leads us to repentance. On the contrary, **it is the “goodness of God that leads every person to repentance!”** Therefore the whole earth is full of incentives to repentance, for “the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.” Psalm 33:5

When will the Organized “Church” learn this simple, but important, Biblical fact and stop preaching the false doctrine of hellfire!

We should not try to improve on the Scriptures and say that the goodness of God **tends** to lead men to repentance. The Bible says that it **does** lead them to repentance, and we may be sure that it is so.

There are many who say, “Every man is **led** to repentance, but not all repent.” But that’s trivial word-play. If one is *led* to repentance, **he repents!** But theologians and other Christians are so anxious to preserve the false doctrine of “Free Will” that they distort the Scriptures. They want to make “man” a god with his very own “Free Will” that they say, in essence, is stronger than God’s “Will”, while, at the same time, making God’s “Will” subject to “man.” In doing so, Christians make God impotent to do what He has set out to do, to be the “Saviour of ALL mankind!” (1 Timothy 4:10)

5 Yet in accord with your hardness and unrepentant heart, you are hoarding for yourself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God:

6 Who will be paying each one according to his acts:

7 To them who by endurance in good acts seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal (eonian) life.

Eonian (eternal) life and immortality are two different things. Eonian life is the spiritual “life” that Jesus puts in us. As we participate in daily Bible study and prayer, alone with God, we begin to behold Who He is. It is by this “beholding” of

Christ that we become changed into His image. We become like those we admire.

Eonian life is the life of Christ manifested in the character of the Christian. It has nothing to do with living “forever.” The Bible translators mistranslated the word *Eonian* as *eternal*, because they were not divinely inspired and did not understand the difference. Eonian life is given to us here on this earth, as we get to know Christ up close and personal and become like Him, exhibiting His character. (See, Does “Forever” Really Mean Forever? at the following website, www.goodnewsaboutgod.com)

On the other hand, *immortality* means to live forever. Only when one has Eonian life, the life of Christ exhibited in his every-day character, can one then be ready for immortality – living forever!

Immortality is given to the righteous at the Second Coming of Christ – **not** at the time of death. Paul says in this passage that “we **seek** for immortality.” Paul realized that we don’t already have it. The Bible contains the word “soul” 1600 times, but never once does it use the term “immortal soul.” In fact, the Bible tells us that, “**only God is immortal.**” (1 Timothy 6:16) (See “What Happens When We Die?” at www.goodnewsaboutgod.com)

8 But unto them that are self-seeking, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,

9 Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew (correct translation - Judean – “Believer) first, and also of the Greek (Gentile – the Unbelievers, who do not know God.)

10 But glory, honor and peace, to every worker of good, to the Judean (“Jew) first, and also to the Greek (Gentile - Unbeliever).

11 For there is no partiality with God.

There is NO partiality with God. Therefore, the “Jews” cannot be God’s special “Chosen People.” The ones who have been “Chosen” in Bible times as well as now, are only “Chosen” to exhibit the character of Jesus Christ and tell others of the Good News of Salvation for ALL. They are **not** God’s special little pets!

We remember from Romans, Chapter 1, that God’s “wrath and indignation” are nothing more than God giving us up to our own desires, eventually to reap what we have sown. Everyone who “doeth evil” will bring tribulation and anguish on himself, whether he is a “believer” or an “unbeliever.”

But the “believers” are even guiltier because they certainly know better. This also shows us that God is no respecter of persons. He treats everyone the same. **Everyone** will “reap what he has sown.” Galatians 6:7

12 For whoever sinned without the law, shall also perish: and as many as have sinned in the law, through the law shall be judged;

13 (For not the hearers of the law are justified before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified),

14 For whenever they of the nations (Unbelievers - Gentiles), that have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:

15 who are displaying the actions of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts between one another accusing or defending them

16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of hidden things of humanity through Jesus Christ.

Those who sit in a pew and hear the Word of God preached at them, but do not study for themselves and incorporate God’s Word into their lives, are “hearers - - and not **doers** of the law.”

“Human nature, or instinct, is not corrupt. It is in line with God’s law and conscience. (Rom 2:27) It is against sin. (Rom. 1:26) The heart of humanity is corrupt. By following their nature, it was quite possible for men to do by instinct what was later inscribed in the written code. Men’s acts are unnatural.

“Much of the judgment that obtains among men is unjust and oppressive because of their inability to uncover the real truth. But in the divine judgment, the hidden things will be revealed and a just sentence will be based on all the facts. Doubtless the motives will be laid bare as well as the acts themselves and thus the quality of each action will receive due recognition.” Concordant Commentary, p 232

In addition, we see that the law must be “written in the hearts” for them to do right. Right-doing (or true righteousness) **cannot** occur with the “law” (The Ten Commandments) **on the wall**. It can only occur **when the “law” is “written on our heart.”**

We must also note, that the “Law” has not been done away with. Paul shows us how important the “Law” is - - and will remain! God runs the entire universe on His law – the Ten Commandments, in their original, Exodus 20: 1-17 form, even

though most “Churches” have changed them. “Man” has **changed** the Word of God! - a very serious sin.

17 Behold, you are called a Jew (Judean - a Believer) and you rest in the law, and make your boast of God,

It should not be overlooked as a trifling matter that Paul does not say “you **are** a believer (“Jew”). Instead the apostle says, “you **are called** a believer.” People are not always as they are called, nor what they call themselves, including most Christians.

18 And know His will, and approve the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law;

19 And are confident that you yourself are a guide of the blind, a light of those who are in darkness,

20 A discipliner of the imprudent, a teacher of minors (new believers), which has the form of knowledge and the truth in the law.

21 You then who are teaching another, you are not teaching yourself. You who preach a man should not steal, you are stealing.

22 You who say a man should not commit adultery, you are committing adultery? You who abhor idols, do you despoil the sanctuary?

23 You who make your boast in the law, through breaking the law you dishonor God.

Instead of rejoicing in the Lord’s salvation, the “Jews” of Paul’s time boasted over their superior knowledge of God. They did indeed have more than others, but they had nothing that they had not received from God, yet they boasted as though they had not received it from God. They glorified themselves, rather than God, for the knowledge that they had; and therefore they put themselves in the condition of the those Paul writes of in Romans 1:21,22, who “when they knew God, glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain (futile) in their imaginations (thoughts).”

“Do you steal?” Most people will say, “No; I am honest in all my dealing.” But it is just as wrong to steal from God as to steal from man. Do we give God His due? Have we dealt in a perfectly honest way with Him?

Christians have more knowledge of Jesus and the Bible than non-Christians. But they only have it because they were given it by God – Who expects them to share it – not to boast about it! By doing so, they dishonor God.

- 24 For the Name (character) of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles (nations – Unbelievers) through you, as it is written.**
- 25 For circumcision, indeed is benefiting if you should be putting the law into practice, yet if you should be a transgressor of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.**
- 26 If the Uncircumcision, then, should be maintaining the just requirements of the law, shall not his Uncircumcision be reckoned for circumcision?**
- 27 And the Uncircumcision who, by nature, are discharging the law's demands, shall be judging you, who through letter and circumcision, are a transgressor of the law.**
- 28 For he is not a Believer (Judean – “Jew”), which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:**
- 29 But he is a Believer (Judean – “Jew”) that is one inwardly; and circumcision is of the heart, in spirit, not in letter, whose praise is not from men, but from God.**

All true “Jews” (Judeans – Believers in the true God) in Paul’s time recognized that true circumcision was only of the heart, for Stephen addressed those who rejected the truth as “stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears.” Acts 7:51

“The rite of circumcision was the outward sign, in the first place, of an inward faith, but it degenerated into a mere mark of privilege. But misused privilege is of no avail at the bar of God.” Concordant Commentary, p 232

“What is it to keep the law? It is to keep all its precepts; our righteousness must exceed that of the Pharisees (the leaders of the Organized Church of the time), which was only an outward form. If we hate, it is murder (Matthew 5:22); if we have impure thoughts, it is adultery (Matthew 5:25); if we have an impure heart, we violate all the rest of the law. We may be ever so strict in outward Sabbath observance and adhere closely to the outward obligations of all the rest of the law, but an impure heart renders every act sinful.” Waggoner, E. J., Bible Studies on the Book of Romans, p 4

In the judgment, only that which is vital, in spirit, which will meet the scrutiny of God, will receive recognition.