

## Getting Started

- As you read Romans 2:1-16 what change do you notice in the pronouns that are used compared with Romans 1:18-32?
- Some believe that Paul has shifted his focus from the “heathen” Gentile and placed it now on the Jew. Others believe that Paul is now speaking to another group of people, possibly the moral person (maybe Jew or Gentile). What do you think?
- Discuss how you see these three truths presented in this section:
  1. God’s judgment is inescapable (2:1-4)
  2. God’s judgment is impartial (2:5-11)
  3. God’s judgement is universal (2:12-16)

## Discussion

*“Paul uncovers in this section of his letter a strange human foible, namely our tendency to be critical of everybody except ourselves. We even gain a vicarious satisfaction from condemning in others the very faults we excuse in ourselves. Freud called this moral gymnastic “projection”, but Paul described it centuries before Freud. The device enables us simultaneously to retain our sins and our self-respect.” – John Stott*

- According to 2:1-4, why is it dangerous to judge someone else?
- What is the difference between human judgment and God’s judgment?
- There is a time and place for confronting others when sin is present in our lives. What principles can we take from Matthew 7:1-5 and 18:15-17 to guard ourselves from self-righteousness and hypocrisy?
- In 2:4, how might God’s judgment be a kindness?

*“At the end of days, there will be a terrifying courtroom scene involving every human being who ever took a breath on earth. The deeds of each man and woman will be laid on a scale and weighed against God’s holy character – the very definition of righteousness (2:5-6). Wealth, power, position, race, color, nationality, heritage and philosophy will count for nothing. Religion will count for nothing. The standard will be the same for all – those who have had access to the Law and those who did not. God will render to each person according to his (or her) deeds (2:6). Each person will be judged by their deeds, not saved by them. Each will lay his deeds on the scale and they will be found wanting. No amount of good deeds will balance the righteousness of God on the other side. Paul’s point is simple: There is no partiality with God (2:11). All have equal opportunity to stand before the Judge to present evidence of their own righteousness. And the standard will be the same for all. But Paul warns that because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself. Anyone who presumes that his or her deeds are sufficiently good for eternal life, or that God, who sees all, will overlook sin has chosen a bleak future.” – Chuck Swindoll*

- What does 2:5-11 reveal about the “day of God’s wrath”?
- Since Paul states numerous times in this letter and other letters that no one is saved by good works, what is the point he is making in this section about good works and judgment?

We must remember that Paul is in the process of building a case. It can be summarized like this:

- Salvation for both Jew and Gentile is available only by doing good (2:6,11,12).
- The power of sin prevents both Jew and Gentile from doing good (3:9-19).
- Therefore: No one can be saved by doing good (3:20).
- How do you see God’s fairness in 2:12-16 when He judges Gentiles, who did not have His Law as part of their history?
- Discuss how you can apply this statement from Chuck Swindoll.

*“If we genuinely care about the righteousness of God, if we authentically desire to condemn sin and uphold justice, if we truly want to be champions of good, we must begin with an examination of ourselves. Then if we have any time remaining, we can call the sin of another into account. Being aware of our own flaws, we will more likely “judge” others with a humble attitude in a spirit of grace.”*

- What can we do to cultivate a healthy conscience? What influences have helped to shape your conscience?
- Several times this passage speaks of the “day of God’s wrath.” How would you advise someone to prepare for that day?

## Prayer