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## Romans 2

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



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Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

## Romans 2.

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### Topics.

- Condemning yourself by judging others.
- God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance.
- Those who do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness.
- God shows no partiality.
- They are a law to themselves.
- God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.
- God is blasphemed among the Gentiles.
- A Jew is one inwardly by the heart and by the Spirit, not by the letter.

**The previous chapter:** in the previous chapter Paul spoke about his desire to reap a harvest among the Romans, the Greeks the Barbarians, the wise and foolish and told them it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes (as opposed to their race, birth, or works). The chapter ended with Paul giving a picture of those who deny God's existence and the world lying under a multitude of sin.

**NOTE:** for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

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### ROMANS 2:1-3

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#### Condemning yourself by Judging Others.

- **Romans 2:1-3:** 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. <sup>2</sup>We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who do such things. <sup>3</sup>Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who do such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God?

**NOTE:** Paul had both Jews and Gentiles in mind (Rom. 2:9-10) as he wrote this letter to those in Rome who are loved by God (Rom. 1:7). It is interesting to notice that Paul's focus in the first three chapters is primarily on those who deny God's existence or on living a godly or ungodly life, but from chapter 4:23 his focus changes to being saved by faith and grace.

Since none of us are free of sin we have no right to judge who is worthy or unworthy of salvation, in fact it is an enormously dangerous thing to do since in judging someone unworthy of salvation we bring judgment on ourselves rather we should trust that God will judge rightly those who are deserving and underserving of eternal life (v1-3). Jews believed that salvation came to those born a Jew, while others believed it could be earned by strictly adhering to laws, religious rites and keeping holy days etc. Salvation cannot be earned since it comes by the power of God through faith in the Good News of the Gospel (Rom. 1:16) thus the reason no-one can judge who can and who can't be saved, by looking at their birthright, status in life or outward behaviour. The words, "O Man," encompasses all those Paul spoke of at the end of the previous chapter (i.e., people who denied God, worshipped idols are proud, murderous, wicked, malicious, dishonest, covetous sensual, jealous greedy, bitter

spiteful and who spread slanderous gossip). The list included those who lack compassion and empathy for others, are cold and hard-hearted, argue and quarrel are cruel and have a strong desire to do harm thus the expression "You O Man," encompasses the entire human race that denies the existence of God and those who deliberately set about to harm others, physically, financially, sexually, verbally, emotionally or spiritually.

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## ROMANS 2:4-10

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### **God's Kindness is meant to lead you to Repentance.**

- **Romans 2:4-10:** 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? <sup>5</sup>But because of your hard and impenitent (unrepentant) heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. <sup>6</sup>He will render to each one according to his works: <sup>7</sup>to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, he will give eternal life; <sup>8</sup>but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. <sup>9</sup>There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, <sup>10</sup>but glory and honour and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek.

Since God with one word could annihilate us all, the riches of His kindness and self-controlled restraint is manifested in allowing humanity to live in spite of their denial of Him and all our gross sin. This kindness of God is a time for mankind to repent, but humanity continues in an ever increasing determination to prove God does not exist, so much so that our schools are teaching evolution (which denies the need for a creator) to our children and our scientists are spending billions of dollars on inventions to prove man came from anything other than God, thus during this period of time we live the following two things are happening:

1. Wrath is being stored up for both Jews and Gentiles who are self-seeking, unrepentant and blatantly deny God for that day when God's righteous judgment will be revealed against all the world, because all are held accountable to God and "The wages of sin is death." (Rom. 3:19) (Rom. 3:23) (Rom. 6:23). Wrath in this context will ultimately end in judgment to eternal death
2. Glory, honour, peace and eternal life is being kept in heaven for both Jews and Gentiles who are patient in well-doing and seeking after glory, honour and immortality.

During our present age God is patient and longsuffering allowing mankind a space of time to repent, but when the cup of iniquity is overflowing God will once again intervene in human history as he did in the days of Noah and the days of Sodom and Gomorrah.

**Those who do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness:** it should be noted that the truth in the context of the following verse; "Those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness" (v8), does not mean, "Those who do not understand all the doctrines of the Bible and have them neatly wrapped up with a coloured ribbon" Rather the truth in this context is about doctrines that teach right behaviour while unrighteousness is referring to wrong behaviour. Right behaviour before God can be summed up in the words, "Love your neighbour as yourself," while wrong behaviour (unrighteousness) refers to all behaviour that is contrary to the Law of love. The truth in the context of this chapter refers to those doctrines that speak about doing right, it is about fulfilling the Royal law, "You're your neighbour as yourself" which means do not deliberately do harm to other humans. No sane person deliberately does things to inflict pain on themselves, loving others as you love yourself is not about feeling some warm and fuzzy emotion towards others, it is about not hurting others as

you would not hurt yourself. The thing God hates the most is when we do harm to another person, physically, financially, sexually, verbally, emotionally or spiritually and the thing God loves the most is when we do good to others. It is interesting to notice that the major crime that God points out in Noah's time and one of the main reasons for the flood was because of all the violence in the land. Leviticus chapter nineteen makes it clear that our neighbour is every other person, showing that the law requires justice to all people. The six commandments regarding mankind should be applied to everyone and we must abide by them ourselves. To love in the biblical sense is not an emotional attitude, but the keeping of these laws in relation to our neighbour. This is the general law of justice, beyond that; our conduct is to be regulated by relationship. We must render honour and justice to all people wherever due, but we have a particular responsibility to care for our families and those who belong to Christ. When we do these things glory, honour, peace and eternal life is being kept in heaven for us.

Some people tend to judge the salvation of others:

- To make themselves feel superior and more righteous than others.
- To exalt themselves or win approval from friends or church leaders.

**NOTICE:** it is goodness not condemnation that leads people to God (v4).

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### ROMANS 2:11-13

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#### God shows no Partiality.

- **Romans 2:11-13:** For God shows no partiality. (Respect in the KJV) <sup>12</sup>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. <sup>13</sup>For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified.

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**Partiality:** means favouritism it carries the idea of favouring a person we consider special to us.

God shows no favouritism to Jews or Gentiles, the words, "All who sinned without the law will also perish without the law" (v12) refers to the Gentiles since they were not given the laws of God, while the words, "All who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law" (v12) refers to the Jews who God gave all His Commandments and statutes to. Paul is simply saying it does not matter whether a person is a direct descendant of Abraham, a Hebrew or Jew or from any other nation it makes no difference to God he will not give any favour to anyone based on their birthright or status in life, whoever does wrong will be judged accordingly and whoever does right will be rewarded (v13).

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### ROMANS 2:14-15

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#### They are a Law to Themselves.

- **Romans 2:14-15:** 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. <sup>15</sup>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

These verses show that amongst the human race there are people whose natural orientation is to do the right thing, they are compassionate merciful and give to others, they do not need a law telling them to be kind and caring or what they should be doing or not doing since it is their natural disposition to do-good (the law is written on their heart) added to this their conscience not only lets them know what the right behaviour is,

but tells them when they are doing wrong (Romans 2:14-15). This does not mean that they are without sin before God since we are all born with sinful aberrations and dysfunctions that limit us from attaining to God's, Most Holy Standard of perfection, but it does mean that God counts them worthy of reward rather than wrath.

This chapter is primarily teaching the following two things:

1. No-one will be exempt from God's judgement.
2. God shows no favouritism to any human it does not matter whether they are direct descendants of Abraham, live in kings houses, serve in God's temple or are simple beggars living in rags everyone will be judge in the same way (i.e., according to the, Royal law of Love meaning according to how they have treated other humans).

It should be noted that it is not having great doctrinal knowledge of the Scriptures that makes a person righteous, but the doing of them, which means living in the fruits of the Spirit (grace, mercy, kindness and being quick to forgive etc.). Remember the chief priest's, Pharisees and scribes had great knowledge of the Scriptures but because they lacked, mercy and compassion Jesus condemned them. Seeking after knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures is certainly to be commended and encouraged, but if love, mercy and compassion are lacking all the study in the world will count for nothing before God.

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## ROMANS 2:16-24

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### God Judges the Secrets of Men by Christ Jesus.

- **Romans 2:16-24:** on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus. <sup>17</sup>But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God <sup>18</sup>and know his will and approve what is excellent, because you are instructed from the law; <sup>19</sup>and if you are sure that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, <sup>20</sup>an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth— <sup>21</sup>you then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? <sup>22</sup>You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? <sup>23</sup>You who boast in the law dishonour God by breaking the law. <sup>24</sup>For, as it is written, "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you."

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Paul is telling self-righteous hypocritical Jews who pridefully boast that they keep all the laws of God and teach others to do the same, but in reality are breaking the law of God themselves, through stealing, adultery, idols and taking offerings that are given to the temple for themselves etc., that they will not be judged by the outward appearance they present to others, but by what they do when no-one is looking since nothing is hidden from God. The words "God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus" (v) means Jesus is the standard we will all be judged by, his life was not about appearing religious, but living a life that was honest and full of integrity (contrasted to hypocrisy and pretence) before God and showing compassion, mercy and grace to all who came to him, this is the standard we all will be judge against (i.e., the "Royal law of Love."

**The secrets of men:** refers to what we do that no-else sees and what is in our hearts, (i.e., pride, greed and selfish-ambition or compassion, mercy and love etc.).

**God, is blasphemed among the Gentiles:** the words, "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you (v24)" is a terrible indictment since it means that those who are in exalted positions to serve God and minister to the people are themselves causing non-believers to speak badly of God. This is because they are prideful, hypocritical religious leaders imposing God's standards onto others when they are not

keeping the LORDS statutes themselves. The practical application of Paul's words today would refer to Christians who teach the Scriptures, but are dishonouring God and bringing judgment on themselves because they are devoid of grace, mercy and love and don't live the life they are teaching and therefore cause the unbelieving world to speak badly about God because of their hypocritical life and hypocritical teaching.

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## ROMANS 2:25-29

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### **A Jew is One Inwardly by the Heart and by the Spirit, Not by the Letter.**

- **Romans 2:25-29:** For circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law, but if you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision.<sup>26</sup> So, if a man who is uncircumcised keeps the precepts of the law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? <sup>27</sup> Then he who is physically uncircumcised but keeps the law will condemn you who have the written code and circumcision but break the law. <sup>28</sup> For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. <sup>29</sup> But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.

Paul is saying though circumcision was considered valuable to the Jew it was not worth anything if they disobeyed the law, whereas if an uncircumcised man kept the law, he would not only be counted as righteous, but would also condemn the Jewish man even though he was circumcised and had the written laws of God. Paul is showing that a true spiritual Jew before God's eyes is not one who is outwardly adhering to ceremonial religious acts and has the written code of Moses Law, but a person who has the Spirit of God (love, compassion, mercy and grace etc.), in their hearts and look for God's praise and not the exaltation of man.

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**Today Paul's words could be stated in the following manner:** those who don't go to church every Sunday or attend Bible meetings etc., but live a life that honours God and brings a good testimony to the name of Jesus and the Christian faith will condemn those who do go to church every Sunday and who do attend Bible meetings and practise all the outward religious rituals, but don't live the life of a Christian. It should be noted living a Christian life is not about being perfect in every circumstance or situation of life, if we could do this Christ would not have needed to lay his life down, rather living a Christian life is about having a heart that desires to please God, is sorrowful when one fails and about showing mercy, grace and love to others contrasted to pretending to be righteous and lacking compassion and mercy. Paul is basically saying outward religious rituals will not get one saved since salvation is a matter of the heart and mind that results in a change in direction of one's life and passions directed toward God.

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*As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.*

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