
The Epistle to the Romans (5)

Having proven in chapter one that the Gentiles are utterly depraved and therefore unable to be justified by any of their works, Paul proceeds to tackle that same issue with regard to the Jews. The Jews have come to the false conclusion that because God had in the past shown special favor to their race they would, therefore, be exempt from condemnation. They had come to believe that mere physical connection with the nation Israel (being Abraham's descendants) meant salvation. In this section Paul shows that the self-righteous moralist Jews (like the Gentiles) are sinful and therefore equally exposed to God's wrath.

The Bird's Eye View

A. Rom. 1:18-32:

The Gentiles are sinful and are without personal righteousness before God

B. Romans 2:1 – 3:8:

The Jews are sinful as well and are without personal righteousness before God

1. Rom. 2:1-11: *God will judge and reward men according to what they have done*
2. Rom. 2:12-16: *God will judge men according to the light they have enjoyed – according to the law they have obeyed*
3. Rom. 2:17-24: *When tested by God's written Law, the Jews are shown to be as justly and certainly exposed to condemnation as the Gentiles*
4. Rom. 2:25-29: *When "circumcision" is truly valuable*
5. Rom. 3:1-8: *Jewish objections anticipated and refuted*

C. Romans 3:9-20: Summary and final conclusion

All men, Jews and Gentiles alike, are under the power of sin and have failed to keep God's law: therefore there is no one righteous before God and none can ever be righteous before God by his own doing: salvation by man's own doings is therefore forever impossible!

Questions to discuss on chapter 2:1-11

Vs. 1-3:

1. "Therefore" connects this chapter with the previous. What is the connection?
2. In what or about what are the self-righteous moralist Paul is addressing 'inexcusable'?

3. Judging others. Is this wrong to do? And if not, how can it be done wrong?
4. The self-righteous Jews were very zealous. Does zeal against sin prove innocence or purity?
5. What are the 'such things' Paul refers to in vs. 3?
6. Fallen man 'think they shall escape the judgment of God' even though they know they commit things that are worthy of punishment (see Rom. 1:32; 2:15). How do they reason themselves into such thinking?

Vs. 4

7. The more people are overloaded with God's blessings, the more they despise it. (To despise in the Greek has the meaning of *contemn or treat it with neglect*). Why is this happening?
8. Give one example of His *goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering* in our life. Can you observe in yourself how this has led you to repentance?
9. To repent is to have a change of mind flowing into a change of action. What change of mind and action is God seeking from us?

Vs. 5

10. The 'hardness and impenitent heart' is a heart that is *insensible to touch and to every appeal*. Is this true or false?
11. The word 'treasure up' is a banking term describing 'saving up for the future.' So Paul is saying that religious but insincere people are also treasuring up God's wrath to be revealed at a future date.
 - a. Are to we think more about the attribute of God's wrath?
 - b. How important is it to share this truth with others around us? And if, how do you this effectively?

Vs. 6-11

Reading these verses can be tricky as Paul broke up the two lists. When you read these verses, be aware that the list he began in vs. 7 with *eternal life*, it expanded in vs. 10 with *glory, honor, and peace*.

12. God will render according to every man's deeds. (vs. 6)
To them who by patient continuance in well doing (vs. 7) and 'worketh good' (vs. 10) seek for glory, honor, and immortality (vs. 7), He renders (vs. 6) eternal life, glory, honor, and peace (vs. 10).
To them who are contentious (self-seeking) and disobedient (vs. 8), He renders indignation, wrath, tribulation, and anguish (vs. 8b-9).

It seems that Paul is totally contradicting himself these verses. His thesis is that man cannot be justified by works. Yet it appears he is saying that eternal life is received by doing and seeking the right things (vs. 7). How can this be explained?