Let the voice of Jesus drown out all other voices.
Evangelist Elveria Lloyd-Webb

ROMANS CHAPTER TWO
Prayer Study #442
First Love Ministries, Inc. of Perry, Georgia USA

Romans 2 - New King James Version (NKJV)

God's Righteous Judgment

2 Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. 2 But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things. 3 And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God? 4 Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? 5 But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, 6 who "will render to each one according to his deeds": 7 eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; 8 but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, 9 tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; 10 but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 11 For there is no partiality with God.
12 For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law 13 (for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified; 14 for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, 15 who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them) 16 in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.

The theme of this chapter is that God will judge self-righteous and religious people. The chapter spends a great deal of time talking about judging. The way the word is used in this passage is more in the sense of condemning others. Paul is not talking about salvation here, for when we receive Christ, the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all unrighteousness (1st John 1:7), and we are told by Jesus in John 5:24: ***"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto***

life." Paul is talking about sin, and how God will judge those not covered by the blood of His son.

The word *"man"* is a Greek word *anthrope*, a generic term meaning both men and women. Because we have heard the truth of God's word, we are without excuse, and Jesus, who has been given all judgment (John 5), will judge us one day with the facts of what we have done and said with no partiality. He will judge us specifically for accepting or rejecting Christ. The coming judgment is unavoidable for every human who has ever lived, and God has delayed His judgment because He is not willing that any should perish (2nd Peter 3:9), and so He gives man time to repent and shows mankind His goodness and kindness so that each person will be led to repentance. This longsuffering of God is exemplified throughout the Bible, such as in the days of Noah, in the days of Lot, in the days of the Prophets, etc. In the days of Noah, for example, Methuselah was the sign-son, and his name means "when he is dead it (the Flood) shall be sent." God let Methuselah live on earth more years than any human ever lived (969 years) because of the His longsuffering and desire to give mankind every possible opportunity to repent before He sent the flood. That *goodness* or *kindness* of God should lead us to repentance, but mankind did not heed His warning and did not respond to His kindness.

There is much confusion in the world and even in Christian circles about judging. We are always taught that we are not to judge others, and we certainly do not want to be operating in a *judgmental* spirit or attitude. However, we must judge by the gift of discernment from the Holy Spirit, or we will fall for anything and anyone who puts on a false cloak of righteousness. If we did not judge, how could we tell if someone was a wolf in sheep's clothing (Matthew 7:15-19)? So, how can we reconcile Jesus' own words in John 7:24 (***"Do not judge according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment***), with His words in Matthew 7:1 (***Judge not, that you be not judged***)? The same Greek word is used in both scriptures. The Lord expands and explains Matthew 7:1 in Matthew 7:2 (***For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.***) The Lord is not telling us in Matthew 7:1 that we are to close our eyes to the wrong character of others, but that we are not to walk in a critical, fault-finding spirit toward other people. What I think the Lord is trying to teach us is that we are not to judge other people for the very things that we are doing in secret. Also, we must judge, not by appearance, but by fruit. Thus, we are called to be "fruit inspectors," realizing that we must analyze the fruit in our own lives, whether it be good or bad, first. If we judge others for their sins, and we are doing the same sins, then we involuntarily are condemning ourselves. This is illustrated in the story of the woman taken in adultery in John 8:1-11. The Pharisees, in judging the woman taken in the act of adultery, condemned themselves for they recognized that they were guilty of sin in their own lives.

Verse 5 speaks of the hardness and impenitence of the human heart. Kevin Conner gives us several reasons that the Word of God gives for the cause of hardness of the heart:

1. Pride (Daniel 5:13-23)
2. Religious Bigotry (Acts 19:8-9)
3. Hatred and Wrong Spirit or Wrong Attitudes (Mark 3:5)
4. Rationalizing the Word (Mark 8:16)
5. Unwillingness to Yield, Deceitfulness of Sin (Hebrews 3:13)
6. Disobedience (Zechariah 7:8-11)
7. Sin of Unbelief (Hebrews 3:7-12)

The last verses of this section let us know clearly that we will reap whatever we have sown (Galatians 6:7). The harvest, however, is always greater than what was sown (Hosea 8:7). God has poured out His wrath at certain times in history, but we will see two future events where this wrath is the greatest. First, there is the great Tribulation period, a time of great judgment of men. Then there is the Great White Throne of Judgment, which all people who have rejected the goodness and longsuffering of God and have rejected Jesus Christ, will stand before the righteous Judge. Believers will not be at the White Throne of Judgment, but they will stand before the *bema* or mercy seat of Christ to be judged not according to salvation but judged according to their works and deeds. In both the Great White Throne of Judgment and the Judgment Seat of Christ, the Lord shows no partiality or class distinction.

This section ends with verse 16, a verse full of meaning that could take weeks to adequately cover. Let us take each phrase from this verse and briefly examine each one:

- ***When God shall judge:*** This refers to the Day of Judgment (2nd Peter 3; 8-10).
- ***Secrets of Men:*** These are the secret thoughts and deeds of mankind which only God sees and knows (Ecclesiastes 12:14; Matthew 25:31-46).
- **By Jesus Christ:** The Father has given all judgment to the Son, so Jesus Christ is the divinely appointed Judge (John 5:20-30).
- **According to my gospel:** Paul's Gospel is the Gospel of Justification. This means that we stand before God the Father, *just as if* we had never sinned, because we are covered with the blood of Jesus Christ (1st John 1:7-*But if we [really] are living and walking in the Light, as He [Himself] is in the Light, we have [true, unbroken] fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses (removes) us from all sin and guilt [keeps us cleansed from sin in all its forms and manifestations].*
- **God shall judge:** God is holy and just and must prosecute the sinner because of the violation of the law. Justice demands that the penalty for sin be paid. (*For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus Our Lord-Romans*

6:23). Sin must be dealt with (1st Timothy 1:9-10) or God's holiness and righteousness and justice is at stake.

The Jews Guilty as the Gentiles

17 *Indeed you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God,* ***18*** *and know His will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law,* ***19*** *and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness,* ***20*** *an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law.* ***21*** *You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal?* ***22*** *You who say, "Do not commit adultery," do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?* ***23*** *You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law?* ***24*** *For "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you," as it is written.*

The Jews believed that the Gentiles were unclean and could not be saved and would be used as firewood for Hell. They were deceived by their own pride, and Paul, himself a Jew, lists eleven things concerning what the Jews boasted in. This is explained by Kevin Conner:

1. They boasted that they were called Jews and had great nationalistic pride and racial pride, although they rejected the Messiah and Jesus called them children of the devil and of the synagogue of Satan (John 8:44, Revelation 2:9)
2. They boasted that they rested in the law, unlike the lawless Gentiles (Matthew 13:11; 11:18, Isaiah 48:2).
3. They boasted that God respected them above all Gentile nations and races on the earth, and they alone had the true revelation of God, not the Gentiles.
4. They boasted that only they knew God's will because His will is His Word, and they had the Word (Deuteronomy 4:8).
5. They boasted that since only they had the law, they were the only ones who could approve or disapprove of things or say what was right and what was wrong.
6. They boasted that they were the only ones who had been instructed in the law (Luke 1:4).
7. They boasted that only they could have self-confidence because the Gentiles were spiritually blind, and Jews were the guides (John 9:1-41; John 15:22-24, Matthew 23:24).
8. They boasted that they were in the light and the Gentiles were in the dark.
9. They boasted that they were the instructors or correctors, and the Gentiles were the foolish.
10. They boasted that they were the teachers of babes or proselytes.
11. They boasted that they had the form of knowledge of the truth, but this was an

external thing instead of a heart thing. The Greek word for "form" used here is the same word used in 2nd Timothy 3:5: *Having a form of godliness [the external form], but denying the power thereof…*

Conner is not bashing Jews but just reporting what Paul is saying. We know that the Lord has a special covenant with the Jewish people and that what happens to and with Israel is a prophetic sign of the Last Days. The Lord promises prosperity for those who pray for the peace of Jerusalem, and I believe that Israel is America's best friend in the world. That does not mean, however, that the nation is perfect, nor that Gentiles have to follow the Jewish law to enter into salvation. There is much of value in their dietary laws and studying the Jewish festivals and ceremonies can cause much in the New Testament to become alive to the serious student of the Bible.

Paul ends this passage by saying that, because of the pridefulness and the actions of the Jews, the Gentiles not only did not accept their God but blasphemed His name. We see the same thing happening today among Christians whose lives cause non-believers to sarcastically comment: *You call yourself a Christian? If you are a Christian, I don't want anything to do with Christianity.* Thus, some Christians are blaspheming the name of Christ by what they do and say in the presence of the world.

Circumcision of No Avail

25 *For circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law; but if you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.* ***26*** *Therefore, if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision?* ***27*** *And will not the physically uncircumcised, if he fulfills the law, judge you who, even with your written code and circumcision, are a transgressor of the law?* ***28*** *For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh;* ***29*** *but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.*

Circumcision came long before the law was given. It is part of the Abrahamic covenant in Genesis 17. Circumcision involved three things:

1. Shedding of Blood
2. Cutting of the Flesh and invocation of the child's name.
3. Doing this on the 8th day of the child's life.

This would make a great study of the spiritual significance of all of this. I would think that this was to represent coming into relationship with Christ and thus having our sins cleansed by His blood, symbolically dying to our flesh nature, and entering into life as a new creature since *8th* represents *new beginnings*.

Circumcision was confirmed under the law. Those males who were not circumcised could not eat of the Passover lamb (Exodus 12:44-48). Also, God sought to kill Moses because he had not circumcised his children (Exodus 4:24-26). Only by circumcision was a male child brought into covenant relationship with God.

Whether to require new converts to Christianity to follow the rites of circumcision to be included in the new religion made up at first predominantly of Jews, was a hot issue in the early church. `Paul argued forcefully against making new converts be circumcised, and eventually he won out. He also argues in this passage that circumcision was part of the law and thus even the circumcised became spiritually uncircumcised if they violated any part of the law. Thus, circumcision became of no value if the whole law was not kept and became only an external sign of the covenant. Thus, Paul emphasizes the circumcision of the heart which was signified in a person's life if they were walking in the Spirit, keeping the law, and praising God.

The Old Testament gives several types of circumcision that the Lord required, although the cutting of the flesh was the only one that the Jews considered the sign of the covenant:

- **Circumcision of the heart** (Deuteronomy 10:16, Jeremiah 4:4, Leviticus 26:41)
- **Circumcision of the lips** (Exodus 6:12, 30)
- **Circumcision of the ears** (Jeremiah 6:10, Acts 7:51)
- **Circumcision of the flesh** (Genesis 17; Ezekiel 44:7-9)

The New Testament says that true circumcision is to be of the heart and in the spirit. It is thus internal and not external (Colossians 2:11, Galatians 5:1-6; Colossians 3:11, 1st Corinthians 7:18-19, Ephesians 2:11, Galatians 6:15).

These first two chapters of Romans deal with the need for God's righteousness and the problem of sin. Paul builds a solid case for the condemnation of all people, both Jew and Gentile. The Gentiles have no excuse because they suppressed the knowledge of God they could have been taught by nature and their own consciences. The Jews were at fault because they had the law but did not meet the Lord's standard in obeying the law and had an external form of godliness but in their hearts, they were rebellious. We will see this theme expanded in Chapter 3 where Paul gives God's verdict: *"…all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"* (Romans 3:23).