

Coming Judgment

GOD WILL JUDGE EVERY PERSON ACCORDING
TO THEIR RESPONSE TO HIM.

Romans 2:1-13

1 Therefore, every one of you who **judges** **A** is without excuse. For when you judge another, you **condemn yourself**, **B** since you, the judge, do the same things. **2** Now we know that God's judgment on those who do such things is based on the **truth**. **3** Do you **think** **C**—anyone of you who judges those who do such things yet do the same—that you will escape God's judgment? **4** Or do you despise the riches of his **kindness**, **D** restraint, and patience, not recognizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to **repentance**? **5** Because of your hardened and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of **wrath**, **E** when God's righteous judgment is revealed. **6** He will repay each one **according to his works**: **F** **7** eternal life to those who by persistence in **doing good** **G** seek glory, honor, and immortality; **8** but wrath and anger to those who are **self-seeking** **H** and disobey the truth while obeying unrighteousness. **9** There will be affliction and distress for every human being who does evil, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek; **10** but glory, honor, and peace for everyone who does what is good, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek. **11** For there is **no favoritism** **I** with God. **12** For all who sin without the law will also perish without the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. **13** For the hearers of the law are not righteous before God, but the **doers** **J** of the law will be justified.

Exploring Key Words

- A** Not just saying something is wrong. This represents a pride and arrogance that expects God's judgment on someone.
- B** Warning against hypocrisy. Some in the Roman church were condemning behavior, yet participating in the same activities.
- C** Unlike human judgments, God's verdicts are accurate and just in every way.
- D** "Suppose" (ESV). Generally, a term from arithmetic that relates to calculation or deliberation. In Romans 4, Paul used it to describe God crediting righteousness to those who demonstrate faith.
- E** "Goodness" (KJV). Not an approval of sin, but an element of God's character, along with restraint and patience, that moves individuals toward repentance.
- F** A changed heart that turns from sin. Without it, people store up judgment for themselves.
- G** Not human anger, but divine justice. God's wrath represents His appropriate response to sin.
- H** God's judgment is not capricious or unjust. He will judge every human being by the same standard: their response to His Son, Jesus.
- I** Not works-based salvation, but good works performed as the result of a life transformed by Jesus and aligned with God's values.
- J** "Contentious" (KJV). The Greek wording suggests one who seeks divisions, having no concern for others or for God.
- K** Whether Jew or Gentile (vv. 9-10), every person is accountable for how they respond to truth.
- L** True righteousness is demonstrated through action. Hearing is not sufficient (see Jas. 1:22-25).



NOTES

No Excuses (Rom. 2:1-5)

- Paul emphasized that human logic is skewed. The hypocrisy of condemning others only leads to one's own condemnation for the same sins.
- In contrast, God's judgment is always impartial and based on His character. Therefore, no one who rejects His grace will escape His wrath.

Perfect Standard (Rom. 2:6-11)

- People's response to God's grace will determine where they spend eternity. Those who follow Him will experience eternal life. Those who pursue their own ways will face His wrath.
- Everyone will be judged by this standard because God does not play favorites.

One Way (Rom. 2:12-13)

- Paul affirmed that the eternal consequences of sin are universal. Those who "keep" the law and those who "reject" the law both face judgment apart from Christ.
- Hearing the gospel is not sufficient for salvation. The first step toward being made righteous before God is obeying Him by accepting His offer of salvation.

Summary Statements

God will judge every person according to their response to Him.

- We should focus on our own sin rather than judging others.
- Our eternal destiny is based on our response to God in this life.
- Unbelievers need to understand that good works will not justify them before God.

Memory Verse

Romans 2:11

Key Doctrine

Man

In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. (See Genesis 3; Psalm 51:5.)



For additional commentary, see the Leader Guide or Adult Commentary, available for purchase at [goExploreTheBible.com](https://www.goExploreTheBible.com).

ENGAGE

What does a speeding ticket teach us about accountability? (PSG, p. 19)

- Standing before a judge can be a sobering experience, even if it's only for the speeding ticket in your hand.
- When a police officer pulls you over and gives you a ticket, you might set it aside and get back on the road. However, from that moment on, you know that one day you will be accountable to a judge.
- On that day, the ticket testifies to your accountability.

Bonus: When have you been held accountable for something? What were you grateful for at that time? What made you nervous about it?

EXPLORE

NO EXCUSES (ROM. 2:1-5)

Why do individuals tend to judge others while overlooking their own sin? (PSG, p. 22)

- Most Jewish people in Paul's day considered themselves spiritually superior to non-Jews. They viewed Gentiles as spiritually unclean. But Paul asserted that they were without excuse and had no right to judge others.
- Those who were judging others were under God's judgment themselves. God's judgment is always just, impartial, and based on His character, while humans are usually prejudiced and hypocritical.
- Some presume upon God's kindness, believing that He won't judge sinners. Others think God's kindness applies only to them. Paul already established the universality of sin and the fact that all people stand guilty before God apart from His grace. Now he explained that the kindness of God moves people toward repentance.

Bonus: How does knowing you are accountable to God affect the way you see Him and your sin?

PERFECT STANDARD (ROM. 2:6-11)

Bonus: What are some ways people try to measure success in our culture?

- Paul said that all people will belong to one of two categories at the final judgment. One category includes everyone who receives eternal life. They devote themselves to doing good in response to what God has done for them. They live to bring glory and honor to Him.
- The other category includes the misguided people who have deceived themselves. Instead of eternal life, they will face God's wrath.
- Jews and Gentiles alike will be judged by the same standard. If they submit to Christ, they will be blessed. However, if they reject Christ, they will face God's wrath. Christ is the standard.

- No one can count on favoritism with God to give them a right relationship with Him.

Based on these verses, what is the key to a healthy relationship with God? (PSG, p. 24)

ONE WAY (ROM. 2:12-13)

Bonus: Why is it important to remember that God doesn't play favorites? How can you avoid playing favorites spiritually?

- As Paul emphasized, God does not play favorites. He applies the same perfect standard of judgment to each person. His judgment is based on how people respond to Him.
- The same truth applies to us: those who have God's Word cannot treat it as nothing more than a keepsake. Both the Jew and the Gentile were condemned if they stood apart from Christ, whether they knew the law or not.
- Again, Paul divided his listeners in two categories: "hearers" and "doers." For anyone to be righteous before God, they need to do more than just hear the words of Scripture. They must act on it. People are justified—that is, declared innocent, upright, or righteous—by faith in Christ alone. God has no other plan.

In what ways might you be relying on knowledge rather than obedience in your own spiritual life? What practical steps can you take to move from hearing God's truth to actively doing it? (PSG, p. 26)

CHALLENGE

As a group, discuss some opinions you have heard about how people are justified before God.

How can you use this week's passage to give a biblical answer? (PSG, p. 27)

As you apply this Bible study to your own life, think about your personal response to God.

How have you responded to the gospel of Jesus Christ? How are you responding to the gospel message today—how is your life being changed? (PSG, p. 27)

FURTHER DISCUSSION



Scan here for additional discussion questions for this week's study.

BIBLE SKILL (PSG, P. 26)

Use multiple Scripture passages to understand a major doctrine.

People have used Romans 2:13 and other passages to claim that salvation is achieved by works that are needed in addition to faith. Read the following passages and determine what the Bible teaches about salvation by faith: John 6:28-29; 11:26; Acts 16:31; Romans 1:17; 4:6-8; 6:23; Ephesians 2:8; Philippians 3:9. **How do these verses relate to Paul's words to the Romans about the universality of judgment?**

Assign each adult one of the verses from the Bible Skill on page 26 of the PSG. Direct them to read and reflect on their assigned verse, identifying what it says about salvation. After a few minutes, allow each person to share their findings. Emphasize that works do not have the power to save anyone, though God does expect us to perform good works as a result of our salvation.

OBJECT LESSON: MIRROR

Display a mirror. Encourage adults to share something they noticed about themselves the last time they looked in a mirror. Explain that sometimes it's easier to ignore things we don't want to see by turning the mirror on others.

Share that in Romans 2, Paul warned the Jews not to think of themselves as superior to the Gentiles but to take a good look at themselves. Note that contemporary believers also need to make sure they are evaluating their lives honestly before God.

Say: *Every person has sinned, so every person is accountable before God. But we can find mercy and forgiveness through Jesus.* Remind adults that God does not play favorites, so we need to see things as He sees them. Encourage them to let God be the mirror for their lives in the week ahead.

GOD'S WRATH

In Romans 2:1-3:20, Paul addresses a sobering truth: God will judge every person according to their response to Him. This judgment is not rooted in favoritism or emotion, but in the perfect, impartial justice of a holy God. While we often think of wrath as uncontrolled anger, Scripture describes God's wrath as His settled, righteous opposition to evil, His necessary and just response to human rebellion.

Paul began by exposing hypocrisy: we tend to judge others while excusing our own sin (Rom. 2:1-5). However, our selective standards will not exempt us from God's righteous judgment. He alone is qualified to judge, and He does so without bias.

Paul moved on to reveal the standard: every person will be judged "according to his works" (2:6). This isn't works-based salvation. Rather, it's a reflection of how we've responded to God's grace. The root issue is not religious knowledge, but our response to God's revealed truth.

In Romans 1, Paul explained that God's wrath is already being revealed and that He delivers sinners to their own desires when they reject Him (1:24,26,28). So, God's judgment includes both present (as people experience the consequences of their rebellion) and future (when all will stand before Him) aspects.

Romans 2:12-13 ties Paul's argument together. Regardless of our background, no one escapes accountability before God. We all will answer for our actions. Those who sin under the law will be judged by it, while those without the law will be judged by what they knew. Yet, God's wrath does not have to be the final word. His kindness leads people toward repentance (2:4). His wrath is meant to awaken us, not destroy us.

God's wrath is real, but so is His mercy. The gospel reveals not only the justice of God but also the rescue He offers through Jesus. We can choose to respond in humility. The Judge also offers Himself as our Savior and will redeem us if we refuse to harden our hearts.