

Coming Judgment

Session 2 • Romans 2:1-13



ENGAGE

PREPARE: Display **Pack Item 3** (Poster: *The Doctrine of Man*) and **Pack Item 4** (Poster: *Key Words in Romans*). On a whiteboard write *law, accountable, and judge*.

ASK: What does a speeding ticket teach us about accountability? (p. 21)

INTRODUCE: Read aloud the opening paragraph on page 21. Direct the group to signal with a thumbs up or a thumb down if they agree or disagree with the following: *Many people are guilty of speeding on the highways. A speeding ticket usually acts as a deterrent and changes behavior.*

REVIEW: Point to the words recorded on the whiteboard and ask how the three words are related to one another. Summarize the following:

- “In Romans 1:18-25, Paul described the guilt of the Gentile world. The Jews likely would have stood and applauded at Paul’s proclamation of the Gentiles’ guilt. But in chapter 2, Paul reminded the Jews they were no different from the Gentiles when it came to facing God’s judgment. . . . God’s judgment is based on truth and is impartial—both Jews and Gentiles will be judged in the same way.” (p. 21)

EXPLAIN: Emphasize the key truth of today’s session: *God will judge every person according to their response to Him.*

ASK: Why will you come before God to be judged?

TRANSITION: *Today’s study examines Romans 2, where Paul shifted his focus from the Gentiles to the Jews. In the end, even God’s people needed to recognize that knowing, and even obeying, the law did not free them from accountability for their sins.*

EXPLORE THE TEXT

REVIEW: Write *No excuses* on the whiteboard. Remind the group that in Romans 1:18-25, Paul focused on the Gentiles having no excuses for their sin. Explain that in Romans 2:1-5, Paul shared that the Jewish people had no excuses either.

READ: Invite a volunteer to read aloud **Romans 2:1-5** as the group counts the number of times words like “judge” are used.

GUIDE: Explain what kind of judgment Paul was addressing.

- **(2:1)** Jesus had warned against judging others in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 7:1). This is not a simple evaluation of someone’s actions or holding them

accountable. Rather, it involves hypocrisy, where the one doing the judging is doing “the same things.” The verb’s present tense indicates that a “judge” is also a habitual sinner.

DISCUSS: Direct attention to **Pack Item 3** (Poster: *The Doctrine of Man*). Lead adults to suggest ways Paul’s words in verses 1-5 align with this statement about humanity. Note that our universal guilt removes any moral high ground for judging others.

ASK: Why do individuals tend to judge others while overlooking their own sin? (p. 23)

IDENTIFY: Guide the group to identify the three characteristics of God in Romans 2:4. Point out that all people live under God’s judgment, but He delays judgment to move people toward repentance. Emphasize that one day, though, the ones who reject His kindness will face His wrath.

DRAW: Draw two columns on the whiteboard or a large sheet of paper. Label one column *righteous* and the other *unrighteous*.

READ: Instruct the group to read Romans 2:6-11, looking for characteristics of the righteous and the unrighteous.

RECORD: Direct the group to work in pairs to read the verses again and share the characteristics they discover. After a few minutes, allow a few volunteers to share their responses. Record their answers on the chart.

EXPLAIN: Point out that Paul wanted both Jews and the Gentiles to realize that good

works do not provide salvation. Highlight the truth that good works bring glory to God and reveal our relationship with Him, but they will never save anyone from judgment.

DISCUSS: Based on these verses, what is the key to a healthy relationship with God? (p. 23)

DISCUSS: To illustrate Paul’s point, share the following case study:

- *John and Sam both love to play golf. On a par three hole, John takes three strokes and records a par, while Sam takes five strokes and records a par. Sam thinks he deserves the same score as his friend. Ask: **How do people treat God with indifference and expect the same result as their friend who honors God? How do Paul’s words in these verses relate to that?***

REVIEW: Emphasize God’s impartiality when it comes to judgment:

- **(2:11)** God judges all people impartially; He shows no favoritism. Like certain Jews in the first century, some today believe their heritage gives them a special standing with God. Nothing could be further from the truth. A right relationship with Him is never based on favoritism.

READ: Invite a volunteer to read Romans 2:12-13 as the group listens for how God responds to those who hear or know His commands, yet refuse to obey them.

GUIDE: Encourage adults to consider the distinctions between hearing God’s words and obeying God’s words. Discuss why Paul

(and God) would place such an emphasis on doing, not just hearing.

REVIEW: Summarize this information to dig deeper into the need for obedience:

- **(2:13)** Hearing God’s Word alone is not enough to make someone righteous before Him; it must be lived out. Yet this obedience is not a means of earning righteousness. Only Jesus has ever fully obeyed the law. Those who put their faith in Him are the true doers of the law.

ASK: Why can’t my good works make me right with God? (p. 23)

INSTRUCT: Encourage a few volunteers to define “justification.” Direct attention to **Pack Item 4** (*Poster: Key Words in Romans*) and highlight the definition. Note other words that appear in these verses (examples: *sin, law, righteous*). Emphasize that hearing the gospel is not sufficient for salvation. Share that people must embrace Jesus’s sacrifice and His offer of salvation.

SHARE: As time allows, walk the group through the Plan of Salvation on the inside front cover. Assure adults that you are available to speak with anyone who has questions about a personal relationship with Jesus.

CHALLENGE

SUMMARIZE: Review these points from this week’s Bible study passage:

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

DISCUSS: Place adults in groups of three or four and direct each group to discuss the **Apply the Text** activity on page 23. After a few minutes, allow volunteers to share what some people trust to be right with God. Encourage the larger group to compare those beliefs to what Paul expressed in Romans 2.

REFLECT: Highlight the **Apply the Text** questions on page 27. Challenge adults to spend time during the week reflecting on their personal relationship with Jesus. Remind them that you are available to speak with anyone who has questions about Jesus. Note that even those who have a relationship with Jesus still need to trust Him fully each day.

PRAY: Refer back to the **Explore the Bible Prayer Guide** QR code on page 15. Challenge adults to use the prayer prompt in the prayer guide to pray through the Scripture passage this week. Close the session in prayer, asking God to move in powerful ways during the week.

AFTER THE SESSION

Reinforce the session by sending the group a text or email that assures them you are praying for them. Encourage them to share requests with you so your prayers can be more focused.