

ROMANS – LIVING BY FAITH
GOD’S RIGHTEOUSNESS & MAN’S REBELLION – Chapters 1-3

LESSON 7 – STANDARDS OF GOD’S JUDGMENT – Romans 2:1-16

Who’s ever heard someone say, “That’s not fair!” when a decision hasn’t gone their way?

People’s standards can vary and some of these people might have a legitimate case, but God’s standards are righteous and unchanging. People will have no case when they stand before Him.

Most “religious” people who read Paul’s message to the wicked at the end of chapter 1 would wholeheartedly agree with his writing. What we find Paul doing here in this section of chapter 2 is reminding these respectable sinners that they are also guilty before God.

In the first 16 verses of Romans 2, Paul gives six thoughts that provide the basis of God’s judgment for those who consider themselves beyond His judgment.

God’s Judgment Is According to Reality

The sin of the hypocrite is being intolerant of other people’s shortcomings and sin and lenient of their own. They put others on a tight moral leash but give themselves plenty of room. The hypocrite tries to hide their own guilt by judging others.

Paul reminds these people that because this judgment of others is evidence that they will be judged themselves. How easy it is for us to hold others to a standard of behavior that we ourselves do not even keep.

God’s Judgment Is According to Integrity

God judges with integrity and truth. There is only one standard for His judgment and that is His righteous standard. No one will be allowed to escape judgment based on a different standard for some and another standard for others.

Scripture makes this abundantly clear...

Romans 3:4 “Let God be true, and every human being a liar...”

Psalm 9:7-8 “He has established his throne for judgment. He rules the world in righteousness and judges the peoples with equity.”

1 Corinthians 4:5 “Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God.”

God’s Judgment Is According to Opportunity

Paul gives us three attributes of God that tell us how He extends opportunity for people to repent.

Goodness – Scripture is filled with the truth that God’s goodness is extended to everyone everywhere.

Forbearance – This is reference to the judgment He withholds even though it is rightly deserved.

Patience – This is God’s patience both in sending kindness and withholding judgment.

Paul says that people’s stubbornness and unrepentant hearts put these attributes of God to the test. Think of this stubborn attitude like a hardening of the arteries. Hardened arteries can be temporarily disabling but a hardened heart can be permanently disabling.

God’s Judgment Is According to Morality

These religious hypocrites want God to judge based on position, prominence and possession. The reality is that all those things add up to the one thing that God will judge for sure...and that is pretension.

Paul tells us that it is not the person that simply claims to have a relationship with God that will escape His judgment, but the person who actually possesses that relationship. Living a righteous life should be the goal of every believer. Paul mentions three goals that will help us with right behavior...

Glory – to bring glory to God

Honor – to honor God and be honored by Him

Immortality – eternal life

What about the unbelievers who selfishly seek their own justification by their own means? Paul gives us a description of them. He says they...

Are self-seeking

Reject the truth

Follow evil

He then goes on to give the results of this unbelief...

Wrath and anger – the purposeful response of God to unrighteousness

Trouble and distress – a time of tribulation, confinement and constriction

God’s Judgment Is According to Impartiality

Paul goes in to great detail to assure his readers that God is not picking on anyone and to let them know that God doesn’t play favorites. He judges impartially and righteously.

Again...as discussed many times...not only does God not treat people differently, He doesn’t treat sin differently either. The self-righteous hypocrite will be judged for their sin of hypocrisy just as the heathen from the end of chapter 1 will be judged for their sin.

Paul gives us four reasons why those who refuse God’s salvation are lost...

They have sinned against creation

They have sinned against the law

They have sinned against their conscience

They have sinned against their own thoughts about good and evil

God's Judgment Is According to Certainty

To finish this section of Romans, Paul says in verse 16 that the day of judgment is coming for all people. "This will take place on the day when God judges people's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares."

So how foolish is it for people to think they can get by with anything when they stand before God? On that day when He judges, God will judge according to the reality of our relationship with Him not on our presumption of right living based on our own standards.