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Series: The Book of Romans

Sin and Condemnation: The World's need to get right with God

(52)

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[Romans 1:18-3:20](#)

(Continuation from 11/13/16)

C. God's Case Against the Moralist: Judgment, [Romans 2:1-16](#)

[Romans 2:1-5 \(NASB\)](#)

¹“Therefore you have no excuse, every one of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.

² And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things.

³ But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same *yourself*, that you will escape the judgment of God?

⁴ Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?

⁵ But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.”

[\(Romans 2:1-16\) Introduction](#): this is one of the passages that covers several subjects and can be studied from the viewpoint of any one of them. It is an excellent study on judging, criticizing others, the judgment of God, self-righteousness, the moralist, and the legalist.

It also deals with the judgment of the heathen, and answers the question so often asked: “What will happen to the heathen, to the person who never hears about Jesus Christ?” [\(Romans 2:11-15\).](#)

The present study is entitled: “God's Case Against the Moralist.”

1. [The moralist \(v.1\).](#)
2. [The judgment of God is according to truth: perfect justice \(v.2-5\).](#)
3. [The judgment of God is according to deeds: eternal reward or punishment \(v.6-10\).](#)
4. [The judgment of God is without respect of persons: absolute impartiality \(v.11-15\).](#)
5. [The judgment of God is to be executed by Jesus Christ and His gospel \(v.16\).](#)

2. [\(Romans 2:2-5\) Judgment— God, Misconceptions of— Man: the judgment of God— of the only living and true God—is according to truth.](#)

[Romans 2:2-5 \(NASB\)](#)

²“And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things.

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³ But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same *yourself*, that you will escape the judgment of God?

⁴ Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?

⁵ But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.”

2

In doing so, he presents **six principles** by which God judges sinful men: **knowledge** ([v. 1](#)), **truth** ([vv. 2-3](#)), **guilt** ([vv. 4-5](#)), **deeds** ([vv. 6-10](#)), **impartiality** ([vv. 11-15](#)), and **motive** ([v. 16](#)).

Principles of God’s Judgment--part 1 ([Romans 2:1-5](#))

Truth

[Romans 2:2-3 \(NASB\)](#)

² “**And we know** that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things.

³ But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same *yourself*, that you will escape the judgment of God?”

[Romans 2:2-3 \(NKJV\)](#)

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?”

[Romans 2:2-3 \(KJV\)](#)

² “**But we are sure** that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.”

³ And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?”

Know translates *oida*, which carries the idea of awareness of that which is commonly known and obvious. As Paul has already pointed out, even the pagan Gentiles acknowledge that “**those who practice such things [the sins listed in [1:29-31](#)] are worthy of death**” ([v. 32](#)). Surely then, the more spiritually enlightened Jews **know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things.**

3

Everything God does is, by nature, right and according to the truth. Paul declares the following:

[Romans 3:4 \(NASB\)](#)

⁴ “May it never be! Rather, **let God be found true, though every man be found a liar**, as it is written, “**THAT YOU MAY BE JUSTIFIED IN YOUR WORDS, AND PREVAIL WHEN YOU ARE JUDGED.**”

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Romans 9:14 (NASB)

¹⁴“What shall we say then? **There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be!**”

God is not capable of doing that which is not right or saying that which is not true. David declared that the Lord:

Psalm 9:4 (NASB)

⁴“For You have maintained my just cause; You have **sat on the throne judging righteously.**”

Psalm 9:8 (NASB)

⁸“And **He will judge the world in righteousness; He will execute judgment for the peoples with equity.**”

Another psalmist exulted that God would do what?: There is always distortion in human perception, but never any in God’s.

Psalm 96:13 (NASB)

¹³“Before the LORD, for He is coming, For He is coming to judge the earth. **He will judge the world in righteousness And the peoples in His faithfulness.**”

Psalm 145:17 (NASB)

¹⁷“The LORD **is righteous in all His ways** And kind in all His deeds.”

Isaiah 45:19 (NASB)

¹⁹“I have not spoken in secret, In some dark land; I did not say to the offspring of Jacob, ‘Seek Me in a waste place’; I, the LORD, **speak righteousness, Declaring things that are upright.**”

Men are so used to God’s blessings and mercy that they take them for granted, not realizing that they receive those things purely because of God’s long-suffering and grace. God would be perfectly just to blot out any person or all persons. But human nature trades on God’s grace, believing that everything will work out all right in the end because God is too good and merciful to send anyone to hell. As someone astutely observed, “There is some kind of a still little voice in everybody that constantly convinces them that in the end it’s going to be OK.” That little voice speaks from a person’s fallen nature, which constantly seeks to justify itself.

Paul sternly warns against such false confidence. Although he was conscious of no specific unconfessed sin in his life, even he knew better than to rely on his imperfect human judgment, declaring, ³“**But to me it is a very small thing that I may be examined by you, or by any human court; in fact, I do not even examine myself.** ⁴For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet **I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord.**” (1 Corinthians 4:3-4 NASB).

He knew that every person’s discernment is hopelessly distorted and cannot make a proper evaluation even of his own spiritual health, much less that of someone else. The apostle goes on to say:

1 Corinthians 4:5 (NASB)

⁵“Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, *but wait until*

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the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of *men's* hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.”

Man’s judgment never squares completely with the truth, because he never knows the complete truth.

When the proud moralist judges and condemns others, while thinking he himself is acceptable to God, it is only because he is judging by his own perverted perspective, which fallen human nature always skews to its own advantage. But God’s perspective and judgment are always perfect.

The writer of Hebrews therefore warns, “**And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do**” ([Hebrews 4:13 NASB](#)). Every sin that every individual has ever committed flashes on a life-sized screen before God, as it were, with no detail missing from His view.

The secret hope of the hypocrite is that God will somehow judge him by a standard lower than perfect truth and righteousness. He knows enough to recognize the wickedness of his heart, but he hopes vainly that God will judge him in the same superficial way that most others judge him and that he judges himself. He plays a kind of religious charade, wanting to be judged by his appearance rather than by his true character. And because most men accept him for what he pretends to be, as most hypocrites he assumes God will do the same. But as God cautioned Samuel:

1 Samuel 16:7 (NASB)

⁷“But the LORD said to Samuel, ‘Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God *sees* not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.’”

And do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment upon those who practice such things and do the same yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God? ([Romans 2:2-3 NASB](#))

Romans 2:2-3 (NASB)

²“And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things.

³But do you **suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same *yourself*, that you will escape the judgment of God?”**

Logizomai (suppose) carries the idea of calculating or estimating. (It is related to the English term *logic*.). The moralist falsely calculates his own sinfulness and guilt.

Donald Grey Barnhouse gives a contemporary and forceful paraphrase of this verse: “You dummy—do you really figure that you have doped out an angle that will let you go up against God and get away with it? You don’t have a ghost of a chance.” **Dr. Barnhouse** continues by commenting, “There is no escape. Do you understand? No

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escape—ever. And this means you—the respectable person, sitting in judgment upon another fellow creature, and remaining unrepentant yourself” (*Expositions of Bible Doctrines*, vol. 2, *God’s Wrath* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953], p. 18).

The hypocritical, self-righteous man who passes judgment upon those who practice the sinful things that he himself practices brings greater judgment on himself. God not only judges him for those evil practices but also for his hypocrisy in the self-righteous judgment of others. Such people “...**are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness**” ([Matthew 23:27 NASB](#)). “You are foolish and self-deceived,” Paul says, “if you think that you will escape the judgment of God.”

If a man cannot escape his own judgment, how can he escape divine judgment? If we are forced to condemn ourselves, how much more will the infinitely Holy God condemn us? Comparing the ancient Israelites (who heard God speak through Moses from Mount Sinai) to those who hear the gospel of Christ (which comes from heaven), the writer of Hebrews declares:

Hebrews 12:25-29 (NASB)

²⁵ “See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned *them* on earth, much less will we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven.

²⁶ And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, “YET ONCE MORE I WILL SHAKE NOT ONLY THE EARTH, BUT ALSO THE HEAVEN.”

²⁷ This expression, “Yet once more,” denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

²⁸ Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe;

²⁹ for our God is a consuming fire.”

Because the Israelites refused to listen to God when He spoke to them on earth in regard to His law, that generation perished in the wilderness. How much more accountable, then, will those be who disregard the infinitely greater message of the gospel? “For if the word spoken through angels,” that is, the Mosaic law (see [Acts 7:53](#)), “proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, ³ how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?” as that offered by God’s own Son, Jesus Christ ([Hebrews 2:2-3](#))?

The only way any person, no matter how outwardly moral and religious, can escape God’s judgment is to receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, receiving in faith the provision He made on the cross by His paying the penalty all deserve.

It has been told that nomadic tribes roamed ancient Russia much as American Indians once roamed North America. The tribe that controlled the choicest hunting grounds and

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natural resources was led by an exceptionally strong and wise chief. He ruled not only because of his superior physical strength but because of his utter fairness and impartiality. When a rash of thefts broke out, he proclaimed that if the thief were caught he would be punished by ten lashes from the tribal whip master. As the thefts continued, he progressively raised the number of lashes to forty, a punishment that everyone knew he was the only one strong enough to endure. To their horror, the thief turned out to be the chief's aged mother, and speculation immediately began as to whether or not he would actually sentence her to the announced punishment.

Would he satisfy his love by excusing her or would he satisfy his law by sentencing her to what would surely be her death? True to his integrity, the chief sentenced his mother to the forty lashes. But true also to his love for his mother, just before the whip came down on her back he surrounded her frail body with his own, taking upon himself the penalty he had prescribed for her.

In an infinitely greater way Christ took the penalty of all men's sin upon Himself.