



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Letter of St. Paul to the Romans

Chapter 2

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Introduction

- After St. Paul depicted the condition of the Gentiles in chapter one, now he addresses his comments to those who pass judgment on others especially when they themselves are guilty of the same things
- This judgment will offer either eternal life or wrath and indignation, given without partiality, and the decision is based on whether one does good or evil



Introduction

- To justify the condemnation of the Gentiles who did not have a written Law (like the Jews), St. Paul affirms that the Gentiles could "by nature do the things contained in the law" and that their own consciences will bear witness of their guilt on the day of judgment
- In this way St. Paul demonstrated the Gentiles' need of salvation



Introduction

- Lest the Jews think their having the Law frees them from condemnation, St. Paul proceeds to demonstrate that they too are in need of salvation
- Though they have the Law, their failure to keep it perfectly caused them to dishonor God and blaspheme His Name
- A true Jew is one who is circumcised in his heart, and not just in the flesh

God's Righteous Judgment (2:1-16)



- Everybody is in need of salvation whether gentiles or Jews, especially those who feel better than others and judge them, otherwise they will be condemned by God's righteous judgment
- There is no excuse to judge others because:
 - ❖ The inconsistent judge judges himself
 - ❖ The hypocritical judge is judged by truth
 - ❖ The foolish judge reasons poorly
 - ❖ The arrogant judge treasures up wrath

God's Righteous Judgment (2:1-16)



- The purpose of the goodness of God is to lead us to repentance
- Taking advantage of God's goodness means:
 - ❖ Despising the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering.
 - ❖ Hardness of heart
 - ❖ Impenitent heart
 - ❖ Treasuring up wrath

God's Righteous Judgment (2:1-16)



- Features of God's Judgment:
 - ❖ According to the Truth (2)
 - ❖ After forbearance and longsuffering (4)
 - ❖ Just and righteous judgment (5)
 - ❖ According to the deeds (6)
 - ❖ With no partiality (11)
 - ❖ By the natural law or the written law (12)
 - ❖ Searching their secrets (16)

God's Righteous Judgment (2:1-16)



- It is we who treasure wrath for ourselves and not God, so His judgment is based totally on us
- Revelation: because the judgment will be public
- Verses 7 and 8 emphasize our freewill
- Good work requires patience, its purpose should be seeking glory, honor, and immortality, and its reward will be eternal life

God's Righteous Judgment (2:1-16)



- Those who choose to be self-seeking, disobedient to the truth, and obedient to unrighteousness will deserve indignation and wrath
- “The Jew first” because they were the first people who followed the true God so they will be rewarded or punished first
- Evil doers suffer tribulation and anguish
- Good doers are blessed by glory, honor, and peace

God's Righteous Judgment (2:1-16)



- The impenitent sinners without law will perish because the wages of sin is death
- The impenitent sinners in the law, will both perish and be judged (suffer more punishment because of His knowledge) (Matthew 10: 15)
- Justification is by doing the law not only by knowing it
- Although the Gentiles do not have Mosaic Law, but they have the Natural Law

God's Righteous Judgment (2:1-16)



- The Natural law and the Mosaic law cannot save but only enlighten and discipline the human being
- The Natural Law is written on the heart and uses the conscience and the thoughts
- Conscience is that faculty of thought which makes moral judgments (either excusing or condemning our actions); developed through training
- God will judge the people by Jesus Christ
- God will judge the secrets of the people

The Jews Guilty as the Gentiles (2:17-24)



- The Jews were boasting of their race, law instead of making a relationship with God and living according to the law
- Also they were boasting of their knowledge of God and what is right and wrong
- They described themselves as: guides to the blind, light to those who are in darkness, instructors of the foolish, and teachers of babes

The Jews Guilty as the Gentiles (2:17-24)



- They only had the form of knowledge and truth in the law but not living accordingly
- There was inconsistency between their words and their actions.
- Thus they dishonored God
- The name of the Lord will be either hallowed by us or blasphemed (Isaiah 52:5; Ezekiel 36:22)

The Limitation of Circumcision (2:25-29)



- You cannot keep one commandment of the law “circumcision” while breaking the rest of the law
- Breaking the law = no circumcision
- The same, if the uncircumcised gentiles walked according the law, they would be considered as circumcised
- The Gentiles who fulfill the law will judge the Jews who transgress against the law

The Limitation of Circumcision (2:25-29)



- He is not a Jew in the religious sense of the word (i.e. one of God's chosen people) whoever is outwardly a Jew
- The true circumcision, which makes one a member of God's, is not the outward circumcision
- But he is a Jew: that is, one of God's people
- Who is one inwardly: in the secrets of his soul
- And the acceptable circumcision is that of the heart

The Limitation of Circumcision (2:25-29)



- “And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live” (Deut 30:6)
- The putting away of all inward impurity is done by the Spirit who is able to change us not by the letter of the law which is incapable to change
- Whose praise is not from men, but from God: The only searcher of the heart



Conclusion

- Why without excuse is one who passes judgment?
- How does God try to lead one to repentance?
- What is the reward given to those who do good?
- What are the features of God's judgment?
- Without a "written" Law, how did the Gentiles know the difference between right and wrong?
- Why were the Jews in need of salvation?