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ROMANS CHAPTER 2

In Your Group Read Romans chapter two (aloud) in a modern translation or read it in the King James Version (below). As a Group, Discuss the general content of the chapter.

THE LETTER OF ROMANS CHAPTER 2 King James Version

ROMANS 2: [1] Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. **[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? **[4]** Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? **[5]** But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; **[6] WHO WILL RENDER TO EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS: (PSA. 62: 12; PROV. 24: 12)** **[7]** To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: **[8]** But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, **[9]** Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; **[10]** But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: **[11]** For there is no respect of persons with God. **[12]** For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; **[13]** (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. **[14]** For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: **[15]** Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their

conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) [16] In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel. [17] ¶ Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, [18] And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; [19] And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, [20] An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. [21] Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? [22] Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? [23] Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? [24] **FOR THE NAME OF GOD IS BLASPHEMED AMONG THE GENTILES THROUGH YOU (ISA. 52:5; EZEK. 36:22)**, as it is written. [25] For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. [26] Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? [27] And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law? [28] For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: [29] But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE GROUP: Read and Discuss each verse and translation along with the “Additional Information” in each box provided.

ROMANS CHAPTER 2 VERSES 1-2

Romans 2: [1] Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. [2] But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. (King James Version)

¹You may be saying, “What terrible people you have been talking about!” But you are just as bad, and you have no excuse! When you say they are wicked and should be punished, you are condemning yourself, for you do these very same things. ²And we know that God, in his justice, will punish anyone who does such things. **(New Living Translation)**

Now if you feel inclined to set yourself up as a judge of those who sin, let me assure you, whoever you are, that you are in no position to do so. For at whatever point you condemn others you automatically condemn yourself, since you, the judge, commit the same sins. God’s judgment, we know, is utterly impartial in its action against such evil-doers. (verses 1-2) **(Phillips Translation)**

Therefore you are inexcusable, whoever you are, if you pose as a judge, for in judging another you condemn yourself; you the judge, do the very same things yourself.

‘We know the doom of God falls justly upon those who practice such vices.’ (verses 1-2) **(Moffatt Translation)**

[1] If you judge someone else, you have no excuse for it. When you judge another person, you are judging yourself. You do the same things you blame others for doing. [2] We know that when God judges those who do evil things, he judges fairly.

(New International Reader’s Version)

[1] Therefore if anyone condemns someone else, you are without excuse, sir, because when you condemn someone else, you are only condemning yourself. You are always doing the same things that you are condemning! [2] We know God is right when He condemns people who always do such things. **(The Simple English Bible)**

Additional Information: Consider the context of Romans 2:1-16. It is a description of God’s judgment on both the Jews and the Gentiles. Paul has argued that the pagan corruption of life reveals God’s wrath (Rom. 1:18); he now points out that all persons, Jews and Gentiles alike, whether or not they have committed those moral abuses (Rom. 1:18-31) are guilty before God’s judgment (Rom. 1:32). Paul insists that the self-righteous man, whether Jew or Gentile also stands under the same judgment as do the pagans (Rom. 2:19-24) (Helps for Translators, p. 31). When Paul’s letter was read in the Roman church, no doubt many heads nodded as he condemned idol worshipers, homosexual practices, and violent people. But what a surprise his listeners must have felt when he turned on them and said in effect, “You have no excuse. You are just as bad!” Paul is not discussing whether some sins are worse than others. Any sin is enough to lead us to depend on God through Jesus Christ for salvation (Life Application Bible, p. 2029).

(Verse 1) – “Thou that judgest.” Judgment is God’s business, not ours. God will decide who receives eternal life and who receives eternal wrath (Matt. 25:46). In a number of languages there are two quite distinct words for judging. One implies purely objective evaluation and the other suggests strong condemnation. The first type of term would be relatively out of place in this kind of context, and hence it is the second which must be chosen (Help for Translators, p. 32). God holds us accountable unto Himself for what we do with our lives. Every person must answer to God, who judges us all. The just final judgment of God is the answer to questions of injustice and unfairness (Disciple’s Study Bible, p. 1418).

(Verse 2) – “The judgment of God.” “It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27). “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: **Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world** in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained... (Acts 17:30-31). The judgment-seat of God (Rom. 14:10. RSV) and the judgment-seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10-11) are interchangeable terms. **It is impossible to identify a series of distinct and separate judgments. The Bible is concerned [only] with the fact of judgment.** The basic principle of judgment is the justice of God (Rom. 3:4-6). Final judgment rest on a living faith in Christ that demonstrates itself in works of faith (Matthew 25: 31-46; Rev. 20:13-15).

The Gentiles have perverted the light of general revelation (Rom. 1:21) and the Jews have failed to fulfill the law (Gal. 3:10-12). Since God in His mercy has provided a way of salvation by the redeeming work of Christ, the final basis of judgment is relation to Christ. Jesus taught that the destiny of men rested upon their attitude towards Himself (Matt. 10:32-33; 25:40).

A further aspect of eschatology is seen in the fact that this judgment, which belongs to the last day, has essentially already taken place in history. The unbeliever stands under condemnation; the judgment has really taken place, even though the penalty has not yet been enforced (Jn. 3:18). The believer will not experience condemnation, for he has already passed from death (the condemnation) to life (Jn. 5:24).

The Pauline teaching about justification embodies the same truth. Justification is an eschatological truth. It means acquittal from the guilt of sin by a favourable decision of the Judge on the last day (Rom. 8:33-34). Because of present justification, we shall be saved from wrath in the day of judgment (See Rom. 5:9).

Nevertheless, judgment remains an eschatological fact, even for believers. The righteousness we hope for (Gal. 5:5) is acquittal in the final judgment. “We must all appear before the judgment seat of

Christ" (See 2 Cor. 5: 10-11; Rom. 14:10-12). However, because of the redemption in Christ, the day of judgment has lost its terror for the man in Christ (1 Jn. 4:17) (The New Bible Dictionary, pgs. 388-389).

ROMANS CHAPTER 2 VERSES 3-4

Romans 2: [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? [4] Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? (King James Version)

³Do you think that God will judge and condemn others for doing them and not judge you when you do them, too? ⁴Don't you realize how kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Or don't you care? Can't you see how kind he has been in giving you time to turn from your sin? **(New Living Translation)**

³You judge those who do wrong, but you do wrong yourselves. Do you think you will be able to escape the judgment of God? ⁴He has been very kind and patient, waiting for you to change, but you think nothing of his kindness. Perhaps you do not understand that God is kind to you so you will change your hearts and lives. **(New Century Version)**

³Do you really think God won't punish you, when you behave exactly like the people you accuse? ⁴You surely don't think much of God's wonderful goodness or of his patience and willingness to put up with you. Don't you know that the reason God is good to you is because he wants you to turn to him? **(Contemporary English Version)**

[3] But, mister, you are judging people who practice such things – yet you are doing the same things! Will you escape God's condemnation? **[4]** Do you look down on the wealth of God's kindness, tolerance, and patience? Surely you know that God's kindness is meant to lead you to a change of heart. **(The Simple English Bible)**

[3] Do you think God will punish others for doing wrong and let you keep sinning? **[4]** Do you forget about His loving-kindness to you? You know that God is kind. He is trying to get you to be sorry for your sins and turn from them. **(The New Life Testament)**

[3] And do you think *or* imagine, O man, when you judge *and* condemn those who practice such things and yet do them yourself, that you will escape God's judgment *and* elude His sentence *and* adverse verdict? **[4]** Or are you [so blind as to] trifle with *and* presume upon *and* despise *and* underestimate the wealth of His kindness and forbearance and longsuffering patience? Are you unmindful *or* actually ignorant [of the fact] that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repent (to change your mind and inner man to accept God's will)? **(Amplified New Testament)**

[3] But listen, man, do you actually believe that when you pass judgment upon those who practice such things, and then continue doing them yourself, that you will escape the unbiased and unerring judgment of God? **[4]** Or do you think you can get

away with your contemptible attitude toward the abundance of God's kindness, tolerance, and patience toward you? Don't you realize that God, *in giving you all this time*, is showing His kindness toward you so that you'll turn from your sinning and turn to Him in faith and obedience? **(The Last Days Bible)**

Additional Information: (Verse 4) – "The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance." In his kindness, God holds back his judgment, giving people time to repent (Life Application Bible, p. 2030). In His love God is kind and patient and does not judge and punish people immediately for sins. His kindness is not softness towards sin but love for sinners seeking to provide time to change (Disciple's Study Bible, p. 1419).

ROMANS CHAPTER 2 VERSES 5-6

Romans 2: [5] But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; [6] WHO WILL RENDER TO EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS: (PSA. 62:12; PROV. 24:12) (King James Version)

⁵But no, you won't listen. So you are storing up terrible punishment for yourself because of your stubbornness in refusing to turn from your sin. For there is going to come a day of judgment when God, the just judge of all the world, ⁶will judge all people according to what they have done. **(New Living Translation)**

[5] Your stubborn refusal to repent is only adding to the anger God will have toward you on that day of anger when his just judgments will be made known. **[6]** *He will repay each one as his works deserve.* **(Jerusalem Bible)**

[5] But you stubbornly refuse to turn from sin, and so you are ensuring that God will be more and more angry with you on the Day of His Anger, when God will show how right His judgment is: **[6]** *He will give every person according to what he has done -* **(God's Word to the Nations)**

[5] But you are stubborn. In your heart you are not sorry for your sins. You are storing up anger against yourself. The day of God's anger is coming. Then his way of judging fairly will be shown. **[6]** God "will give to all people in keeping with what they have done." (Psalm 62:12; Proverbs 24:12) **(New International Reader's Version)**

[5] But because your heart is so hard that you will not change your mind or your way of living, you're storing up a lot of God's holy anger for yourself on that awful Day when everyone will see how right God's judgments are. **[6]** For then He will give every person exactly what he or she has coming for what each has done. **(New Testament in Everyday American English)**

[5] But your heart is hard and unchanged. You are storing up punishment for yourself on the Day of punishment when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. **[6]**

God will pay back each person according to the way that person lived. **(The Simple English Bible)**

Additional Information: (Verse 5) – “Treasur[est] up unto thyself wrath.” This is a word picture, the picture of a man treasuring up something for himself, only in this context it is punishment (Helps for Translators, p. 34).

“The Day of wrath.” The word “Day” is spelled with a capital in many translations, inasmuch as in both Jewish and Christian thought this was a specialized term, referring to the final day on which God would bring his wrath and punishment on all evil doers (Ibid., p. 34).

(Verse 6) - “Who will render.” It is not easy to find a completely appropriate term for “will render.” In general one must use some such term as “recompense” or “pay back,” in order to suggest that what God will do for people is in direct proportion, or in line with, the manner in which they have acted (Help for Translators, p. 35).

(Verses 5-6) – The “Day of God’s wrath,” will be a future, final judgment. Evil conduct can cause a storing up of divine wrath. Judgment will be on an individual basis, rather than a national one as was often the case in the Old Testament. It will be conducted on the basis of deeds done, as the true inner character is revealed through conduct. Divine judgment will be without partiality and it will be based on the secrets of the human heart (Rom. 2:16) (Disciple’s Study Bible, p. 1419).

ROMANS CHAPTER 2 VERSES 7-11

Romans 2: [7] To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: [8] But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, [9] Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; [10] But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: [11] For there is no respect of persons with God. (King James Version)

[7] To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. **[8]** But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. **[9]** There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; **[10]** but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

[11] For God does not show favoritism. (New International Version)

⁷He will give eternal life to those who patiently do the will of God, seeking for the unseen glory and honor and eternal life that he offers. ⁸But he will terribly punish those who fight against the truth of God and walk in evil ways—God’s anger will be poured out upon them. ⁹There will be sorrow and suffering for Jews and Gentiles alike who keep on sinning. ¹⁰But there will be glory and honor and peace from God for all who obey him, whether they are Jews or Gentiles. ¹¹For God treats everyone the same. **(The Living Bible)**

[7] To those who pursue glory, honour, and immortality by steady persistence in well-doing, he will give eternal life; **[8]** but the retribution of his wrath awaits those who are governed by selfish ambition, who refuse obedience to truth and take evil for their

guide. [9] There will be affliction and distress for every human being who is a wrongdoer, for the Jew first and for the Greek also; [10] but for everyone who does right there will be glory, honour, and peace, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

[11] God has no favourites. **(The Revised English Bible)**

[7] Some people, who are patiently trying to keep on doing good things, are looking for glory and honor and freedom from all sin and corruption. And God will give these people eternal Life on that Day. [8] But there are others who are driven by selfish ambition and will not believe the truth. Instead, they follow that which is wrong, and God's holy and destructive anger will fall on these people on that Day. [9] Yes, suffering and misery will come to every human being who does what is bad, whether that person is a Jew or a Greek. And God's judgment will begin with the Jews. [10] But there will be glory, honor and peace for every person who does what is good, whether that person is a Jew or a Greek. And again it will start with the Jews. [11] You see, God doesn't have any favorites. **(New Testament in Everyday American English)**

[7] To those who by patient persistence in well-doing [springing from piety] seek [unseen but sure] glory and honor and [the eternal blessedness of] immortality, He will give eternal life. [8] But for those who are self-seeking *and* self-willed *and* disobedient to the Truth but responsive to wickedness, there will be indignation and wrath. [9] [And] there will be tribulation *and* anguish and calamity *and* constraint for every soul of man who [habitually] does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek (Gentile). [10] But glory and honor and [heart] peace shall be awarded to everyone who [habitually] does good, the Jew first and also the Greek (Gentile). [11] For God shows no partiality [undue favor or unfairness; with Him one man is not different from another]. [Deut. 10:17; 2 Chron. 19:7.] **(Amplified New Testament)**

Additional Information: In Ephesians 2:8-10 we see that salvation is by grace through faith and is "unto" good works. "Good works" is the fruit of a Christian's life. Sometimes when the Bible speaks of salvation, it speaks only in terms of the good works that every saved person will show in their lives (See Acts 26:18-20; 1 John 3:7-8, 10). In Romans 2:7-11 we see the "fruit" of a true believer and the "fruit" of the unbeliever.

(Verses 7-10) – Paul describes the deeds of two distinct groups: the redeemed (verses 7, 10) and the unredeemed (verses 8, 9). The deeds of the redeemed are not the basis of their salvation, but the evidence of it. They are not perfect and are prone to sin, but there is undeniable evidence of righteousness in their lives (MacArthur Bible Commentary, p. 1510).

(Verses 7-8) – **"By patient continuance in well doing."** Works are central in the New Testament picture of judgment. They are an outward indication of an individual's inward trust or commitment. The Lord, of course, looks at both the inward and the outward. But the outward activity reveals the inward conviction. One needs only to compare the verb form in Romans 2:9 – "that constantly doeth evil" – with that in Romans 2:10 – "that constantly worketh the good" – to see that actions disclose convictions (or the lack of them) (Wycliffe Bible Commentary, p. 506).

A person's habitual conduct, whether good or evil, reveals the condition of his heart. Eternal life is not rewarded for good living; that would contradict many other Scriptures. A person's doing good shows that his heart is regenerate. Conversely a person who continually does evil and rejects the truth shows that he is unregenerate (The Bible Knowledge Commentary, p. 445). Divine judgment is based on every aspect of a person's relationship to God. Only those who receive grace do in fact seek "glory, honor and immortality" (See Romans 2:7; Titus 2:11-12) (New Geneva Study Bible, p. 1769).

ROMANS CHAPTER 2
VERSES 12-13

Romans 2: [12] For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; [13] (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. (King James Version)

¹² Those people who don't know about God's Law will still be punished for what they do wrong. And the Law will be used to judge everyone who knows what it says. ¹³ God accepts those who obey his Law, but not those who simply hear it.

(Contemporary English Version)

If you sin without knowing what you're doing, God takes that into account. But if you sin knowing full well what you're doing, that's a different story entirely. Merely hearing God's law is a waste of your time if you don't do what he commands. Doing, not hearing, is what makes the difference with God. (verses 12-13) **(The Message)**

[12] Those who sin without knowing the Law will be lost without reference to the Law; while those who sin under the Law will be judged by the Law. **[13]** For not the hearers of the Law are righteous before God, but those who practice the Law will be pronounced righteous. **(Berkeley Version)**

[12] All who have sinned without knowing God's written laws will perish just the same, in spite of not knowing the written laws. And all who have sinned in spite of knowing God's laws, will be judged by those very laws. **[13]** Because no one is made free of guilt before God by just hearing what God commands. It's those who do what God commands who are free of guilt. **(The Last Days Bible)**

Additional Information: (Verses 12-13) - Consider the context (the next few verses that follow) before you try to interpret these verses.

(Verse 13) – **"The doers of the law shall be justified."** I believe the apostle Paul is not saying people are to keep a list of rules (law) in order to earn their justification. I believe he is speaking of a revelation of God's righteous ways (law) that each person has instinctively. If a person turns in repentance toward God and His ways and turns away from sin, Satan and his ways (Acts 26:18-20) they will indeed find forgiveness. Consider Ezekiel 33:19; Luke 18:13-14. These people found justification (forgiveness) before the Cross but it was granted by God on the basis of the Cross (See Romans 3:24-25). D.W.K.

The Full Life Study Bible states it this way, Paul does not use the term "law" in the sense of a system of statutes that one may obey and earn his salvation without grace. "Law" here stands for the will of God made known to the human race. Merely hearing God's Word avails nothing apart from faith, submission, and obedience. There must be "obedience to the faith" (Rom. 1:5; 16:26), working through love (Gal. 5:6)."

ROMANS CHAPTER 2
VERSES 14-16

Romans 2: [14] For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: [15] Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also

bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) [16] In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel. (King James Version)

¹⁴ Even when Gentiles, who do not have God's written law, instinctively follow what the law says, they show that in their hearts they know right from wrong. ¹⁵ They demonstrate that God's law is written within them, for their own consciences either accuse them or tell them they are doing what is right. ¹⁶ The day will surely come when God, by Jesus Christ, will judge everyone's secret life. This is my message. (New Living Translation)

¹⁴ Some people naturally obey the Law's commands, even though they don't have the Law. ¹⁵ This proves that the conscience is like a law written in the human heart. And it will show whether we are forgiven or condemned, ¹⁶ when God has Jesus Christ judge everyone's secret thoughts, just as my message says. (Contemporary English Version)

When outsiders who have never heard of God's law follow it more or less by instinct, they confirm its truth by their obedience. They show that God's law is not something alien, imposed on us from without, but woven into the very fabric of our creation. There is something deep within them that echoes God's yes and no, right and wrong. Their response to God's yes and no will become public knowledge on the day God makes his final decision about every man and woman. The Message from God that I proclaim through Jesus Christ takes into account all these differences. (verses 14-16) (The Message)

[14] When Gentiles who have not the [divine] Law do instinctively what the Law requires, they are a law to themselves, since they do not have the Law. [15] They show that the essential requirements of the Law are written in their hearts *and* are operating there, with which their consciences (sense of right and wrong) also bear witness; and their [moral] decisions (their arguments of reason, their condemning or approving thoughts) will accuse or perhaps defend *and* excuse [them] [16] On that day when, as my Gospel proclaims, God by Jesus Christ will judge men in regard to the things which they conceal (their hidden thoughts). [Eccl. 12:14.] (The Amplified New Testament)

[14] In fact, when Gentiles, who don't have God's written laws, still instinctively obey their own conscience and thereby do what God has commanded, they are in effect obeying God's commands, even though they don't have the Law of Moses. [15] They give evidence that the requirements of God's laws are actually written in their hearts. Their conscience, which sometimes accuses them and other times defends them, also shows that this is true. [16] *God will take all these things into consideration* on the Day when thru Jesus Christ, *God's appointed Judge*, He will judge the secrets of all people, according to the Great News I preach. (The Last Days Bible)

Additional Information: (Verses 14-16) – Although the Gentiles do not possess the Old Testament law, nevertheless they do those things which are contained in the law. This is because of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness. The Gentiles manifested a moral principle at work in their hearts, because when they broke their own ethical code, their conscience (Gk. *syneidesis*) would prick them and cause them to feel guilt. The result of their guilt, however, was they would excuse themselves by making a defense for their actions. But Jew and Gentile alike must face a day of judgment with God when the secrets of men (Gk. *ta krypta*) are judged by the Lord Jesus Christ according to the truth of the gospel preached by Paul (Liberty Bible Commentary, Vol. 2, p. 347).

Paul stresses that both Jews and Gentiles are accountable to God for judgment. They differ from each other in that Jews possess the law, while Gentiles do not, even though by nature they do some of

the things that are stipulated in the Law (Rom. 2:14). God has given all people a moral instinct by creation (Rom. 2:15), though repeated sin or cultural acceptance may distort their understanding. The point is that people will be judged according to the revelation they have. The standard of judgment for Jews will be the written Law; the standard for pagan will be the unwritten law of conscience and nature (Spirit Filled Life Bible, p. 1690).

(Verse 16) – “God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.”

The idea is that the righteous judgment of God is an essential ingredient of the gospel Paul preached and a reason for trusting Jesus and his finished redemption (See Acts 24:24-25) (The Bible Knowledge Commentary, p. 446).

ROMANS CHAPTER 2 VERSES 17-18

Romans 2: [17] ¶ Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, [18] And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; (King James Version)

¹⁷ What about you? You call yourself a Jew. You trust in the law of Moses and brag that you are close to God. ¹⁸ You know what he wants you to do and what is important, because you have learned the law. **(New Century Version)**

[17] You call yourself a Jew, and rely upon *obeying* the Law *for your salvation*, and boast about *your relationship* with God; **[18]** and you know *His* will and approve of all that is excellent because you are taught by the Law; **(The New Translation)**

Additional Information: (Verses 17-18) – This presentation takes the form of a dialogue. Paul knew how a self-righteous Jew thought, for he had been one himself. He cites one advantage after another that Jews considered to be unqualified assets. But those assets became liabilities when there was no correspondence between profession and practice. Paul applied to the Jew the principles of judgment set forth in Romans 2:1-16 (NIV Study Bible, p. 1708).

(Verse 18) – **“Knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent.”** It is important in introducing this clause to avoid implying that the Jews habitually chose what is right. A more appropriate wording may be “you have learned from the law how to choose what is right” or “...how one ought to choose what is right,” suggesting that the Law forms the basis for teaching men how to choose the right, without necessarily implying that the Jews always do so (Help for Translators, p. 43).

ROMANS CHAPTER 2 VERSES 19-20

Romans 2: [19] And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, [20] An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. (King James Version)

¹⁹ You think you are a guide for the blind and a light for those who are in darkness. ²⁰ You think you can show foolish people what is right and teach those who

know nothing. You have the law; so you think you know everything and have all truth.
(New Century Version)

[19] and you are confident that you are a guide to the *spiritually* blind, and a light to those in *spiritual* darkness, **[20]** and a corrector of the foolish, and a teacher of little children because, in the Law, you have a form of knowledge and truth. **(The New Translation)**

Additional Information: (Verses 19-20) – Confident that he would be saved by his law, the Jew was convinced that he had been made righteous and therefore was able to assume four roles: a guide of the blind (the blind being the Gentile in his un-Jewish darkness); a light of them which are in darkness (the Gentile needs to be enlightened by the Jew who was enlightened by the law); an instructor of the foolish (because he did not know the law, the Gentile was a fool); a teacher of babes (the Gentile was immature, an object of Jewish disgust) (Liberty Bible Commentary, Vol. 2, p. 348).

ROMANS CHAPTER 2 VERSES 21-23

Romans 2: [21] Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? [22] Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? [23] Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? (King James Version)

²¹ You teach others, so why don't you teach yourself? You tell others not to steal, but you steal. ²² You say that others must not take part in adultery, but you are guilty of that sin. You hate idols, but you steal from temples. ²³ You brag about having God's law, but you bring shame to God by breaking his law, **(New Century Version)**

²¹ But how can you teach others when you refuse to learn? You preach that it is wrong to steal. But do you steal? ²² You say people should be faithful in marriage. But are you faithful? You hate idols, yet you rob their temples. ²³ You take pride in the Law, but you disobey the Law and bring shame to God. **(Contemporary English Version)**

While you are guiding others, who is going to guide you? I'm quite serious. While preaching "Don't steal!" are you going to rob people blind? Who would suspect you? The same with adultery. The same with idolatry. You can get by with almost anything if you front it with eloquent talk about God and his law. (verses 21-23) **(The Message)**

[21] Well then, you who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you teach against stealing, do you steal (take what does not really belong to you)? **[22]** You who say not to commit adultery, do you commit adultery [are you unchaste in action or in thought]? You who abhor *and* loathe idols, do you rob temples [so you appropriate to your own use what is consecrated to God, thus robbing the sanctuary and doing sacrilege]? **[23]** You who boast in the Law, do you dishonor God by breaking the Law [by stealthily infringing upon or carelessly neglecting or openly breaking it]? **(The Amplified New Testament)**

Additional Information: (Verses 21-23) – The Jews were prepared to teach the heathen Gentiles the commandments of the law, but were themselves breaking these commandments. Dost thou steal? (the eighth commandment), dost thou commit adultery? (the seventh commandment), dost thou commit sacrilege? (lit., "Do you rob temples"), (the second commandment). The Jews were ready to

preach morality but their lives did not back up their message. They were stealing from one another, perhaps by collecting an extreme interest; they were committing adultery; they were profaning the house of God by commercialism; and thus Paul asked the biting question, Thou that makest they boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonorest thou God? Transgression of the law brings dishonor to God. The Jews claim to have known the law but were silent in claims to have kept it (Liberty Bible Commentary, Vol. 2, p. 348).

ROMANS CHAPTER 2 VERSE 24

Romans 2: [24] FOR THE NAME OF GOD IS BLASPHEMED AMONG THE GENTILES THROUGH YOU (ISA. 52:5; EZEK. 36:22), as it is written. (King James Version)

²⁴No wonder the Scriptures say that the world speaks evil of God because of you. **(The Living Bible)**

[24] Don't you know that the very name of God is cursed among the gentiles because of the behavior of Jews? There is a verse of scripture to that effect. **(Phillips Translation)**

[24] The scripture says, "Because of you Jews, the Gentiles speak evil of God's name." **(Today's English Version)**

[24] for as the Scripture declares, "The name of God is cursed by the Gentiles because of you." **(The New Translation)**

[24] For, as it is written, The name of God is maligned *and* blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you! [The words to this effect are from your own Scriptures.] [Isa. 52:5; Ezek. 36:20.] **(The Amplified New Testament)**

[24] As the Scripture says, "The name of God is being scorned by the Gentiles because of your actions." **(The Last Days Bible)**

Additional Information: "The name of God is blasphemed." "Blaspheme" has a disadvantage of being a term which most readers do not understand unless they are familiar with biblical terminology; it is merely a transliteration of the Greek word *blasphemeo*, a term which means, in contexts such as this, "to speak evil of God" (Help for Translators, p. 45). An honest Jew would have to respond to Paul's questions by admitting his guilt and his hypocrisy. Paul did not condemn this hypocrisy of the Jews on his own authority; he quoted their own Scriptures (the close of Isa. 52:5, in the LXX). Their hypocrisy dishonored God; also it caused Gentiles to blaspheme God. "Why should we honor God," Gentiles may have reasoned, "when His Chosen People do not follow Him?" (The Bible Knowledge Commentary, p. 447). Often the worst enemy of the gospel and of God's honor is sin in the lives of those who profess to be believers (Spirit Filled Life Bible, p. 1690). We could paraphrase Romans 2:24 by saying, "Men and women who claim to be the people of God but do shady things, cause people to think less of God."

ROMANS CHAPTER 2 VERSES 25-27

Romans 2: [25] For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. [26] Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his

uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? [27] And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law? (King James Version)

²⁵The Jewish ceremony of circumcision is worth something only if you obey God's law. But if you don't obey God's law, you are no better off than an uncircumcised Gentile. ²⁶And if the Gentiles obey God's law, won't God give them all the rights and honors of being his own people? ²⁷In fact, uncircumcised Gentiles who keep God's law will be much better off than you Jews who are circumcised and know so much about God's law but don't obey it. **(New Living Translation)**

[25] If you obey the Law, your circumcision is of value; but if you disobey the Law, you might as well never have been circumcised. **[26]** If the Gentile, who is not circumcised, obeys the commands of the Law, will not God regard him as though he were circumcised? **[27]** And so you Jews will be condemned by the Gentiles, because you break the Law, even though you have it written down and are circumcised, while they obey the Law, even though they are not physically circumcised. **(Today's English Version)**

[25] It is a good thing to be circumcised if you keep the Law; but if you break the Law, you might as well have stayed uncircumcised. **[26]** If a man who is not circumcised obeys the commandments of the Law, surely that makes up for not being circumcised? **[27]** More than that, the man who keeps the Law, even though he has not been physically circumcised, is a living condemnation of the way you disobey the Law in spite of being circumcised and having it all written down. **(Jerusalem Bible)**

²⁵Being a Jew is worth something if you obey God's laws; but if you don't, then you are no better off than the heathen. ²⁶And if the heathen obey God's laws, won't God give them all the rights and honors he planned to give the Jews? ²⁷In fact, those heathen will be much better off than you Jews who know so much about God and have his promises but don't obey his laws. **(The Living Bible)**

[25] Circumcision benefits you only if you do what the Law says. If you are breaking the Law, your circumcision is changed into uncircumcision. **[26]** So if an uncircumcised man does what the Law demands, will he not be considered circumcised? **[27]** If a man who has never been circumcised really does what the Law says, he will condemn you for breaking the Law, you who have the written Law and circumcision. **(God's Word to the Nations)**

[25] Circumcision does indeed profit if you keep the Law; but if you habitually transgress the Law, your circumcision is made uncircumcision. **[26]** So if a man who is uncircumcised keeps the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be credited to him as [equivalent to] circumcision? **[27]** Then those who are physically uncircumcised but keep the Law will condemn you who, although you have the code in writing and have circumcision, break the Law. **(The Amplified New Testament)**

Additional Information: (Verse 25) – “If thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.” A Jew who continually transgressed God's Law had no more of a saving relationship to God than an uncircumcised Gentile. The outward symbol was nothing without the inner reality (MacArthur Bible Commentary, p. 1511). Physical circumcision is a symbol of sanctification and renewal of life (See Rom. 2:25; Deut. 30:6). The reality, not the sign, is the vital thing (New Geneva Study Bible, p. 1770). Religious rites (such as circumcision, baptism, church membership, etc.) only have value if what they symbolize is present and real in a person's life. **(Verse 26) – “Shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?”** If the reality of a religious rite is present in a person's heart and life, it is acceptable to God, even if the person has not performed the religious rite.

**ROMANS CHAPTER 2
VERSES 28-29**

Romans 2: [28] For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: [29] But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God. (King James Version)

²⁸ For you are not a true Jew just because you were born of Jewish parents or because you have gone through the Jewish ceremony of circumcision. ²⁹ No, a true Jew is one whose heart is right with God. And true circumcision is not a cutting of the body but a change of heart produced by God's Spirit. Whoever has that kind of change seeks praise from God, not from people. **(New Living Translation)**

[28] To be a Jew is not just to look like a Jew, and circumcision is more than a physical operation. [29] The real Jew is the one who is inwardly a Jew, and the real circumcision is in the heart – something not of the letter but of the spirit. A Jew like that may not be praised by man, but he will be praised by God. (Jerusalem Bible)

[28] Because one is not truly a Jew just because of visible evidence, nor is true circumcision a visible, physical thing. [29] No, the evidence that one is a real Jew is on the inside. And true circumcision is a circumcision of the heart. Such a person obeys because of a changed heart attitude, not because of written laws. And he will be praised by God, even if not by others. (The Last Days Bible)

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QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

(Romans Chapter 2)

Instructions for Group Leader: Do not let the group read the following questions and answers. The leader of your group should ask the group the following questions and encourage the group to discover the answers by going to the appropriate Scriptures. **Discuss and answer (as a group) the questions correctly by using the Scripture(s). Turn to Romans Chapter 2.**

1. **Read Romans 2:1.** Judgment is God's business, not ours. In a number of languages there are two quite distinct words for judging. One implies purely objective evaluation and the other suggests strong condemnation. Which word do you think Paul is using? Strong condemnation. God holds us accountable unto Himself for what we do with our lives.

2. **Read Romans 2:2-3; Romans 5:9.** God will judge those who do wrong. We know that His judgment is right. We judge others who do wrong, but we do wrong ourselves. How can we avoid His judgment? By being justified by His blood.

3. **Read Romans 2:4.** Many people think they will avoid God's judgment altogether. Why? Because God is patient and longsuffering. In His goodness He patiently waits for men to repent (2 Peter 3:9).

4. **Read Romans 2:5; Acts 17:30-31; Acts 24:25.** What four things is Romans 2:5 stating? 1. Men have stubborn, unyielding and unrepentant hearts. 2. They are storing up against themselves wrath (divine retribution, eternal punishment) to be revealed on the Day of wrath. 3. There will be a revealing of God's righteous judgment. (It is not revealed now, God's goodness, patience and longsuffering are). 4. There will be a Day that man without Christ will be accountable.

5. **Read Romans 2:6.** People who have not accepted God's deliverance from judgment through faith in Jesus' blood (Rom. 5:9) will be judged for the things they have done (their deeds). True or False.

6. **Read Romans 2:7.** Sometimes when the Bible speaks of salvation it speaks in terms of the good works that every saved person shows in his or her life (See Matthew 7:21; Eph. 2:10; Titus 2:14). What fruit is being expressed in the life of the believer mentioned in Romans 2:7? Patient continuance in doing what is right. Seeking glory, honor and immortality, those will be given eternal life. This is the fruit of a saved person.

7. **Read Romans 2:8-10.** What two groups of people are mentioned in Romans 2:8-10? The saved and the unsaved. One group fights against the truth (Rom. 2:8). One

group obeys the truth, leading to a change that produces works meet for repentance (Acts 26:19-20) that is, they proved their repentance by what they do.

8. **Read Romans 2:11.** Does God show partiality in His judging? No. Those who have repented and turned to God and His mercy will be saved. For those who have not repented but have obeyed unrighteousness, there will be tribulation and anguish upon every one that practices evil.

9. **Read Romans 2:12.** What are the two kinds of people mentioned here? Those with the law and those without the law.

10. **Read Romans 2:13; Ezekiel 33:19; Luke 18:13-14; Romans 3:24-25.** These people found justification (forgiveness) before the Cross, but it was granted by God on the basis of the Cross. True or False.

11. **Read Romans 2:14.** Even when Gentiles who do not have God's written law, instinctively follow what the law says, they show that in their hearts they know right from wrong. True or False.

12. **Read Romans 2:15.** The conscience sometimes accuses and sometimes defends. True or False.

13. **Read Romans 2:16.** What will God bring to light in judgment? The secrets of all people.

14. **Read Romans 2:17.** What is the person in Romans 2:17 called? A Jew, a word used to denote God's people.

15. **Read Romans 2:18.** This person was instructed by the law. True or False.

16. **Read Romans 2:19.** What is the claim of this religious person? He is a guide to the spiritually blind. He is a light to them that are in darkness.

17. **Read Romans 2:20.** What are some other claims of this religious person? He is an instructor to those that are ignorant. A teacher of the immature, and has within the law knowledge and truth.

18. **Read Romans 2:21.** What questions does the apostle Paul ask this person? You teach others, don't you teach yourself? You preach against stealing, do you steal?

19. **Read Romans 2:22.** What other questions does Paul ask? You say a man should not commit adultery, do you? You abhor idols, do you commit sacrilege? (the misuse or theft of sacred things that belong to God).

20. **Read Romans 2:23.** What was the question the apostle Paul asked in this verse? You brag about the law, don't you know you dishonor God by breaking it?

21. **Read Romans 2:24.** Paraphrase the meaning of this verse. Men and women who claim to be the people of God, but do shady things, cause people to think less of God.

22. **Read Romans 2:25.** “Circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law,” what scriptural principle can we learn from this? Religious rites such as circumcision, baptism, church membership, etc. only have value if what they symbolize is present and real in a person’s life.

23. **Read Romans 2:25.** “If thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.” What principle can we learn from this verse? If the reality of what a religious rite represents is not in a person’s life, the religious rite mean nothing. It is as if the person has not been circumcised, baptized, etc.

24. **Read Romans 2:26.** What principle do we see in this verse? If the reality of a religious rite is present in a person’s heart and life, he is acceptable to God, even if the person has not performed the religious rite.

25. **Read Romans 2:27-29.** What is a true Jew according to these verses? Anyone whose heart is right with God, or belongs to God in heart (these are His people).

26. **Read Romans 2:28-29.** A wedding ring symbolizes something sacred (faithfulness and commitment). To be unfaithful makes the wedding ring meaningless even though it is on one’s hand. God wants men’s heart, not outward symbols. True Christianity is inward, not outward. True or False.

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