

1. **Introduction:** Romans 2:1-16 presents several principles concerning God as Judge. We will examine 12 principles, but first some background comments.

- God judges a person’s moral nature and the actions that flow from that nature.
- God established standards for human moral behavior and judges our moral behavior by those standards which have been made known by various forms of revelation.
- God’s moral standards for behavior are grounded in His holy character. The fundamentals of His moral standards are given in the Ten Commandments.
- Examples of consequences of disobeying or obeying God’s standards are given in Scripture. Both Testaments give interpretations of the standards and their application.
- Today’s lesson concerns God’s judgment of people. Next lesson, we will consider the related standards God has given concerning people judging people.
- Since Adam and Eve’s sin, all people are born “fallen,” meaning they have an inherited sin nature and are spiritually disconnected from God .
- If a person is to be able to meet God’s moral standards, God must intervene and change their fallen moral nature, making them morally a “new person.”
- God offers everyone the opportunity to become a “new person” who satisfies God’s standards of moral behavior. The salvation transformation creates morally new people.
- Salvation saves a person from condemnation due sinful behavior. Salvation is made possible by Jesus Christ’s vicarious work.
- He lived the perfect life under the Law necessary to earn righteousness. He willingly took upon Himself our sins (our failure to meet God’s standards) and the death penalty due those sins. He died a cruel death to pay the penalty due for sins.
- Jesus vicarious life and death established a lawful basis for God to declare believing sinner justified (declared legally righteous) before Him.
- Justified and pardoned, believers are then transformed by the process of sanctification into persons whose moral character is like that of Christ.

2. **Categories of People Paul Considers:** In Chapter 1, Paul considered people involved in gross sins. In Chapter 2, Paul considers people who, though not believers, are more moral. They know “right” from “wrong,” are morally superior to the gross sinners. Yet Paul concludes even that the best of “good” people fall short of God’s requirements.

- Heb 12:14 reminds that only people who are holy (and righteous) will see God.
- The goal of progressive salvation is to glorify believers (make holy, unable to sin).
- That goal enables believers to dwell in God’s presence. Becoming holy can only be achieved by spiritual connection to God who is the source of all that is holy.

3. Concept of Judging: In Christianity, judging means to discover the facts of a person's moral behavior and compare those facts to God's standard to determine whether they meet or fail to meet His standards. "Judge" can also mean to condemn.

- God knows all the facts. We have only a mixture of truth and error. He judges a person's moral nature. We can only judge their perceived conduct and its implied motivation.
- In our secular world, there are many words related to the concept of judging. Examples include Judge (a person), judgment (the result of judging), judge (the act of judging), evaluate, judgmental, ill-judged, judicial, judgmentally, judicially.
- There are judges (people) with very specific assignments. Judging for pie contests, beauty contests, best science project for 14-year-olds, etc.
- Synonyms for judge (an action) include decide, determine, adjudicate, referee, resolve.
- Synonyms for Judge (a person) include magistrate, referee, umpire, arbitrator, arbiter, mediator, reconciler, moderator, negotiator, magistrate, jurist. Judge (a person) usually refers to a public official authorized to decide questions brought before a court.
- A common meaning of Judge (a person) is someone appointed to decide on questions of rules (like an umpire in a contest or competition like an umpire – was it a strike or a ball – it is nothing until the umpire decides).
- The last point is important to believers. Until our Umpire (God, our Righteous Judge) calls it, a judgment about us is "nothing." What people say (both good and bad) may or may not be correct, but God's judgment is always precisely correct.
- A human judge's judgment may be ill-judged (not accurate) or judgmental (deliberately nasty). A judge's duty is to honestly judge the validity of specific actions, but not all do.
- Two things of interest to us are (1.) understanding how God judges us and (2.) knowing in what ways we are permitted to judge others.
- The first 16 verses of Romans Chapter 2 contain 12 principles dealing with God's judgement of the moral behavior of people. We will consider point 2 next lesson.

4. Principle #1 (2:1): Even the person who has the best morals fails to meet God's standards and is rendered inexcusable before God the righteous judge (in other words, with no exceptions, all people sin).

5. Romans 2:1: *Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things.*

- People "judge" behavior of others by comparing observed actions to some standard.
- If you judge the morals of others, you demonstrate you know right from wrong since judging others assumes moral discernment (knowing right from wrong).

- If you then commit the same sin, you judged them for, you condemn yourself by the standard you used in judging them.
 - The gross sinners of Chapter 1 have a different moral status from the moral people of Chapter 2 but neither meets God's standards. The sinners in Chapter 1 commit sins and approve others committing the same sin. The more moral people of Chapter 2, while also sinners disapprove and judge the sinful conduct of others.
6. **Principle #2 (2:2):** God's judgment is accurate and true. He is omniscient, knowing all things, so He knows all pertinent facts, and circumstances. He knows every detail and compares each detail to His standard. Judgment falls on those who violate the standard.
7. **Romans 2:2:** *We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things* (things that violate God's standard). Human judges have limited knowledge of truth. They depend on testimony of other people who may or may not be truthful.
- God's situation is different. People who fail to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth are no problem for Him. All truth is an open book before Him.
 - He needs no witnesses or jury because He personally witnesses every sinful incident committed. He knows all the facts (Hebrews 4:12-13). He never is mistaken about what is true. God's judgment is always accurate.
8. **Principle #3 (2:3):** Judgment by God is inescapable and accurate. God knows the truth!
9. **Romans 2:3:** *Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God?*
- The right answer is NO! You may escape human justice but not divine justice.
10. **Principle #4 (2:4):** Run to God for forgiveness, for repentance, for a welcome into the family of God. But never think you can run from God. Escape is impossible. God's goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering are meant to lead people to repentance.
11. **Romans 2:4:** *Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?*
12. **Principle #5 (2:5):** There will be a final day of judgment for people who do not turn to God. It will be a day of wrath for people who, because of their hard and impenitent hearts, are storing up wrath for themselves. The day of forbearance will end, and the day of judgment will become reality. Stored wrath will become applied wrath.
13. **Romans 2:5:** *But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.*
- Repeated deliberate sin hardens the heart making resistance to further sin difficult.
 - Stored wrath implies judgment is cumulative. Being repentant is beneficial. An example of the benefit of repentance is seen in the destiny of the two thieves crucified with Jesus. The penitent one was in paradise with Jesus that same day.
14. **Principle # 6 (2:5):** God's judgment is always righteous. His day of final judgment will be a great day of wrath revealed. Don't store up wrath for that day. Be obedient.

15. **Principle #7 (2:6):** God's judgment is accurate and true. His justice is sure. Every person will get exactly what they deserve according to their works (by their fruit people are known and judged). All reward for good or penalty for bad will precisely fit.

16. **Romans 2:6:** *He (God) will render to each one according to his works.*

- God is not only a God of Justice and Judgment. He is a God of Grace.
- Justice demands that sin be judged and punished. But grace can and does forgive and pardon sin. The wonderful truth of the gospel is that God can be gracious to sinners without compromising His justice. The redeemed are shielded by God's grace.
- In showing grace to sinners, God is not unjust (because of His Son's atoning work). The incarnate Son lived a perfect life under the Law, took upon Himself the sins of all who will believe, died on a cross to satisfy the penalty due believer's sins, and rose from the dead after 3 days proving He is the Son of God just as He said. The Father poured out on Jesus the judgment and wrath due us thus shielding all who in faith believe.

17. **Principle #8 (2:7-10):** God punishes those who persist in doing evil and rewards those who turn to Him in repentance, seeking forgiveness and a life that is pleasing to Him.

18. **Romans 2:7-10:** *To those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he (God) will give eternal life; ⁸ but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. ⁹ There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, ¹⁰ but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek.*

- Self-seeking, disobedience to truth, and obedience to unrighteousness lead to wrath.
- Verses 2:7-10 are structured as an inverted parallelism. (V. 7 – how God will reward those who do good. V. 8 – how God will punish those who do evil.) (V. 9 – how God will punish those who do evil. V. 10 – how God will reward those who do good.)

19. **Principle #9 (2:11):** There is no partiality in God's judgment.

20. **Romans 2:11:** *For God shows no partiality.*

- God shows no favoritism, is impartial, and He judges from complete knowledge.

21. **Next Lesson:** Complete the study of "God Judging People" and begin the study of "God's rules for People Judging People."