

1. **Introduction:** Earlier Paul said God’s wrath is declared against those who refuse to accept the knowledge about Him available in creation.
 - In Chapter 2 Paul speaks of God’s wrath at stubborn hearts who refuse to repent.
 - He says there are two possible paths life can follow – one path based on denying God, the other following God in repentance and obedience.
 - Those suppressing nature’s truth about God will progress to hardening their hearts against the kindness of God shown in His common grace.
 - God’s wrath is directed toward people who reject God’s natural revelation and who treat God’s patience, kindness, and forbearance with contempt.

2. **Romans 2:6-11:** *“He will render to each on according to his works: ⁷to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; ⁸but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. ⁹There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, ¹⁰but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. ¹¹For God shows no partiality.”*

3. **Two Paths for Life:** Verses 2:6-11 like Psalm 1 speak of two different life paths. One path produces obedient good works, the other leads to rebellion and evil.
 - The two paths are mutually exclusive.
 - The path of righteousness can only be followed if a person is enabled by God. Of their own accord, no one will choose this straight and narrow path.
 - The good works of right deeds, right motives, and right methods are only possible when enabled by God’s salvation.
 - Paul and James both teach that authentic saving faith inevitably produces good works (James 2:18; Galatians 5:6).
 - In God’s righteous judgment He renders to each one according to their works. In saying this, Paul is speaking not about salvation but about judgment.
 - Verse 2:11 is a general statement about all forms of God’s judgment and wrath reminding us that God shows no partiality (no favoritism).
 - Salvation is based only on Jesus’ salvation work and does not in any way depend on a person’s works.
 - Salvation is God’s gift to those who believe. Believers are pardoned and declared righteous before God. Judgement for a believer deals with good works done after salvation. Our Savior is our judge.

4. **The Path of Obedience to God:** When people become believers, God establishes a new relationship with them. In that new relationship, they seek the glory, honor, and immortality God promises to those who faithfully follow Him.
- Believers are to do good and to persist in doing good. With patience and persistence they strive to be holy as God is holy so that they may live in eternity in God's presence.
 - The path of good works leads ultimately to glory, honor, and immortality. The path of rebellion leads to tribulation, distress, and wrath.
 - "Glory" is a reference to being transformed into an image of Christ and thus reflecting the glory of God.
 - "Honor" refers to God's loving approval of believers as opposed to the hate, dishonor, and scorn believers can expect to receive in the world.
 - "Immortality" refers to the promise of life eternal in the presence of God.
 - There is only one path in life that will reach the ultimate goal of eternal life in the presence of God, and that is to walk the path of righteousness
 - Having been saved by grace through faith in Christ and His salvation work, a believer must not continue to follow the path they walked before salvation.
 - When they become a believer, a person is to live the remainder of their mortal life walking the path of righteousness.
 - Everyone sins and remains a sinner unless God intervenes bringing salvation.
 - Sinful thoughts, words, emotions, and deeds store up wrath.
 - Believers are shielded from God's wrath only because Jesus on the cross bore the full penalty of God's wrath for their sins.
 - God never "gives up" on believers. Believers persevere.
5. **John 3:18:** *"Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God."*
- **John 5:24:** *"Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes in him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life."*
 - **Romans 8:1:** *"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."*
6. **The Path of Self-seeking Disobedience:** Everyone is by nature a sinner. Salvation and walking the path of righteousness only happens through supernatural means.
- Many (most?) sins begin with attitudes of selfishness, covetousness, or lust.

- Unsaved sinners continue to walk their path of unrighteousness. That is the path everyone would walk if God never intervened.
 - Self-centered people, who reject the truth and follow evil, will suffer wrath and fury. All who reject Christ expose themselves to trouble and distress.
 - Everyone (Jew and Gentile) who is not “in Christ” desperately needs to believe the gospel, trust God, and receive God’s freely offered salvation.
 - In chapter 1 Paul recounted the dreadful situation of immoral Gentile pagans caught up in idolatry and unspeakable sin. No doubt Paul was thinking of what he had seen in places like Ephesus and Corinth, cities abundant in wickedness.
 - Paul was eager to preach to such needy people. They desperately needed Christ!
7. **Unredeemed Sinners are Condemned:** In God’s righteous judgment, unredeemed sinners are condemned. If they remain unredeemed, they will suffer God’s wrath due those who continue in their sins, refusing to repent and turn to God to be pardoned and then transformed into an image of Christ.
- Sinners should fear God’s justice. It isn’t justice they need it is grace and mercy. Having broken God’s moral Law, failed to acknowledge God and thank Him for what He has provided (which is everything including life), sinners earn God’s wrath by their rebellion.
 - The grace and mercy everyone needs are found in the freely offered salvation God through faith in Christ, who He is, and what He has done.
 - Our redeemer, Jesus Christ, bore the full measure of God’s wrath stored up for sinners. All have sinned and do sin and by their sin store up wrath.
 - The dreadful reality of Jesus’ coming experience on the cross is seen in His anguish in the hours preceding and during His crucifixion.
 - He prayed to the Father so earnestly that He sweat drops of blood. His prayer was that He not have to experience the cup of God’s wrath, but nonetheless He will continue to do God’s will and He did.
 - Jesus drank that cup of wrath to the dregs so God’s justice might be satisfied.
 - As we stood condemned before the Father, Jesus took our place. He who was without sin took upon Himself our sins and bore God’s wrath due those sins.
 - He suffered physical and mental torment unto death on a cross to pay the penalty due our sins and enable sinners by grace through faith to be pardoned.
 - Worst of all, He suffered the extreme penalty of separation from God the Father. Something believers will never experience.
 - How could anyone doubt Jesus’ love or His obedience to the Father?

8. **Romans 2:12-16**: *“For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. ¹³For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified. ¹⁴For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law unto themselves, even though they do not have the law. ¹⁵They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them ¹⁶on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.”*

9. **God’s Judgment**: Beginning in verse 2 of chapter 2, Paul provides insight into the principles of God’s judgment. He tells us that:

- God’s judgment is according to truth (v.2).
- It is according to righteousness (v.5).
- It is impartial (v.11).
- It is according to people’s deeds (v.6-10;12-15).
- God’s judgment through Jesus Christ will expose every secret of every person. There are no secrets before our omniscient God. Everything we have hidden, even that which we hide from ourselves is known to God and will be exposed.
- In judgment He will impartially take everything into account.
- Believers are shielded from God’s wrath. Their record is replaced by Christ’s.
- The overall point of these verses is that God judges according to a person’s moral knowledge and how they apply that knowledge to their behavior.
- If a person never hears the gospel, never hears about Jesus, they will be judged by whether they are obedient to what they know from God’s natural revelation.
- To hear and understand is not sufficient. People must live out what they know. They must be doers and not only hearers.

10. **Judgment for Jews and Gentiles**: At first look, a Jew’s relationship to God seems to be fundamentally different from a Gentile’s.

- Jews were given the Law. Every Sabbath in the Synagogue, the Jews heard the Law expounded. Jesus was born a Jew.
- Gentiles did not have the law (v.14), nor the teaching of the Prophets. The Law was neither revealed nor given to them.
- The differences between Jews and Gentiles, while real, are not as great as might seem at first. The reason is that the requirements of the Law are written on every human heart (v.15).

- Though the degree of recognition of the Law as written on the heart is different for every person, no person is totally without moral knowledge.
 - Everyone has a moral standard, but no one consistently obeys their standard.
 - Sin is committed, guilt is accumulated, and judgement will happen for disobeying the moral law a person knows.
 - From the perspective of final judgment, disobedience leads to sin and death (v.12) ensnaring Jews and Gentiles alike.
 - On that day all who sinned apart from the Mosaic Law (Gentiles) will perish apart from the Law (v.12a). Those who sinned under the Law (Jews) will perish by the Law.
 - Unconstrained sin leads to destruction. Gentiles will not be condemned for failure to obey a law-code that was not available to them but for sinning by disobeying the moral law they know
 - God is absolutely impartial or even-handed in judgment.
 - The way people sinned (either in knowledge or ignorance of the Law) will determine the standard by which they are judged. Those who sinned under the Law (Jews) will be judged by the standard of the Law.
 - In every case people will be judged based on whether they do good by their accepted standard of right and wrong.
 - Favorable judgement will be based on doing what you believe to be right and not doing what you believe to be wrong.
 - Although believers fail to live up to Christ's standard, in God's grace they are justified (declared righteous) before God by their faith in Christ.
 - Jesus lived a perfect life under the Law. That perfect life is credited to everyone who believes.
 - Paul's point about the Jews is that possessing the Law never guaranteed the Jews immunity to judgment. What really matters is not possessing the Law but obeying the Law. Even those who obey high moral standards need Christ.
11. **Romans 2:17-29**: *“But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God ¹⁸and know his will and approve what is excellent, because you are instructed from the law; ¹⁹and if you are sure that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, ²⁰an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law he embodiment of knowledge and truth – ²¹you then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? ²²You who say that one must not commit*

adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? ²³You who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law. ²⁴For, as it is written, ‘The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.’ For circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law, but if you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision. ²⁶So, if a man who is uncircumcised keeps the precepts of the law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? ²⁷Then he who is physically uncircumcised but keeps the law will condemn you who have the written code and circumcision but break the law. ²⁸For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. ²⁹But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.”

12. **What Makes a Jew a Jew and a Christian a Christian:** In these verses Paul addresses the most religious people of his day, the Jews. His message is important and applies to Christians as well as Jews.

- God says that those who follow Him are to be holy as He is holy and righteous as He is righteous. Those are tough requirements!
- The vital question is how does actual belief and behavior of those who claim to be God’s chosen compare with God’s requirements?
- A great danger for people, Jews and Christians, is to believe that being born a Jew or becoming a member of a Christian faith group guarantees salvation.
- Being a Jew or Christian consistently active in synagogue or church has distinct advantages but is no assurance of salvation.
- Salvation is by God’s grace and through His gift of faith which enables authentic belief in Christ. No activity, membership, or ancestry provides advantage or disadvantage.
- In broad terms Paul’s message is that no matter what the externals of your religion or your activities might be, “apart from Christ” you are condemned and lost, but “in Christ” you are saved.
- In a little more detail, the message is that no matter how spectacular your religious ritual or liturgy, no matter how awesome your doctrine, no matter how great the fellowship in your group, no matter what signs of devotion you display, and no matter how much knowledge and ability you have to teach other, all is of no avail apart from Christ.
- Such things are great blessings, but salvation is from Christ alone, by grace alone, through faith alone. Scripture alone supplies the knowledge we need.

- The Jews possessed and knew the Law and their males were circumcised as a sign of God's Covenant.
 - Paul remarks that circumcision is of value only if one obeys the Law. God is much more concerned with the hidden heart than with externals.
 - Crucial questions include what is the heart's attitude toward God? What is the moral status of the heart? What is hidden away and treasured in the heart? Our "spiritual heart" controls our thoughts, words, and deeds.
 - If we are not "in Christ" our hearts desperately need to be cleansed of the effects of sin and our tendency to sin and to be righteous before God.
 - The needed cleansing can only come from the power of God for salvation which God gives to all who believe in Jesus and His works of salvation.
 - When honor and respect for God are only external qualities, the result at best will be sufficient knowledge to piously condemn the sins of others, while they continue to sin and remain apart from Christ.
 - Paul says to be a true Jew is an inward thing, a matter of circumcision of the spiritual heart by the Spirit.
 - To be a true Christian is a question of inward status, a matter of believing in Christ, being cleansed from sin's effects, and being given the gift of the Holy Spirit to work within transforming us into a likeness of Christ.
 - When the inward status is right, the outward signs will be right.
 - Baptism is for a Christian an outward declaration of the invisible reality of the inward change wrought by salvation.
13. **Romans 3:1-8**: *"Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision? ²Much in every way. To begin with, the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God. ³What if some were unfaithful? Does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God? ⁴By no means! Let God be true though everyone were a liar, as it is written, 'That you may be justified in your words, and prevail when you are judged.' ⁵But if our unrighteousness serves to show the righteousness of God, what shall we say? That God is unrighteous to inflict wrath on us? (I speak in a human way.)" ⁶By no means! For then how could God judge the world? ⁷But if through my lie God's truth abounds to his glory, why am I still being condemned as a sinner? ⁸And why not do evil that good may come? – as some people slanderously charge us with saying. Their condemnation is just."*

14. **Paul's Rhetorical Question:** If being born a Jew doesn't assure a right relationship with God, of what advantage is it?

- For the Christian the analogous question might be "What advantage is it to be an unsaved person in a Christian church?"
- Paul's answer is there is much advantage in every way.
- It is with God's people that one is most likely to be exposed to God's Word and His Gospel.
- God's Old Testament oracles were entrusted to the Jews. The care, interpretation, and teaching of the both the Old and New Testaments have been entrusted to those "in Christ."
- In churches and synagogues one is embedded in a community of love and exposed to the way of righteousness.
- God is righteous in all His ways. His salvation and judgment are righteous.
- Questions like "why not do evil that good may come of it" are so absurd that they deserve no answer.

15. **What is Next:** Romans 3:9-11.