

**Date : 15 September 2024**

**Theme : Making our Salvation sure**

**Topic : Understanding how God judges**

**Key Passage: Romans 2:1- 3:8**

**Key Verse : All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law Romans 2:12**

## **Introduction**

In the book of Romans, Apostle Paul introduces the gospel by addressing man's problem – Jews and Gentiles who had come to faith in Christ. In Romans Chapter 1, we see Paul pointing to the revelation that God's wrath is against the godless, that God is a God of judgment. In Romans Chapter 2, Paul's focus shifts. He turns his attention to the guiltiness of those who know the law – the Jews –and, by extension, to Christians who often assume they are safe from God's judgment simply because of their religious identity or knowledge of God's Word. Paul reiterated 'to the Jews first, then the Gentiles. Gentiles refers to the heathens, but in this context, it refers to the believers who are not Jews. Today, as we explore Romans 2 to Romans 3:1-8, we will examine the dangers of false faith and the evidence of a transformed heart. Romans 2 instructs us that no one is exempt from God's judgment. The question is, how will God judge me on the last day so that I can account to God. There is no favouritism – both Jews and Gentiles who live in sin will be judged.

## **Lessons on how God judges the Jews**

### **Who are the Jews?**

- Descendants of the ancient Hebrews who trace their lineage back to Abraham, the patriarch of the Jewish people. Their origins are rooted in the covenant made between God and Abraham. Abraham's grandson, Jacob (later named Israel) was the father of the twelve tribes of Israel, which became a nation.
- Jews are God's chosen people, signifying a unique relationship with God. They were given the law by God on how to live a righteous life. They were chosen to display the glory of God to the world. Through this chosen lineage, the Messiah was prophesied to come. This prophecy was fulfilled with the arrival of Jesus Christ.

### **1) Observations regarding the Jews**

The Jews have many advantages: *Romans 3:1-2, Romans 2:17-21*

- Entrusted with the Law and revelation of the way of God
- Knowledge of the law – were taught the law and well versed in the law.
- Understood God's will – they knew what God desired and expected from them
- Unique identity:
  - chosen people of God (marked by circumcision)
  - considered a guide for the blind and light for the lost
- Instruction and teaching
  - responsible for instructing the ignorant and teaching the ways of God

The sin of the Jews: broke the law: *Romans 2:1, 5, 8*

- Teaching God's laws but not obeying.
- Stubborn unrepentant heart, instead of responding to God's goodness.
- Judging others while harbouring spiritual pride.

How does God judge the Jews? *Romans 2:2-3, 6*

- God will judge and hold them accountable by their action.
- To those who received more light, more is required.

## 2) How are believers in Christ judged (compared to the Jews)

### Advantages of believers:

- Entrusted with the Gospel - revelation of Jesus Christ and the message of salvation.
- Have received the revelation of God's Word
  - understood the message of the gospel
  - recognize and appreciate Christ's sacrificial death, which paid the ultimate price to set us free
- Understanding God's will – know what God desires, guided by the teachings of Christ, with the Holy Spirit as our helper on our journey of faith.
- Unique identity:
  - chosen people of God through faith in Christ.
  - called to be a light to the world and a guide for those seeking truth.
- Instruction and teaching
  - Called to instruct others in the faith and teach the ways of Christ.

**Christians will be judged in 2 ways:** *Romans 2:5-11*

### I) Our Deeds

#### a) Sinful deeds – committing same sin as the godless

**Those who continue to be stubborn and refuse to turn from their sin** *Romans 2:5-9 NLT*  
*But he will pour out his anger and wrath on those who live for themselves, who refuse to obey the truth and instead live lives of wickedness.<sup>9</sup> There will be trouble and calamity for everyone who keeps on doing what is evil—for the Jew first and also for the **Gentile**.*

There is judgment for continuing in sinful living

- Storing up God's wrath.
- Consequences for their actions.

#### b) Our Actions confirm whether sin controls our lives *Romans 2:6-7*

*Persevering in doing good, seeking after the glory and honor and immortality that God offers.*

- God judges our actions as evidence of our genuine faith and love for Him (*not as a means to earn salvation*).
- Genuine faith, rooted in a transformed heart, must be the source of our actions.
- Any work performed without sincere faith is worthless in God's eyes. *James 2:26*
  - Our work should flow from a sincere heart, not as empty rituals.
  - Evidence of a sincere faith is manifested as fruit of the Spirit, reflecting Christ's character, and seeking praise from God, not people.
- Zacchaeus' repentance and transformation *Luke 19:1-10*  
Zacchaeus, a tax collector known for extorting money from people, met Jesus and was transformed by His presence. In repentance, Zacchaeus immediately offered to give half of his possessions to the poor and repay four times what he had stolen.

### II) God also looks at Our Hearts

*No, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a person's praise is not from other people, but from God. *Romans 2:29**

**a) Judging others**

- Judging others' faults while being guilty of the same sins. *Romans 2:1*
- Condemning others without self-reflection or the intent to restore.  
*The accusers of an adulterous woman leave after Jesus says, "Let him without sin cast the first stone. John 8:1-11*
- Judging others with moral superiority
- God judges us with the same measure or standard we judge others  
*Jesus' warning believers to first "remove the plank" from their own eye before addressing the "speck" in their brother's eye. Matthew 7:1-5*

**b) Fail to practice what we preach** *Romans 2:19-21, 23*

- Teaching the law, taking pride in head knowledge of the Word yet without applying its principles or even violating it through personal sin.
- Discrepancy between public life and private life  
*Eg: David, as king, was responsible for upholding justice, yet he acted unjustly by taking another man's wife and arranging the man's death. Nathan exposed David's hypocrisy and his blindness to these serious transgressions*  
*Eg Attending church, cell group, prayer but secretly living in sin*

**c) Spiritual pride and legalism** *Romans 2:1-3, 17, 23*

*You who boast in the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law?*

- Knowledge of the Word without transformation or inner change of our hearts
  - Focus on the outward appearance and rituals, follow rules and laws, good deeds and high moral standards without heart transformation
    - Observing religious rituals like attending church, fasting, reciting prayers, and Bible study, cell group without a change in attitude and heart.
    - External rituals like church activities are worthless without inner heart transformation.
    - Consider themselves "good Christians" overlooking their flaws and assuming God's grace will cover their ongoing disobedience, leading to complacency and vulnerability to sin.
  - View oneself as superior or more righteous due to obedience to the law, good deeds, and moral standards, while looking down on those who do not meet these expectations.
    - Equate righteousness with rule-following rather than true transformation
  - Seek approval from men through their work. This fosters legalism, spiritual pride, and a focus on external over inner transformation, leading to a false sense of security
  - God judges our heart attitude to examine our motives, intentions and sincerity of our faith above outward deeds.
  - It's about inner transformation (circumcision of the heart) not just external actions.
    - Circumcision of the heart involves cutting away sinful desires
    - Cutting away spiritual pride and self-righteousness, hypocrisy and legalism
- d) True faith reflects inward change, not just outward adherence to laws and rituals.
- e) **The Beatitudes** highlight that true righteousness comes from a heart transformed by God, reflecting a deep, internal commitment rather than superficial compliance.

### 3) How are those who have not yet heard the gospel judged?

*The requirements of God's law are written on their hearts and their conscience bearing witness*  
*Romans 2:14-15*

- They are judged according to the light or revelation they received
- They are judged according to their conscience
- Conscience is the faculty that distinguished between what is
  - Morally good and bad
  - The lawful and the unlawful
  - The sense of guiltiness before God
- God's judgment is fair and impartial *Romans 2:11*
  - Judgment is based on the revelation received, and our response to it.
  - Those who have been give more revelation are expected to be held to a higher standard in judgment *Luke 12:48*

#### Applications

1. Reflect on how you might be judging others in your own life. Are you pointing out others' faults while ignoring similar sins in yourself? Are you condemning others without taking the time for self-reflection or seeking to restore them?
2. Where am I placing my sense of security—on my religious knowledge, identity, or outward actions? Reflect on whether your heart is truly aligned with God or if you are relying on external practices for your sense of righteousness.