

X. Romans in Biblical Perspective

The Gospel of God

“From the Present Wrath of God to the Eternal Wrath of God

Amplifying the Grace of God—Part I”

Romans 2:1–11

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We are now in Romans 2. There are a couple of very key statements in the verses we will be looking at for this study. This is God’s Word, inspired, infallible, inerrant and sufficient for all matters in life and godliness. Romans 2:1–5 says *[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. [2] We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things. [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? [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? [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.*

The grass withers, the flower fades, God’s Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

We have been in Romans 1 where the wrath of God and the declaration of our condemnation is revealed and it seems like it is continuing in Romans 2. Paul will cut to the chase on this when he gets to Romans 3:23 where he says *[23] for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.* That is his summary, his distillation but he doesn’t just give you that because is not only are we under condemnation because of our sin unless we come to Christ for forgiveness and redemption, but we are controlled by the deceitfulness of sin. We may even agree that God judges sinners and that sin is worthy of God’s judgment yet deceive ourselves into thinking that we get an excuse – where we’re the exception, we get the ‘get out of jail free’ card. It is amazing the deceptiveness of sin so Paul takes the time to bring every segment of humanity in front of the bar of God’s justice and at the foot of Christ’s Judgment Seat. Every segment is to hear ‘no excuse, indicted, guilty’ – helpless, hopeless.

Why is Paul doing that? Perhaps I can answer that by telling you why he isn’t doing that or why this isn’t what he wants to do or be focused upon. Paul has a mission and that mission is the salvation of sinners. So why is he spending so much time on the condemnation of sinners? He has a glorious, Good News, Gospel message but this message can never be a Good News message if the bad news is not declared in the message. You will never see grace as grace or grace as amazing and you will never be motivated by grace until you understand the bad news. In other words, the word ‘therefore’ in this opening of Romans 2 is tied to everything he has said in Romans 1 and so because he couldn’t get to the people in Rome he is writing the Gospel of God to them to explain it to them – this grace of God revealed from heaven through the Son of God by saving sinners by the grace of God to the glory of God.

Then Paul turns to the wrath of God that is revealed. The wrath of God will be revealed in the day of Judgment and on that day, it will be unmeasured, irrevocable, and eternal. But there is now the wrath of God being revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness. What is it that is causing God’s present measured wrath of God upon this world? One is because man

will not honor God and worship Him which is why He made us and suppresses the truth in unrighteousness. The problem is not an intellectual problem but a moral problem. Paul says the heart is darkened and so it is a heart problem. When man suppresses the truth, he doesn't give up thinking and worshipping for he now is disposed to the wrath of God by futile thinking professing to become wise they become fools (Romans 1:22) and is consigned to the emptiness of idolatry. There is no way to keep the truth down for it's like trying to keep a boogie board underwater – it's not going to stay underwater for it will pop back up. This whole idea of the truth popping back up with expose from time to time how futile and insane our thinking is and how empty our worship is – it's idolatry. We worship jobs, family, sports, material things, etc. yet these are things that are good when we use them for God's glory but when they are put in the place of God in worship then they become empty and destructive in our lives.

Then Paul brings a whole category of people in front of the bar of justice in Romans 1:23–32. He brings out the Gentile pagans who try to say they don't have enough information yet they are without excuse because what can be known of God – His Divine power and visible attribute – are all around in creation, the theater of His glory and majesty. Yet you exchange the glory of God for the emptiness of that which is created. So God gives them over. The sacrament of sin is sexual anarchy, sexual promiscuity, sexual perversion – taking God-given natural appetites and turning them into the insanity of lust with pornography, fornication, adultery thinking that is where you happiness and joy come from so you give yourself to it. That is the ultimate statement of rebellion against God. The pagan exchanges the truth of God for the lie and they embrace the sophisticated, intellectual journey into imbecility. This then takes you to unnatural desires/lusts – men being lovers of men, women beings lovers of women – even though you get the due penalties in your body and the brokenness that comes from it.

Yet this doesn't even bring them to repentance for then they begin to recruit others into the culture of insanity and absurdity and declare their sin as good. Not only do they practice such things knowing they deserve the judgment of God but they approve them and bring others into with them. No matter how much you codify sin as right, sin will never be right. It always has its consequences. As Paul brings this out he says they are with no excuse with all that is surrounding them and the wrath of God measured keeps calling you to repentance but with the darkness of heart you descend further in this death spiral of insanity, absurdity, imbecility and immorality as you convince others to join you in this religion of rebellion.

Not all Gentiles are pagan. Some have religion so now Paul brings out a second category and there will be other categories coming at the end of Romans 2 and 3. This second category brings me great concerns, but not a concern of accusation just of my own heart and soul. In Matthew 7 when Jesus preaches on the Kingdom of God and those who follow the Gospel of the Kingdom, when Jesus finishes it He takes people to the Day of Judgment. Jesus says in Matthew 7:22–23, [22] *On that day many will say to Me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and cast out demons in Your name, and do many mighty works in Your name?' [23] And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you workers of lawlessness.'*

They had brought to the Judgment Seat the hope of their religion and its activity and not Jesus, my One defense – His righteousness. They brought the deceitfulness of sin. The pagan Gentile believes when sin's emptiness and the wrath of God giving him over comes, the answer is more futile sin from a futile mind to a debased mind. My problem is not sin but I'm not sinning absurd or depraved enough. As a preacher I have to make clear your need of the Good News by communicating clearly the bad news. The bad news is we're all under indictment. You

may think that you tithe and do certain good/religious things. Do you remember what Jesus shared of the prayer of the Pharisee in public?

Luke 18:11–12 says [11] *The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. [12] I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.'* He condemns the tax collector while exalting himself putting his trust in his condemnation of the tax collector, also while putting his trust in own exaltation and self-righteousness.

Jesus then responded this way in Luke 18:13–14 which says [13] *But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' [14] I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.*” The tax collector was justified due to his confession of Christ and his contrition. God is our only defense.

The deceitfulness of sin, not only leads people to thinking ‘we just need to sin more’ but it also can lead people to thinking ‘my religion will deliver me for it will be my pass on the Day of Judgment.’ Jesus, see I condemn people that You condemn. So why is it that this self-righteous religionist is so heavy on my heart? I basically preach to a lot of Gentiles. While Romans 1 is a mirror of my culture because my culture politically, socially, economically and spiritually is descending back into neo-paganism and we’re calling evil good and good evil as we’re destroying life, gender, marriage, sexuality and everything in the name of self-exaltation. The people in this culture that I minister to are those I have access to don’t fit the profile directly of the pagan Gentile but some of us can fit the profile of the Gentile self-righteous religionist and that is who is in focus in Romans 2:1–5.

In Romans 2:1–5 Paul is engaging in a diatribe. You might think ‘we don’t do that, we’re Christians!’ Diatribe is not a bad word. It is a literary device in which an author, to get a point across, sets up an imaginary debate with a fictional character who takes the position that he wants to show is a wrong position. So he presents the position with that person and then begins to dismantle it step by step which is a diatribe. As Paul just finished his sermon in Romans 1 it’s like he heard an ‘Amen’ from this self-righteous religionist because in Romans 2:1–5 he goes on to talk about what a self-righteous religionist is.

I experienced this one time when I was a student pastor. Some of my mentors and models at the time said ‘people don’t preach enough on the bad news so when the Good News is preached it’s not appreciated enough – they don’t let people know of the wrath to flee of the hell to come from Gehenna. You must do it.’ So I decided I would do it. I was certainly intimidated by it so I made sure that people knew Jesus talked about it more than anyone else in the Bible so it’s okay to talk about but I remember being overwhelmed with emotion and I also remember every time I said ‘those who do not repent are going to spend eternity in hell’ my heart was literally breaking as I said that. I had friends and family that were on my mind when I was saying that, but I also remember a man saying ‘Amen!’ every time I said that. I went home and thought about that because it just didn’t sit right with me. It was like there was this jagged edge to it. Then I tried to work through it with ‘Amen’ meaning that’s the truth – truly, truly. So technically it seemed to belong there but perhaps not so emphatically but more of a reserved reluctance with the realization of except for God’s grace that’s my destination and I want them to be saved.

Paul has a mission and message of salvation. Paul is trying to get across anyone who comes to you with the good news that you are saved but doesn’t communicate the bad news of

you can't save yourself, you're under an indictment, you're helpless and hopeless. Any news good news from a man-made religion is not good news, it's fake news. It's a wrong hope. Here are religious people who have a misplaced hope through the deceitfulness of sin. This pagan condemns the sins and condemns the sin but does the sin and acquits themselves. This is the person Paul is talking to in Romans 2:1–5.

It's a man who thinks he has an excuse but Paul says he has no excuse. His excuse is that he is a participant. You say you condemn sin, I condemn sin. You condemn sinners, I condemn sinners. Paul is telling him by what he has done he has signed the papers of his own indictment and everyone like you, who embraces this. Paul is dealing with one man who represents a whole group and Paul gives us five things about this man.

Number one is this man puts himself in the position of judge – Romans 2:1–2, you who judge, who pass judgment on another. All of us, if you're a Christian make judgments about behavior – is this right or wrong, is it sin or obedience – for we're all called to make that judgment, but this man isn't simply making a judgment about sin. He is making the judgment on sinners and put himself as the judge over sinners, not simply on behavior but upon others and he condemns them.

Secondly, he condemns sin and sinners. He passes judgment on others as if he knew their heart and as if he had the right to do that, to sit on the judgment throne.

Number three, this man does the very same things as others do. He does that whole list previously mentioned that included gossip, slander, divisiveness, inventing evil, etc. The man-made religionist is a practitioner for he has a hidden life, not the observed life that practices the very same things that he publicly condemns when he condemns others.

Fourthly, here is a man who in the providence of God has not yet tasted the wrath of God, on the contrary his life has been characterized by tasting of the common grace of God. Romans 1:3–5 says [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?* [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?* [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.*

So they have not tasted the wrath of God today although the wrath of God is to come on that Day, so they now have convinced themselves that there is no wrath of God. They think they have an excuse, a pass because of their self-righteous religion.

Fifthly, this man (this group) comes to sinful deceitfulness in their man-made religion. It shows up four ways in the text. Here is how they have come to the deceitfulness of sin. First of all, it is through sinful hypocrisy. Hypocrite is a really interesting word. Here's an interesting illustration on this. These days all I hear is 'what do you think about wearing masks (due to COVID 19)?' My response is that it depends on what the mask is. A mask that I hate that I ask God I don't ever want to wear is the mask that Jesus exposes. Jesus grew up with a carpenter and worked with him until age 30 at least and four miles from Nazareth the Romans rebuilt a theater, called Sephora, where they re-introduced Greek theater and Greek drama. I've often wondered if this influenced Jesus' choice of terms because it's likely He worked on this theater. Greek drama is very profound in its playwriting, but very inexpensive because you only need one actor. If there are six characters they would just give him six masks. The Greek word for this actor was called *hypokrites* – for they were people who were wearing a mask who appear as someone that they are not. So here are men in their religion who are appearing as those who hate sin as they condemning sin and sinners, while they practice they very same thing behind the

mask of hypocrisy. They have another computer, another phone, another appointment book, another life. You are without excuse. Don't fool yourself. God doesn't look at the mask. He looks at the heart.

Secondly, they engage in sinful presumption. The text says do you who presume on others not presume God will not act accordingly? Romans 2:4 says *[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?* In other words, as you have sinned God's wrath has not yet come upon you so you think you have gotten away with it – I'm still here, I still own my house, I still have my health, I am not experiencing God's common grace through forbearance and patience. What this man doesn't know, is that God's forbearance is not a message that he got away with it, but that He is giving him time to confess it and repent of it. That time has a shelf life. The Day when He judges rightly is coming.

Thirdly, they engage in sinful assumption. The sinful assumption is them saying 'if I got away with it today then on that Day I'll get away with it.' If I'm not experiencing God's wrath now, and I've gotten away with it then that's where the sinful assumption comes in for in Day perhaps, He will lose my file or I'll miss or get mixed up in the crowd or I'll have an excuse or be an exception.

The fourth thing is they engage in a sinful assessment. Since I haven't been judged now then my self-righteousness and my religion will keep me from being accountable on that Day. Here is what this person doesn't know. God judges rightly. Paul says in Romans 2:4 'not knowing' and Paul wants to tell us about salvation through faith alone through grace alone in Christ alone but it won't make sense until you understand condemnation and indictment. This is something you have to know and that's this; you will not escape the judgment of God.

The pagan's problem was darkness of heart but here is the hardness of heart. In the hardness of heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the Day of God's wrath and righteous judgment and it will be revealed. Paul uses a banking term for it could be translated treasuring up judgment against yourself. You might think you're getting away with it but it has not disappeared from the ledger. God is just giving you time to repent for this is the day of grace and salvation, but instead of seeing it as an opportunity to repent you have sinfully assumed and presumed you will get an excused pass, as if you are an exception. On that Day there will be no exceptions for on that Day God judges rightly and everyone will receive according to their deeds. You will stand under that judgment and you have made a wrong anticipation in the deceitfulness of sin.

I know where you are right now. Everyone will be there on that Day. Everyone will be accountable for their deeds. Everyone's sins will be under the wrath of God. So how can there be no condemnation. The message is clear. There are no excuses that will be issued on the Day of Judgment. There are no exceptions from the wrath of God upon our sins. If you want to know what it will be like then go read Revelation 6. It says the children of wrath on that Day in Revelation 6:16–17 will say, *[16] calling to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, [17] for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"* They would rather the mountains to fall on them rather than the wrath of the Lamb.

I can't help but think of the Hebrews 2:3 which says *[3] how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?* There are no exceptions. They who refused Him upon the earth, if they receive that judgment how much more will be the judgment of those when He speaks from heaven. Forget Harry Reeder, for Jesus has promised to speak to the hearts of His

people through preaching, so will you reject Him or come to Him? There are no exceptions but we don't have an exceptional message but it's not if you love Jesus and do enough good things in your religion you get a pass. No, here is what it is; the One who did not sin went to the cross and the wrath due for all your sins was paid for by His death. There is nothing hidden from God for we will give an account for every thought, word and deed, but the exceptional message is that on that Day if you're in the Book of Life because you have repented of your sins to come to Christ and trust Him alone, Jesus has paid it all for your sins and the wrath of God was satisfied in His Son and in Jesus the love of God is magnified and you're redeemed.

As the hymn so appropriately puts it; Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe. I do not want to be deceived by sin where in my sin all I need is more of it or in my man-made religion and the fake news that I can work my way into heaven by condemning others, having a hidden life, where I do the same things I condemn. No, I want to know Jesus.

Everyone is going to the Judgment Seat – everyone. We only have one hope and that is that we're not written in the books but written in the Book of Life with the blood of the Lamb. Those written in the Book of Life are redeemed because Jesus paid the ransom for every single one of our sins. It's not because of any pass or exception for there are none on that Day. I am absolutely sure there is no other way for many reasons – the Bible tells me so.

This question was asked in the Garden, where Jesus bleeding blood because of what He is going to face in the wrath of God on the cross. Jesus says to the Father in Matthew 26:39, [39] *And going a little farther He fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, **if it be possible**, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."* If it be possible also means if there is another way but there was no other way. There is only one way and it is Jesus who is The Way, The Truth and The Life (John 14:6). We have a first name relationship with Jesus. What does Jesus mean? It means Yahweh saves and that's our plea, 'Jesus, my Savior, my Lord, my all.' Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, I pray You would speak to the hearts of those reading this today to encourage them that they are forgiven, not through the fake news of man-made religion but through the Good News that Jesus has overcome our indictment and removed it by His blood so there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus and has given us a ticket to heaven because we are clothed with His righteousness. We are accepted in the beloved and forgiven because of His shed blood. Father, please give Your people joy in the assurance of that Good News of salvation, no fake news of man-made religion but the Good News of true religion which is the Good News that Jesus saves sinners. Jesus, help us take that Good News of the Gospel of God to the world. For those who are reading this and are seeking and searching please God do not let them walk away with another callous on a hardened heart, but make their heart soft to come to Jesus. Call upon Him today saying 'Jesus be my Savior for I put my hope not in sin and its depth of depravity or man-made religion while hypocritically judging others while practicing the very same things, but I put my hope in Jesus, His blood and righteousness, my only dress. I come to You Jesus for that new record, that new heart and that new life.' If you prayed that prayer or want to talk or pray with anyone about this Good News please contact me at Briarwood at (205) 776-5200 for I'd love to do this with you. Jesus we love You because You first loved us for You are our Redeemer, Amen.

Power Point

THE INEVITABLE ETERNAL WRATH OF GOD
The Depraved Pagan Gentile—No Excuse

The Self-Righteous Religious Gentile—No Excuse

“THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN”

Sinful Hypocrisy

Sinful Presumptions

Sinful Assumptions

Sinful Assessments

LIFE TAKEAWAY

The message is clear: no excuses will be issued at the Day of Judgment. There are no exceptions from the Wrath of God upon our sin. So how can we escape the wrath of God to come?