



ROMANS 2:1-7

The Greek word used in Romans 2:1 for judgement is “krino” (judge). Kriterion—the basis of judgement, it’s a righteous judgement “dikadoes”.

By special edict, Jews were banished from Rome for several years (Acts 18:2). Aquila and his wife Priscilla also called Prisca (2 Timothy 4:19) were residents of Rome. After the edict was lifted, they returned to Rome (Romans 16:3-5) and opened their home for fellowship and the promotion of the Gospel. Many Jews living in Italy accepted the message that Jesus indeed was the Messiah. Jews generally felt superior to Gentiles because of their rich religious heritage and boasted of being the chosen seed of Abraham.

The church in Rome consisted of Gentiles and Jewish believers. These Jews judged their fellow Gentile brothers for not practicing Mosaic laws in diet and observance. Paul therefore addresses this problem not withstanding that in chapter one, he painted a dark and grim picture of the world of the Gentiles.

The Jewish believers in Rome were delighted that Paul had tackled the issues of how far Gentiles had departed from the Truth. These Jews must have grinned with delight as Paul condemned the pagan practices of the Gentile people. After all the Jews in the Roman Church, although saved, felt that they were not as bad as the Gentile believers who had been converted from such evil and thought that they occupied a more privileged position. God might be the judge of the Gentiles, they thought, but He was the protector of the Jews.

With this in mind, we now consider Paul’s words inspired by the Holy Spirit. Vs 1-3. These Jewish believers needed to understand that they were in no position to judge Gentile believers. **Jews were as guilty** as Gentiles before God and would be judged by God.

One commentator has said that almost everyone has “a vague and undefined hope of impunity” a kind of feeling that “this cannot happen to me”. The Jews, however, took this notion further and openly stated that they were exempt from judgement. The Jews traded on God’s mercy toward them because of their heritage. Paul makes it abundantly clear that under the programme of Grace “all have sinned” and need salvation. (Romans 3:23).

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Romans Lesson 5 continued

Many Christians use (Romans 2:1-3) to promote the false idea that we cannot tell people that their lifestyles are wrong. To the contrary, Paul was in fact saying that those who believe they are above the law need to realise that they are also sinners, and in need of a saviour.

Basic Divine judgement is according to truth (v.2). The truth of the Gospel exposes sin and offers forgiveness. It is our responsibility to call sin by its real name but offer the antidote for its venomous effects.

Paul goes on to say that they must not despise or take for granted Gods goodness and mercy. We are saved by Grace to do good works. We are **not saved** through our good deeds but if we are saved the by-product of conversion manifests itself through good deeds and works of righteousness. Against such acts of fruitfulness, there is no law. To Paul, a faith that did not lead to action was a travesty of faith. It is dangerous to make people believe that “good deeds” are not important. Good deeds are important when they are rooted in the outworking of the Holy Spirit in our lives – as a result of our willingness to yield to the mighty work of God’s Spirit. Good deeds done in our own strength without Christ are “filthy rags” from God’s perspective. Read Isaiah 64:6 and Eph 2:8-10. It is so critical the Christian to understand this. It is in understanding this fact, that our works will flow out of our life to God’s glory.

We are not saved by good works through faith in Grace. Rather we are saved by Grace through faith to do good works. We do not preach virtue and practice vice.

God has no favourites. Jesus, God’s son is the only favoured one. A **right relationship** with Him **will produce** fruits of righteousness. Paul presents a principle that some have difficulty in accepting: God rewards good and punishes evil, but how do we attain goodness? Read Luke 18:18-23. The rich young ruler wasn’t prepared to give up his riches and follow Christ. Christ is the only Way. All of us are sinners and our goodness cannot compare with God’s Divine nature of goodness. The only goodness God rewards is a Divine goodness – this goodness is made possible through faith in Christ – when we “follow” Him. 1 Cor 11:1, 1 Cor 4:16, Eph 5:1.

Verse 7 confirms that God is no respecter of persons, that both Jew and Gentile are sinners. The Jews had an advantage because of their heritage and the Mosaic Law, and yet they still failed to achieve goodness. The Gentiles were given the opportunity to **attain goodness** without the law **through faith**.

QUESTIONS:

1. On what basis does God judge?
2. Why did Paul rebuke them for judging one another?
3. Complete this statement taken from Ephesians 2:8-10:

We are saved bythroughto.....
