



ROMANS 2:7-24

In Paul's inspiring letters to the Christian churches he states unequivocally that salvation is by grace through faith (**Eph 2: 8-9**) yet in this passage he seems to suggest that God will reward goodness with eternal life and evil with eternal wrath.

Before Paul can explain grace as an unmerited gift, he sets out the basic principles of Divine Judgement:

The principle of goodness/righteousness = eternal life.

The principle of unrighteousness = separation from a Holy God.

Paul in essence is saying that God is just. He will do what is right. As Paul promotes the justice of God to honour righteousness, he points out that no one is righteous – all of us are sinners and therefore unrighteous in God's sight. (See **Romans 3:10-12 & Genesis 8:25**).

God does not respect one and despise the other. He judges with equity and in fairness. All have sinned (Jew & Gentile), all deserve punishment.

The Gentiles will not be judged by the Mosaic Law because it was not given to them, but being without the written law does not exempt them from God's wrath. By choice they have gravitated to unrighteousness. The Jews, on the other hand despite having the law also rebelled against God. They will be judged by God according to the Law of Moses.

The law is of no advantage to the Jews over Gentiles because the Jews like the Gentiles have broken God's law. For example a Jew knows it's wrong to lie because the law of Moses says it. The Gentile knows it's wrong to lie not because he knows the Law but instinctively he knows because of the conscience by an intrinsic and natural awareness.

Paul states that the Good News (Gospel) he preached included the principle that Jesus Christ would be the barometer of judgement (see **John 5: 22, Acts 17:31 and Rom 2:16**).

The Gospel Paul preached contained a secret which previous prophets and apostles were unaware of, that God's righteousness was imparted without the works of the law. (See **Romans 4:5**)

Page 2 / Romans 6 continued

Romans Lesson 6 continued

The Jews were the chosen seed of Abraham. The term Jew refers to all the children of Israel. There was a time in Jewish history when the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Levi were called Jews and the ten other tribes were called Israel. After the return from the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities all Israelites were called Jews. This is borne out in the New Testament. God's ancient people came to be known as Hebrews by race, Israelites by nationality and Jews by religion. (All tribes had embraced Judah as the royal tribe from which the Messiah and King of Israel would come.)

The Jews in ancient times felt privileged among all the nations. It seems that they still feel the same way today. In chapter one Paul "had a go" at the Gentiles as uncivilized heathen. In the opening verses of chapter two, both cultured Greeks and religious Jews are exposed as unbelievers. Now Paul shatters Jewish confidence and questions their status. If you, who call yourselves Jews, boast in the law do you keep the law? What benefit is there in the law if you as Jews preach and teach the law but disobey the law? Paul's repetitive questions relating to Israel's boast of being instructors and guides of the blind etc, seek to point them to their failure as instruments of righteousness. **Rom 2:24** contains a body blow to Jewish boasting. Unbelievers and Gentiles were "put off" by Jewish lifestyles. God's name was mocked by unbelievers because the Jews did not live what they preached. Israel's arrogance made them unpopular with other minority groups in the Roman Empire.

The Jews despised Gentiles and refused any social contact with them. In Alexandria a story is told that Jews had taken an oath never to show kindness to a Gentile. Some heathens exaggerated Jewish hatred of Gentiles and spread a rumour that Jews sacrificed a Gentile annually to their God. Some Romans thought that the Jews were atheists because they refused to worship idol deities. Others believed that the reason why Jews refused to eat pork was that they worshipped the pig as sacred. One can only imagine how they distorted and twisted the beliefs of the Jews. Nevertheless the Jews failed to reach out in evangelising to win Gentiles for God. The Jews had brought belief in God, the Creator into disrepute. They were guilty of contradicting the meaning of their name. The Greek word for praise is "epainos" the meaning of Judah is praise – the Jews failed to live up to their name and special identity, and thus unable to reflect their glorious calling.

QUESTIONS:

1. What are the principles of Divine Judgement?

2. Complete the following—John 5:22
 "The Father judges no one, but....."

3. There are two types of good works / righteousness
 - 3A. *True*—Which come from
 - 3B. *False*—Which come from