

Chapter Twenty
Studies in the Epistle of Paul to the Romans
Four Principles of Divine Justice
Judgment with Impartiality

“¹¹ For there is no respect of persons with God. ¹² For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; ¹³ (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. ¹⁴ For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: ¹⁵ Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)” (Romans 2:11-15).

One of the great lies of Satan is that God sees mankind in various degrees of good and bad. If Satan can convince a person of that lie, he can deceive him into thinking God will show greater respect or favor to those who live the most moral lives. When Satan is successful in this deception, he gives the deceived person a false security blanket to cling to.

One overwhelming and universal principle of justice is that God is not a respecter of persons. When it comes to justice, God has one standard by which He judges all mankind. That standard is His righteousness. That judgment is not based upon how close a person is to God-righteousness, but simply if one is God-righteous or not.

The only way to be as righteous as God is righteous is to be saved whereby the believing sinner receives God-righteousness as a gift imputed to the believer by the grace of God. God does not take into account any truth a person might believe and live unless that person believes the Truth. The only way to God-righteousness is through salvation by grace alone through faith alone in the finished, substitutionary sacrifice of Christ alone.

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).

There is no such thing as being almost saved. Being almost saved is like being almost pregnant. You either are or you are not. God-righteousness is available no where but through salvation. It cannot be achieved or earned. It is a gift of grace. This one truth echoes throughout the cannon of Scripture.

“²¹ But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; ²² Even the righteousness of God *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: ²³ For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; ²⁴ Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: ²⁵ Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; ²⁶ To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. ²⁷ Where *is* boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith” (Romans 3:21-27).

“⁴ Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. ⁵ But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. ⁶ Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works . . .” (Romans 4:4-6, compare Romans 10:1-3, 10; I Corinthians 1:30; II Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 3:9 and James 2:23).

Judgment will not be based on if you are Baptist, Pentecostal, Lutheran, Catholic, Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Jew, Black, Caucasian, Asian, Native American, or anything else. A person will be judged without respect of religion, race or social position according to one standard: God-righteousness, do you have it or not? “Respect of persons” is from the Greek word *prosopolepsia* (pros-o-pol-ape-see'-ah), which refers to discrimination for or against a person according to outward appearances.

“But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for *the LORD seeth* not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart” (I Samuel 16:7).

When God says He has “no respect of persons,” it means it does not matter to Him what you look like or act like outwardly (this is man-kind righteousness). It does not matter if you have white washed your sepulcher full of dead men’s bones. It does not matter if you have learned to talk *God talk* or walk the *God walk*. The only thing that matters is; do you have God-righteousness?

Those “without the law” refers to Gentiles (v 12). Those “in the law” refers to Jews (v 12). God judges the Jew by the same standard He judges the pagan Gentile. God judges the Moralist by the same standard He judges the Religionist.

“¹³ Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: ¹⁴ Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. ¹⁵ Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. ¹⁶ Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? ¹⁷ Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. ²⁰ Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. ²¹ Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. ²² Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? ²³ And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. ²⁴ Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: ²⁵ And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. ²⁶ And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: ²⁷ And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it” (Matthew 7:13-27).

The person who recognizes that he has sinned (even once, let alone a sinner by birth and nature) must recognize he is lost and needs a Savior in that he recognizes he is destitute of God-righteousness and hopeless in ever attaining it. To “come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23) is to miss the mark of God-righteousness to any degree. Whether you are a Jew “in the law” or a Gentile “without law,” God will judge you by the same standard.

In what way are “the doers of the law . . . justified”? Knowing the law, justifies no one. There are many people who know the Scriptures backward and forward, but who do not know the basic, elementary (A, B, C) truth that those Scriptures (especially the Law) teaches them.

“¹⁹ Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. ²⁰ Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin” (Romans 3:19-20).

The law reveals and proclaims one simple truth. All men are sinners and therefore, all men are guilty of capital crimes against God deserving the eternal death sentence on their souls. The law leads men to one conclusion, all men need a Savior. That is the only way to escape God's wrath. When a person knows what the law says, he will do what the laws demands. He will seek a Savior.

³⁹ Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. ⁴⁰ And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life" (John 5:39-40).

²¹ Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. ²² But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. ²³ For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: ²⁴ For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was" (James 1:21-24).

Real faith acts upon what it believes (Romans 2:13-15). Faith is not defined by what we know, but by what we do with what we know. If we know we are sinners, we act upon that knowledge by seeking a Savior. If we know that the universal standard by which God judges all men is God-righteousness, we will act upon that truth by acknowledging before God our own spiritual bankruptcy and crying out to God for mercy.

When Gentiles begin to do what the law says to do, they manifest a change in nature and an activated conscience to God's existence. "The law written in their hearts" is a metaphor signifying truths owned by deep conviction of the Holy Spirit bringing about real change in life and practice. God has implanted in their conscience a degree of knowledge regarding right and wrong. To whatever degree those convictions exist (whether accurate or not), they will accuse those who live contrary and excuse those who live according to their knowledge.

Simply because the Moralists accuses someone or excuses someone is not the basis of his condemnation. The standard by which all men are saved or condemned is God-righteousness.

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1. What is one of the great lies of Satan by which he deceives men? _____

2. What is the universal principle of judgment found in Romans 2:11? _____

3. What is the one universal standard by which God judges all mankind? _____

4. Discuss the doctrine of imputation and the only way to God-righteousness. _____

5. Why is there no such thing as being almost saved? _____

6. Read Romans 3:21-27. How is God-righteousness received according to this Scripture? _____

7. Read Romans 4:4-6. How is God-righteousness received according to this Scripture? _____

8. Discuss the meaning of “respect of persons” from the Greek word *prosopolepsia* (pros-o-pol-ape-see’-ah). _____

9. Who is God referring to by the words “without the law” and “in the law” in Romans 2:12? _____

10. What must the person do who recognizes he has even once sinned? _____

11. From the perspective of this lesson, what does Romans 3:23 mean by “come short of the glory of God”? _____

12. In what way are “the doers of the law...justified”? _____

13. Read Romans 2:13-15 with James 1:21-24. If real faith acts upon what it believes, discuss how saving faith acts upon the knowledge of sin and the knowledge of the universal standard of God-righteousness by which God judges all men? _____
