



Romans

Right With God

God Judges Sin

Lesson Fourteen

Mission Arlington/Mission Metroplex Curriculum

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Today we consider one of the more difficult of Paul's teachings. We need to be clear at the very beginning of this lesson, we are not talking about the decision as to whether a person is saved or not. This is Paul's statement of belief about God's judgment of sin. He will get to what saves us from sin later.* (Read Romans 2:12-16)

In this paragraph, the Apostle is telling the folks at Rome, and us, what makes God finally say, "Depart from me." He is talking about the certainty that everyone who sins will be judged by God in a negative way. He has been saying, since the eighteenth verse of the first chapter that people sin...all people sin.

Since all people sin, what does God use to identify their sin? For the Jew the Law of Moses will be the measurement. For the Gentile, it could not be that law, because they did not know about the law. Instead, the measurement for the Gentile will be their conscience.

It is clear that those who know the Law would be judged according to how they kept the Law. God was very specific with the people of Israel. There are five books that the Hebrews called the Law: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. These five books contain very specific laws...laws that Hebrew children memorized when they were young children. God does the judging through the law. Also, if one could be totally justified by the Law, it would be by doing the Law, not simply hearing it. Memorizing the Law wasn't enough.

The Gentiles, on the other hand would look at the Jew and say, "God should condemn the Jews, they had the Law and should have known better; but we Gentiles will not be judged because we had no opportunity to know the Law. We didn't know any better."

For the Gentiles, Paul has two principles: First, A person will be judged by what he or she had the opportunity to know. If that person knew the law, he or she would be judged by the Law. If that person did not know the Law, he or she will be judged as one who did not know the Law. God is fair!

Second, Paul says that those who did not have the written law had an **unwritten law** within their hearts. We might call it instinctive knowledge. People naturally know right from wrong. Even the most uneducated, uncivilized people know about right and wrong.

The Gentile is not conscious of keeping the Law; he or she is simply doing that which they believe to be the right thing...something they **ought** to do.

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Paul mentions conscience in the fifteenth verse. Here it means something in us that guides our thoughts when we make decisions. Paul calls it a law “written on the hearts.” For the Christian, it doesn’t necessarily mean God’s will, or even a guarantee that we have arrived at the best decision. And, although conscience should not be ignored, it must be guided and even overruled by God’s Word. Paul is saying that even those who do not know the law, have a conscience to give them some guidance, and to know, generally, right from wrong.

The “thoughts” he speaks of in verse fifteen are the result of conscience. The Gentiles have their conscience and, as we saw earlier, what they see in nature to guide their thoughts. And Paul says that sometimes those thoughts tell them that they are doing the wrong thing, and sometimes those thoughts tell them that they are doing things right.

Paul tells us in verse sixteen that there will be “a day when God will judge things that we thought were secret. Through Jesus, God will make known everything good and bad that we have done.

Scripture Memory: “For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God’s sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous.” Romans 2:13

*Underlined statements in this Teacher’s Guide appear in the Student Worksheet with blanks to be filled in by the student during the lesson. Words in the Student Worksheet may not appear exactly as printed in the Teacher’s Guide.

For the Teacher:

Lesson Goal: To help students to see that God judges everyone and is completely fair in His judgment.

1. The first sentence of this lesson says that this is a difficult passage. Your lesson writer has struggled to simplify, hopefully not to oversimplify what it teaches. Be very careful to separate this from the final judgment when God will judge all humans according to whether they have, in faith, ask Jesus to be the Lord of their life. This lesson is about how God judges sin.
2. God shows no partiality. He sees no difference. Everyone stands before God equal and without prejudice. See Deuteronomy 10:17. And, New Testament writers: Acts 10:34; Ephesians 5:9; Colossians 3:25; James 2:9; I Peter 1:17
3. Aristotle, Greek philosopher, said, “The cultivated and free-minded man will so behave as being a law unto himself.” With Paul, the nature of humans was implanted by God, just as the Law of Moses, was given by God for those who would listen .
4. The judgment will be through Jesus, verse sixteen. Read also John 5:27. Think about it, our judgment will be rendered by the one who died for us. We could look for no one more predisposed in our favor. The one who paid the price will have the most complete understanding of the cost of the redemption and judge humans most fairly.
5. It has been said, there are three sets of laws that give humans light: The Law of Moses, the law of nature, and the Law of Christ.
6. Conscience is not an Old Testament concept. It is one of a few Greek concepts that Paul picked up. The term can have several meanings. However, here it most certainly means evaluative actions. See Romans 9:1. It does not define “The good” or God’s will. In our day, conscience has been elevated to the supreme place in our evaluative thought. Conscience should have a strictly limited and provisional place in the Christian life.

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Student Worksheet

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=This is Paul's statement of belief about God's judgment of _____. He will get to what saves us from _____ later.

=He has been saying that _____ sin... _____ people sin.

=Since all people sin, what does ____ use to identify their sin? For the Jew the ____ of Moses will be the measurement. For the Gentile, the measurement will be their _____.

=The Gentile is not conscious of keeping the _____; he or she is simply doing that which they believe to be the _____ thing...something they _____ to do.

=Paul is saying that even those who do not know the _____, have a conscience to give them some guidance, and to know, generally, _____ from _____.

=Paul tells us that there will be "a day when God will _____ things that we thought were secret. Through Jesus, God will make known everything _____ and _____ that we have done.

Scripture Memory: "For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous." Romans 2:13

A Roman Road to Salvation:

Romans 3:23 "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Everyone is a sinner and needs salvation.

Romans 6:23a "For the wages of sin is death." The law of God is unchangeable. If someone sins the penalty must be paid, the payment is death.

Romans 5:8 "But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners Christ died for us." God loves us so much, according to John 3:16, that He sent His Son, Jesus, to die for our sins.

Romans 6:23b "But the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." The penalty for sin is spiritual death, but God, through the death of Jesus on the cross, took the penalty for the sins of all people, and now everyone can have eternal life. See also, II Corinthians 5:21

Romans 10:9, 10 "That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved." To personally receive the gift of God, eternal life in Christ Jesus, you trust God to be what He says He is. Believing that "God raised Him (Jesus) from the dead" is to accept all that the Bible says about God and His Son, Jesus. Then you speak (confess) the words, "Jesus is Lord," as a statement of faith. Believing "with your heart" means that you believe with your mind and with everything that you are.

Romans 10:13 "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." You have the promise of God Himself that if you do what Romans 10:9, 10 says, you will become God's child and have eternal life.

Romans 12:1, 2 "I urge you brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will." Becoming a Christian is a life-long act of faith and worship.