

The Gospel Defender Journal

"appointed for the defense of the gospel !"

(Philippians 1:15 - 17)

*"Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill. The former preach from selfish ambition not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains but the latter out of love knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel."
Apostle Paul - Philippians 1:15 - 17*

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Biblical Reasons Why Those Who Never Hear The Gospel Will, In The End, Be Lost At The Judgment Seat Of Christ

(Part 3)

For the first two 2019 issues of this "journal" we have written on the subject that is the main title of this third and final installment on this subject. We believe that we have adequately made the case for the veracity of the title. Those who never hear the gospel of Jesus Christ will, in the end, be found to be spiritually lost at the judgment seat of Christ. Much more could have been written, and indeed has been by others, but we leave our preceding eight reasons on the table for believing what we do. Those who believe that we are in error are encouraged to state their case and give it the widest dissemination possible for all to consider; then, each person must decide for him- or herself what the real truth is.

However, having said what we have said, we will address this subject one final time using a message that we have preached in a series of messages on the book of *Romans* (a series ingeniously entitled "Roaming Through The Book Of Romans") for it is in the text of this message that the doctrine before us is addressed by the Apostle Paul. As an inspired writer there is certainly no better spokesman to whom we possibly could go to know what God's Word says on any doctrinal matter, including the one we are presently considering.

The following message is from *Romans 2:11 - 16*.

Honest Judgment

In the opening words of the book of *Romans* the Apostle Paul made it known to those to whom he wrote that he frequently prayed that he might find some way in which he could visit the church there - not the Roman Catholic Church for she would not raise her apostate head until later, but the church of Christ - the church that is built on the Word of God, upon the foundation of Christ who built her. In the opening words of the book he told those in the

church at Rome that he prayed frequently that he might somehow, some way "*find a way in the will of God to come to [them].*" Later in life he found the "*way.*" It was a hard "*way*"; it was the "*way*" of being a prisoner bound in chains. He landed in Rome at the end of his life only to be executed for having preached the gospel message of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, a message that was despised by the Jews and a message that was foolishness to the

Gentiles. But before that happened he wrote the book of *Romans*, the first Apostolic epistle of the New Testament as far as its placement in the New Testament. *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke* and *John*, biographies of Jesus, of course, are really part of the Old Testament although they appear in the New Testament section of our Bible. The book of *Acts* is the history book of the church. But *Romans* is the first epistle. Perhaps more commentaries have been written on this one epistle than on any other book of the New Testament. It is a deep theological book that most of us need some help in understanding. This is especially true of the text of this message, *Romans 2:11 - 16* that reads as follows:

"¹¹ For there is no partiality with God. ¹² For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law ¹³ (for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified; ¹⁴ for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, ¹⁵ who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them) ¹⁶ in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel."

The second chapter of *Romans* is a chapter that deals with the matter of judging. *Verses 1 - 3* are about the hypocritical judging that the Jewish element in the Roman church of Christ was guilty of doing towards their Gentile brothers and sisters. They found it very easy to mete out judgment against their Gentile brethren for doing or not doing certain things while they themselves were guilty of doing or not doing the same things. Paul would have none of it.

In contrast to the Jews' hypocritical judgment, *verses 4 - 10* are about holy judging, the kind of judging that God does. It is written that God's judgment is "eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality" but "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil."

Verses 11 - 16 are verses that continue discussing the subject of God's judgment that is not only holy but also . . .

Honest

Of course, that is the only kind of judgment that could be rendered by a God who is holy. Were He to render any kind of judgment other than honest judgment He could hardly be thought of as being holy. Dishonest judgment is

unholy judgment. Paul said that there are two things that demonstrate that God's judgment is honest. The first thing that reveals that God's judgment is honest is that it is . . .

impartial

It is written in *verse 11* . . .

"For there is no partiality with God."

In the American judicial system there is an icon that pictures the kind of judgment that God renders. It is the figure of lady justice. Her figure is secured to a wall in most court rooms. She is mounted high behind the judgment chairs of many earthly judges and is visible to all who are in the courtroom. She is always blindfolded. She is designed this way to communicate to those who stand before the court that justice is blind; she is not able to see who stands before her and therefore she will not be partial one way or another to those who plead their case regardless of who that person might be. In her hand is a set of scales communicating to those who look at her that both sides of a case will be considered. The evidence will be weighed and the decision that she promises to render in each and every case will be decided by nothing but the facts of the case. Like Jack Webb in "Dragnet," just the facts ma'am, just the facts.

We all wish that all of this were true but we know that sometimes that is not the way the judicial system always works. Some times some people are judged to be guilty for a crime while someone else guilty of the same crime gets off "scot-free." Some times judges can be corrupted by outside influences. Some times the verdict handed down by the judge or a jury depends upon whether or not a person can afford a good lawyer to weave his case.

We all have seen people who we thought were guilty be exonerated because they had the money to hire a good legal dream team while others, with little worldly goods go to jail with all the other less financially endowed members of society. It makes us angry to witness that, but we know that that is the way the system works. Wealthy people, powerful people, and well-connected people get "off the hook" because of their money and their power. This is not the way that God's system of justice works. God's court with Him presiding is impartial. Either you are innocent or you are guilty based upon the facts. Money, power, associations with influential people or being an "insider" have no bearing upon the way in which God judges.

The way in which God judges is vividly seen in *1 Samuel 16*. When Prophet Samuel was sent by God to find a replacement for King Saul and he thought that Eliab, a son

of David, was surely the man for the job, God told the Prophet in *verse 7*, *"Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."* The omniscient God sees it all - that which is out in the open and that which is hidden in the deep, dark recesses of the heart. David expressed it this way in *Psalm 139:1 - 4*. *"O LORD, you have searched me and known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. You comprehend my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word on my tongue, but behold, O LORD, you know it altogether."*

The church can be guilty of wrongfully judging people based on appearance. James had something to say about this in *James 2:1 - 6*. *"¹ My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. ² For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, ³ and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, 'You sit here in a good place,' and say to the poor man, 'You stand here,' or, 'Sit here at my footstool,' ⁴ have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts. ⁵ Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? ⁶ But you have dishonored the poor man."* Church, let us be very careful that we are not guilty of judging with partiality for James went on to say in *verse 9*, *"...if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors."*

Peter also had something to say about this in *Acts 10:34-35*. *"In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever hears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him."* He had something else to say about this in *1 Peter 1:17*. God the Father is One *"...Who without partiality judges according to each one's work..."* Just one more comment concerning God's impartiality in the judgment.

To the churches of Christ in Galatia Paul wrote in *chapter 6* and *verses 7* and *8*: *"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life."* With God it is not who you are or what you have in the eyes of the world; it is what is in your heart and what you have done or not done in life that will decide the outcome of your judgment.

There is much more that could be said on this point of God's impartiality in the judgment, but we must move

on. A word to the wise is sufficient; God's judgment will be honest and impartial.

The second thing that makes God's judgment honest is that it is determined only upon the deeds of the . . .

Individual

Sometimes people judge others by stereotype or by class. During the reign of the Third Reich all Jews were stigmatized as being sub-human and each of them was judged worthy of death because they belonged to a particular class of people. Stigmatizing people is still alive and well. A person who stands on a corner begging for a handout is judged as being too lazy to work when the facts of the case may be otherwise. A person who is grossly overweight and eats food that only adds to his weight is judged to deserve the way he looks when the facts of the case may be otherwise. A person who has long hair with tattoos and piercings all over his body is judged as being someone who is beyond the reach of the gospel when the fact is, on the inside they are crying out for the help that can come only from Christ and His gospel. Examples could be multiplied but you get the point. People are sometimes judged as a class. This is not true with God's judgment. His judgment is honest and because it is, it is impartial and individual.

It is written in *verse 12* . . .

"For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law."

The "law" in this verse is, of course, the "law" of God - His Word. It is the only "law" that will be used in the judgment.

In the context, those who "sinned without law" were the Gentiles who were not privileged to have God's Word in the beginning as did the Jews. Those who "sinned in the law" were the Jews. Both groups will be judged by God.

Verses 13, 14, and 15 is a parenthetical statement that for the moment we can pass over to read *verse 16* that completes the thought of *verse 12*. *"For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law...in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel."* The day is coming when both those who had the "law" of God and those who didn't will be judged by the same person, "Jesus Christ," and by the same standard, the "gospel." No one will go to heaven because someone in his class of people went to heaven and no one will go to hell because someone in his class of people went to hell. Everyone will be judged

individually by the God of righteousness. Both classes of Jews and Gentiles will be judged but it will be an individual judgment. First, the . . .

Jew

The Jew had been privileged to have the "law" of God from the beginning. But as *verse 13* says, it was not their having or even hearing the "law" that "justified" any one of them; it was their doing the "law" that "justified" them. But they did not do the "law" and therefore would not be "justified" in the judgment. Christians also can be guilty of this same thing - having and hearing the Word of God dozens and even hundreds of times within a life time but not doing the Word of God. *James 1:22* says that we only deceive ourselves when we do this.

Second, the judgment of God not only will be upon each, individual Jew but also upon each, individual . . .

Gentile

Unlike the Jew, they had not been privileged to have the "law" of God from the beginning but they did have from the beginning "the law written in their hearts" - a "conscience." Some of them did "the things in the law" by nature." Having been created with a "conscience" they too knew what was according to God's "laws" and what wasn't. Unlike the Jews, they had not heard the "law" but also unlike the Jews they did what the "law" taught. The Gentile had not heard the sixth commandment, "You shall not murder," but that "law" had been "written in their hearts." They had not heard the eighth commandment, "You shall not steal," but that "law" was imbedded in their "conscience" and "written in their hearts." There are some things that are right and there are some things that are wrong that people are born knowing. They "are a law to themselves."

God's honest, impartial, individual judgment will take all these things into consideration. They will be weighed on the scales of God's honest and impartial judgment. Everyone is accountable to God for the "law" that he has heard and for what he knows about the "laws" whether it is available to him in written form in a book called the Bible or that is "written in [his] heart" and is witnessed by his "conscience." All Jews are "without excuse." All Gentiles are "without excuse." All men and women are "without excuse."

In the case of the Jews, remember what Jesus said in *Matthew 11:20 - 24*. " *20 Then He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent: 21 Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would*

have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22 But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. 23 And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. 24 But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you.' " There will not be a first-century Jew or a twenty-first century Jew on the Day of Judgment who will be able to rightfully plead his case of being innocent on the grounds of being ignorant of the gospel.

The same will be true of all Gentiles. Paul had written to them in *Romans 1:20* that because they could see God's "invisible attributes" "by the things that are made" "they are without excuse." They too will be judged, not for failing to believe in Jesus of Whom they had never heard, but for failing to do what their "conscience" told them to do even without having received any special written revelation from God as did the Jews. Remember *verse 12*: "For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law..." How "many" is "as many?" "All" - "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." ¹ What are the "wages of sin?" *Romans 6:23* says that it is "death" - eternal, everlasting "death." People who never hear the gospel will be judged for their sins just as will those who have heard the gospel a thousand times. And this is why the church takes the gospel to those who have never heard it. They are guilty of sins and need to receive Christ's forgiveness through His blood.

But there is a difference that God does make between those who have heard the gospel and those who have not. The difference in the judgment of God upon those who have been exposed to the gospel and upon those who have not is not based on one's race, or God's favoritism, or His dishonesty and unfairness; it is based upon a person's opportunity.

Some have every opportunity to receive God's justification. Christ said in *Luke 12:47* concerning that person: "...that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes." In the case of the person who has not received the living oracles of God but has God's "law" "written in his heart" and implanted in his "conscience" but had never obeyed the gospel, Christ said in *Luke 12:48*, "But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few." Why the different degrees of punishment? Does God like some people more than others? Of course not! "For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that

¹ *Romans 3:23*

whoever - including those who have not received the gospel, **whoever** - believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." ² "God is not willing that any should perish but that **all** - including those who have not received the gospel, **all** - should come to repentance." ³ "God our Savior...desires **all men** - including those who have not received the gospel, **all men** - to be saved." ⁴ "And the Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!' And let him who hears say, 'Come!' And let him who thirsts come. **Whoever** - including those who have not received the gospel, **whoever** - desires, let him take the water of life freely." ⁵ The criterion for the judgment is not different for one individual than for another. The judgment is impartial towards each person but the degree of penalty is different. In the words of Christ, "...everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more." ⁶

There are those who have difficulty in accepting God's judgment. But remember that only God is God. The advice David gave to his son Solomon in *I Chronicles 28:9* is good advice for those who have free access to God's written "law" in the New Testament. "As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever." For those who have "found" the LORD, the best advice I know to give is to be faithful unto the end of your life. For those who are looking for Him, go to the Word of God. There you will hear Him speak the words of life. Believe that He is the Son of God. Repent of your sins. Be baptized in water in His name for the remission of sins. Live faithfully until He comes again. Then, you will be ready for His honest and impartial judgment.



*"I am appointed for the defense of the gospel!"
(Philippians 1:17)*

² John 3:16

³ II Peter 3:9

⁴ II Timothy 2:4-5

⁵ Revelation 22:17

⁶ Luke 12:48