

“Grace & Peace to You”

A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF ROMANS

Voice of China and Asia

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ROMANS-17 PART 1- THE ARROGANCE OF RELIGION

I DON'T Do That! There is nothing more contradictory than the “religions” created and held by mankind. Rising out of the “**rebellion of Cain**” each has established their OWN path by which “their god” MUST accept them. Each one establishes the “rules” to which others must also be held accountable. They demand to be tolerated, accepted, celebrated. Those who do not accept their path, *making them feel uncomfortable*, are the ones who are wrong. **The tolerance they cry-out for becomes intolerance... even persecution.**

It all begins in the same place...

ROM 1:21 For although they **knew** God, they **did not honor** him as God **or give thanks** to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

ROM 2:1 Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things.

The response of the religious to “**finding right-standing with God**” is the subject of **ROMANS 2:1-16**. This group DOES HAVE a moral basis, and in many ways, they agree with, and practice, the same morality presented in the Bible. But, like a person in a “**Theological Mega-Mart**”, they “**pick and choose**” what they want (*what they like... feel comfortable with*) and what they don't.

IN DOING SO they set their soul against the expressed wisdom of God... creating their OWN PATH to the “**righteousness**” God has called for.

But God has already evaluated ALL humanity, and issued a “**judgment that awaits...**”

ROM 3:9-12 What then? Are [the] Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that **ALL**, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, ¹⁰ as it is written: “**None** is righteous, no, **not one**; ¹¹ **no one** understands; **no one** seeks for God. ¹² **All** have turned aside; **together** they have become worthless; **no one** does good, **not even one.**”

ROM 3:18 “There is **no fear of God** before their eyes.”

The **ONLY** way to attain to the “**right-standing**” God has demanded of those who will live in His eternal presence is through the “**obedience of faith...**” (ROM 1:17)

THE RELIGION OF CAIN...

Religion is the result of rebellion...

GEN 4:2b-8 Now **ABEL** was a keeper of sheep, and **CAIN** a worker of the ground. ³ In the course of time **CAIN** brought to the **LORD** an offering of the fruit of the ground, ⁴ and **ABEL** also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And **the LORD** had regard for **ABEL** and his offering, ⁵ **but for CAIN and his offering he had no regard.** So, **CAIN** was **very angry**, and his face fell.

⁶ *The LORD said to CAIN, “Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? ⁷ If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it.”*

⁸ *CAIN spoke to ABEL his brother. And when they were in the field, CAIN rose up against his brother ABEL and killed him.*

- There was “**knowledge**” about the requirement of sacrifice... -
- ABEL responded to this knowledge with “**the obedience of faith**” –
HEB 11:4 *BY FAITH ABEL offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than CAIN, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks.*
- CAIN KNEW what was right (“**IF you do well...will you not be...**”) -
- He knew WHAT was required to be “**accepted**” –
- HE **chose** to establish “**his own way...**” – the **FIRST Religion**
- CAIN’S **anger against God**, and **passion for self-righteousness** resulted in the murder of Abel...
1 JOHN 3:12 *We should not be like CAIN, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil, and his brother’s deeds were righteous.*

ALL of the “**World Religions**” have grown out of this “**rebellion**” – **MY Way to “right-standing”**

THE “EXCUSE” OF MORALISM...

Paul’s Dialogue:

As Paul does throughout Romans and his other Letters (esp. Galatians & Colossians) he enters into a “projected conversation” often through the use of question and answer OR (as here) just the answer. This was a common way of instruction in Paul’s time and was meant to guide the reader into direct teaching on PAUL’S subject instead of scattered questions and incomplete thoughts.

The use of the address, “**O man**” as Paul’s projected “**opponent/question-er**” seems to indicate someone who is **NOT** a Jew, but is familiar with the Judaism.

ROM 2:1 *Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things.*

³ *Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God?*

BORROWED MORAL STANDARDS: See: ****Seneca / Capone pg05**

In this section, Paul is not appealing to God’s standard as that by which self-styled moral individuals will be judged, though he had every right to do so. *Rather, he is appealing to their own standard, whatever it is.*

What are the standards by which our culture might judge sin in others?

- **TEN COMMANDMENTS...** - Broken any... **EVER?** Kept them? How long? Always? Can’t remember?
- **SERMON ON THE MOUNT...** - A “Standard” even higher than the Decalogue: *Hatred... Lust... Lack of Compassion... Arrogance... Stinginess... Self-centeredness...*
- **GOLDEN RULE...** - **DO... AS...** Have you **always** treated others **exactly** as you have wanted them to treat you? Have you **never been** impatient with them? **Never gotten** angry with them unjustly... **Never accused** them falsely... Have you **Never taken** advantage of another’s weakness?

- **FAIR PLAY...** - *What about the simple, basic standard of fair play? The point is obvious. There is no one who has ever been fair to other people... always and in all ways.*

What Philosophical model... will they cling to? What Cultural Standard of Ethics... What Governmental Laws, Rules, Edicts... What Religion... NONE...

ROMANS-17 PART 2- THE ARROGANCE OF RELIGION

1ST PRINCIPLE OF JUDGMENT: ACCORDING TO TRUTH

ROM 2:2-5 *We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things.*

- **“Rightly Falls...”** - **“according to Truth”** – **“kata”** – under the influence of...

- **“Truth...”** – **“Alethia”** – **Truth Absolute... All-Together correct** –

God **KNOWS** – His judgment is not opinion / partial / hypocritical / biased / prejudiced

³ *Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God?*

- There will be NO exemptions... **“Yes, but...”** **Jew / Religious / Self-righteous / Ignorant**
- There will be NO Escape...
 - That their offence will not be seen / known
 - That they may escape beyond the limits of jurisdiction
 - That there may be some failure in the legal process after their arrest
 - That they may escape from prison and hide himself from the officers of the law

⁴ *Or do you presume on the riches [the wealth] of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?*

“The most grievous sin is not righteousness violated, but mercy despised.” [Bishop Lightfoot]

Those who reject BECAUSE they reason that they DO NOT Need IT...

- **Kindness...** - **“Chrēstos”** – **kind - describes one who is always essentially displaying an attitude kindness – it IS their way.** Jesus was **Chrēstos** when he treated with loving gentleness the sinning woman who anointed his feet and the woman taken in adultery.

So Paul says, in effect **‘You Jews are simply trying to take advantage of the great wealth of the kindness of God.’**

- **Forbearance...** - **“Anochē”** **is the word for a truce.** Yes, it means a cessation of hostility; but **it is more particularly a cessation that has a limit.**

Paul, in effect, is saying to the Jews:

‘You think that you are safe because God’s judgment has not yet descended upon you. But what God is giving you is not complete freedom to sin; he is giving you the opportunity to repent and to amend your ways.’

No one can sin forever without facing the consequences.

- **Patience...** - “**Makrothumia**” *is characteristically a word which expresses **patience with people** – the idea being that “anger” is immanent BUT NOT YET.* The 4th Century Church father, JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, defined it as **the characteristic of someone who has the power to avenge and deliberately does not use it.**

Paul is saying to the “**Religious**”: *“DO NOT THINK that the fact that God DOES NOT punish you **is a sign that he CANNOT punish you.** The fact that his punishment does not immediately follow sin is **not a proof of his powerlessness;** it is a **proof of his patience.** You owe your very lives to the patience of God.”*

NOT because You DON'T need it... It was GOD waiting / withholding / granting time...

- **Meant to lead...** - (Present) – *“is leading even AS you are despising”* - Paul’s “supposed opponents” were taking the mercy of God as an invitation to sin rather than as an incentive to repentance. A famous German Poet, known for his cynicism, was asked *why he was so confident that it did not matter what he said or did: ‘God will forgive.’* When asked why he was so sure of that, his reply was: *‘It is his trade.’* And we MUST respond... *“Yes, FOR NOW.”* **God’s purpose is NOT ALWAYS received nor enjoyed by those to whom it is directed...**
- **Repentance...** - **Metanoia** – *To CHANGE the mind... - Think again... - God’s grace grants us the opportunity to “change our response / thinking / action” – AND to enjoy the benefit of that Change WITHOUT judgement...*

It is one of the most shameful things in the world **to use love’s forgiveness as an excuse to go on sinning.** That is what so many people still do. The **Mercy** and **Love** of God are not meant to make us feel that we can **sin and get away with it;** they are meant **to break our hearts that we will seek never to sin again.**

It is certain that the **Wealth of God’s Grace** is not to be contemptuously treated.

ROM 2:5 *But because of **YOUR hard and impenitent heart** YOU are storing up wrath for YOURSELF on THE DAY OF WRATH when God’s righteous judgment will be revealed.*

In spite of His judgment against evil, God is always long-suffering to the evildoer.

And yet the sinner is here depicted as **despising grace, ignoring goodness,** and **thereby accumulating punishment.**

- **YOUR... YOU... YOURSELF...** - It is YOU... Not God...
- **Hard...** - “**sklerotes**” - *obstinacy, stubbornness* – Not a heart that cannot change BUT one that Arrogantly WILL NOT Change – *“Nothing will make me... / I don’t NEED to change”*
- **Impenitent...** - *“UNrepenting...”* – the negative of repentance
- **Storing up...** - *“to gather and lay up as a **guarded treasure**”* - not just gathering BUT **protecting**
- **Wrath... day of wrath...** – **“Orges”** – *a “reserved display of anger”* – pending doom -
- **God’s Judgment WILL BE revealed...** - **“Apokalupsis”** – *to pull away what obscures – “pull back the veil”* – It IS out there... in our FUTURE... **we just CAN’T SEE IT!**

2ND PRINCIPLE OF JUDGMENT: ACCORDING TO ABSOLUTE JUSTICE

ROM 2:6-10 *He will render to each one according to his works:*

⁷ *to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life;*

⁸ *but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury.*

⁹ *There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, ¹⁰ but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek.*

3RD PRINCIPLE OF JUDGMENT: ACCORDING TO IMPARTIALITY

ROM 2:12-15 *For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law.*

For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified...

¹⁴ *For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law.*

¹⁵ *They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them...*

4TH PRINCIPLE OF JUDGMENT: ACCORDING TO JESUS CHRIST

THE GOSPEL... MY GOSPEL... The GOSPEL of GOD... THIS is Paul's GOSPEL...

ROM 2:16 *"...On that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men BY CHRIST JESUS.*

- John 3:36
- John 5:24
- Rev 20:

ROM 3:20-26 *But now the righteousness [that has been demonstrated by] God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— ²²*

the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.

For there is no distinction: ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.

This was to show GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS, because in HIS divine forbearance HE had passed over former sins. ²⁶ It was to show HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS at the present time, so that HE might be just and THE JUSTIFIER of the one who has faith in Jesus.