

PREPARING FOR JUDGMENT DAY

Romans 2:1-16

By Andy Manning

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The book of Romans is all about the good news of Jesus Christ. But to understand the good news, you have to understand the bad news.
2. Romans is all about how to find salvation. But to understand salvation, you have to understand your need for salvation.
3. So, in the first chapter of Romans, Paul explains why you need a Savior. In 1:18-32, he focuses on pagans. They need a Savior because they have rejected the true God and run after sin.
4. In 2:1-16, he focuses on self-righteous people. These are people who think they are better than pagans because they believe in God and know God's commands. But Paul's message to them is they need a Savior too because they aren't perfect, and the final judgment is coming. And that is really what Paul focuses on this chapter: You need a Savior, you need the gospel, you need salvation, because the final judgment is coming.
5. **Hebrews 9:27** And just as it is appointed for people to die once—and after this, judgment
6. The Bible says you can count on two things: death and judgment. You will die, and then you will face judgment.
7. What does the Bible teach about the final judgment? When will it occur? Who will be judged? Who is the judge? What will you be judged by? Is there any way to be rescued from the final judgment?
8. This passage (Rm 2:1-16) is all about this final judgment.

II. TEN FACTS ABOUT THE FINAL JUDGMENT

1. **The final judgment will be based on the truth.**
 - i. **Romans 2:1** Therefore, every one of you who judges is without excuse. For when you judge another, you condemn yourself, since you, the judge, do the same things.
 - ii. What is Paul saying? Remember. He is talking to self-righteous people who look down on sinners. In 1:18-32 he gave a lengthy list of sins. Now he says, "You do the same things." Paul knows that everyone is a sinner. The only difference is that self-righteous people try to hide, and pagans don't.
 - iii. And Paul says, "And you are without excuse. You too deserve God's judgment." In 1:20 Paul said that the pagans were without excuse for rejecting God because God has made His existence obvious through creation. Now Paul says to the self-righteous, "You are don't have any excuse for your sin because when you condemn others for the same sins you commit, you

prove that you know your behavior is wrong. And therefore you deserve God's punishment as well."

- iv. In other words, if you are a drunk and you condemn people who get drunk, then you prove that you know it's wrong to get drunk, and that you deserve God's punishment.
- v. Now that Paul has proved that everyone deserves judgment, he gets into the specifics about judgment day.
- vi. **Romans 2:2** Now we know that God's judgment on those who do such things is based on the truth.
- vii. God's judgment is based on truth.
- viii. In an earthly trial, people can get it wrong; they can lie; you can be accused and punished for things you didn't do. But God's judgment isn't like that. God is omniscient. His judgment will be based on facts; on what you actually did.
- ix. Romans 2:5 calls it "God's righteous judgment." God's judgment will be perfectly righteous, just, and fair.
- x. Romans 2:11 says that "there is no favoritism with God." God's judgment will not be affected by how rich you are, or what you look like, or how famous you are, who your parents are, or what your race is. It will be based on the truth.

2. No one will escape the final judgment.

- i. **Romans 2:3** Do you think—anyone of you who judges those who do such things yet do the same—that you will escape God's judgment?
- ii. On earth it is possible to escape judgment. Sometimes people skip their court appearance and they run from the law. Sometimes people commit suicide to avoid facing judgment. Sometimes, as in the case of O.J. Simpson, people are able to fool the jury and escape judgment. But there's no escaping God's judgment.
- iii. Down in verse 6 it says "each one" will be repaid.
- iv. Mt 25:32 says "all the nations will be gathered before him."
- v. Rm 3:6 says that God will judge "the world."
- vi. Everyone will face God's judgment on judgment day.
- vii. It's obvious that unbelievers will be judged, but believers will be judged on that day as well.
- viii. **2 Corinthians 5:10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may be repaid for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.
- ix. That leads to a question. We know that believers will not be punished on judgment day; they will go to heaven. What does it mean that they will be judged, and why do they need to be judged?

- x. Believers will not be condemned, but their deeds, both good and bad, will be revealed.
- xi. **Romans 14:12** So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.
- xii. **1 Corinthians 4:5** 1 Cor 4:5 “So don’t judge anything prematurely, before the Lord comes, who will both bring to light what is hidden in darkness and reveal the intentions of the hearts. And then praise will come to each one from God.”
- xiii. Why will your deeds be revealed? Your good deeds will be revealed so that you can be rewarded. Your sins will be revealed so that God’s grace can be magnified.
- xiv. **Ephesians 6:8** “knowing that whatever good each one does, slave or free, he will receive this back from the Lord.”
- xv. The purpose of the final judgment is not like an earthly trial in which an investigation takes place to determine the truth. God already knows the truth about you. The purpose of the judgment will be publication and execution. The deeds of every person, which until then have remained largely hidden, will be published or revealed. Then God will reveal the degree of reward or the degree of punishment each person will receive. And finally, God will execute judgment, assigning to each person the place where they will spend eternity.

3. God wants to rescue you from the final judgment.

- i. **Romans 2:4** Or do you despise the riches of his kindness, restraint, and patience, not recognizing that God’s kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?
- ii. Paul is speaking to self-righteous people who might ask, “If I deserve judgment, then why am I still alive? Why hasn’t He already taken me out?”
- iii. Paul’s answer is that reason for God’s delayed judgment is His kindness, restraint, and patience. He is giving you time to repent.
- iv. 2 Pt 3:9 says that God doesn’t want anyone to perish. 1 Tim 2:4 says God wants everyone to be saved.
- v. God can’t save you from judgment day, but He can save you from being punished on judgment day. No matter what, you will have to stand before the judgment seat of Christ and be judged with all of your deeds being revealed. But there is a way to be saved from punishment on judgment day.
- vi. That’s why God sent Jesus to earth, to die and be punished for your sins so that you don’t have to be punished. If you will put your faith in Christ, then God will forgive all your sins and deliver you from judgment.
- vii. **Romans 8:1** Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus

4. To be rescued from the final judgment, you must repent.

- i. Let's go back to verse four and read through verse five, because Paul reveals what you need to do to be rescued from judgment.
- ii. **Romans 2:4-5** 4 Or do you despise the riches of his kindness, restraint, and patience, not recognizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance? 5 Because of your hardened and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath, when God's righteous judgment is revealed.
- iii. Twice in these two verses Paul uses the word repentance. In verse 4 he says that God's delay in judging you is because He is giving you time to repent. And then in verse five he says that if you remain unrepentant, you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of judgment. In other words, the way to be rescued from condemnation and punishment on judgment day is to repent.
- iv. What is repentance? To repent is to turn away from sin and to Jesus Christ.
- v. There are two things you need to repent or turn away from in order to be saved:
 - 1. Self-righteousness. Realize that you are a sinner deserving hell, and you can't do anything to save yourself. Realize that your only hope is that Jesus paid for your sins. Realize that you don't deserve heaven, and you can't earn it.
 - 2. Self-rule. Make the decision that for the rest of your life you will turn away from all sin, and you will let Jesus Christ be in charge of your life.
- vi. Make no mistake. Repentance is necessary for eternal life/salvation.
 - 1. **Luke 13:3** [Jesus said,] "No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as well."
 - 2. **Acts 2:38** Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."
 - 3. **Acts 3:19-20** "19 Therefore repent and turn back, so that your sins may be wiped out, 20 that seasons of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send Jesus, who has been appointed for you as the Messiah."
- vii. The tricky thing is that the Bible often says that salvation is by faith, and other times it says that salvation is by repentance. Well, which is it?
- viii. The key is to understand that true faith involves repentance, and true repentance involves faith.
 - 1. True faith is not merely trusting in Christ as Savior, but as King. It is not just trusting in Christ to get you to heaven, but to be your king on earth.
 - 2. Repentance is not merely turning away from sin, but it is turning away from self-righteousness, and self-reliance, and performance-based

religion. It is not only the determination to be obedient, but the realization that obedience can't earn you a ticket to heaven.

5. The final judgment will occur on the day of wrath.

- i. When will the final judgment take place?
- ii. **Romans 2:5** Because of your hardened and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath, when God's righteous judgment is revealed.
- iii. The final judgment, or judgment day, will be on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.
- iv. Here Paul calls the final judgment the day of wrath. Jesus called it "that day" (Mt 7:21-23), and "the day of judgment" (Mt 11:20-24; Mt 12:36)." Peter called it "the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly" (2 Pt 3:7), the "the day of the Lord," and "the day of God" (2 Pt 3:7-13). Jude called it "the great day" (Jude 6).
- v. When will the day of wrath, or the day of judgment occur?
- vi. The day of judgment will occur when Jesus comes back.
- vii. **Matthew 16:27** "For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will reward each according to what he has done."

6. The final judgment will be based on your works.

- i. The next logical question is how will you be judged?
- ii. **Romans 2:6** He will repay each one according to his works.
- iii. The Bible gets even more specific.
- iv. **Ecclesiastes 2:14** "For God will bring every act to judgment, including every hidden thing, whether good or evil."
- v. Not only the actions that are seen, but all of your secret actions that nobody knows about will be judged.
- vi. **Matthew 12:36-37** "I tell you that on the day of judgment people will have to account for every careless word they speak. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."
- vii. Not only your actions, but your words will be judged.
- viii. **1 Corinthians 4:5** "So don't judge anything prematurely, before the Lord comes, who will both bring to light what is hidden in darkness and reveal the intentions of the hearts. And then praise will come to each one from God."
- ix. The Bible says that your works, your actions, your words, your secrets, and even your motives and intentions will be revealed and judged.

7. The final judgment will result in eternal life for some, and wrath for others.

- i. **Romans 2:6-11** 6 He will repay each one according to his works; 7 eternal life to those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor, and immortality; 8 but wrath and anger to those who are self-seeking and disobey the truth while obeying unrighteousness. 9 There will be affliction and

- distress for every human being who does evil, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek; 10 but glory, honor, and peace for everyone who does what is good, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek. 11 For there is no favoritism with God.
- ii. This passage says that on judgment day, there are two possible outcomes: eternal life (v. 7), or wrath and anger (v. 8). Eternal life refers to heaven, and wrath and anger refer to hell.
 - iii. Let's look at how Paul describes heaven and hell in this passage.
 - iv. In verse 7 he describes heaven with the words glory, honor, and immortality. And then in verse 10 he adds the word peace. What do these words mean?
 1. Glory could mean two things:
 - a. Praise from God. In other words, when you get to heaven God will say, "Good job!" In the Parable of the Talents (Mt 25), the king entrusted his money to his servants and then went away on a long journey. When the king returned he settled accounts with his servants. He judged them. To the good servants the king said, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" When God judges you and lets you into heaven, you could hear him say, "Well done! Good work!"
 - b. A glorified body. At the final judgment, believers will receive new, eternal, glorified bodies (1 Cor 15:43).
 2. Honor could refer to the rewards that will be given to believers in heaven (Mt 16:27).
 3. Immortality refers to eternal/everlasting life (Jn 3:16).
 4. Peace refers to the nature of what heaven will be like – no sin, suffering, sickness, or sorrow, or struggle (Rev 21:4).
 - v. Then in verse 9 Paul describes hell as a place of affliction and distress. The Bible describes hell as a place of intense pain, unending pain (forever), and unceasing pain (24/7) (Rev 14:10-11).
 - vi. Notice that it says that eternal life will be given to those who do good. Verse 7 says "those who by persistence in doing good," and verse 10 says "for everyone who does what is good." That brings up a question. The Bible is clear that eternal life is received by faith, not by good works (Jn 3:16; Eph 2:8-9). Why does this say that eternal life is given to those who do good? The Bible often substitutes faith for the results of faith, or the evidence of true faith. True, saving faith, includes repentance, and always results in good works; a changed life. Not perfection, but a new direction, and a gradual transformation. Where there is no change, and no good works, there is no faith. That's why Jesus said that not everyone who calls Him Lord will go to heaven, but only the one who does the will of His Father in heaven (Mt 7:21). You can't earn heaven with obedience; salvation is received by faith alone. But true faith always includes repentance and results in obedience.

8. The final judgment will be based on the light that you have.

- i. In heaven and hell there will be degrees of reward and degrees of punishment. Everyone in heaven will not get the same reward, and everyone in hell will not get the same punishment.
- ii. How will this be determined? You will be judged by your works, but also by the light that you have.
- iii. **Romans 2:12-15** For all who sin without the law will also perish without the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. 13 For the hearers of the law are not righteous before God, but the doers of the law will be justified. 14 So, when Gentiles, who do not by nature have the law, do what the law demands, 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. Their consciences confirm this. Their competing thoughts either accuse or even excuse them.
- iv. Paul is talking about two types of people. There are those who have the Bible, and those who have never heard the Bible.
- v. In verse 12, Paul says that either way, if you sin, you deserve to go to hell.
- vi. How is that fair? How can people who have never heard God's commands be responsible for breaking them?
- vii. Beginning in verse 14, Paul talks about those who have never heard God's law. He says that they still sometimes obey God's law. You can look back through history at cultures who never heard God's law, but they still obeyed many aspects of it. They still honored parents, condemned adultery, and valued justice, honesty, and compassion.
- viii. How did they know right from wrong? Paul says it is because of two realities. First, God has written His law on the human heart. People instinctively have a sense of right and wrong. Second, God has given every human being a conscience which either accuses or excuses. When you break God's law, your conscience accuses you, or makes you feel bad.
- ix. Paul's point is that everyone knows God's commands, even those that don't have the bible, and everyone breaks God's commands, so everyone is guilty before God.
- x. But, God's judgment is based on the light that you have. It is based on how much information you have been given of God.
 1. James 3:1 says that those who teach the Bible will receive a stricter judgment. Why? Because they know more. They have more knowledge.
 2. Jesus said that those didn't listen to His disciples would receive a stricter judgment (Mt 10:14-15).

- 3. He also said that the towns that saw Him in person and witnessed His miracles yet rejected Him would receive a stricter judgment (Mt 11:20-24).
- xi. So, we know that there are variations of rewards in heaven, and variations of rewards in hell. And God's judgment is based on the light, the knowledge of God's word that a person has.

9. The final judgment will be determined by your response to the gospel.

- i. Verse 16 contains two important facts about the final judgment.
- ii. **Romans 2:16** on the day when God judges what people have kept secret, according to my gospel through Christ Jesus.
- iii. Notice that God will judge people according to the gospel. If you remember, verse 6 says that God will repay each one according to his works. So, which is it? The gospel, or works?
- iv. The ultimate standard by which God will judge people is the gospel. Remember, the gospel is the good news that God sent Christ to suffer and die for the sins of mankind, and anyone who trusts in Christ will be forgiven and receive eternal life (Jn 3:16). If you reject the gospel, then you will be punished for your sins, based on the light that you had. If you accept the gospel by repenting of your sins and trusting in Christ, then your sins will be forgiven, and you will only be rewarded for the good you have done.
- v. If you believe the gospel of Jesus Christ, then you have nothing to fear about the day of judgment. You will not be punished for your sins, because the penalty for your sins was paid for by Christ. You will only be given eternal life and the rewards that you have stored up for yourself by doing good.
- vi. But if you reject the gospel, then you should fear the final judgment, because you will have to pay for your sins.
- vii. God is holy, and righteous, and just. He will not overlook sin. It must be paid for. It must be penalized. If you believe the gospel, then God will count your sins against Christ. But if you reject the gospel, then God will count your sins against you, and you will have to suffer for all eternity.

10. The final judgment will be executed by Christ.

- i. The last fact about the judgment in this passage is easy to miss because it is at the end of verse 16.
- ii. **Romans 2:16** on the day when God judges what people have kept secret, according to my gospel through Christ Jesus.
- iii. Who will be the judge on the judgment day? Who will pass judgment on mankind? Christ Jesus.
- iv. This is made more clear in other Bible versions:
 - 1. NIV: This will take place on the day when God judges people's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.
- v. Christ is the judge.

- vi. This is even more explicit in other passages.
- vii. **Matthew 16:27** “For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will reward each according to what he has done.”
- viii. **John 5:22** “The Father, in fact, judges no one but has given all judgment to the Son”
- ix. **2 Corinthians 5:10** “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may be repaid for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.”
- x. This is why the Apostles Creed says of Jesus: “He ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.”
- xi. The theologian **Anthony Hoekema** said that it only makes sense that Christ is the judge. “It is indeed most appropriate that Christ should be the judge in the final judgment. He is the one who became incarnate, died, and rose again for the salvation of his people. Those who believe on him are saved through him; hence it is most fitting that he should be their judge. Those who have rejected him, on the other hand, have sinned against him; hence it is appropriate that the one whom they rejected should be their judge. “

III. CONCLUSION

1. There are two things you can count on. Death, and the final judgment. You will die, and then you will face the final judgment. Are you ready?
2. Remember, the good news is that you don't have to worry about the final judgment. The whole reason that God sent Christ was to save us from the final judgment (1 Thess 1:10). The ultimate standard by which God will judge people will be the gospel. Did you accept or reject the gospel. Another way to put it is this: What have you done with Jesus (1 Jn 5:12)? Have you accepted Jesus or rejected Jesus?
3. Let me walk you through very simply how to believe the gospel and accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior so that you can be rescued from Divine judgment. It's a matter of ABC.
 - i. Admit you are a sinner in need of a Savior. Admit that don't deserve heaven and can't earn it. Admit that you deserve God's punishment. Admit that your only hope is the grace, mercy, and forgiveness of God.
 - ii. Believe in Jesus. Believe everything the Bible teaches about Him – most importantly, that He died on the cross to pay for your sins and rose again. Believe that through His death you can receive forgiveness and eternal life.
 - iii. Call on Jesus to save you. Invite Jesus to be your Savior and boss. Invite Him into your life to save you, to cleanse you, forgive you, and to take control of every part of your being.
4. The moment you make that decision, God will save you and deliver you from Divine judgment. I pray that you make that decision today.