

## Romans 2A

- About to transition
  - Away from why all men are without excuse and in need of God's righteousness
    - And we're moving toward a more specific issue
    - If you remember, we said that as hard as it might be men in general to admit they are not good and in need of salvation
    - It was even harder for a devout Jew to see their vulnerability before God
      - For the Jewish nation had come to believe that their road to heaven had been assured the moment God had selected Abraham
  - So as Paul finishes his introduction on unrighteousness, he will open a can of worms
    - Does being a Gentile or being a Jew give someone an advantage in the question of who is righteous?

[Rom. 2:1](#) ¶ Therefore you have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.

[Rom. 2:2](#) And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things.

[Rom. 2:3](#) But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same *yourself*, that you will escape the judgment of God?

[Rom. 2:4](#) Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?

- Men have no excuse for their sin before God
  - Paul says we who pass judgment on others condemn ourselves
    - When we say other men deserve God's wrath for what they do, we pronounce our own sentence
      - Because we all do the same things

- There is no one good except God alone
  - If one man is due judgment for sin, then all men are due it because we share the same patterns
- The judgment of God rightly falls on men who practice such things because God judges on the basis of is really true
  - Not what we would like to think
  - Therefore, all who practice sin are equally guilty without respect to the form that sin takes
- Now what do men often say when someone tells them they might face God's wrath for their sin?
  - Some would say, as Paul repeats in verse 3, that somehow it won't apply to me
    - I know I've done some bad things in the past
      - I haven't lived the perfect life
      - But I've improved a lot
        - And besides I know people a lot worse than me
      - God will understand
      - He'll see me for who I tried to be, and He'll overlook my failures
        - Hell might exist, but I won't be there
  - To that reasoning, Paul says do you consider (or think) that you can acknowledge some men deserve God's wrath
    - And at the same time remain confident that you're not that person
    - Especially when you know you've done many of the same things the worse people have done
      - What do you mean Paul? I'm no Hitler?
        - Did Hitler lie? Have you ever lied?

- Did Hitler ever speak a curse or hateful thought?
- Have you?
- Hitler stole and deceived and coveted and betrayed and did many other things
- Have you never done those things even once?
- And yes Hitler murdered, and maybe you never committed murder
  - But are you resting on that difference? Only murderers go to Hell?
- As Paul says, do you suppose that you will escape God's judgment?
- Perhaps you assume everything will work out because so far, so good
  - No signs of hell and judgment...in fact, life's pretty good
  - Another foolish assumption
    - Paul says you are thinking lightly of God's kindness, tolerance and patience
      - Kindness is chestotes - goodness, excellence
      - Tolerance is anoche – a delaying
      - Patience is makrothumia – long-suffering
    - Do you get the picture?
      - You've been taking something for granted
      - The fact that you are not already in hell is nothing more than God's goodness
      - As He intentionally delays (puts off) your judgment
      - And as you go on sinning, God is long suffering over your sin – but not eternally suffering
  - And this window of opportunity has been extended to you and I so we might have opportunity to repent of our sin

[2Pet. 3:8](#) ¶ But do not let this one *fact* escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day.

[2Pet. 3:9](#) The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

[2Pet. 3:10](#) But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.

- Peter echoes Paul's words
  - The long passing of time while the world waits for God's judgment to fall as promised hasn't diminished God's intention to carry that plan through
    - Don't call God slow because the world's judgment day hasn't arrived yet
    - No more than you should take some comfort from the fact that you haven't faced your own personal reckoning
      - Both are coming just as assuredly as God has promised them both
  - God's apparent delay is patience and kindness toward sinners

[Rom. 2:5](#) But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,

[Rom. 2:6](#) who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS: [Rom. 2:7](#) to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life;

[Rom. 2:8](#) but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation.

- All men are guilty and we are all under the same sentence of condemnation, but unfortunately, as you remain unrepentant, you store up God's wrath for that fateful day
  - How ironic
    - The time God gives for you to repent of your disobedience and rebellion actually becomes your opportunity to increase God's anger against you

- Instead of the delay bringing you closer to God, it brings greater judgment because you continue to use the time you have to sin even more
- Paul then says that there is a rule by which we can anticipate God's judgment as it plays out
  - God renders to each according to their deeds (Ps 62:12)
    - Paul is really drawing a contrast between to ends of a spectrum
      - God doesn't play favorites and He doesn't change the rules
        - Each person gets what they deserve, in a sense
    - To the person who perseveres in doing good and seeking glory and honor and immortality – they receive eternal life
    - To those who are seek for self rather than obeying God's truth
      - Those who obey unrighteousness receive God's wrath
- This moment is described in the book of Revelation

[Rev. 20:11](#) ¶ Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them.

[Rev. 20:12](#) And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is *the book of life*; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.

[Rev. 20:13](#) And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one *of them* according to their deeds.

[Rev. 20:14](#) Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

[Rev. 20:15](#) And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

- You see there's actually a catch in Paul's statement
  - Verse 8, Paul says that all men are guilty and are under the same sentence of condemnation
    - Didn't Paul just say that God deals with people according to their deeds

- Some will be judged to be good and others bad
  - But now he says all are guilty and due condemnation
- Well the answer is found in those verses I read from Revelation
  - Everyone who stands for the test of their deeds fails
    - Rev 20:15 says all those who were not found in the book of Life were thrown into the Lake of Fire – eternal punishment
  - It didn't say that all those who had good deeds survived
    - It says those who were in the book of life survived
  - But the book of life wasn't the book that contained their deeds
    - That was a different book
    - It's called the Lamb's book of life in Rev 21, and it's a book of those who have trusted in the Jesus for salvation
- So Paul says God is fair to judge men according to their deeds, and this He does
  - But all men have evil deeds, and so all men fail the test
    - Only one man can pass this test, the man Jesus
  - The rest are under condemnation, as Paul says in verse 8
- Now Paul is ready to introduce the issue of Gentile vs. Jew

[Rom. 2:9](#) *There will be* tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek,

[Rom. 2:10](#) but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

[Rom. 2:11](#) For there is no partiality with God.

[Rom. 2:12](#) ¶ 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;

[Rom. 2:13](#) for *it is* not the hearers of the Law *who* are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified.

- Paul says the judgment falls equally for the Jew as the Gentile

- And to those who do good, honor follows for both equally
- For there is no partiality with God
  - God doesn't play favorites
- Now we tend to see this phrase from the positive perspective
  - God is an equal opportunity savior – and that He is
  - But Paul is speaking from the negative point of view
    - God is an equal opportunity punisher
- He mentions the opportunity for glory, but Paul has already said that all men deserve condemnation
  - So the point is still the same
    - If it were possible for a man to live perfectly, then he would receive his proper reward regardless of whether he was Gentile or Jew
  - But the opposite is also true
    - Both Jew and Gentile receive the same punishment
- Then Paul begins a series of comparisons between what the Jew knew and received from God in terms of knowledge
  - As compared to the Gentile and what he received and knew
    - The issue here is what impact does our understanding of God's expectations play in our guilt
      - For example, the Jews had received a very clear and specific set of instructions directly from God called the Law
      - But the Gentiles had received no such instructions
  - Did these instructions make the Jews more guilty and the Gentiles less guilty?
  - Or perhaps it worked the opposite way

- Perhaps their opportunity to know and follow God's law, however imperfectly, gave them an edge
- While the Gentiles ignorance of God's expectations left them without hope and doomed to judgment
- So Paul explores those possibilities
  - He begins with the Gentiles
    - He says that all who have sinned without the Law also perish without the Law
      - So, those without the Law are...Gentiles
        - They will perish though they never received the Law
        - Their ignorance of God's law doesn't exonerate them
          - Why? Because it obviously doesn't help
  - Because those under the Law will find themselves judged by it...
    - Meaning they will be held accountable for their inability to keep the law
    - Because merely hearing the Law isn't an advantage if you never actually do what it says
      - And here again is the fundamental problem of all humanity
        - We can't live a live that's good enough to meet God's standard
  - What about the claim of ignorance?
    - Why is God so quick to condemn men who never knew the things that Israel was privileged to know?

[Rom. 2:14](#) For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, [Rom. 2:15](#) in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them,

[Rom. 2:16](#) on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.

- Because our conscience betrays us
  - As Gentiles, we still have a sense of right and wrong
    - Gentiles have laws of their own, and men understand there is right and wrong instinctively
    - Paul suggests something interesting here
      - When we see a Gentile doing the work of the Law, then they show evidence that God's expectations have been revealed to them at some level
      - And they are showing obedience to God in their actions
      - Even though they were not given the specific revelation given to the Jews
  - Paul's saying that God is more than capable of revealing Himself to men apart from the Law given through Moses
    - Therefore, the Law in itself didn't define who could know and understand God's expectations
      - So when Gentiles feel a sense of guilt over their mistakes, they are bearing witness to the fact that they knew better
      - And when they chose to act differently in other circumstances, they are showing evidence that they knew what was right
- Now up to this point, Paul has established two central truths
  - First, all mankind did engage in and continues to engage in rebellion and depravity
    - And this rebellion left mankind subject to God's wrath
  - Secondly, Gentiles specifically are guilty of disobeying the truth
    - Though they lack God's specific revelation found in the Mosaic Law, nevertheless they are punishable by God

- Because they received a less specific kind of revelation in their conscience that bears witness against them
  - Which is why they are without excuse at the judgment
- But who is Paul's key audience?
  - The Jewish leaders of this church must begin to see themselves under the same condemnation of sin as the Gentiles
- Note the letter began talking about humanity in the third person (they)
  - Then it moved to second person briefly at the beginning of the second chapter
    - Paul includes his audience in the condemnation of chapter 1
  - Then he returns to third person when talking about Gentiles
    - Now he returns to the second person to talk to his audience again
      - And notice which group he addresses in the second person

[Rom. 2:17](#) ¶ But if you bear the name "Jew" and rely upon the Law and boast in God,

[Rom. 2:18](#) and know *His* will and approve the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law,

[Rom. 2:19](#) and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness,

[Rom. 2:20](#) a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, having in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth,

[Rom. 2:21](#) you, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that one shall not steal, do you steal?

[Rom. 2:22](#) You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?

[Rom. 2:23](#) You who boast in the Law, through your breaking the Law, do you dishonor God?

[Rom. 2:24](#) For "THE NAME OF GOD IS BLASPHEMED AMONG THE GENTILES BECAUSE OF YOU," just as it is written.

- Now, remember not all members of this church are Jew, but certainly there remains a Jewish element in the church

- And likely a leadership element
- Now Paul very carefully attacks the key elements of Jewish self-righteousness
  - He attacks all the sacred cows of Judaism
    - We will cover only the first one tonight
  - First, Paul begins with the patriarchal issues
  - Paul says if you bear the name Jew
    - He's not say if you are Jew
      - As if to distinguish them from Gentile
      - It's a deeper issue
      - It's an issue of decendency
- Top get a sense of how what Paul's dealing with here, we need to drop into a discussion between Jesus and Pharisees in John's gospel
  - The Pharisees were evil, unbelieving men
    - They thought themselves very righteous men
    - In reality, they were the condemned men Paul describes in chapter 2 – condemned by the very Law they thought they represented
  - They clung to their heritage as their basis for salvation
    - They would be saved simply because they were Jew, descended from Abraham

[John 8:31](#) ¶ So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, " If you continue in My word, *then* you are truly disciples of Mine;

[John 8:32](#) and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

[John 8:33](#) They answered Him, " We are Abraham's descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, 'You will become free'?"

[John 8:34](#) ¶ Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.

[John 8:35](#) " The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever.

[John 8:36](#) "So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.

[John 8:37](#) "I know that you are Abraham's descendants; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you.

[John 8:38](#) "I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from *your* father."

[John 8:39](#) ¶ They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you are Abraham's children, do the deeds of Abraham.

[John 8:40](#) "But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do.

[John 8:41](#) "You are doing the deeds of your father." They said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father: God."

[John 8:42](#) Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me.

[John 8:43](#) "Why do you not understand what I am saying? *It is* because you cannot hear My word.

[John 8:44](#) "You are of *your* father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *nature*, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

- This conversation is like two ships passing in the night
  - Jesus is telling them they are not who they think they are
    - They are not God's children
    - They are slaves of sin, and condemned by their sin
  - Jesus calls them out repeatedly for their hypocrisy, even as they declare their innocence
    - And Jesus says their hatred for Jesus stems from the age old battle between God and Satan
      - Men are either aligned with God or with the Enemy – there is no neutral ground
    - And their persistent hateful, sinful hearts betrayed them as followers of the enemy, sons of the devil Jesus calls them
  - Meanwhile, the Pharisees are aghast at Jesus' accusation, since they see themselves as the height of righteousness
    - More over, they are born of Abraham
      - They bear the name Jew, as Paul says in Romans

- They have nothing to worry about
  - They are not enslaved to anyone
  - They are children of Abraham, and as such, they are saved and automatically going to Heaven
- Jesus clearly refutes that logic, saying that their physical birth gives them no automatic place in Heaven
  - And in fact, the clearest and simplest proof that we are God's children is that we would love God's Son
    - Jesus makes clear that these two always go together
- And so Paul says that if you bear the name Jew, you better not rest on that alone
  - We still do this today, a Christian version of this same error