

Romans 2

Written by K B Napier
Monday, 10 August 2009 11:03

Heaven is reserved only for those who love God and are saved. One cannot love God and remain unsaved. Many within cults, such as Catholicism, say they 'love God'. This is impossible, because those who are unsaved are bound to obey their 'father the devil' and do his bidding... and his bidding does not include the idea of loving God!

Loving God is a function of salvation, or, rather, an *effect* of salvation, as a normal Christian characteristic. It is to be expected in the life of a saved person. This love includes a love for His word in every detail, not just the parts we prefer.

Hell is reserved for all - most people - who are not saved. (There is no possibility of redemption once a person dies). Paul advises his readers of these two destinations and two very different ends of man. He clearly tells us what the unsaved are really like. He refers to their heart condition, not to their outward image, as seen by other men. The outward image of men can often be genial and good, but their hearts are steeped in sin, black and heading for hell.

As Paul says, God is no respecter of persons. He judges according to His own law, and will never deviate from it. Unlike us, God is not swayed by emotion. If we live and die as unbelievers, then we will automatically be destined for hell. If we live and die as saved men, then we head for heaven, even if we make many mistakes, or sin, along the way. The reason for this is that our salvation depends not on our activities, but on God's election of our souls, predestinating us to glory.

Paul speaks of Jews who dishonour God by their blindness. The same charges can be aimed at us all, who claim to be God's children, if we likewise dishonour Him by our sin.

Verses 1 & 2

1.

Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.

2.

But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such

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things.

Many Christians believe this text is warning against judging others. It is a common misconception. Note that the verse begins with 'Therefore' ('because of what I have just said'), *ergo*, a conjunction. This means that what is to follow is based on what precedes it... a description of wicked people whose reprobate condition leads them to be filled with all manner of evil. Thus, those who are 'inexcusable' are the wicked people mentioned towards the end of chapter one.

Whilst the words mainly apply to reprobates, the nature of the warning, however, means that it also applies to all Christians. There is no defence; no excuse, for acting this way. Which way? Judging people of things we are ourselves guilty of. That is the key to judging others. As we read elsewhere, Christians are commanded to judge each other, before unbelievers do it for us; but, we may NOT judge other Christians if we are guilty of the very same sins. In other words, as Christians, we are duty-bound by God to judge our fellow Christians.

Paul, then, is warning Christians not to judge their fellows if they are also committing the same sins, because, if they do, they point the finger at themselves. This seems to be the problem in today's legal system, where judges 'go easy' on men when they are sympathetic towards their crimes, particularly in the sexual sense. Hence, very lenient sentences. The same is beginning to show its ugly head in crimes by environmentalists, because judges actually believe 'green' propaganda, and so let criminal behaviour go unpunished. This ought not to be – judging must be impartial and non-personal.

This is what Paul is saying: that though men might judge emotionally or with their personal agendas, God judges truly, in purity and holiness. His every judgment is good and true, and cannot be faulted. This is why His judgment against homosexuals (and, by implication, all kinds of sexual sins, whether heterosexual or otherwise) stands firm, and cannot be altered.

As I said in the previous chapter, churches and Christians who offer sympathy or alliance to the homosexual cause, are shameful and guilty of wickedness. This shows us that 'judging' can be either against or for. To judge in favour of a group of people who have been condemned by God, is blasphemy and is itself wickedness.

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Where God has judged “according to truth” (the ONLY way He can judge), no man may dare to overturn that judgment with his own futile ideas and sympathies. Whatever God decides, is, for us, ‘the law’, both spiritual and earthly. There should be no discussion about it – it stands for eternity as God’s judgment, made from a foundation of truth... there can be no alternative views, nor different judgments. We may only judge on the basis of God’s word, and nothing else. Christians who judge emotionally or from a standpoint of their own sinful desires, as with homosexuality and heterosexual sexual sins, are already condemned themselves, for they show disregard and contempt for what God says.

Verses 3 & 4

1.

And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?

2.

Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

Think about this, says God: if you judge others and yet are guilty of the very same things (whether in action or thought), do you seriously think you will escape God’s wrath and judgment? Those condemned by God in chapter one will never enter heaven if they remain unrepentant. God will also condemn Christians who support and uphold the sins of people declared reprobate by God.

In the matter of homosexuality, I read many awful arguments from Christian circles, where they say we must include them in our churches, and keep lines of communication open! This is sheer sinfulness! We are commanded to shun and cast out such people, not include them. The reason for this, and for casting out anyone whose sins are so serious as to warrant it, is to make the person think more deeply on what he has done, in the hope that he will return to God in repentance.

Only then, and after he has proved his return to purity, may we accept him back into fellowship.

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If, however, he remains within the congregation and is allowed to continue his sin without censure, then we are complicit in his wickedness and thus reject God.

On the other hand, if we cast out such a man, and yet commit the same sins, then we condemn ourselves and God will make sure we know it, in our conscience. He may even ensure that the wickedness we try to hide will be made known, to shame and condemn us. At any rate, we will stand convicted by Almighty God. And, if the sin happens to be ardent homosexuality, be assured that the man who commits it without shame will be barred entry to heaven.

Note that this sin, though specifically mentioned as abominable by God, does not give any person the right to hate. It is just that some fall to the deception and others fall to another type of sin. We are all equal, in that we all sin. Yet, when such sin is made public those who practice it must be taken to task. And, certain sins will require casting out until repented of. Whoever is the sinner, and whatever the sin, we must always remember that each one of us could fall to the same sins. It does not condone such sins, but it should temper the way we approach people who commit them.

Does this mean an homosexual will never enter heaven? Yes it does – unless he repents and turns to Christ. Please examine this more closely. If a man or woman is elected and predestinated to salvation, he or she will be saved at the right time in his or her life. But, up to that point of salvation, they may enter into all kinds of wicked ways and sins.

Like all other sins, homosexuality is a choice. Therefore, one can enter into it, or not, at will. Of course, because the unsaved are led by the nose by Satan, their ‘father’, they will do all kinds of evil as a matter of principle. They still have a choice to do good, but they refuse, because they prefer what is bad.

But, this does not stand in the way of salvation! Now, if God says that homosexuals will not enter heaven, do you think that one who becomes a Christian will be allowed to continue in his or her sin? Of course not! Not even in thought. The Holy Spirit will ensure that even the thoughts of this sin are removed. The only reason a man or woman continues to have wicked thoughts of their previous sin, is because they have not dealt with it properly. It is their choice to remain in their sin or to remove it, with God’s grace.

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Only a Christian has this choice to do good or evil! But, the genuine Christian will not wish to remain in such sin, and will be triumphant if he gives God his heart. It may be that he or she will have occasional temptations, but these will be quickly dealt with and cast aside. They will also start to diminish with time and godly intent.

God is good, and His goodness leads us all to repent when we have sinned by thought or deed. These are “riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering”. That is, we will continue to be tempted by our deepest desire to sin... and we all have this within, because of our ‘old man’. Yet, God is greater, so we can overcome our desires. The problem arises when a Christian secretly wishes to continue a particular sin. Then, he will outwardly speak of his revulsion to sin, but keep on sinning anyway.

It is an error to say that wicked men cannot stop sinning. It is also an error to say Christians cannot get rid of their desires. God’s goodness is given to us for this purpose, and He is certainly longsuffering whilst He waits for us to realize our stupidity. As the purpose of God is to take away our sinfulness, He makes sure that the means are there – conscience and repentance – to do so.

But, if as Christians we continue to commit the same sins all the time, well, we then ‘despise’ God’s provision, by refusing to stop the sin. Make no mistake – we do it deliberately. Talk of it being ‘hard’ to stop is irrelevant, shameful, and derogatory to God, Who plainly offers us the ‘way out’. So, to refuse, is to spit in His face.

Verses 5 - 11

1.

But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

2.

Who will render to every man according to his deeds:

3.

To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:

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4.

But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,

5.

Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;

6.

But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:

7.

For there is no respect of persons with God.

As Paul tells us, we continue to sin because of the hardness and impenitence of our heart. Do not complain that “God doesn’t listen” or that He “doesn’t answer your pleas”, when you so deliberately reject His answers! The reason you cannot shake off that awful sin is NOT because of God’s failure, but because of your own: you do not *wish* to get rid of it, and that is the real reason you continue in your sin and receive no help. We all do this at times, so the Christian who sins is not alone in his behaviour!

Does this mean none of us is free of sin on this earth? Yes. Does it mean our sins will not diminish? No. If we live in and for Christ our sinfulness will diminish and almost disappear. We will never be rid of it until we enter heaven. Those who will not enter heaven are those who live by their sin and desire it above all else. They do so because they have never been saved in the first place.

God will one day judge us all, Christians included. Our shamefulness will be made known, but we will still enter heaven. It is most likely that many we thought were genuine Christians will be

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judged, their sins made known, and then be cast into hell.

On the day of judgment God will “render to every man according to his deeds”. Some think this means that we are saved or cast off by our actions or works. This is not the case. Our deeds will cause God to throw us into hell only if we are unsaved and unrepentant. We know this because ‘once saved always saved’. To think that our works alone can damn us forever, is as erroneous as thinking we can be *saved* by our works. This is explained in verses 7-11.

Men (and women of course) who continue in the ‘faith once delivered to the saints’ will be found to live in “patient continuance in well doing”. This is their constant and deep desire, shown in outward good (works). They do this because they want to live in glory, honour and immortality; that is, they want eternal life. Their works are only the outer demonstration of their inner beliefs and salvation. Works based on an unsaved state will be discounted by God and ignored, even if they seem ‘good’.

The word ‘seek’ does not mean they still do not have salvation. It just means it is their desire to enter heaven, so they live as people who are called to salvation. If people claim to be Christians and yet never show any signs of spiritual life, and sin constantly without change, then we may legitimately consider them to be unsaved.

Conversely (verse 8), people who are the opposite to this: contentious, “and do not obey the truth”, are unrighteous, deserving an indignant response from God, Who will be filled with anger. A true Christian, one who has been called by God to salvation, will not react badly when his faith is challenged. They will do their best to *prove* their saved state.

Very often, though, their true spiritual state is shown by their continual life of unrighteousness and arguing against all kinds of truth, with a refusal to outwardly conform to Christ and holiness. So, if you live this way, do not expect to be taken seriously as a ‘Christian’. Indeed, expect to be called ‘unsaved’ by Christians, who have every right to do so... providing they are not guilty of the same behaviour.

Paul is more open and frank than modern Christians. He bluntly says that people who reject godliness will have “tribulation and anguish” heaped upon them, with “indignation and wrath”; “upon every soul of man that doeth evil”. God is not easy on sin as human beings are! He

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remains implacable. It does not matter if we are Jew or Gentile. Both will know God's wrath if they are unrepentant.

In the same way, God gives mercy, glory, honour, and peace to those who display good in their lives and hearts. Merely showing outward good is not the same, for any unsaved man can make an outward show of 'good'. Many charities do 'good'. Indeed, many churches do 'good'. But, God only calls works 'good' if they are done by His calling. Everything else is as dung, only 'good' in the eyes of human beings, who have no idea what God means by 'good'.

Whether He is displaying His wrath or His beneficence, God is always true and never wrong. He is never a 'respector of persons'. That is, He sees every person on his own merit, as either saved or unsaved, good or wicked. It does not matter who they are, or if they are 'religious'. Each will enter hell or heaven depending on his spiritual state, saved or unsaved. Even on this earth, the saved man will be condemned for continual sin, and may be judged so in this life, receiving God's punishment.

Verses 12 - 16

1.

For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law;

2.

(For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.

3.

For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:

4.

Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)

5.

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In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

This text is a very powerful one, for those who claim we are no longer under the law. Such a claim is an oversimplification of the Grace-versus-Law argument.

What does 'sinning without law' mean? 'Without' sometimes means to be outside of something, and there is a similar meaning here. Thus – to sin without knowledge of the law. What law is this? It is a reference to Judaic law, for in verse 14 there is a comparison with Gentiles. The term 'without law' is one word, the adverb, *anomōs*; it is rooted in the adjective, *anomos*. It means to be destitute of Mosaic law, either as one who is wicked, or as one who is a Gentile.

Overall, then, this phrase means that though a Gentile had no knowledge of God's law, he would nevertheless perish, just as an Hebrew who *knew* the law of God would perish, if he was wicked. The Jew would be judged as knowing God's commands but rejecting them, whereas the Gentile, who has no specific knowledge, would also be judged. The reason for this is given in verse 13: it is doers of the law who are justified before God, not the hearers.

A hearer can listen to a man shouting a warning that a fire was consuming the building, so everyone should get out. The man, however, stays where he is, and so dies. Simply hearing the warning made no difference. To be safe the man had to obey the warning and do something about it. In the same way, "many are called but few are chosen". That is, the number of people who hear the Gospel is very much higher than the number who are saved. Many hear it, but few receive Christ. This, of course, is a fact of predestination.

Here Paul is speaking to Jews, who knew the law and were justified when they obeyed (under the Lord's old promise or covenant), but were cast off by God if they did not act according to His law. By way of contrast, the Gentiles did not have the Mosaic law and yet many of them acted in a way consistent with that law... they lived clean and decent lives. Gentiles lived in their own way (verse 14), according to their own humanistic reasoning ('a law unto themselves'), yet many knew in their hearts what right and wrong were, proving the point of chapter one, because God placed the knowledge in them.

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It means that they had a conscience still, and if they did wrong, it prodded them with shame. Or, if they did well, they were prompted to human goodness. As Paul says in chapter one – *everyone* knows the truth and what is right or wrong. There is no excuse, because we are all aware, saved or unsaved. When saved, this awareness is greatly heightened, but it is still within each person ever born.

Verse 16 picks up where verse 12 ends: God will judge everyone on the great Judgment Day, when He will open his books and declare the works of us all, to our shame or glory. For the unsaved, their deeds will merely add to their burden of guilt. For the saved, unsavoury deeds will probably result in the loss of crowns – the meaning of which is unclear. Sin might be secret on this earth, but all will be revealed before the Judgment Seat of God. And the Gospel will be a benchmark against which all people will be accepted or rejected.

Verses 17 - 20

1.

Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God,

2.

And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law;

3.

And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness,

4.

An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.

“Thou art called a Jew”. We saw in chapter one that Paul was writing particularly to the Gentile Christians of Rome. In the text above we read that he now writes to both Jews and Gentiles; in verse 17, he specifically refers to Jews. The argument he puts forward is not to anyone in

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particular, but to Jews as a nation. Hence his use of 'Jew' in the singular, and not 'Jews' in the plural, as he is referring to Romans in Rome. Paul is commenting on the general unbelief of Jews, in the form of a complaint – one that he uses to press forward the Gospel.

Paul says that the Jews base their religion on Moses and adhere to Mosaic laws, claiming that they thus honour God, Who gave the law to Moses. Indeed, they 'boast' or glory in the fact. In making the claim, they believe they are safe from blame of any kind. They knew God's law and applied it, thinking they were superior. In this capacity they taught others they considered to be spiritually blind, as though they held the key to eternal life and the worship of God. But, their worship and beliefs were only in 'form'. That is, they had the semblance or outward appearance of faith, but inwardly their lives and hearts denied it. ('Form' can also be used to describe a *genuine* portrayal of truth, but it is not the interpretation in this text, given Paul's complaint).

Today, many Christians believe they have what is needed for a failing world (and they do!). But, what they teach others is not imprinted in their own souls. They preach and teach about things they have no personal knowledge of. They know the words but cannot sing; they know the moves but cannot dance; they hear God's word, but have no idea how to apply it to their own lives. As Jesus said to the Pharisees, and as Paul is now saying to the Jews – they are the blind leading the blind... usually over a cliff.

Verses 21 - 23

1.

Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?

2.

Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?

3.

Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?

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Paul asks a question that should be basic to all Christians who wish to teach others the great truths of scripture: 'You teach everyone else – but do you teach yourself?'. This is a vital question to answer. When I, and over 20 others, left the 'system' 25 years ago, we all agreed not to move forward and have teaching sessions until we had firstly sorted out what we ourselves believed.

To do this we went 'back to basics', by studying what God was saying in His word. The next two years were profound, disturbing, and traumatic, but when we got to the end of 'round one' we were amazed at what God really said, as opposed to what we had been taught (badly) for so many years! After that initial phase, studies were very different from the usual meetings held in other local churches. Gone were the often inane singing sessions consisting of hymns we never bothered to examine; gone were the regular prayer meetings, held only to satisfy an unscriptural belief (for more, see articles on the topic); gone were superficial relationships; in came truth, no matter how it caused us to flinch or change.

We were discovering, and still do, that before we can tell others of Christ and God, we must firstly know Him in our own hearts, not just intellectually but experientially. If we could not do that, whatever we said was empty of meaning. This is my personal stance: I will not teach something if I have not believed it myself. To me this is honesty; it is also what scripture (God) requires. It is what Paul means when he demands to see the action and not just hear the words. There is no boast in being like this. It is just plain teaching from the Lord, necessary for our well-being and growth.

So, Paul asks: do you condemn a thief and yet steal yourself? Do you tell others not to commit adultery and yet commit it in your own life (by deed or thought)? If you oppose idols, do you have idols of your own? If you make much of obeying the law, do you yourself break it and so dishonour the Lord? Of course, Paul also includes our thoughts in his complaint, for just *thinking* of doing something sinful is the same as committing it. To put it bluntly, every single one of us is guilty of that one! No point in denying it, for if we kept every law, of God and man, we would still be found guilty of sin in our heads and hearts. You know it and I know it.

What, then, is the answer? Does it mean none of us may teach others or condemn sin? No, it means, as Paul has already said, that when we judge we must not do the same things we rebuke in others. As every one of us stands guilty at some time, even in thought, it means repenting whenever we know we have acted or thought wrongly. Then, we start again, afresh. We must do this every time. Then, we are open before God and honest to ourselves. Only God stands between us and the worst evils committed by mankind! We are not better than those who do the vilest of things. *Christ* is our shield, not our own goodness. So, friends – if you have

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to condemn or judge, do so from a stance of purity and truth, not out of human dislike or hypocrisy.

Verses 24 - 29

1.

For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.

2.

For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.

3.

Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?

4.

And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfill the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?

5.

For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:

6.

But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

By saying one thing and doing another, says Paul, you cause unbelievers to blaspheme the name of God. The same occurs today on a much larger scale, for few who claim to be believers actually are. Their lives deny their claims. As I have said before, most 'Christians' think that their

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own interpretation (eisegesis) of God's word is sufficient. In truth, they are deceived, and spread confusion, causing others to laugh in derision at the Lord. Such 'Christians' read popular books or magazines and listen to liberal preachers. They cobble-together bits and pieces of beliefs, but have no real truth or roots, yet think they are 'theologians'. Like the Jews, they peddle this to everyone else, with great confidence! Paul calls it blasphemy. And so it is.

Paul then says that circumcision is useful, but only if the one circumcised keeps the whole law of God. But, breaking just one of those laws reduces any claim to God to ashes. Remember the query of the young rich man to Christ?

Therefore (verse 26), said Paul, if those who are *not* Jews keep God's laws, is this not the same as him being circumcised (being a Jew)? Think of an artist... he might train under a great master and become brilliant at his craft. He boasts of his background. But, another man teaches himself and becomes just as great. Is only the trained man 'great'? No – whoever has the ability and talent to be great is great! It is not the claim to greatness that makes him great, but his proven talent. Likewise, if a man claims to be of Christ, then he must prove it both inwardly and outwardly.

Therefore, says Paul, a holy Gentile who knows nothing of Hebrew Law can judge you who are born into Jewry, if you do not practice the Law. The true Jew is not one who is born into an Hebrew family or is circumcised. The true Jew is he who has an inward love for the Lord and His commands. The man who lives for and by the Lord is 'circumcised' in his heart, marked-out as special by God. He is marked-out in the spirit and not just in his flesh, or by his knowledge of God and His word. Such a man is praised and loved by God, and not necessarily by other men.

Like myself, many who teach and preach the truth are shunned and spoken against by those who believe they are 'orthodox'. Like the Pharisees, they gather many who agree with them, though what they all believe is out of line with scripture. In this grouping they feel useful and 'holy'... but God sees them differently. Do not stand against men called by God – stand against men called by men.

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