

Romans 2:1–29

Objection: But I'm no "Gentile sinner," but a Jew with the attendant moral and social privileges!

1. (2:1–5) **You members of the visible church** who think you're better than "those immoral people," you also have **no excuse** and thus **no escape** in and of yourself ...

- a. (2:1–3) Your self-righteous judgmentalism exposes and condemns your hypocrisy as a doer of the things on which God's judgment rightly falls.
- b. (2:4) Your self-righteous hypocrisy presumes on God's present kindness to you.
- c. (2:5) Your self-righteous refusal to repent is storing up wrath for you on the day of wrath.

*We can distinguish between the "**visible**" church and the "**invisible**" church. The invisible church consists only of regenerate believers—that is, people who have received a transformed heart by the Spirit through their genuine faith in Jesus. The visible church consists both of regenerate believers and unregenerate people who merely belong to the church outwardly but have not put their trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior.*

2. (2:6–29) ... because God ultimately will judge your unrighteousness with **no partiality** to your external moral and spiritual privileges.

- a. (2:6–11) **God will judge on the basis of your works ...** (not "save"! compare 3:20)
 - i. (2:6, 11) Summary of principle (see Ps 62:12)
 - ii. (2:7, 10) Obeying the truth results in eternal life, whether Jew or Gentile. (*"the obedience of faith"; 1:5; 16:26; this obedience of faith has evidential, not causal relationship to salvation*)
 - iii. (2:8–9) *Emphasis:* Obeying unrighteousness will result in wrath, whether Jew or Gentile.
- b. (2:12–16) **Not whether you possessed the Bible's commands**
 - i. (2:12) Human sin is what incurs God's judgment, whether it's failure to conform to his general revelation ("without the law") or special revelation ("under the law").
 - ii. (2:13) It's not being "under the law" as its hearer that justifies but being its doer.
 - iii. (2:14–16) The conduct of people without the Bible's commands ("Gentiles") proves the universal reality of natural law and conscience, with its conflicting thoughts that will be revealed on judgment day—and so, every human being possesses God's "law" on some level and will be judged by their failure to conform to it.
- c. (2:17–24) **Not whether you studied and taught the Bible's commands**
 - i. (2:17–20) You self-righteously boast about relying on God's commandments ...
 - ii. (2:21–24) But you violate the very commandments you so proudly preach and thus bring dishonor to God's reputation among those outside the visible church. (*citation Isa 52:5*)
- d. (2:25–29) **Not whether you were ritually marked as belonging to God's people**
 - i. (2:25–27) The privilege of having been ritually marked as God's special people only matters in the end if that ritual expresses your full obedience to God; otherwise, that physical rite is null and void as a "work." (*old-covenant circumcision; new-covenant baptism*)
 - ii. (2:26–27) If someone who isn't ritually marked as God's special people obeys God, God counts her obedience as a seal of her spiritual inclusion in his family; such a woman's obedience will condemn members of the merely visible church who know God's commandments and yet break them.
 - iii. (2:28–29) Belonging to God's special people isn't a matter of external conformity by the letter to please people, but of inward, heart conformity by the Spirit to please God.

What answer will you give to Paul's argument in Romans 2?

What does it look like tonight and tomorrow for you to respond rightly to Romans 2? *Be specific.*

What are you finding most difficult about responding rightly to Romans 2? *Be specific.*

***Table Discussion:** responses above; Study Guide Questions 8, 9, a, b, c, e, h, 12.*

Romans 2 in context of Romans 1:18–3:20

(1:18a) In and of yourself, you have **no escape** from the reality of God's judgment against your unrighteousness.

(1:18b–23) You have **no excuse** for the reason for God's judgment against your unrighteousness.

(1:24–32) There is **no element** outside of Christ, in or around you, **exempt** from the revelation of God's judgment against your unrighteousness.

{ (2:1–29) You members of the visible church who think you're better than "those immoral people," you also have no excuse and thus no escape in and of yourself because **God ultimately will judge your unrighteousness with NO PARTIALITY to your external moral and spiritual privileges.**

(3:1–20) So, visible church, your external privileges of having God's precepts and the mark of belonging to God's people give you **no advantage** in God's final judgment, when he holds the whole world accountable.