

THE ROAD OF THE RIGHTEOUS

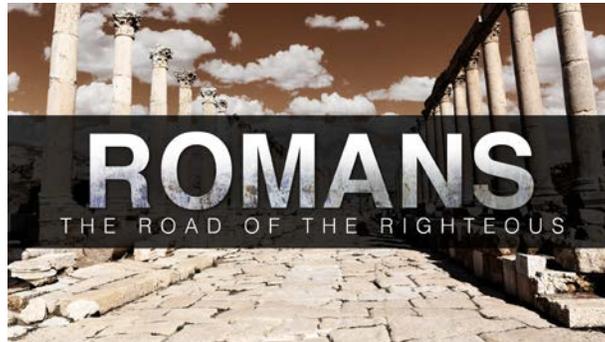
Expositional Study Of Romans

Romans 2:5-16

Written By

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Two thousand years ago Jesus rode a donkey into Jerusalem from the small hamlet to the East called Bethany. Thousands of well-wishers happily greeted him. Why were they there waving and laying palm branches before Him? Two answers are in order.

One, John tells us they assembled to catch a quick glimpse of Lazarus. Word had spread like wildfire of his resurrection from the dead, and the truly inquisitive wanted to see if the story was, in fact, true (John 12:9). Two, the presence of the palm branches served to illustrate they also assembled because they thought Jesus would fulfill the last feast of Israel as prophesied, the feast of tabernacles (Zech. 14:16). After all, since He had supposedly raised Lazarus from the dead then overthrowing the Roman Empire and erecting the long-awaited Davidic Empire would be a proverbial cake walk for Him.

By the end of the week, however, they were not shouting “Crown Him,” but “Crucify Him” (Mark 15:14; Luke 23:21; John 19:6). What happened in that tumultuous week of Jesus teaching from the precincts of the Temple? The Jews, who were schooled in the Torah and the Prophets, decided to cling tightly to their religious tradition while rejecting religious truth. Shocking, isn’t it? In the face of overwhelming evidence that Jesus was the prophesied Prophet (Deut. 18) and Christ (2 Sam. 7; Isa. 7:14; 9:6), the fine, upstanding religious Jews chose to snobbishly reject the Savior because His mission did not fit with their selfish view of theology.

Fast-forward from April 3, 30 A.D., the date of Christ’s crucifixion,¹ to around 57 A.D., the time when Paul wrote his letter to the Church in Rome. Having just explained in chapter one how the Gentile world typically swirls downward into a cesspool of sin based on their rejection of God (Rom. 1:18-32), Paul turns in chapter 2 and addresses the Jews who heartily agreed with his precise analysis. What does he have to say to them? He castigates them for their misguided

¹Harold W. Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975).

spiritual snobbery. They, like their countrymen some twenty-six years earlier, basked in their Jewishness, their traditions, and their ancestry instead of bowing before the Messiah of the gospel of God. In a concerted effort to wake them from their spiritual stupor, the loving and caring Apostle spends the entire second chapter of his letter addressing a question which naturally arises from the text:

How Does God Respond To Moral/Religious People Who Appear Spiritual? (Rom. 2:1-11)

God responds by informing the pious Jews that no one, and I repeat, no one will escape the divine repercussions of spiritual snobbery. His words, I'm sure, were most shocking to the Jews who felt they, if anyone, would be saved based on items just stated. Paul's counsel here is most ominous: If you suppress and reject the gospel of Jesus, you will bear the brunt of God's eternal wrath regardless of whether you were an immoral or moral Gentile or a highly religious Jew. You must come to God on His terms, not yours. You must lay your erroneous, sin-tainted, inferior thinking and sin at the foot of the cross to become His true child, but if you fail to do this, you will experience His divine judgment . . . regardless of who you are.

Perhaps this is a message you need to hear because you either don't think you are all that sinful (as described and detailed in chapter 1), or you think that based on your pedigree, ancestry, love of so-called holy books (be what they may), and love of religious tradition(s) you will most certainly waltz into heaven. Please, *don't* be deceived by your own small, selfish standard of spiritual measurement. Please, *do* take note, maybe for the first time in your life, how God will react to those who seek to come to Him by any means other than the cross of Christ. How God reacts is detailed by Paul in this pericope (vss. 1-16) in four spine-stiffening, hopefully eye-opening concepts:

By way of review, we have learned that . . .

- God Supplies The Reason For Divine Judgment* (Rom. 2:1). If you, as a Jew, judge others for being truly godless, while you think you are quite godly based on your devotion to religion and ritual, be what it may, you really do not have a proverbial leg to stand on because you are guilty of committing the same type of sins . . . just in a cleverer, internal fashion.
- *God Supplies The Rightness of His Judgment* (Rom. 2:2-4). Yes, God's judgment of you in eternity will be correct because it will be based entirely on the truth about your life, which He knows all too well. You have unfortunately taken the blessings He has permitted on your life as a stamp of approval of your love of religion and ritual over a love of Savior who died for your sin so you could actually secure eternal repentance. Are you guilty? It's a question each man must ask himself.

With verse 5, Paul introduces us to a third critical concept:

God Supplies The Road Of Divine Judgment (Rom. 2:5-11)

Come with me as we sink our interpretive spades into this rich soil:

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, ⁶ who will render to every man according to his deeds: ⁷ to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; ⁸ but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation. ⁹ *There will be* tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, ¹⁰ but glory and honor and peace to every man who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹¹ For there is no partiality with God (Rom. 2).

What happens to the Jew (or the religious person) who wrongly assumes that since their life is going quite well while pursuing their brand of religion everything must be spiritually fine? The answer is in verse 5.

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,

Hold it right there. We can't move too quickly through this verse.

First, note there is a contrast with the word "but." You, who perform your ritualistic prayers, who observe holy days, who pray pre-written prayers (*tefilah*), who keep the Torah near you with your *tefillin* (phylacteries; Ex. 13:1-10, 11-16; Deut. 6:4-9; 11;13-21), who pray the *Shemoneh Esrei* (a blessing) three times a day, who bow correctly during prayer by first bending the knees and then straightening them before you bend forward, who say "Amen" in worship every time someone repeats a formal blessing, who, well, you can fill in the blank, you merely store up divine wrath against yourself because of your spiritual stubbornness to come to God on His terms.

"Stubbornness" is from the Greek word *skelroteta* (σκληρότητα), from which we get our word *sclerosis*, which speaks of the hardening everything from arteries to osteosclerosis or the hardening of bone density. Literally, this word denotes that which is extremely hard. Josephus uses it in this fashion to denote hard ground (*Antiquities* 3:2). It was an easy jump to take this word and make it speak of a stubborn, intransigent person. This, of course, was a word Jews knew quite well because throughout the Old Testament God used it to describe them spiritually (Deut. 9:27). Historically they chose to reject God no matter whether they witnessed His miraculous deliverance from the Egyptians or whether they heard truthful words through countless courageous prophets.

²And I will send an angel before you and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite. ³ *Go up* to a land flowing with milk and honey; for I will not go up in your midst, because you are an obstinate (σκληροτράχηλόν) people, lest I destroy you on the way (Exod. 33).

Jaw-dropping, wouldn't you agree? How hard is the heart of man? This hard. In the face of incontrovertible evidence of God's existence, coupled with the giving of the Law of God by God's visible appearance on Mount Sinai, the Jews still chose to walk away from loving and following Him on His terms. Their entire history is one of spiritual *skelroteta*, or stubbornness. When the ten northern tribes finally fell in 722 B.C. because of their rejection of God, the scribe of 2 Kings 17 catalogues their sins which brought the destruction by calling their attitude as being "stiffened

in the neck,” or *skelroteta* (ἐσκληρώσαν). Some one hundred and thirty years later when the southern kingdom of Judah was about to fall to the Babylonians, the weeping prophet castigated the people for snobbishly remaining hardened and stiff-necked to following God on His terms. Listen as the prophet booms in chapter 19:

¹⁵Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: I will bring upon this city all the evil I have spoken against it, because they have become stubborn and have not obeyed my words. (Jer. 19).

Really, chapter 7 catalogues how Israel slowly spiritually hardened the spiritual arteries of their heart. One the one hand they would offer sacrifices to Baal and any other available so-called god, and, on the other hand, they would audaciously come and worship God in the Temple (Jer. 7:9-11) . . . all while pagan idols stood everywhere they had brought into that Temple (Jer. 7:30). From their deliverance from Egyptian bondage (in 1446 B.C.) until Jeremiah’s day, God said He had sent then countless prophets to warn them but they did not listen but chose to become “stiffened [in] their neck” (Jer. 7:24). For some 860 years, Jeremiah warns, they had purposefully and willfully chosen to disregard God and God’s teachings, while opting to live for their own beliefs and desires. Eventually, their hardening reaches a point of no return and God judged them with captivity, again.

Now, some six hundred (shocking) years later Paul says his brethren are *still* known for being spiritually obstinate. He knows this from firsthand experience because he, too, had at one point in his life, rejected Jesus and placed all of his spiritual capital on his Jewish pedigree, love of the Torah, love of ritual, and so forth. And as they had historically done, they, again, wrongly thought that since God’s blessing seemed to rest on them, they must be correct in their elevation of their ancestry, love of the Torah, love of ritual and so forth at the expense of loving God on His terms. Such was not the case, according to Paul. Their outright rejection of Jesus merely demonstrated their spiritual stubbornness was still a problem.

And this historical stubbornness is logically followed by what Paul calls an “unrepentant heart.” You should note the cause/effect relationship here. If you are stubborn to the ways and teachings of the living God, if you live to push back against the person and work of Christ, if you just can stomach the entire story of the Bible, you will, *ipso facto*, become impenitent. Is this a picture of you?

What happens when a person is spiritually stubborn and impenitent? Paul minces no words:

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,

When this becomes your default response to the wooing and revelation of God, you merely make deposits into the vault of God’s wrath bearing your name. The word Paul employs to describe this process is most interesting. “Storing up” is from the Greek present tense active verb *thesaurizo* (θησαυρίζω), from which we get our word thesaurus. Literally, the word means to “store up something.” ² Roget’s Thesaurus, then, is really nothing more than a depository of

²Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. Frederick William Danker, 3rd ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 456. **θησαυρίζω** 1 aor. ἐθησαύρισα; pf. pass. ptc. τεθησαυρισμένος (s. next entry; Hdt.

synonyms and antonyms to help you find just the right word in a given situation. And I'm sure when they print a new edition they come to the day, hour, and minute when the editorial teams says, "That's it. We have the last word. We can now go to print."

Spiritually applied, the word connotes the fact that you make a deposit in a heavenly depository each time your spine and neck stiffen to following God's advice and trusting in His Son as your personal Savior. That's what happened to the religious leaders on the day of Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. As the large, spiritually fickle crowd gathered to see Jesus, the jealous, stiff-necked Pharisees actually went to a whole new level of evil. John recounts their twisted, tainted thinking:

¹⁰But the chief priests took counsel that they might put Lazarus to death also;
¹¹because on account of him many of the Jews were going away, and were believing in Jesus (John 12).

Tragic. Their hearts were so hardened toward God, they so loved their religion and ritual they desired to murder the very man who had just been to heaven and back. They should have interviewed him thoroughly and then turned their lives over to Christ and His Lordship, but their hatred of God was too great. The very moment they had this murderous thought deposits were immediately made to their various spiritual vaults, vaults which will one day be opened and used to demonstrate God's eternal wrath against them was, and is, justified.

For those who are thinking right now, "That is so negative. That kind of talk is the reason I am not a Christian," I make no apologies. I am merely like a waiter at a restaurant who is bringing out the food from the cook, i.e., God. He says He judges sin eventually and that His judgment is true because it is based on sin you are personally responsible for . . . in addition to your Adamic sin status (Rom. 5:12-21) . . . and I, as his under-shepherd, am compelled to represent Him well. Further, from what we said earlier about the spiritual stubbornness of Israel in Jeremiah's day it is blatantly clear that, if anything, God is extremely patient with our sinful activity. His wrath always comes against sin and sinners, but it, thankfully, is slow in coming. Since He waited from 1446 to 586 B.C. to sternly deal with the spiritual obstinacy of His people, I'd dare say we can't condemn Him for being mean-spirited and hot-headed. On the contrary, He is the epitome of patience and long-suffering just like John said (Jonah 4:1-2). He was patient with them and He is patient with you, but there will come the day when He says, "Enough!" Yes, there will come the day when He, the holy Sovereign, will say, "You have just made the last deposit in your vault of sin. Now is the time of judgment."

et al.; SIG 954, 80; LXX; En 97:9; PsSol 9:5; Philo). ① **to keep some material thing safe by storing it, lay up, store up, gather, save** τὴν σὸμῆν. (Diod S 5, 21, 5; 20, 8, 4) ὁ τι ἐὰν εὐδοῶται *in keeping with his gains* **1 Cor 16:2**. τί τινα *some*. *for someone* θησαυροὺς ἑαυτῷ *store up treasures for oneself* **Mt 6:19** (citation Just., A I, 15, 11). Abs. (Philod., Oec. p. 71 Jensen; Ps 38:7; Just., A I, 15, 12 [on **Mt 6:20?**]) *store up treasure* **Js 5:3**. τινὶ *for someone* **Lk 12:21; 2 Cor 12:14**. ② **to do someth. that will bring about a future event or condition, store up**, fig. extension of mng. 1 (Diod S 9, 10, 3 words ἐν ταῖς ψυχαῖς τεθησαυρισμένοι; Philostrat., Vi. Soph. 2, 1, 2 θ. ἐν ταῖς γνώμαις=in the hearts). ③ of treasures in heaven (cp. Tob 4:9; PsSol 9:5 θ. ζῶντων αὐτῷ παρὰ κυρίῳ) **Mt 6:20** (citation Just., A I, 15, 11; cp. 12 [citation?]). ④ *store up* (plentifully) ὀργὴν ἑαυτῷ *anger for oneself* **Ro 2:5** (cp. Diod S 20, 36, 4 φθόνος; Appian, Samn. 4, 3; Vi. Aesopi G 107 P. κακά; IPriene 112, 15 ἐθησαύρισεν ἑαυτῷ παρὰ μὲν τ. ζώντων ἔπαινον, παρὰ δὲ τ. ἐπεσομένων μνήμην 'he stored up praise for himself fr. the living, and remembrance fr. those yet to be born'; Pr 1:18 κακά. S. also ὀργή 2b; on θ. ἐν ἡμ. cp. Tob 4:9). ⑤ *save up, reserve* (4 Macc 4:3; Philo, Sacr. Abel. 62, Deus Imm. 156) heaven and earth τεθησαυρισμένοι εἰσὶν *are reserved* **2 Pt 3:7**.—DELG s.v. θησαυρός. M-M. TW.

When exactly is the judgment day Paul speaks of? Good question. First, let's read Paul's words again:

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,

Is Paul talking about a literal day? Well, yes and no.

In his book *Maranatha: Our Lord, Come!* Renald Showers has an excellent discussion about the concept of the Day of the Lord, or the day of divine wrath, in the second chapter which is titled *The Biblical Day of the Lord*. After looking at the Old Testament evidence for the day of God's wrath, Showers concludes, "In addition, we should note that the biblical expression 'the Day of the Lord' has a double sense (broad and narrow) in relationship to the future. The broad sense refers to an extended period of time involving divine interventions related at least to the 70th week of Daniel and the thousand-year Millennium . . . The narrow Day will be the great and terrible day of the Lord because, in contrast with the earlier part of the judgment phase of the broad Day, the narrow Day will involve the coming of Christ from heaven to hearth." The former word usage points to a broad period of time, viz., seven years in this instance, while the later usage points to an actual day when God appears. Jesus spoke about this "day" in Matthew 24:29-30 and 25:31, as did John in Revelation 6:17 and 19:11-15.

I tell you all of this to say this: From what we know from the rest of what Bible says about the day of God's wrath against sin and sinners it can denote more than one day. Which "days" might those be, or when will they occur?

- One, we know that when a person dies they face immediate judgment, "And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment" (Heb. 9:27). The story of the death of the rich man and the poor man, Lazarus, in Luke 16 verifies there is a judgment of heaven or hell after the moment of death, so this would denote "the day of wrath and revelation of God's righteous judgment."
- At the close of the seven-year Tribulation, there will be another judgment between believing (sheep) and unbelieving people (goats) from the nations of the world (Matt. 25:31-33). The sheep will; enter the Davidic/Messianic kingdom, while the goats will be thrown into everlasting fire (Matt. 25:41). This will also be a "day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God."
- When God vaporizes, at the close of the 1,000 millennial kingdom, the rebels energized by Satan when he is released from bottomless pit, this is yet another "day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God" (Rev. 20:7-10).
- At the close of the millennium when God resurrects the lost of all time and causes them to stand before His holy, lofty throne to see if their names are in the Lamb's Book of Life and to determine if their works really trump His redemptive work on the cross (Rev. 20:11-15), this is the final "day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God."

Which day is Paul speaking of in Romans 2:5? I think it references the last one, or the day when all unbelievers have to stand before the God they rejected so they can learn how inferior their

works are to the salvific work of the Savior. Truly, God's judgment will be righteous concerning them because the vault is full of all of the incriminating evidence.

This, my friend, is the road of God's judgment. Peter, among many others, prophesied this day is, in fact coming down the proverbial pike, "*7But the present heavens and earth by His word are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.*" (2 Pet. 3). Right now, godless people (deeply religious and otherwise) are merely making deposits into their vaults of sin as they reject God's way(s) for their way(s), and most of them are lulled into thinking that because they don't see lightning bolts coming down from a clear blue sky that they must be good. They should reconsider because this is exactly what they thought in the times of Noah. Obviously, those people thought wrong and experienced the wrath of a holy God who finally had had enough of their sinful behavior (Gen. 6-8).

When the road of time terminates at the day and time of God's judgment, how will He judge? Paul answers that question most clearly and forcefully:

⁶who will render to every man according to his deeds: ⁷to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; ⁸but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation. ⁹There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, ¹⁰but glory and honor and peace to every man who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹¹ For there is no partiality with God (Rom. 2).

Now, please, don't get all worked up thinking that Paul is talking about how a sinner becomes a saint here. He is not. He is talking about how God judges. The rest of his letter definitively teaches that sinners are not made into saints by ANY works on their part. Paul makes this perfectly clear in the next chapter:

²¹But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, ²²even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; ²⁵whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; ²⁶for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. ²⁷Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. ²⁸For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law (Rom. 3).

Justification is by faith, not by works.

So how are we to interpret what Paul says in Romans 2:6-11? First, Paul is merely saying that God's judgment is and always will be just. No one will be hell because of a mistake on His part as the Judge. The sinner's wicked deeds, both internal and external, will verify the verdict of "Guilty!" Second, just because you, as a believer, are in pursuit of eternal life does not mean you did not have it all along. Jesus taught that life begins at the moment of justifying faith in Him (John 3:15-16, 36; 4:14; 5:24; 6:26, 40, 47). Seen in this light, Paul's words are not necessarily a

cause/effect thing. Conversely, they merely describe the life of one who really has eternal life. They are known by how their life reflects that of Christ. Third, those who reject Christ and His glorious, life-giving gospel will inherit divine wrath, indignation, tribulation, and distress for all eternity. These last two words are most interesting: θλίψις και στενοχωρία (Rom. 2:9). The former literally denotes pressure applied to something,³ while the latter denotes a narrow or restricted space.⁴ Really, what could be more pressure oriented than being in a restricted, small, intensely dark place with some form of divine fire for all eternity and most likely no one else around, a place where you can never get away from the fact that you willingly rejected the person and work of Jesus, the Christ? I shudder to think of the magnitude of God's final judgment against sin and

³Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. Frederick William Danker, 3rd ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 457-458: **θλίψις, εως, ἡ** (s. θλίβω; on the accent s. B-D-F §13; W-S. §6, 3c; Mlt-H. 57.—KLipsius, *Grammat. Untersuchungen über d. bibl. Gröz.* 1863, 34f, prefers to write θλίψις; so also W-H.) rare in extra-Biblical Gk., and there lit., 'pressing, pressure' (Aristot., *Meteorol.* 4, 4, 383a, 13; Epicurus p. 45, 9 Us.; Ps.-Aristot., *De Mundo* 4, 394a, 29; Strabo, Galen).

① in our lit. (as in LXX, En, Test12Patr, JosAs cod. A; Just., D. 116, 2; Mel.) freq. and in the metaph. sense **trouble that inflicts distress, oppression, affliction, tribulation** (so Vett. Val. 71, 16; Cat. Cod. Astr. VIII/3 p. 175, 5; 178, 8; pl. 169, 2 [s. Boll 134f]; OGI 444, 15 [II or I B.C.] διὰ τὰς τ. πόλεων θλίψεις; BGU 1139, 4 [I B.C.]; POxy 939, 13; PAmh 144, 18). Of distress that is brought about by outward circumstances (Jos., *Ant.* 4, 108; En, PsSol, Mel.; Did., *Gen.* 116, 10), in sg. and pl. **Ac 11:19; Ro 5:3b; 12:12; 2 Cor 1:8; 6:4; 8:2; Rv 1:9; 2:9, 22; 1 Cl 22:7** (Ps 33:18); 59:4; 2 Cl 11:4 (quot. of unknown orig.); Hs 7:4ff. ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ θ. ἡμῶν **2 Cor 1:4a; 7:4; 1 Th 3:7**; ἐν πάσῃ θ. (TestGad 4:4) **2 Cor 1:4b**; ἐν (τ.) θ. **Ro 5:3a; Eph 3:13; 1 Th 1:6; 3:3**. ἐν πολλαῖς θ. καὶ ποικίλαις Hs 7, 4. θ. μεγάλη *great tribulation* (SibOr 3, 186) **Mt 24:21** (1 Macc 9:27); **Ac 7:11**; Hn 4, 2, 4. Plural Hn 3, 2, 1. ἡ θ. ἡ μεγάλη *the great tribulation* **Rv 7:14**; τὸ ἐλαφρὸν τῆς θ. *slight affliction* **2 Cor 4:17**. ἀνταποδοῦναι τινι θλίψιν *repay someone w. affliction* **2 Th 1:6**. W. ἀνάγκη (q.v. 2) **1 Th 3:7**. W. διωγμός **Mt 13:21; Mk 4:17; Ac 8:1 D; 13:50 D**; pl. **2 Th 1:4**. W. δεσμά (TestJos 2:4) **Ac 20:23**. W. ὀνειδισμός **Hb 10:33**. W. στενοχωρία (q.v.) **Ro 2:9**. W. στενοχωρία and διωγμός **8:35** (w. λμός and στενοχωρία Hippol., *Ref.* 5, 26, 12).—On the catalogue of hardships (peristasis) cp. **1 Cor 4:9–13; 2 Cor 4:8f; 6:4–10; 11:23–28; 12:10; Phil 4:11**; s. FDanker, *Augsburg Comm.* 2 Cor '89, 89–91; 180f; idem, *The Endangered Benefactor in Luke-Acts: SBLSP '81*, 39–48; JFitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel '88*; MFerrari, *Die Sprache des Leids in den paulinischen Persistenzen-katalogen '91*; MEBner, *Leidenslisten u. Apostelbrief '91*.—ἡμέρα θλίψεως *day of affliction* (Gen 35:3; 2 Km 22:19; cp. En 103:9; TestLevi 5:5) 1 Cl 52:3 (Ps 49:15).—Of the tribulations of the last days (as Da 12:1) **Mt 24:21, 29; Mk 13:19, 24**. ἡ θ. ἡ ἐρχομένη ἡ μεγάλη *the great tribulation to come* Hn 2, 2, 7; cp. 2, 3, 4; 4, 1, 1; 4, 2, 5; 4, 3, 6.—Distress caused by war 1 Cl 57:4 (Pr 1:27). θ. θανάτου *affliction of death* B 12:5. *Difficult circumstances* **2 Cor 8:13; Js 1:27**; συγκοινωνεῖν τῇ θ. *show an interest in (someone's) distress* **Phil 4:14**. Of a woman's birth-pangs **J 16:21**.—ὅταν γένηται θ. *when persecution comes* Hn 3, 6, 5. θλίψιν ἀκούειν *hear of persecution* Hs 9, 21, 3. θλίψιν ἔχειν **J 16:33; 1 Cor 7:28; Rv 2:10**; Hn 2, 3, 1; Hs 7:3. εἰάν ὑπενέγκῃ τὰς θλίψεις τὰς ἐπερχομένας αὐτῷ Hs 7:4; cp. 7:6. ἐξείλατο αὐτὸν ἐκ πασῶν τῶν θλίψεων αὐτοῦ **Ac 7:10**. διὰ πολλῶν θ. εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τ. βασιλείαν **14:22**. τότε παραδώσουσιν ὑμᾶς εἰς θλίψιν **Mt 24:9**; cp. B 12:5. ἀποστήσεται πᾶσα θ. ἀπὸ σοῦ ... ἀπὸ πάντων ἀποστήσεται ἡ θ. Hs 7, 7.—Of the sufferings of Christ θλίψεις τοῦ Χριστοῦ **Col 1:24** (s. on ἀνταναπληρῶ and πάθημα 1).

② **inward experience of distress, affliction, trouble** (Gen 35:3; 42:21 θ. τῆς ψυχῆς) θ. καὶ συνοχή καρδίας *trouble and anguish of heart* **2 Cor 2:4**. θλίψιν ἐγείρειν τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου *cause trouble for me in my imprisonment* **Phil 1:17**. Ἄννα ... περιελάτο πᾶσαν θλίψιν ἀπ' αὐτῆς GJs 2:4 (cod. A, not pap; s. περιαιρέω 1).—DELG s.v. θλίβω. M-M. TW.

⁴Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. Frederick William Danker, 3rd ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 943: **στενοχωρία, ας, ἡ** (s. prec. entry; in the lit. sense, 'narrowness', Thu. et al.) fig. a set of stressful circumstances, *distress, difficulty, anguish, trouble* (Polyb. 1, 67, 1; Petosiris, *Fgm.* 7 ln. 22 [w. πόλεμος]; Plut., *Mor.* 182b; Artem. 3, 14; Aelian, *VH* 2, 41; Cass. Dio 39, 34; PCairZen 435, 2 [III B.C.]; Cat. Cod. Astr. VII 169, 21; Sir 10:26; 1 Macc 2:53; 3 Macc 2:10; En 98:10; TestAbr B 7 p. III, 21 [Stone p. 70]) w. θλίψις (Artem. 1, 68; 82; 2, 3 al.; Dt 28:53; 55; 57; Is 8:22; 30:6; Esth 1:1g; PLond V, 1677, II [VI A.D.]). Cp. Epict. 1, 25, 26 στενοχωρία ... θλίβειν) **Ro 2:9; 8:35**. W. λύπη Hn 4, 3, 4; m 10, 2, 6. Pl. *difficulties* (oft. Artem.; 1 Macc 13:3; Cat. Cod. Astr. VIII/1 p. 165, 2) **2 Cor 6:4; 12:10**.—DELG s.v. στενός. TW.⁴

sinner, and mind you He, more than anyone else in the Bible, describes it in detail to warn sinners from winding up here (Matt. 5:22, 29; 30; 10:28; 11:23; 16:18; 18:9; 23:15, 33). Fourth, Paul asserts in closing that God will show absolutely no partiality toward whether a person winds up in heaven or hell. His gospel is open to any and all, regardless of creed, color, nationality (Jew or Gentile), social standing, IQ, portfolio size, net worth, education level and the like. No, on the day of judgment your life will either be covered by the blood of the Lamb or it will not. On the day of judgment, God will either be able to tell from your life that you were His child, or He will be able to readily tell you were a child of the Adversary.

When, not if, that day comes, will you have stored up your treasure in heaven, or will you have stored up God's wrath because you were too busy, too spiritual, too religious, too preoccupied, too smart, too broad-minded and so forth to ever come to Jesus? You know they say that you can be so broad-minded that your brain can fall out. I'd say that a wise, thinking person would use the brain that God gave you to see your need of the Savior, not tomorrow, not next week, but right now.

Chris Rice's song puts in perspective what you need to do next:

Weak and wounded sinner,
Lost and left to die,
O, raise your head for Love is passing by,

Come to Jesus,
Come to Jesus,
Come to Jesus and live,

Now your burden's lifted,
And carried far away,
And precious blood has washed away the stain... so

Sing to Jesus,
Sing to Jesus,
Sing to Jesus and live,

And like a newborn baby,
Don't be afraid to crawl,
And remember when you walk sometimes we fall... so

Fall on Jesus,
Fall on Jesus,
Fall on Jesus and live,

Sometimes the way is lonely,
And steep and filled with pain,
So if your sky is dark and pours the rain... then

Cry to Jesus,
Cry to Jesus,
Cry to Jesus and live,

O, and when the love spills over,
And music fills the night,
And when you can't contain your joy inside... then

Dance for Jesus,
Dance for Jesus,
Dance for Jesus and live,

And with your final heartbeat,
Kiss the world goodbye,
Then go in peace, and laugh on Glory's side... and

Fly to Jesus,
Fly to Jesus,
Fly to Jesus and live,

Fly to Jesus,
Fly to Jesus,
Fly to Jesus and live.