Romans 2

- In chapter one Paul showed the result of man rejecting general revelation.
- Beginning in chapter 2:1 and going through 3:8 Paul addresses the issue of receiving special revelation (scripture) and rejecting that.
- The Jews are obviously the ones who at this time had heard the most of God's special revelation since they were the ones who received it and were responsible for bringing it to the world.
- The nation of Israel was chosen to receive the revelation, but only by the grace and calling of God. The very fact that they were Israel and chosen cannot save them.
- They had to respond appropriately to the message.

Some would say Israel was not as bad as the Gentiles in chapter one.

Romans 2:1-16 shows that God will judge everyone. Romans 2:1-4 the self-righteous are warned.

- In chapter 1 the identification of sin in 1:18 is followed with a detailed lists of accusations in 1:23, 26, 32.
- In chapter 2 the identification of sin in 2:1-16 is followed by the accusations of 2:17-29.

Three Principles of Judgment

1. God's judgment is based on truth. Judgment is not arrived at by evaluating appearances or man's misrepresentations. Judgment is decided on reality and facts. (2:2)
    a. We are not judged on what we intended to do or wished we had done.
    b. We are not judged on our knowledge of right and wrong but on what we really did.
    c. It is not about knowing God's will but about doing God's will.
2. God's judgment is based on performance. Each man's judgment is based on what he has actually done.
    a. NIV: "to each person according to what he has done." (literally: "according to his works.") (2:6)
    b. 1 Cor. 3:13, "***<u>His work</u>*** will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality ***<u>of each man's work</u>***."
3. God's judgment is impartial. God does not show favoritism. (2:11)

2:1 - You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things.

Point of this verse is that since God's wrath is revealed against all people and all people have knowledge of God then even the person who knows this to be the truth and can explain this is also one of those people who are without excuse. Even the self-righteous are one of "all people."

This chapter picks up where chapter 1 left of by saying "You . . .have no excuse."
In 1:20 mankind was told they have no excuse.
Now, those who have received special revelation of the written word of God also have "no excuse."

Paul begins chapter 2 with change in style by entering into a dialog with an imaginary reader who has so far agreed with Paul's accusations against the godless heathen described in chapter 1.

Paul begins with the second person singular "you". Paul is using a style called a diatribe:

1. Paul is not accusing his readers. That would require the second person plural such as "you all", or "you Romans"
2. A Diatribe is a literary style where the writer addresses and frequently questions an imaginary person in an imaginary conversation through his writing.
3. Many ancient authors used this and it is found elsewhere in the NT including James.

Some of Paul's readers may have been able to say after reading chapter 1, "We've never done that."

They may not have gone to the extreme but they have:

- Committed some level of the sin in their actions
- Have had forms of this rebellion rise up in their thinking and in their hearts
- Matthew 5-7 Jesus says that sinful desires are sin as well as sinful deeds.

This verse is speaking to the rest of mankind who sit in judgment on those in chapter one.
This verse says,

> "You do the same things but have no excuse because you have enough understanding to judge those in chapter one as being wrong."

2:2 - Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth.

- "we know" is Paul making a statement that both he and his imagine discussion partner both agree on.

2:3 - So when you, a mere man, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment?

We may think that since we have escaped judgment so far that God is not going to judge our sins or that our sins where not that bad and he did not count them.

The reason God has not called our sins to account is explained in the next verse. He is showing us kindness so that we have time to repent.

2 Peter 3:9 –

> "***The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance***."

<u>Romans 2:1-3</u> is saying:

a) God will judge those who do "these things"
b) But those who claim to do right still do "these things."
c) Conclusion: Both those who admit they know and those who suppress the truth are come under the judgment of God

2:4 - Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?

The focus is God's kindness.
The words "tolerance" and "patience" are descriptions of his kindness.

"Tolerance" is the translation of a Greek word that carries the idea of self-restraint.
This word was used in many Greek writings of the ancient world to describe a temporary truce.

God's kindness and patience is not an indication that he is soft on sin or excuses sin, but instead is God trying to create a situation for you to avoid the inevitable judgment that he will surely bring to each man.

2:5 - But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed.

But judgment is coming. And the longer we fail to deal with our sin the more judgment we are building up for the Day of Judgment.

This Day of Judgment refers to an eschatological day when we will be judged before God. This is a day of personal judgment and it is in the future.

There are temporal judgments that occur in time. National judgments occur in time.

2:6 - God "will give to each person according to what he has done."
(NIV – "God "will repay each person according to what they have done.")

- 2:6-11 – Judgment based on works
- 2:6 is the theme statement of 2;66-10
- Works judged:
    - Bema seat:
        - Romans 14:10-12 – "***Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; for it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." So then each of us will give an account of himself to God***."
        - 2 Corinthians 5:10 – "**For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil**."
    - Book or works and book of Life
        - Revelation 20:11-15 – "***Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead***

who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

2:7 - To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life.

- Cornelius in Acts 10
- Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts 8

2:8 - But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger.

2:9 - There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile;
Two groups are mentioned:

1. Jews, who have received the Law of God
2. Gentiles, who have not received the Law of God through Moses, but still have a form of God's law revealed to each of them

2:10 - but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

In 1:16 the Jews were the first to receive the message of salvation. Here they are the first to experience judgment.

2:11 - For God does not show favoritism.

2:12 - All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law.

- Two groups of people on earth (and, in history):
    - Those who <u>SIN without</u> having or knowing the <u>Law of Moses</u> (Gentiles)
    - Those who <u>SIN with</u> knowledge of the <u>Law of Moses</u> (Jews)

2:13 - For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous.

- The Law is only useful when obeyed
- The Law can only justify or prove justification if obeyed

2:14 - (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law,

"Indeed" shows that Paul is going to present a case against the boastful Jew.

- When Paul uses the word "***Gentiles***" instead of "***the Gentiles***" he is no longer talking about the masses of Gentiles as a whole but as individual Gentiles who respond to God's law that is written on their hearts. (General Revelation)
- So, he is saying, "When any Gentile meets the requirements of the Law they show that they already have ***a law*** even though they do not have ***The Law***."

2:15 – since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.)

- The word "conscience" comes from the Greek world instead of the Old Testament

3748 [e]	1731 [e]	3588 [e]	2041 [e]	3588 [e]	3551 [e]	1123 [e]	1722 [e]	3588 [e]	2588 [e]
hoitines	endeiknyntai	to	ergon	tou	nomou	grapton	en	tais	kardiais
15 οἵτινες	ἐνδείκνυνται	τὸ	ἔργον	τοῦ	νόμου	γραπτὸν	ἐν	ταῖς	καρδίαις
who	show	the	work	of the	law	written	in	the	hearts
RelPro-NMP	V-PIM-3P	Art-ANS	N-ANS	Art-GMS	N-GMS	Adj-ANS	Prep	Art-DFP	N-DFP

("spiritual")

846 [e]	4828 [e]	846 [e]	3588 [e]	4893 [e]	2532 [e]	3342 [e]	240 [e]	3588 [e]
autōn	symmartyrousēs	autōn	tēs	syneidēseōs	kai	metaxy	allēlōn	tōn
αὐτῶν	συμμαρτυρούσης*	αὐτῶν	τῆς	συνειδήσεως	καὶ	μεταξὺ	ἀλλήλων	τῶν
of them	bearing witness	their	-	conscience	and	between	one another	the
PPro-GM3P	V-PPA-GFS	PPro-GM3P	Art-GFS	N-GFS	Conj	Prep	RecPro-GMP	Art-GMP

3053 [e]	2723 [e]	2228 [e]	2532 [e]	626 [e]
logismōn	katēgorountōn	ē	kai	apologoumenōn
λογισμῶν	κατηγορούντων	ἢ	καὶ	ἀπολογουμένων
thoughts	accusing	or	also	defending [them]
N-GMP	V-PPA-GMP	Conj	Conj	V-PPM/P-GMP

("moral")

conscience.

From a prolonged form of suneido; co-perception, i.e. Moral consciousness -- conscience.

4893 *syneidēsis* (from 4862 */sýn*, "together *with*" and 1492 */eidō* "to know, see") – properly, joint-knowing, i.e. *conscience* which joins moral and spiritual consciousness as part of being created in the divine image. Accordingly, *all* people have this God-given capacity to know right from wrong because each is a *free moral agent* (cf. Jn 1:4,7,9; Gen 1:26,27).

2:16 - This will take place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.

Justin Martyr records a Jew named Trypho as saying,

> "They who are the seed of Abraham according to the flesh shall in any case, even if they be sinners and unbelieving and disobedient towards God, share in the eternal kingdom."

Romans 2:17-29

Here the discussion concerns:

1. The Jews have received the law of God and the sign of circumcision
2. Israel is proud (arrogant) and unproductive (not fruitful)

Trust and obedience are important.

These verses echo the rebuke of the Gentile found in 1:18-32
Both in chapter 1 and in the first half of chapter 2 Paul is talking about people who knew the truth but rejected it.

The Jewish attitude in 2:17-20 is also found in Jewish writings from the first century.

Although the Jew is the subject of these verses the application is for all who are religious:

- the churchgoer,
- the Fundamentalists,
- Methodist,
- Baptists,
- Catholics,
- the righteous conservative.

2:17-24

Paul continues his dialog with his imaginary discussion partner.
Paul uses irony here as he first builds the Jew up then tears them down.
Jews had many advantageous and opportunities but had squandered them and ended up fruitless.
The Jewish claims of "righteousness" and their actual conduct did not line up.

The Jews advantages:

1. called a Jew
2. have the Law
3. relationship to God
4. know God's will
5. approve the superior way of the Law
6. a guide to the blind Gentiles
7. a light for those living in darkness
8. an instructor of the foolish
9. a teacher of infants
10. having knowledge and truth

The Jewish Failure:

1. do not teach themselves
2. they steal (8th commandment, Ex. 20:15)
3. they commit adultery (7th commandment, Ex. 20:14)
4. they rob temples (1st and 2nd commandment Ex. 20:3-6)
5. they break the law
6. Gentiles blaspheme God because of the Jew

The terms used by Paul are terms used by the Jew for the Gentiles in their darkness:

1. the blind
2. in darkness
3. foolish

4. infants

In both chapter 1 and 2 Paul has shown that the Gentiles also have a light and have knowledge. And, that is ***without*** the Jewish revelation.

Paul is hoping to cause the Jew to reconsider his position and realize they still have a need.

2:24

"God's name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you."

Quoted from Isaiah 52:5 –

> " '***And now what do I have here?' declares the Lord. 'For my people have been taken away for nothing, and those who rule them mock,' declares the Lord. 'And all day long my name is constantly blasphemed***.'"

God's name is mocked among the nations because Israel sinned and God sent them into captivity. The nations do not think God could protect his people.

> ***"I dispersed them among the nations, and they were scattered through the countries; I judged them according to their conduct and their actions. And wherever they went among the nations they profaned my holy name, for it was said of them, 'These are the Lord's people, and yet they had to leave his land.' I had concern for my holy name, which the house of Israel profaned among the nations where they had gone."*** **-** Ezekiel 36:19-21

2:25-27

Circumcision was also an area of distinction and pride for the Jews.
When the Jew classified people into two groups of circumcised or uncircumcised it was the same as when Christian put people into two groups of baptized or unbaptized, or saved or not saved.

Circumcision was the sign of what is on the inside.
It is a law that labels on bottles have to accurately describe what is on the inside.

To violate the law means circumcision is useless.
Without circumcision the Jews are like the Gentiles and outside the covenant.

Circumcision is useful, but only if you fully obey the Law.
Violating or breaking the Law of Moses means "the jar is mislabeled."

Here Paul identifies:

- accepting/doing the law
- being perfectly obedient to the law

We find two different aspects of the relationship with God:

a. Faith
b. Obedience

These two were mixed in Judaism.

Paul is making a break in these two.
One being possible while the other is impossible

2:26
If a Gentile who is not labeled with circumcision obeys the law is he not still considered ***genuine***?
Surely a circumcised Jew who does not obey the law is ***not genuine***.

2:27
Paul goes on to say that not only is the Gentile genuine but the Gentile who obeys the law will condemn the Jew who has the knowledge and the label but is not genuine.

2:28, 29

Verses 28 and 29 are the conclusion of the discussion concerning the law and circumcision.

Even in the Old Testament circumcision was to be more than a physical sign.
True circumcision has always been circumcision of the heart.

Deuteronomy 30:6 -

> "***He will bring you to the land that belonged to your fathers, and you will take possession of it. He will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers. The Lord your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all you heart and with all your soul, and live***."

Jeremiah 4:4

> "***Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, circumcise your hearts, you men of Judah and people of Jerusalem, or my wrath will break out and burn like fire because of the evil you have done***."

Jeremiah 9:25, 26 " '***The days are coming,' declares the Lord, 'when I will punish all who are circumcised only in the flesh – Egypt, Judah, Edom, Ammon, Moab and all who live in the desert in distant places. For all these nations are really uncircumcised, and even the whole house of Israel is uncircumcised in heart***.'"

1 Samuel 16:7

> "***Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart***."

The written code or letter of the law refers to the Law of Moses.
It does not refer to literal interpretation of scripture.