

# The Greatest Letter Ever Written

## An Expository Journey Through the **Epistle of Romans**

### **Romans 2:1-29**

#### 7-There is NO Partiality with God

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January 14, 2024

#### **Romans 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.

**2** And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things.

**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?

**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?

**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 EACH PERSON 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 everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

**11** For there is no partiality with God.

**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;

**13** for it is not the hearers of the Law who are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified.

**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,

**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,

**16** on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.

**17** But if you bear the name "Jew" and rely upon the Law and boast in God,

**18** and know His will and approve the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law,

**19** and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness,

**20** a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, having in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth,

**21 you, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that one shall not steal, do you steal?**

**22 You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?**

**23 You who boast in the Law, through your breaking the Law, do you dishonor God?**

**24 For "THE NAME OF GOD IS BLASPHEMED AMONG THE GENTILES BECAUSE OF YOU," just as it is written.**

**25 For indeed circumcision is of value if you practice the Law; but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.**

**26 So if the uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?**

**27 And he who is physically uncircumcised, if he keeps the Law, will he not judge you who though having the letter of the Law and circumcision are a transgressor of the Law?**

**28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh.**

**29 But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.**

Now please notice that the very *first* word of Chapter 2 is “**Therefore**”. And that means that Chapter 2 is NOT a “stand-alone” Passage, but a *continuation* of what Paul taught in the *last* Chapter. In fact, what Paul began in **Romans 1:18** continues all the Way down to **Romans 3:31**. So, from that we know that the Chapter divisions as well as the verse numberings are NOT inspired. They were added many hundreds of years AFTER the writers of the New Testament had died. Now there is NO sinister Motive behind the Chapter divisions and Verse numberings- they were added to help us study and memorize the Bible easier. And most of the Time- they ARE very helpful. But there are other times that these Tools are NOT helpful and so, we need to be able to ignore them when it is appropriate.

As I have already told you, there were two main Issues that Paul dealt with in Romans:

1. How God can pardon guilty Sinners and remain Righteous Himself
2. Why the Jew did NOT embrace Jesus Christ

First, the Old Testament taught that whoever justifies the wicked is unjust Himself and has become an Abomination to God.

### **Proverbs 17:15**

**He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous, Both of them alike are an abomination to the Lord.**

... and the Old Testament also taught that the person who sins will bear God’s Punishment.

### **Ezekiel 18:20**

**The person who sins will die. The son will not bear the punishment for the father’s iniquity, nor will the father bear the punishment for the son’s iniquity; the righteousness of the righteous will be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked will be upon himself.**

These Old Testament verses set the Standard as to *how* and *why* God judges Sinners. The guilty one will die; and the one who “justified” the Wicked is an Abomination! And that is very clear and easy to understand.

But we know that God justifies guilty Sinners all day long! In fact, that’s what Salvation is! God pardons and cleanses His elect. So, has God then become an Abomination to Himself? Is God an “unjust” (unrighteous) Judge? In **Romans 1:18- 3:31**- Paul seeks to explain HOW God can justify the Guilty and still remain perfectly Righteous Himself.

Also, we know that except for the first few years of Christianity- the Jew has categorically *rejected* Jesus as being the Messiah. So, what do we do with the Reality that the Jews were chosen by God to be His people? Is Sovereign Election only temporary? Did God change His Mind? How could God’s people reject God’s Son? This Mystery *begins* to be solved here in **Romans 1:18** and then Paul *continues* to explain this Mystery in the next Chapters until it is finally completely solved in **Romans 9,10, &11**.

And the Apostle began both Explanations by showing us how God “abandons” a people; a nation; a group- who despise God by making two sinful “Exchanges”. They do NOT love God; they do NOT honor God; and they do NOT fear God- and so, they make two unholy and ungodly “Exchanges”:

1. They exchanged the Glory of God for Idols
2. They exchanged the Truth of God for a Lie

#### **Romans 1:21-24**

**21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.**

**22 Professing to be wise, they became fools,**

**23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.**

**24 Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.**

#### **Romans 1:25**

**For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.**

... and as a Result of these two sinful Exchanges- Paul taught that God *abandoned* them:

**Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. (Romans 1:24)**

#### **Romans 1:26&27**

**26 For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural,**

**27 and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.**

**Romans 1:28-32**

**28 And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper,  
29 being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips,  
30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,  
31 without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful;  
32 and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.**

... so, now here in Chapter 2- Paul is saying that God is NOT partial in His Judgments. And so, WHOEVER commits the Sins will be judged accordingly. And Paul is teaching here that this is true- even for the Jew! If the Jew is guilty of making these sinful Exchanges and if the Jew is guilty of NOT wanting God in their Lives- then God will abandon them, too!

But HOW would God do that- if the Jew is chosen by God? Is God's election of the Jews only temporary? Those Questions will be answered in Chapter 2.

**The Jews were Condemning the Gentiles**

**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.  
2 And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things.  
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?  
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?**

Here we see that some people were judging the Gentiles for participating in some of the wicked Sins that Paul described in Chapter 1:

**Romans 1:29-32**

**29 being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips,  
30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,  
31 without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful;  
32 and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.**

... but then notice how the Apostle addressed the Judgment of God:

**Romans 1:18-20**

**18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,  
19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.  
20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.**

The Wrath of God is against WHOEVER is guilty of doing the things that Paul described here:

#### **Romans 1:21-22**

**21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.  
22 Professing to be wise, they became fools,**

The Wrath that the Apostle speaks of in Chapter 1- is NOT poured out on those who did NOT know God- but on them who **“knew God- but who did NOT honor Him as God or give thanks”** And there were two groups of people in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century who knew God:

1. Gentiles
2. Jews

The pagans knew God because God made it a Point to reveal Himself through the created Universe:

#### **Romans 1:19&20**

**19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.  
20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.**

The Jew had the “*general Revelation*” of God through the created Universe as well. But they also had the “*special*” or the “*specific Revelation*” of God that is found in the 39 Books of the Old Testament that God gave them. So, if the Gentile had “no Excuse” because they had the “*general Revelation*” of God that is found throughout the created Universe- then the Jew had even *less* Excuse- because in addition to having the “*general Revelation*” of God found throughout all Creation- they also had the inspired; infallible; and inerrant Writings that made up the Old Testament Books as well. And that means that, if the Gentile has no Excuse and can and will be judged by God for having the “*general Revelation*” of God from Creation- then the Jew had even *less* Excuse than the Gentile. And the Judgment on the Jew will be even *greater* and more *terrible* than the Wrath poured out on the Gentile.

And that is *exactly* what the Apostle is teaching here in the first few verses of Chapter 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.**  
**2 And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things.**  
**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?**  
**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?**

... everyone of you who passes judgement ... (The 1<sup>st</sup> Century Jew was passing Judgment on the Gentiles- even the Gentile Believers)

... for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. (The 1<sup>st</sup> Century Jews were actually *worshipping* Angels. And even though they didn't build physical idols to the Angels- they were nevertheless in horrible Idolatry.)

**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?** (The Gentile was being judged by God because they could put all the pieces together about who God was. But the Jew had infinitely MORE Revelation about God than did the Gentile- yet the Jew was NOT loving and obeying God either. They had just rejected God's incarnate Son and attributed His Miracles to the chief Demon- Beelzebul. Therefore, their Judgment would be even *harsher* than the Wrath that was poured out on the Gentile.)

**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?** (The Jew wanted the Gentiles to be damned by God and, like the Prophet Jonah, was angry that God showed those pagan "dogs" His Mercy. And in their disgusting Self-righteousness- they forgot that God was also showing the Jew His Kindness and Patience- giving them "space to repent.")

Now it is absolutely appropriate for Christians of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century to *apply* these verses to themselves. But as to the one single MEANING of these verses- Paul was referring to the unbelieving Jews.

## **There is NO Partiality with God (the Person who Sins will Die)**

### **Romans 2:5-11**

**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 EACH PERSON 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 everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.**

## **11 For there is no partiality with God.**

It is abundantly clear here that Paul was saying that **Ezekiel 18:20** was correct:

**The person who sins will die. The son will not bear the punishment for the father's iniquity, nor will the father bear the punishment for the son's iniquity; the righteousness of the righteous will be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked will be upon himself.**

Twice in this Passage- the Apostle uses a similar phrase:

**of the Jew first and also of the Greek** (v. 9)

**to the Jew first and also to the Greek** (v.10)

... showing that He will judge WHOEVER sins- whether that is the Jew or the Gentile. And then, just in case the reader didn't get that Message correctly, Paul summed all that he has been teaching in Chapter 2 with the Statement in verse 11:

## **For there is no partiality with God.**

God is NOT being contradictory when He damns the Jew, who said he was chosen by God. The Jew is being contradictory to the Call of God on his Life when he disbelieves in Jesus; and refuses to trust in WHATEVER God says or does. God is NOT on Trial when He acts in a Way that sinful people have a hard time understanding. The people who reject what God says or does are proving that they haven't been chosen at all and are NOT God's people.

"**The person who sins will die**" is true- even for a Jew. And God is NOT speaking out of both sides of His Mouth by *rejecting* the Jew. If the Jew were chosen- he would gladly submit to God and God's Ways. But because, for the most part, the Jew *didn't* submit gladly- they were NOT proving that Sovereign Election was only temporary- they were merely proving that they had never been part of those Jews that God did choose.

So, the Judgment of God on the Jews does NOT do damage to the "*Doctrine of Election*". It merely proves that those Jews who sinned by refusing to believe in Jesus were never part of the Jews who were chosen. Jesus told us who the "sons of Abraham" are in **John 8:34-59**:

**34 Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.**

**35 The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever.**

**36 So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.**

**37 I know that you are Abraham's descendants; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you.**

**38 I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father."**

**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.**

**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.**

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

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.

43 Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word.

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.

45 But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me.

46 Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me?

47 He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God."

48 The Jews answered and said to Him, "Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?"

49 Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me.

50 But I do not seek My glory; there is One who seeks and judges.

51 Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death."

52 The Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets also; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word, he will never taste of death.'

53 Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too; whom do You make Yourself out to be?"

54 Jesus answered, "If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, 'He is our God';

55 and you have not come to know Him, but I know Him; and if I say that I do not know Him, I will be a liar like you, but I do know Him and keep His word.

56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad."

57 So the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?"

58 Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am."

59 Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.

So, here, these Jews, who could trace their Genealogy directly from Abraham, were proving that they were NOT the “sons of Abraham” by their Words and Actions.

- These “sons of Abraham” seek to kill Jesus (v.37)
- The Word of Jesus has NO place with these “sons of Abraham” (v.37)
- The true “sons of Abraham” will do the Deeds of Abraham- they will Believe (v.39)
- The true “sons of Abraham would NEVER kill a man who tells the Truth. (v.40)
- The true “sons of Abraham” will rejoice to see Jesus (v. 56)
- Those who are “of God” hear and believe the Words of Jesus (v.47)

... and so, those Jews who are guilty of the things that Jesus said here- are NOT the “sons of Abraham”; and they are NOT God’s chosen people; while the Gentiles, who believe (do the “Works of Abraham”); and who rejoice to see Jesus- are God’s people and are the true, *spiritual* Jew!



