

God is a just judge: the logic of Romans 2:1 – 3:19

Thesis: Nobody is right with God, and all of us deserve the judgment we are scheduled to receive. This includes the pagans of 1:18-32; but it also includes the Jews (2:1-3:19).

- 2:1-5 Yes, the pagans have sinned and earned their judgment (1:18-32). But we Jews commit the very same sins. So, when we look down on pagans because they are not “God’s people,” we condemn ourselves! And don’t think that God is kind to us because we’re such good people. He is not. Rather, He is kind to us in order to provoke us to repent!
- 2:6-11 God is an impartial God, and He will judge each of us, Jew and pagan, according to our works (not our race or class). Those who do good will receive eternal life. Those who disobey the truth will receive God’s wrath—your race won’t save you. Being a Jew won’t exempt us from the judgments of a just God.
- 2:12-16 We Jews need to remember that having a law means nothing if we don’t obey it; and we consistently disobey it. This is also true for pagans. Though they weren’t given the Old Testament law, they do have a natural law written on their hearts (cf., 1:18-23). Indeed, the fact that they have a conscience proves that even pagans know some things are right and other things are wrong.
- 2:17-24 What nerve we Jews have when we boast that we have God’s law: we break every single law He gave us! Indeed, we are the reason the world blasphemes the holy name of God!
- 2:25-29 Take circumcision, for example—which is the primary sign that you have God’s law. Having a physical circumcision doesn’t make you right with God; a pagan whose heart is circumcised is more a Jew than a Jew who is only physically circumcised!
- 3:1-8 Of course, this doesn’t mean there is no value in being Jewish. After all, we Jews are privileged to serve as custodians of God’s very words. But the mere possession of His words doesn’t magically make us right with Him. And don’t argue that our failure to keep His word somehow means that His word is unjust. To say this implies that God is an unjust God. And don’t say that our sin only highlights God’s goodness, so we should sin more so that God will look better (some have accused me of preaching this). This doctrine will bring on you the damnation you deserve.
- 3:9-18 Once and for all, let’s get this right: Everyone has sinned, and nobody is right with God. Not even one. Our own Jewish Scriptures repeatedly remind us that we are all sinners.
- 3:19 So every mouth in this room (Jew or pagan), needs to shut up with its fancy excuses and recognize that a just God is going to judge every one of us for our sins. Not a single one of us is right with God. At least, apart from Christ.
- 3:20ff BUT