

Romans 2:1-11 God's Impartial Judgement

Text

¹Therefore 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. ²And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things. ³But 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? ⁴Or 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? ⁵But 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, ⁶who will render to each person 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 everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹¹For there is no partiality with God.

Key Points in the text

- God will judge me by the same standard as everyone else.
- When I condemn others I condemn myself.
- God is long suffering and gives me time to repent.
- I really must repent.

Text Study

¹Therefore 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. ²And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things. ³But 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 Jewish people in Rome reading Paul's letter would have seen themselves as free and clear because they would be thinking something like, we don't do those things, and because I am Jewish I am fine.
- Paul, is about to tell them you are not fine, you too need to repent.
- Does this apply to you?

⁴Or 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? ⁵But 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,

- God is long suffering and gives me time to repent.
- Do not look at God not punishing you in the moment as a sign that you are good with God.
- His long suffering is not a sign of approval but a grace, to encourage your repentance.
- When we repent and turn from our sin, we are doing what was talked about in 1:5, 'the obedience of faith'. I have faith He will forgive me so I obey by repenting as He commands.
- Note: This is not a statement meaning if I don't repent for each and every sin before I die I am under His wrath. This is talking about habitual sin without any repentance.

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- There are no exceptions to God's law, I really must repent
- Verse 6 is a quote from Psalm 62:12
 - ¹¹Once God has spoken;
Twice I have heard this:
That power belongs to God;
¹²And lovingkindness is Yours, O Lord,
For You recompense a man according to his work.
- Verses 7-10 describes two types of people and what they will be rendered according to their deeds.
 - Group A - Believers
 - ⁷to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life;
 - Action: Live in light of 'the obedience of faith'
 - Receive: Eternal Life
 - ¹⁰but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.
 - Action: Live in light of 'the obedience of faith' (does good).
 - Receive: Glory and honor and peace (eternal separation from God's wrath, and eternity in God's love)
 - Group B - Unbelievers
 - ⁸but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation.
 - Action: Deny God, live for self
 - Receive: 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,
 - Action: Lives in the world's morality (does evil).
 - Receives: Tribulation and distress (eternal separation from God's love, and eternity in God's wrath)
- Verse 11 is the other bookend, restating verse 6, so that we know without a doubt that the wages of sin is death.
 - ¹¹For there is no partiality with God.

Does this mean the believer must live without sin or to a certain level of 'goodness'?

- Obviously no, but it does mean that the way we live our lives is the evidence of our salvation.
- If in the courts of heaven I stand and say I am a believer but there is no evidence of it in having a changed life, we have a false faith.
- The way we live our lives after salvation is evidence also to the world of our salvation.

Application

- Honestly examine how you saw yourself after we finished last week's lesson, did you think it applies to you, or did you think otherwise? Use this to encourage yourself to repent and praise God for the righteousness He has given us.
- Remember that the chief end of man is to 'Glorify God and Enjoy Him Forever', and then get back to work on doing both.
- Pray for those in the group that believes they have it figured out on their own.

Next Week's Lesson Prep/Preview

Text: Romans 2:12-29

Focus: How to be right with God

Devotional: Philippians 3:7-11

Preparation: Learn more about the significance of circumcision in the Old Testament.

How Was Circumcision a Sign of the Covenant?

Nick Batzig

Early on in my pastoral ministry, I decided to preach a sermon series through Paul's letter to the Galatians. Throughout the series, I dealt with the passages that referenced the old covenant sign of circumcision. After addressing the subject of circumcision several Sundays in a row, I was approached by a congregant who wanted to express his disapproval of me preaching "something of such a sensitive nature as circumcision" since young children were present. In response, I asked if he believed that I should faithfully preach God's Word. He said, "Of course!" I then asked if he believed that I should faithfully preach from every part of God's Word (i.e., Law, Wisdom, Prophets, Gospels, Epistles, and apocalyptic literature). "Absolutely," he replied. Recognizing that he didn't understand the prevalence of circumcision throughout Scripture or that God gave it as a sign of the covenant promise in the old covenant era of redemptive history, I explained that one would have to refrain from preaching a large portion of the Bible if he could not talk about the meaning of circumcision.

Misunderstandings about circumcision should come as no surprise to us. After all, even many in old covenant Israel failed to rightly understand the nature of the covenant sign of circumcision. Instead of trusting in the Christ to whom it pointed, they trusted in it as a badge of ethnic superiority. Instead of seeing it as the divinely appointed gospel sign of God's covenant, they viewed it as a fleshly mark of merit. Several factors contribute to this ongoing misunderstanding of the nature of circumcision as a covenant sign in our day.

The first thing that contributes to misunderstandings about circumcision is that the Apostles largely spoke of it in negative terms when they referenced it in their preaching or included it in their epistles. This was necessary since the Judaizers (as well as other groups of Jewish false teachers) were spreading a false gospel among the members of the fledgling churches, insisting that circumcision was necessary for salvation (see [Acts 15:1, 5](#); [Gal. 2; 5:3; 6:11–15](#)). To deal decisively with these errors, the Apostles spoke strongly against the need for circumcision. The Judaizers were telling the gentile Christians, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved" (see [Acts 15:1](#)). The Apostles made clear that this was a false gospel. As a notable exception, the Apostles also speak about the blessing of regeneration for elect Jews and gentiles using the term *circumcision* (see [Col. 2:11–13](#)).

The second contributing factor is that many people today have never been taught the typological function of circumcision in redemptive history. After giving Abraham exceedingly great and precious promises, the Lord commanded him to give the covenant sign of circumcision to all the males in his household on the eighth day (see [Gen. 17:11–14](#)). Closely related to the covenant promise itself, the Lord calls the sign of

circumcision “My covenant” ([Gen. 17:10](#)). God commanded Abraham to apply the sign of circumcision to the male reproductive organ since, in procreation, spiritual corruption passes from generation to generation. This corruption started with Adam and spread to all his posterity—Christ alone excluded. Since all have received a sin nature from Adam, God promised that He would deal with that corruption and bring renewal by means of a bloody judgment. In this way, circumcision was typifying the covenant promises of the gospel.

The typological nature of circumcision as a gospel sign is understood by the two-fold way in which it conveys a promise. Though it was the first of the laws given to Israel, circumcision resurfaced in the Mosaic covenant in relation to the law of God with its promised blessings and curses. Circumcision, then, represented God’s covenant promise of curse and blessing. First, circumcision carried the promise of judgment for those who broke covenant with God. If someone rejected the covenant sign, he was rejecting the covenant Lord of the sign. If someone rejected the covenant Lord, he or she would incur the judgment of God. The act of “cutting” formed the signatory element of circumcision. The cutting away of the foreskin of the flesh denoted God’s promise to cut off covenant breakers from His presence, His people, and His blessing.

Simultaneously, the sign of circumcision represented the cutting away of the filth of the fallen, sinful human nature. This was the promise of covenant blessing in the gospel. If the demands of the covenant were met, God would fulfill His promise to cut off the sin of His people. The promise of spiritual renewal was also intimately bound to the promise typified in the sign of circumcision. The fact that God commanded it to be applied to all the male offspring on the eighth day represented this sign aspect of the new creation. In a seven-day week, the first and the eighth day are the same. As the first day represents the day of creation in Scripture, the eighth day in the old covenant often represented the new creation. John Calvin suggested: “It is probable and consonant with reason, that the number seven designated the course of the present life. Therefore the eighth day might seem to be fixed upon by the Lord, to prefigure the beginning of a new life.”¹

Circumcision, like the Passover, also served as a blood sign of the gospel. Blood had to be shed if God was going to justly cut away the corruption of fallen human nature. This points to the blood of Christ as the fulfillment of that which circumcision typified in the old covenant. Circumcision pointed to the need for the bloodshed of Jesus. Significantly, Jesus first shed blood when He was circumcised on the eighth day (see [Luke 2:21](#)). This was part of the redemptive-historical nature of the covenant sign of circumcision. It signified that for which Christ had come into the world. As John Owen explained, “Every act almost of Christ’s obedience, from the blood of his circumcision to the blood of his cross, was attended with suffering,—so that his whole life might, in that regard, be called a death.”² Jonathan Edwards also suggested that “in his circumcision, what [Christ] suffered . . . had the nature of satisfaction, the blood that was shed in his circumcision was propitiatory blood; but as it was a conformity to the law of Moses it was part of his meritorious righteousness.”³

On the cross, Jesus fulfilled the promise of God to die for the sins of His people (see [Col. 2:11–14](#)). The sins of the elect were imputed to Him, and the floodwaters of God’s wrath were poured out on Him as the object of God’s covenant curses. Jesus was “cut off from the land of the living” ([Isa. 53:8](#)). The promise of covenant curse, typified in the “cutting off” element of circumcision, was enacted against Jesus at Calvary. By His sacrifice, Jesus “cuts off” the filth of our sin. Christ became a curse for us so that we might become the recipients of the covenant blessings by faith in Him (see [Gal. 3:10–14](#)).