God’s Justice  
Romans 2:1-12  
SS Lesson for 08/05/2018

Devotional Scripture: 2 Peter 2:1-21

OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW AND KEY VERSE OF THE LESSON

Key Verse: Rom 2:10-11
Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary
Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary

LESSON INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND
From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

MAJOR THEME ANALYSIS

JUSTICE ACCORDING TO TRUTH (ROM 2:1-4)

Truth because it is beyond excuses (1)
Beyond excuses because God makes what is right plain (Rom 1:18-19)
Beyond excuses because God judges to fit the situation (Matt 7:1-2)
Beyond excuses because God's judgments are based on what is man's own words and deeds (Luke 19:22-24)
Beyond excuses because no one is without sin (John 8:3-7)

Truth because it is against those who practice evil (2-3)
Against evil because of stubbornness and unrepentant hearts (Rom 2:5-8)
Against evil because God punishes those who do not know Him and practice evil (2 Thess 1:5-8)
Against evil because sin is against God (Ps 51:4)

Truth because of God's goodness (4)
God is good because He keeps no records of sin for those He has forgiven (Ps 130:3-4)
God is good because He shows His compassion through His gracious justice (Isa 30:18)
God is good because He is patient, waiting on everyone to repent (2 Peter 3:9)
God is good because even while we were sinners, He sent Jesus to pay for our sins (Eph 2:4-7)

JUSTICE THAT IS IMPARTIAL (ROM 2:5-12)

Impartial because it is righteous (5)
Righteous because when justice is needed, He does it without fail (Ps 7:11)
Righteous because God is righteous and has total integrity (Ps 7:8)
Righteous because God's judgment is founded on righteousness (Ps 94:14-15)
Righteous because Jesus relied on God's judgment (1 Peter 2:23)

Impartial because it is according to ones deeds (6)
According to deeds because God judges on what the individual does, not others (Ps 62:12)
According to deeds because God examines each one's conduct (Jer 17:10)
According to deeds because that is what Jesus will judge (Matt 16:27)
According to deeds because God judges on motives that can't be hidden (1 Cor 4:5)
According to deeds because judgment is on what was done while in the human body (2 Cor 5:10)

Impartial because it provides eternal life to those who do good (7)
Because God is good to those to whose hope is in Him (Lam 3:25)
Because God has promised to not let good works be in vain (1 Cor 15:58)
Because at the proper time, God will reward those who have not grown weary in doing good (Gal 6:9)
Because doing the will of God will be richly rewarded (Heb 10:35-36)

Impartial because it provides wrath to those who do evil (8-9)
God's wrath because of suppression of truth by wickedness (Rom 1:18)
God's wrath because not knowing God (2 Thess 1:8-9)
God's wrath because the soul belongs to God and those who sin will die (Ezek 18:4)
God's wrath to weed out sin and evil (Matt 13:41)

Impartial because God does not have any favoritism (11)
No favoritism because God is God (Deut 10:17)
No favoritism because God created all (Job 34:19)
No favoritism because God accepts all who fear and obey Him (Acts 10:34-35)
No favoritism because God does not judge by the external (Gal 2:6)

Impartial because no one can be righteously justified by the law (12)
Not justified by the law because it has been weakened by man's sinful nature (Rom 8:3)
Not justified by the law because justification is only through faith in Jesus (Gal 2:16)
Not justified by the law because the righteous will live by faith (Gal 3:11)

CONCLUSION AND OTHER THOUGHTS

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM BOB DEFFINBAUGH
Principles of Divine Judgment (2:1-16)
CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE NIV STANDARD LESSON COMMENTARY
PRACTICAL POINTS FROM THE BIBLE EXPOSITOR AND ILLUMINATOR COMMENTARY

Introduction

Overview and Key Verse of the Lesson

The lesson teaches that God’s judgment is always according to truth and results in God’s Justice. The study's aim is to fit in with God’s plan as well as we can as He enables us. The study's application is to live daily aware of God’s justice and our place in His plan.

(Key Verse: Rom 2:10-11)

10 but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.
11 For there is no partiality with God.

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

2:1. In any generalization such as the preceding blanket indictment of pagan humanity (1:18-32) exceptions to the rule always exist. Obviously some pagans had high ethical standards and moral lifestyles and condemned the widespread moral corruption of their contemporaries. In addition the Jews morally stood in sharp contrast with the pagan world around them and freely condemned the Gentiles. Both groups of moralists might conclude that God’s condemnation did not apply to them because of their higher planes of living. But Paul insisted that they also stood condemned because they were doing the same things for which they judged others. Therefore, Paul declared, at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself. Everyone in the entire human race has turned away from God and commits sins even though there are differences of frequency, extent, and degree. In addition the entire human race, especially moral pagans and the Jews, stood condemned before God (and have no excuse [cf. 1:20]) because God’s judgment is based on three divine standards—truth (2:2-4), impartiality (vv. 5-11), and Jesus Christ Himself (vv. 12-16)—which are absolute and infinite, condemning every person.

2:2-3. The first divine standard of judgment is truth. Nowhere in Scripture is God identified as “Truth” as He is as “Spirit” (John 4:24), “Light” (1 John 1:5) and “Love” (1 John 4:8, 16), though Jesus did call Himself “the Truth” (John 14:6). But God is called “the God of truth” (Ps. 31:5; Isa. 65:16). Truth—absolute, infinite truth—is unquestionably one of God’s essential attributes. As a result when God’s judgment of people is declared to be based on (lit. “according to”) “truth,” no escape from that judgment is possible for anyone. All are without “excuse” (Rom. 2:1) and without “escape.” One may be moral and he may even judge his contemporaries as totally enmeshed in a depraved lifestyle, but yet he is judged by God because he does the same things (cf. v. 1).

2:4. By not exacting His divine penalty on sinful humanity immediately, God is displaying the riches of His kindness (chrēstotēs, “benevolence in action,” also used of God in 11:22; Eph. 2:7; Titus 3:4), tolerance, and patience (cf. Acts 14:16; 17:30; Rom. 3:25). God’s purpose is to lead people toward repentance—a return to Him—through His kindness. (This word for “kindness” is chrēstos, a synonym of chrēstotēs, also trans. “kindness,” used earlier in the verse.) Both words mean “what is suitable or fitting to a need.” Chřēstos is used of God in Luke 6:35 and 1 Peter 2:3 and of people in Ephesians 4:32. Not realizing (lit., “being ignorant of”) God’s purpose, people showed contempt for (kataphroneis, “you thought down on”) God’s attributes and actions (cf. “suppress the truth,” Rom. 1:18). People knew of God’s Being through natural revelation (1:19-21, 28), but did not know the purpose of His kindness.

2:5-6. Why are people ignorant of God’s intention to be kind? (v. 4) And why do they despise it? It is because of their stubbornness (lit., “hardness”; sklērotēta, whence the Eng. “sclerosis”) and their unrepentant heart(s). So God’s wrath against people’s sins is being stored up like a great reservoir until
the day when it will all be poured forth in His righteous judgment. On that day God will give to each person according to what He has done (quotation of Ps. 62:12 and Prov. 24:12). God’s judging will be based on the standard of truth (Rom. 2:2) and it will be impartial (v. 11).

2:7-11. God will bestow eternal life on those who by persistence in doing good seek (pres. tense, “keep on seeking”) glory, honor, and immortality. On the other hand wrath and anger will be the portion of the self-seeking... who reject (lit., “keep on disobeying”) the truth and follow (pres. tense, “keep on obeying”) evil (adikia, “unrighteousness”; cf. 1:18). Each one who does (“keeps on producing”) evil will receive trouble and distress, whereas each one who does (“keeps on working”) good will have glory, honor (cf. “glory and honor” in 2:7), and peace. This just recompense by God is without regard to ethnic background or any other consideration except what each person has done. A person’s habitual conduct, whether good or evil, reveals the condition of his heart. Eternal life is not rewarded for good living; that would contradict many other Scriptures which clearly state that salvation is not by works, but is all of God’s grace to those who believe (e.g., Rom. 6:23; 10:9-10; 11:6; Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5). A person’s doing good shows that his heart is regenerate. Such a person, redeemed by God, has eternal life. Conversely a person who continually does evil and rejects the truth shows that he is unregenerate, and therefore will be an object of God’s wrath. The statement first for the Jew, then for the Gentile (lit. “Greek”) does not imply special consideration for Jews. Instead, in the light of the divine standard of impartiality (God does not show favoritism), it emphasizes that the entire human race is dealt with by God. The phrase “the day of God’s... judgment” (Rom. 2:5) taken by itself may seem to lend support to the idea of a single general judgment of all humanity. However, the Scriptures do not support such a concept. This phrase must be interpreted in conjunction with passages which clearly indicate that several judgments of different groups occur at different times (cf. judgment of Israel at Christ’s Second Advent, Ezek. 20:32-38; the judgment of Gentiles at Christ’s Second Advent, Matt. 25:31-46; the great white throne judgment, Rev. 20:11-15). The focus of this passage is on the fact that God will judge all peoples, not on the details of who will be judged when.

2:12. God’s impartiality in judgment is also seen in the fact that He will deal with people in accordance with the dispensation in which they live. “The Law was given through Moses” (John 1:17), which marks the beginning of the dispensation of Law. The Law was provided for God’s Chosen People Israel, and the Gentiles were considered outside the Law. Therefore Paul declared, All who (lit., “as many as”) sin apart from the Law (lit., “without Law”) will also perish apart from the Law. Gentiles who sin will perish, but the Law of Moses will not be used as a standard of judgment against them. On the other hand the Jews who sin under (lit., “in the sphere of”) the Law will be judged by the Law. The Gentiles are not excused from God’s judgment, but they will not be judged according to the standard (the Mosaic Law) that was not given to them.

2:13. Reading the Mosaic Law was a regular part of each synagogue service, so that Jews were those who hear the Law. However, being recognized as righteous was not the automatic concomitant of being a Jew and hearing the Law. Those who will be declared righteous (a forensic action usually trans. “justified,” e.g., 3:24; see 1:17 on “justify”) are those who obey the Law (lit., “the doers of the Law”). James made the same point (James 1:22-25). Again (cf. Rom. 2:7-10) God does not give eternal life or justification to those who perform good works, but to those who believe (trust) in Him and whose conduct reveals their regenerate hearts.

2:14-15. The Jews looked down on the Gentiles partly because they did not have the revelation of God’s will in the Mosaic Law. But, as Paul pointed out, there are moral Gentiles who do by nature things required by the Law. Such persons show that the Law is not to be found only on tablets of stone and included in the writings of Moses; it is also inscribed in their hearts and is reflected in their actions, consciences, and thoughts. The Law given to Israel is in reality only a specific statement of God’s moral and spiritual requirements for everyone. Moral Gentiles by their actions show that the requirements (lit., “the work”) of the Law are written on their hearts. This is confirmed by their consciences, the faculty within human beings that evaluates their actions, along with their thoughts that either accuse or excuse them of sin. This is why Paul called such Gentiles a law for themselves (v. 14). Conscience is an important part of human nature, but it is not an absolutely trustworthy indicator of what is right. One’s conscience can be “good” (Acts 23:1; 1 Tim. 1:5; 19) and “clear” (Acts 24:16; 1 Tim. 3:9; 2 Tim. 1:3; Heb. 13:18), but it can also be “guilty” (Heb. 10:22), “corrupted” (Titus 1:15), “weak” (1 Cor. 8:7; 10, 12), and “seared” (1 Tim. 4:2). All people need to trust the Lord Jesus Christ so that “the blood of Christ” might “cleanse [their] consciences” (Heb. 9:14).
2:16. The Greek text of this verse begins with the phrase “in the day.” The words this will take place are not in the Greek but are supplied to tie this verse back to the main idea of this section (vv. 5-13), namely, God’s righteous judgment (v. 5). Verses 14-15 are actually a parenthetic idea (as indicated in the NIV). This was brought to mind by verse 13 and the Jewish prejudice against the Gentiles. The certainty of divine judgment is emphasized by the words God will judge (lit., “God judges”). The Agent of divine judgment is Jesus Christ (cf. John 5:22, 27; Acts 17:31). This judgment will deal with men’s secrets (lit., “the hidden things of men”) and will reveal those things and prove God’s judgment right (cf. 1 Cor. 4:5). Paul’s gospel is not the standard of God’s judgment. The idea is that the righteous judgment of God is an essential ingredient of the gospel Paul preached and a reason for trusting Jesus’ finished redemption.

Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary

The beginning chapters of Romans do not offer sinners any encouragement that they can work their way back to God and earn salvation. Paul spoke of various categories of humanity to prove this. Romans 1:18 talks about the heathen, or the wicked, who have little regard for God and His law. There is no hope for them to make it if they persist in this. Paul then considered the religious Jews (cf. 2:17). Even for them there is no hope of salvation, despite all the advantages they possess. Our text is embedded in a section dealing with moral people, those who have a semblance of goodness. There is no hope apart from grace for them, either. The “good” man falls short for two reasons. First, he falls short because of his hypocrisy (Rom. 2:1-3). He cannot keep the standards by which he judges others. Second, he falls short because of his impenitence (vss. 4-11). He will not turn to God in faith. He thinks he can make it to heaven his own way. But God’s justice is firm. We see that God has “no respect of persons,” which simply means that God applies His perfect justice to every person, regardless of background or position. There is no possible way of procuring salvation or favor with God based on some human characteristic. Paul specifically mentioned the two broad ethnic categories common in his day—Jews and Gentiles. No special or intrinsic glory, honor, or peace is attributed to anyone merely because of the group or background he comes from. How then can a person be saved? The text mentions that “every man that worketh good” will receive glory, honor, and peace. This is not implying that someone can be saved by good works. Paul labored to show that this is not possible. The good works of men can never satisfy God’s holy justice; they always fall short (Rom. 3:23). This statement refers back to the contrast of Romans 2:7-8, the contrast between obedient faith and disobedience. Romans 2:7 speaks about the element of faith, which seeks glory, honor, and eternal salvation. Verses 8 and 9 speak about the element of unholy disobedience, which brings God’s just wrath. So faith and disobedience are contrasted. Because of God’s justice, we are pointed in only one direction for salvation—to faith in God’s atoning work in Christ. There is no hope for the sinner in any other thing. Neither religion nor morality can get us to heaven. Those who trust in such things for salvation display a tragic misunderstanding of God’s justice. We must look beyond human works and efforts to a salvation granted from above, received only through faith in Christ. There is nothing wrong with good morals, and there is nothing wrong with the practice of religion, unless it misleads us about how we as sinners can escape God’s condemnation. We must submit to God and His means of salvation. There is no way around God’s justice through our own efforts. We must trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Lesson Introduction and Background

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Insider trading is the buying or selling of a public company’s stock by those with access to information not generally available. This is seen as unfair to other investors, and laws have been written to discourage it. Insider-trading cases involving high-profile people have been major news stories of the past two decades. However, it seems that those who made laws forbidding insider trading were exempt from those very laws! In November 2011, the TV show 60 Minutes aired an exposé on insider trading by members of Congress in both parties. The program cited examples of lawmakers using nonpublic information about pending legislation and other congressional matters to make lucrative investments. Members of Congress had exempted themselves...
from the very rules they had created, which jailed bankers, CEOs, and others. After this information was disclosed, Congress took action and passed, with overwhelming support, a law to prevent this abuse. As a result, members of Congress and their staffs are no longer exempt from the insider-trading laws that apply to everyone else. It’s easy to expect more of others than we expect from ourselves. In today’s lesson, Paul points out just how dangerous such an attitude can be.

The letter to the Romans is considered by many to be Paul’s greatest literary accomplishment. Are we surprised, then, to learn that he wrote it to a church in a city he had not visited? This lack of face-to-face contact, however, contributes to the book’s value. Paul was not writing to a congregation that had heard him preach or teach; therefore there were no assumptions that he left some things unsaid, thinking that the readers already knew his views on a topic. This is of great benefit to us, the modern readers, because we have had no face-to-face contact with Paul either. Reading Romans carefully gives us the best single picture of what Paul taught to first-century Christians on a wide range of topics, including the origin and consequences of sin, God’s plan for justifying sinners by Christ’s atoning death, the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer, the comforting promise of never being separated from the love of God, the problem of the unbelief of the people of Israel, and many other matters. Paul wrote Romans at the end of his third missionary journey. Acts gives fewer details concerning this trip compared with the first two, but it does mention that Paul spent three months in Greece (Acts 20:2, 3); the specific Greek city was likely Corinth, located in the province of Achaia. Romans 16:1 mentions someone from Cenchrea (Corinth’s port city), who seems to be the delivery person for the letter. All this puts the dating of the letter in AD 57 or 58.

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

(NOTE: The lesson points and cross-references were copied from previous SS Lesson dated 03/13/2005)

Justice According to Truth (Rom 2:1-4)

1 Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.
2 But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things.
3 And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God?
4 Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

Truth because it is beyond excuses (1)

Beyond excuses because God makes what is right plain (Rom 1:18-19)

18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, 19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.

Beyond excuses because God judges to fit the situation (Matt 7:1-2)

7:1 "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. 2 For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

Beyond excuses because God’s judgments are based on what is man’s own words and deeds (Luke 19:22-24)

22 "His master replied, ‘I will judge you by your own words, you wicked servant! You knew, did you, that I am a hard man, taking out what I did not put in, and reaping what I did not sow? 23 Why then didn’t you put my money on deposit, so that when I came back, I could have collected it with interest?’ 24 ‘Then he said to those standing by, ’Take his mina away from him and give it to the one who has ten minas.’
Beyond excuses because no one is without sin (John 8:3-7)

3 The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group 4 and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. 5 In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" 6 They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. 7 When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her."

Truth because it is against those who practice evil (2-3)

Against evil because of stubbornness and unrepentant hearts (Rom 2:5-8)

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. 6 God "will give to each person according to what he has done." 7 To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. 8 But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger.

Against evil because God punishes those who do not know Him and practice evil (2 Thess 1:5-8)

5 All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering. 6 God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you 7 and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. 8 He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

Against evil because sin is against God (Ps 51:4)

4 Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge.

Truth because of God's goodness (4)

God is good because He keeps no records of sin for those He has forgiven (Ps 130:3-4)

3 If you, O LORD, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? 4 But with you there is forgiveness; therefore you are feared.

God is good because He shows His compassion through His gracious justice (Isa 30:18)

18 Yet the LORD longs to be gracious to you; he rises to show you compassion. For the LORD is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him!

God is good because He is patient, waiting on everyone to repent (2 Peter 3:9)

9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

God is good because even while we were sinners, He sent Jesus to pay for our sins (Eph 2:4-7)

4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions-it is by grace you have been saved. 6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.
**Justice that is Impartial (Rom 2:5-12)**

5 But in accordance with your hardness and your Impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, 
6 who "will render to each one according to his deeds": 
7 eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; 
8 but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness -- indignation and wrath, 
9 tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; 
10 but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 
11 For there is no partiality with God. 
12 For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law

**Impartial because it is righteous (5)**

- *Righteous because when justice is needed, He does it without fail (Ps 7:11)*
  11 God is a righteous judge, a God who expresses his wrath every day.

- *Righteous because God is righteous and has total integrity (Ps 7:8)*
  8 let the LORD judge the peoples. Judge me, O LORD, according to my righteousness, according to my integrity, O Most High.

- *Righteous because God's judgment is founded on righteousness (Ps 94:14-15)*
  14 For the LORD will not reject his people; he will never forsake his inheritance. 15 Judgment will again be founded on righteousness, and all the upright in heart will follow it.

- *Righteous because Jesus relied on God's judgment (1 Peter 2:23)*
  23 When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.

**Impartial because it is according to ones deeds (6)**

- *According to deeds because God judges on what the individual does, not others (Ps 62:12)*
  12 and that you, O Lord, are loving. Surely you will reward each person according to what he has done.

- *According to deeds because God examines each one's conduct (Jer 17:10)*
  10 "I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve."

- *According to deeds because that is what Jesus will judge (Matt 16:27)*
  27 For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.

- *According to deeds because God judges on motives that can't be hidden (1 Cor 4:5)*
  5 Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.

- *According to deeds because judgment is on what was done while in the human body (2 Cor 5:10)*
  10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.
Impartial because it provides eternal life to those who do good (7)

*Because God is good to those to whose hope is in Him* (Lam 3:25)

25 The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him;

*Because God has promised to not let good works be in vain* (1 Cor 15:58)

58 Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

*Because at the proper time, God will reward those who have not grown weary in doing good* (Gal 6:9)

9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

*Because doing the will of God will be richly rewarded* (Heb 10:35-36)

35 So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. 36 You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.

Impartial because it provides wrath to those who do evil (8-9)

*God's wrath because of suppression of truth by wickedness* (Rom 1:18)

18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,

*God's wrath because not knowing God* (2 Thess 1:8-9)

8 He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power

*God's wrath because the soul belongs to God and those who sin will die* (Ezek 18:4)

4 For every living soul belongs to me, the father as well as the son—both alike belong to me. The soul who sins is the one who will die.

*God's wrath to weed out sin and evil* (Matt 13:41)

41 The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil.

Impartial because God does not have any favoritism (11)

*No favoritism because God is God* (Deut 10:17)

17 For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes.

*No favoritism because God created all* (Job 34:19)

19 who shows no partiality to princes and does not favor the rich over the poor, for they are all the work of his hands?

*No favoritism because God accepts all who fear and obey Him* (Acts 10:34-35)

34 Then Peter began to speak: 'I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism 35 but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right.

*No favoritism because God does not judge by the external* (Gal 2:6)

6 As for those who seemed to be important—whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not judge by external appearance—those men added nothing to my message.
Impartial because no one can be righteously justified by the law (12)

Not justified by the law because it has been weakened by man's sinful nature (Rom 8:3)

3 For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man,

Not justified by the law because justification is only through faith in Jesus (Gal 2:16)

16 know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.

Not justified by the law because the righteous will live by faith (Gal 3:11)

11 Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, "The righteous will live by faith."

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Concluding Thoughts from Bob Deffinbaugh

Principles of Divine Judgment (2:1-16)

As we can easily discern, Paul does not immediately point his finger at the Jew as the object of his attention. But it becomes evident at verse 17 that this has been his purpose from the outset of the chapter. Some have understood the first 16 verses of the second chapter as directed toward the Gentile moralist, the up-and-outter. Such is not the case for Paul simply continues to lay the foundation for his pointed accusations at the end of this section on condemnation. Verses 1-16 provide a basis for evaluating the righteousness of the Jews. We shall focus upon five principles of divine judgment for by these five standards the righteousness of the Jew will be measured.

(1) God’s judgment of men is according to our own standards (Romans 2:1). The Jews have eagerly consented to the condemnation of the Gentiles. They even delighted in it. The Jew had gladly assumed the seat of the judge. He pronounced the Gentiles guilty of God’s eternal wrath. He sentenced them to eternal torment. In this the Jew has already condemned himself, for he has placed himself under his own standards. Our Lord taught, “Do not judge lest you be judged yourselves. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it shall be measured to you” (Matthew 7:1, 2).

By this our Lord meant that when we set ourselves over others as their judge, we have imposed upon ourselves the same standard of measurement. In our days of situational ethics and relativity, some tell us that they do not feel it is wrong to commit adultery or to steal. We can well afford to be broad-minded concerning our own conduct, but if we are consistent then we must agree that it is acceptable for others to steal from us or to violate the sanctity of our marriage.

God is not so interested in the standards we set for ourselves as those we set for others. It is by these standards that we ourselves will be judged by God. Very few of us would wish to be judged by these standards, but the Scriptures tell us this is the case.

Since the Jews have enthusiastically condemned the Gentiles, they have assumed for themselves the same standards. Shortly, Paul will bear down on these standards.

(2) God’s judgment of men is according to our works (Romans 2:5-11). All of us would prefer to be judged in accordance with what we profess rather than according to what we practice. There is a world of difference between what we say and what we do. If there is any doubt in your mind, simply ask your children. The Jew would have delighted to be judged by their doctrinal statements; in fact, that is what they relied upon.

Furthermore, the Jew expected to be judged according to his standing as a descendant of Abraham. They supposed that being the seed of Abraham was all that was required for entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Paul blasted the false expectations of his Jewish readers when he wrote,

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, who will render to every man according to his deeds: to
those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation. There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, but glory and honor and peace to every man who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God (Romans 2:5-11).

But with all the emphasis in the Bible on faith, why is a man judged according to his deeds? **Although a man is saved on the basis of faith, he is condemned on the basis of his works.** “And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds” (Revelation 20:12).

You see, when a man or woman rejects the righteousness which God has provided as a free gift in Jesus Christ, he, in effect, chooses to establish his own righteousness, and this can be judged only on a performance basis. So Paul establishes that one principle upon which condemnation is administered is that a man’s righteousness is measured by his works.

We should say in agreement with James that the measure of one’s faith is his works. As James wrote, “… Faith without works is useless” (James 2:20b). The genuineness of our faith is revealed by the quality of our works. So a man is judged according to his works. The second principle, then, for the judgment of man is that he is judged according to his works.

(3) **God’s judgment of man is according to the revelation we possess** (Romans 2:12). If the judgment of God is to be fair, it must account for the amount of revelation that a man has. The revelation available to the heathen is that evident in creation, attesting to the eternal power and divine nature of God (1:20). The Jew, on the other hand, has the written revelation of the Old Testament. Not only is the nature of God described, but also His moral requirements are prescribed, and the way of salvation declared. God judges every man according to what he knows of divine revelation: “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” (Romans 2:12).

(4) **God’s judgment of man is impartial** (Romans 2:3, 11). Somehow the Jew had it in his mind that God was playing favorites. The Jew thought he had a corner on the market when it came to salvation. Paul declares that the judgment of God is impartial and that the Jew should not expect special treatment:

And do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment upon those who practice such things and do the same yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God? (Romans 2:3). For there is no partiality with God (Romans 2:11).

God does not play favorites; the fact that a man is a Jew will in no way influence the verdict of God. No one will go to heaven because Abraham was his father, nor will any one be kept out because he was not. God’s judgment of men is impartial.

(5) **God’s judgment must not be confused with His longsuffering and mercy** (Romans 2:4-5). While the wrath of God is presently evident upon the Gentile heathen (Romans 1:17, 27), the Jew may be tempted to misinterpret the momentary absence of judgment on the Jew. The absence of present judgment for sin is not to be understood as God overlooking the sins of His chosen people. God does not look down on the sins of the Jews, shake His head, and say in effect, “Boys will be boys.”

The manifestation of the wrath of God has been delayed because of God’s mercy and longsuffering. The delay is to give men the opportunity to repent, not to encourage them to keep sinning. To fail to repent is to spurn God’s mercy and to store up future judgment on ourselves.

Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? 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 (Romans 2:4-5).

These, then, are the principles which govern God’s judgment on men, and these are the standards by which the Jew, as well as the Gentile, is to be measured. In verses 17-29, Paul applies these standards and finds the Jew equally guilty with the Gentiles before God.

(Adapted from URL: https://bible.org/seriespage/4-no-excuse-jews-romans-2)
Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

God’s system of judgment is perfectly just: if we do not sin, we will be judged as righteous. But our sin means we deserve God’s judgment of death. We may think it unfair that a single sin could cancel a lifetime of righteous choices, but we know that is never the case. We are not good people with trivial sin problems. We are sinners who are sometimes coated with a thin veneer of righteous appearance. The sinful part of us is dense and deep, and we do not have to scratch the surface very hard to uncover it. This sin has brought alienation from God and threat of a harsh judgment for eternity. This is not Paul’s last word, however. The great good news of Paul is that we can be forgiven and restored to a proper relationship with God. That relationship is not based on our merits, but on faith in Jesus Christ, who paid our sin penalty.

Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary

1. We have no business judging others, for we are all guilty of sin (Rom. 2:1-2)
2. We cannot escape God's judgment if we do not repent (vss. 3-5)
3. People will receive a sentence that is directly in line with the way they behaved (vss. 6-8)
4. Those who do evil, even if they are God's chosen people, will be judged accordingly (vs. 9)
5. Those who do good, whether they be Jew or Gentile, will be judged accordingly (vs. 10)
6. God is a fair and righteous judge. He will hold people accountable by a just standard (vss. 11-12)