

## Monday, July 11, 2022 • Read Romans 2:12–16

Questions from the Scripture text: *What will happen to how many of those who have sinned without the law (v12)? By what will those under the law be judged? How would someone have to be justified, if they are justified by the law (v13)? How do Gentiles show that they already know what the law demands (v14)? Where was this law written (v15)? What bears witness to this? In what types of activities do Gentiles' consciences do this? On what day will all sinners be perish (v16, cf. v12)? What will God judge that day? By Whom? According to what?*

**How do we know that we will be judged and how immense that judgment will be?** Romans 2:12–16 looks forward to the this week's midweek sermon. In these five verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that on the day of wrath, the secrets of our hearts will be judged against the standard of that glorious Jesus Christ Who is offered to us in the gospel.

How can Gentiles, who don't have the law, be judged? v12 says that "as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law." We have already heard from 1:19–20 that all men are aware of God and His glory. However, apart from grace, the children of Adam refuse to glorify His glory (1:21) or give Him thanks. Indeed, they give that glory to created things instead (1:23).

So all sin is against the glory of God. When men accuse themselves (v15), their consciences show that they are aware of God's law (cf. 1:32). And when men excuse themselves (v15), their consciences show that they are aware of God's law. However much we push down on the knowledge of God's glory, we all know that our sin is against Him. If our minds and hearts were functioning properly, we would freely admit and acknowledge that our sin deserves and receives a response from God as great as His glory itself.

How can Jews, who have the law, be judged? This might seem like a silly question to us, after considering how we have all sinned against God's glory. But there apparently were Jews who thought that they were given the law as something that they would keep in order to obtain the blessings that God was promising. They even thought that the atonements in the ceremonial law were just enough to make up for the small breaches of the law that they made at times, so that it all balanced out.

There are people in churches today making similar mistakes. They live feeling pretty good about how they're doing, so long as they don't make "great stumblings" (in their own estimation), but when they do make those stumblings, they have recourse either to the sacraments or to some other spiritual "works" or even just make themselves feel better by remembering the cross. But in their overall relationship with God, they have no sense that even their best works need this atonement, and that it is never their remembrances of Christ that make things better but Christ Himself Who has once-for-all made them right with God.

The law itself gave moral commands that would have to be perfectly obeyed in order to be justified by the law. This should have shattered the idea that they could be justified by circumcision or sacrifices, because doing these would at best keep that part of the law, and still leave them liable for breaking the other parts of the law. And even their sacrificing was never done sincerely enough of purely enough!

So the law itself was not of faith, but it demanded that they be justified through faith in Him Who would fulfill all perfectly. Jesus fulfilled the moral law perfectly. Jesus fulfilled the ceremonial law perfectly. Jesus was the point of the law. Jesus was the end of the law for righteousness. When He comes, that which was always true becomes that much clearer: the law that the Jews heard could not save them; it could only point to the only One Who could save.

When Jews failed to see this, they pushed down on the glory of God displayed in the law. They pushed down on the glorious standard: "you shall be holy as Yahweh your God is holy." They pushed down on the glory displayed in the wrath of God in the burning sacrifices, where the original fire upon the original sacrifices came out from God Himself.

But Jesus has come as the display of the glory of God—not in wrath but in gospel! The secrets of men are bad news, then. The secrets of the Gentiles are that they know about the glory of God in creation but have sinned against Him anyway. And the secrets of the Jews are that they know about the glory of God in the law but have sinned against Him anyway.

But now Jesus, God the Son, has come in the gospel and displayed the glory of God. He Who is God Himself has atoned for our sins because only One Who is as great as God's glory could suffice to atone for sin that is against God's glory. This is the great display of Jesus and His glory that 3:25 will proclaim when it says that God exhibited Jesus as a propitiation.

So, it is awfully frightful that God judges the secrets of our hearts. He judges us against the standard that we know, despite our efforts to push down on that knowledge. And it is awfully frightful that this judgment is through Jesus Christ, since He is an even greater display of God's glory than we have in the creation. But it is awfully merciful that the way we come to know about the greatness of this judgment is "according to my gospel."

For those who come to be justified not by what we do, but only by what Jesus has done, we learn the greatness of the judgment that we deserve by the very fact that Jesus has fully taken it upon Himself!

What sins in your life are you tempted to think of as not a big deal? What has God shown in the creation and the gospel to show you how big a deal it is? What can(has!) be (been!) done about it?

Sample prayer: *Lord, truly You have displayed Your glory in redemption even more than in the creation. Forgive us for when we respond to these displays of Your glory by excusing ourselves. Thank You for making the greatest display of Your glory in Your Son, who offered Himself for our sins. Give us to trust in Him, and to hate our sin for His sake, AMEN!*

Suggested songs: ARP51A "God, Be Merciful to Me" or TPH51C "God, Be Merciful to Me"

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Romans 2 verses 12 through 16. These are God's words For as many as have sinned without the law. We'll also perish without the law. And there's many as have sinned in. The law will be judged by the law for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified.

For when Gentiles, you do not have the law by nature. Do the things in the law, these although not having the law or a law to themselves who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience. Also bearing witness and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ.

According to my gospel So far, the reading of God's inspired. And and there. It's worked.

So, how do we know that we will be judged? And how immense? Hi dreadful. That judgment will be on part because the Bible says so. But he makes the point here, that we are going to be judged according to Jesus Christ. And that what will be judged is not only our outward work but our secrets and that the gospel displays how great that judgment will be start to unpack.

This a little bit. We answer the question of how can Gentiles who do not have the law be judged. So he says, for as many as have sinned without law. We'll also perish without law. And then he says, for when Gentiles verse 14, who do not have the law by nature, do the things in the law.

These, although not having the law are a law to themselves who show the work of the law written in their hearts. Their conscience bearing witness and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them. So Gentiles when they show that, they know, right and wrong, then whether or not their acknowledging that it came from God, they are displaying that, they know that God is, it is an indication that however, hard they are pushing down upon the truth in unrighteousness.

However, hard they suppress the truth and unrighteousness. They know, They know that God is He made himself known to them and he's displayed the truth about himself in the creation and he has written his law on their hearts. So, he said, in verse 32 of the last chapter about them who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice, such things are deserving of death.

So, the Gentile even without the law, He knows the existence of God. He knows the glory of God. He knows the righteousness of God. He knows that He deserves for the glory of God to express itself upon Him in punishment. So, even without any Bible at all, we would already know the greatness or have an indication of the greatness of the hell that sin deserves.

So that's how the Gentile who doesn't have the law can be judged? Well, there were Jews who thought that having and hearing the law. Made them safe. They thought. Oh yes. Those are Gentile centers, like Paul says to Peter and Barnabas when he's rebuking them in Galatians chapter two.

Yeah, we're not Gentile. Sinners, like they are. And he, of course, he, of course, tells them in that place that they already agree that they are saved by faith. And of course, Gentiles can only be saved by faith as well. But there were Jews, who thought about thought that way that the Gentiles are the sinners, and the Jews are the favored ones.

And so Paul has to go on in the second half of verse 12 and say and as many as I've sinned in the law will be judged by the law. You see the law doesn't say congratulations. You have the law, you're safe. The law says, you must be holy as Yahweh.

Your God is. Holy the law says, as we finished hearing in the 10th commandment today that God wants righteousness. God wants holiness, even from the thoughts. And inclinations of the heart. The law in its moral aspect demands more than we could ever give. And then the law in its ceremonial aspect says, You deserve to have your throat slit.

All of your blood spilled out the wages of sin is death. And after you die you deserve to have the fire of God burn itself upon you. This was displayed in many different ways in this ceremonial law. And so it is astonishing. Except for, we know that our sin is deceptive, and we will misuse and twist anything that God says apart from the help of a spirit, It is astonishing that there were Jews who thought that because they had and heard the law that somehow they were safe.

So the apostle says in second half of verse 12 and we'll read into the first half of verse 13 now, and as many as have sinned in, the law will be judged by the law for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God. But the doers of the law will be justified.

Now this cuts in two different ways. One. As if you want to be justified by the law, then you have to be justified by doing it, which you can. But the other is that the law hears talking about all of God's law and includes the ceremonial law that points forward to Christ and a right doing of the sacrifices was not to think that somehow you slaughtering the animal and burning it, or buying it and handing it over to the priest.

Who does that somehow that takes away your sin, but the right doing of the law would be to be instructed by the law to be justified through faith alone. Even as had been told to Abraham and then God gave the law as a schoolmaster to keep us walking in the faith way of Abraham, and not the works way of the devil, and of the flesh until Jesus came.

And it became all the more clear by his finished work and by baptism and by circumcision and the ordinances of the New Testament church that only the faith way of salvation works. The only way to be made right with God, is by trusting in Jesus, by his sacrifice wiping away your sin, and His righteousness being counted for you, Indeed.

Hebrews tells us, if we understood the law correctly, we would have known that the Bloods of bulls and goats couldn't take away sin because they had to be sacrificed over and over a year after year. And so there are two ways in which to read this. The doers of the law will be justified One if you wanted to be justified by law.

Instead of by faith by grace through faith, then you would have to keep it perfectly with. You can't. But two, that the law itself taught you to trust in Jesus. So having the law doesn't put you in a better place. In the Gentile, The Gentile is accused by the display of the glory of God in the world.

The Jew is accused by the display of the glory of God in the world and the display of the glory of God, in the Word that God had given him. It didn't make him safer. Unless by the spirits blessing of that word to him, he was taught by the law to hope in the promised Redeemer alone, that would be a means by which the

law brought him not to works but to faith in Jesus Christ.

So God will judge in the last day. All of this is still coming out of treasuring up for yourself, wrath in the day of wrath and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God. And then we had in verses 6 through 11 that there was no partiality with God and now he's saying the Gentiles are under judgment first half of verse 12.

And then verse 14 and verse 15, and then we have the Jews are under judgment second half of verse 12 and all of verse 13 and that brings us to verse 16 in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ. According to my gospel.

So the creation said, God is glorious, and our sin against him is immense. Our sin is against His glory and then the law came and said, God is glorious and full of wrath, Behold, the death, and the burning that our sin deserves and then the gospel comes and does the gospel.

Say, just kidding, God, isn't that glorious into your sins? Not so bad. No, The gospel comes and says God is so glorious and your sin is so bad, that it actually requires God, the Son, the second person of the Trinity to suffer the wrath of God in order to save you.

And so verse 16 comes and says in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel. So he says, in the Gospel, Jesus is displayed as a propitiation. Jesus Christ is displayed as the greatness of the glory of God. On the one hand and the greatness of the guilt of our sin, on the other hand, that it could only be he who could atone for our sin, and that this atonement was so great, that it would be right for God to give His Son in order to do it.

So we see the greatness of our sin and the greatness of the wrath that we deserve, by the fact of who it is, who was atoned for those who God is saving. He says, don't think don't think that you can be safe because you look better than others or you feel like you're better than others.

The Gentile wasn't safe the creation. Testifies against him, the Jew isn't safe, the Old Testament, testifies against him and the one who hears the gospel is not safe because the glory of Jesus, who had to be offered for sin, testifies against him. It's the one who believes in Jesus Christ, who is say you are not safe before.

God by being in this family and hearing these truths. You are only safe If you have trusted in Jesus Christ, because even the secrets of our hearts are going to be judged, according to the standard of Jesus himself. And so, you better have Jesus himself as your sacrifice, and your righteousness, believe in the Lord, Jesus Christ.

And you will be safe. Hey man. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for speaking to us, so plainly and so seriously. But perhaps most of all we thank you that the greatest way in which you have shown us, what our sin deserves as by showing us him who has atoned for it.

That we might have confidence in him and trust in Him and find our safety. Only in who He is and what he has done, grant to me, granted to my wife grant, to my children that every single one of us would be believers in Jesus Christ and that we would be safe.

Not by what we have heard, but by what he has done. And upon which your spirit makes us to rest my faith for. We ask it in Jesus name, Amen.