

# THE BOOK OF ROMANS

## EQUAL WRATH: BE AFRAID, BE VERY AFRAID!

*Romans 2:5-11*

### Remember Where We Are in This Book

We are in the middle of a few chapters that explain all people are sinful and deserve nothing but the perfect, holy wrath of the God of the universe. This section starts in 1:18 and goes through 3:20. Everyone is guilty and no one is going to get off free from his sins.

Chapter 2 begins with people who think they are fine in God's eyes even though they are sinning too. Paul made clear that they are acting like hypocrites and that will not be tolerated by God. Remember that repentance is the proper response to this section of scripture.

### Works Salvation?

*Romans 2:5-6*

#### Three Main Possibilities

1. *Salvation is based on works apart from Christ.* You get what you deserve, so you better do good. This would fly in the face of everything that Paul teaches in this letter as well as all the others. This cannot be the correct interpretation.
2. *God does it for us.* Good works are expected, but God actually works in all Christians to accomplish this in them. In other words, this would be saying that good works are the fruit of true salvation and therefore Paul is simply talking about the fruit of their salvation. They are not saved because of those works, but those works display that they have been saved already. Though I agree with this position and think Scripture teaches it in several places, I don't think that is the point in this text. *Titus 2:11-12, Hebrews 10:14-18, James 2:14-26*
3. *Everyone deserves hell.* Everyone is under law and will be held accountable to perfect obedience. If they perfectly obey all that God says, they will gain eternal life. This view fits well into the context because the point in the text is that no one is going to get in based on law. This is not trying to tell you how people actually get to heaven, but rather that no one is going to get there on their own. Remember that this is the bad news section of the book.

#### The Points

- ❑ Jews are storing up wrath because, just like the Gentiles, God will judge them based on their works.
- ❑ The only way to be saved from experiencing God's wrath is through perfect obedience to God's commands. *Deuteronomy 28:1,15 Galatians 3:10-12, Romans 2:6,13*
- ❑ Do you want what you have earned for yourself? This text should remind all of us of our need.

### Which Direction are You Headed?

*Romans 2:7-8*

#### Two Options

- ❑ Heaven- if you are pursuing good and persistent in it. The problem with this is that we are told clearly that NO ONE will get to heaven this way. *Romans 3:20*
- ❑ Hell- if you are selfish and following evil. This is what everyone is promised if the rest of Paul's writings are taken into account here.

#### Something to Think About

- ❑ No one can fulfill that standard! This is the point—we need help.
- ❑ Even those who disobey God are obeying something or someone. They are obeying Satan. *Ephesians 2:1-3*
- ❑ Obedience will take perseverance and patience. It will not come easy. In the text we read that those who persist have a bigger goal set before them.

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## Good or Evil Restated, but Preference for the Jews

*Romans 2:9-10*

Notice the differences or clarifications from the previous section.

- ❑ Evil is anything you do other than obedience to God.
- ❑ The Jews are preferred. They are either praised or cursed first.
- ❑ Peace comes to those who obey. That is a wonderful promise! *Romans 5:1-5*

### The Main Lesson

*Romans 2:11*

As we finish this section and prepare for the next, Paul makes his point loud and clear.

- ❑ There is no favoritism in who will receive the benefits or consequences. Everyone will be held accountable for their actions against God's law.
- ❑ God judges everyone by the same standard and unlike us He does not give some folks a break and overlook their guilt because of their status. *Acts 10:34, Ephesians 6:9*
- ❑ God chooses to show mercy and love to some people and justice and wrath to others. *Romans 9:16-19, 21-24*

### Implications

1. Don't let the focus on good works distract you from the real benefit for us as believers in this text. Do you know your sinfulness well enough to recoil in horror at the idea of standing before God with just your works to commend you?
2. How would you classify evil? Would you include the things God does?
3. Cling to the Cross and be thankful for it.