

DODGING THE ISSUE (2:1-3:8)

2:1-11 God's standards of judgment (a)

- A ¹ You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else,
 B for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself,
 C because you who pass judgment do the same things.
 D ² Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth.
 B ³ So when you, a mere human, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment?
 A ⁴ Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience,
 D not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?
 C ⁵ But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart,
 A you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed.
 ALL ⁶ God will repay everyone according to what they have done.
 C ⁷ To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honour and immortality,
 B he will give eternal life.
 D ⁸ But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil,
 A there will be wrath and anger.
 B ⁹ There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil:
 C first for the Jew, then for the Gentile;
 D ¹⁰ but glory, honour and peace for everyone who does good:
 C first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.
 ALL ¹¹ For God does not show favouritism.

2:12-16 The way conscience works (b)

- A ¹² All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law,
 B and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law.
 C ¹³ For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight,
 D but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous.
 B ¹⁴ (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law,
 A they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law.

- D ¹⁵ They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts,
 C their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.
 ALL ¹⁶ This will take place on the day when God judges everyone's secrets through Jesus Christ,
 A as my gospel declares.

2:17-24 Questions for religious people (b)

- D ¹⁷ Now you, if you call yourself a Jew;
 C if you rely on the law and boast in God;
 B ¹⁸ if you know his will and approve of what is superior because you are instructed by the law;
 A ¹⁹ if you are convinced that you are a guide for the blind,
 B a light for those who are in the dark,
 C ²⁰ an instructor of the foolish,
 D a teacher of infants,
 C because you have in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth—
 ALL ²¹ you, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself?
 B You who preach against stealing, do you steal?
 A ²² You who say that people should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery?
 C You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?
 D ²³ You who boast in the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law?
 ALL ²⁴ As it is written: "God's name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you."

2:25-29 The meaning of circumcision (c)

²⁵ Circumcision has value if you observe the law, but if you break the law, you have become as though you had not been circumcised. ²⁶ If those who are not circumcised keep the law's requirements, will they not be regarded as though they were circumcised? ²⁷ The one who is not circumcised physically and yet obeys the law will condemn you who, even though you have the written code and circumcision, are a lawbreaker. ²⁸ A person is not a Jew who is one only outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. ²⁹ No, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a person's praise is not from other people, but from God.

3:1-8 God's right to judge everybody (c)

¹ What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision? ² Much in every way! First of all, the Jews have been entrusted with the very words of God. ³ What if some were unfaithful? Will their unfaithfulness nullify God's faithfulness? ⁴ Not at all! Let God be true, and every human being a liar. As it is written: "So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge." ⁵ But if our unrighteousness brings out God's righteousness more clearly, what shall we say? That God is unjust in bringing his wrath on us? (I am using a human argument.) ⁶ Certainly not! If that were so, how could God judge the world? ⁷ Someone might argue, "If my falsehood enhances God's truthfulness and so increases his glory, why am I still condemned as a sinner?" ⁸ Why not say—as we are being slanderously reported as saying and as some claim that we say—"Let us do evil that good may result?" Their condemnation is just!

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GRASPING THE SOLUTION (3:9-26)

3:9-18 Snapshots of human evil (b)

- A ⁹ What shall we conclude then? Do we have any advantage?
B Not at all!
C We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin.
D ¹⁰ As it is written:
ALL "There is no one righteous, not even one; ¹¹ there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God.
B ¹² All have turned away,
D they have together become worthless;
A there is no one who does good,
ALL not even one."
C ¹³ "Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit."
D "The poison of vipers is on their lips."
B ¹⁴ "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness."
A ¹⁵ "Their feet are swift to shed blood; ¹⁶ ruin and misery mark their ways, ¹⁷ and the way of peace they do not know."
C ¹⁸ "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

3:19-20 Everyone must answer to God (a)

- A ¹⁹ Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law,
ALL so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God.
B ²⁰ Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by observing the law;
ALL rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin.

3:21-26 God's way of righteousness through Christ (a)

- C ²¹ But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known,
D to which the Law and the Prophets testify.
A ²² This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.
B There is no difference between Jew and Gentile,
ALL (pp) ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
ALL (ff) ²⁴ and all are justified freely by his grace
C through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.
D ²⁵ God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement,
A through the shedding of his blood—
ALL to be received by faith.
B He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—
C ²⁶ he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time,
D so as to be just
ALL and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.