



Sunday, January 5, 2014 Zapping-you Whenever Thoughts Flow

## ROMANS Part 11

Chapter 2:4-10



### Romans chapter 2:4-10

**Or are you despising the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, being ignorant that the kindness of God is leading you to repentance? Yet, in accord with your hardness and unrepentant heart you are hoarding for yourself indignation in the day of indignation and revelation of the just judgment of God, Who will be paying each one in accord with his acts: to those, indeed, who by endurance in good acts are seeking glory and honor and incorruption, life eternal; yet to those of faction and stubborn, indeed,**

**as to the truth, yet persuaded to injustice, indignation and fury, affliction and distress, on every human soul which is effecting evil, both of the Jew first and of the Greek, yet glory and honor and peace to every worker of good, both to the Jew first, and to the Greek.**

**K**ee in mind that here in the early chapters of Romans we're slogging toward the solution to the eons-old problem of humanity: an inability to stand before a righteous, perfect God. I keep telling you that the solution begins in Romans 3:21. We're not there yet. The problem isn't with people who know they are lousy sinners and could never please God. The problem is with the Pharisee, the Christian, and the atheist (all these belong in the same category) that is, with people convinced they are doing things right in their own strength. Not only are they not doing things in their own strength, they're not doing things right. They're guilty of the same things they condemn others for.

You may say, "But Martin, how do you know these people believe they are doing things in their own strength? They sound so humble. They say all the right things. They know all the humility clichés such as, 'It's nothing of myself.'" I know it because of their condemning attitude toward others. According to Paul, these are those "who are judging those committing such things, yet are doing the same things" (Romans 2:3).

This section of Romans chapter 2 will reiterate the point that the religious person is liable to worse condemnation than the poor sinner who knows how inept he or she is. The religious person has so many reasons why he or she is going to heaven, but why others are hell-bound. Paul spends much time yanking their reasons out from under them. His chief charge in this section of Romans is: "Hypocrite!"

In the case of the religious person, Paul points out the kind of hypocrisy which claims to be saved by faith alone apart from works, but which at the same time condemns another person to eternal separation from God for not doing certain works. It's the kind of hypocrisy which says, "Faith isn't a work," but then condemns another to hell for "not having faith."

The atheist version of such hypocrisy (not nearly as sick as the Christian variety) would be, say, accusing a competitor for stealing while you cheat your own employees.

Keep in mind that here in Romans we're driving toward the salvation of the entire race, no one excepted. Without a knowledge of this final goal of God, everyone will miss not only this point in Romans chapter 2, but every other point in Romans. Before God can redeem people, He must first make them painfully aware of their shortcomings. Religious people are the last to receive this revelation. Their own estimation of themselves is too high. It needs reduced. Thus, Romans 1:18 through 3:21.

#### CHANGING THE MIND

**"Or are you despising the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, being ignorant that the kindness of God is leading you to repentance?" (Romans 2:4).**

The kindness, forbearance and patience of God is for everyone. Religious people forget that they were once unilluminated. It's a Christian phenomenon: this tribe forgets that they were once on the fast-track to what they now threaten other people with: eternal separation from God.<sup>1</sup> God endured their years of ignorance. He patiently brought them along their pre-determined way. Then one day, they came into what they perceived as light. It felt like a self-wrought work to them, so that's what they end up believing. They believe their personal faith saved them. In no way do they see faith for what it is: a gift (Romans 12:3; Philippians 1:29). Later, they learn the popular Christian humility clichés, such as, "It's nothing of my self," and "Jesus saves." None of these clichés, however, change their deepest conviction that what separates them from the rabble is that they chose Christ while the rabble drank beer, smoked cigarettes, and stubbornly refused to

1. Apart from the cross, the fate of all humanity would be eternal death. Because of the cross, no one is separated from God for eternity, though some will be separated for part or all of the two upcoming glorious eons, namely the kingdom eon of Israel's earthly supremacy (Revelation 5:10) and the eon of the new heaven and the new earth (Revelation 21:1).

make an intelligent decision concerning Christ. They think they found the light themselves. They must think this (in spite of what they say) because they condemn (to eternal, conscious torment) those in darkness.

My question to these people would be Paul's question as well: "Do you think maybe God is exercising patience, kindness, and forbearance with these other people, just as He did with you?" What they fail to consider is that it takes *more* forbearance and patience and kindness to deal with the religious person, than with those simply floundering through life without light.

#### NO FUN FUN-HOUSE

**"Yet in accord with your hardness and unrepentant heart you are hoarding for yourself indignation in the day of indignation and revelation of the just judgment of God ..." (Romans 2:5).**



This verse applies to the people applying this verse to other people! The "hardness and unrepentant" people of the context are those from verse 2:1 and 2:3 who are hypocritically judging other people for the same shenanigans they pull. They are despising the riches of God's kindness because they don't think His kindness applies to them. Hells bells, God is not being kind to



them (in their estimation), He is giving them their deserts for being so faithful to Him and doing so many good acts.

What a mix-up. It's like a Lucy show, when no one understands anyone until the end of the show. Christians read this passage, see the phrase, "hardness and unrepentant heart" and apply it to other people. They do this because they imagine themselves to have repented and believed. But their attitude towards those who don't "toe the line" is pure hardness. It is the *Christians* who are hard. It is *their* hearts that are unrepentant. This passage of Romans is like a terrible fun-house mirror that keeps showing reflection upon reflection. The Christians use this passage to point to other people, but in fact they are seeing a reflection of themselves, and it just keeps showing and showing and showing themselves to themselves, though they don't recognize the image. They never do see through to a fair estimation of other people. That's because they don't understand God's ultimate plans for these other people.

As primitive as the message of Romans chapters 1 through 3 may be to you and me, the religious of this world will simply not comprehend it in this life apart

**"People read Romans through the rose-colored glasses of errant self-opinion.."**

from a Saul-like miracle. Otherwise, it will not be until the Great White Throne judgment when they confront their own hardness and realize how badly they've misjudged not only their own character, but the character of God. And not only the character of God, but the character of their fellow humans, who are actually—in their ignorance—more righteous than they. After all, these Christians had the Word of God. Purporting to grasp its gracious message, it only made them harsher critics and condemners of other people. Remarkably, access to the Scriptures takes the blindness of religion and amplifies it to deadly degrees. Now you think you have God on your side. Now you have the Word of God in your quiver to not only justify your own self-righteousness (a crazy concept if ever there was one), but to condemn other brands of unbelievers. Paul invented a phrase for it: "Always learning and yet not at any time able to come into a realization of the truth" (2 Timothy 3:7). There are other phrases invented by yours truly, though they are unprintable in such a respectable periodical as this.

#### NOW OR LATER

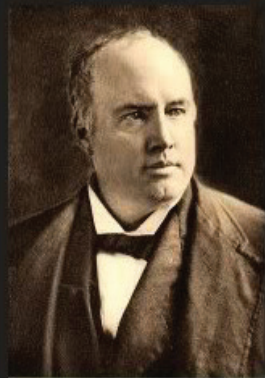
Paul tries hard early in Romans to bring people to a realization of their failings. He's trying to make things easier on people in the long run. It's as though he is saying, "Spare yourself barrels of grief by reading these few pregnant paragraphs and reckoning yourselves worthless compared to the righteousness of God. I'm trying to get this necessary breaking over with, for you. We all need to be broken of self-confidence. You can either do it the easy way, or the hard way. If you don't believe what I'm telling you now, you'll go on your merry way and get broken later anyway, apart from your cooperation."

This corresponds to Jesus saying in Matthew 21:44,

And he who is falling on this stone shall be shattered, yet on whomever it should be falling, it will be scattering him like chaff.

Instead of realizing their own unworthiness, people enter this section of Romans pre-loaded with a favorable estimation of themselves. Rather than letting this passage change them, they change *it*, reading it through the rose-colored glasses of an errant self-opinion. In their minds, these verses apply to others only. This is what the doctrine of human free will does to people. It makes them think they are relying on God, when in fact they are relying on themselves. Rather than faith in Christ, they have





There can be but little liberty on earth while men  
worship a tyrant in heaven.

(Robert Green Ingersoll)

faith in their faith. Standing to be judged, these people will ultimately be stunned to discover that the worst acts on earth were not murder and adultery. The worse acts were those which pretended to laud the cross, but which ended up despising it. (False images of God *inspire* murder and adultery.) The worst acts are those which claim an inability to reach God apart from the cross, but then deny the very assertion with doctrines making the human will and its exercise the final arbiter of one's eternal destiny. The worst acts are those which preach a God of limitless grace, but then damn the majority of the race to eternal conscious torment. The worst acts make God, Himself, a hypocrite. It is for the disseminators of these false teachings that the hottest judgments of the Great White Throne are reserved.

#### THE GREAT WHITE THRONE

**“Yet, in accord with your hardness and unrepentant heart, you are hoarding for yourself indignation in the day of indignation and revelation of the just judgment of God, Who will be paying each one in accord with his acts: to those, indeed, who by endurance in good acts are seeking glory and honor and incorruption, life eonian. Yet to those of faction, and stubborn, indeed, as to the truth, yet persuaded to injustice, indignation and fury, affliction and distress, on every human soul which is effecting evil, both of the Jew first and of the Greek, yet glory and honor and peace to every worker of good, both to the Jew first, and to the Greek” (Romans 2:5-10).**

I believe this passage to be describing the proceedings at the Great White Throne. Note the similarities between Romans 2:5-6, “revelation of the just judgment of God,

Who will be paying each one in accord with his acts”; and Revelation 20:12—

And I perceived the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne. And scrolls were opened. And another scroll was opened which is the scroll of life. And the dead were judged by that which is written in the scrolls in accord with their acts.

No one in either of these passages is judged for sin. We are considering two different words here in the Greek. The Greek word for “sin” is *hamartia*, while the Greek word for “acts” is *ergon*. Sin is the underlying problem; acts are the results of the underlying problem. The underlying problem (sin) has been fixed by Christ, but we still do stuff (acts). Of this stuff we still do, some is good and some is bad. Sin is that thing that would separate us for eternity from God, via death. Sin is no longer a problem; Christ took it away (John 1:29). Thus, no one will be separated from God for eternity. But the things we *do* will need adjusting, both for our benefit and the benefit of those who have done us either good or ill. Again, Christ judged the underlying problem and delivered us from the eternal consequences. God leaves our individual acts on the table so that we can either be rewarded for them, or confront them for our own good. Only then will these irritants be graciously removed.

As members of the body of Christ, we do not come into judgment. John 5:24 is what I call a transadministrational truth, that is, it applies to the Circumcision as well as to the Uncircumcision:

Verily, verily, I am saying to you that he who is hearing My word and believing Him Who sends Me, has life eonian and is not coming into judging, but has proceeded out of death into life.

For those to whom God has not given faith in this life (worldly people; atheists; Christians), the Great White Throne brings them to the realization of human inability and divine ability. We have received this wisdom in *this* life—thank God.

The Great White Throne is for hard hearts. In the case of the atheist, it takes a hard heart to look at creation and not see a Creator. In the case of the Christian or other religious person, it takes a hard heart to believe God will torture billions of his children for eternity—including loved ones and family members—in spite of sending Christ to rescue the race. And yet these kinds of people *can* believe this, even while going about their daily business. This is utterly brutal callousness. Harder hearts you will not find.

Even among the faithless, there is a mix of good and bad. Some faithless people are great philanthropists and



humanitarians. Mother Theresa was one. Other faithless people are quite nasty; I am thinking of Adolph Hitler. Mother Theresa is an unbeliever because she stumbled on the stumbling stone, the cross. Her faith was a matter, not of Christ crucified, but of observing Catholic ritual. The cross was too simple for her. Mother Theresa will be judged for this. She will realize at the Great White Throne the worthlessness of her Catholic ritual. At last, she will behold the cross and what it did for her. She will not be judged in accord with her underlying sin (Jesus died for her underlying sin), but in accord with her acts. She did many good acts.

For good yet faithless people like Mother Teresa, God gives, “life eonian” (Romans 2:7). Even though she will have missed the thousand-year kingdom (“the rest of the dead do not live until the thousand years should be finished—Revelation 20:5), Mother Teresa will avoid the lake of fire (the lake of fire is the second death—Revelation 20:14), and will be ushered onto the New Earth, albeit as a mortal (she will not be made immortal until the consummation of the eons (1

Corinthians 15:21-28). This will be her “life eonian.”

Hitler’s sin is the same as Mother Teresa’s in that neither of them trusted Jesus Christ as their Savior. They both trusted themselves. The common denominator between Hitler and Mother Teresa is human free will. This common form of self-righteousness condemns them both. Hitler lacked in the “good acts” department, however, and here is where he and Mother Teresa part company. For Adolph Hitler, it will be, “indignation, fury and affliction, and distress” (Romans 2:8-9). Mother Teresa will also get a dose of this, just not to the degree Hitler will.

**“Both of the Jew first and of the Greek” (Romans 2:10).**

Jews are mentioned first here, I believe, because access to the written Word of God subjects them to a stricter judgment. They fail to live up to the privilege of possessing divine revelation. We will be speaking more of this next week. Some of this may be repetitive, but if Paul repeats it, I will too. And repeat it, he does.

It’s one way to make sure you will never forget it. —MZ



#### A PRACTICAL QUESTION CONCERNING THESE TRUTHS

Dear Martin,  
Every day I look forward to your audio messages, Crack of Dawn videos, and articles. I’ve written previously, and will continue because I still need an answer to a question that I cannot wrap my head around. Clearly, you and other believers (including myself) see through the lies taken as truth by Christians. You speak of these Christians being confronted at the Great White



Throne. How can we, as believers, condemn, rant, and cast stones at these people when in fact God has placed every one of them, including the leaders, in the positions they find themselves? God is sovereign and places all exactly where He wants them. We cannot change that which God has arranged. I feel great sadness for these people, especially given that they will one day stand before Christ Jesus and be made aware that they were given such ignoble positions for God's greater glory. How sad to be one that was hardened.

The question: Is condemnation of Christians a path you want to take? Where in Scripture does it state that we have any authority to do anything but to accept God as God and the Director of His creations, namely people.

Thank you, Martin.

My love to you.

*Becky*

Dear Becky,  
I am not sure you are aware of it, but your objection is the precise objection, nearly word-for-word, of the protester of Romans, chapter 9. I'm not getting on you unduly about this, I'm just pointing it out to you. Paul writes, and my teaching is: "Consequently, then, to whom He will, He is merciful, yet whom He will, He is hardening." Here comes your protest. I quote now from Romans 9:19—

You will be protesting to me, then, 'Why, then, is He still blaming? For who has withstood His intention?' Paul's answer is: "O man! Who are you, to be sure, who are answering again to God? That which is molded will not protest to the molder, 'Why do you make me thus?' Or has not the potter the right over the clay, out of the same

kneading to make one vessel, indeed, for honor, yet one for dishonor?

In this series on Romans, I've show you Paul's condemnation of the world. Paul points out in Romans 1:22 that the entire world is stupid: "Professing themselves to be wise, they are made stupid." If Paul knows that God has made people stupid, why does he condemn people for being stupid? You would have to ask the same question of Paul that you ask of me. I'm not saying it's an abnormal, unnatural question, I just don't want you to consider me an anomaly.

Paul rails against the Jews in nearly all of Romans, chapter 2, as we shall see.

You assume that because God does everything, we should not fight and struggle against it. Allow me to offer you a practical example from everyday life of this kind of thinking. When you have grasped this simple example, I then want you to apply it to the spiritual realm (for some reason, this is harder for people), and I think at that point everything will make sense to you.

Matthew 5:45 states that God sends the rain. So here is my question to you: Since you know God is sovereign and sends the rain, why do you use your windshield wipers when you're driving during a rainstorm, to get rid of the rain God sent?

This is precisely what you are asking me, in the realm of teaching about God: "Martin, since God makes people hard, why do you point out their flaws and try to correct them?"

Here is the answer: God hardens people so that we can be fellow workers with Him in bringing these people to the truth. According to Paul, this bringing to the truth includes the command to teachers: "expose, rebuke, entreat" (2 Timothy 4:2). Since God hardens whom He will (Romans 9:18), and since Paul is here *ordering* me to rebuke people, how can I not but rebuke people whom God hardens? I am not condemning them to hell. I am not condemning them to eternal separation from God. I am not hating them. This is where I differ from the condemners of Christianity. Rather, I am exposing and rebuking them to show their error to themselves, and to others, that all might come into a realization of the truth, as they surely will (1 Timothy 2:4; 4:10).

I hope this helps. Thank you for writing. My love to you as well. As always, and because of grace,

*Martin*

**"God hardens people so we can bring them the truth."**