

JUDGMENT OF GOOD AND EVIL

Romans 2:9-16

Romans, Chapter 2, Verse 9: "Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile:"

These days, it's fashionable to pretend that God no longer judges wickedness. The days when God rained fire and brimstone on Sodom and Gomorrah are long past - God doesn't work that way any more! But, those who pretend such things are deceiving themselves. For example, there is a modern-day Sodom right in our own back yard, just a little bit southeast of Florida.

Port Royal, which used to be a city on the island of Jamaica, was often called the richest and wickedest city in the world.

It was the natural rendezvous for most of the pirates and buccaneers that used to roam the waters of the Caribbean. Liquor, gambling, women, drugs - every vice thrived in Port Royal in greater extravagance than anywhere else in the world. Perpetual brawls raged in the streets and the blood of murdered men flowed endlessly. Rape and theft were commonplace.

Then on June 7, 1962, just a little <sup>less than 30</sup> ~~over 25~~ years ago, two monstrous earthquakes struck Port Royal. With the second quake, ~~the~~ the sea was driven back half a mile and the city was split open in a dozen places. Scores of screaming men, women, and children were almost instantly swallowed-up by the earth.

Choking sulphur fumes rose from the new holes in the earth's surface. Then as the sea returned, a great wall of water swept into Port Royal, smashing ships and washing buildings from their foundations. Suddenly, and with a sullen roar, the whole city slipped slowly into the sea with most of its population.

To this day, you can go down to the site and look down through several fathoms of clear water and see some of the coral-crusted remains of Port Royal, the wickedest city in the world!

God does still judge evil: "Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil."

However, verse 10 is the other side of the coin: "But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:"

Glory and honour beyond anything the world can offer belong to us as children of our Heavenly Father. J. C. Macaulay tells the story of visiting the opulent Biltmore Estate near Asheville, North Carolina. He was accompanying a group of college students who were preparing for Christian service on the mission field. They were all impressed as they viewed the fabulous treasures on display and the luxuriant surroundings.

But as they returned to their summer conference grounds, the students began singing with joy in their hearts:

"When you look at others with their lands and gold,  
Think that Christ has promised you his wealth untold;  
Count your blessings - money cannot buy  
Your reward in Heaven nor your home on high."

Macaulay writes that he thought to himself, "How much richer are these young people who are investing their lives in the Lord's service than the owners of the most treasure-laden castles of the world!"

And the peace we are promised is much more than just the absence of war. It is the inner peace that allows us to face anything, secure in the knowledge that we are safe in God's hands.

Just before President Eisenhower died, Billy Graham was invited to visit him at Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, D.C. He was told he could stay thirty minutes. When he went in, President Eisenhower was wearing his usual big smile, even though he knew he didn't have long to live.

Later Billy Graham told what happened:

"When the thirty minutes were up, he asked me to stay longer and said to me, Billy, I want you to tell me again how can I be sure my sins were forgiven and that I am going to heaven, because nothing else matters now.

"I took my New Testament and read him scriptures. I pointed out that we are not going to heaven because of our good works, or because of money we've given to the church. We are going to heaven totally and completely on the basis of the merits of what Christ did on the cross. Therefore he could rest in the comfort that Jesus paid it all!

"After prayer, Ike said, 'Thank you, I'm ready!'"

President Eisenhower had God's peace in his heart, and not even death could shake that peace!

11. "For there is no respect of persons with God."

The first part of Romans 2 tells us that God's judgement will be according to truth and that it will also be according to works. And now, Romans 2:11-16 tell us that God's judgment will also be impartial. Romans 2:11 says it concisely in nine words: "For there is no respect of persons with God." This means that there is absolutely no middle ground between mercy and justice. You can't have a little bit of each.

It is either all mercy and no justice, or it is all justice and no mercy. It is all mercy for those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ - mercy that flows from the fact that the divine justice was fully satisfied by Jesus when he was our substitute and bore our sins and our punishment on the cross. But it is all justice and no mercy: justice to the full and forever, for those who will not receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior!

12. "For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law;"

There is no hope for any man outside of Christ! Sinners who have never heard the law are dead and damned without the law. And sinners who know the law are damned by the law. And we are all sinners! The Bible defines a sinner as anyone who is less perfect than God. That includes you, and me, and everybody else in the world!

13. "(For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.)"

This verse is not saying that you can work your way into Heaven by being a doer of the law. Quite the opposite: it is saying that since no-one is able to be a doer of the law, no-one can be justified apart from the blood of Christ. There is no way to work your way into Heaven.

If we think we are really good people, and really doers of the law, James 2:10 tells us, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." One single transgression is all that it takes to make us guilty, lost, helpless sinners.

And, if anyone would dare to think that he or she has not broken even one point of the law, recall what Jesus said when the lawyer asked him which was the greatest commandment. Mark 12:30 records that Jesus said to him, "...thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength..." None of us has obeyed that commandment! So, we are all guilty! There is no hope for us except through the blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

14. "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:"

15. "Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)"

Every nation on Earth, whether or not it acknowledges the true God, nevertheless recognizes that it needs laws in order to govern itself. And so that nation establishes laws and standards for its populace. But the people never live up to those laws! Instead, they accuse one another, make excuses, and continue to deny God's rule over them. There is no question of justification in these verses: they merely set forth the principles of condemnation.

16. "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel."

For those who have not put their trust in Christ, there will be no place to hide from the Wrath of God! Romans 2:16 says, "...God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ..."

Less than a hundred years ago, it was still possible to deceive ourselves into believing that the secrets of the heart could never be unveiled. But, today, in the face of all man's inventions, how is it possible for men to think that God is not able to know all?

Man now uses sonar, radar, and lasers to see into the depths of the ocean and onto the surfaces of distant planets. He uses geiger counters and metal detectors to find minerals and objects beneath the surface of the ground. He even uses polygraphs and drugs to pry the truth out of men's minds. If man can do all this, how can we think that God cannot do even more; immeasurably more?

Beloved, there is no way to hide from the Wrath of God! There is no escape! If you commit a crime on Earth, the crime may never be detected and you may think you've gotten away with it, but God knows: you can't hide it from Him!

If the crime is detected but you run to Brazil or somewhere else with no extradition, you may escape the Justice Department of the United States, but God is waiting: you can't escape His justice.

If you get caught and are brought to trial, you may still escape human justice if your lawyer finds some technicality in the law that he can use to get you off, but there are no technicalities in God's law: His law is perfect - there are no loopholes.

And, if all else fails and you are caught, tried, convicted, and sent to prison, you might still be paroled or escape. But there is no parole from Hell; there is no escape from the Lake of Fire!

There is no escape! And, you are guilty! Quick! Settle out of court before it's too late! If you haven't already done so, throw yourself on the mercy of God! Do it now! Now is the accepted time! Now is the day of salvation!

If there are any here who have not yet accepted God's salvation through the atoning death of Jesus Christ, do it now! Everywhere, the Bible teaches us that the issues of eternity are settled in this life. There is no purgatory: there is no second chance! It is appointed unto men once to die, and then the judgment.

In John 8:21 & 24, Jesus said, If ye "die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come....for if ye believe not that I am he ye shall die in your sins." Without Jesus, you are already dead and damned where you stand. Don't stay dead and damned: reach out and accept life and salvation instead!

Hallelujah! Amen!

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