

***“Romans, Dispensationally Considered —  
Who Art Thou O Man That Judges?”***

**Our Outline Today:**

- ***Once All Knew God and His Glory But Now That Knowledge Has Been Lost***
- ***What Has Been the Effect of The Dispensational Change Through Paul?***
- ***The Bottom Line — All Stand Under Judgment By Their Creator, Always***
- ***The Revelation of the Dispensation of Conscience Continues In the Romans***

**I. Once All Knew God and His Glory But Now That Knowledge Has Been Lost:**

- ***We have been studying how Paul opens the letter to the Romans and how he in other ways as well and the Lord also in other portions of the Word revealed various important aspects of his dispensational plan for the ages. We took note here during the last several weeks how God had revealed himself and his plan of redemption in the heavens itself as well as here on earth. That revelation and accompanying explanation was found in chapter 1 of Romans and in chapter 10 where Paul referred to Psalm 19.***
- ***Then we looked at Paul's preaching on his missionary journey to Asia and then in Greece culminating in the great city of Athens. Though Greece at that time was ruled by the Roman emperor, life went on there pretty much as it had for hundreds of years. Through all of that it was clear that the creator God had revealed in his creation much concerning himself and mankind and therefore no one was with an excuse. Sinful and rebellious man was held accountable by Almighty God and judgment was therefore a certainty.***
- ***But there was hope as the first verses in the Romans made so clear. The way the apostle put it in his Mars Hill speech was that in addition to the signs given before, many which had remained in the common knowledge of mankind (while many other were sadly lost, we know), but now a new sign had been added, that of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. That was the crown jewel of the revelation of God concerning his great work of redemption from the effects of Adam's sin propagated to all of humanity. It was the good news of the coming of the Seed of the Woman, as the prophetic plan had now been advanced in its fulfillment greatly. But***

*this demanded a dispensational change to what God had previously revealed concerning his work down through the ages.*

- *Paul's preaching in Acts 13, 14 & 17 brought that dispensational change into a clearer focus:*

*Acts 13:38-39, 43, 48 [In Antioch of Psidia — Just after preaching the resurrection, Paul continues...]*

*38 Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:*

*39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.*

*...*

*43 Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.*

*...*

*48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.*

- *Many were saved. Some Jews and proselytes were exhorted to continue in grace (continue hearing so that they might believe) but it was the Gentiles that gladly received the teaching and were saved. I wonder if it was because they had at least to some degree received the witness in the heavens while the Jews had not. Perhaps.*
- *And then in chapter 14 where we looked last time where Paul's preaching of the gospel was interrupted with his stoning, but afterward he returns to this city and region and further ministers God's grace with much fruit. The foundation had been laid by his earlier preaching that relied on and prepared their hearts using the signs and their teaching.*

*Acts 14:14-19 [In Lystra, after the healing of a man lame from birth, the citizens of the city prepared to bow down and even sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas treating them as if they were "gods"]*

*14 Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out,*

*15 And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein:*

*16 Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.*

17 Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

*Acts 17:16-18, 22-25, 30-32 [Now, in Athens ...]*

16 Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.

17 Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him.

18 Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.

...

22 Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.

23 For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

24 God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

25 Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

...

30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

32 And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this *matter*.

- *Paul refers here to the signs established from the beginning. He knows that some of them remained in the understanding of these Gentiles for there were many evidences. In fact the entire Greek Mythology was a perverse twisting of the teaching revealed from the heavens by Almighty God in the beginning.*
- *But, he exclaimed, now the Lord had brought forth a new “sign” — that of the resurrection of Christ! Revealing the meaning of the sign required more grace teaching which he gave then to those compelled to receive this additional truth outside the formalities of*

***what the Athenic legal, philosophical, and religious system demanded.***

- ***So, at this point, the apostle stopped speaking and left the Greek supreme court that was meeting there on Mars Hill that day. Some had “mocked” but others said they wanted to hear more. But it was not the philosophers and the rulers of Athens that Paul was most interested in, it seems, for he did leave them behind, just as he taught we should in Romans 16:17.***
- ***So although the witness of the stars of heaven and the signs of the seasons, new moons, etc. only continued in a more limited way, nevertheless all were without excuse. And now a new sign has been given — and that was Christ resurrected from the dead!***

***But would the Gentiles receive it for according to prophecy, the Jews for the most part had not?***

- ***But, as Paul says in verse 31 of Acts 17 with the words “... but now commands all men everywhere to repent ... because he hath appointed a day ...” the signs were not enough for saving faith to grasp on to anymore. Something else was required for that as a dispensational change had occurred. As in the Acts 14 account, his preaching there was interrupted before he reached that additional item. But after his stoning he was surrounded by those, like Dionysius and Damaris, who “continued with Paul ‘in the grace of God’” (Acts 13:43), and others here who were saved as they attended to Paul and his continued teaching concerning the wealth of grace through the risen savior, whom the apostle was preaching everywhere.***

## ***II. What Has Been the Effect of The Dispensational Change Through Paul?***

- ***There is the beginnings of a dispensational outline here in the Romans, do you see it? Not that most of those signs still remain, of course, but some do, at least. But which are they that remain? Well the one cannot be denied as Paul proclaimed so boldly everywhere: It is the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, that of the risen Christ, of course, as Acts 17:31 proclaims. That should convince all of a coming judgment and all are therefore without excuse, Paul writes. How wonderful the rest of the saving message is though, that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and is now risen again, and all who believe on him will be blessed eternally together with him.***

***And that we shall always possess his righteousness, for he has been “raised again for our justification”. You are more than free of this judgment or that through Moses and his sacrifices, more than the recipients of the mercy of God, more than acquitted, more than forgiven. You are declared righteous as Christ himself is righteous, no judgment of God again even possible. Though man may condemn you, the Lord has promised that he will not!***

- ***Paul’s gospel includes all of this, amen and amen. Rejoice believer! But now we go back to the Romans account to see more of what is written there, as the dispensational plan of Almighty God for sinners is further outlined.***

### ***III. The Bottom Line — All Stand Under Judgment By Their Creator, Always:***

- ***What is written here at the end of chapter one and at the beginning of chapter two of the Romans is very foundational and a good introduction to the rest of the verses in chapter 2. Let us see:***

***[READ ] Romans 1:28-32***

***28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;***

***29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,***

***30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,***

***31 Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:***

***32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.***

***[READ ] Romans 2:1-3***

***1 Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.***

***2 But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.***

***3 And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?***

- *The Bottom Line, the apostle writes here, is that all stand under judgment by their creator, all, Jews and Gentiles. And he strongly implies that all know it. They may not know all that was revealed before, but they do know this.*
- *Is this true only then or still true today? If we continue we may grasp the whole picture here as we see the dispensational outline here fully revealed:*

#### **IV. The Revelation of the Dispensation of Conscience Continues:**

- *The apostle continues in chapter 2 in a remarkable way. Let's examine that scripture by quickly reading it to begin with:*

**[READ ] Romans 2:4.** Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

**[READ ] Romans 2:5-7**

**5** But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

**6** Who will render to every man according to his deeds:

**7** To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:

**[READ ] Romans 2:8-10**

**8** But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,

**9** Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;

**10** But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:

**Romans 2:11** For there is no respect of persons with God.

- *The apostle's intention here in these words should be clear: The judgment of God on all is held to be still known by all if little else. But there is more still to be known as well, and a way pointing to salvation rather than perdition is indicated in the words here in verse 4. For, he writes, there was still available a knowledge of the "riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering" of God and then the reality of repentance regarding that former life, for indeed the*

***truth was there to be known that “... the goodness of God leadeth to repentance”? This was not only a grieving about one’s past sins in the sense of “feeling sorry”, for that was a concept conveyed by a different Greek work than the one found here, but rather a change of mind regarding ones current condition before the Creator and indeed so much more.***

- ***So many were simply disobedient with what they did know. It seems to me that his intention is that they knew they were under God’s judgment but that their response to that was contrary to what God had revealed of his expectations for sinners who knew they were under condemnation. But he implies strongly here that many also knew something of God’s “riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering”. That meaning is underscored in what follows.***
- ***The bottom line is that the Lord held all accountable, Jew or Gentile, for they all had the same revelation that had been given before and its truth sufficiently continued in Paul’s day for him to write these words about both individual accountability AND eternal redemption for those who had lived according to that other program, implying that there were always some:***
  - ***Verses 6 and following state the fundamental principle that all should know: For the Lord of glory has made known that all stand condemned by the clear evidence the Creator has provided. Each sinner, he writes, has evidence from the Almighty that he stands during life and at will at the judgment stand before his creator naked before the one who had always had the claim on his life as his creator and sustainer.***
  - ***Verse 7: Furthermore, those that also took God at his word by repenting had the desire for and expectation of eternal blessing. That one through life after repentance saw all with an eternal expectation of future glory. That one would be blessed by God in both this life and eternally. Consider Job in this regard as a clear example. This was the hope of Gentiles who received the revelation that the Lord God had provided.***
  - ***Verses 8-9: But the other side of the coin was also clear, for many would not receive that testimony. And those that would not keep his will would suffer the consequences as these verses make so evident.***

- ***Verse 10: The positive and eternal hope of the Gentile believer is now repeated here in direct opposition to the one opposing God truth:*** “But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile”.
- ***Two ways of life are here therefore contrasted, that of the believer and that of the unbeliever. But some are Gentiles and others are Jews, and the judgment of God through Christ will take that into account. The Gentiles were not under the law, it says here, but the Jews were. The Gentiles had “law from God” written in their hearts in the form of the conscience (verses 11-16). Let’s read these next verses now to prepare and set the stage for next week’s teaching. For the Jews also had the Law of Moses ADDED to the previous covenants and so they were truly “under the law” and would have by necessity a life marked by that law while the Gentiles had no law except what what written in their conscience:***

***[READ ] Romans 2:11-16***

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

***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;***

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

***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;)***

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

- ***Ah, there is so much here that we must save these words for next time ... but the dispensational plan of God is outlined here at least in two instances, the conscience and the law. The other dispensations that have already past are also hinted at here, human government (Noah, Job), and promise (Abraham) as we shall see in chapters yet ahead, and, of course, grace has already been introduced in chapter one. These are all independent but there are relationships between them as we will see as we proceed.***
- ***One aspect of this seems clear though, and that is that earlier dispensational plans (such as the one that relied on the heavenly***



***witness and on the inwrought conscience) continued as foundational in importance as other plans came to be instituted which had their own unique focus (such as human government or promise or the law). But Paul was respectful towards them all, amazingly, and faithfully explained their ongoing relevance.***

- ***As we proceed next time, Lord willing, we will see how this develops here in the great letter to the Romans. For other dispensational plans will be brought under Paul's microscope as he examines them carefully with a special focus on Abraham and the promises and on Moses and the Law.***

***Next Time: We will continue here in chapter two and see how this outline of God's Dispensational Plan of the Ages is revealed further here .***