

20 Lessons from the Impartiality of God, II

Romans 2:11-16

“For there is no respect of persons with God.”

REVIEW

8. (:12) “As many as have sinned...” Here we find Bible doctrine on sin: that eternal condemnation is not related to quantity or quality of sin. One chain link breaks, and the whole load falls. One wrong step in the minefield spells doom. A drop of poison contaminates the drink. And one bite of the forbidden fruit brings spiritual death. This truth will be explained more in Romans 5 (see v. 12).

9. “...without law...” Non-Jews were not given primary care of the law of God. This non-assignment does not mean that Gentiles were without witness, however. Everyone has the law written on his heart. So Gentiles who break the law are also guilty and subject to God's judgment. How is this judgment carried out fairly, given the differing exposures people have to truth? Remarkably, some answer the question by denying the need for some to hear and believe the gospel of Christ in order to be saved.

10. “...shall perish...” “Perish” means to destroy fully, typically in a violent, sudden, or untimely way. The prodigal son feared perishing for hunger. The disciples at sea feared perishing in a storm. See the association of the word in Matt. 5:29-30 with mutilation to avoid hell. Truly, as many as have sinned face perishing as pictured by starving, drowning, torturing, and burning.

11. “...in the law...” Here we have introduced the heart of Jewish prejudice: the expectation of God's preferential treatment for being caretakers of the law. This is an inaccurate presumption. In reality, the more God gives to people the more He expects of them. See James 3:1, Luke 12:48. The dilemma with the law is that it is not the hearers but the doers who are justified. The law must be kept perfectly, and no one can. See Gal. 3:10-11. Recall how the dilemma is illustrated in *The Merchant of Venice*.

12. Certain truths are very hard to have sink in. The example here is the purpose of the law. The world, the flesh, religious institutions, etc., can not seem to comprehend the purpose. The Lord complains, “But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear. Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets.” (Zech. 7:11-12)

13. (:15) See the importance of reflection. The Greek word translated “thoughts” is *logismos*, which means to contemplate actions as a result of the verdict of the conscience. Paul's counsel to Timothy and through him to us is, “Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.” (I Tim. 4:15) Again, we read, “We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.” (Heb. 2:1)

14. Meanwhile, no issues should keep us from confessing Christ. Not concern for fairness to the less advantaged, or of the spread of the effects of the Fall, of eternal suffering, of the foreknowledge of God, etc. A wise choice would be to act on the measure of truth we do understand. Act on Mark 16:15, Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8.... Act on the known; leave the unknown and incomprehensible to God.

DISCUSSION

1. How much sin does it take, and how bad does it have to be, for a person to go to hell? Explain.
2. Do you believe that believers in false religions and atheists will go to heaven if they are sincere?
3. Jesus said, "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required." (Luke 12:48) Old Testament Jews were given the law. What have you been given, and what do you think is expected of you to do with it?
4. What great truths have you observed to be very hard to sink in?
5. An anchor verse for us as a church is "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all." (I Tim. 4:15) Write a 3-point sermon outline based on this text. :)
6. List things you know you should be doing, do them this week, and report how it went.