

Romans 2 • Study Notes • Religion, Morality and Faith

Note: The Apostle Paul has been dividing all mankind into 3 groups to establish their guilt before God. In chapter one he spoke of the godless (1:18-32). In this chapter he addresses the two remaining groups: The moralists (2:1-16) and the religious.

- **Read verse 1.** Define what it is to be a moralist.
- Now define “moral superiority.”
- In **verse 3** the Apostle asks a pointed question suggesting that the person who sees themselves as morally superior is just as much under God’s judgment as the person who is considered “immoral.” Read Matthew 5:21-22, 27-28. What is Jesus saying in these verses about guilt? How do these verses relate to what Paul is saying to the moralist?
- What is one of the major pitfalls of always looking at the faults of others? (It tends to blind us toward our OWN faults.)
- The Bible isn’t telling us that we can never address sin in the lives of others. But what attitude should we have when doing it?
- **Read verses 6-11.** These can be challenging verses to read because, taken all by themselves, they might give someone the impression that we are saved by our good works. But we know according to passages like **Ephesians 2:8-9** that Paul is NOT saying that. (Lewis S. Chafer in his book **Systematic Theology** says that there are approximately 150 passages in the Bible that state that our salvation is acquired by faith which naturally precludes good works. So, if the Apostle Paul were saying in these verses that people are saved by good works then he would be contradicting a huge part of the Bible. **Read John 6:28-29.** Based on that passage what are the “works” that God requires?
- If **verses 6-11** are not teaching that salvation is earned as a result of good works, then what *is* the Apostle saying? (Remember the context of this section — Paul is arguing for the guilt of mankind.)
- **Read verses 12-29** The last group of people that Paul confronts as being under God’s wrath are those who are “religious.” (The Apostle uses Jews as his primary example, but these words could apply to anyone who believes that adherence to religious rules are the way to be saved.) Describe the kind of religious observance the Apostle Paul is outlining in these verses.
- The Jews were obviously the Religionists of Paul’s day. Who do we see as “religious” today?
- Paul ends the chapter by talking about circumcision. The Jews believed that because they circumcised their males, that they were instantly made acceptable to God. What was the meaning behind circumcision that they failed to recognize?