

# The Letter of St. Paul to the ROMANS



## OPENING WORSHIP

To begin your Bible study, read together **Psalm 2**. The nations conspire against God and his Son, Jesus Christ, because they don't want to call him Lord and Master. Unbelievers despise the righteousness of Christ and tout their own righteousness. In the end they will be destroyed.

## INTRODUCTION

What's in store for this world in which we live? All around us we see people thumbing their noses at God, living life with impunity, and shrugging off the yoke of God's direction in their lives. People want to do their own thing – and they feel they are accountable to no one.

Are you immune to this kind of thinking? How does your character compare with that of people around you. Do your moral character, your efforts to do good, and your attempts to please God actually make you any better than those around you? What will happen to you if your best efforts don't measure up? These are the issues we'll explore in today's Bible study.

## THE WRATH OF GOD

**Read Romans 1:18-32** and consider the following questions:

Today we are told over and over that God our Father loves us and cares for us. Very little is said about God's wrath that is coming upon the world. Why is it important to understand both God's love and God's wrath?

Place a checkmark in front of the statements that are true:

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> God loves sinners | <input type="checkbox"/> God loves sinners but hates sin | <input type="checkbox"/> God must punish all sinners   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> God hates sinners | <input type="checkbox"/> God will punish sin             | <input type="checkbox"/> God is both just and merciful |

Why are pagans, heathens and unbelievers without excuse before God? (v. 19, 20)

Why are there so many religions in the world? (v. 21-23)

Explain the meaning of this ominous phrase: *God gave them over . . .* (v. 24, 26, 28)

What does God say here about homosexuality?

Consider verses 29-32. How do you compare with this detailed list of specific sins?

### **Read Romans 2:1-16.**

Explain this statement: "When we point fingers at others, we're really condemning ourselves."

Verses 6-11 seem to imply that we can earn God's favor by what we do. What does Paul mean here?

Suppose someone has never heard about Jesus or read the Bible. How can God condemn such a person, who has never had a chance to hear and believe the good news?

## WHAT ABOUT YOU?

### Read Romans 2:17-29.

Paul shifts the focus here from the Gentiles to the Jews – to whom he is specifically writing. It’s fun to blame others and point out their sin. What does Paul emphasize in verses 17-24.

“God’s name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you” (v. 24). Describe an occasion where you brought ridicule and disgrace to the name of Christ and his church because of your behavior.

Apply vs. 25-27 to your reception of Baptism and Holy Communion today.

Do you have a circumcised heart? Explain the meaning of the term.

## WE’RE ALL NATURALLY UNDER THE SAME CONDEMNATION

### Read Romans 3:1-8.

Some people who call themselves Christians have a very distorted view of God’s grace. Grace becomes an excuse for licentious living. See if you can follow the logic Paul outlines here:

We should glorify God . . .

God is glorified when he forgives sins . . .

God cannot forgive me, unless I sin . . .

Therefore I should sin more, so God can forgive me more, so God is glorified more!

What is Paul’s verdict upon a loose and cavalier attitude that turns God’s grace into a license for sin? (v. 8)

### Read Romans 3:9-20.

The philosophy of *humanism* says that man is basically good, and that he is only corrupted by society’s influence. The theology of *Arminianism* says that man, while sinful, is not entirely corrupt, and he can cooperate with God, if he so chooses. Based upon Paul’s description in these verses, how do you describe the character of a natural human being?

Paul’s entire discussion from chapter 2 through chapter 3:19 finally leads to what great conclusion? (v. 20)

What is the purpose of God’s law? (v. 20)

Summarize Paul’s logical train of thought in chapters 2 and 3:

(2:1-16) \_\_\_\_\_ are sinners ⇒ (2:17-29) \_\_\_\_\_ are sinners

⇒ (3:1-19) \_\_\_\_\_ are sinners;

(therefore, 3:20) \_\_\_\_\_ !

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## VERSE TO REMEMBER

### Romans 3:20

*Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.*

**For next time read Romans chapters 2 through 5.**

Remember, we’re striving to capture the continuity of Paul’s train of thought.