

ROMANS 1:18-3:39 | THE CASE REJECTED

Supplemental Resource: *Romans Graphically Presented*, pgs. 5-6

ROMANS 2:2-16 | GOD'S WORK UNDER LAW

Supplemental Resource: *Romans Graphically Presented*, pg 10

ROMANS 2:2-3 | GOD IS ABLE TO JUDGE

Supplemental Resource: *Romans Graphically Presented*, pg. 14

VERSE 2 – GREEN

Paul has been talking, in general, of the world situation, including the manifestation of God (1:18-20), the rejection by the world of that manifestation (1:21-23), and the wrath of God (1:24-2:1). Now Paul turns his attention toward the judgment of God as manifested during the dispensation of the Law. Verses 2-3 are a bridge, being applicable in general to all men living in that dispensation, with general truth for all times. By verse four the application is only to those living under Law, and thus care should be taken not to make direct application to our Christian lives today, for we are not under law.

In verse 2, Paul expresses a foundational element of Judeo-Christian thought, that God (and only God) is righteous and holy, and thus only God can pass judgment.

VERSE 3 – GREEN

A similar foundation to Judeo-Christian thought is that there is an inescapable **judgment of God**, and that every individual should prepare for that “day of judgment.”

However, though not revealed at this point in the book of Romans, there is an age of grace in which a person may totally *skip the judgment!* Compare Romans 8:1 and Galatians 3:13, for example.

In our *rightly divided* color coding, these words should not be *black*, for they do have some applicability to mankind today. But they should not be *blue* because there is a way to **escape the judgment of God**. I have made them *green* because they contain a foundational issue which has truth for those who reject the gospel of grace.

ROMANS 2:4 | GOD ALLOWS REPENTANCE

Supplemental Resource: *Romans Graphically Presented*, pg. 14

VERSE 4 – BLACK

These words apply to those under the law, and not to our dispensation (see v. 6 and v. 12-14, for evidence). During the age of the law God's **goodness and forbearance and longsuffering** was a gracious way of leading sinners **to repentance**.

While the Greek word *μετάνοια* [metanoia] has the etymology related to *change of thinking*, the usage of the word is not as much the *change of thinking* as the *change of behavior*. There are many in the Free Grace Movement and others who adhere to grace-salvation who emphasize *change of thinking* to avoid the clear works requirement of *change of behavior*. However, this really doesn't solve the problem since a *change of thinking* is as works-based as a *change of behavior* (for isn't a day of education *work*?) Only the right-divider has the blessing of recognizing that *repentance belongs in the age of the law*. With this recognition one does not need to *wordsmith repentance* into a non-works status. We should note that the use of etymology to “unwork” the work of repentance is so pervasive that the right-divider will hear it often and be tempted to employ it rather than use proper right-division.

The *law of first use* in hermeneutics is that the first use of a word sets its default definition. The first use of repentance is found in Matthew 3:8. Another hermeneutical principle is that *the simple defines the difficult*. The simplest use of the word is found in Hebrews 6:1 and is clearly a works-based usage.

## VERSE 5 – BLACK

Too many, in that age of the law, did not come to **repentance** (v. 4), but rather built up a “treasure chest” of **wrath against the day of wrath**.

The word θησαυρίζω [thesaurizo] (translated **treasurest**) is the root of our word *thesaurus*. It is an "ultimate and complete collection" of things. Under the law, this *full treasure of sin* would be dealt with at the **righteous judgment of God**. Under grace (not yet revealed in Romans), there is no “treasure chest of wrath” because **God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them** (2 Cor. 5:19).

## VERSE 6 – BLACK

At the time of the **righteous judgment of God** (v. 5) God will **render to every man according to his deeds**. This is, of course, incompatible with the Pauline message of grace, in which **deeds** are not considered. The word translated **deeds** is ἔργον [ergon], the common word for *works*. How can one be saved **by grace...through faith...not of works** (Eph. 2:8-9) and then experience a judgment **according to his deeds**? Only a right-division approach to interpretation resolves this difficulty.

## VERSE 7 – BLACK

To the one who argue against our position that these verses *do not refer to the age of grace*, and that verse 7 refers to *rewards of salvation*, this verse becomes an almost impossible conundrum, for it unequivocally teaches that the path to **eternal life** is through **patient continuance in well doing**. If ever there was a *works-based* message of salvation, this is it. For additional Scriptures that support the idea that those living under Law (pre and post age of Grace) would be saved by works of the Law, consider Leviticus 18:5 and Luke 10:25-28.

The problem in the common interpretation comes from 1800+ years of the prevalence Covenant Theology. Even dispensational thinkers have a hard time getting away from this kind of thinking. When we try to fit every passage of Scripture into our preconceived notions of "everyone always by grace through faith," then we create contradictions that otherwise would not have been there. Take this passage as distinct and separate from the age of grace and everything harmonizes. Fail to recognize the different salvation of the age of grace and everything becomes convoluted.

## VERSES 8-9 – BLACK

For those who do evil deeds (as opposed to verse 7), the **righteous judgment of God** (v. 5) will bring **indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish**. Once again, this is *impossible* to reconcile to a “rewards” position. It is clearly and absolutely a position in which good works bring **eternal life** (v. 7) and evil works brings punishment **upon every soul of man that doeth evil**.

## VERSE 10 – BLACK

Paul began with **glory and honour** in verse 7 and concludes with the same here. These are presented as reward **to every man that worketh good**. Once again, works are *plain as day* in verses 5-11.

The phrase **to the Jew first, and also of the Gentile** is found three times in Scripture, verse 9, verse 10, and Romans 1:16 (where **Greek** is used rather than Gentile, and all three verses use the word Ἑλλην [helleni]). This phrase is often used to describe the age of grace but is actually in opposition to this age because there is currently **neither Jew nor Greek** (Gal. 3:28, Col. 3:11). The time of grace is *not* a time in which there is a **Jew first** theology, but prior to and after this dispensation God’s activity is definitely to the **Jew first**.

## VERSE 11 – BLACK

Deuteronomy 10:17 sets this forth as a characteristic of God. Under the law, the Jew was **first** (v. 10), but the Gentile would be judged under the same standard as the Jew, namely, the Law.

This character trait, of course, remains under grace even though the standard of judgment changed from works to faith.