Guilt of the Hypocrites

Romans 2:1-16

Introduction:

In the first three chapters of Romans Paul shows that all men are guilty before God. We have seen the “Guilt of the Gentile”. (Chapter 1)

Chapter 2 deals with the guilt of the hypocrite. - Actor- portrays himself as something he is not. Ryrie called them Moralists, true, but incomplete. Paul will deal next with the Jew and then all men.

I. Judgment by the Hypocrite Stated – 2:1-6

A. What He Feels – 2:1-2

“Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, because in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.” (1)

Paul starts this chapter with a “Therefore”- “What is it therefore?”

He is connecting this chapter with the first chapter. In 1:28, he says that men take pleasure in those who do those sins. It is not limited to those sins alone.

In chapter 2:1, Paul tells them that they, who condemn others, are doing the same things.

Man has a desire to parade the sins of others, even preachers do this sometimes, but this desire springs from his own sinfulness and boomerangs back upon him (like “rubber and glue).

But there is one good thing that comes from all of this: It shows that the accuser knows that the act, itself, is sin.

“But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things. (2)

Verse 2 we find that God judges according to truth against anyone who does those things, including the accused and the accuser.

B. What He Finds 2:1, 3

“And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God?”

The hypocrite finds that Numbers 32:23 is true, “be sure your sin will find you out.”

In the “Pharisee and the Publican”, Jesus said that the parable was about “those who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others.” The publican prayed, God be merciful to me, a sinner. The Pharisee prayed, “I thank you, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.” His hypocrisy was found out in his own words. Those acts are sins, by his own admission.

C. What He Forgets – 2:4

“Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?”

Goodness - χρηστότητος

Forbearance – ἀνοχῆς

Longsuffering – μακροθυμίας

While we are accusing other of these sins, we are ignoring the purpose of the goodness, forbearance and longsuffering of God. It is to lead us to repentance. God loves us to Himself.

If that doesn’t work, then comes the chastening, which is God’s love. (See Hebrews 12) At the end, there is “the sin unto physical death” (I John 5)

D. What He Faces – 2:5–6

“But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,who *“will render to each one according to his deeds”*:

The word wrath in Paul’s writings is never a reference to eternal wrath, but temporal wrath. So, this is temporal wrath and the “day of wrath” is the tribulation period.

Note: the singular “Oh man who judges”, and the singulars in verse 5. In this context the “Day of Wrath” takes on a “collective overtone.” He is looking at the human race as a whole. Eventually that race will reap the judgment it so richly deserves.

II. Judgment on the Hypocrite Shown – 2:7–16

A. Judged According to His Works – 2:7–10

1. God States the Reasons for a Person’s Behavior – 2:7–8

Good Behavior

Eternal life “to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality;”

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Note: One commentator saw a unique division in verses 7-10. Verse 7 pictures the rapture (no Jews) and they receive “glory, honor, and immortality;” Verses 8-10a pictures the tribulation, and they receive glory, honor, and peace; (10a), and (10b) pictures the millennium. (Check II Peter 3 in this regard.)

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Paul is not saying that those who do those things receive eternal life for doing them. There is more to eternal life than quantity of life. There is also quality of life. (See John 10:10) “More abundant life.” - There is also “life as a gift” and “life as a reward”.

Physical life is like that. We receive it as a gift from our parents. It has great potential. Then we develop it and we receive the benefits of that development as reward.

Paul has primarily in mind the life firmly dedicated to the acquisition of eternal rewards but his language does not exclude any good work. These receive immortality – at the Rapture

Bad Behavior

“…but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey-unrighteousness—indignation and wrath” (2:8)

This behavior brings indignation and wrath (temporal wrath) Eternal wrath comes later. I take it that this wrath is the wrath of the tribulation period on that final period of man’s disobedience.

It is also true of each individual until that time.

2. God States the Results of a Person’s Behavior - 2:9–10

“tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; The Jew is still first because he had the clearest revelation.”

Increased light brings increased responsibility.

“but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”

The “glory, honor, and peace” seem to be referring to the Millennium. Again, the Jew is first, but this time in a good thing.

B. Judged According to His Worth – 2:11–16

1. God’s Judgment is Discriminating – 2:11–15

1. He Weighs a Person’s Advantages – 2:11–12

“For there is no partiality with God. For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law.”

Thus, to the righteous, God gives reward. There is no respect of persons; and to the sinner He gives wrath, there is no respect of persons. But Paul knows only these two classes; He will soon prove that among the unsaved there are none righteous and that among the saved there are only the righteous, those justified by faith. Without faith it is impossible to please Him.

b. He Weighs a Person’s Attitudes – 2:13–15

The Attitude of the Jew

“(for not the hearers of the law *are* just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified;”

Hearing and knowing the Law is not enough. Doing the Law is necessary before God.

The Attitude of the Gentiles

“for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves,who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves *their* thoughts accusing or else excusing *them*).”

God’s will was known to everyone on earth at one time – after the flood! Some of that revelation passed on through many generations; parents to children, leaders to followers, in the form of religions. Generally, it was not in a book, but in their minds and hearts.

They also have a God-given conscience which gave them some more knowledge. The conscience has been called “the watchdog of the soul” It warns of danger. It can be ignored or seared and thus its help is minimized. But, when they do what they know, God gives them credit.

2. God’s Judgment Is Devastating – 2:16

“in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.”

In the Day of Judgment, God will judge men according to Paul’s Gospel. What a fearful day that will be when God begins to call to light the hidden works of darkness. All men have guilty secrets, things they have done which they ought not to have done, and things they have left undone which they ought to have done. They have not been overlooked nor forgotten by God. One day the hypocrite’s secrets will all be exposed and he will be shown up for what he really is.