

II

Principles of Divine Judgment

ROMANS 2:12-16

For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. ¹³ For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified. ¹⁴ For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. ¹⁵ They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them ¹⁶ on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.

READ | ROMANS 2:12–16

THINK ABOUT

All people deserve to be judged and condemned by God (divine judgment). We have no excuses. God has made Himself known to everyone. No one can say, “I didn’t know” and escape His judgment.

From this text alone, we can observe a number of ways God reveals Himself:

1. The law is written on our hearts. The Creator made us with a sense of morality.
2. We have a conscience. It is not always trustworthy, but we typically are aware of when we sin against God and others.
3. Our thoughts also make room for God and make us wonder about Him.

Does God exist? Yes! As the Designer, He placed within us built-in “God-detectors” to show us the way (the heart, the conscience, and the mind). We can only love, process, and think correctly when we have been transformed by the Gospel, but these “God-detectors” point us to Him in the meantime.

APPLY

Stop trying to figure it all out by yourself. God will judge the secret feelings and thoughts we have one day. They will be used to hold people accountable for rejecting Him. Why not go ahead and talk to someone now about your thoughts and feelings? Talk to someone you know who loves Jesus and will give you biblical direction and truth.

ASK

What do you believe about Jesus Christ?

What do you think most often about God? What fears or doubts do you have?

With whom do you feel most comfortable talking about God?

THE BIG IDEA

All humankind is infested and impacted by sin. Some sin under the law (Jews) while others sin without the law (Gentiles). God is the only one who sees and knows the condition of the heart. While we can hide things from our fellow man in the inner recesses of our hearts, God knows all and will judge each person accordingly.

KEY POINTS

Sin under or outside the law has similar divine consequences (v. 12).

God expects us to put His Word into practice (v. 13).

God speaks to the conscience of man innately (vv. 14–15).

God's knows and will judge the innermost secrets of man's heart (v. 16).

LIFE APPLICATION

Hearing God's Word without putting it into practice alienates us from God.

Hearing the Word of God without doing it hinders righteousness.

God knows the secrets of our hearts and speaks to us accordingly.

DISCUSSION

What kind of judgment is in view for the believer?

What other passage(s) in the Bible speaks of God's knowledge of man's heart?

How can we show that we are putting the Word of God into practice?

“PRINCIPLES OF DIVINE JUDGMENT”

Romans 2:12–16

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