OPEN

Do you realize that there is a time coming when there is going to be a fear of God before our eyes? If you believe that today, if you believe that you are accountable to God. Would it change the direction of your life, would it change the quest of your life, would you stop being selfishly ambitious for yourself and would you seek in a way, to honor God as God? There’s a day coming. We need to be ready.

PART ONE

When that judgment comes and, “… when men fear and when men tremble and when they crawl …,” as it says in Revelation, chapter 6, “… into the rocks and they cry to the rocks to crush them, to hide them form the wrath of God.” Do you realize that that time that is coming upon the earth and leads to the culmination of the judgment of all the nations at that time there will not be one single person who is without excuse before God? Now we’re
looking at the book of Romans and we’re in the second chapter and as that second chapter opens up, he turns from this description of a society that is gone mad, a society that is in rebellion to God, a society that has no rights or no wrongs or no standards, a society that is much like most of the world today. They are saying there are no absolutes. So he turns from them saying that they are without excuse and they are without excuse because God has put a God conscientiousness within them, because God has testified to His eternity and His attributes in nature so that what was made is clearly seen by us and we understand there’s a God behind it. Then in chapter 2 he turns either to the Jew or to just in general the hypocrite, the hypocrite that looks at the way the people are living in Romans, chapter 1, in all this licentiousness. And what do I mean by licentiousness? I mean in moral anarchy. In other words, there’s no restraint. I’ll do what I want to do. Get out of my way. Don’t tell me what’s right and don’t tell me what’s wrong. Go get away from me. I don’t want to hear it. That kind of an attitude. These people are more of a respectable people. These people are ones that look at that and they say you know, that is an abomination. It is an abomination to live morally, sexually like is described in Romans, chapter 1. It is terrible that these people are so filled with all this ungodliness and all this unrighteousness and that they are so mean and they are so evil and they are so in rebellion to society and to their parents. They shouldn’t be living that way. And yet the people that are saying that are judging them and yet their lives are not perfect either. So what he does in chapter 2, he begins, this part of the letter by saying, “Therefore you are without excuse, every man of you who passes judgment, for in that you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.” He says, “For we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things.” Now when he says that remember, there’s a footnote there in the margin of the New Inductive Study Bible that says that this should be according to truth. So now he’s going to start talking about the judgment of God. And we saw already that the judgment of God is according to truth. We
saw that the judgment of God is according to deeds. Look at verse 6, “Who will render to every man according to deeds, to his deeds?” In other words, look, your lifestyle manifest what you really believe. Your lifestyle manifest, shows, displays what you really believe, I mean, who you’re really focusing on, whether you really respect God. And fear God and by fearing God, I’m talking about respecting God. I’m talking about trusting God. I’m talking about believing God, honoring him as God and I’m also at times, because the Bible talks about it, trembling before God, because you know that you weren’t what you ought to have been. You didn’t do what you ought to have done. So he goes on to say, “Who will render to every man according to his deeds …,” now look at verse 7, “… To those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life.” In other words, He’s going to give eternal life to those who are seeking for glory and honor and immortality. Not my glory, not my honor, but that I am seeking to live in a way that honors God, that I’m seeking to live in a way that glorifies God, that gives a true and correct estimate of who God is and that I am seeking as it says in verse 7, “… that I am seeking immortality.” I’m seeking to live forever. I am seeking to live forever with God. That’s my goal. That’s my passion. Now if that’s your goal and that’s your passion you’re going to have eternal life. You say, but wait a minute, I have heard over and over and over again that true Christianity is attained not by good deeds, not by what you seek, but by faith. You’re right. You have heard it and you are dead right. And we saw in Romans, chapter 1 that “The righteous man shall live by faith, that our salvation is from faith to faith.” In other words it comes out of faith. We believe God and it is lived through faith. And that’s how we live. And that’s how we get eternal life. But, if I really believe that, then how am I going to live? Well, if I really believe that then it’s going to show because what am I doing? I am seeking glory and I am seeking honor and I am seeking immortality. In other words, I have a focus. I’m saying, hey, what I believe, I’m living in the light of it. What I believe dictates the way that I’m living. Watch the contrast and it might help you understand it better.
But he goes on to say, “But…,” when you see “but” there, when you’re studying the Bible and “but” is a term of contrast. And what God does is many times He shows us truth by bringing a contrast to us, light and darkness, good and evil, righteousness, unrighteousness. There’s a contrast, so that the lines are drawn very clearly. And you know what? In our world today, we need the lines drawn; because what we have done is we have tried to smudge the lines, so there is no difference and everything is gray and therefore there is no right, there’s no wrong, there’s no absolute. And that’s what we want to do. But God wants us to see the contrast. So what he says in verse 8 is, “But to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, they will get wrath and indignation.”

Now what do you need to mark? You need to mark “unrighteousness” here and you need to mark “wrath”. Now remember how we marked “righteousness” and you need to put a slash through it. You remember how we marked “wrath”. We took it and we put a fine red point like flames. All right, when he contrasts these two things, what you’re seeing is you’re getting a better understanding of the first part of it which says that “… if we are seeking …,” if this is our habit of life to seek honor and glory and immortality, we’re going to get eternal life. Contrast, “… if we are selfishly ambitious ….,” In other words, if our focus is on me, my, mine, you know and what we have to understand is life is not about us. It is so much greater. And the reason, the reason that so many are miserable, and you may be one of them, but the reason that so many are miserable is because they think life is about them. And when they think that life is about them, if life is not everything they want, if life is not as the saying goes, a piece of cake, I mean if it’s not dessert personified, then we’re just miserable. We’re absolutely miserable because it’s not lining up the way that we want it to line up. It’s not making us happy. So he’s saying, “If that you are selfishly ambitious, and you do not obey the truth, but you obey unrighteousness ….,” Now see, truth is to be obeyed. And this is what I want you to see; it is not just something that you put in your little brain. It is not something that you say, oh I know that. No.
It’s I know that and consequently I live accordingly. So if we are not obeying truth, but we are obeying unrighteousness and he’s going to talk about this in Romans, chapter 6. We’re going to see it really clearly then. He says, “… then there’s wrath and then there’s indignation.” He says, “There will be …,” now listen carefully, “… tribulation and distress, tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil.” Listen to God. This is the Word of God. If you are doing evil, you may think that you have escaped, that you have gone unnoticed, that you have got away with it. You may have cheated people. You may have been selfishly ambitious and just heaped up riches to yourself and in the process stripped others of their life savings or you may have made yourself rich and made your family miserable. I don’t know what you’ve done to do evil. You have molested someone. You may have defamed someone. You may have crushed someone. You may have murdered someone. But I want you to know this: there is a God in heaven and you better fear and you better tremble and you better come and throw yourself on His mercy. He can save you. He can save you. But He will save you His way or you won’t be saved. And this is what he’s saying. “There will be distress. There will be tribulation for every soul of man who does evil.” And then he wants to make sure that they don’t miss it. “For the Jew first, for the Jew first and also for the Greek or the Gentile,” the non-Jews. Now why does he say for the Jew first? Well, he said that the gospel is to be delivered to the Jew first and then to the Gentile and so now he’s saying judgment is for the Jew first and then for the Gentile. Why? We’ll talk about it when I come back after this break.

PART TWO

The question that I left you with is why is tribulation and distress to the Jew first and then to the Greek or then to any other human being that’s outside of the Jewish race? It’s because God deals impartially and it’s because God knows that they have had more light than any Gentile. God chose the nation
of Israel. He chose the nation of Israel... You say, well what right did He have to do that? Listen, He’s God. He can do anything He wants to do. If you get that through your head, it’s really going to help you a lot because then you quit sitting as a judge on God, and you submit to Him and life gets a whole lot easier. But they have had so much light and the more light that a person gets the greater the judgment. And so the Jews have had light ever since Abraham. They’ve had the promises of God as we’re going to see and I won’t go into it right now. But that’s why the judgment, the tribulation, and distress is going to be to the Jew first. Look at what he says again, because he follows and he says, “… the Jew first…” again and then he says in verse 10, “But glory and honor and peace to every man, every man who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God.” So what God is saying is, okay, the gospel comes to the Jew first. Why? Because they’re the ones that God brought the gospel through. The gospel was written in the Old Testament. And we saw that and we saw that the prophesies that were in the Old Testament about Messiah, all pointed to the good news of salvation through faith. It’s always been salvation through faith. So then judgment is going to come to them first. If they ignore this and they walk in their selfish ambition, but also if they seek good and honor and glory, then to the Jew first, they will get the glory and the honor and the peace that people are looking for. Is that what you’re looking for? Are you looking for glory? Are you looking to be everything that you ought to be? Are you looking for honor? Are you looking to live in an honorable way, in a way that you’re not ashamed, a way that leaves you guiltless? Are you looking to live in a way that brings that deep abiding peace? Then what do you do? You seek good. You say, but I’ve tried to be good and I can’t. Well, that’s because you haven’t found the answer or the source of that goodness, which is really faith in Jesus Christ. And that’s what Paul is going to get to in the book of Romans. And we’re coming up to that spot in Romans and it’s wonderful. But first he wants to make sure that you are thoroughly convicted of the fact that you’re a sinner, that you were born in sin, that you have
sinned and that you have dishonored God. But if your heart is to be what God wants you to be, if you come to God and you receive salvation by faith, then Precious One, then you’ve got your eyes set on eternity. You’re seeking immortality. You’re seeking eternal life and that’s what you’re going to get. You know, it’s very interesting, because God tells men, do not be deceived. I want to take you to 1 Corinthians, chapter 6 and I think it’ll fit in so well with what we’ve read in Romans, chapter 1. Now I hope you can remember Romans, chapter 1. There is no more important book in the whole Bible than the book of Romans in the New Testament. And I will tell you why, because it is the constitution of our faith. It lays down the gospel from A to Z. It is an incredible treaty on the gospel. And so you need to know what it has to say. Now listen to 1 Corinthians, chapter 6 so that you can understand what he’s saying. You’re either righteous or your unrighteous. Your righteousness shows in what you’re seeking. Your unrighteousness shows in your selfish ambition. All right, and you’re going to reap the harvest. There’s going to be a judgment. So in 1 Corinthians, chapter 6, he’s talking to the church at Corinth. Now there are people in that church at Corinth that have a religion but not a relationship. And he wants to make it very clear what real Christianity is about. What is it really like when you and I truly believe God? All right, so in 1 Corinthians, chapter 6, verse 9 he says, “Do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?” Now this is what he’s saying in Romans, chapter 2. Oh man, you’re without excuse, because what you’re doing is you’re saying what they’re doing in Romans 1 is wrong, but he says, you really are doing the same thing. You’re not doing it as blatantly. You’re not doing it as obviously and it may not be as external as it is internal, but when you judge something and then you do it yourself then you’re guilty and you’re without excuse. And so he’s saying that God is going to judge you according to truth and He’s going to judge you according to deeds. So he’s going to look at truth and He’s going to see how you measure up to the Word of God. He’s going to look at your deeds. Why? Because your deeds show what you believe. So watch what he says. He says,
“Do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived.” Now the hypocrites, Jews or Gentiles, in Romans, chapter 2 are deceived. They think that they’re all right because they’re not living that licentious lifestyle of Romans 1. So he says, “Do not be deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate …,” Effeminate would be male prostitutes or it would be cross-dressers, all right. “… Nor homosexuals …,” which would encompass lesbianism also, “… nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers.” Remember when all that was going on with the Enron scandal and then other businesses were being found out and people were really, they were just swindlers. And people that got swindled wanted to see them get it. I want to tell you something, there is a just God and every sin will be brought before His eyes but the unbelievers will be judged. They will get tribulation. They will get distress. They will get wrath. They will get eternal destruction. There is a God whether you know it or not, there is a God. And you would do well to tremble if you’re living in any of these conditions. But listen, there’s good news. I’m not finished, okay. He says, “… nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers shall inherit the kingdom of God.” He says, don’t be deceived. All these people that I just listed that are living this way, this is their habit of life, it’s not a singular occasion. It is their habit of life then they’re not going to inherit the kingdom of God. But this is the good news. He’s writing to this church at Corinth and he’s saying and such were some of you. You know, some of you were male prostitutes. Some of you were cross-dressers. Some of you were homosexuals. Some of you were fornicators. Some of you were idolaters. Some of you were swindlers. You were revilers. You were drunkards. You were like this. He says but, there’s that contrast again. I love it. But you were washed. You were sanctified. You were justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Spirit of our God. You say, what does that mean? What is that all about that I could be washed, that I could be sanctified, that I could be justified in the name of God and in the Spirit of God? That’s what Romans is all about.