

## ROMANS 2:12-16 | JUDGMENT UNDER THE LAW

Review: In vv. 7-11, Paul is explaining that those who are not saved under the Age of Grace will be “on their own,” and judged for entrance into the Kingdom by their **patient continuance in well doing** (v. 7). This explains that the Age of Grace will come to an end (with the rapture, which he doesn’t mention here), and that those who enter the Kingdom by surviving the Tribulation will be judged based on their good works (which aligns with Matthew 25).

- Verse 12 –
  - This verse supports the notes of vv. 7-11, showing that Paul *cannot* be talking about the age of grace, since these words are not true in this age.
  - Verse 12 is written (in my opinion) from the perspective of the future judgment (v. 5), thus is "past tense of a future event."
  - One should note that sin kills, with or without the Law. Sin itself is the problem, and the Law is not the remedy.
  - This also declares that *sin outside the Law has no remedy* but sin **in the law** can be **judged by the law**.
  - If this verse was true for all times, then several problems would arise:
    - Those living prior to the Law (Exodus 20) would **perish** (presumably eternally). Therefore, this passage cannot be talking about the past (which was taken care of in Christ when he proclaimed to the spirits in prison).
    - If this verse was true for the present, then sin is still judged by the Law (which would contradict Paul's teaching later in this book, such as Rom 3:20).
  - These words must be about the future after the Age of Grace, the seven-year period of the Tribulation, which is part of Daniel's 70 weeks, and thus decreed for Israel (that is, the final seven years is under the Law).
  - From Roy Gingrich: “Does Paul in these verses teach justification by *works* while in other places he teaches justification by *faith*? The answer is this: Paul in these verses is not expounding *the gospel* but *the law*.” (Gingrich, Roy E. [The Book of Romans](#). Memphis, TN: Riverside Printing, 2002.)
- Verses 13-15 are parenthetical
  - Verse 13 –
    - Verse 13 speaks directly to the last phrase of v. 12, it is directed toward those under the law.
    - The plain sense of these words goes against what most preachers teach today, because most preachers mix dispensations.
    - Here, Paul is not (and cannot be) talking about the age of grace, but is talking to those who will miss the age of grace and be living in the time of the judgment.
    - For consistency, we must insist that **shall be justified** means the same thing here as it does in Rom. 5:1, where justification comes **by faith**, and where Paul has come to a different place in his unfolding of the mysteries of this age.
    - Note: So many commentators of this verse say something like, "**the doers of the law shall be justified**, but there are no actual doers of the Law." This is the same lame argument given by Calvinists for the "whosoever will" passages, and is unacceptably deceptive.

- Verse 14 –
  - Verses 14-15 speak to the first phrase of v. 12, speaking of the non-Jewish nations.
  - **when the Gentiles which have not the law** - Literally, "when the nations which have not a law" (as in YLT). Note that there is no definite article, so it could be "have not law" or "have not a law."
  - **do by nature** - The translation question is whether "the law" is *any law*, and thus this is a general statement, or *the Law of Moses*, thus it is a specific statement. I contend it is general, because none of the nations of the world ever fulfill the specific demands of *the Law by nature*. Which nation, ethnicity, or even individual gentile performs the sacrifices just naturally, without education in Torah? None! Therefore, this must be general. On the other hand, it could be that Paul here only speaks of the moral aspect of Torah law.
- Verse 15 –
  - **The work of the law written on their heart** - This is entirely different than *the Law written on their hearts*, as in Jeremiah 31 with the New Covenant. To create such a scenario would be of great offense to the New Covenant (which does not apply to the lost peoples of the world under any kind of New Covenant interpretation).
  - **...their thoughts the mean...** - That is, **the Gentiles, which have not the law** (v. 14) are living out a law based on the witness of their conscience and the "average popular vote" of the moral discussions they have amongst themselves. This is not a commendable way of discerning morality, but it is the way of the Gentiles.
- Verse 16 –
  - **in the day** - This phrase picks up directly with v. 12, about the future judgment.
  - **secrets** - The κρυπτός [kryptos] of men. We get cryptology and *encryption* from this Greek word.