

# Remembering Romans 2:6

by [Lee Yih](#) | Feb 21, 2022

Romans 2:6, “Who will render to every man according to his deeds”, is one of the most important, yet mostly ignored verses in the Book of Romans. I remember an encounter with this verse in a Bible Study in Boston where I was an invited guest. Things were getting uncomfortable as we moved through this chapter, reading about the judgment of God falling upon hypocritical believers, and how we store up wrath for ourselves when we are stubborn and unrepentant before God. Then reading verse 6, it summarizes what has been said and introduces further principles of judgment – detailing glory, honor, and immortality for doing good, and wrath, indignation, and tribulation for doing evil. Suddenly the host broke the tension by saying, **“Don’t worry, grace is coming!”** referring to Romans 3:21ff.

I have heard people refer to Romans chapter 2 as a “Flyover” chapter because leaders hurry through the material to get to the “good stuff.” As a result, important concepts about no partiality with God (vs. 11), Paul introducing justification by works (vs 13), God seeing and judging our deepest secrets (vs. 16), and how believers’ actions blaspheme the reputation of God among non-believers—all get short-changed. **It’s as if nothing matters for our Christian walk once we fully realize that we have been saved by grace.** The rest of the chapter says that circumcision, and by implication, baptism, is worthless if we don’t practice the Law and that is something that further encourages us to say, “Don’t worry, grace is coming!”

To say this, is the wrong approach to the important theological truths being introduced in Romans chapter 2. True theological literacy demands that we pause to integrate these important concepts into our understanding, especially that God will render to every man according to His deeds.

Walter Henrichsen gives this chapter the title, “Principles of God’s Justice.” **This chapter does more than just set up the bleak background of sin to enhance the beauty of God’s grace. Instead, it is a real warning that sin has consequences, whether you go to heaven or hell!**

When a person hears about the substitutionary atonement of Christ on Calvary’s hill, which allows God to elect to eternal life those He chooses without violating His justice, there are two responses: 1) Whoopee, I’m saved no matter what; God knows that no one can keep the law, so He does not expect me to, or 2) Wow! God has elected a few in Christ; I wonder if I am one of them?

I have seen Walt labor to teach this principle every which way possible. The most memorable way was when he drew two circles side by side, calling the one on the left “Heaven” and the

one next to it on the right, “Harvest”. These two circles depict two distinct protocols from God – they do not touch each other, and they are not related to each other. The first circle, “Heaven,” represents the concept that there is no other basis by which a person goes to Heaven except by the Election of God. **You don’t go to heaven because you said a prayer – if that were so then you would be going because of what you did and that is not grace; it’s works, based on what you did or did not do.** In that sense, Christ died for God, meeting Him on Calvary’s hill, purchasing chits with His blood for His Father to save those He elects. We have nothing to do with it. As a result, God is just and the justifier of those who have faith in Christ (Romans 3:26).

While we have nothing to do with the first “Heaven” circle, the second circle, “Harvest,” represents how God deals justly with giving out consequences. Here in this temporal life, we observe that a person does not always reap what he sows (Psalms 73 and Book of Job). For Example, bad people get wealthy and the righteous are often poor. As a result, people accuse God of being unjust. But God’s justice is indeed preserved through the “Law of the Harvest,” which states that there is an eternal accounting for temporal behavior.

There will be appropriate and just eternal consequences given for every one of our actions on earth. Regardless of our salvation state (whether a person goes to heaven or hell), **godly behavior does matter because God is a debtor to no man. He does not ask us to do something of a sacrificial nature without promising a payback in eternity** (Ephesians 6:7-8). Again, the circles do not touch or intersect – they represent two different protocols that are consistent with God’s justice.

The concept of God rendering to every man according to his deeds is replete throughout the Bible. 2 Corinthians 5:10 (appearing before the Judgment seat of Christ to be recompensed for deeds done in the body), Revelation 20:12 and 22:12 (a judgment for deeds done in this life), Galatians 6:7-9 (reap what you sow), and I Peter 1:17 (fear God who impartially judges) are four of the nearly 20 places I have listed in the fly leaf of my Bible. **We must never deflate the import of keeping the commandments by saying, “Don’t worry, grace is coming!” Grace has come, and the salvation Christ purchased for us is to save us from sin, not to encourage us to continue in it (Romans 6:15).** Walt’s words have stuck with me when he said: **“Good works and obedience to the Law does not earn you salvation, but you cannot be saved without works and obedience.”** Knowing that behavior matters has made me more fearful of my propensity to sin and less cavalier in my walk.

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