

223 *Response to my enquiry*

My kind friend who likes to see that I'm not going (too far!) off beam was concerned that I might be heading towards universalism: in the end, God won't actually condemn anyone. Thankfully, I was able to fully agree with each Bible-based point he made. But there was one passage^[Rom 2] that I felt I should check further – and I was quite surprised by what I found.

Our concern was what would happen – come the judgement – to those of other religions, but that passage turned out to be not about '*them*' out there. Here's my precis.

Having wound them up in chapter 1 into a frenzy about the awful things that '**they**' do, he now attacks the Christians in Rome with all guns blazing...

- Don't you **dare** judge others, because you do the same things they do! (1)
- If you judge others, **God will judge you!** (2,3)
- By judging others, you could be showing **contempt** for 'God's kindness, tolerance and patience'. (4)
- Your hearts are stubborn, dear Christian friends, and thus you are 'storing up God's **wrath** against yourself'. (5)
- If you, dear Christian friends, persist in doing good, you will receive eternal life, but if you follow evil, you will receive **wrath and anger** (because you should know better, I assume he means). (6-8)
- There will be **trouble and distress** if you, dear Christian friends, do evil, and **judgement** will come against you, especially if you have the advantage of being a Jew, because (I'm guessing he means) you have knowledge of the Scriptures. (9-11)

Then 12-16 seems to say that those who **don't** have the Jews' advantage of knowing the Scriptures will be judged on the basis of what they do, even though they haven't got any knowledge of the Jewish law.

In 17-24, he really lays into the Christians for **saying** that they know what God requires, and yet hypocritically not doing what they know is right.

Finally, 25-29 seems to say that their 'being religious' is just a sham if they don't live up to it. Again, it's what you actually **do** that matters, not what you say and/or how 'religious' you are.

Ouch!!

Now, part of the reason I wanted to check this passage is because it follows Romans 1, which contains verses^[26,27] that some people use to support their view about gay sex, so let's check our interpretational options on this general topic:

- 1) Gay sex is an evil perversion (the traditional, 'plain reading').
- 2) Being gay is *not* evil, but Christian gay people should remain celibate.
- 3) Within a committed relationship, gay sex should not be seen as a sin.

What would the apostle say at this point, given that Christians differ in their interpretation of the Scriptures? If we're concerned about what kind of example we set to those who don't yet believe, what is the **really** important issue? I'd say it's this:

Don't you **dare** judge others with whom you disagree (whether Christian or not)!

Paul Bev. 7.12.22