

Romans 2:5 states that even the moral man will receive God's "wrath" due to his "stubbornness and unrepentant heart":

*But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, (Romans 2:5)*

Man's decision to remain in his depravity causes God to condemn man. Thus, God's "wrath" is directed toward the lost due to a decision they make, not a decision He makes; the lost (depraved) are free to choose to repent and believe. This "judgment" of "wrath" is a "righteous judgment," since man has a choice. He never makes a contradictory decision, speaks a contradictory word, or performs a contradictory deed. Hence, He can "rightly" judge the lost:

*And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things. (Romans 2:2)*

Taking this truth into account, let's pause for a moment and consider the ramifications of some of the popular theology of our day.

Some people incorrectly assume that God elected and predestined certain persons to salvation from eternity past by means of an eternal decree. They also assume that He withholds the freedom to believe from those who were not selected. Under these circumstances, God's "wrath" would be placed upon persons incapable of believing. Yet, Romans 2:5 states that God's "judgment" is "righteous." "Righteous" means "to be right." Thus, God's "judgment" is always "right," meaning that the punishment in every case is equal to the wrongdoing. However, if the lost were punished for not believing, when it was God's choice that prevented them from believing, God would be totally unjust. Yet, this contradiction is being promoted in our day. Mystery is often cited as the solution, which is no solution at all; it fails to answer the ultimate question:

If God is capable of saving all, yet chose to save only some (through predetermining their destiny from eternity past—as some advocate), how can He remain a God of love?

The dilemma generated by this question is insurmountable for those who classify contradiction as mystery. If God, by means of an eternal decree, chose some to be saved (as they advocate) when He could have chosen all (as they also advocate), how could He remain a God of "love" (1John 4:8, 16)? I have never heard or read a satisfactory, non-contradictory answer from those who cite mystery as the solution. In fact, they often present the following argument:

"God is so sovereign that He must cause all things. Therefore, He chose the elect to salvation from eternity past. Should man possess the freedom to determine his destiny through the exercise of his will (especially while depraved), man would be more sovereign than God. Consequently, God, Who is capable of saving all, chose from eternity past to save only some

so that He might have someone upon which to display His wrath. This violent display of His wrath causes those who were chosen to salvation to appreciate His grace.”

Does this mindset properly portray the God that you know, the God of “love” that John addresses so passionately in 1John 4:8 and 16? Impossible! Individuals who adhere to such unbiblical thinking elevate God’s sovereignty at the expense of His love. God is sovereign, but He never allows His sovereignty to override, supersede, or violate His love. Had God chosen some to salvation from eternity past, thus preventing others from being saved, yet judged those “others” for failing to exercise repentance and faith, He would be cruel and totally unjust. (This subject is covered in much detail in our *God’s Heart* series.)

God’s “judgment” is “righteous” (Romans 2:5), for He condemns only one class of people—those individuals who choose to reject His offer of salvation through the exercise of their will.

Paul also states that the lost are “storing up wrath for...the day of wrath” (Romans 2:5). God’s “wrath” will be poured out on unbelievers in proportion to the quantity of “wrath” they have stored up—in proportion to the degree of their sin. They will face the “great white throne” judgment (Revelation 20:11-15), a judgment of condemnation for all who discard His free offer of grace—a judgment from the “books” that list the sins of all the unredeemed.

The “great white throne” judgment (Revelation 20:11) differs from “the judgment seat of Christ” (2Corinthians 5:10). No believer will be judged at the “great white throne,” for it is a judgment of wrath. A New Testament believer faces “the judgment seat of Christ,” a judgment bestowing rewards. Each of our works will be tested “with fire” (1Corinthians 3:10-15), and our rewards will be contingent upon the deeds done in faith. Thus, we will be rewarded for those times when we have trusted Christ to perform a particular deed through us, regardless of the outcome. The deeds performed in our own strength will burn, even if good has resulted from our efforts.

God “will render to every man according to his deeds” (Romans 2:6). Those who do “good” will receive “glory...honor...peace...and immortality, eternal life” (Romans 2:7, 10). Those who “do not obey the truth” receive “wrath...indignation...tribulation and distress” (Romans 2:8-9). Verses 7-10 teach, therefore, that all who habitually do “evil” and enjoy it, proving that repentance and faith are non-existent in their lives, will receive God’s “wrath.” These passages also teach that all who do “good,” if their good deeds result from yielding to Christ’s indwelling presence, will receive “glory...honor and peace.” After studying this comparison, do you wonder how anyone could choose to reject Christ?

These verses do not teach that good deeds yield a right standing with God. Paul will confirm this fact to a greater degree later.

The statements, “of the Jew first and also of the Greek” (Romans 2:9), and, “to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (Romans 2:10), are interesting in that the Jews were the first to receive the Law—not the Gentiles. Paul preached first in the synagogue, and later to the Gentiles, upon his arrival in a new city. The Jews are also God’s “first-born” (Exodus 4:22), meaning that they are doubly cursed for their sin (Isaiah 40:1-2; Jeremiah 16:18; Jeremiah 17:18) and doubly blessed for their obedience (as will be evidenced most

vividly during the Millennium, when Israel is elevated above all the nations)—for the first-born received a double portion of the inheritance (Deuteronomy 21:17). Israel's sin has caused her to reap more persecution and hardship than any other nation. This situation will change when she repents at the end of the Tribulation and calls Christ back, for she, more than any other nation, will be blessed while basking in the awesomeness of the Millennium. In fact, the Gentiles will serve the Jews throughout the Millennium, as is confirmed by Isaiah 14:2. Hence, Paul's words of Romans 2:9-10 are totally compatible with the full counsel of God's Word.

Paul teaches that, "...*there is no partiality with God*" (Romans 2:11). Any person who is unsaved, due to refusing to repent and believe while depraved, will be condemned and "*thrown into the lake of fire*" (Revelation 20:15). Yes, God loves man enough to allow man to live eternally separated from His presence should he (man) so desire.