

THE COURTROOM OF THE CONSCIENCE - Rom 2:14-16

INTRODUCTION

1. Conscience is crucial & constantly active. Image of God, the Creator, Law-giver & Judge. Functions w/ mind & directs life on to Final Judgment.

1st: The Conscience Set in the Context of Creation and Final Judgment

1. Rm 2:14-16 set in context of Rom 1. 3 “revelations:” 1] Creator; 2] present wrath; 3] gospel. In Rom 2 - context of Final Judgment [FJ]
 - i. Idolatry is the root sin. “What have you done w/ God?”
 - ii. Legitimacy of wrath [1:18-3:20] Gentiles & Jews [2:17-3:8]. 3:9 then 3:10-14 indicts Gentiles & 3:15-17 indicts Jews: every mouth shut
2. Idolatry: intentional *suppression* [1:18-21] & *exchange* [1:22-25]. Present wrath [1:24-32] & Gentile's conscience agrees - 1:32
3. Rom 2 -> future Jdgmt: v5 *day of wrath* according to deeds, evidence [v6]
4. Conscience: *approves* sin [1:32] but *condemns* sin. Aligns conscience w/ Judgment of God - 2:3.
 - i. An internal courtroom adjudicate behavior: *practice* [5x 1:32-2:3]
 - ii. 2:1 idolater is *w/o excuse* - self condemned in FJ.
5. R 2:6-11 impartial principles of jurisprudence - *Jew 1st & also Greek* [v9,10]
6. 2:12 *all who have sinned* [2x]: Gentiles *w/o Law - perish*; Jews *under the Law - judged* [parallel w/ *perish*]. Accountable for revealed truth: creation to Gentiles, Scripture to Jews. Both face *judgment/perish*: eternal destruction
7. 2:13 - *justification* = vindication of worshiper of true God [Jms 1:22]
8. 2:14 - Gentiles can *do things of Law* but conscience still condemn [v15-16].
9. 2:14-v16 = context of FJ when conscience will agree w/ God's condemnation
10. 2:12-16 guilty Gentiles; 2:17-3:8 guilty Jews -> 3:9-10: none righteous

2nd: The Courtroom of the Conscience

1. v14 - Gentiles able to *do the things of the Law*: 2nd table; violate 1st table
 - i. How? *instinctively: by nature* - parallels *are law to themselves*. Image of God - innately moral. “Image is ethics.”
 - ii. Why? b/c God's creation is *very good* [good 7x in Gen 1]
 - iii. *Nature* communicates moral truth about creation & God [Rm 1:26-27; 2:27; 11:21f; *nature teaches* 1C11:14; Gal 2:15; Gal 4:8 & Eph 2:3].
 - iv. Gentile's conscience - Rm 12:17b; Lk 6:32f; Gen 20. Common grace
2. v15 - explains *are a law to themselves*. Show moral & immoral behavior that evidences moral *nature* [v14] of *heart* wh/ has *work of Law* written
 - i. Jer 31:33 = regeneration. 2C 3:3 same Law: on stone or heart of Xn
 - ii. Pagans have moral nature that works like the Law: communicates moral truth re: God & personal accountability, but lies deceive.
3. *Heart* lives in a courtroom in wh/ *conscience witnesses* to evidence of deeds. But conscience itself is affected by the Fall. Has shape of “creation ordinances” but broken: 1T 4:2; Tit 1:15; Hb 10:22. Paul calls pagan to align conscience w/ God's judgment now, before FJ!
4. As soon as conscience testifies, *thots* enter courtroom as 2 lawyers: *alternately accusing* [guilty!] or *defending* [refuting the accusation]. To what is conscience testifying? What is being assumed? The deed in view is “bad.”
5. v16 - FJ [2:5] *will perish w/o the Law* [2:12]. Condemned & conscience agrees. *Gnashing of teeth* in hell = anger of condemning conscience - forever

Applic #1: Rejoice in Having a Cleansed Conscience

1. *No condemnation* - Rm 8:1: justification. Cleansed: [Tit 3:5; Hb 9:14; 1Jn 3:19-20].
2. Rm 8:31-35a we are justified in God's courtroom. No other courtroom and overturn His sentence: righteous & cleansed - 1Jn 2:1-2; 1:9.

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Applic #2: Our Stewardship of Our Consciences and Minds

1. Mind & conscience work together [Jer 17:10]. Gentile thinking described w/ moral vocab: Rm 1 & Eph 4:17ff. Issue is wisdom, not intelligence.
2. We are responsible for what we admit into our minds [Rm 12:1-2] wh/ calibrates conscience. Cultural norms inform. Be all things to all men, but not w/o the Law of God but under the Law of Christ [1C9:21].
3. Discernment is needed - morally charged issues of life. The Judge is standing right at the door [Jms 5:9]

Applic #2: Live a Life of Love

1. *Heart* - not emotions, but self. The life we live is determined by who we love. The Xth <=> Ist. Mat 22:35-40; Rm 13:8-10.
2. Life - love - law unite in Jesus Christ.