

This class will receive:

- (a) wrath and indignation (vs. 8)
- (b) tribulation and distress (vs. 9)

In verses 10b-12 Paul lays down the principle that God does not show partiality to either Jews or Gentiles. Those who have sinned without the (Mosaic) Law (the Gentiles) will be condemned apart from the Mosaic Law, and those who have sinned within the jurisdiction of the (Mosaic) Law (Jews) will be condemned by the Mosaic Law.

In verse 13 we discover the principle that, in order to be justified by the (Mosaic) Law, one must not only hear it, but obey it.

Does this teach salvation by works? Does it teach that the one who fulfills the Law (perfectly, since the Law is perfect and demands perfection) will be declared righteous in the day of God's righteous judgment? It certainly seems so!

Notice in this connection that verses 14-15 are a parenthesis between verses 13 and 16:

For not the hearers of the Law are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified . . . on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.

But if Paul has established the unrighteousness of all human beings (and he has), then how can he speak of God's declaring some men righteous in the day of His judgment? If all human beings are transgressors of the Law, how can God declare some human beings righteous who obey the Law?

One way out of this impasse is to understand Paul to be speaking of two classes of people in terms of the necessary conditions for being declared righteous at God's righteous judgment.

The first class is composed of those who accept the truth and follow righteousness. They will be declared righteous at the judgment.

The second class is composed of those who reject the truth and follow unrighteousness. They will not be declared righteous at the judgment.

These, then, are the conditions for being declared righteous or unrighteous in the day of God's righteous judgment.

But when we compare these two classes of people and these two conditions with the first major strand of thought in this section -- that of mankind's unrighteousness -- we discover that, except for Jesus Christ Himself, the first class of people is an empty class! There are no people who fulfill the condition in the first class, and thus there are no people in that class!

There simply are no people who persist in doing good, who seek heavenly glory, honor, and immortality, who perfectly obey the Law of God, and who will therefore be declared righteous in the judgment. If there were any such people, they would be declared righteous. But there are none except for Jesus Christ!