

Fifth, only obedience that is genuine and motivated by love to God is acceptable.

Now having worked our way through Romans 2:1-16 we have discovered four possible yardsticks that God could use to measure human beings for salvation. But which one will He use?

- (1) Will the yardstick be the way in which sinful human beings have judged other sinful human beings? Will the standard be whether human beings condemn themselves for doing the same things they condemn in others, or whether they justify themselves by not doing the same things they condemn in others?
- (2) Will it be the overall moral direction of persons' lives – if they have persevered in doing good, God will declare them righteous, but if they have persevered in doing evil, God will declare them unrighteous and condemn them?
- (3) Will it be doing the best that human beings can with the light that they have; doing the best they can according to the law written on their heart and the dictates of their conscience? Will God declare them righteous if they measure up to this yardstick, and unrighteous if they don't?
- (4) Will the yardstick be perfect obedience to God's law? Will God declare human beings righteous if they measure up to this yardstick, and condemn them if they don't?

Which will it be?

When we think about it a bit we discover a curious thing: No sinful human being can or will be declared righteous or saved by any or all of the four yardsticks?

There are simply no human beings who do not do at least some of the things enumerated in Romans 1:29-31. Therefore whether or not they condemn others for doing those things, they condemn themselves by doing some of them themselves!

Again, there are no human beings who persist in doing good as God defines good – as perpetual, perfect obedience to His will.

Further, there are no human beings who do the best they can with the light that they have. All fall short of that standard. The problem is that human beings