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**Resurrectional  
Responsibility**

*in Romans 2:1-16*



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# **Resurrectional Responsibility**

in

## **Romans 2:1-16**

The following study is an examination of the Unamended and Amended teaching concerning this passage to determine whether or not this Scripture teaches the enlightened rejector will be raised to the judgment seat of Christ.

We state first what we believe to be the Unamended position (accompanied by quotes from Unamended brethren) in this type face; then compare Amended teaching, followed by an examination of the Scripture itself. The italics in these Notes are the writer's emphasis.

The three best-known Amended studies of Romans are Bro. John Carter's book *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, Bro. H. P. Mansfield's verse-by-verse series in *Logos* magazine, Vols. 31 - 34 (commencing Oct./64) and, more recently, Bro. Peter Pickering's verse-by-verse exposition of chapters 1 - 8, entitled "Expository Notes on Paul's Epistle to the Romans, Vol. I." We quote from these in support of Amended beliefs and then turn to Scripture. For the sake of brevity we use the initials for these brethren: **J.C., H. P.M., P.E.P.**

The Unamended position is that there are no chapter breaks in the original epistle so the second chapter is a continuation of the first one. In Rom. 1:7 "called to be saints", Paul very clearly delineates the individuals to whom this epistle was addressed — to Roman Christians, to the ecclesia. The epistle deals with problems that were vexing the First Century Christians within their own body. Paul's epistle to the Romans deals extensively with the problems caused by Jewish believers in the ecclesia who have been sitting in judgment on Gentiles in the ecclesia. He addresses that problem, beginning with the second chapter.

At the outset, this question of who Paul was addressing is crucial. What was the Epistle to the Romans written for? Can the principles expounded in its opening chapters be limited to Jewish believers, or even just to the household?

**J.C.**'s book begins with:

"The letter to the Romans has been described as the profoundest book in the world. It differs from most of the other letters that Paul wrote in that *it does not appear to have been written to meet difficulties in the church* to which it was addressed . . . Romans is a statement of Paul's teaching concerning *the principles of God's dealing with men* . . . As it is a statement of principles, comparable to a treatise, as much as to a letter, it can be studied independently of a knowledge of local conditions, and the need for it being written."<sup>1</sup>

**H.P.M.** writes:

"*DOCTRINE* is the main consideration of Romans."<sup>2</sup> He continues later, as we note further on in this study, "The *believing world* exists under the same shadow (of God's wrath) if it does not act upon the truth it acknowledges (Rom. 2:1-16) and this applies equally to Jew or *Gentile*."

**P.E.P.** writes:

"This epistle is without doubt the foundation stone of all further epistles . . . (it) contains the most comprehensive exposition of the principles of the Gospel and the atonement available in the Scriptures."<sup>3</sup>

"Romans appears first in the order of New Testament epistles . . . because of its prime importance in being a complete exposition of the atonement."<sup>4</sup>

A brief look at Romans confirms what these brethren have written. Romans is *the* doctrinal book of the New Testament containing the fundamental principles of salvation which apply to all men everywhere in any generation:

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| e.g.: Rom. 1:16 | "the gospel of Christ . . . is the power of God unto salvation" |
| 3:9             | "Jews & Gentiles, that they are all under sin"                  |
| 3:23            | "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God"        |
| 5:1             | "Therefore, being justified by faith"                           |

1 "Paul's Letter to the Romans" by Bro. J. Carter, page 9.

2 Logos magazine, October, 1964, page 52

3 "Expository Notes on Paul's Epistle to the Romans" by P.E.P., preface

4 Ibid, page 5

5:12 "as by one man sin entered into the world"

6:23 "the wages of sin is death"  
etc. etc.

We see, then, that the foundation principles established in chapters 1 and 2 of Romans cannot be limited to the household, nor to Jewish believers, but *apply to all men everywhere in all ages of the Gentile dispensation.*

With reference to the Unamended statement that Rom. 1:7 confirms that the message is addressed to the ecclesia, we have still further confirmation from the three brethren already quoted, who indicate that it cannot be thus limited:

**J.C.** shows that the message of Romans is of much wider application:

"(The gospel) is to 'everyone that believeth'."<sup>5</sup> He goes on to demonstrate that in the opening chapters of Romans Paul "first shew's *man's* failure to attain to righteousness himself . . . The matter might be presented in tabular form thus:

"Rom. 1:18 - 3:20. The *whole world* has failed to attain righteousness."<sup>6</sup>

**H.P.M.** "DOCTRINAL. HOW THE GOSPEL RELATED TO SALVATION. Chap. 1:16 - Chap. 8.

a. Condemnation. Rom. 1:16 - 3:20"<sup>7</sup>

**P.E.P.** "Rom. 1:16 - 8:39. Throughout this section Paul outlines certain fundamental principles dealing with the *nature of man* in relation to the righteousness of God."<sup>8</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

We come now to a consideration of the passage itself:

### **Romans 2:1-16:**

The Unamended position is that the Jewish element in the ecclesia at Rome are the members particularly addressed in 2:1 ff. These were judging (condemning) those that did contrary to the teaching of the law.

Again we quote from the three Amended expositions:

**J.C.** (Rom. 2:1-16) "Before proving that the Jews were guilty before God, Paul lays down the grounds of *individual responsibility to God.*"<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup> "Paul's Letter to the Romans" by Bro. J. Carter, page 16

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, page 22

<sup>7</sup> Logos magazine, October, 1964, page 49.

<sup>8</sup> "Expository Notes on Paul's Epistle to the Romans" by P.E.P., page 26.

<sup>9</sup> "Paul's Letter to the Romans" by Bro. J. Carter, page 27.

**J.C.** deals with Romans 2:1-16 as relating to God's treatment of the Gentiles and then at verses 17-29 he writes: "(God) now turns to consider the Jew."<sup>10</sup>

**H.P.M.** continues his exposition of Romans with this heading over Chapter 2:

#### HOW THE GOSPEL RELATES TO SALVATION

Ch. 1:16 - Ch. 8

He writes: "In Romans 1:16-19, Paul revealed that faith in the saving truths of the Gospel is necessary for salvation. The unbelieving world of Gentilism does not reveal this, and therefore lives under the shadow of God's wrath (Rom. 1:18-32). The *believing world* exists under the same shadow if it does not act upon the truth it acknowledges (Rom. 2:1-16) and this applies equally to Jew or Gentile (Rom. 2:1)."<sup>11</sup>

**P.E.P.** On Rom. 2:1-5: "Having accomplished his task in Chapter 1 of proving the guilt of the Gentiles in the eyes of God and *before* continuing on to castigate the Jewish community for their blatant hypocrisy before Yahweh, Paul pauses to clear up the matter of *individual responsibility before God* — whether Jew or Gentile."<sup>12</sup>

There can be no confusion nor misunderstanding as to whom Paul is addressing in the opening verses of chapter 2.

Verse 1: "Therefore thou art inexcusable, *O man*, whosoever thou art that judgest . . ."

Verse 3: "And thinkest thou this, *O man*, that judgest them . . ."

"man" - GK. *anthropos*

In the New Testament there are six Greek words translated "man" or "men". Of these *anthropos* is by far the most common. The question is: Can its use be limited, in any one passage, to the Jews?

For a definition of *anthropos* we quote from Vine and Bullinger and then look quickly at its usage in the New Testament:

**Vine:** "generally of a human being, male or female, *without reference to sex or nationality.*"

**Bullinger:** "Lat. *homo*: i.e. an individual of the human race, a man or woman, a person, a human being, the generic name, relatively to gods and animals."

<sup>10</sup> "Paul's Letter to the Romans" by Bro. J. Carter, page 32.

<sup>11</sup> Logos magazine, February, 1965, page 198.

<sup>12</sup> "Expository Notes on Paul's Epistle to the Romans" by P.E.P., page 43.

Following is a sampling of usage from the New Testament:

|        |       |   |
|--------|-------|---|
| Mth.   | 4:4   | “ <i>man</i> shall not live by bread alone” (1st usage in N.T.) |
|        | 5:16  | “let your light so shine before <i>men</i> ”                    |
|        | 8:9   | “I am a <i>man</i> under authority” (a Gentile)                 |
|        | 8:20  | “the Son of <i>man</i> ”  |
| Mk.    | 7:21  | “out of the heart of <i>men</i> , proceed evil . . .”           |
| Lk.    | 2:14  | “peace, good will toward <i>men</i> ”                           |
|        | 12:8  | “whosoever shall confess me before <i>men</i> ”                 |
|        | 21:26 | “ <i>men</i> ’s hearts failing them for fear”                   |
| Jn.    | 3:4   | “How can a <i>man</i> be born”                                  |
| Acts   | 4:12  | “given among <i>men</i> , whereby we must be saved”             |
|        | 17:26 | “Made of one blood all nations of <i>men</i> ”                  |
|        | 17:30 | “commandeth all <i>men</i> everywhere to repent”                |
| Rom.   | 5:12  | “by one <i>man</i> sin entered into the world”                  |
|        | 6:6   | “that our old <i>man</i> is crucified”                          |
|        | 7:22  | “law of God after the inward <i>man</i> ”                       |
| 1 Cor. | 2:9   | “entered into the heart of <i>man</i> ”                         |
| 1 Cor. | 11:28 | “let a <i>man</i> examine himself”                              |
| 2 Cor. | 4:16  | “though our outward <i>man</i> perish”                          |
| Eph.   | 4:24  | “that ye put on the new <i>man</i> ”                            |
| Phil.  | 2:7   | “made in the likeness of <i>men</i> ”                           |
| Col.   | 3:9   | “ye have put off the old <i>man</i> ”                           |
| 1 Tim. | 2:4   | “who will have all <i>men</i> to be saved”                      |
| 2 Tim. | 2:2   | “commit thou to faithful <i>men</i> ”                           |
| Tit.   | 2:11  | “salvation hath appeared to all <i>men</i> ”                    |
| Heb.   | 2:6   | “what is <i>man</i> , that thou art . . .”                      |
| Jms.   | 1:7   | “let not that <i>man</i> think that he . . .”                   |
| Rev.   | 4:7   | “third beast had a face as a <i>man</i> ”                       |

A quick glance through this list will show how ideally *anthropos* is designed to have application to *all men*, as Vine says: without reference to nationality. Out of approximately 550 occurrences there is *not a single instance* where *anthropos* could be said to be confined exclusively to the Jews. In three instances it is used with regard to a Jew:

|      |     |                                     |
|------|-----|-------------------------------------|
| Mth. | 9:9 | “he saw a <i>man</i> named Matthew” |
|------|-----|-------------------------------------|



- Jn. 3:1 "There was a *man* of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus"
- Acts 16:20 (of Paul and Silas) "these *men*, *being* Jews, do exceedingly trouble . . ."

But even in these three *anthropos* is used in the general sense of Bullinger's definition: as individuals of the human race. And, in fact, in Acts 16:20 above, the explanatory phrase is added: "being Jews". Again, with regard to Nicodemus, the emphasis in this passage is that he is man, that is flesh, in contradistinction to spirit-minded man.

The same word, *anthropos*, is used of "man" in Rom. 2:9 and of "men" in verse 16. The RSV and New International Version renders verse 9: "There will be tribulation and distress for *every human being* who does evil" — confirming that this passage cannot be limited to Jews.

This brief study of the usage of a very common word in the New Testament gives considerable weight to the Amended argument that in Romans 2:1-16 Paul's reasoning *cannot be confined to the Jews*. Paul is establishing a foundation principle for *all men in every age*; he goes on to make specific application to the Jews in vs 17-29.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Romans 2:6:** "Who will render to *every man* according to his deeds"

Unamended exposition: The word "every" includes everyone *under the bond of the covenant* — not every Jew or Gentile who has ever lived.

Again we ask ourselves the question: can we limit this statement, or principle, to Jewish and Gentile believers — those in covenant relationship?

Incidentally, this is not the same word for "man" that we have already considered in verses 1, 3, 9 and 16. Here the Greek word is *hekastos* which simply means each or each one.

If verse 6 is not a quotation by Paul from Psa. 62 then it is certainly an allusion. Bullinger shows it as a quotation. Rotherham tells us the whole verse is a "refrain" from the Old Testament —

a refrain being a recurring phrase. And so we see it in the following:

- Psa. 62:12: "... for thou renderest to *every man* according to his work."
- Prov. 24:12: "and shall not he render to *every man* according to his works?"
- Jer. 17:10: "I the LORD . . . try the reins, even to give *every man* according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings" (also 32:19).
- Mth. 16:27: "and then he shall reward *every man* (Gk. *hekastos*), according to his works."
- Rev. 2:23: "I will give *everyone* (*hekastos*) of you according to your works."
- Rev. 20:12,13: "and they were judged *every man* (*hekastos*) according to their works."
- Rev. 22:12: "I come quickly . . . to give *every man* (*hekastos*) according as his work shall be."

We see the statement of Rom. 2:6 is a foundation principle in Old and New Testament.

The Unamended may wish to argue that Rev. 2 is limited to the household as verse 23 was written to "all the ecclesias." The same argument could be applied to the other two passages from Revelation because God gave the Revelation "to shew unto his *servants* . . ."

But this reasoning surely cannot be applied to Jer. 17 where in the previous verse we have that oft-quoted foundation principle: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" Must we limit this to Jews because it was spoken to natural Israel?

Similarly, in Mth. 16 the verse in question immediately follows the passage vs. 24-26, where we read in part: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." Surely no one is going to argue that because that was spoken to disciples Jesus' invitation is limited to them and cannot apply to all men everywhere?

In summary then of this passage, Psa. 62:12, Prov. 24:12 and the context of Jeremiah 17:10 and Matthew 16:27 lead us to

the conclusion that these passages, along with Rom. 2:6, spell out *a foundation principle of God's dealings with mankind* and cannot be limited to the household.

That this is a foundation principle is confirmed by Robert Roberts in *Christendom Astray* (1951 edition, page 64) where he includes Rom. 2:6, in conjunction with verses 5 and 16, in a long list of references which he relates to the mission of Messiah to 'take out of the Gentiles a people for his name' — the mode of accomplishing that work being the preaching of the gospel.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Romans 2:6:** "who will render to every man *according to his deeds.*"

We now look at the last phrase in this statement, "according to his deeds". Bro. Ron Abel, in the study days he gave on Resurrectional Responsibility, prior to his untimely loss, suggested that this was the key phrase to unlock the understanding of Romans 2.<sup>13</sup>

Paul is writing not only about the knowledge component, but about what one *does* with what one has. *Actions* are the key to a person's end. It is what a person *does* that determines God's attitude toward an individual. The emphasis upon this aspect of our study of this passage becomes very clear when we itemize the words of action as follows:

- vs. 1: "for thou that judgest *doest* the same things."
- vs. 2: "the judgment of God is . . . against them which *commit* such things."
- vs. 3: "thinkest thou . . . that judgest them which *do* such things, and *doest* them the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?"
- vs. 6: "Who will render to every man according to his *deeds.*"
- vs. 7: "To them who by patient continuance in *well doing* . . . eternal life."
- vs. 8: "unto them . . . *do not obey* the truth."
- vs. 9: "Tribulation and anguish upon every man that *doeth* evil."
- vs. 10: "glory, honour, and peace to every man that *worketh* good."

<sup>13</sup> The Christadelphian Tidings, Vol. 46, No. 5, page 10.

vs. 13: "the *doers* of the law shall be justified."

vs. 15: "Which shew the *work* of the law . . ."

The general character of the terms is particularly emphasized in verse 9: There will be tribulation and distress for every one, every human being, who does evil, to the Jew first and also the Greek. How can this passage possibly be limited to the household? "The whole emphasis of Romans 2 is on what you *do* with what you *know*."<sup>14</sup>

While on this particular point we must also note the time frame of the judgment of God:

vs. 2: "But we are sure that the *judgment of God* is according to truth . . ."

vs. 3: "doest the same, that thou shalt escape the *judgment of God*?"

vs. 5: "the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous *judgment of God*."

vs. 12: "as many as have sinned in the law shall be *judged* by the law . . ."

vs. 16: "In the day when God *shall judge* the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel."

"The passage specifically excludes a judgment in abstention where the verdict is pronounced but the condemned is not present to receive it. The end here set forth for those of hard and impenitent heart is that they will suffer 'tribulation and anguish'. There can be no way that people left in the grave unaware of their judgment pronounced in abstention suffer anguish or experience tribulation 'in the day when God shall judge . . . by Jesus Christ'. The Word thus requires that the sinners here in view experience a resurrectional judgment."<sup>15</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

**Romans 2:8:** "do not obey the truth"

The Unamended position is that this is confined to members of the household, particularly Jewish, who did not live according to the commandments given to God's people. They defied God's commandments even though under covenant to obey him. The language is directed to *those within the household*, not to those without. They quote the strong language of 1 Jn. 2:4: "He that saith,

<sup>14</sup> The Christadelphian Tidings, Vol. 46, No. 5, page 11.

<sup>15</sup> Study Notes by Bro. Don Styles.

I know him, and keepeth not his commandments is a liar . . ." and similar passages, to prove that this is the attitude of mind of those in the household condemned in Rom. 2:8.

J.C.'s limited exposition of Romans did not allow him to comment in detail on verse 8. H.P.M. and P.E.P. spell out the Amended position in detail. To save space we quote as briefly as we can from:

**H.P.M.** "Verse 8: '*Do not obey the truth*' — Here is a class who, knowing the truth, refuse to submit to it. The word 'obey' (Gk. *peitho*) signifies 'an actual and outward result of inward persuasion' (*Vine*), but in its negative form, *apeitheo*, as here, it signifies *not to allow oneself to be persuaded*, to withhold the result of belief. The word thus indicates one to whom the truth has been taught, but who *knowingly and wilfully refuses* to act upon the doctrines presented to him. They are the 'responsible' class . . ." <sup>16</sup>

H.P.M. and P.E.P. give the correct meaning of the Greek for "obey", or more explicitly "not to obey", but in this instance we want to analyze the Scriptures themselves. This is a key phrase in this study and we must ensure we are thorough in our examination of it. Anyone can do this using, for example, Youngs, Strongs, Vine, Bullinger or Englishman's.

**"do not obey"** — Gk. *apeitheo*.

Youngs: "to be *unpersuaded*"

Strongs: "to *disbelieve (wilfully and perversely)*. From *peitho*, a prime verb, to convince (by argument, true or false) . . . to assent (to evidence or authority)."

Vine: "(on *peitho*) — to *persuade*, to win over . . . Rom. 2:8: The obedience suggested is *not by submission to authority*, but resulting from *persuasion* . . . *peitho* in the N.T. suggests actual and outward result of inward persuasion."

Bullinger: "to *persuade*, win by words, influence or gain any one, win for one's self."

Rotherham: "Rom. 2:8: Unto them . . . who are of contention and are *not yielding* unto the truth."

From these authorities, note the constant emphasis on "persuade" — to convince by argument, to win over by persuasion,

<sup>16</sup> Logos magazine, March, 1965, page 230.

to win by words. There is no suggestion that *peitheo* means obedience to commands from anyone — or that *apeitheo* means disobedience to commands. There is a very definite reason why Paul uses *apeitheo* in verse 8, rather than the far more common New Testament word *hupakouo* which describes one who disobeys the truth or the gospel in Rom. 6:17, 10:16, 2 Thess. 1:8 and 1 Peter 1:22.

“*hupakouo*” = Strong: “to hearken submissively, to listen attentively, by impl. to heed or *conform to a command* or authority.”

Bullinger: “to listen, hence to obey.”

Paul selects *apeitheo* to describe one who is not persuaded, and therefore rejects the truth rather than the negative form of *hupakouo* which describes one who disobeys the accepted commandments of God through a lack of trust.

Englishman's list of usage of *apeitheo* (not obey) in the New Testament confirms the foregoing. In 16 occurrences NOT ONCE is *apeitheo* used in the sense of disobeying the accepted commandments of God. It is translated:

- 1) three times: “obey not” — as in Rom. 2:8.
- 2) nine times: “unbelieving” or “believe not.”
- 3) four times: “disobedient.”

Taking these in turn:

### 1) **three times “obey not”**

Besides Rom. 2:8, the other two passages are:

1 Peter 3:1: “if any *obey not* the word”

1 Pet. 4:17: “. . . judgment must begin at the house of God, and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that *obey not* the gospel of God?”

— reference to those *outside the truth* in contrast to those in the household.

If “obey not” in the two passages in Peter's epistles refers to those outside the household would it not be a reasonable assumption that it does the same in Rom. 2:8? But see also over:

## 2) nine times “unbelieving” or “believe not”

The first usage of *apeitheo* in the New Testament clearly demonstrates this usage:

John 3:36: “he that *believeth not* the Son . . . the *wrath* of God abideth on him.”

“believeth not” = *apeitheo*  
 “wrath” = *orge*

Precisely the two words used in Rom. 2:8 — with precisely the same meaning! — the meting out of punishment, the pronouncement of doom on the unbeliever, the one who does not obey the truth, the one outside covenant relationship with God.

As “unbelieving” or “believe not” is the more common usage of *apeitheo*, and as this aspect of the meaning of the word is fundamental to the understanding of the four occurrences translated “disobedient”, we look at one more passage in this section:

Heb. 3:18: “And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that *believeth not* (*apeitheo*).”

vs. 19: “So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief (*apistia*).”

The association of *apeitheo* and *apistia* in this passage is important to the understanding of the meaning of *apeitheo*. We ask the question: did Israel fail in the wilderness because of disobedience to God’s commandments, or because of lack of faith? To answer this is to solve the question of Romans 2:8. The question we are seeking to answer is: Does “not obey the truth” mean disobeying the accepted commandments of God or does it mean *not believing and therefore rejecting* (which could only apply to one outside covenant relationship) the truth of the gospel?

Israel failed in the wilderness for *lack of faith* (and that inevitably led them to disobey God’s commands). This is the lesson of Heb. 3 and 4.

Heb. 4:2: “For unto us was the *gospel preached*, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, *not* being mixed with faith in them that heard it.”

In Heb. 3:19 “unbelief” (*apistia*) is a synonym for “believeth not” (*apeitheo*) in verse 18. One explains the other. Of “unbelief” Vine writes: “*disbelieve* is the best rendering, implying that the unbeliever has had a full opportunity of believing and *has rejected it*”. *Apeitheo* (believed not) in this passage is *rejection of the gospel*.

Similarly, a comparison of the use of “hardness” in these two passages is revealing:

Rom. 2:5: “But after thy hardness and impenitent heart”

Heb. 3:8: “*harden* not your hearts”

vs. 13: “lest any of you be *hardened* through the deceitfulness of sin”

vs. 15: “*harden* not your hearts” (the same “evil heart of unbelief” — *apisteo* — of verse 12).

In Romans we have the noun: *sklerotes*.

In Hebrews we have the verb: *skleruno*.

Of these two Greek words Vine comments: “illustrated in Rom. 9:18 by the case of Pharaoh who first *persistently hardened* his heart . . .”

Pharaoh rejected the evidence of the miraculous power of God. The Jew in Heb. 3 and 4 rejected the same evidence — not because he was disobedient, but *because he did not believe* — “the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith.”

*This is the position of the man in Romans 2:8.*

### 3) **four times “disobedient”**

A cursory reading of these four passages would seem to indicate that these all define *apeitheo* as simply breaking the commandments of God. But such is not the case. Rom. 10:21 is the only one which is a direct quote from the Old Testament so we are assisted in our study by an examination of the equivalent Hebrew word.

Rom. 10:21: “But to Israel he saith: All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a *disobedient* and gainsaying people.”



This is a quotation from:

Isa. 65:2: "I have spread out my hands all the day unto a *rebellious* people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts."

"*rebellious*" — Hb. *sarar*. A prime root meaning to turn aside or away, to be stubborn, unmanageable, unyielding. It is used 17 times in the Old Testament, but never translated "disobedient". It is translated: withdraw, backsliding, revolting, pulled away, etc.

Both Strong and Gesenius define *sarar* as meaning refractory. Webster's dictionary gives as synonyms of refractory: "Intractable, obstinate, ungovernable, unruly . . . *obstinately resisting* cure, as a disease or wound."

Gesenius further defines *sarar*: "used of an untamed cow, Hos. 4:16; of a son who refuses to submit to his parents, Deut. 21:18, 20, Psa. 78:8, Jer. 5:23; of a woman who has cast off restraint and indulges in lusts, Prov. 7:11; of the people of Israel . . . from the idea of stubborn animals shaking the yoke off their shoulders . . . Neh. 9:29, Zech. 7:11."

From these definitions we receive a clear idea of the meaning of rebellious (O.T.) or disobedient (N.T.): a stubborn and defiant people who *deliberately refuse the way of God*. In this study we must make the distinction between disobedience and rejection. All saints are disobedient sinners at times but the description of men who defiantly reject the way of God is surely more appropriate to those outside the household, who know the way of truth but refuse it. Hence the definition given by Bro. H.P.M. of "obey not the truth" in Rom. 2:8: "The word thus indicates one to whom the truth has been taught, but who knowingly and *wilfully refuses to act* upon the doctrines presented to him."<sup>17</sup>

The final three usages of *apeitheo* are in the epistle of Peter. Taking the last one first:

1 Pet. 3:20: "Which sometime were *disobedient*, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah."

Rotherham: "(Spirits) *unyielding* at one time."

H.P.M.: "even as the people were *unyielding* at the time of the flood to the warning voice of Noah."<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Logos magazine, March, 1965, page 230.

<sup>18</sup> "To the Strangers Scattered Abroad" (1 Epist. of Peter) by H.P.M., pg. 43

Bro. Ron Abel: "The 'spirits in prison' however, were not ignorant, but *disobedient*, condemned by the preaching of Noah."<sup>19</sup>

In this passage "disobedient" (*apeitheo*) describes those *outside covenant relationship*.

1 Pet. 2:7: "unto them which be *disobedient*, the stone which the builders rejected, the same is made the head . . ."

vs. 8: "And a stone of stumbling . . . even to them which stumble at the word, being *disobedient*."

Here are two references to natural Israel again — and natural Israel with the same attitude of heart (see Psa. 78:8) we have seen in the foregoing passages. They are men who did not simply disobey God's commandments, but men who *rejected* the Lord Jesus Christ.

H.P.M. writes on "*disobedience*" in this passage: "Lit. 'the disbelieving'; those who '*refuse to be persuaded*' of the truth, and not merely those who sin in the truth."<sup>20</sup>

We can summarize our study of Rom. 2:8 "do not obey" (*apeitheo*) as follows:

- 1) Youngs, Strongs, Vine, Bullinger, Rotherham, all define *apeitho* as referring to those *not persuaded of the truth* — those who *wilfully reject* it.
- 2) In 16 occurrences of *apeitheo* the primary meaning of the word is *never* of simple disobedience to the commandments of God. It is of *faithlessness* or *unbelief* — which leads, naturally, to disobedience.
- 3) In the other two New Testament passages where *apeitheo* is translated "obey not" ("do not obey" Rom. 2:8) it is of those *outside covenant relationship*.
- 4) Besides Rom. 2:8, the only other verse in the New Testament where *apeitheo* and *orge* (*believe not* and *wrath* — of God) are used together is John 3:36 — again, of one *outside covenant relationship*.
- 5) In Heb. 3:18 *apeitheo* (believed not) is used of natural Israel who are reproached for their hard hearts (like Pharaoh) resulting in *rejection of the gospel* (Heb. 4:2). The same words are used in Rom. 2:5 and 8 to describe the same kind of attitude.

<sup>19</sup> "Wrested Scriptures" by Bro. R. Abel, page 114.

<sup>20</sup> "To the Strangers Scattered Abroad" (1 Epist. of Peter) by H.P.M., pg. 26.

- 6) In the Old Testament the equivalent word in the Hebrew for *apeitheo* is *sarar* = rebellious, describing a stubborn, unyielding people obstinately resisting the way of God. *Sarar* is never translated disobedient. It describes *one who refuses to submit*.
- 7) In the epistle of Peter we find *apeitheo* three times: once of those *outside covenant relationship* and twice of Jews who *rejected* the Lord Jesus Christ.

Do we need any further evidence that “do not obey” in Rom. 2:8 can only refer to one who has *heard the truth and rejected it* — one outside covenant relationship — an enlightened rejector? The Unamended insist that *apeitheo* applies only to those in covenant relationship. Surely it is perfectly clear from the foregoing detailed study of its usage throughout New Testament scripture, and of the usage of the parallel Hebrew word in the Old Testament, that there cannot be the slightest doubt in the world that *apeitheo* (“do not obey”) clearly identifies those *who know and understand the truth and make a wilful decision to reject it?*

The length and detail of these pages on Rom. 2:8 may prompt some to comment that if it takes this much work to properly understand simple words in Romans 2:1-16, then the principle which Amended brethren think is a first principle is surely obscure to say the least.

Many years ago the writer completed a study on fellowship particularly with reference to the New Testament. A relatively simple assessment convinced him that Rom. 2:1-12 was about the three classes of individuals at the judgment seat — one class being the so-called enlightened rejector. This current attempt, considerably more in depth, is to hopefully convince any who so far have not been willing to acknowledge the clear teaching of this passage of Scripture.

A further illustration might be helpful. This concerns a new sister-in-Christ, baptized less than four years before this study was commenced and not brought up in the Christadelphian faith. She loves to study her Bible and, with a large family finds the only time available is from 5:00 a.m. to 6:30 a.m. The writer gave her a list of the 16 occurrences of *apeitheo* in the New Testament and asked her to advise him if she thought any one of them applied to an individual, or people, breaking the commandments of God. She did not know that a study of Rom. 2

was being done and she would probably have no knowledge of the interpretation placed on Rom. 2:8 by the Unamended and Amended brethren. She is a very thorough student. Her tools in this study were simply Youngs and Strongs.

She returned with three typewritten pages. Her answer was that not a single passage could be construed as being limited to direct disobedience to the commandments of God — although that was the inevitable result of *lack of faith*. She defined the meaning of *apeitheo* as “rebellious faithlessness” (which is an excellent definition) and concluded that *apeitheo* carried the implication “that disobedience comes from disbelieving” — which is the crux of the matter with the enlightened rejector of Roms. 2:8. This sister extended her study beyond the 16 usages of *apeitheo* to include the 29 occurrences of noun, verb and adverb. She summarized all the passages on *apeitheo* (obey not) as “pointing to the *rebellious unbeliever who had the gospel knowledge but despised it*”. Of these 16 occurrences which the writer has referred to, in addition to those already commented upon in this paper, she singled out:

Acts 19:9: “But when divers were hardened and *believed not* but spake evil of that way” (the way of Christianity).

Heb. 11:31: “By faith, the harlot Rahab perished not with them that *believed not*.”

— as two passages demonstrating the use of *apeitheo* (believed not, do not obey) in reference to *unbelieving Gentiles* who had the opportunity to accept the truth.

Surely there is a lesson in this for all of us as brethren? If a babe-in-Christ, using the most elementary Bible study aids and simply comparing Scripture with Scripture, can come up with the correct understanding of key words or passages which we all ought to believe and accept — then ought not brethren who are leaders of the community be able to remove the scales of doubt and bias from the eyes of their understanding and accept the truth of Scripture?

\* \* \* \* \*

**Romans 2:12:** “For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law.”

In the "World's Redemption", page 398, Bro. Thomas Williams lists verse 12 with several other references "which speak of a large part of the human race who will not be raised". It would appear, then, that our Unamended brethren believe those who have "sinned without law" are the majority of mankind who have never understood (and probably never ever heard) the gospel. On page 400, Thomas Williams includes verse 12 in verses 6-16 of which he writes: "that the judgment of the *household* is for the separation of the good from the bad". Again we have the limitation of a passage to the household. Again we ask the question: Is this warranted? One Unamended brother supplied copies of excerpts from a study of Romans in *The Bible Student* of Jan.-April, 1975. This study defines "law" in verse 12 as the Law of Moses.

The key to an understanding of this verse, and vs. 13, is the meaning of "without law" and the word "law" itself. Some think "in the law" and "by the law" is a reference to the Mosaic Law. The following authorities show that the definite article "the" does not belong in either place:

RV: "or many as have sinned under law shall be judged by law."

Diaglott: "as many as sinned under Law, will be judged by Law."

Nestle Greek: "as many as in (under) law sinned, through law will . . ."

Rotherham: "As many as within law sinned. Through law shall be . . ."

Bullinger says omit "the" in both phrases. (Of the first half of the verse he also comments: "The Mosaic Law will not be cited against non-Jews" — but see below.)

Vine on "law" — "Gk. *nomos*. In Rom. 2:12,13 'a law' — of *law in general*, expressing a general principle relating to law." He distinguishes "law" in vs. 12 from the "the Mosaic Law" in verse 15.

We quote now from the expositions of the three Amended brethren already referred to:

**J.C.** defines "law" in this passage as "*a revelation of God's will*". We quote his comments in their entirety with respect to verse 12:

“Paul has said that God’s judgment will include both Jew and Gentile; that ‘there is no respect of persons with God.’” He supports this statement in vs. 12-16 “. . . The Jew regarded the Gentile as being ‘without law’, and spoke of him as such. *The Gentile was out of covenant relationship with God.* Paul uses the words in a similar sense. He does not contemplate those of whom he speaks as being without any law at all, for he says they ‘have sinned’, which *implies a knowledge of God’s will*, as the preceding verses also show. The word ‘law’, while often used of the Mosaic Law, does not exclusively apply to it. In fact, even when the Mosaic is in mind, the emphasis is upon law as such, and not on the particular illustration of law in the Mosaic code. *Law is a revelation of God’s will.*

“We must notice also that those who sin ‘without law’ ‘perish’, and those who sin ‘under law’ will ‘be judged’. The idea of the verse we think might be freely paraphrased thus:

“As many as have sinned (in disobeying the truth, vs. 8) *outside covenant relationship* will perish when Christ comes. Their doom is sealed. But as many as have sinned *in covenant relationship* will be judged, for they have stood related to a possible reception of glory, honour and immortality.

“The verse is closely connected with what has gone before. Thus interpreted, it is in harmony with other scriptures; it presents a precise definition of the end of the different classes of *those who know God’s will*. Those ignorant of God’s will, such as the heathen, etc. are not considered at all in this verse.”<sup>21</sup>

**H.P.M.** “‘*sinned without law*’ — These are those who are *outside covenant relationship*; they have knowledge but do not submit to it in baptism. They are those referred to in vs. 8.

“‘*sinned in the law*’ — This relates to those who have come under the influence or the bounds of the law. The Jew was subject to the law by inheritance, and obedient Gentile believers had the law ‘written on their hearts’; but both Jewish and Gentile believers could ‘miss the mark’ if they did not respect the precepts of God to which they had been brought nigh.

<sup>21</sup> “Paul’s Letter to the Romans” by Bro. J. Carter, page 29.

“‘shall be judged’ — In contrast to those who *have not submitted to baptism* and who shall perish without a formal investigation, these shall be examined before the judgment seat of Christ and sentence passed on them.”<sup>22</sup>

**P.E.P.** “The two classes of ‘judgments’ in this section (vs. 12-16) are for 1) saints — those in covenant relationship — those who have law, and 2) sinners — those *not possessing covenant relationship* — those ‘without law’.

“‘sinned without law’ — Those outside covenant relationship but *possessing a knowledge of the Truth*.”<sup>23</sup>

The following scriptural exposition will be found to clearly confirm the studies of these brethren:

“without law” — Gk. *anomōs* (*nomos* = law) meaning lawless, *in contempt of law*.

This is the only occurrence of the adverb, *anomōs*, in the New Testament. The adjective (spelt the same: *anomos*, but without the accent), occurs nine times and is translated: transgressors, wicked, lawless, unlawful and without law (the latter four times in 1 Cor. 9:21).

In *all* nine occurrences *anomos* is used of men *who knew law* — but broke it. Two examples will suffice:

Acts 2:23: “ye have taken, and by *wicked* hands have crucified . . .”

RV: “by the hand of *lawless* men (mg: men without the law) did crucify and slay.”

2 Pet. 2:8: “(of Lot) that righteous man . . . vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their *unlawful* deeds”

RV: “lawless deeds”

Lawless — not in the sense that they did not know law — but that they deliberately placed themselves outside law. Of *anomōs* in this passage, Vine comments: “the thought is not simply that of doing what is unlawful, but of *flagrant defiance of the known will of God*.”

The noun, *anomia* (lawlessness) is found in:

1 Jn. 3:4: “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law,” where “transgression of the law” is *anomia*.

RV: simply: “Sin is lawlessness.”

<sup>22</sup> Logos magazine, March, 1965, page 231.

<sup>23</sup> “Expository Notes on Paul’s Epistle to the Romans” by P.E.P., page 56.

Again quoting from Vine on this passage: "This definition of Sin sets forth its essential character as the *rejection of the law, or will of God* and the substitution of the will of self."

The usage of the adjective, *anomos*, nine times in the New Testament, always of those *not in the household*, surely warrants the same meaning for the adverb, *anomōs*, in Rom. 2:12.

The foregoing is not exhaustive but is sufficient to confirm the exposition by J.C., H.P.M. and P.E.P. that "without law" or lawless, described *those who have known the revealed will of God and have rejected it*. They are not members of the household but outside covenant relationship with God — in a word: they are enlightened rejectors.

### The Three Classes of Romans 2:1-16

It would be remiss of the writer to conclude this study without spelling out the identity of the three classes who are responsible to the judgment seat of Christ, as defined in the passage under consideration. The simplest way to do this is to quote Bro. Mansfield:

**H.P.M.** "These verses reveal that there will be three classes at the judgment seat of Christ comprising both Jews and Gentiles. They are 1) Those who know the will of God but do not obey it. 2) Those who obey it in baptism but do not manifest its power in a changed life. 3) Those who do reveal it in deeds of faith. These three classes are dealt with as follows:

"**CLASS 1.** They 'obey not the truth' (vs. 8) being indifferent to God's requirements (vv. 2-3), and despising his word (v. 4). They know what is required of them, but refuse to submit even to baptism, let alone practise the truth. Upon them judgment will be poured (vv. 4-5). There will be for them no formal assessment of deeds good or bad, but they have openly repudiated Christ's sacrifice and the Divine mercy, and stand self-condemned by that very action. They therefore receive 'thumos' — a sudden blaze of anger because of their contemptuous treatment of God's goodness — followed by 'orge' the pronouncement of their doom (v. 8), and they perish without investigation of their characters (vv. 8, 12).

"**CLASS 2.** Those in covenant relationship with God (whether Jew or Gentile) and therefore 'under law', but who habitually practise evil (v. 9). They will be 'judged' (v. 12), that is, their



deeds will be formally investigated (in contrast to those who have not submitted to baptism) and because they do not measure up to what is required they will receive 'tribulation' and 'anguish' as they recall their lost opportunities, and hear condemnation pronounced against them (v. 12).

**"CLASS 3.** The righteous will be vindicated because they are 'doers of the law' (v. 13) whether Jew or Gentile (v. 14). They will receive glory (or approbation of their conduct), honour (elevation with Christ), immortality (the life of the age)."<sup>24</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

### SUMMARY OF THIS STUDY:

- 1) Romans is THE doctrinal book of the New Testament. It is a statement of Paul's teaching concerning the principles of God's dealing with men. Therefore the foundation chapters (1 & 2) cannot be limited to the Jew nor to the household.
- 2) Rom. 2:1-16 is the grounds of individual responsibility before God; then, vs. 17-29, Paul turns to consider the Jew.
- 3) In Rom. 2:1 "man" is a very common New Testament word having application to *all men*, with no reference to nationality and never used exclusively of the Jew.
- 4) "Every man" of Rom. 2:6 cannot be limited to everyone under the bond of the covenant. "(God) will render to every man according to his deeds" is a foundation principle in both Old and New Testament.
- 5) Actions (deeds, works) are the key to a person's end. It is what an individual *does* (accepts or rejects the Truth) that determines God's attitude towards him.
- 6) "Do not obey" in Rom. 2:8 cannot be limited to those within the household who broke the commandments of God. It describes those who will not be persuaded of, and therefore reject, the truth. In every New Testament usage it describes those, in or out of covenant relationship, who *reject the truth* and then, therefore, disobey God. The Old Testament equivalent is of a rebellious people, obstinately and defiantly refusing the way of God.

<sup>24</sup> Logos magazine, February, 1965, page 200.

- 7) In Rom. 2:12 "without law" has no reference to the Mosaic Law and cannot be applied to unenlightened Gentiles. Law is the revealed will of God in this passage. "Sinned without law" describes *enlightened rejectors outside of covenant relationship*. *Anomōs* means in contempt of law and the New Testament usage confirms our definition.
- 8) The three classes of people in Romans 2:1-13 are:
  - a) The enlightened rejector
  - b) The disobedient saint
  - c) The obedient saint
- 9) These three classes will be at the Judgment seat of Christ.
- 10) Therefore, today, light is a ground of responsibility to the judgment seat of Christ.

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### Teaching of the Pioneers:

The conclusions reached in the foregoing study are in harmony with the teachings and beliefs of Bro. John Thomas and Bro. Robert Roberts, as the following brief quotes show:

Bro. Thomas in *Anastasis*:

In Romans 2:16 "He that understands the truth, but *declines the obedience it commands*, will be held accountable for its rejection: for 'he that believeth not shall be condemned' 'in a day of judgment', 'when the Deity shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ' according to the gospel Paul preached." (page 41)

"... This being his purpose, knowledge, belief and obedience are made the basis of *accountability* and *responsibility*." (page 40)

"The light shining into the darkness and divinely attested, makes *sinner*s accountable and *saint*s responsible." (page 40)

"nevertheless, if a sinner come to the understanding of the truth, the result being the same, he is held accountable. An enlightened sinner cannot evade the consequences of his illumination. I have known some of this class flatter themselves that they would not be called forth to judgment; but would perish as the beasts, if they did not come under the law

of Christ. Such reasoning, however, is simply the 'deceitfulness of sin' . . . This evidently teaches their *anastasis kriseos*, or coming forth from *sheol*, for judicial condemnation and punishment, contemporary with the establishment of the kingdom in the Holy Land." (page 42)

(from the 1920 Edition, copy of original written 1866)

Bro. Roberts in *Christendom Astray*

"The law of righteousness by faith is the principle on which men are saved . . . This law came into operation with Abraham. Actually it had its origin in Eden . . . but a fuller initiation of the law of faith, as the rule of salvation, occurred in the history of Abraham. This law was the basis of resurrectional responsibility."

". . . resurrectional responsibility was contemplated in all Jehovah did through his servants, from righteous Abel to faithful Paul." (page 61)

*On present day judgment*: ". . . it is easy to recognize resurrectional responsibility in many expressions which a *forced method of explanation alone* can apply to the judgment of the present limited experience (list of references)." (page 62)

"The promises and precepts conferred privileges and imposed responsibility having reference to resurrection. They formed a basis for that awakening from the dust to everlasting life, or to shame and everlasting contempt, foretold by Daniel, and implied in many parts of the writings of Job, David and Solomon . . . The law of resurrectional responsibility operates much more vividly upon our own times . . ." (page 63)

\* \* \* \* \*

**Study Guides:**

The Unamended studies which the writer has to hand were supplied in part by three Unamended brethren. One of them quoted Adam Clarke's Commentary, a second relied heavily upon another non-Christadelphian work to support his view that Romans 2:1-16 was directed specifically against the Jew. The writer has deliberately refrained from using non-Christadelphian works of reference, as members of the Apostasy can-

not be expected to rightly divide the Scriptures of truth. When brethren disagree with one another in a study, it is natural to turn to outside sources for confirmation of one's own viewpoint — and to choose those who support our own conclusions. Surely brethren studying the first principles of truth, the understanding of which is peculiar to Christadelphians, should allow the Scripture to explain itself? This has been the aim in this study.

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#### A Personal Note:

In a study like this it would be foolish for any Amended brother to pretend he was not influenced by the expositions of the three brethren whose work has been given a prominent part in this pamphlet. However, I have tried to approach Scripture with an open and unbiased mind and to allow it to speak for itself.

Romans 2:1-16 is only one of several passages used by Amended brethren to confirm our understanding of the Resurrectional Responsibility question. It is my firm belief that a similar, thorough treatment of some of these other passages (for example, John 12) will bring the student to the same conclusion. Christadelphians are sometimes criticized for their belief in the Millenium because it is said there is only one passage (Rev. 20) that spells out the length of time Christ will reign on earth: one thousand years. But that passage is divinely inspired. Similarly, Romans 2 is a product of the divinely inspired mind of the apostle Paul and I cannot see that we have any choice but to accept it and teach it. It is my hope that this study will be helpful towards that end.

This exposition reconfirms my opinion that there is only one honest and honourable method before God for Amended brethren to take in pursuing reunion. Rather than trying to find formulas to which our Unamended brethren can agree, we should expend all our efforts in convincing them that light IS a ground of responsibility to the judgment seat of Christ, that this IS a sound Scriptural proposition, that it IS a first principle, and that it is the ONLY basis upon which we will meet with anyone.

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