1216 Judgment, Law, blind leading blind, circumcision, benefits - Rom(2)1-(3)8
(by Whirlwind)

First, we discussed works of faith and the need for discernment and judgment, noting that God shows no partiality. Second, we examined the two categories of people—those under the Law and those not under the Law—and addressed the question of what happens to those who have never had the opportunity to hear the gospel, recognizing that the gospel Paul preached is, in fact, the work of the Triune God Himself. Third, we briefly discussed how the Jews, if they do not examine themselves, are like the blind leading the blind. Fourth, we explained the true meaning of circumcision, recognizing that in the New Testament era, what is observed is the essence of the Law, not the letter of the Law—just as the Lord Jesus set an example for us. Finally, it discusses the benefits of being a Jew, noting that Psalm 51, written by David, was "For the choir director," indicating his complete repentance. It also highlights that Jesus Himself said the Old Testament was not truly understood for about a thousand years; even in the New Testament era, it was only through God's own work that people were able to comprehend the Scriptures. We also cited the example of Solomon to illustrate that God does not show partiality; He does not favor someone simply because of what they have done for Him. We also saw that while it is certainly good for a person to be willing to lay down their life for God, isn't it even better to be able to correctly understand the Bible as well! We truly must let the Holy Spirit to lead our Bible study. Two past articles were cited in this section: one discussed how God, through His absolute sovereignty, forgave the sin of lying committed by the prostitute Rahab and David's capital offense; it also mentioned Rahab's willingness to lay down her life for her faith. The other article discussed a proven path: just as the Holy Spirit led Paul westward to Macedonia during his second missionary journey, we too can allow the Holy Spirit to lead our Bible study in this way and thereby find a path of having life.

Please note that this article is an expansion of the topicwise Bible study held on Sunday (11/15/26). Unless otherwise specified, verses refer to those in NASB95. If this article refers previous articles, they can all be found on our website, 'https://a-christian-voice.com/'; click on 'Understanding Spiritual Life'.

1. Acts of faith and discernment require judgment

"Therefore you have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things. But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? 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, who will render to each person according to his deeds: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey

unrighteousness, wrath and indignation. There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God."(Romans 2:1-11)

Right from the start, this verse is cited: "Therefore you have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; ..."(Romans 2:1) Some churches use this verse to morally coerce those who express dissent, accusing them of "judging" others—a tactic designed to silence them. Yet they often overlook the remaining part of the verse: "...or you who judge practice the same things."(Romans 2:1) According to this passage, doesn't that mean it's perfectly acceptable to speak out as long as one's actions differ from those being criticized and is in the right direction? Jesus said, "You judge (G2919, verb, 131 occurrences) according to the flesh; I am not judging anyone. But even if I do judge, My judgment (G2920, noun, 48 occurrences) is true; for I am not alone in it, but I and the Father who sent Me."(John 8:15-16) It appears too many times; I haven't read through it all, but I know the passage above is a typical example. Christians are called to discern—this scripture makes it very clear: "But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil."(Hebrews 5:14) How can there be discernment without judgment? To discern, one must necessarily have judgment.

Here it is emphasized once again: do not act in a way that is no different from others! This is essentially the same principle as in other passages. For example, "For in the way you judge (G2919), you will be judged (G2919); and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you."(Matthew 7:2) Then he said, "But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?"(Romans 2:3-4) God is a God of mercy and grace: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."(1 John 1:9) If a person remains unrepentant, how could God forgive that person's sins? So do not harden your heart; repent. But there are always those who harden their hearts, so He says, "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."

He then spoke out this verse: "...God, who will render to each person according to his deeds."(Romans 2:5-6) This is consistent with what is said in the Book of Revelation: "Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds."(Revelation 20:11-13) For

Christians, "deeds" refer to acts of faith, as this scripture states: "For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead."(James 2:26)

In this passage, we can see how important it is to distinguish between the spirit and the soul, because a person is composed of spirit, soul, and body, as this passage states: "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."(1 Thessalonians 5:23) Do not follow the example of the Chinese Union Version, which often fails to distinguish between spirit and soul, separating them only in a few passages. In the Book of James 2:26, it is translated as spirit and soul when there is only talking about spirit. Another example is found in this passage which involves both spirit and soul and translated correctly: "For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."(Hebrews 4:12) Here, the soul and spirit are distinguished. In fact, only by distinguishing them can we see "what God tells through the Bible is consistent."

It then states, "to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation. There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."(Romans 2:7-10)

This clearly demonstrates that indeed,"...there is no partiality with God."(Romans 2:11) However, there is an order: first the Jews, then the Gentiles. This applies equally to punishment for good and evil, as well as to salvation: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."(Romans 1:16) Consider this: "But He answered and said, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”"(Matthew 15:24) Salvation did indeed come first to the Jews. Please note: "If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth."(1 Peter 1:17) Isn’t this yet another call for Christians to live out their faith through their actions?

2. Two categories of people: those under the Law and those without the Law

"For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law; for it is not the hearers of the Law who are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified. For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them, on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus."(Romans 2:12-16)

Paul divides the people of the world into two categories: those under the Law and those without the Law. "...all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law."(Romans 2:12) "for it is not the hearers of the Law who are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified."(Romans 2:13) To fulfill the Law is what this Scripture says: "So you shall keep My statutes and My judgments, by which a man may live if he does them; I am the LORD."(Leviticus 18:5) In other words, "For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness."(Romans 10:5) In short, "...the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, "He who practices them shall live by them.""(Galatians 3:12)

As for those who do not have the law, "For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them."(Romans 2:14-15) Therefore, it is truly the case that"...there is no partiality with God."(Romans 2:11) This brings up a question that people often ask: What about those who have never had the opportunity to hear the gospel? Those who have had the opportunity to hear the gospel know that the Law is in the Old Testament and are therefore considered to be under the Law; those who have not had the opportunity to hear the gospel are not under the Law. Since God shows no partiality, Romans 2:14-15 explains how they will be treated.

Paul concludes this passage by saying, "on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus."(Romans 2:16) At first, I wondered why Paul sounded so arrogant, going so far as to say that God would act "according to my gospel," but later I realized that this was only natural, for he clearly stated, "For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ."(Galatians 1:11-12) So this was, in fact, the work of the Triune God Himself; he was simply speaking the truth as it is.

3. If Jews do not examine themselves, they are like the blind leading the blind

"But if you bear the name "Jew" and rely upon the Law and boast in God, and know His will and approve the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law, and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, having in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth, you, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that one shall not steal, do you steal? You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who boast in the Law, through your breaking the Law, do you dishonor God? For "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you," just as it is written."(Romans 2:17-24)

This passage refers to the Jews who believed that they "...know His will and approve the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law."(Romans 2:18) In other word, they thought that they could distinguish between right and wrong things. It then gives some examples to illustrate this point: "You who boast in the Law, through your breaking the Law, do you dishonor God?"(Romans 2:23) As for the examples, a glance at the text makes them clear.

They "...are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, having in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth."(Romans 2:19-20) Yet they failed to see that they themselves were blind. Let's examine this point.

The Pharisees were a sect of the Jews. See how Jesus Himself spoke of the blindness of the Pharisees: "Then the disciples came and said to Him, "Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this statement?" But He answered and said, "Every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant shall be uprooted. Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit.""(Matthew 15:12-14)

In terms of "...the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you ..."(Romans 2:24), it refers to Ezekiel's prophecy: "Also I scattered them among the nations and they were dispersed throughout the lands. According to their ways and their deeds I judged them. When they came to the nations where they went, they profaned My holy name, because it was said of them, 'These are the people of the LORD; yet they have come out of His land.'"(Ezekiel 36:19-20) Isaiah also said, "Now therefore, what do I have here," declares the LORD, "seeing that My people have been taken away without cause?" Again the LORD declares, "Those who rule over them howl, and My name is continually blasphemed all day long."(Isaiah 52:5) It is indeed so.

4. The true meaning of circumcision

"For indeed circumcision is of value if you practice the Law; but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. So if the uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? And he who is physically uncircumcised, if he keeps the Law, will he not judge you who though having the letter of the Law and circumcision are a transgressor of the Law? For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God."(Romans 2:25-29)

This passage discusses the true meaning of circumcision. It clearly states that in the Old Testament era, "For indeed circumcision is of value if you practice the Law; but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. So if the uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be

regarded as circumcision?"(Romans 2:25-26) The emphasis, therefore, is on putting it into practice; thus, "...he who is physically uncircumcised, if he keeps the Law, will he not judge you who though having the letter of the Law and circumcision are a transgressor of the Law?"(Romans 2:27)

In the New Testament era, we are to observe the true spirit of the Law, not the letter of the Law—just as the Lord Jesus set an example for us: "...He said to them, "What man is there among you who has a sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will he not take hold of it and lift it out? How much more valuable then is a man than a sheep! So then, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath."'(Matthew 12:11-12) He also said directly, "...the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."(Matthew 12:8)

We must understand that "...he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God."(Romans 2:28-29) Only praise that comes from God is genuine; praise from people is often misleading.

5. The Advantages of being a Jew

"Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision? Great in every respect (every way, G3956 G2596). First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God. What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it? May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man be found a liar, as it is written, "That You may be justified in Your words, And prevail when You are judged." But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? The God who inflicts wrath is not unrighteous, is He? (I am speaking in human terms.) May it never be! For otherwise, how will God judge the world? But if through my lie the truth of God abounded to His glory, why am I also still being judged as a sinner? And why not say (as we are slanderously reported and as some claim that we say), "Let us do evil that good may come"? Their condemnation is just."(Romans 3:1-8)

It begins by asking a very natural question: "Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision?"(Romans 3:1) It then answers its own question: "Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God."(Romans 3:2) Regarding the statement, "...First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God."(Romans 3:2) This refers to the explicit passage in the Old Testament: "...what great nation is there that has statutes and judgments as righteous as this whole law which I am setting before you today?"(Deuteronomy 4:8)

Truly, "What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it? May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man be found a liar, as it is written, "That You may be justified in Your words, And prevail when You are judged."'(Romans 3:3-4) This is because "If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself."(2 Timothy 2:13) "...Rather, let God be

found true, though every man be found a liar, as it is written, “That You may be justified in Your words, And prevail when You are judged.”"(Romans 3:4) This verse refers to the time after David had slept with Bathsheba and wrote Psalm 51 in repentance, in which one verse says, "Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight, So that You are justified when You speak And blameless when You judge."(Psalm 51:4) Please note that while this psalm was indeed his confession of sin to God, it was also entrusted to the choir director to be sung before the people; thus, he did not conceal his sin from the people either—he had repented thoroughly.

He then posed a question and answered it himself: "But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? The God who inflicts wrath is not unrighteous, is He? (I am speaking in human terms.) May it never be! For otherwise, how will God judge the world?"(Romans 3:5-6) Then he asked and answered himself again: "But if through my lie the truth of God abounded to His glory, why am I also still being judged as a sinner? ..."(Romans 3:7-8) His conclusion is clear: "...why not say (as we are slanderously reported and as some claim that we say), “Let us do evil that good may come”? Their condemnation is just."(Romans 3:8)

Let’s now talk more about the fact that "...they were entrusted with the oracles of God."(Romans 3:2). This took place during the time of the Old Testament. More than a thousand years have passed, yet no one among the Israelites truly understood the Old Testament; the Jews even crucified Jesus. After His resurrection, Jesus Himself proved that no one truly understood the Old Testament. He said to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, "...“O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?” Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures."(Luke 24:25-27)

It was not until Paul was filled with revelation (see Acts 1:11-12, 2 Corinthians 12:7, Ephesians 3:3) that he began to understand the Old Testament Scriptures. Because it is revelation, we know this is the work of the Triune God; in fact, only God knows His own work. Therefore, when His time came, He chose Paul as His channel, so that he would, as mentioned earlier, "on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus."(Romans 2:16) Peter said in this way: "...our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction."(2 Peter 3:15-16) Do not distort the Scriptures.

Speaking of God’s holy words in Scriptures, we see that while some are willing to lay down their lives for the Lord—and indeed have done so—they have not done so in accordance with the teachings of the Bible. A good example is Watchman Ni; some of his erroneous teachings have influenced in certain churches. If you have read our previous articles, "1213 Warfare, sin, acceptance, mix of right and wrong, discernment – 2Co(10)1-(11)15," specifically in the section titled "2. Paul’s consistency between words and deeds," you can see how God, through His absolute sovereignty, forgave the prostitute Rahab for

her sin of lying and David for his capital offense. Although I believe God will forgive the sins of Watchman Ni, just as He forgave David's and Rahab's sins, my opinion does not matter; God has absolute sovereignty, and He is the One who decides.

"For there is no partiality with God."(Romans 2:11) His decisions are also absolutely fair. On this point, Peter also made it very clear to Cornelius: "...I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality."(Acts 10:34) In fact, the Song of Moses in the Old Testament already declared, "The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He."(Deuteronomy 32:4) Later, when Jehoshaphat appointed judges in the kingdom of Judah, he said to them, "Now then let the fear of the LORD be upon you; be very careful what you do, for the LORD our God will have no part in unrighteousness or partiality or the taking of a bribe."(2 Chronicles 19:7) Therefore, He will not show partiality toward anyone simply because that person has done something for Him.

Let us now take an example from the Old Testament concerning Solomon to illustrate this point. He built the temple for God, yet the Bible's assessment of him is as follows: "Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not follow the LORD fully, as David his father had done. Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable idol of Moab, on the mountain which is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the detestable idol of the sons of Ammon. Thus also he did for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods. Now the LORD was angry with Solomon because his heart was turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not observe what the LORD had commanded. So the LORD said to Solomon, "Because you have done this, and you have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you, and will give it to your servant. Nevertheless I will not do it in your days for the sake of your father David, but I will tear it out of the hand of your son. However, I will not tear away all the kingdom, but I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of My servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen.""(1 Kings 11:6-13) God shows no partiality.

Fortunately, God values faith even more. The "2" in the "1213" mentioned earlier addresses this point, revealing a general principle to us: while being willing to lay down one's life for God is certainly good, isn't it even better to be able to interpret the Bible correctly? At the very least, the latter will certainly result in one fewer charge at the Judgment Seat of the Great White Throne. And to interpret the Scriptures correctly, it is only possible by letting the Holy Spirit to lead our Bible study—we truly must "let the Holy Spirit lead our Bible study." Previously, in "250823 1 A method for having life by allowing the Holy Spirit to lead Bible study," we discussed a proven method. Just as the Holy Spirit led Paul westward to Macedonia during his second missionary journey, we too can let the Holy Spirit to lead our Bible study in this way and thereby gain a method for having life.

Speaking of understanding the Bible, after His resurrection, Jesus said to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, "..."O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to

enter into His glory?" Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures."(Luke 24:25-27) Therefore, during the approximately one thousand years of the Old Testament era, no Israelite truly understood the Old Testament Scriptures; the Jews even crucified Jesus.

In the New Testament era, what Paul received came from revelation—it was God's own work—and so he understood the Scriptures as they were known at that time. Because God is infinite and man is finite, we can only use the phrase "as they were known at that timee." Let us now consider Stephen. He was the first disciple to be martyred for the Lord and the first person recorded in the New Testament to be conformed to the image of Jesus (cf. Acts 7:54-60). How could he not have understood the Scriptures in this case? We must remember that "...Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, ..."(Acts 6:5). Therefore, his being conformed to the image of Jesus was also the work of God. Stephen's example also tells us that a person can be conformed to the image of Jesus while still alive, which confirms what Paul said: "For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren."(Romans 8:29) In other words, foreknowledge and predestination are two sides of the same coin. Since we do not know who those foreknown and predestined are, we must still pursue this truth ourselves and preach the gospel in accordance with the Great Commission. In short, even in the New Testament era, it is only through God's own work that the Bible can be truly understood.

Finally, I want to thank this person—"she disagreed"—with what I used to believe: that, just as in the Old Testament era, since the advent of the New Testament Scriptures, no one has truly been able to understand the Bible. This has allowed me to see what the Bible actually says, as stated above, and to realize that my previous understanding was wrong.