

In Romans 1:32 Paul says that unrighteous human beings, although they know that they deserve God's condemnation for their practice of sin, not only persist in doing these sinful things, but also approve of those who practice the same things.

Then Paul, in 2: 1-16, develops teaching concerning God's righteous judgment.....(go through the passage).

Does this section 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 to! (notice verse 13 and 16 [14 and 15 are a parenthesis])

But if Paul has established the unrighteousness of all men (and he has) then how can he speak of God's declaring some men righteous in the day of His judgment?

If all men are transgressors of the Law, how can God declare some men 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.

They are in fact the conditions for being declared righteous or unrighteous in the day of God's righteous judgment.

But when we place these two classes of people and these two conditions next to the first major strand of thought in this section- that of man's unrighteousness -we discover that, except for Jesus Christ Himself, the first class of people is an empty class! There are not people who fulfill the condition in the first class and thus there are no people in that class!