Romans 2:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

> Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.

Analysis

Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest—Paul's διό (dio, "therefore") pivots from condemning pagan idolatry (1:18-32) to confronting the Jewish moralist who nodded in agreement but practices the same sins. The Greek ἀναπολόγητος (anapologētos, "without excuse/defense") echoes 1:20's indictment of Gentiles, now applied to the self-righteous. **For wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself**—the verb κατακρίνω (katakrinō) means to pronounce guilty; hypocritical judgment boomerangs into self-condemnation.

Paul exposes the fatal flaw of Jewish presumption: assuming covenant status exempts one from moral accountability. Jesus made identical arguments in Matthew 7:1-5 and John 8:7. The ὁ κρίνων (ho krinōn, "the one judging") assumes a judicial seat reserved for God alone (James 4:12). This verse demolishes ethnic or religious privilege as grounds for escaping divine judgment.

The τὰ αὐτὰ πράσσεις (ta auta prasseis, "you practice the same things") reveals that sin is universal, transcending ethnic boundaries. Paul will develop this theme through 3:23: "all have sinned." The verse establishes that knowledge of God's law intensifies—not diminishes—culpability.

Historical Context

Paul wrote Romans circa AD 57 from Corinth to a mixed congregation of Jewish and Gentile Christians. Chapter 2 addresses Jewish Christians who retained cultural superiority over Gentile converts, believing circumcision and Torah knowledge guaranteed salvation. This was the central controversy Paul fought in Galatians and at the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15). First-century Judaism emphasized God's faithfulness to Abraham's seed, often sliding into ethnic nationalism that Jesus and Paul both confronted.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. In what areas might I condemn others for sins I rationalize in myself?
2. How does this verse challenge Christian tribalism or denomination-based superiority?
3. What 'therefore' connects my privileges (religious upbringing, biblical knowledge) to greater accountability before God?

Interlinear Text

Διὸ	ἀναπολόγητος	εἶ	ὦ	ἄνθρωπε	πᾶς	ὁ
Therefore	**inexcusable**	**thou art**	**O**	**man**	**whosoever**	G3588
G1352	G379	G1488	G5599	G444	G3956	

κρίνων	ἐν	ᾧ	γὰρ	κρίνων	τὸν	ἕτερον
thou art that judgest	**wherein**	G3739	**for**	**thou art that judgest**	G3588	**another**
G2919	G1722		G1063	G2919		G2087

σεαυτὸν	κατακρίνεις	τὰ	γὰρ	αὐτὰ	πράσσεις	ὁ
thyself	**thou condemnest**	G3588	**for**	**the same things**	**doest**	G3588
G4572	G2632		G1063	G846	G4238	

κρίνων
thou art that judgest
G2919

Additional Cross-References

Romans 2:3 (Judgment): And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?

Luke 6:37 (Judgment): Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:

Romans 9:20 (Parallel theme): Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?

Luke 19:22 (Judgment): And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow:

James 2:20 (Parallel theme): But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

James 4:11 (Judgment): Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.

1 Corinthians 7:16 (Parallel theme): For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?