

Romans 2:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Who will render to every man according to his deeds:

Analysis

Who will render to every man according to his deeds—Paul quotes Psalm 62:12 and Proverbs 24:12, affirming the universal principle that God judges κατὰ τὰ ἔργα (kata ta erga, "according to the works"). The future ἀποδώσει (apodōsei, "will render/repay") points to eschatological judgment. This seems paradoxical in a letter championing justification by faith (3:28, 4:5), but Paul's point is that genuine faith produces transformed behavior—judgment by works reveals faith's authenticity.

This principle demolishes any claim that God plays favorites based on ethnicity, religious pedigree, or doctrinal correctness divorced from life transformation. James 2:14-26 parallels this: "faith without works is dead." Paul will argue that no one achieves justification through works (3:20), yet works demonstrate whether professed faith is genuine or hypocritical. The judgment throne evaluates fruit, not mere profession.

The phrase every man (ἐκάστῳ, hekastō) emphasizes individual accountability—no corporate shield of "Abraham's children" or "church membership." This anticipates verses 9-10's "to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile," universalizing both condemnation and salvation.

Historical Context

Old Testament consistently taught that God judges deeds (Jeremiah 17:10, Ezekiel 18:30). First-century Judaism affirmed this but often coupled it with covenant

privilege, creating a two-tiered system: Gentiles judged strictly by works, Jews by covenant mercy. Paul insists on one standard for all. This echoes Jesus's teaching that servants are judged by their stewardship (Matthew 25:14-30, Luke 12:47-48)—knowledge increases accountability.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. If my salvation is by faith alone, why does Scripture so frequently speak of judgment according to works?
2. What 'deeds' would my life present at God's judgment throne—do they evidence genuine faith or mere profession?
3. How does this universal standard of judgment guard against presumption while driving me to Christ?

Interlinear Text

ὅς	ἀποδώσει	ἐκάστω	κατὰ	τὰ	ἔργα	αὐτοῦ·
Who	will render	to every man	according	G3588	deeds	to his
G3739	G591	G1538	G2596		G2041	G846

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 62:12 (Parallel theme): Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work.

Jeremiah 32:19 (Parallel theme): Great in counsel, and mighty in work: for thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men: to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings:

Matthew 16:27 (Parallel theme): For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

Jeremiah 17:10 (Parallel theme): I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.

2 Corinthians 5:10 (Parallel theme): For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

Revelation 22:12 (Parallel theme): And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

Revelation 20:12 (Parallel theme): And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

Job 34:11 (Parallel theme): For the work of a man shall he render unto him, and cause every man to find according to his ways.

1 Corinthians 3:8 (Parallel theme): Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

Revelation 2:23 (Parallel theme): And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.