

Romans

“I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes”

– Romans 1:16

God's Wrath In Judgment

- **1:18 – “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven...”**
 - *For* – links vs. 18 as the *reason* for what was just stated in vs. 17
 - Why do we need justification through faith?
 - God's judgment will be against the unrighteous and ungodly
 - The Greek for “just” or “justified” (*dikaioo*) is from the same family of words as “righteous” (*dikaio*) and means “*to be judged or treated as righteous*” (a judicial term, cf. Isa 5:23; Matt 12:36-37)
 - *Wrath* – i.e. His judicial wrath against us as lawbreakers
 - Breaking God's rules makes us “unjustified” (Rom 2:13)
 - Thus, God loves us and wants us to be saved (1 Tim 2:4), but we are all unrighteous (Rom 3:21) and thus in danger of His wrath
- *How can we escape God's wrath?* See vs. 16-17 with John 3:16; I John 4:7-11; Titus 3:3-7; Eph 2:1-10

God's Wrath In Judgment

- 1:18 – “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven...”
 - *Note: the present tense of the revealing of God's wrath (i.e. judgment) from heaven (cf. Eph 5:6, Col 3:6)*
 - Not because God is wrathfully judging the unrighteous *now*
 - In fact, the unrighteous often prosper (Ecc 8:10-14; Ps 37), and they receive God's blessings (Matt 5:45) just like the righteous
 - But as surely as you breath this moment, God's judgment is coming – *thus the present tense* (cf. Lk 12:20; II Pet 3:10-12; I Pet 4:7-11)
 - *Note: our interpretation of “judgment” in vs. 18 must match our interpretation of “death” in vs. 32 – i.e. spiritual or physical?*
- *The entire point of Romans 1:18-3:26 is that all people, no matter who you are, will be judged and lost if not for faith in Christ!*
 - God's wrath “is revealed” in judgment (1:18)
 - God's righteousness “is revealed” in the gospel (3:21)

God's Wrath In Judgment

- **1:18 – “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven...”**
 - *All ungodliness and unrighteousness of men*
 - Ungodly is lack of reverence and respect toward God
 - Unrighteousness is evil behavior, either in secret or (*especially*) toward our fellow man (cf. 1:29-32; I Cor 6:9-11)
 - *Note: It seems that Romans 1 shows that ungodliness begins with lack of knowledge of God (or ignoring that knowledge) and necessarily leads to unrighteousness (e.g. vs. 28-31, cf. II Tim 2:15-16; Titus 2:11-12)*
 - *Who suppress the truth in (by) unrighteousness*
 - “*Suppress*” is a deliberate, active, continual word – the same used in I Thes 5:21 (in a good sense)
 - “*Truth*” refers to the reality of God’s existence, power, and will
 - i.e. those who know better but choose to act out evil as if God is not even there (Ps 10:3-4, 94:3-7; Ecc 8:12-13; etc.)

From Ungodliness to Unrighteousness

- The rest of the chapter particularly deals with the decline of the Gentiles into idolatry and all unrighteousness
 - However, his language deals with mankind from the beginning – i.e. from the generations who knew God since the creation
 - We often use examples to illustrate the main point, especially when it is a condemning point to people currently living
 - The point: all are guilty – how did the Gentile world fall this far?
 - NOT because of their *nature* (note the *active* verbs of vs. 18-32)
 - Because they forgot – or refused to recognize – their Creator
- *Application for us: ignoring the available knowledge of God leads to ungodliness and unrighteousness*
 - *Making us guilty and in danger of God's wrath*

From Ungodliness to Unrighteousness

- vs. 19-20 - “Because what is knowable of God...since the creation”
 - Examining ourselves and the universe around us shows the reality and power of God (cf. Ps 8, 19, etc.)
 - “*evident*” (manifest, NKJV) through the God-given ability to observe and reason out rational conclusions based on observation
 - *Not* dealing with innate knowledge here, instilled in the mind by God: the following verses imply observation and reasoning on man’s part
 - *Not* dealing with the revelation through the word here, but what can be observed in nature (i.e. Ps 19:7-11; 33:6-7; etc.)
 - *Two attributes of God displayed in His creation:*
 - Eternal power
 - Fullness of deity (i.e. Godhead)

From Ungodliness to Unrighteousness

- *Invisible things*: cannot be observed directly, but by lots of evidence
 - Could anything physical (i.e. directly observable) do all this?
 - Col 1:15; John 1:18, 4:24; Heb 11:3; etc.
- *Eternal power*:
 - Life begets life, motion requires a mover, order does not come from disorder, etc.
 - Speaking of the “*kosmos*” – i.e. the orderly universe (Thayer)
 - “*Eternal*,” i.e. everlasting, the kind of power to sustain this universe (cf. Col 1:17; Heb 1:3; etc.)
- *Fullness of deity* (i.e. *Godhead*, NKJV):
 - *Not* God as a Person(s) or anything else that the word reveals
 - *Rather* the glory, majesty, intelligence of God evidenced in the things He has created – i.e. *His “hand,” not His “face”*
 - cf. Ps 94:9; Isa 42:5; Job 12:7-12, 36:34-33, Job 39-41; etc.

From Ungodliness to Unrighteousness

- “*Godhead*” is probably a purposefully ambiguous word (see Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament*)
 - Speaks of God’s nature, but nothing specific as to His person
- “*Being understood through what has been made*” (NASU)
 - Interpretation depends on the preposition, “by” or “through”
 - Could both be the same: we understand the Godhead through observing what the Creator made
 - Could be “understood by them who are created” – referring again to man’s logical reasoning
- “*So that they are without excuse*”
 - *i.e.* without excuse to live and speak like God is not a reality
 - Without excuse to refuse to be thankful and worshipful

From Ungodliness to Unrighteousness

- vs. 21-23 – “Because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God”
- *The real problem: digression from limited knowledge to absolute depravity by choice*
 - As if God does not hear and is not watching
 - vs. 21 – no reverence, respect, thankfulness toward God
 - vs. 22 – futile thoughts (probably w.r.t. idolatry, Acts 14:15): no use, point, hope in their philosophizing (I Cor 3:20)
 - vs. 23 – idolatry, worshipping man and beast, not God
- **“Their foolish hearts were darkened”** – gave up the ability to judge between right and wrong: erased all truth from the intellect
- *Note: “glory” (vs. 23) – compared to “image” of corruptible things*
 - Compare Rev 4, John 1:14, II Pet 1:17, etc.

From Ungodliness to Unrighteousness

- vs. 24-28 – “God gave them up”
- **Three times this phrase is used, and implies that God:**
 - Allowed them to follow their chosen course, even to death
 - Dismissed them and did not work with them as He did the Hebrews
 - Judged them without mercy because of their stubborn rebellion
- **The evil course chosen by mankind:**
- *Note:* “glory” (vs. 23) – compared to “image” of corruptible things
 - vs. 24 – lust and impurity, dishonoring their bodies
 - vs. 25 – idolatry and carnality, worshiping creatures and themselves
 - vs. 26-27 – indecent use of the body and sexuality, against the order that God created
- If we choose the path of evil, God will allow us to follow it!

From Ungodliness to Unrighteousness

- vs. 28-32 – “God gave them up to a depraved mind”
- **There is a word play in the Greek text (see Reese):**
 - *“Just as they did not see fit to keep God in mind, so God gave them up to a mind that could not see fit”*
 - i.e. void of judgment, wisdom, reason, conscience
 - They abused their minds and consciences to the point that they began to regard evil as good
- **vss. 29-31** – see also I Cor 6:9-10, Eph 5:3-5; Gal 5:19-21; etc. – when man lives like there is no God, this is where he ends up!
- **vs. 32:** difficult to interpret this verse exclusively
 - How did the Gentiles know the ordinances (i.e. rules) of God?
 - How did they know the evils of vss. 19-32 would lead to death?
 - **Point: when we live contrary to our knowledge of God, we condemn ourselves to spiritual destruction.**

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