

Romans

Romans 1:18 - 3:20

A World Under Sin and Condemnation

The Relation of Divine Wrath Against All Humanity

- Revelation of the Wrath of God
 - vs. 18 God's wrath against men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.
 - These men know the truth
 - These men *SUPPRESS* or *HOLD* the truth
 - Greek *katecho* – (1) to hold fast or possess (1 Cor 7:30) OR (2) to hold down, suppress, restrain, or hinder (2 Thes 2:6f)
 - These men do so in unrighteousness
 - God *REVEALS* –current tense- His wrath against these men
 - The explanation of God's wrath takes up the rest of the chapter and is divided into 3 parts

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- 1) Possession of the Truth
 - vs 19 God made it known to them
 - It is evident within them
 - vs 20 God revealed the truth to them in His creation
 - God made it evident to all mankind that creation was not an accident. That creation was purposeful and intentional. He revealed enough of Himself in His creation to leave humanity without an excuse of ignorance of Him
 - Natural order of the universe
 - God made man in His image
 - God breathed life into all living creatures
 - The macroscopic and microscopic universe reveal this divine order from subatomic particles, to cellular mechanics, to procreation, and through exploration of our known universe -- all these things reveal God.

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- 2) Rejection of the Truth
 - vs 21 Knowing God they rejected Him
 - They did not recognize His deity
 - They did not give thanks for His good gifts
 - “They became **futile** in their reasonings”
 - Greek *mataioo* – *resultlessness, fruitless, useless, no purpose*
 - Their reasonings did not bring them to the proper goal
 - vs 22 “*Claiming wisdom they became fools*”
 - Foolishness led to idolatry
 - vs 23 They exchanged the glory of God for idols
 - Foolishness led to idolatry
 - Is it any different today? Does our society partake in this foolishness?
 - Witness the fantastic theories invented to explain God away.

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- 3) Consequence: Abandonment to sin
 - Vs 24 “*Therefore*”
 - Greek – *dio* – *on which account*
 - Because of humanity’s rejection of God...
 - God gave them up, delivered them over to their sins
 - vs 25-27 Sin punished with sin
 - Sin runs its course and reaches its natural end – death – separation from God
 - In the very practice of homosexuality people were “receiving in themselves the due penalty of their errors” – The error was abandonment of God – exchanging the truth of God for a lie.
 - The perversion of homosexuality is a punishment, the due penalty for the rejection of God.
 - They began by dishonoring God, they ended by dishonoring themselves.

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- vs 28 – *“And just as they **did not see fit to acknowledge God**”*
 - A play on words
 - Greek – dikimazo – this means they tested and tried God and found him unfit or unworthy to be retained in their knowledge.
 - This was a misuse of their mind, and God punished them accordingly.
 - *“God gave them up to a depraved mind” with all the consequences listed in verses 29-31*
 - *This is the consequence of such misuse of the mind*
 - *vs 29-31 - “people having been filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, and evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, and malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unfeeling, and unmerciful;”*

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- vs 32 – *“but also approve of those who practice them.”*
 - The culmination of the description of this unrighteousness
 - In today’s world, moral philosophers calmly and dispassionately figuring out a rational to justify the sinful life, instead of falling into sin in the heat of passion
- To sum it up...
 - This righteous abandonment is not the final judgement and does not imply these people can not be saved
 - This is part of Paul’s demonstration of humanity’s need for salvation, not a demonstration that it can not be saved
 - The prodigal son came to his senses in the pig pen and all over the Roman empire, Paul found people who were sick of sin, having found out what it comes to and looking for something better.
 - The modern world shows evidence of returning to paganism. It shows itself, in the light of Romans 1:18-32 to be a world under the wrath of God

Tonight

- Chapter 2:1-20 The Judgment of God: None Exempt by Respect of Persons (2:1–16)
- And if time...
- Special Application of the Principles of Judgment to the Jews (2:17–29)

No One is Exempt from the Judgement of God by Respect of Persons, 2:1-16

- Three views
 - This passage is a transition from indictment of the Gentiles (1:18-32) to indictment of the Jews (2:17-29)
 - The language here is general
 - Jews are not specifically identified
 - The “judges” are those who are morally superior (Greeks or Jews)
 - The “judge” of 2:1 has already been included in the indictment of 1:18-32
 - Wherefore draws a conclusion from the whole of the preceding discussion rather than the last statement

Conclusion with respect to those who judge others, 2:1

- The “judge” is without excuse on account of what has already been said
- The remainder of this section explains more fully why he is without excuse
- The object of God’s wrath is humankind – not just the Gentile
 - Wrath is “revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of man, no matter where it is found, whether Jew, Gentile, or even Greeks
 - Some (the judges) thought they would exempt
 - “Whoever you are that judges” is universal, applies certainly to Jews but also to anyone else in the class (Greeks were as racist as the Jews)

Conclusion with respect to those who judge others, 2:1

- The coming discussion includes:
 - Jews – who had the Law of Moses
 - Gentiles – who had “Eden” law

Logical Propositions

Sin existed before the law of Moses
Where there is no law there is no sin

Law must have existed before the Law of Moses

The Law (Moses)
Jews only

Law (Eden)
All men

Law of Christ
Perfected
Redemption

Conclusion with respect to those who judge others, 2:1

- The “judge” is does not claim moral superiority
 - He practices those things outlined in 1:18-32
 - Holding this view requires adding “in principle” to the text (Their sins were no different *in principle*)
- *Their claim of exemption from God’s wrath rested on some personal consideration*
 - The Jews considered themselves special (not like Gentiles) because of the law privilege
 - Greeks also considered themselves special (not like the “Barbarians”), 2: 9, 14

Common knowledge regarding the nature of God's judgement, 2:2

“...we know that the judgment of God is according to truth [that is, the facts of the case, and therefore without favoritism] against them that practice such things”

L.A. Mott

- Cf. 2:11, ...***“there is no respect of persons with God...”***

Miscalculations, 2:3-4

- What is this man who judges another while guilty of the same things possibly be thinking?
 - He expected to escape wrath in spite of his guilt, v.3
 - The Jews thought they would escape wrath by virtue of their status as sons of Abraham, Matthew 3:7-22; John 8:33; 39, 53; Romans 2:17-20
 - The Greeks had a similar rationale
 - He despised the “riches of God’s goodness and forbearance, and longsuffering – not knowing that this goodness was intended to lead them to repentance, v.4; II Peter 3:9-15 where it is linked with negating God’s ability to keep His promise

Harsh reality: wrath in judgement according to works and without favoritism, 2:5-11

- This judge is, in fact, treasuring up wrath for himself in the time when God's righteous judgment would be revealed, v.5
- The basis for judgment is the same for "every man" – God will render to every man according to his works, v.6
- Paul then elaborates in v. 7-11
 - Neither Jew or Greek would be favored above others
 - Judgment will be on the basis of character or works – ***what one is*** rather than ***who he is***

Judgement without respect of persons explained, 2:12-16

- “For” introduces an explanation connected with v.11
- Men are not condemned on the basis of a law they did not have
- Different situations call for different treatment in order that judgment could be without respect of persons – two cases considered
 - Jews, having the law of Moses, are condemned on that basis, v.12 (not “hearers” but doers, v. 13)
 - Gentiles are shown to have “law” (ethical) in v.14f
 - Their own conduct often shows an understanding of law and witnesses to “the work of the law written on their hearts”
 - Conscience
 - Reasoning among themselves (perhaps the functioning of conscience) to accuse or excuse themselves

Conscience: How does it work?

- Conscience only measures agreement between two things (law-giver's expectation and my behavior)
- Only the law-giver can specify what is right and wrong – conscience never determines right and wrong.
- Sometimes we don't like what the law-giver says so we remove the law-giver and substitute some other definition of right and wrong.

