

## ROMANS: THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

Romans 1:18-20 | God's Wrath Revealed

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- **Paul demonstrates the universality of human sin and guilt by dividing the human race into several sections and taking them to court as the prosecuting attorney.**
  - (1) The depraved Gentile society (1:18-32)
  - (2) The critical moralizers (2:1-16)
  - (3) The self-confident Jews (2:17-3:8)
  - (4) The whole human race (3:9-20)
- **In each case Paul's procedure is the same.**
  - (1) He reminds the group of their knowledge of God and His goodness.
  - (2) He then confronts them that they do not live up to their knowledge.
  - (3) He accuses them of deliberately suppressing their knowledge of God and even contradicting it with their unrighteous living.
  - (4) Therefore they are inexcusably guilty before holy God.
    - > The verdict is "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).
- **Why four sermons on wrath and sin?**

Knowing the nature of sin and wrath will cause you to cherish the gospel.

Probably the most important thing I would say, and the most firmly rooted in Romans 1:18, is that knowing the true condition of your heart and the nature of sin and the magnitude and justice of the wrath of God will cause you to understand the mighty gospel, and love it, and cherish it, and feast on it, and share it as never before. And this is crucial because this is the way the gospel saves believers. If you don't understand the gospel, if you don't cherish it and look to it and feed on it day after day, it won't save you (see 1 Cor. 15:1-3; Col. 1:23). Knowing sin and wrath will help you do that.

**John Piper**

### I. The righteousness of God is revealed (1:16-17)

- **The righteousness of God (v. 17) is God's righteous way of 'righteousing' the unrighteous.**

#### Paul in dialogue

**Paul:** For I am not ashamed of the gospel (v. 16a)

**Q: Why not, Paul?**

**Paul:** For it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes (v. 16b)

**Q: How so, Paul?**

**Paul:** Because in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, that is, God's way of justifying sinners (v. 17)

**Q: But why is this necessary, Paul?**

**Paul:** For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth (v. 18)

**Q: But how have people suppressed the truth, Paul?**

**Paul:** For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse (vv. 19-20).

## II. The wrath of God is revealed (1:18-20)

### 1) God's wrath is his personal righteous anger against our unrighteousness (1:18).

**John 3:36** Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

- **It is His holy love that requires wrath.**

"Would a God who took as much pleasure in evil as He did in good be a good God? Would a God who did not react adversely to evil in His world be morally perfect? Surely not. But it is precisely this adverse reaction to evil, which is a necessary part of moral perfection, that the Bible has in view when it speaks of God's wrath." **Packer – *Knowing God*, pp. 136-37**

- **His wrath is against those who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth (v. 18b).**

**Psalm 14:1** The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds, there is none who does good.

For as long as we suppress the truth, we will never understand who we are, or why the world is as it is. It is not acknowledging the Creator's right to be Ruler that is repressive; rather, it is the self-suppression of living in denial of that truth. **Timothy Keller – *Romans For You*, p. 27**

### 2) God's wrath is future and present.

- **Future**

**Romans 2:5** But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.

- **Present**

- **Death (Rom. 5:12; 6:23)**

**Romans 5:12** Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—

- **Futility of creation (Rom. 8:19-22)**

19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.

- **Government (Rom. 13:3-4).**

3 For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, 4 for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer.

- **Human depravity (1:24-32)**

When we think of wrath we think of fire and brimstone from heaven, a cataclysmic event. Instead we have God's wrath as quietly and invisibly handing sinners over to themselves. **Neil – pp. 12**

- **Preaching the gospel**

Whenever the Gospel is preached, we have the revelation of a righteousness from God, and the revelation of God's wrath against human sin.

### 3) God's wrath is just (vv. 19-20).

#### Psalm 89:14

Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; steadfast love and faithfulness go before you.

- **God's wrath is just because God in His grace continually reveals to everybody everywhere through nature his eternal power and divine nature.**

- **General revelation is the knowledge of God that is available to us through nature.**

- **It is universal (v. 19)**

**Psalm 19:1–4** The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. 2 Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. 3 There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. 4 Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them he has set a tent for the sun,

- **It is intentional (v. 20a)**

- **It is continual (v. 20b)**

- **The result is that on judgment day no one is without excuse (v. 20c).**

### 4) God's wrath was satisfied at the cross.

**Romans 5:9** Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

It is the great wonder of our redemption that God himself has provided the way of salvation by sending his own Son, who is both God and man, to be our representative and bear the penalty for our sins, thus combining the justice and love of God in one infinitely wise and amazingly gracious act. **Wayne Grudem**