

Romans 1:18-23

The gospel is the message of how a *righteous* God makes people *righteous righteously!*

Righteousness Revealed In Condemnation 1:18-3:20

Verse 18

The wrath of God – God’s temporal displeasure and display of judgment against all human sin, whether performed by unbelievers or sinning believers. The wrath of God is not a synonym for eternal judgment.

The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all:

Ungodliness – The lack of reverence for God (Deuteronomy 6:5).

Unrighteousness of men – Injustice toward other human beings (Leviticus 19:18).

Matthew 22:36-40 – Jesus quotes both of these O.T. passages and concludes, “On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.”

The wrath of God:

- 1 It comes because of sinful practices and not because of a person’s position.
- 2 It applies equally to unbelievers as well as sinning believers.
- 3 It has a present aspect and a future aspect.

Who suppress the truth – The word means to ‘hold down’ or ‘stifle’ the truth. They suppress through their unrighteous behavior, some by immorality and others by argument and denial of the truth.

Verse 19

Evident within them – All humans possess an inherent knowledge of God.

“There is a God shaped vacuum in the heart of every man which cannot be filled by any created thing, but only by God, the Creator, made known through Jesus.”

Blaise Pascal

“...in her darkness and isolation, she knew she was not alone. Someone was with her. She felt God’s love.”

Helen Keller

Verse 20

Clearly seen – Through *Special Revelation* – The Bible, and through *Natural Revelation* – The Creation.

Natural Revelation:

- 1 It is a clear testimony.
- 2 Everyone can understand it.
- 3 It is there for every generation.
- 4 It is a limited revelation.

So that they are without excuse –

“No man is able to offer the excuse that he could not see, that it is God’s fault and not his own that God is hidden from him.” R.C.H. Lenski

Verses 21-23

For even though they knew God – Even though men recognized God’s existence and His eternal power and divinity they refused to respond properly.

Their response is shown in seven downward steps:

- 1 *They did not honor Him as God* – They did not give Him the glory He deserves.
- 2 *They did not give thanks* – They did not credit God for the blessings they had received from Him
- 3 *They became futile in their speculations* – ‘Futile’ means *empty* or *without content*. ‘Speculations’ carries the idea of *rationalizing* in an evil sense. The result of these first three steps is that men end up denying God.
- 4 *Their foolish heart was darkened* – God’s wrath allows sin to sink the sinner deeper and deeper into darkness.
- 5 *They professed to be wise* – Those who deny God turn to their human wisdom to explain Him away.
- 6 *They became fools* – Literally ‘they made themselves fools’. Any reasoning that refuses to bow to what all creation proclaims concerning God is foolish. The word is ‘*moros*’ meaning ‘silly’.
- 7 *They exchanged God’s glory for an image* – To acknowledge God is to become accountable for our behavior. Instead we make our own Gods.