

God's Kindness and Wrath Urge Repentance
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Text: Romans 2:1-5

Romans: [Bibliography](#) or [Manuscripts and Greek Exegesis](#)

UBS 4th Edition Paragraph Topic: The Righteous Judgment of God

Central Idea of Message: God's disclosure of wrath for those rejecting him is a kindness, as is his patience, both of which are intended to lead people to repentance.

Introduction: In the previous paragraph Paul described, in graphic detail, the lostness of blatant Gentile defiance toward God. This rebelliousness was characterized by behavior unrestrained by any fear of consequences. Now, Paul sets out to describe the lostness of blatant Jewish defiance toward God.

On a side note, if men and women are elected to salvation, with no choice in the matter, why does Paul incorporate the element of wrath and consequences into so many of his texts? The answer lies in the fact that people do have choices and that impending consequences, such as hell, are intended to urge people toward repentance. Unrepentant hearts, whether Gentile or Jew, are each urged to turn to God.

- I. Those Passing Judgment Are Without Excuse (v. 1)
 - A. Passing unfavorable judgment or criticizing
 - 1. What is the referent for "you" in v. 1?
 - a) Second person singular in diatribe style
 - b) **"Referent" means the thing or person being referred to, often by a pronoun [it, he, she, we, you, they]**
 - c) The seemingly ambiguous referent must be determined by the context, which becomes clear
 - d) The referent here is the Jews, whom Paul says approved of God's judgment upon Gentiles in countless situations, like the following:
 - (1) Against Sodom and Gomorrah
 - (2) At Jericho against the Canaanites
 - (3) In Moab against the Moabites
 - (4) Against Goliath and other Philistines

2. **In judging, we reveal that we have knowledge of the standard of truth, thereby acknowledging an awareness of sin**
 - a) **Judgment [κρίνω] which is condemning is wrong**
 - b) **Judgment [ἀνακρίνω] which appraises is right**
- B. **Condemnatory judgment of others almost always results in self-condemnation**
 1. Paul says the Jews were guilty of doing what they condemn in others, that is presenting themselves as better than they actually were and innocent of sins against God committed by "those heathen non-Jews"!
 - a) A clear picture of self-righteousness is portrayed in Luke 18:9-14!
 - (1) **Self-righteousness breeds false security!**
 - (2) Like having something stolen and wanting the perpetrators caught and hanged
 - (3) But then we turn around and steal from a business, a friend, a parent, the government, and even from God!
 - (4) **"No skill is more easily mastered than the ability to detect the moral failings of our neighbors" (Cragg 405)**
 - b) **Most of us, even if we didn't say it out loud, at some time believed that God wouldn't condemn us to hell because there are so many others who are far worse sinners than us**
 - c) **In judging others, we are often actually hiding our own guilt (cf. Thomas 78)!**
 - d) When we point a finger at someone there are usually three other fingers and even a thumb pointing back at us!
 2. **God's truth demands that the same standards be applied to the same things for all people**
 - a) White treatment of a black
 - b) Black treatment of a white
 - c) White treatment of an Indian
 - d) Indian treatment of a white
 - e) A male's treatment of a female
 - f) A female's treatment of a male
 - g) A heterosexual's treatment of a homosexual
 - h) A homosexual's treatment of a heterosexual

3. **As the Gentile world is guilty of sinning against the light shed by General (Natural) Revelation, the Jewish world is guilty of sinning against the light shed by both General Revelation and Gospel (Special) Revelation, and we stand guilty today of the same**

II. God's Judgment Falls upon Sinners (vv. 2-3)

- A. God's judgment falls upon those who practice sin (v. 2)
 1. Will be according to truth (cf. Gen. 18:25)
 2. Will be racially impartial, which stuns the Jews
 3. Will not be according to human judgment (contra intersectionality)
 4. Will be consistent with God's unchanging nature
- B. No holiness is attained by condemning sin (v. 3)
 1. **Condemnation of anything as sin or wrong indicates knowledge of a standard of right and wrong**
 2. When the Jews approved of God's wrath on non-Jews they also approved of God's wrath on all perpetrators, including themselves
 - a) Likewise, when we applaud God's consequential wrath falling upon sin and sinners we must also applaud God's consequential wrath falling on us when we are guilty of the same transgressions
 - b) The list of Jewish sins may not be the same as Gentile sins, but their sin was the same: both sinned against the light (cf. McBeth 62)
 - (1) The Jews had the law of Moses and the Prophets
 - (2) They "knew but didn't do"
 - (3) **God is least concerned with our knowing what is right and most concerned with our doing what is right**
 3. **Pursuit of true holiness is demonstrated by confessing and forsaking sin, not simply by condemning it**

III. God's Kindness Is Designed to Lead to Repentance (v. 4)

- A. Kindness is goodness or special beneficent favor in contrast to penal justice (cf. McBeth 67)
- B. Forbearance is delaying, not canceling, due punishment (cf. McBeth 67)
- C. Patience is long-suffering, duration of time for delaying punishment

- D. Repentance is a change of mind and direction which includes recognizing, confessing, and forsaking sin which marks the beginning of a new spiritual and moral life
 - E. The Jewish nation had a more complete disclosure of God than other nations (Special Revelation)
 - 1. God's election of the Jews and his kindness to them was designed to elicit repentance, holiness, and worship, not automate them
 - 2. Instead, the Jews responded with presumption and assumed a privileged status with regard to divine judgment (cf. MacGorman, *Layman's*, 33)
 - 3. They greatly misunderstood election
 - a) Supposed they could claim divine position due to their relationship to Abraham (Matt. 3:9)
 - b) Forgot that all humans are more valuable than any animal (cf. Matt. 12:12)
 - c) The Jews were Abraham's offspring but were still enslaved to sin (cf. John 8:33)
 - d) Felt that since they were Jews by birth that they were not sinners (cf. Gal. 2:15)
 - e) **We must never assume that just because we have experienced the goodness of God that we will thereby be excluded from experiencing the righteous judgment of God**
 - 4. All praise of God's kindness that halts short of personal repentance and obedient faith is nothing short of despising the very kindness of God, whom we say we praise
 - a) Impenitence [refusal to repent] is the source of hardness of heart (cf. McBeth 69)
 - b) The heart that will not repent grows harder (cf. McBeth 69)
 - 5. Reliance on God's tolerance is showing contempt for God's patience
 - 6. God's goodness in not bringing immediate punishment is intended to lead people to repentance
- IV. Stubbornness and Non-Repentance Bring Wrath (v. 5)
- A. Not just any wrath but the wrath of almighty God
 - 1. Failure to repent turns God's kindness into wrath (cf. Moody 173)
 - 2. Wrath aimed at ourselves if we are an unrepentant sinner

3. **Stubbornness and an unrepentant heart point to the self as being responsible for incurring God's wrath, not God**
 - a) This verse clearly defends God against the false notion that he is the one who sends men and women to hell (cf. McBeth 69)
 - b) God takes the initiative in pouring out his *grace* upon mankind, whereas people take the initiative in pouring out God's *wrath* upon themselves
- B. Stored wrath
 1. Never imagine that God is indifferent toward sin just because the fulness of his wrath has not yet been unleashed: there is an abundance of it waiting
 2. Wrath will be set loose in the day of the righteous judgment of God
 3. Fury will be unloaded upon all those treating God's kindness, mercy, long-suffering, and self-disclosures with contempt

Conclusion: Surely the goodness of God will lead you to repentance.

Cast yourself upon the love of the Lord Jesus Christ and you will depart this place justified in the sight of God.