



THE GOSPEL AND GOD'S WRATH!

Romans 1:18-23

The first seventeen verses of Paul's letter to the Romans are an introduction that concludes with incredible promises: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'But the righteous man shall live by faith.'" *Romans 1:16–17 (NASB95)*

That is amazing! God has made provision for everyone who believes to know His love, His forgiveness, and His righteousness! Having introduced us to the hope of the gospel, Paul will change to a much more somber note in verse 18. Yes, the gospel reveals the righteousness of God, but it also reveals the wrath of God! In these verses, Paul declared that every person is without excuse, and those who do not believe experience God's wrath!

1. GOD'S WRATH REVEALED (verse 18)

Orgē (wrath) refers to a settled, determined indignation, not to the momentary, emotional, and often uncontrolled anger (*thumos*) to which human beings are prone.¹

- a. **God's wrath is revealed against human ungodliness (ungodliness is sin against God)**
- b. **God's wrath is revealed against human unrighteousness (unrighteousness is sin against man)**
- c. **God's wrath is revealed against unbelief (stifle or suppress the truth)**

2. THE REASONS FOR GOD'S WRATH (verses 19-23)

"Paul depicts three downward steps into paganism. There is willful blindness, a deliberate rejection of the truth. This is followed by wicked beliefs of either a rationalistic or religious nature. These in turn lead to wanton behavior." – John Phillips



a. The refusal to believe in God! (verses 19-20)

- The witness within - "manifest in them"
- The witness without - "evident to them"
- The witness of the Word

b. The rejection of God! (verse 21)

- Indifference to God - "did not honor Him as God"
- Ingratitude to God - "neither were thankful"
- Ignorance of God - "their foolish heart was darkened"

c. The replacement of God! (verses 22-23)

- Intellectually (verse 22)
- Idolatry (verse 23)

"The result of this was idolatry. The glory of God was exchanged for images of human and animal forms. The root sin of idolatry is that it is selfish. A man makes an idol. He brings it offerings and addresses prayers to it. Why? So that his own schemes and dreams may be furthered. His worship is for his own sake and not for God's. In this passage we are face to face with the fact that the essence of sin is to put self in the place of God." – William Barclay

In conclusion, the good news of Jesus is clear in John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. [John 3:16 \(NASB95\)](#)

In Romans 1:18 - 3:20, Paul explains and describes what it means to be under condemnation from God. He then explains the gospel (Romans 3:21 - 4:25) and what it means to no longer be under condemnation, describing the implications of being declared righteous by God (Romans 5 - 8). Paul's explanation of God's wrath, helps us to understand the greatness of His grace extended to us in Jesus!

"Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." [Romans 8:1 \(NASB95\)](#)