

**The Book of Romans**  
**1:18-20**  
**9/05/2018 Wednesday PM**

**Romans 1:18-20**

<sup>18</sup>The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, <sup>19</sup>since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. <sup>20</sup>For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

- V. 18 – Looking back at v. 17 Paul said, “For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed...”
- One would think that Paul was about to dive into teaching on God’s saving power and Him revealing His righteousness to all that believe.
- However, Paul wanted people in v.18 to understand that not only was God’s righteousness revealed, but also His wrath against evil.
- Only by fully understanding the “bad news” can we appreciate the “good news.”
- **What is the source of the wrath?**
  - Take notice in this verse that it says, “The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven...”
  - It is God’s wrath which is being revealed from heaven. God is the source of the wrath.
  - This is a stumbling block for many people in the world today.
  - People do not want to see God as a God of wrath, however His wrath is as essential to His divine righteousness as love and mercy are.
  - God’s wrath against sin is as much a part of the divine nature as love for this sinful world.
- **Who is the recipient of God’s wrath?**
  - “all the godlessness and wickedness of men”
  - Godlessness – means a lack of reverence for God; even rebellion against him.
  - Unrighteousness – refers to unjust actions between people.
  - Godlessness or ungodliness is vertical between us and God, and unrighteousness is horizontal between us and our fellow human beings.
  - Once humans have abandoned God it will not take long for the effects to be felt in their relationships with each other.
- **Why is God revealing His wrath on these people?**
  - “who suppress the truth by their wickedness.”
  - This type of suppressing the truth goes all the way back to Adam and Eve trying to cover up their sin Genesis 3.
  - That same tendency to cover up is still prevalent today.
  - It takes the gospel, backed up by effective working of God’s Spirit to bring us to the place of confession and forgiveness.
  - God cannot tolerate sin because his nature is morally perfect.
  - While we do not have many idol-worshipping religions in our neighborhoods, we do find those who suppress the truth about God. These people:
    - Replace God with the worship of success, poverty, and wealth,
    - Demote God by elevating their own homespun philosophies, and
    - Ignore God by devoting themselves to family, leisure, and career-rejecting his claim on their lives.
- Vv.19-20 – say, “<sup>19</sup>since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. <sup>20</sup>For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.”
- In these verses Paul establishes the truth of what we sometimes call “natural revelation:” God discloses something of his existence and nature to all people in the created natural world.
- These verses really cause an issue for some people as they grapple with the impact on a person’s salvation from this revelation of who God is from the natural world.
- This is one of those theological topics that you really have to dive into, however you have to be careful to not drown.

- Vv.19-20 give four characteristics of the *truth* as revealed in nature:
  1. It is **plain** and **clearly seen** – it is visible.
  2. It is **understood** – any wise person who sees the truth will also reflect on it and come to a conclusion about it.
  3. It has been **since the creation of the world** – it is constant, ongoing, changeless.
  4. It reveals God’s **eternal power and divine nature** – for an understanding of God’s love and grace one must look into the Scriptures and at God’s Son.
- What we can know from creation about God has been revealed by God.
- The clues to God’s existence and character have traditionally been called “general or natural revelation.”
- Humans cannot discover God on our own, however God chose to reveal himself, generally in nature and specifically through the Scriptures and Jesus.
- V. 19 answers the question, “How could a loving God send someone to hell, especially someone who has never heard the Good News of Jesus?”
- This verse makes it plain that God is generally revealed to people through nature so that it should be plain to people that the creation had a Creator.
- Looking at the natural world will not lead a person to salvation in and of itself, however it will lead a person to seek and find salvation through Jesus Christ.
- If they reject what is “plain to them,” then they will not inherit eternal life in Heaven.
- V. 20 says, “For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature-- have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.”
- This verse has a paradox in it – God’s *invisible qualities* are *clearly seen*. How is this?
- Psalm 19:1-4 says, “<sup>1</sup>The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. <sup>2</sup>Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. <sup>3</sup>There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. <sup>4</sup>Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world...”
- One look at creation in all its splendor tells people that a mighty power made this world.
- It wasn’t an impersonal force, but rather a personal God who did the creating.
- In that sense, creation shows both God’s “eternal power and his divine nature:”
  - It shows a God of might, intelligence, intricate detail, order, beauty, and power; a God who controls powerful forces.
  - Even though God reveals himself through creation, we must realize that the creation at this point is still under the Fall of Genesis 3:17-19 and is waiting on redemption just like we are Romans 8:19-21.
- So some ask the question, Why do we need missionaries if people can know about God through his creation?
  - Although people know God exists, they suppress that truth by their wickedness and thus deny him. Missionaries are there to point out that error.
  - Although people may believe there is a God, they refuse to commit themselves to him. Missionaries can help persuade them,
  - Missionaries can convince people who reject God of the dangerous consequences of their action.
  - Though nature reveals God, people need to be told about Jesus and how through him they can have a personal relationship with God.
  - Missionaries are needed to help the church obey the great commission of our Lord (Matthew 28:19-20.)
- Knowing that God exists is not enough.
- Does anyone have an excuse for not believing in God? Paul answers this in v. 20 with a big NO!
- The argument that a design implies a designer is not something that people cannot accept, it is something that people refuse to accept.
- Every person either chooses to accept God, or reject God. The choice is theirs and there is no excuse for them.

## Next Week Study

### Romans 1:21-32