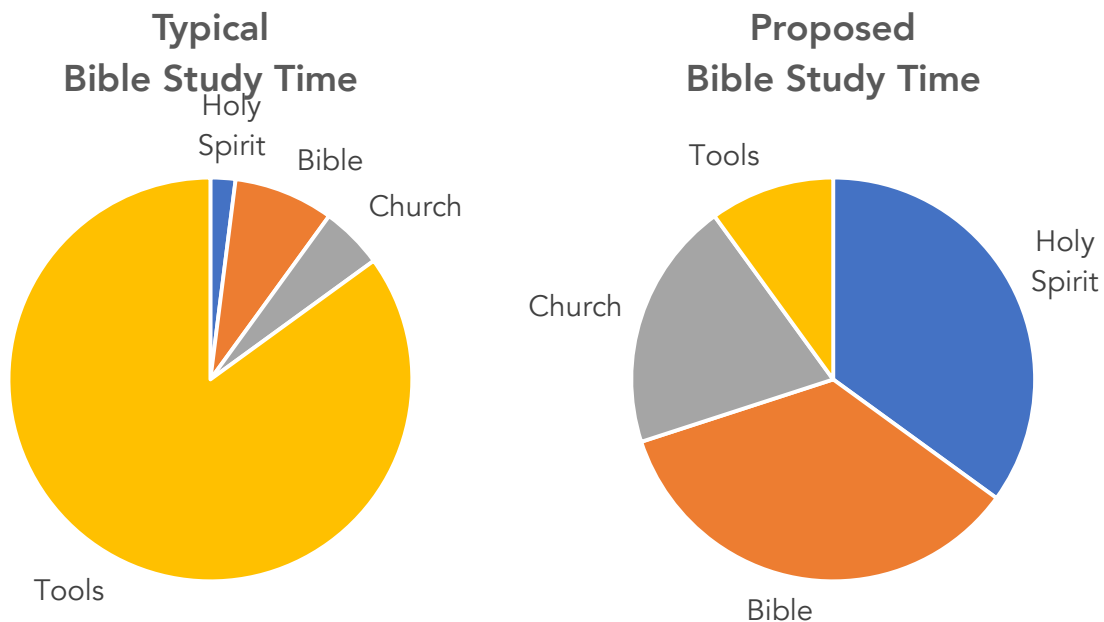


Romans

God's Wrath on Unrighteousness ([Romans 1:18-32](#))

Introduction

A gentle review: **Did we do this?** Spend more time with God and His Word than with anyone and anything else.



Our approach each week will be REAP (read, explain, apply, personalize).

Let's read the text that leads into this week's text.

Greeting

1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, 2 which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, 3 concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh 4 and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, 5 through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, 6 including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

7 To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Longing to Go to Rome

8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world. **9** For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention you **10** always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you. **11** For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you— **12** that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine. **13** I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in order that I may reap some harvest among you as well as among the rest of the Gentiles. **14** I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. **15** So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.

16 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. **17** For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."

Read: God's Wrath on Unrighteousness (1:18-32)

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. **19** 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. **21** For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. **22** Claiming to be wise, they became fools, **23** and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

24 Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, **25** because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

26 For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; **27** and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.

28 And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. **29** They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, **30** slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, **31** foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. **32** Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.

Explain: God's Wrath on Unrighteousness (1:18-32)

Bible study is asking and answering questions about the text. Let's ask some questions.

Are there any literary/structural observations?

An easy trap to fall into in Bible study is focusing on portion of a passage we want to focus on at the expense of the major point an author is making.

If you look at a passage as literature (which it is) and work towards the main point, then the supporting arguments and evidences become clearer in light of the main point.

So, what is the main point of today's text? Is it the evils found in Romans 1:21-32? No

Let me ask it another way: **What caused the evils found in Romans 1:21-32?** Look at the verse before. **Why?** Look at the verse before. **Why?** Look at the verse before. **Why?**

Romans 1:18: who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

Suppression of the truth is the issue eventually resulting in the sins of **Romans 1:21-32**.

Sometimes it's helpful to study the text as literature before moving to the smaller components to ensure we don't focus too much on the ramifications of a root issue.

What do the words mean?

18 For [a word that explains what came before] **the wrath** [desire, violent passion, abhorrence, punishment, anger, indignation, vengeance, wrath] **of God is revealed** [present (right-now-continuous) middle (the subject acting in his own interest) indicative (statement of fact); to take off the cover, disclosed, revealed; the same word from **Romans 1:17**] **from heaven against all ungodliness** [impiety, wickedness, ungodliness] **and unrighteousness** [legal injustice, moral wrongfulness of character, life, or act, iniquity, unjustness, unrighteousness, wrong] **of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress** [present (right-now-continuous) active (the subject performs the action) participle (can add an -ing); to hold down, have, hold fast, possess, retain, seize on, stay, take, withhold] **the truth** [truth; **What truth?** (that's about to be made clear)]. **19 For what can be known** [well known, acquaintance, known, notable] **about God is plain**

[present (right-now-continuous) middle (the subject acting in his own interest) indicative (statement of fact); adjective; shining, apparent, public, external, appeared, known, manifested, open, outward] **to them, because God has shown** [aorist (simple occurrence without regard for the amount of time taken to accomplish the action) active (the subject performs the action) indicative (statement of fact); verb; rendered apparent, appeared, manifestly declared, showed] **it to them. 20 For** [a word that explains what came before] **his invisible attributes** [invisible things], **namely, his eternal** [eternal, everlasting] **power** [*dynamis*; force; miraculous power, ability, abundance, meaning, might, miracle, strength, violence, mighty work] **and divine nature** [divinity, godhead], **have been clearly** [present (right-now-continuous) middle (the subject acting in his own interest) indicative (statement of fact); beheld fully, distinctly apprehended, clearly seen; this is seeing 20-20] **perceived** [present (right-now-continuous) middle (the subject acting in his own interest) participle (can add an "-ing"); exercised in the mind, observed, comprehended, heeded, considered, perceived, thought, understood; this is fully understood], **ever since the creation** [original formation, building, creation, creature, ordinance] **of the world, in the things that have been made** [product, fabric, workmanship (we will come back to this concept later in this passage)]. **So they are** [present (right-now-continuous) middle (the subject acting in his own interest) infinitive (verbal noun: "to" plus the word)] **without excuse** [indefensible, without excuse, inexcusable; an open-and-shut case in a courtroom]. **21 For** [a word that explains what came before] **although they knew** [second aorist (simple occurrence without regard for the amount of time taken to accomplish the action) active (the subject performs the action) participle (can add an "-ing"); perceived, resolved, can speak about, sure, understood] **God, they did not honor** [render glorious, glorify, honor, magnify] **him as God or give thanks** [aorist (simple occurrence without regard for the amount of time taken to accomplish the action) active (the subject performs the action) indicative (statement of fact); be grateful, express gratitude, say grace at a meal, give thanks] **to him, but they became futile** [aorist (simple occurrence without regard for the amount of time taken to accomplish the action) middle (the subject acting in his own interest) indicative (statement of fact); rendered foolish, wicked, idolatrous, became vain] **in their thinking** [discussion, internal consideration, external debate, dispute, imagination, reasoning, thought], **and their foolish** [unintelligent, wicked, foolish, without understanding] **hearts were darkened** [aorist (simple occurrence without regard for the amount of time taken to accomplish the action) middle (the subject acting in his own interest) indicative (statement of fact); obscured, darkened]. **22 Claiming** [present (right-now-continuous) active (the subject performs the action) participle (can add an -ing); asserting, affirming, professing, saying] **to be wise** [present (right-now-continuous) middle (the subject acting in his own interest) infinitive (verbal noun: "to" plus the word); wise], **they became fools** [aorist (simple occurrence without regard for the

amount of time taken to accomplish the action) middle (the subject acting in his own interest) indicative (statement of fact); became insipid, became fools, made foolish, lose savor; think of a meal that is flat and could be so much better with some seasoning—this is a life without Christ], **23 and exchanged** [aorist (simple occurrence without regard for the amount of time taken to accomplish the action) active (the subject performs the action) indicative (statement of fact); made different, changed] **the glory** [very apparent glory, dignity, glory, honor, praise, worship] **of the immortal** [undecaying in essence or continuance, incorruptible, immortal] **God for images** [likenesses, statues, profiles, representations, resemblances, images] **resembling** [form, abstractly resembling, like, shaped similarly] **mortal** [decayed, perishable, corruptible] **man and birds** [flying animals, birds] **and animals** [quadrupeds, four-footed beasts] **and creeping things** [reptiles, small animals, creeping things, serpents].

24 Therefore [a sequencing word] **God gave them up** [aorist (simple occurrence without regard for the amount of time taken to accomplish the action) active (the subject performs the action) indicative (statement of fact); surrendered, yielded up, entrusted, transmitted, betrayed, brought forth, cast, committed, delivered, gave over, gave up, hazarded, put in prison, recommended] **in the lusts** [longings for what is forbidden, concupiscence, desires, lusts] **of their hearts to impurity** [uncleanness, impurity], **to the dishonoring** [present (right-now-continuous) active (the subject performs the action) infinitive (verbal noun: "to" plus the word); rendering infamous, maltreating, despising, dishonoring, suffering shame, treating shamefully] **of their bodies among themselves, 25 because they exchanged** [changed, exchanged] **the truth about God for a lie** [falsehood, lie] **and worshiped** [aorist (simple occurrence without regard for the amount of time taken to accomplish the action) active (the subject performs the action) indicative (statement of fact); venerated, adored, worshipped] **and served** [aorist (simple occurrence without regard for the amount of time taken to accomplish the action) active (the subject performs the action) indicative (statement of fact); ministered, rendered religious homage, served, did the service, worshipped] **the creature** [original formation, building, creation, creature, ordinance; same word as in [Romans 1:20](#)] **rather than the Creator** [aorist (simple occurrence without regard for the amount of time taken to accomplish the action) active (the subject performs the action) participle (can add an -ing); fabricator, founder, creator, maker], **who is** [present (right-now-continuous) middle (the subject acting in his own interest) indicative (statement of fact)] **blessed** [adorable, blessed] **forever** [for an age, in perpetuity, for the duration of the world, present age, future age, eternal, forever, without end]! **Amen** [firm, trustworthy, surely, so be it, amen, verily].

26 For [a word that explains what came before] **this reason** [What reason? Suppressing the truth] **God gave them up** [aorist (simple occurrence without regard for the amount

of time taken to accomplish the action) active (the subject performs the action) indicative (statement of fact); surrendered, yielded up, entrusted, transmitted, betrayed, brought forth, cast, committed, delivered, gave over, gave up, hazarded, put in prison, recommended; same word used in [Romans 1:24](#) **to dishonorable** [infamous, indignity, disgraceful, dishonorable, reproach, shameful, vile] **passions** [suffering, passions, inordinate affections, lusts]. **For their women exchanged** [changed, exchanged] **natural** [physical, instinctive, natural] **relations** [employment, sexual intercourse, use] **for those that are contrary** [near, beside, in the vicinity of, proximity with, opposed to, against, contrary to] **to nature** [growth, natural production, native disposition, usage, kind, nature; the opposite of full requirement contracts]; **27 and the men likewise** [similarly, likewise, so] **gave up** [second aorist (simple occurrence without regard for the amount of time taken to accomplish the action) active (the subject performs the action) participle (can add an "-ing"); sent forth, forsook, laid aside, left, omitted, put away, yielded up] **natural** [physical, instinctive, natural; same word used in [Romans 1:26](#)] **relations** [employment, sexual intercourse, use; same word used in [Romans 1:26](#)] **with women and were consumed** [inflamed deeply, burned] **with passion** [excitement of the mind, longing after, lust] **for one another, men committing** [present (right-now-continuous) middle (the subject acting in his own interest) participle (can add an -ing); working fully, accomplishing, finishing, doing, performing, working out] **shameless acts** [indecencies, pudenda, shame, unseemly] **with men and receiving** [present (right-now-continuous) active (the subject performs the action) participle (can add an -ing); receiving, taking] **in themselves the due** [necessary, what must be met] **penalty** [requital, correspondence, recompense] **for their error** [fraudulence, straying from orthodoxy or piety, deceit, deception, delusion, error].

28 And since they did not see fit [aorist (simple occurrence without regard for the amount of time taken to accomplish the action) active (the subject performs the action) indicative (statement of fact); test, approve, allow, discern, examine, like, try] **to acknowledge** [present (right-now-continuous) active (the subject performs the action) infinitive (verbal noun: "to" plus the word); hold, accompany, begin to amend, conceive, count in their recognition, full discernment, acknowledgement] **God, God gave them up** [aorist (simple occurrence without regard for the amount of time taken to accomplish the action) active (the subject performs the action) indicative (statement of fact); surrendered, yielded up, entrusted, transmitted, betrayed, brought forth, cast, committed, delivered, gave over, gave up, hazarded, put in prison, recommended; same word used in [Romans 1:24, 26](#)] **to a debased** [unapproved, rejected, worthless, castaway, reprobate] **mind** [intellect, mind, understanding] **to do** [present (right-now-continuous) active (the subject performs the action) infinitive (verbal noun: "to" plus the word); make, do] **what ought not to be done** [present (right-now-continuous) active (the subject performs the action) participle (can add an "-ing"); reached, became,

convenient, fit]. **29 They were filled with** [perfect (completed action with the results continuing) middle (the subject acting in his own interest) participle (can add an “-ing”); replete, crammed full, leveled off, furnished, satisfied, executed, finished, verified, accomplished, completed, ended, expired, filled up, fulfilled, perfected, supplied] **all manner of unrighteousness** [legal injustice, moral wrongfulness of character, life, or act, iniquity, unjustness, unrighteousness, wrong; same word used in **Romans 1:18**], **evil** [depravity, malice; plots, iniquity, wickedness], **covetousness** [avarice, fraudulency, extortion, covetousness, greediness], **malice** [badness, depravity, malignity, trouble, evil, maliciousness, naughtiness, wickedness]. **They are full** [replete, full] **of envy** [ill will, jealousy, envy], **murder** [slay, murder], **strife** [quarrel, wrangling, contention, debate, strife, variance], **deceit** [decoy; trick, wile, craft, deceit, guile, subtlety], **maliciousness** [bad character, mischievousness, malignity]. **They are gossips** [secret calumniators (persons who make false and defamatory statements), whisperers], **30 slanderers** [talkative against, slanderers, backbiters], **haters of God** [hateful to God, impious, haters of God], **insolent** [insulters, maltreaters, spiteful, injurious], **haughty** [appearing above others, haughty, proud], **boastful** [braggart, boaster], **inventors** [discoverers, contrivers, inventors] **of evil** [worthless, depraved, injurious, bad, evil, harm, ill, noisome, wicked], **disobedient** [unpersuadable, contumacious (stubbornly or willfully disobedient to authority), disobedient] **to parents**, **31 foolish** [unintelligent, wicked, foolish, without understanding], **faithless** [not agreed, treacherous to compacts, covenant-breakers], **heartless** [to not cherish affectionately, hard-hearted towards kindred, without natural affection], **ruthless** [merciless, unmerciful]. **32 Though they know** [second aorist (simple occurrence without regard for the amount of time taken to accomplish the action) active (the subject performs the action) participle (can add an “-ing”); to know upon some mark, recognize, become fully acquainted with, perceive acknowledge] **God’s righteous decree** [equitable deed, statute, decision, judgment, justification, ordinance, righteousness] **that those who practice** [present (right-now-continuous) active (the subject performs the action) participle (can add an -ing); perform repeatedly or habitually, execute, accomplish, collect, fare, commit, do, exact, keep, require] **such things deserve** [present (right-now-continuous) middle (the subject acting in his own interest) indicative (statement of fact); deserve, suitable, due reward, meet, worthy] **to die, they not only do** [present (right-now-continuous) active (the subject performs the action) indicative (statement of fact); make, do] **them but give approval** [present (right-now-continuous) active (the subject performs the action) indicative (statement of fact); to think well of, assent to, feel gratified with, allow, assent, be pleased, have pleasure] **to those who practice** [present (right-now-continuous) active (the subject performs the action) participle (can add an -ing); perform repeatedly or habitually, execute, accomplish, collect, fare, commit, do, exact, keep, require] **them**.

Are there any repeated words?

Unrighteousness, exchanged, gave up, natural

Are there any repeated topics?

Plain, shown, clearly perceived, revealed, uncovered

What are some observations of the text?

18 For the wrath of God [God's wrath is real and it is **justified**. **Jessica Norris: God's attitude towards the sin of humankind is not one of tolerance.** We are sinners and we have offended a holy God. His wrath is not only just, but it is righteous. **MacArthur: Orge (wrath) refers to a settled, determined indignation, not to the momentary, emotional, and often uncontrolled anger (thumos) to which human beings are prone.** **Where did this wrath go?** It was poured out on Christ at the cross for His children, but for all others, it still burns hot. God is entitled to His anger—because it is justly present. **Mounce: People cannot turn their backs on God with impunity.** There is entitlement for God in salvation.] **is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth** [The root cause of this passage is the suppression of truth. One observation for Christians may be that we should do all we can to uncover the truth and make it plain. One way to think about suppressing truth would be the removal of our freedom of speech and freedom of the press. If we no longer had a free press, then the government could publish whatever it wanted and there would be no other viewpoint able to be expressed. While some think that they can suppress God's truth, one of the problems with attempting to suppress God's truth is that God has direct access to every heart—so attempting to remove His freedom of speech (His ability to communicate true facts about His own existence) will never be completely successful.]. **19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them** [God Himself communicates to all men His existence. Asking what happens to the one who has never heard the gospel is a poor question because God Himself has answered it: God Himself communicates to **all** men His existence. There is no entitlement for man in salvation. Man is not entitled to a not guilty verdict.]. **20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived** [Paul is a lawyer and he has just made an airtight case against mankind. Clearly means sees with 20-20 vision. Perceived means fully understood. The conclusion is clear: man is **guilty**.], **ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse** [Moo quoting **Berkhof: Man becomes guilty because something essential does reach him.**]. **21 For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory** [see **Psalm**

106:20; Jeremiah 2:11] of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things [Amy Valovcin on Hughes: He mentions that the things that they worshiped showed a progressive degeneration, ending in crawling things. Moo: This verse graphically portrays the folly of idolatry that lies at the heart of all religions that are not based on a relevant response to the revelation of the one true God.].

24 Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, 25 because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

26 For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; 27 and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error [Error here links back to the suppression of truth in [Romans 1:18](#)].

28 And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind [Wiersbe: God revealed his wrath not by sending fire from heaven but by abandoning sinful men to their lustful ways] to do what ought not to be done. 29 They were filled with [Christians have the fruits of the spirit—this list is almost the anti-fruits of the spirit (they are certainly at minimum the opposite of the fruits of the spirit); Keller: This passage prompts us to look for places where we are envious, slanderous, disloyal, lusting and so on. These things are the indication that we are worshiping an idol; that something other than God has become our functional master.] all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, 30 slanderers [gossips and slanderers may sound out of place in this list, but many times gossip and slander are how suppression begins], haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 31 foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. 32 Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.

Jessica Norris: When I read through the verses before reading my book, it made me so incredibly sad because it hits so close to home with the terrible state our world is in now. Looking around and what is happening in our society makes me wonder how God can even put up with it. It proves that he is a loving and merciful God that gives us grace as the evildoers of this world drag His name and all that we as Christians stand for through the mud. It is heartbreaking for the Christian, I cannot imagine how heartbreaking it must be for God.

Apply (What is the point?)

1. God's wrath is **real**
2. God's communication is **thorough**
3. There are **consequences** for suppressing truth

Wiersbe: Having held down God's truth and refusing to acknowledge God's glory, man was left without a god, and man is so constituted that he must worship something.

Personalize (What do we do with that?)

1. Don't rush past God's **wrath** (settle there and simmer in the reality)
2. Stop trying to do God's **job** (arguing that God exists)
3. Uncover **truth** (proclaim and herald what the unrighteous suppress)

In next week's text (and for a few weeks), we shift from comments for all mankind and Paul works specifically on Jewish issues.

Next week: God's Righteous Judgment (2:1-11)

1 Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things. **2** We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things. **3** Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God? **4** Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? **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.

6 He will render to each one according to his works: **7** to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; **8** but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. **9** There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, **10** but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. **11** For God shows no partiality.

Homework

Resources (our helps—order matters)

- Holy Spirit
- The Bible: **Romans** (ESV)
- Church: bit.ly/FlemingSS
- Tools: bit.ly/romans2017

Our process

- Ask (the Holy Spirit for help)
- Read (**Romans**)
- Talk (to someone in our class)
- Send (your feedback to Jim (jim314@yahoo.com) by Wed

Quotes & Observations

Albert Whiting (Calvin)

Amy Valovcin (Hughes)

While these verses do not paint a pretty picture the picture is all too clear.

"This is not my message—it is the Spirit's message given through the apostle Paul to the church at Rome (and to us.)" Boo-yah! These were hard verses to read, but we cannot pick and choose what we want (and what we'd rather not hear) from God's word. It is living and breathing and it is for right now.

vs. 18-25

"The idea of a God of wrath and judgement is offensive to modern man's sensibilities."

He talks about how there are two basic words for anger in the Greek. *Thumos* which is more like red hot anger and *orge* (used in the verse) which means a settled and abiding condition. **"The wrath of God is perfect, settled, controlled."**

"The wrath of God is a counterpart to the righteousness of God." (vs 17 . . . the righteous of God is revealed)

"The suppression of truth is not passive . . . all who are without Christ are in the constant process of holding down the truth." We hold it down because we are unfamiliar, we are ashamed, scared or unsure. We hold it down because it messes with the way we are living now and we would rather hold it down than have to face it.

He mentions that the things that they worshiped showed a progressive degeneration, ending in crawly things. **"You can not get any lower than this."**

"The wrath of God against our sin was seen when Christ suffered alone for our sin."

Beautiful!

vs. 24-32

"God allows men and women to go as far down as they desire. His wrath is shown in the removal of His restraining power." God allows us to make our path. We need to stop obsessing about ourselves and put Christ back where He belongs.

vs. 32 "We need to be careful what we watch and applaud." "Be careful little ears what you hear." Said in my best Puggle teacher voice.

It struck me that disobedient to parents was listed (right after inventors of evil). With all the depravity that is mentioned, Paul still calls this point out. In God's eyes sin is sin.

Chris Arnold (Barclay)

Christen Barber (Luther)

Darla Skinner (Mounce)

People cannot turn their backs on God with impunity. They exchanged the majesty of God for images made by their own hands, so God "gave them over . . . to sexual impurity." The verb has a certain judicial quality. The NIVSB note on 1:24 says, "God allowed sin to run its course as an act of judgment." God's wrath mentioned in Romans 1 is not an active outpouring of divine displeasure but the removal of restraint that allows sinners to reap the just fruits of their rebellion. F. Godet writes that God "ceased to hold the boat as it was dragged by the current of the river."

David Barber (his college notes)

Doug Skinner (Phillips)

George Jackson (Murray)

Last week we saw God's righteousness revealed; and that through the Gospel. This week we see God's wrath revealed. I read this text and it is clear as Paul emphasized the Gospel to Christians he also he reminds us (Christians) to meditate on God's wrath. Yes, that's not popular nor something I readily say "YAY" too. That is not God's problem but mine.

The more I have contemplated God's wrath and its reason, my sin and His holiness, the more I appreciate the love I found (and continually find) in the Gospel. God's wrath was great and it was greatly satisfied by the sacrifice of Christ. John Newton said it this way:

John Newton: Although my memory's fading, I remember two things very clearly: I am a great sinner and Christ is a great Savior.

Jessica Miller (Stott)

Jessica Norris (Kroll)

Before you can appreciate good news, you must know that there is bad news. God's attitude towards the sin of humankind is not one of tolerance.

Condemnation of sinners does not rest on the depth of their knowledge of God but on what they make of that knowledge. All people have sufficient knowledge of God to make them responsible to God. (The chapter went on to say some things that I'm not sure that I agree with which caused discussion between Jeremy and me. The logical

side of my brain had a difficult time dealing with what this guy was saying because I understand what he was saying spiritually but maybe disagree with his approach.)

“Immoral people hate what God stands for, and they hate His intrusion into their lives. They hate the twinge of guilt they get when they first do what they know is wrong, and then they keep on hating Him long after they have lost their feelings of guilt and have simply abandoned themselves to the consequences of their sin.”

As long as people suppress the truth, they will never experience the truth. **“God makes sure a Bible, a gospel tract, a missionary or someone or something crosses the unbeliever’s path. But those that suppress the truth that they had about God, do not receive additional light that leads to salvation and instead receive only condemnation.”** (This caused more discussion in our house and again, I understand what he is getting at but don’t like his approach. I think this is an easy statement to make for folks that live in “civilized” societies but have some issues with those that live in places that are completely unknown, especially hundreds to thousands of years ago when transportation to these unknown/unavailable lands wasn’t readily available.)

“God gives them over. They are simply too sinful to know what sinful is. This gallery of iniquity was not only true of the first century but reads much like our newspapers today.”

When I read through the verses before reading my book, it made me so incredibly sad because it hits so close to home with the terrible state our world is in now. Looking around and what is happening in our society makes me wonder how God can even put up with it. It proves that he is a loving and merciful God that gives us grace as the evildoers of this world drag His name and all that we as Christians stand for through the mud. It is heartbreaking for the Christian, I cannot imagine how heartbreaking it must be for God.

Justin Harness (Wiersbe)

Before I talk about Wiersbe’s commentary, my first observation is that **verse 18** pretty much sums up the rest of this portion of scripture. **“The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.”** As Wiersbe says, **“God revealed his wrath not by sending fire from heaven but by abandoning sinful men to their lustful ways.”** Tragic to say the least.

He sums up this section in saying that there are basically 4 stages in humankind’s tragic devolution:

1. Intelligence - vv. 18-20

2. Ignorance - vv. 21-23

3. Indulgence - vv. 24-27

4. Impenitence - vv. 28-32

Jim Fleming (Moo)

Moo quoting **Friederich Schiller: The history of the world is the judgment of the world.**

Moo thinks that perhaps this passage is a foretaste of future judgment (which makes me wonder if judgement doesn't always progress toward less and less direct interaction with God).

Verse 23: Moo: This verse graphically portrays the folly of idolatry that lies at the heart of all religions that are not based on a relevant response to the revelation of the one true God.

Verse 23: Moo: People who have turned from God are fundamentally unable to think and decide correctly about God and his will.

Moo quoting **Berkhof: Man becomes guilty because something essential does reach him.**

Paul makes it clear that, rather than being a help to people in their search for God, the evidence of nature and conscience (cf. **2:14-16**) serves only to render them **"without excuse"** before the wrathful God. My concern here is that almost all of the commentators talk about 'conscience' as opposed to God's direct communication with mankind in informing us of His existence.

Calvin: It is therefore in vain that so many burning lamps shine for us in the workmanship of the universe to show forth the glory of its Author. Although they bathe us wholly in their radiance, yet they can of themselves in no way lead us into the right path. Surely they strike some sparks, but before their fuller light shines forth these are smothered. . . . But although we lack the natural ability to mount up unto the pure and clear knowledge of God, all excuse is cut off because the fault of dullness is within us.

Julia Gregg (Schreiner)

Julie Fleming (Keller)

Once again Paul is stepping on my "I'm not as bad as them" belief. Gee, can't wait for **chapter 2!**

This week I mainly have quotes from Keller that stood out to me, explained something, or just made me think. I don't have a verse-by-verse explanation.

Keller starts this chapter by asking the question, “Why is a received righteousness the only way to be in right standing with God?” He says 1:18-3:20 will show us why we need God to give us righteousness—why we can’t earn, deserve or attain it ourselves.

The gospel is necessary not simply to make me happy, but because there is such a thing as “the wrath of God” that I face. If you don’t understand or believe in the wrath of God, the gospel will not thrill, empower or move you.

Verse 18: God’s wrath “IS being revealed.” “It does not say ‘The wrath of God will be revealed. It is seen now, today. This prompts two questions: WHY is it being revealed? and HOW is it being revealed?’”

What draws God’s anger is ‘godlessness and wickedness’. The first speaks to a disregard of God’s rights, a destruction of our vertical relationship with him. The second refers to a disregard of human rights to love, truth, justice etc., a destruction of horizontal relationships with those around us. It is a breaking of what Jesus said were the greatest two commandments: to love God, and to love our neighbor.

We are ‘tellic’ creatures-purposed people; we have to live for something. There has to be something which captures our imagination and our allegiance, which is the resting place of our deepest hopes and which we look to calm our deepest fears. Whatever that thing is, we worship it, and so we serve it.

Verse 24 tells HOW God’s wrath is being revealed in the present. He “gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts.” The things we serve will not free us; rather, they control us. The main problem of our heart is not so much desires for bad things, but our over-desires for good things, our turning of created, good things into gods, objects of our worship and service.

This made me think. It made me think if my husband, kids, house etc. were the things that I worshiped and served.

This is the wrath of God: to give us what we want too much, to us over to the pursuit of the things we have put in place of him.

In the gospel, we find that, godless and wicked though we naturally are, in Christ we are loved and accepted and blessed. It is as we understand the gospel-as we appreciate that our Lord is also our Savior-that we are led to find freedom in praising the Creator.

If we do not worship God, we will worship something else-sexual gratification, increasing our possessions, keeping rules; and none of these are more (or less) serious than the others.

See, once again, he’s stepping.

We only grasp the gospel when we understand as Paul did, that WE are the worst sinner we know (1 Tim. 1:15) and that if Jesus came to die for us, there is no one that he would not die for.

Here again, I had to think, do I really believe that I'm the worst sinner I know? I'm still thinking about this. I know I'm a sinner, but am I the WORST one I know??

Keller talks about how God's people should respond to these verses. "There is a God who made it all, and made us in his image, to know and reflect his character. And the same God has, in wrath, given us what we have chosen: life without him, worshipping things which cannot satisfy. In the beauty of the world, we are to see God's existence. In the brokenness of the world, we are to see God's justice. As we do, we run back to the place where we see God's mercy: the cross."

We are to read these verses in light of 1:16-17, knowing that we do not need to fear God's wrath because we have received his righteousness.

This passage prompts us to look for places where we are envious, slanderous, disloyal, lustful and so on. These things are the indication that we are worshipping an idol; that something other than God has become our functional master.

Karrie Harness (MacArthur Bible Study)

Michelle Erickson (MacArthur)

A person cannot appreciate the wonder of God's grace until he knows about the perfect demands of God's law, and he cannot appreciate the fullness of God's love for him until he knows something about the fierceness of God's anger against his sinful failure to perfectly obey the law. He cannot appreciate God's forgiveness until he knows about the eternal consequences of the sins that require a penalty and need forgiving.

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

A disease has to be recognized and identified before seeking a cure means anything. In the same way and for the same reason, Scripture reveals the bad news before the good news. God's righteous judgement against sin is proclaimed before His gracious forgiveness of sin is offered. A person has no reason to seek salvation from sin if he does not know he is condemned by it. He has no reason to want spiritual life unless he realizes he is spiritually dead.

God's wrath is not like human anger, which is always tainted by sin. God's wrath is always and completely righteous. He never loses His temper.

But it is foolish, not to mention unbiblical, to measure God by human standards and to discount the idea of His wrath simply because human anger is always flawed by sin.

God's anger is not capricious, irrational rage but is the only response that a holy God could have toward evil. God could not be holy and not be angry at evil. Holiness cannot tolerate unholiness.

Olivia Swint (MacArthur)

Rachel Samsel (McGee)

Sean McGarvey (Ironsides)

"The apostle now proceeds to show the need of such a revelation and piles proof upon proof, evidence upon evidence, and Scripture upon Scripture to demonstrate the solemn fact that man has no righteousness of his own, but is both by nature and practice utterly unsuited to a God of infinite holiness whose throne is established on righteousness. . . . Man is guilty, hopelessly so, and can do nothing to retrieve his condition. If God has not a righteousness for him his case is ended." (p. 22)

"Paganism and idolatry are not steps in human evolution as man advances from slime to divinity." (p. 23)

Regarding [verse 20](#): "One word in the original is rendered by four words in English: 'Things-that-are-made' is *Poima*, and from this we get our word poem. Creation is God's great epic poem, every part fitted together like the lines and verses of a majestic hymn. In [Ephesians 2:10](#) we find the same word again. 'We are his workmanship [His poem] created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.' This is God's greatest poem: the epic of redemption." (p. 23)

Marinate on that for a bit.

"If people change the truth of God into a lie and worship and serve the creature rather than the Creator, the whole order of nature is violated. For apart from the fear of God there is no power known that will hold the evil desires of the natural heart in check. It is part of the very nature of things that flesh will be manifested in its worst aspects when God gives men up to follow the bent of their unholy lusts." (p. 24)

"The apostle's picture of heathenism is still true, the following clipping bears witness: 'A Chinese teacher once told a missionary that the Bible could not be so ancient a book after all, because the first chapter of Romans gave an account of Chinese conduct, such as the missionary could only have written after full acquaintance with the people. The mistake was not an unnatural one, but it is a heathen's testimony to the truth of the Bible.'" (p. 24) Of course, we could replace the word "Chinese" with "American" here, and our options beyond that are hardly limited.

Stephen Archer

Stephen Samsel (Stott)

Tim & Mila Archer (Maclaren—but Wiersbe since Maclaren was silent on this passage)

The title for this chapter is, "When God Gives Up." What a sad thought! It brings the thought of hopelessness.

Paul's theme is the righteousness of God. This is not an original thought. Paul followed the basic Bible pattern: First Law and condemnation, then grace and salvation.

The Gentile World is Guilty

This section doesn't teach evolution, (that man started low and climbed high), but devolution. he started high and, because of sin, sank lower than the beasts. Four Stages mark man's tragic devolution.

1. Intelligence vv. 18-20

Human history began, knowing God.

Men knew truth about God, but turned from the truth and rejected God.

2. Ignorance vv. 21-23

Man knew God, but did not want to know God or honor Him as God. The result was an empty mind and a darkened heart.

Having held down God's truth and refusing to acknowledge God's glory, man was left without a god, and man is so constituted that he must worship something.

3. Indulgence vv. 24-27

From idolatry to immorality in just one short step. . . . The result of this self-deification was self-indulgence; and here Paul mentions a vile sin that was rampant in that day and has become increasingly prevalent in our own day; homosexuality.

4. Impenitence vv. 28-32

When man began to feel the tragic consequences of his sins, you would think he would repent and seek God; but just the opposite was true. Man did not even want to retain God in his knowledge. Now, they've abandoned themselves to sin.

Men not only committed these sins in open defiance of God, but encourage others and applauded them when they sinned. How far man has fallen...

Dan Crawford, British missionary to Africa, said, "The heathen are sinning against a flood of light". There is desperate need for us to carry the Gospel to all men, for this is the only way they can be saved.