28 OCTOBER 2026

THE ROAD TO PERDITION

Romans 1:18-32

But they...fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

1 Timothy 6:9

Having introduced himself and the gospel message he preached, Paul will explain WHY the message needed to be received. *If no one is sick, why send for the doctor*? *If no one is lost, why preach the gospel*? *If the world is not lost then preaching the gospel is foolish*. This next section of *Romans* deals with the condemnation of mankind and answers the question 'Is the world really lost?'

In **Romans 1:18-3:20**, Paul will lay out the charges against mankind in four ways:

condemnation of the HEATHEN

condemnation of the HYPOCRITE

condemnation of the HEBREW

condemnation of the WHOLE WORLD

THE WRATH OF GOD DISPLAYED 1:18

The wrath of God is revealed, Paul says. But what is the wrath of God? The first thought to come to mind is of a sudden outburst of temper. But God's wrath is more than a temper flare; it is His holy aversion to all evil, and His purpose is to destroy it. In other words, God's wrath is His natural response to the sin of mankind as a direct result of His holiness.

consider **1 John 4:8, 16** God is love...

The question then arises: *How is God's wrath revealed*? Where can we best see this revelation? The wrath of God is plainly revealed in three ways:

Note: According to Paul, this revelation is from heaven. The Bible is from heaven (John 3:27); the plans for the cross of Christ originated from heaven (1 Peter 1:20); and the laws of nature also came from heaven (Job 12:7-9).

IN THE BIBLE Throughout the Bible, God's wrath is shown right along side His love, thus making the two attributes inseparable.

John 3:36
He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST In **1:17** Paul stated the righteousness of God was revealed in Christ's death and our faith in it. Likewise, so is His wrath. God must certainly hate sin in order to allow His son to die for our sins.

2 Corinthians 5:21
For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

IN THE NATURAL WORLD The decay of everything in this world is a direct result of man's sin. Contrary to evolutionary thought, the world is getting worse, not better.

2 Timothy 3:13
But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

Romans 8:22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain…

The words translated *is revealed* is in the present tense, giving the sense God's wrath is being revealed continuously. How true this is, for just as in Paul's day, God's aversion to sin remains, being revealed in the decline of mankind all around us.

Paul identifies the object of God's wrath, summing up all human sin in two words: *ungodliness* and *unrighteousness*. We need to understand the difference between these two words.

> **ungodliness** = sin against the *being* of God; the fact there is a God, and we are not Him
>
> **unrighteousness** = sin against the *will* of God; this has to do with our morality and how we respond to one another in the light of God's law

NOTE: Notice the order in which Paul places these words. Man's ungodliness precedes his unrighteousness...they glorified Him not as God (verse 21), and it was all downhill from there.

The word *hold* means 'to hold down; to hinder or restrain.' Sin has a tendency to suppress the truth and no matter how much truth a man has, it will not be evident in his life as long as he continues to disobey God.

Men knew the truth about God, but they did not allow this truth to work in their lives. They suppressed it in order to live their own lives and not be convicted by God's truth. Paul will later show this truth was refused and then exchanged for a lie.

THE WRATH OF GOD DESERVED **1:19-23**

Ancient man had enough truth and was therefore deserving of God's wrath. Paul anticipates some objection to this. There are those who argue the heathen has no knowledge of God and therefore should not be held accountable to the same standard as 'civilized' man. Paul says they do deserve the wrath of God and the key word is BECAUSE:

...because that which is known of God is manifest in them. God revealed Himself to them. Note the two verb tenses in this verse: *is manifest* and *hath shown*. God revealed Himself through the created universe and every man has this revelation. This settles the question of ancient man: he had the same proof we have today. Anyone who can look around and fail to see evidence of God is one who holds down the truth; not because he cannot see but because he is unrighteous.

...because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God. This is the second reason all men deserve the wrath of God. In verse 21, Paul refers to special revelation (Hebrews 1:1); in the time before the written word of God was given, the Almighty made Himself known to His creation.

> Granted, there is the truth of creation (Psalm 19), but creation alone can never make us to *know* God. It can tell us *about* Him, but we can never know God intimately without a special revelation. Today, we have the Bible to introduce us to the Father. Prior to scripture, however, God revealed Himself to man in different ways. (after all, Adam, Noah, and Abraham knew God...)

It is helpful to see Paul's description of man's religious development does not follow the evolutionary order. In fact, his is the opposite, going from *monotheism* (worship of one god) to *polytheism* (idolatry). **Isaiah 44:12-17**

(SEVEN STEPS DOWNWARD)

they knew God, but refused to honor Him

they were not thankful for God's goodness to them

they began to speculate foolishly

their minds became senseless and darkened

they thought they were wise

they became foolish

they preferred idols over the eternal God

NOTE: verse 22 fools = morons (*moraino*)

THE WRATH OF GOD DELIVERED 1:24-32

So, knowing ancient man deserved God's wrath is one thing, but how did He inflict that wrath upon them? *Wherefore, God gave them up...* God stayed with them all the way as they descended into the pit, until they came to the point where they carved out wood and stones and made idols to be worshipped. Then, God surrendered them. Notice three times in this passage it is said God *gave them up*:

TO THE LUST OF THEIR HEARTS verse 24 Sin always begins in the heart of man

Matthew 15:19
For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:

James 1:14-15
But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

TO THEIR VILE AFFECTIONS verse 26 God gave man up to the will of his own body to pervert it as he desired. Consider this...homosexuality is usually the final stage in those civilizations which turn from God. It was for this crime God burned Sodom and Gomorrah off the map (Genesis 19) and later ordered the destruction of Jericho along with other OT cities (1 Kings 14:24).

TO A REPROBATE MIND verse 28 *Reprobate* means 'tested and found to be no good.' God tested man and gave him up. We would assume once man felt the tragic consequences of his sins he would repent and seek God; but because God had abandoned him, he could only become worse. In his final stage, man's mind was so vile he continually searched out new ways to displease God...thus, the list in verses 29-31.

NOTE: for similar lists of sins, see Mark 7:20-23; Galatians 5:19-21; 1 Timothy 1:9-10 and 2 Timothy 3:2-5

DEBASED HUMAN CHARACTER

wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness
envy, deceit, malignity, God haters, despiteful
proud, without natural affection, implacable
unmerciful

DEBASED HUMAN CONDUCT

fornication, murder, disobedient to parents
covenant breakers

DEBASED HUMAN CONVERSATION

debaters, whisperers, backbiters, boasters

DEBASED HUMAN CONCEPTS

inventors of evil things, without understanding

John Phillips, *Exploring Romans*, page 33

Some might ask, *What is the wrath of God like*? When inflicted upon mankind, whatever else it might include, involves one thing: **ABANDONMENT**. The reality of hell revolves around it. There, without the restraining power of God and His love, in utter darkness, is the essence of everlasting punishment.

Notice the final charge against man in verse 32: the word *consent* may be translated 'applaud.' People not only do these things, but they applaud others who do them. Know this, evil is progressive and you cannot stop it, once it is started.

This passage helps to answer the question so many might ask: *Why bother going to church? What's so important about worshipping God*?

> The first two steps in man's downward descent were that he neither glorified God nor gave thanks to Him. If we draw close to God and stay there...if we worship Him as God...if we have a thankful heart...He keeps us from taking the plunge ancient men took.

Acts 17:30
And the times of this ignorance God winked at;
but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

compare **1 Corinthians 1:18-31**

unrighteousness = injustice; also translated as *iniquity* and deceitful

fornication = sexual relations outside of marriage, including adultery and incest (we get our English word *pornography* from this word)

wickedness = anything morally evil that corrupts others

covetousness = wanting more than necessary and believing self is greater than others

maliciousness = a desire to injure; wickedness that is not ashamed to break the law

full of envy = discontentment with the possessions of another

murder = the taking of another's life; follows as a result of envy

debate = disorderly discussion so as to cause strife

deceit = literally 'fish bait'...to ensnare or beguile

malignity = bad character; tending to produce death

whisperers = 'to speak into the ear;' to murmur; secret slander

backbiters = open slander; the natural result of whispering

haters of God = used only here...hateful toward God

despiteful = (*hubristes*) insolent; full of pride and using insulting language

proud = haughty; literally, 'to show oneself above'

boasters = those who go about bragging of themselves; used in classical Greek to refer to quack doctors and their cures

inventors of evil things = those who seek out new ways to be evil and to cause trouble

disobedient to parents = will not recognize authority of any kind

without understanding = spiritual stupidity; unable to comprehend consequences of actions

covenant breakers = literally, 'without good faith'; one who cannot be trusted to keep the truth

without natural affection = an inability to love and hold dear those who are family

implacable = unstoppable; unwilling to seek peace

unmerciful = without compassion of any kind