

The Wrath of God

Romans 1:18

Sermon-in-a-Sentence: God pours out His wrath on those who reject His truth and pursue a lifestyle of wickedness and sin.

In Romans 1:1-17 Paul presents the theme of his letter to the Romans: Righteousness, a right relationship and right standing with God, is provided through faith in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, as set forth in the Gospel of God. Beginning at 1:18 and going through 3:20, Paul declares that this Righteous from God is desperately needed by humankind because we have all rebelled and sinned against God. We have all broken His laws and disobeyed His commands and, consequently, we all deserve to suffer His judgment and condemnation.

Verse 18 summarizes what follows in verses 19-32 where Paul describes what happens to us as individuals and as a society when we rebel against God and reject the truth of His self-revelation. Each of us must choose between the righteousness or the wrath that come from God; between His free gift of salvation through faith in Christ or His wrath as a consequence of our sin and rebellion against Him.

I. **The Reality of God's Wrath**

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven...

- What is the wrath of God?
 - The wrath of God is "God's holy aversion to all that is evil.' His wrath is not a sudden outburst of anger [like that of man] but a constant condition of hatred toward everything that violates His [holy] character [and will]." (*Chuck Swindoll Coming to Terms with Sin, p. 12*)
 - God's wrath is that terrifying manifestation of His holiness and righteousness in the fair and just judgment and punishment of the sinfulness and rebellion of man.
- Examples of God's wrath:
 - In the past: The Flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the ten plagues brought upon Egypt.
 - In the future: The seven bowl judgments of Revelation 16.
- God is certainly a God of love and grace, of mercy and forgiveness. But equally, He is a God of holiness, righteousness and justice.
- When Man rejects God's love and His offer of forgiveness, nothing remains but a fearful expectation of judgment, condemnation and death. (Cp. Hebrews 10:30-31)
 - Revelation 6:15-17 gives us a sense of the terror that befalls mankind in the face of the judgment and wrath of God.
 - For each of us, Jesus Christ will either be the Lamb who takes away our sin (John 1:29), or the Lamb who will execute His wrath upon us (Rev. 6:16).

Is being revealed...

- The wrath of God is a *present* reality in the world. (Cp. John 3:36)

- The wrath of God manifests itself today in His progressive abandonment of those who reject Him to the full consequences of their own sins. (Romans 1:24-32)

II. The Recipients of God's Wrath

...against all the godlessness and wickedness of men...

- Godlessness (ungodliness, sinfulness)
 - God pours out His wrath on those who are ungodly in their character and sinful in their conduct. Character manifests itself in conduct.
 - This speaks of a lifestyle that has no place for God or the teachings of His Word.
 - Godlessness is a lack of reverence for God manifested in rebellion against Him.
- Wickedness (unrighteousness, evil)
 - From a word that speaks of "a violation of divine law."
 - Wickedness is living contrary to the character of God as set forth in the Word of God.
- Taken together, godlessness and wickedness speak not only of the violation of God's rules for living as set forth in His Word, but of the utter rejection of God Himself—His deity, His authority over our lives and His very nature. (*Swindoll, Insights, p. 41*)
- God's wrath is poured out on those who live according to the lusts and evil desires of their earthly, sinful nature. (Ephesians 5:3-7; Colossians 3:5-9)

III. The Reason for God's Wrath

...who suppress the truth by their wickedness...

- Truth – The truth about God and the truth that comes from God—what He has revealed to us in His world (general revelation) and His Word (special revelation).
- Suppress – to hinder, to hold down, to hold back; it means to refuse and to reject the truth in order to pursue and practice godlessness and wickedness.
 - "The word picture painted by 'suppressed' depicts a man struggling to keep the lid on a container closed so that whatever is inside cannot escape. The sin of humanity suppresses the will of God; sin keeps the world from working as God originally intended it to... The sin of people prevents the world from being better than it could otherwise be." (*Swindoll, Insights, p. 41*)
 - When bad things happen in life, we have a tendency to blame God. But the fact is, it is the wickedness and sinfulness of mankind that has brought all of the evil, pain and suffering that we experience.
 - When we reject God in our lives and expel Him from our society, only bad things can and will happen.
 - The suppression of God's truth has resulted in the deliberate, systematic, relentless removal of God and biblical values in our society: our educational systems, our government and political system, the economy; the institutions of marriage and family; our religious institutions; our views and values in economics, the arts, the entertainment industry; the environment, health care and insurance; our military institutions, immigration, etc.