

God's Righteous Wrath

Romans, Part VII

Romans 1:18-23

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I. Rage at Wrath

If you give up the _____ of God against unrighteousness, then you give up the righteousness of God. And if you give up the righteousness of God, then you give up the Gospel. And if you give up the Gospel, you give up the power of God to salvation. Therefore, if you give up the _____ of God against unrighteousness, then you give up salvation.

II. God's Wrath Revealed from Heaven

Our text introduces a large section in which Paul discusses *the _____ of God*, the righteous judgment of God against the wickedness of men. First, Paul establishes the unrighteousness of the idolatrous, pagan Gentile (1:18-32). Then, he highlights the unrighteousness of the self-righteous, hypocritical Gentile or Jew (2:1-16). Finally, he develops the unrighteousness of the Jews (2:17-3:20). He concludes that *"both Jews and Greeks are all under sin"* (3:9). So we begin with the idolatrous, pagan Gentile:

¹⁸For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, ¹⁹because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. ²⁰For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, ²¹because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²²Professing to be wise, they became fools, ²³and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

A. The Reality of God's Wrath (18 cf. Gen 18:25; Mk 12:29-31)

Paul connects what he is writing here and what he has just written. One way that God reveals His righteousness is by *revealing His wrath against unrighteousness*. God is *righteous* and opposes the *unrighteousness* of men. *"The _____ of God is his punitive justice, his determination to punish sin"* (Hodge, 35). God wrath is directed *against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men...* These terms summarize the way that human beings violate the two greatest commands of God's moral law:

- *Ungodliness* – impiety towards _____
- *Unrighteousness* – injustice towards _____

B. The Reason for God's Wrath (19-23)

So what is the reason for God's wrath? The reason is that we know better and we choose to rebel against what we know to be true; we *suppress the truth in unrighteousness* (18).

1. God's Clarity (cf. Ps 19:1-4)
2. Man's Culpability (cf. Ps 14:1-3)

An Outline of Romans

- I. Introduction
 - A. Opening Greeting (1:1-7)
 - B. Travel Plans (1:8-15)
 - C. Theme (1:16-17)
- II. Credenda: "The Righteous by Faith" Shall Live
 - A. God's Wrath vs. Unrighteousness (1:18-3:20)
 - B. The Revelation of God's Righteousness (3:21-5)
 - C. The Triumph of God's Righteousness (6-8)
 - D. The Universality of God's Righteousness (9-11)
- III. Agenda: The Righteous "Shall Live by Faith"
 - A. Transformed not Conformed (12-13)
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- IV. Conclusion
 - A. Paul, Minister to the Gentiles (15:14-21)
 - B. Travel Plans (15:22-33)
 - C. Closing Greetings and Benediction (16)

III. God's Righteous Wrath

A. God's wrath is righteous (cf. Ps 14)

First, *God's wrath is not out of control*. James tells us that "*the wrath of _____ does not achieve the righteousness of _____*" (Jas 1:20). God's wrath doesn't resemble our sinful wrath. "*Outbursts of wrath*" are one of the works of the _____ (Gal 5:19).

Second, *God's wrath is not capricious*. God's wrath is based on *truth*. "*With righteousness He shall judge the world, and the peoples with equity*" (Ps 98:9). Webster defines equity as "*the impartial distribution of justice*." He gives to every man *according to what he deserves* (cf. Rom 2:6).

B. God's wrath reveals God's righteousness (cf. Ps 98:4-9)

God's wrath reveals His righteousness. It is precisely because God is righteous that He must punish unrighteousness. God's punitive justice is to be distinguished from God's *remunerative justice*, God's determination to _____ *righteousness*. Because God is *righteous*, He *rewards* righteousness and *punishes* wickedness.

On one level, God's wrath is very _____ news. If God just winked at sin, we would rightly consider him a monster. God's *wrath*, His opposition to both moral evil and natural evil, reveals His *righteousness*. That God intends to judge these things assures us that these things are aberrations and that the evils of the world will be set right.

⁴Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth; Break forth in song, rejoice, and sing praises. ⁵Sing to the LORD with the harp, With the harp and the sound of a psalm, ⁶With trumpets and the sound of a horn; Shout joyfully before the LORD, the King. ⁷Let the sea roar, and all its fullness, The world and those who dwell in it; ⁸Let the rivers clap their hands; Let the hills be joyful together before the LORD, ⁹For He is coming to judge the earth. With righteousness He shall judge the world, And the peoples with equity. (Ps 98)

God's determination to judge the world is good news. If you give up the _____ of God against unrighteousness, then you give up the righteousness of God.

C. God's wrath will be righteously satisfied

1. Judgment of the unrepentant/unbelieving

In another sense, God's wrath is _____ news. Why? Because, as Paul is setting out to argue, *all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God*. The bad news is that the righteous God *must judge the unrighteousness of men* and we are all, *by nature, unrighteous, children of wrath* (Eph 2:3). The Apostle John writes in His Gospel: "*He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him*" (Jn 3:36).

2. Justification of the repentant/believing (Rom 3:21-26; 2 Cor 5:21)

But the Good News is that the Eternal Son of God, took on human flesh in the Person of Jesus. As the Righteous Man, He offered Himself a sacrifice in our place and bore the _____ of God for us, that we might be justly forgiven through faith in Him. "*God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*"

IV. Conclusion