

The rejecting mind then becomes the rejected mind

Romans 1: 1 – 32

Order in the court, order in the court! Bring the court to order, the court is now in session! Paul starts this passage, 'The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness' Romans 1: 18. This passage is the door that leads us into God's courtroom.

When I say the 'Wrath of God'. What are your first thoughts? [Lightning bolts from heaven, old man in the clouds judging us]

What does your own wrath look like? anger, rage, fury, annoyance, **indignation – anger caused by something that was wrong**, outrage, spleen, vexation, hot temper, bad temper, bad mood, **retribution – punishment for an offence**. "he hadn't the nerve to face his mother's wrath"

What does God's 'Wrath' look like? That is what part of this passage helps us understand the ***manifestations of God's present wrath***, which are the result of man's sin. "God's wrath is his love in action against sin." J.I. Packer summarizes: "God's wrath in the Bible is never the capricious, self-indulgent, irritable, morally ignoble thing that human anger so often is. It is, instead, a right and necessary reaction to objective moral evil"

Note: this passage does not say God's wrath in the future BUT 'is being revealed.' It is the action or manifestation of God handing the sinner over to the desire of their sin. The 'Rejecting Mind then becomes the Rejected Mind'. Romans chapter 2 helps us understand God's wrath in the future.

The other interesting insight that we get from this passage is that it does NOT teach ***evolution*** meaning 'that man started low and climbed high' BUT ***devolution*** 'He started high and, because of sin, sank lower than the animals and birds.

Four Stages of Devolution: When you take God out of the picture, out of your life it becomes all about 'I' me, selfishness. Sin has affected who? 'I'! Sin has affected our 'Intelligence', caused us to become 'Ignorant', we have become 'Indulgent' and suffer 'Impenitence'. [Impenitence - not feeling regret about one's sin or sins, stubbornly resistant to moral influence.]

1/ Intelligence V18 – 20

As created beings how did we start out? Human history began with man knowing God, in fact walking with God in perfect peace, harmony, pleasure with all we needed provided for even some rules that were for our benefit. Human history is not the story of an evolved monkey that worshipped idols, and then evolved into a man worshipping one God.

Human history is just the opposite: man began knowing God but then became deceived of the truth and rejected God. Creation is amazingly beautiful and has God's fingerprints all over it, God reveals Himself through creation.

Romans 1: 20, '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.'

Psalms 19: 1, 'The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.'

Check out verse 18 with the word 'Suppress' [other translations may have 'hold' or 'hold down'] There is something that God has created in each of us where we 'know – know the truth or know God' if we dig deep BUT we suppress the truth. Men knew the truth about God, but they did not allow the truth of God to work in their lives. They suppressed it in order that they might live their own lives and not be *convicted* by God's truth.

The end result of suppressing the truth has meant that men now believe a lie. Romans 1: 25, 'They exchanged the truth of God for a lie.' Finally, man has suppressed and abandoned the truth that he become like an animal in his thinking and living without a care, concern or worry for God or each other. It now affects us as nations in war right down to the family with domestic violence and even further to our core with abuses and addictions.

The result is an empty mind. 1 Corinthians 1: 19, 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.' An empty mind that man now tries to fill with all sorts of junk and is frustrated instead of it being filled with the glory of the Lord.

The song 'That's Why We Praise Him'. That's why we worship, that why we sing, that why we offer Him our everything. We have a God in our midst who is worthy of praise and our minds should be filled with His wonder.

2/ Ignorance v21 – 23

I have established that man knew God (and can know God); this is clear. The result is now man does not want to know God or honour Him as God, what ignorance!

Instead of thanking God and being grateful for all that God has given him, he decided to use and abuse God's provision, what ignorance! Man did not even thank God for his very life, what ignorance! And we wonder why the world is like it is!

Man was willing to use God's gifts, but he was not willing to worship and praise God for His gifts, what ignorance! Use the gifts forget the gift giver.

The result is a darkened heart.

Man the worshipper became man the philosopher, but his empty wisdom only revealed his foolishness. Paul actually summed up all Greek history in Acts 17: 30, 'such ignorance' or

another translation 'the times of such ignorance'. 1 Corinthians 1: 18 – 31, 'For the message of the Cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.'

Man is ignorant even to how he is created. By supressing the truth and refusing to acknowledge God's provision and glory, man misses the fact that he has been created to worship. So, being left without a god he must worship something. If he will not worship the one true living God, he will worship a false god, even if he has to manufacture it himself!

Note: the first on the list of false gods in *Man*. This fulfilled Satan's purpose when he told Eve, "You will be like God" Genesis 3: 5 In other word's saying, "glory to man in the highest!" So, instead of man being made in God's image, man made god's in his own image – and then spiralled down so low that he went on to worship images of birds, animals, bugs and then half and half figures, half beast half man!

3/ Indulgence v24 – 27

As you move away from God in your relationship it is only short steps 1/ Intelligence - loose your sense of knowing Him 2/ Ignorance - where you end up worshipping anything and everything and now 3/ Indulgence – moving away from right living to immoral living.

If man is his own god, than he can do whatever he pleases and fulfil his desire without fear or judgement. God is however the Lord of the lords, the Creator and there are consequences for those sorts of actions.

Man exchanges the truth of God for a lie. The lie now being that man is his own god, and that he should worship and serve himself and not the Creator. The result of this deception and self-deification (making yourself a god) is self- indulgence. Those things of life that God created for please now become perverted and warped and in this passage Paul points out how their sexual desire became impure v24.

We see the wrath of God here, 'Therefore God gave them over' Romans 1: 24. The wrath of God being **indignation – anger caused by something that was wrong** and **Retribution – punishment for an offence**. Man now suffers, there are consequence to our actions. God hands us over to suffer that which is far less than the beautiful pleasure that God had intended for the sex life to be. When you look at the world you can see it rampant: lust, people having affairs, homosexuality, porn. All of these are far less beautiful than the joy of sex as it is intended between a husband and wife.

Because of 'sin' God gave them over, which means they would reap the sad consequences of their indulgences. This is the meaning of Romans 1: 18, 'The wrath of God IS being revealed from heaven.' God revealed His wrath, NOT by sending fire from heaven or lightning bolts, but by abandoning sinful man to their lustful ways. But there is one more 'i'.

4/ Impenitence v28 – 32 [not feeling regret about one's sin or sins, stubbornly resistant to moral influence.]

I work around at the Court House and time and time again when I am talking to those who are coming up on charges for their crime, you would think that they would turn from their ways. Learn their lesson in other words! BUT no time and time again I see the same people coming back to the Court House like a dog going back to its vomit.

When I talk to them its all talk they say, 'oh yeah I know I have done wrong, I know I need to change my ways.' So I offer them an opportunity to catch up and get them on track with their lives (in Christ). But no, they never turn up for a meeting and then next month or the month after I see them back at the Court House.

But aren't many others the same! Are we the same! It may not be a criminal act, it may be the lotto ticket, or the short temper, or flicking across to a porn site, or that extra piece of chocolate, or whatever that habit or sin is! Without God there is no real regret or conviction about our sin and we resist any sense of turning back to living a moral life before Him.

Romans 1: 28, 'He gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not be done.'

A mind without God cannot form right judgement for their life. Paul names twenty-four specific sins, all of which are with us today. (also refer to Mark 7: 20-23; Galatians 5: 19 – 21; 1 Timothy 1: 9 – 10; 2 Timothy 3: 2 – 5)

The worst thing about this fourth one 'Impenitence' is that man not only committed these sins in open defiance of God, but encouraged others and applauded them when they sinned. How far has man fallen from the beautiful relationship that God intended.

Man began glorifying God then exchanged that to glorify an idol, one which was often man made out of stone or wood, now it comes in plastic forms and dollar notes. He began knowing walking with God and knowing Him to suppressing any knowledge of Him at all. He began as the highest creatures God saying man was 'very good' to living a life lower than animals and birds. In God's Court Room the verdict is called, 'They are without excuse' Romans 1: 20.

Conclusion

The mind that rejects God in the end becomes rejected. We are desolate and are in absolutely need for Christ our Saviour King. In Christ we are forgiven and can once again walk with God and have an intelligent mind filled with the wonder and beauty of life with God. In Christ we are not ignorant but are caught up in the awe of God, that He is able, powerful and our all in all. In Christ we are able to experience the simple pleasures of life and enjoy wonderful relationships with no need to indulge and exploit. In Christ we are able to confess our sins and experience the freedom of sin. In Christ we are able to experience the peace and joy of life knowing our Creator the Lord of all.

Amen