



In Romans Paul claims to have the cure for the world's greatest disease. But before he reveals the cure, he has to describe the disease, and that's what he does in chapters 1-3. He paints a bleak picture, but only to highlight the brilliance of the "good news" – the gospel of Jesus Christ.

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

Romans 1:18-32

¹⁸ The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, ¹⁹ since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. 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.

²¹ For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools ²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

²⁴ Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. ²⁵ They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator -- who is forever praised. Amen.

²⁶ Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. ²⁷ In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.

²⁸ Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. ²⁹ They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, ³⁰ slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; ³¹ they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. ³² Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

In verse 17 (in the previous study) something about God is "revealed" – what is it?

What about God is revealed here in verse 18?

Paul says that certain things about God are readily apparent to everyone. What are they?

There is a phrase, repeated 3 times in this passage, that represents God's response to man's sin. What is that phrase, and what is it connected with in each case?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What did man choose in "exchange" for God? (vs. 23, 25).

What word does the Bible use for this wrongly placed worship? (hint: it's found in these passages: 1 Sam 15:23, 2 Kings 9:22, Ezek 14:4, 1 Cor 10:14, 1 Jn 5:21).

How does a Bible dictionary or wordbook define that word?

Which of the 10 Commandments does that violate?

LIFE RESPONSE: What Does it Mean to Me?

The Character of God

People often struggle with the concept of the “wrath of God”. They say, “The God of the Old Testament was angry, but new Testament God is loving.” How would you answer that statement?

If you believe in a God who has wrath, how do you relate to Him?

Idolatry

Write your own definition of the word “idolatry”:

What signs of idolatry do you see in your own life?

“Creation establishes heterosexuality as the norm. In Genesis 2:24, which is the Biblical definition of marriage, we see that the only “one-flesh” experience is in monogamous, permanent heterosexual marriage. It is also very important that Jesus quoted that verse. ~ “what God has joined together, let no man put asunder” (Matthew 19:4~6). What has God joined together? Answer: male and female. Jesus endorsed the male/female union in marriage.”

John Stott,
Christianity Today

Homosexuality

Verse 24 mentions sexual immorality, and then verses 26-27 describe a certain type of sin. What is it?

Where else in the Bible is that behavior mentioned, and what is God’s attitude towards it?

How have you responded to gay people? How should the church respond to a gay person?

Man's responsibility for his actions

Let's say someone dies, comes before God at the Judgment, is confronted with their sin, and says, "I plead ignorance. If I'd known who you were and what you wanted from me, God, I'd have done it." According to this passage, what do you think God's answer would be?

What light does **Romans 2:12-16** shed on this discussion?

"The pagan in Africa has an ethic. But even that ethic is violated. Thus, he remains exposed to the judgment of God. So often the primitive is idealized as being untainted by the corruption of civilization. Such idealizations, however, do not fit the facts.

Thus if a person in a remote area has never heard of Christ, he will not be punished for that. What he will be punished for is the rejection of the Father of whom he has heard and for the disobedience of the law that is written in his heart.

If all men have heard of the Father but naturally reject Him, then it follows that all men need to know of the redemption offered in Christ."

R.C. Sproul,
Reason to Believe

As a group, discuss R.C. Sproul's quote.
(If you're doing this study by yourself, summarize the point he is making.)