Mt. Wade Baptist Church

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**Adult Bible Study (October 2023)**

**God’s Wrath**

Part 1

**Romans 1:18-25**

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

**How many of you believe in the punishment of sin?** The punishment of sin includes the punishment of the sinner. Do you believe that you should be punished for your sins?

Luke 12:46-48 says, *“The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. And that servant, which* ***knew*** *his lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with* ***many stripes****. But he that* ***knew not****, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with* ***few stripes****. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.”*

**Romans 1:18 reveal that God will punish sin (and sinners who fail to repent).**

The text says, “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;”

**The wrath of God is (orge),** anger, but not an agitated outburst of violence.

* It is not the anger that quickly blazes up (meaning to be quick tempered) and just as quickly fades away.
* It is not the anger that arises solely from emotion.
* It is a decisive anger. It is an anger that has arisen from a thoughtful decision, an anger that arises from the mind much more than from the emotions.
* When used of God, it is always an anger that is *righteous, just and good*. It is an anger that stands against the sin and evil, violence and slaughter, immorality and the injustices of men. It is an anger that abhors and hates sin and evil, that dispenses a just revenge and equal justice.
* It is an anger that is *deeply felt*; in fact, it must be felt, for evil and corruption must be opposed and erased from the face of the earth if there is to be a “new heavens and a new earth.” And God has promised a new heavens and a new earth where righteousness and perfection dwell forever.

Have you every thought about how God reveals His wrath? God reveals His wrath in four ways.

1. All four ways concern judgments that come upon man. That is, the wrath of God is exercised and falls upon man because of his ungodliness and unrighteousness.
2. All four ways have to do with history, with human experience, with a moral universe. That is, God’s wrath is revealed from heaven day by day …

• throughout history

• in man’s experience

• within a moral universe

1. Three of the judgments are present judgments; they take place today in the lives of men (Romans 1:24–31). The fourth judgment is future and is to be the final judgment upon men (Romans 1:32).

Before we dive into the four areas of God’s wrath, let’s discuss the subjects of God’s wrath. They are twofold. God shows His wrath after becoming angry with two classes of men.

1. **Men who are ungodly and unrighteous.**
2. The *ungodly* (asebeia) fail to love and obey God. They are those who do not live as God desires for them to live.
* They are not like God, meaning they are not holy, righteous and pure.
* They do not work at developing a godly nature.
* They do not honor God by word or deed
* They do not worship and obey God as the only living and true God
* They do not reverence Him by doing what He says.
* On the contrary, the ungodly are those who do what they want when they want, who may give lip-service to God but who ignore Him in their day-to-day lives.
1. The *unrighteous* (adikia) fail to love others. They are those who do not live among men as they should. Their actions against men include cheating, stealing, lying, abusing, enslaving, destroying, and taking advantage of them.
2. **God is angry with such men; men who are ungodly and unrighteous, who do not love and obey God and those who do not love and treat others as they should.**
3. **Men who hold the truth in unrighteousness.** The word hold (katechonton) means to hold down, suppress, repress, stifle, hinder. Men know the truth from three sources:
* **From nature (see Ro. 1:20).** “For from the first making of the world, those things of God which the eye is unable to see, that is, his eternal power and existence, are fully made clear, he having given the knowledge of them through the things which he has made, so that men have no reason for wrongdoing.” [CREATION]
* **From reason and conscience** (see Ro. 1:18; 2:15). “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;” “Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;” [CONSCIOUS]
* **From Scripture** (Jn. 5:39; 2 Ti. 3:16). “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:” [INSTRUCTION]

Despite MAN having access to the truth, they ignore, neglect, and even push the truth aside, doing all they can to avoid and get rid of it by any means necessary. Why? Because MAN want to live as *they* wish and not as God says. MAN wants to live unrighteous lives, to taste and feel and see and have all the stimulating things they desire.

Scripture says they ***“hold the truth in unrighteousness”***; that is, they know the truth while they go about living in unrighteousness. **How many times have you committed a sin and you knew it was a sin before you committed it?**  The bible declares that you have no excuse when the truth has been revealed to you in so many ways. 2 Thess. 2:10 literally says, “we perish because we will not accept the truth, but rather are deceived by unrighteousness.”

The wrath of God is being fueled. God is angry with men…

* who are ungodly, who do not love and obey God (remember we discussed that obedience is evidence of love for God.)
* who are unrighteous, who do not love and treat others as they should (God command in obedience is to love one another [love your fellow man] as we love God.)
* who hold the truth while they live ungodly and unrighteous lives (knowing the truth and living the truth or two different requirements)

*“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”* (Tit. 2:11–14).

How much do you know about God? Before you answer that question, here is an even bigger question. **How much can we know about God?** (What are we capable of knowing about God?)

* ***We can know enough to be led to God.*** This passage is all about what man is capable of knowing about God and how man surpasses what he knows in order to believe a lie and reject God.
* “…for he that comes to God, must believe that He is [exists] and that He rewards those who diligently seek Him” (He. 11:6). **How does He reward us?** By revealing (manifesting) more of Himself to us that we may fully know the truth. (God is truth.)

**How does God reveal and execute His wrath upon man?**

1. God gave men over to do as they willed (v. 24).

2. God gave men over to sexual impurity (vv. 24–25).

3. God gave men over to shameful lusts (vv. 26–27).

4. God gave men over to depraved minds (vv. 28–31).

5. God assures final judgment: death and wrath (v. 32).

1. **(Romans 1:24) God gave men over to do as they willed.** This is said three times in this passage, and each time was due to a serious sin of man (vv. 24, 26, 28).
* *v.24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies.*
* *v.26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:*
* *v.28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient (i.e., to do what’s right, fitting, proper);*

Man’s sin forced God to give man up and to abandon him. This scene is terrible and frightening. To be abandoned and left without God in this world leads to the worst possible life imaginable. *(Personal note - “I don’t want to spend one millisecond in this world without God.)*

**There are two strong reasons why God gives man up, and each issues a loud warning to us.**

1. Man chooses sin over God, and when he does, two things happened.
2. **Man becomes enslaved to sin.** Sin actually invites more sin and sin promotes sin (Read Psalms 1). The more a man sins the easier it is for him to sin again. At first he may struggle with suppressing the truth, but the more man sins, he very seldom, if ever, gives the sin a second thought. Sin looks good, tastes good, and feels good. It is attractive and it satisfies the human flesh and urges of man. It satisfies so much that man is naturally attracted to it. By continuing to sin, he steadily makes himself a slave to sin. He becomes addicted to sin. Sin becomes his master and subjects man to its cruel habits and enticements that are almost impossible to break free of. (Sin takes us to a point where only God, through Jesus Christ, can set us free.)
3. Sin *always* lies to us. Please remember this. Sin entices us by claiming to bring pleasure and stimulation leading to happiness, but in reality it destroys a person. Sin works against our family, friends, careers, mind, body, soul, will, hope, values, future, and life overall.
4. **Man abandons God, meaning he actually turns away from God and gives God up.** This is called *spiritual abandonment.* Man spiritually abandons God. God has given man a free will, and if a man wills to turn away from God, he can. God will not interfere with that choice. To do so would be to take away man’s freedom. As an alternative, God appeals to man spiritually, through mercy, love and grace; but He does not violate man’s choice. If God violated man freedom of choice, it would create a coerced and mechanical universe. Man would become nothing but a robot, coerced to do this and that exactly as God wills. **The result would be tragic.** Why? Because man would never experience love, mercy grace, goodness, compassion, care, concern, or salvation which comes from God who desires to be with man for eternity.
* ***Love is not love if it is coerced.*** Coerced love is mechanical and meaningless. The expression of any affection or virtue is meaningless unless it is freely given. Therefore, when man turns away from God, he makes the choice to do so and God *will not* interfere. The choice is man’s, and man is abandoned, left all alone to himself to do exactly as he chooses (Ref., Ho. 4:17 “Ephram is join to idols, leave him alone.”). God has no choice but to give man up and let man go his own way. God spiritually abandons man leaving him to live for that which he has chosen. *“So I gave them up unto their own hearts’ lust: and they walked in their own counsels”* (Ps. 81:12). *“Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven. [Mesopotamian reference to idols]”* (Ac. 7:42).
1. **(Romans 1:24–25) God shows wrath by giving men over to uncleanness.** The word *uncleanness* (akatharsian) means impurity, filthiness, immorality, defilement, dirt, pollution, contamination, infection. When men abandon God choosing to live unclean and immoral lives, God leaves them to their choices. God lets them wallow around in their filthiness. Men are then judged and condemned to uncleanness.
2. **The *reason* men are condemned to “uncleanness” is because of the *lusts* “in their hearts.”** Their hearts are filled with *lusts* (epithumiais), that is, passionate cravings, desires, and urges. They long after things that displease God and that dishonor their bodies. God cares deeply about the human body, and he judges any person who abuses their body. (Read 1 Co. 3:16-17; 1 Th. 4:3–5)
* In the Greek the lusts are said to be “*in* [en] their own hearts.” Sin takes place in the heart *before* the “act” takes place. *“And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man” (Mk. 7:20–23).*
1. **The result of living an unclean life is idolatry.** Men “changed the truth of God into a lie and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator.” When men choose ungodliness and live in uncleanness, they begin to serve and give their lives to one of two things.
2. ***They serve themselves,*** giving their time and energy to their own desires, pursuits, and lusts.
3. ***They serve other “gods***,” that allow them to go ahead and live as they wish. They *imagine* what god is like and they worship him either in their minds or in some graven image molded by man’s hand.

Man abandons the only true and living God and lusts after uncleanness. He lusts and craves so much …

* that he creates a god in his own mind who allows him to satisfy his lust
* that he rationalizes and thinks that his god understands his situation and need, and that his god will not judge him for his uncleanness and immorality
* that he seeks a god that will allow him to do what he wants
* that he allows his uncleanness to control his thoughts about God

**The Bible says….**

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (1 Jn. 2:15–17).