

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth One Verse at a Time*

Reasons for the Wrath of God, Part 2

Scripture: Romans 1:21

Code: 45-11

Romans chapter one is our text, and I would invite you to take your Bible and look along with us as we examine this most essential portion of Paul's -- epistle to the Romans from verses 19 through 23. Romans 1:19 through 23.

We've already discussed verse 18 which talks about the wrath of God being revealed and then the reasons for the wrath of God are given in verses 19 to 23. "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shown 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, 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 corruptible man, and birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things."

As Paul begins his message on the Gospel of Christ, he begins it by establishing the fact that God is a God of wrath. Having introduced to us himself and his theme in the first 17 verses he begins unfolding the Gospel of God, and he starts with the statement in verse 18, "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven. And the Gospel therefore begins with an opening statement that God is exceedingly angry with men. And that's where the Gospel has to begin. Men must be confronted with the reality that they stand in inevitable judgment from a holy God who must react against their sins.

Sadly through the years Christians have soft peddled the theme of judgment. Hell has been quietly omitted from our preaching, wrath has been often depersonalized as if God were not involved, only the outworking of some deistic machine. But God is involved, He is involved in His wrath as much as He is in His grace or mercy or love or any other extension and expression of His nature.

Scripture has painted an absolutely fearful and horrifying picture of God's wrath, and it is a picture that men need to have firmly fixed in their minds. For example in the Psalms we read things like this, "The righteous will rejoice when he sees the vengeance; he will bathe his feet in the blood of the wicked." "God will shatter the heads of his enemies; Add to them punishment upon punishment, may they have no acquittal from thee." "Return sevenfold into the bosom of our neighbors the taunts with which they have taunted thee, O Lord." "Let there be none to extend kindness to him nor any pity to his fatherless children." "Happy shall he be who takes your little ones and dashes them against the rock."

"Do not I hate them, that hate thee, O Lord? And do not I loathe them that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them my enemies."

Now those are amazing statements that reflect the wrath of God, in very dramatic terms. Some men have been unable to accept those statements.

Some years back, 1962 in the London Times, there was an article and in the article it said this, "Earlier this year fourteen church study groups in Woodford looked at the Old Testament Psalms and concluded that eighty-four of the Psalms were not fit for Christians to sing." In other words these people were so unable to deal with the wrath of God revealed in eighty-four different Psalms that they just excluded them from the Christian Scriptures altogether.

J.C. Wonsie who in Britain compiled a collection of New Testament passages which have been used for congregational chanting under the title of a New Testament psalter said this, "Parts of the Psalms are full of tribal jealousies, blood thirsty threats and curses, whinings and moanings which are shocking in themselves and time wasting to God and man. The New Testament Psalms however are Christian through and through." And so he just rejects them all. But if you're going to do that with the Psalms you're going to have to go from there because Jeremiah understood God's wrath, and in his prophecy he says, "Give heed to me, O Lord, and hearken to my plea. Is evil a recompense for good? Yet they have dug a pit for my life. Remember how I stood before thee to speak good for them, and turn away thy wrath from them. Therefore, deliver up their children to famine, and give them over to the power of the sword; let their wives become childless and widows; may their men meet death by pestilence; and their youths be slain by the sword in battle. Forgive not their iniquity, nor blot out their sin from thy sight." So said Jeremiah. And God answered Jeremiah's call with these words, "Behold, I am bringing such evil upon this place, that the ears of everyone who hears of it will tingle. Because they have filled this place with the blood of innocence, and have built the high places of Baal, to burn their sons in the fire as burnt offerings to Baal. Therefore, behold, days are coming," says the Lord, "when this place shall be no more called Topheth, or The Valley of Ben-Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter. I will give their dead bodies for food to the birds of the air and to the beasts of the earth. And I will make this city a horror, a thing to be hissed at, everyone who passes by it will be horrified and hiss because of all its disasters. And I will make them eat the flesh of their sons and daughters." And then there's the prophet Nahum, "The Lord is a jealous God and avenging; The Lord is avenging and wrathful. The Lord takes vengeance on His adversaries, and keeps wrath for his enemies. The Lord is slow to anger and of great might, and the Lord will by no means clear the guilty. Who can stand before his indignation? Who can endure the heat of his anger? His wrath is poured out like fire, and the rocks are broken asunder by him." Woe to the bloody city.

Similarly Isaiah, "Behold, the day of the Lord comes cruel, with wrath and fierce anger, to make the earth a desolation; And to destroy its sinners from it. Their infants will be dashed in pieces before their eyes; their houses will be plundered and their wives ravished." Fearful language. And you can

read in the Book of Deuteronomy how Moses spoke of similar things. Upon entry into the Promised Land the people were instructed to have a solemn ceremony of blessing and cursing in the valley which separated Mount Ebal from Mount Gerizim. Twelve solemn curses were to be read by the Levites to each of which all the people were required to say, Amen. And they were to invoke God's curse upon such of their number as did not obey God's commandments. And then there were to follow more than fifty verses in which all of the judgments were detailed on those that violated God's commandments. Fifty verses. And they're fearful, verses of judgment.

Now we realize that these are the statements of the Word of God, authoritative, and they relate God's absolute truth. The God of the Old Testament is a God of wrath. Now some people assume that it's just the God of the Old Testament who is a God of wrath, but that is not true at all. Listen to John the Baptist in the New Testament, "You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? He will clear his threshing floor; the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." Listen to John, the Apostle, "He who does not obey the Son shall not see life but the wrath of God rests upon him." The Book of Acts says, "And as he argued," referring to Paul, "about justice and self-control and future judgment, Felix was alarmed." Paul in his letters speaks of God's wrath. He says, "You are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath, when God's righteous judgment will be revealed, for he will render to every man according to his works. For those who are factious and do not obey the truth, but obey wickedness, there will be wrath and fury. There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil. On that day when God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus." He says, "Let no one deceive you with empty words, for it is because of these things that the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience." The Book of Hebrews goes on, "If we sin deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful prospect of judgment, and a fury of fire which will consume the adversaries."

Hebrews goes on to say, "If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less shall we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven." You can skip the statements for the moment in First and Second Peter and Jude and go right to Revelation and find there other statements about wrath and judgment. It says, "That the wine of God's wrath will be poured unmixed into the cup of his anger." "That men will be tormented with fire and sulfur, the smoke of their torment going up forever and ever having no rest day or night." "From his mouth," it says, "issues a (a) sharp sword with which he will smite the nations and rule them with a rod of iron, and tread the wine press of the fury of his wrath." And even the Lord Jesus Christ, speaking with no trace of harshness and with a life and a heart filled with compassion and love and concern and mercy spoke frequently of judgment, frequently of perdition, destruction, vengeance and hell.

And what are we saying in the sum of all of this? That God is a God of wrath. Now many are denying this today. And basically the denials come in two primary forms; the first is the denial that comes by way of soul sleep. People which teach that when you die you just go to sleep, if you are to be condemned and you never suffer anything. And then there are the Universalists who are now saying

that ultimately God will just save everybody. But the Scripture doesn't teach either of those things. It teaches that men are to be warned of the wrath to come, and that assumes that it is real.

Let me caution you in four areas. Beware of the powerful natural appeal of Universalism and soul sleep. They evade everlasting suffering which is a problem for us to deal with but they do it by perverting the Scripture. So beware of that because you can easily be sucked in to believing that because you wish well on everyone. And people will corner you and say how can a good God allow people to go to hell? Secondly, beware of the pervasive influence of liberalism, which always sees Jesus as too loving to condemn anybody. Thirdly, beware of the fact that such teachings are cultic. The traditional Seven-Day Adventist form of Christianity is cultic. There's much changing in that and much for the good nowadays but the old line traditional is cultic and so are the Jehovah Witnesses and the Christadelphians all of whom want to teach these doctrines, that by-pass punishment. And let me add a fourth thing; beware of the loss of zeal for winning souls. For if you are determined to believe that nobody is ever going to wind up in hell ultimately then there you have the basis for never bothering to tell anybody the truth any longer, whybother?

"Shallow views of sin and God's holiness," said R.A. Torrey, "and of the glory of Jesus Christ and His claims on us lie at the bottom of weak theories of the doom of the impenitent. When we see sin in all its hideousness and enormity the holiness of God in all its perfection and the glory of Jesus Christ in all its infinity nothing but a doctrine that those who persist in the choice of sin who love darkness rather than light and who persist in the rejection of the Son of God shall endure everlasting anguish will satisfy the demands of our moral intuitions. The more closely men walk with God and the more devoted they become to His service the more likely they are to believe this doctrine."

Now that brings us to the question of verses 19 to 23. If God is going to judge and if He is going to pour out His vengeance, is it fair, is it just, is it right? And the answer is in these verses. Four reasons for God's wrath, and they are also four phases in the decline and fall of man. These four phases become the four reasons why God is just in condemning men to hell. They are revelation, rejection, rationalization, and religion. Revelation, rejection, rationalization (zation) and religion.

First of all revelation. We talked about that in our last study. Verse 19 and 20 are the key to that, it says, the reason God will pour out His wrath as in verse 18 is, "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shown 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." In other words creation has given to man enough light for him to perceive the revelation of God. And the obvious implication is that man rejected the truth and went downward, if he had accepted the truth of God visible in creation he would have moved upward. In other words if he'd of lived up to the light that God gave him God would have given him more light. That happens many times in the New Testament, Lydia, Cornelius, the eunuch of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, all of them living up to the existing light that God gave them

were given opportunity to receive more light and when they did they believed momentarily. The message comes to an open heart, to one who lives up to the light he has. And so the text is telling us that God has revealed Himself to man in His world. Man can see His sustaining power and His Deity, so that if he lives up to that recognition and that revelation God will give him more light. If he sees the never failing omnipotence and the divine attributes of God as manifest in creation God will give him more light. In fact he has so much information in creation; the end of verse 20 says he's without excuse.

Now that's the key. Is God's wrath just? Yes. Is it fair? Yes. Is it equitable? Yes. Because man is inexcusable, man is inexcusable. If a man goes to hell he goes there because he has openly, personally chosen to reject the revelation of God. You say, but what if he never heard the Gospel? If he'd live up to the light that he had God would reveal the whole message of redemption to him. That's the whole point.

That moves us to the second of the four reasons why God is just and that is rejection, rejection. Verse 21, because, again, "Because, when they knew God and the implication there is that all men innately have known God. Remember Joh...remember John 1:9? Christ is the light that lights every man that comes into the world. In other words every human being has the light of Christ within him, and the revelation of creation around him to lead him to God, and if he does not go there he is inexcusable. "Because, 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." Revelation simply says that God has revealed Himself to men. Rejection says men have turned away from that revelation. When man finds God in creation, he rejects God. Lucifer did it, Adam did it. Adam even walked and talked with God and rejected Him.

Dr. Barnhouse has this very, very potent paragraph, "Will God give man brains to see these things and will man then fail to exercise his will toward that God? The sorrowful answer is that both of these things are true. God will give a man brains to smelt iron and make a hammerhead and nails. God will grow a tree and give man strength to cut it down and brains to fashion a hammer handle from its wood, and when man has the hammer and the nails God will put out 'His hand and let men drive those nails through it and place Him on a cross in the supreme demonstration that men are without excuse."

And what he's saying is that the very things God gave man to lead them to Him were the very things he used to crucify Christ. Men do not act in accord with the truth they wickedly fight against and oppose the truth. So they know God, he says, verse 21, they knew God, and yet they don't know God because they have turned away from Him. And the sin of rejection is crystallized in verse 21, look back at it for a moment. "When they knew God, they glorified him not as God." That is the crime of all crimes. The worst deed ever committed in the universe is to fail to give God glory. Above everything God is to be glorified, and I want to stop at this juncture and I want to share with you some principles

that I think are so utterly foundational, and you've heard me share these, some of you before. But they must be shared in the context of Romans 1. It makes this tremendous indictment of man's rejection when it says that they glorified Him not as God.

Now that is the heart and soul of the fallenness of man. He refuses to glorify God. Now what does it mean to glorify God? It means to exalt Him or to honor Him or to treat Him as majestic. It means to recognize His attributes for the attributes of God are His glory. The glory of God is the consummation of all of His being, the glory of God is the consummation of all of His attributes. The glory of God is what God is revealed. And when man will not recognize that and man will not give the glory to whom it is due then that is the ultimate effrontery to God. God is to be glorified. That is the reason man has been created, to glorify God. The old catechism said, what is the chief end of man? And the answer was, the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. And that is exactly right. God is to be glorified. And glory is simply His attributes. For example in Romans 6:4 it says, "That Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father." What part of His glory? The power part of His glory. In Exodus 33 Moses says, show me Your glory, and He says, I'll make My goodness and My mercy pass before you. And so His glory is His power and His glory is His mercy and His glory is His kindness and His grace. In John 1 it talks about Christ being full of the glory of God, full of grace and truth. Truthfulness is part of His glory. All of the attributes of God make up His glory, and man is to recognize that. And that is precisely what they will not do. "For all have sinned and come short of (what?) the glory of God." They will not see His glory, they will not manifest His glory in their own lives, they will not even ascribe to Him the glory due His name.

Read sometime the 16th chapter of First Chronicles, repeatedly from verse 24 on it tells us to give God glory, give God glory, give God glory. And basically the created world does that; the heavens declare the glory of God, don't they? They don't argue. There's never been a revolt of the stars. They just do it. And Isaiah said for God, "The beast of the field shall give me honor." The animals just do what God created them to do, they manifest His mighty handiwork. The flowers bloom and the butterflies flutter and all of creation does what it was made to do and it doesn't argue it just gives God glory. But in the midst of it all man rebels and refuses to glorify God, refuses to recognize God. And frankly if you can stand in the midst of this created universe and look around in our day and our time and say that you do not believe in God and you will not affirm the glory and majesty and honor and power of God you are the biggest fool who ever lived. The evidence is so replete. All of man's commitment to life can be summed in one statement, "Whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God." That's the reason we live.

Now God has always desired that man would see His glory. And I want to take you on a fast tour through this theme, so look back at Genesis chapter 3, Genesis chapter 3. Now God had made Adam and Eve and placed them in this wonderful garden, and God has placed His presence there as well and it says His presence was in the garden. The old word for presence is Shekinah. It's not a Biblical word but it is the word that was used for presence. And we call the presence of God there the

Shekinah glory. God actually manifested Himself in some kind of light, some form of light. And Adam and Eve even walked and talked with God in the cool of the day. And they recognized God's glory, they saw God's glory, they communed with God, they praised God, they accepted His glory. And then they sinned in the 3rd chapter, verse 8, "They heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day:" here was the shekinah, the presence again, and they heard God speaking as He moved through the garden, "and Adam and his wife," and here you have a monumental change, "hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God." Why? They were no longer interested in communing with His glory. That was a thing of the past.

Then go to the end of the chapter, verse 23, "Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground from where he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the Garden of Eden cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way of the tree of life." Adam rebelled and he was expelled. Adam saw God's glory and turned his back, he is a classic illustration of Romans chapter 1, "When they knew God, they glorified him not as God." God had said obey Me and do not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, that's what I ask of you, glorify Me by your obedience to My law. Adam defied God led by his wife and the temptation of Satan, you shall be equal to God, get some glory for yourself, be like God, they sought their own glory and they were expelled. In other words just what Romans 1 says, "They knew God, but glorified him not as God." Would you say Adam has an excuse if he were to be condemned? Not at all. He was expelled from the garden because he made his choice, he could have obeyed, he had the knowledge, he knew what it was to perceive and to know God, but he turned his back on it. And God put a sword and said, that's it.

Now God could at that point have just obliterated the human race and started from scratch. But God desired to reach back to mankind and let man see His glory. God wanted to seek out fallen sinful man and draw him back. And so throughout the Scripture God endeavors to reveal His glory. In fact He comes to the point in the 12th chapter of Genesis where He forms a special nation, and that nation is designed for ah, a, a vehicle by which God can reveal His glory. And God gives them a great leader, by the name of Moses. Turn to the 33rd chapter of Exodus, and God had said to Moses, I want you to lead My people, I want you to represent Me before them. And God came to Moses to set him aside for the work, verse 11 of Exodus 33 says, "And the Lord spoke unto Moses face to face, as a man speaks unto his friend." God came and communed with Moses. Verse 12, "Moses says, Lord, See thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me." This is a big job Lord, You've got to be kidding, a couple of million people, You want me to lead them around? Who's going to help me? "Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight." In other words, I know that You'll be gracious to me and I know You know me, I know You're here with me, but I don't know if I can do it alone. So he says in verse 13, "If I've really found grace in your sight," this is Moses talking to God, "show me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight." In other words, do something tangible, physical, show me something, demonstrate Yourself.

Verse 14, God says, all right, "My presence shall go with thee." What is that? Oh, that's the same presence we saw in Genesis 3, here it is back again. It is God's glory. God's Shekinah and God is saying, now I'll show you My glory and God desired that the people would see His glory and respond properly. I'll show you My glory. My presence will go with you. Well Moses was still skeptical so in verse 18 "He says, I beg you, show me your glory." I can't accept it by faith Lord, reveal Yourself. "And he said, I'll make all my goodness pass before thee, I'll proclaim the name of the Lord before thee, I'll be gracious to whom I'll be gracious, and show mercy on whom I will show mercy." In other words God says I'll show you My name, that's the sum of all My attributes, I'll show you My goodness, I'll show you My grace, I'll show you My mercy, I'll reveal My glory. But He said, you couldn't see it all, verse 20, and live for if you saw all of it you'd die.

So the Lord said there's a place over here where I am, near a rock and you get in that rock, "in a cleft of the rock," verse 22, "and I'll cover you with my hand" and that's an anthropomorphism, God veils his sight, "and I'll pass by and I'll just remove my hand and let you see my back parts; my face you'll not see," or it'd burn you up. So God says I can't show you the full deal but I'll let you see a little of My after glow. And so He tucks Moses in the rock, and Moses is up on the mountain and God goes by, and when Moses saw the glory it got all over his face, and God sent him down the mountain. And after this incredible vision that Moses had seen his face was literally transfigured, the glory of God was all over it. In verse 5 it says, "The Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, Lord God, merciful, gracious, long-suffering, abundant in goodness, truth. Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, sin." You see He just recites all of His attributes and they were all somehow revealed in a blazing light.

Now I don't understand that I just know that's what it says. And he says now let me go and show the people. So he goes down the mountain. And look over at chapter 34 verse 29, "And it came to pass, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in his hand, when he came down from the mount, Moses knew not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him." He comes down and he's talking to the people and his face is lit up like a light bulb. He's got the glory of God all over the place. And he came to reveal God's glory; he came to show the people the glory of God. Did they accept it? No, no they never glorified God. They griped, they complained, they bellyached all over the place until that entire generation died in the wilderness. God was saying see My glory, He even put it on the face of Moses. And by the way Paul says in Corinthians that the glory would fade on Moses' face so he'd run back up the mountain, stick his face in the rock again and get some more glory and come down. And finally veiled his face so the people wouldn't see it fade, it wasn't his glory it was God's glory. It was permanent for God but temporary for him. And God was - saying to His people, see My glory, see My glory but instead they complained and griped and they died in the wilderness. I guess God could have written them off then but He didn't. He gave them plans to build a tabernacle, look at chapter 40 when they finished the tabernacle. They were to

wander for forty years, and all the while they were to wander God wanted them to see His glory and so when the tabernacle was completed, verse 34 says, "A cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle."

Now all the tribes were set around the tabernacle, they all had their camping places, all twelve tribes around the tabernacle, and they all faced the tabernacle. It was a place of worship. And then they moved for those forty years the tabernacle was picked up and moved along and the glory went with it. And the glory of God came down and dwelt between the wings of the cherubim on the Ark of the Covenant in the holy of holies and the whole camp focused in on that glory. And by the way through all of those wanderings the glory of God led them when they were to move during the day by a cloud, and led them when they were to move at night by a pillar of what? Fire, that was the glory of God. God was putting Himself right in the middle of the camp, right in the middle of their life, in the middle of their activity and saying, will you see My glory, will you see Me for who I am, will you honor Me for who, who I am? And in spite of all of that glory coming down it says in verse 35 it literally "filled the tabernacle," and it led them day and night. And in spite of that when it came time to conquer the land they didn't have any faith. And only two of them even believed that they could do it. And even Moses himself because of his sin never entered the Promised Land. And God was saying, will you see My glory, will you see My glory? And men refused. Finally they got in the land, and God said I want to reveal My glory one more time. He said I want you to build a temple, and My glory will dwell in it. Look at First Kings chapter 8, they finished the temple, they brought the ark of the covenant into the temple and after it was all done the tables of stone were placed there, First Kings 8:10 says, "And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the Lord, So that the priests couldn't stand to minister because of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord." And here was again the temple permanent, right in their midst, this incredible, magnificent, Solomonic temple. And there in the midst was the glory of God, and He was saying, will you see My glory, and then will you like Moses reflect My glory to the world? For Israel was to be His channel. And He was asking them that here. Did they respond? Did they become the channel to reach the world? Did the temple remain a place where God's glory dwelt? Nope. No, they refused to see the glory; they turned their back on it just like men always have.

Look at Ezekiel chapter 8. This is an incredible passage. And this is so typical, of how they desecrated the temple. Verse 4, "Behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there," he saw a vision of the place of worship, the house of God, and he saw the glory there, that's where it belonged. "But then he said unto me, Son of man, lift up your eyes now in the way to the north. I lifted up mine eyes in the way to the north, and, behold, northward at the gate of the altar this image of jealousy in the entrance." Uh-oh, there's an idol in the entrance to the temple. "Do you see Son of man, the great abominations that the house of Israel commits here, that I should go far off from my sanctuary? But turn yet again and thou shalt see greater abomination. And he brought me to the door of the court; and when I looked, behold, a hole in the wall." In other words it's in disarray; they aren't even taking care of it. And he looked in the hole, "Go in, he said, through the door and behold the wicked

abominations. And I went in and behold, every form of creeping thing, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, portrayed upon the wall round about."

Now let me ask you a question, were they responsible and without excuse? You better believe it. No more so than any other person. They got into the snakes and they got into the abominable bea, abominable beasts, and they got involved in the idols because they turned their back on the glory of the Lord. They would not see God for who He was. And then you have in verse 11, "There stood before them seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel, in the midst of them stood Jaazaniah, the son of Shaphan, and every man had his censer in his hand; and a thick cloud of incense went up." And here you have a whole bunch of people playing the role of a priest and that was a desecration and a blasphemy worthy of death. And then in verse 13, "Turn again, and I'll show you greater abominations. He brought me to the door of the gate of the Lord's house, which was - toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz." "He said unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? Turn yet again and thou shalt see greater abominations than these. And he brought me into the inner court of the Lord's house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of the Lord, between the porch and the altar," which is the most sacred place, "were twenty-five men, with their backs toward the temple of the Lord, and their faces toward the east; and they worshiped the sun. Do you see this, O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here? Therefore, (verse 18) I will also deal in fury." You see God has patiently revealed His glory in the garden and man turns his back, He reveals His glory on the face of Moses and they turn their back, He reveals His glory in the tabernacle and they do the same thing, His glory in the temple and they pollute the very temple in which His glory dwells. This is how it is with man.

And in chapter 10 you have the saddest event in history of Israel, Ichabod, means the glory hath departed. And you can go through the 10th chapter on your own and you can watch the glory of God leave the temple. It leaves. Verse 4, "The glory of the Lord went up from the cherub, and stood over the threshold of the house, and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the Lord's glory." That's the first place, it just comes out of the holy, holy ... holy of holies and it moves to the court. And if you follow it, then moves up over the top and then it moves out over a mountain and then it's gone. Men have always refused God's glory. You say, did God ever send it back again? Yes, one more time. John's Gospel, chapter 1 verse 14, "And the Word was made flesh," who's that? Christ. "And the Word was made flesh," listen carefully now, "and dwelt among us and we beheld his (what?) glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." When did God reveal His glory? In Christ. And one time Jesus went up on the Mount of Transfiguration and He pulled aside His cloak, the Bible says and showed His glory, in blazing light. He was the glory of God, the same glory that walked and talked in the garden, the same glory that shone on the face of Moses, the same glory that dwelt in the tabernacle, the same glory that departed from the temple, that same reality of living God came in a human tabernacle, a human temple, a human face, and walked and talked in this world, God's glory again saying to man, will you see Me for who I am? And He demonstrated love and He demonstrated mercy and goodness and strength and power and

wisdom and truth, and every - attribute of God. And what did they do to Him? What'd they do to Him? They murdered Him. But that's how it is with man, you see. So when you want to come along the track and say, well, is God just in condemning men? Ask yourself this question, has man repeatedly throughout his history known God, seen His glory and turned his back on it? Even Israel, with the fullest revelation did that. Why would we expect anything other than that from the pagan?

And when it comes down to condemnation beloved, when it comes down to

God's judgment, God judges men because they reject His revealed glory. The classic illustration is Pharaoh, how many times did God display His glory and how many times did Pharaoh deny it.

Look with me for just a moment at Jeremiah chapter 13, Jeremiah chapter 13. And here is that passage I read earlier, one of them about judgment. In verse 13, "Thus saith the Lord, Behold, (chapter 13 verse 13, Thus saith the Lord, Behold,) I will fill all the inhabitants of this land, even the kings who sit on David's throne, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, with drunkenness., And I will dash them one against another, even the fathers and the sons together, said the Lord; I will not pity, nor spare, nor have mercy, but destroy them." Why? But how can You do that? "Hear, and give ear;" verse 15, "be not proud; for the Lord has spoken.

Give glory to the Lord, your God," you see that's what they refused to do, "before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble on the dark mountains, and, while you look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness." In other words you give glory to God or else, that's the whole message. You give glory to God or else. And men know to give glory to God, because God's revealed it to them. You say, does God get some joy out of punishment? No, verse 17, "If you will not hear, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride;" what is it that refuses to give God glory? It is the sin of what? Pride. "And mine eye will weep bitterly, and run down with tears." No, God is not happily involved in wrath; He is sadly involved in wrath.

Look at Acts chapter 12, let's see a comparative passage in the New Testament. Acts chapter 12, verse 20, this is Herod, and he decides that he's going to declare it Herod day. Just boost himself a little in the eyes of everybody. And there's some tensions going on in the neighboring countries and so he decides just to affirm his strength he'll declare it Herod day and have a big folderol glorifying himself. So verse 21 says, "On a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat on his throne, and made a speech." He does his big thing. "And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not a man." Isn't he marvelous? He is a god. And he loved it. Oh, he loved it. "And immediately an angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory; and he was eaten of worms, and died." Not exactly the planned ending to Herod day. Why did the Lord smite him? Because he gave not what? God the glory. You say, did he know to do that? Of course he knew to do that. All men know to do that. All men know to do that. That's why he's without excuse.

You say, what about the future, will God's glory come again? Oh yes. Look at Matthew 24, Matthew 24, verse 29, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give its light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken." Now one word comes into my mind when I read that verse. What word do you think of? It starts with a d. Darkness. Did you get that? The sun is dark, the moon doesn't give its light, and if the sun is dark the moon won't give its light, and the stars fall out of the sky. The heavens collapse, pitch blackness. "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth (what?) mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and" this is the first time it's ever been stated this way, "great glory." You see? All the lights go out and then comes the blazing shekinah revelation of the glory of God, and then His glory will fill the earth, in the wonder of His kingdom.

The whole history of Scripture is the history of God revealing His glory. You say, what about the present tense? God's revealing His glory in the world today, do you know that? You want to know how? Colossians 3:2 says, "Christ in you, the hope," of what?, "of glory." To Him be glory, Ephesians, in the church. I believe we are the radiation of Christ's glory in the world today and they don't listen to us either. You see man always refuses God's glory.

Now let's go back to Romans 1. Now you have a context for this verse. When they knew God, and all men knew Him simply because of His revelation in creation, and because Christ is the light that lights every man that comes into the world, that's the promise of Scripture. But when they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God because of their own pride, and watch what happens, "neither were they thankful," in other words they do not ascribe everything they possess to the God who gave it to them. Man's failure is not that he fails to recognize God but that he refuses to glorify God. And if he does not accept God as the source he will not thank God, and not to thank God is blasphemous. For God has provided everything that is, and He's so good. He even makes the rain to fall on the just and the unjust. Instead of glorifying God and having thankful hearts, watch this, "they became vain (or empty) in their imaginations." Very interesting statement.

The word imaginations mean, means thoughts, and they became empty in their thoughts. In other words if you reject God you have an empty mind, you've created a vacuum situation. Vain human philosophy, perverse self-willed musings and reasonings. They were left with empty thoughts, useless, pointless, purposeless thinking. They go from truth to emptiness. But that vacuum doesn't stay empty very long; verse 21 says it sucks in darkness. And that is representative of all the world of filth and trash and sin and vileness and evil. So man has a history that is devolutionary, not evolutionary. He knows God, he will not glorify God, he won't be thankful he's too proud and when he puts God out of his life he creates a vacuum and that vacuum is his own empty musings and into that vacuum comes the darkness of evil that fills up his foolish heart. Man having rejected God cannot any longer find the truth. And that's what Jesus said in John 8:45, "Because I speak the truth, you do not

hear me." Because it doesn't ring with you. "The natural man understandeth not the things of (whom? of) God." They are foolishness to him. Because his mind is filled with senseless, empty, evil thoughts. That is the legacy of man's refusal to glorify God. And it's not just intellectual darkness it's moral darkness as well. And you see it all the time, you read all of the dumb things that philosophers write, you listen to the talk programs and you read the articles in the paper and you hear all of this empty, foolish, rambling on of human philosophy that has no content of truth at all, but it's all man's left with.

It reminds me of one evolutionist who wrote in the front page of an article that I read in a magazine on evolution. He said, "I refuse to believe in a God, so what other alternative do I have but evolution?" At least he was honest. All he's got is a bunch of empty nonsense left. You know sometimes I'm so overwhelmed with this as I watch the world going about its business that I just am appalled at the foolishness and the folly and the utter hopelessness. And the thing that makes it so unbelievable is that man thinks he is so smart. Verse 22, "Professing themselves to be (what?) wise, while all the time they're fools."

That brings us to the third word, and that's for next Sunday. Rationalization. Men have heard and known the truth, that's revelation; men have turned their back on the truth, that's rejection. Men now affirm their foolishness as the truth, that's rationalization. And next week we'll also see that all three lead to religion.

May I give you a little footnote for next week? Religion is not man ascending to the highest plain; religion reflects man in the pit, at the very bottom. And we'll see that next time. And it all leads to lusts, homosexuality, etc, etc. And we'll see that in two weeks when we begin verse 24.

Does this give you a perspective on why God judges man? Because man is without excuse. Would you bow with me? In this audience, congregation tonight I know there are some here and you stand in Romans 1, you've known God, because that which may be known of God is revealed unto you, being understood by the things that are made, the created world. You're responsible to live up to that light. As Paul said in Acts 17, God is not far from you if you feel after Him. He has tried to reveal His glory to you, He has revealed His glory, and you've turned your back, and you are not thankful to Him because you will not recognize Him as the source of all goodness, and so you've never been led to the true light, Jesus Christ. And you stand without excuse before the judgment of God. That's not my message to you, that's God's message. If you don't know the Lord Jesus Christ, if you've never embraced the Son, if you've never taken God's provision for salvation I pray that you would do that tonight. Say God I haven't glorified You with my life, I've turned my back on You, lived in my own folly, and I stand in judgment. But I want forgiveness, I want salvation, I want eternal life, I want to know Jesus Christ. Just where you sit that's all you have to say to Him, and His sweeping power will transform you in an instant and make you His child. And you'll be passed from death into life, from wrath to reward, from judgment to justification. I hope you'll pray that prayer.

Father I pray tonight that this great night we've shared, our hearts have been blessed, fellowship has been sweet, we've enjoyed the laughter, and we've thought so deeply, but I pray that it will all climax in the hearts of those who need Jesus Christ tonight, that they might not face that inevitable hour of judgment, oh God, deliver them. May they see Your glory, as You've wanted men to see it since Eden. And may they do all that they do to the glory of God.

While your heads are bowed just a footnote. It all begins here, Paul said, "Thou shalt confess Jesus as Lord, to the glory of God." Philippians 2:11. You can't begin to glorify God until you have confessed Jesus as Lord, for He is the truest and purest revelation of God, He is the glory of God. Have you done that?

Some of you who are Christians, what about the passion that you haven't had for the lost? Ask God to give you a new zeal, to put His glory on your face as He put it on the face of Moses, to make you an instrument to reveal His nature to those around you, that they may see His glory.

Father, thank You for our great evening, oh what a blessed time we've had. Send us on our way with hearts filled with thanksgiving, and we'll praise You in Christ's name. Amen.

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