

LESSON 3: ROMANS 1:18-32
SEPTEMBER 18, 2019

OVERVIEW

- . The revelation of God's wrath – Romans 1:18-21
- . The first result: Spiritual death – Romans 1:21-23
- . The second result: God gave them up – Romans 1:24-32

THE REVELATION OF GOD'S WRATH – ROMANS 1:18-21

- . Many leaders in the church today downplay the wrath of God
 - . They may feel it's an unimportant doctrine
 - . They may feel it is an incorrect doctrine
 - . They may feel it will turn away members of their congregations
 - . Biblical writers had not such reticence and spoke of it frequently
 - . Paul refers to the wrath of God ten times in Romans
 - . Paul uses the word *orge*, which is the type of wrath that builds up over a long time
 - . He talks of God's wrath, not as something that is sudden, based on any particular, but rather that God's firm, fearful hatred of all wickedness that will someday result in eternal condemnation of all who are not justified by Christ's righteousness
- . God's wrath revealed – Romans 1:18
 - . There is a present revelation of God's wrath
 - . "The wrath of God is being revealed"
 - . It is being revealed against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness
 - . Paul is showing how the wrath of God is seen in the downward inclination of the race
 - . The world is set upon a course leading to perversions and ending in debasement in which people call good evil and evil good
- . The reasons for God's wrath – Romans 1:18-20
 - . The refusal of God as revealed in nature – Romans 1:19-20
 - . God reveals Himself through His creation for all to see
 - . Through nature God's eternal power and divine nature are clear
 - . The complexity, yet orderly nature of our physical world, reveals that there is a Supreme Being, who is behind it
 - . People are prone to worship the creation while at the same time ignoring the Creator

- . God has also given our minds the capacity to comprehend His existence
 - . This is what Paul means when he says God's eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen being understood from what has been made
- . Suppression of the truth about God – Romans 1:18
 - . It is this suppression of truth that creates the wrath of God
 - . It is our desire to move in the direction of sin and defiance that causes this suppression of the truth
 - . Those who harden their hearts against God begin to find everything about Him repugnant
 - . We dislike Him for His sovereignty – we want to be sovereign
 - . We dislike His holiness – we want to be free to do as we wish
 - . We dislike His omniscience – we want our privacy
 - . This suppression is also rooted in our frustration over God's immutability
 - . God doesn't change in an ever evolving and changing world
- . No excuses for mankind – Romans 1:19-20
 - . The ultimate reason for this revelation of the wrath of God against mankind is that we have no excuses for our failure to seek Him, worship Him, thank Him
 - . Every age of mankind has had some ability to know Him and has had plenty of excuses why that hasn't been enough
 - . Mankind has always hid behind too many unanswered questions
 - . Many who raise the questions spend little time looking for the answers

THE FIRST RESULT: SPIRITUAL DARKNESS – ROMANS 1:21-23

- . Darkened minds – Romans 1:21
 - . Mankind's willful rejection of God affects his thinking
 - . Having rejected the truth, which God has revealed, human beings have been left to their own mental devices, which are woefully inadequate for working out or discovering spiritual realities
 - . Our thinking has become darkened
 - . When people turn away from God, they rationalize their behavior by declaring some form of enlightenment
 - . The enlightenment movement that began in the 1800's was based in part on freeing the mind from "God" restraints and exploring new spiritual realities
- . Foolish hearts – Romans 1:21-22
 - . Instead of acknowledging their intellectual darkness, people can claim to be wise

- . The word translated “wise” is *sophos*, which has given us words like sophisticated or philosophy
- . A sophisticate thinks himself to be very worldly-wise
- . Many in the world today, who have rejected God and scripture think of themselves as wise, as believers in God and scripture to be foolish
- . The reality, from God’s perspective is quite different
 - . “Fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom” – Proverbs 1:7
 - . In the Greek language the word “fool” does not mean one guilty of intellectual folly rather one guilty of moral folly or wickedness
 - . In the Bible a fool is often connected with one that rejects God
 - . “The fool says in his heart there is no God” – Psalm 14:1

THE SECOND RESULT: GOD GAVE THEM UP – ROMANS 1:24-32

- . In these verses Paul looks at God’s response to our human behavior
 - . God has abandoned men and women to their perversions
 - . “God gave them over” is found three times in these verses
 - . God’s punishment to godless people is to abandon them
 - . The real irony is that this is exactly what godless people want
 - . Godless people want to get rid of God, push Him out of their life
- . The downward slope – Romans 1:24-28
 - . As people turn from God, looking for happiness they just find emptiness
 - . Instead of freedom they find themselves enslaved by the bondage of sin
 - . To give something up is to let go
 - . When God “gave them over” he was letting go, allowing man the free will to choose their own destiny
 - . This is not to be confused with God not caring or stop loving
 - . Man thinks he can do better without God interfering and can make good choices
 - . In the absence of God’s will and direction, we start to make choices centered around us and what we think is best for us
 - . This begins a slow, downward spiral focused around selfish pleasures
 - . One of the first signs of our spiritual depravity is our sexual impurity
 - . Without the boundaries laid down by God concerning these matters we begin to explore our newfound sexual freedoms
 - . We begin to look for pleasure and happiness through sex
 - . After a period of time we realize this is a deception that leaves us feeling unfulfilled just wanting more
 - . Next, Paul talks about man pursuing their shameful lusts – Romans 1:26-27
 - . Paul talks about sexual perversions, namely lesbianism and homosexuality
 - . It’s a slippery slope that leads us to the “what next” scenario

- . Paul goes on to talk about mans godless minds becoming depraved and how we begin to rewrite the laws of nature – Romans 1:28
 - . Paul goes from talking about our digression from lusting over natural things to unnatural things
 - . Natural things would be those things that our in sync with nature like sex between man and woman
 - . Unnatural things would begin with those things that go against the laws of nature
 - . As time goes on we begin to rewrite the laws of nature and begin to think of ourselves as a co-equal to God or as our own god
 - . We find a way to justify our own impurity but loath the darkness around us
 - . This downward slope of a godless man will lead to having no moral compass, just doing whatever feels good
 - . We come to approve of evil, not feeling any sense of shame or remorse
 - . It gets to a point where good becomes evil and evil, good
- . At the heart of what Paul is saying, is that if we will not have God, we will *not* become like God, knowing good and evil, but we will become like animals
 - . Paul list twenty-one vises here that are like a glimpse into hell
 - . By abandoning God, man will continue this downward spiral turning God's creation into a hellish reality

NEXT LESSON - WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2019: ROMANS 2