

# ROMANS

THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL

ROMANS 1:18–23

## THE WRATH OF GOD (ROM. 1:18–23)

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### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Last week we looked at Romans 1:16–17 which talked about the revelation of the righteousness of God. Moving forward in this letter, we learn that a part of God's righteousness being revealed in his wrath.

Wrath is not a popular concept. It makes us uncomfortable. We are much more comfortable talking about the love, mercy, and grace of God. However, inherent in the very notion of the goodness of God is his justice, and therefore wrath. In order for God to be good and just, he must punish evil.

God's wrath, then is: (1) a testimony to his goodness, (2) serves as a warning about the seriousness of sin, (3) and calls us to repentance.

We must respond to God's wrath with (1) reverence, (2) repentance, and (3) by sharing the gospel.

### 2.0 ROMANS 1:18–23

#### 2.1 THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD REVEALED

God's purpose for the creation to begin with was for humankind to fill the creation with the glory of God by bearing his resemblance and governing over the creation the way that he would. Then the fall happened. As a result, God promised Adam and Eve that he would take care of the serpent (Gen. 3:15); God also promised Abraham that all the families of the earth would be blessed through him. Until Jesus, none of those promises were fulfilled. Now, because of Jesus, God has fulfilled his promised and—by extension—revealed his righteousness. Secondarily,

God's purposes for the creation to be filled with his goodness. This hasn't happened. Evil runs amuck in the world. As people are reconciled to God through Jesus, and the life of Jesus is born in the world through the church, God's purposes for the creation are fulfilled and God's righteousness is revealed.

#### 2.2 THE WRATH OF GOD REVEALED

A part of God's goodness and righteousness is his wrath. God's wrath is not selfish or arbitrary. His personal anger against wickedness serves the good of the beloved. It is his loving and holy response to evil. To understand God's wrath, we must recognize His holiness. God is separate from sin, and because He is perfectly just, He cannot overlook wrongdoing. His wrath is a reflection of His justice. In Habakkuk 1:13, we see that God cannot look upon evil and allow it to go unchecked. His wrath serves to uphold His righteousness in the universe.

#### 2.3 SIN HAS CONSEQUENCES

Sin has devastating consequences, not only in our lives but also in our relationship with God. In Romans 6:23, we are reminded that "the wages of sin is death." When we reject God's ways, we align ourselves with the forces of destruction. God's wrath is His response to the rebellion that leads to our spiritual and moral decay.

#### 2.4 THE PURPOSE OF GOD'S WRATH

God's wrath is not only punitive, it also has a purpose: it warns us and invites us to repent. God's wrath serves as a warning to us. It calls us to recognize the seriousness of sin and our need for repentance. Just as a loving parent disciplines a child for their protection, God's wrath compels us to turn away from paths that lead to destruction. In His mercy, God provides an opportunity for repentance. In Ezekiel 18:30, He calls His people to turn from their offenses and live. God's wrath is intended to lead us back to Him, to experience His grace and forgiveness.

#### 2.5 THE SUPPRESSION OF TRUTH

God has revealed himself to all people at all times and all places. This is the doctrine of general revelation. Yet, because humans—by nature—rebel against God, we chose to exchange what we can know about God for

#### 2.6 HUMAN DEPRAVITY

In this text Paul rants against the depth of depravity of humanity. Running from the truth darkens our minds

and therefore alters the very framework for making decisions about what is good and what is wicked. Ultimately, the darkened mind becomes so debased that it's only aim and goal is to fulfill the desires of the flesh that destroy. It also goes as far as exploiting others for one's own fulfillment. This is the opposite of God's personal nature and an offense to God and his image in humanity. It angers him!

## 2.7 THE NEW HUMAN RACE

Thanks be to God, Jesus married himself to fallen humanity and put it to death and raised from the dead to start a new race that does, in fact, look like Jesus. Thanks be to God, a part of God's goodness and mercy is—not only his wrath—but his mercy and forgiveness. Just ask, and he will forgive.

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## 3.0 CONCLUSION

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1. **Reverence.** We must approach God with reverence and awe, understanding his holiness and the seriousness of sin. Just because God may be gentle in convicting us of sin does not mean that the sin is not serious.
2. **Repentance.** If we find ourselves straying, let us not shy away from confessing our faults before him. As 1 John 1:9 assures us, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
3. **Share the Gospel.** Being reminded of the wrath of God should inspire us to share the good news of forgiveness in Jesus Christ. We hold the key to revealing God's mercy to those living under the weight of his wrath. Our mission is to point others to Jesus who reconciles us offers us life and freedom.