

The Deserved Wrath of God

Lesson 2

October 13

Romans 1:18-3:23

After introducing the gospel as the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes ([Rom 1:16-17](#)), Paul leads us face-to-face with our biggest problem.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ([1:18-21](#))

We'll dig into the ugly downward spiral described by Paul throughout the rest of [Romans 1](#) as a class. For now, notice how Paul addresses some who might be quick to think of everyone else as having a problem with sin, but not themselves.

We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things. Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God? ([2:2-3](#))

Beginning in [2:17](#), he specifically challenges the descendants of Abraham...

But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God and know his will and approve what is excellent, because you are instructed from the law; and if you are sure that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth—you then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law. For, as it is written, “The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.” ([2:17-24](#))

In [3:9](#), Paul anticipates a very real question, leading his readers to a very important conclusion...

What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin...

The terrible bottom line? “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” ([3:23](#)). All of us deserve the wrath of God. All of us need the gospel, the power of God for salvation.

Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. ([2:4-5](#))

For Class & Family Discussion:

- If Paul is so eager to preach good news to those who are in Rome (1:15), why even bring up the wrath of God?
- Let's not take the devastating but important words used in 1:18 for granted. In your own words, what is "ungodliness"? And "unrighteousness"?
- What "truth" gets easily "suppressed" by human unrighteousness and ungodliness?
- How does 1:19-20 help us see a little more clearly what we ought to recognize from the "natural" world around us?
- How do human beings—whenever and wherever we might live—get ourselves into trouble? Let's slow down with 1:21 and really notice what Paul describes. Where and why do we so easily get off track?
- Let's take a look together at 1:22-32. How does sin very quickly bring us from bad to worse?
- Romans 2:6-11 very straightforwardly tells us the truth about our accountability to the potter (9:20-21). What do we need to see and understand?
- To summarize much of what Paul is saying in Romans 2-3, "Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all" (3:9). Why not?
- Romans 2:4-5 is a really important thing for us to carry in our hearts this week. What do we need to recognize and remember about God wherever we go, whatever we do this week?