

How To Become A Reprobate: Reject the Divine Revelation

Romans 1:18-32

Although **verse 18** begins a new subject it actually continues and completes Paul's teachings on "the gospel of Christ" addressed in **verses 15-17**. Actually, the teachings on the gospel are never completed. It is a subject that is, as high as high and as deep as deep. But, for the purpose for which Paul has introduced the message of the gospel in this particular letter, he adds an extremely significant piece of information to his teaching. And, I am afraid, it is a piece of information that is too often minimized (if not totally eliminated) in this current spiritual climate. A climate generated by the prosperity gospel, seeker sensitive, pragmatic Church age, or to use pure Biblical verbiage, the Laodicean Church age.

The truths presented here by Paul as inspired by the Holy Spirit, I am afraid, are despised by those who are members of the Church of the Laodicea and, especially by those who are in positions of leadership. It is obvious to anyone who listens to them preach, that when they preach "the gospel" they love to emphasize the "love of God." No one can over emphasize that one of a kind love that belongs only to God. But, if there is not mention of the "wrath of God" in their message, then according to Paul in **Galatians 1:6-9**, they are guilty of preaching "another gospel which is not another gospel."

For the gospel to be the gospel of God, it ***must be a balanced message of both the love of God and the wrath of God.*** It is true that Jesus said: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." **John 3:16**. But it is also equally true that the same Jesus, in the same chapter just a few verses later said: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the ***wrath*** (emphasis mine) abideth on him."

The Bible teaches that "God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day" **Psalms 7:11**. Just in case someone is thinking, well, that may be true but that is Old Testament thinking. Please listen, then, to **Hebrews 10:31** where we find Paul proclaiming "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

God is not an unbalanced God. He is not unbalanced in His person or in His personality. In fact, regardless of what attribute one might consider, whether those natural attributes or those moral attributes that belong to Him who is always the same, one will find they are equally meted (dispensed) out without one rising above another. He is as Holy in manifesting one attribute as He is another.

And in this passage that truth introduces one of the absolutely greatest passages of Scripture there is in the Bible: the Holy Spirit does so describing how the “wrath of God is revealed from heaven against ungodliness and unrighteousness of men” according to **verse 18**.

From **verse 18** through **chapter 3:23** God takes humanity into His court room and declares that “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” **Romans 3:23**. In **chapter 1** God declares the heathen or the Gentile is in need of righteousness. In **chapter two** God declares the hypocrite is in need of righteousness. In **chapter 3** God declares the Jew is in need of righteousness. In other words, all of mankind is taken before the judgment bar of God and found guilty: Jew and Gentile alike.

In this letter, Paul uses the word “wrath” no less than eleven times. The only New Testament book that uses the word more times is the Book of Revelation where it is employed at least thirty three times. It is a peculiar kind of wrath known only by God that makes the righteousness of God necessary. It is a peculiar kind of love known only by God, that makes the righteousness of God available. Both are equally necessary to provide what God has provided all those descendants of Adam who will realize their sinful condition, repent of their sins, and receive Christ by faith as their Saviour. In fact, the love of God and the wrath of God are inseparable.

It was Wuest in his Word Studies in the Greek New Testament that said: “wrath is defined by Trench as “a wrath of God who would not love good unless He hated evil, the two being inseparable, that he must do both or neither.” I doubt it could be stated better than that.

Although man has difficulty understanding how a God who is love can mete out divine wrath and justice equally without compromising who and what He is, God has no problems doing so because: “the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether” **Psalms 19:9**.

The “wrath of God” Paul goes on to say is “revealed from Heaven.” According to the prophet **Isaiah** in **chapter 66:1**, the prophet declares: “The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool.” Heaven can be said is God’s locus of rule although in His omnipresence He is everywhere found throughout His creation equally in all of His fullness.

Here, the apostle Paul tells us God’s wrath “is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness” (which is a lack of reverence toward God, impiety, irreligiousness or the absence of conformity to the will of God) “and unrighteousness” (which includes those wicked and violent deeds done against fellow men that violate both law and justice;) “of men who hold the truth” (meaning holding truth down or suppressing it) “in unrighteousness.”

When men “hold the truth in unrighteousness” it does not mean they do not know the truth. In fact, it means they do know the truth but choose to not allow the truth of God to work in their lives as God intends for truth to work. The reason they resist the truth is they desire to live the kind of life they desire rather than submit to the kind of life the Lord requires. The simple truth is, they do not want to be convicted by the truth that comes from God.

Verse 19-20 continues with a simply remarkable and irrefutable statement. Although “The fool has said in his heart, there is no God” according to **Psalms 14:1**, God has said “God is manifest in them.” Meaning that, both the person of God and the power of God are manifest in His creation. In fact, **verse 20** reads: “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 *they are without excuse*: (emphasis mine).

We will see from the comments that follow that *every man* has this revelation! The eternal Godhead and power which He possesses, is revealed to *every man* that has or will simply look up to the heavens: the stars, the sun, the moon. When they do look, they lose any excuse they may have. It is a revelation of the invisible God who is divine, possessing untrammelled power and the right to manifest His wrath upon those who hold down or suppress the truth to their own destruction. The problem with man **is not** that he cannot see the truth but rather that he **will not** will accept the truth because he is unrighteous.

Alva McClain says: “the heavens tell us there is a God, a God who has power, yet the heaven can never make us *know* God. We can never know God in the actual sense of the word without a special revelation. Paul says in the twenty-first verse that these people not only knew *about* God, but they *knew* Him. They could not know God without a revelation. God apparently revealed Himself to man back there in a special way, before the Word of God was given.” (pg. 65-66 The Gospel of God’s Grace, Romans)

Psalm 19 makes a similar declaration about the testimony of the very creation in which man exists. In fact, **verse 3** of this great Psalm states that the testimony of the creation is so vast and sure that “There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.” That means, regardless of the land or the people, all that man needs to do is to look up to the heavens. It matters not whether day or night and the “handywork” of God will cry out in clear terms that this universe is the result of a creative act of an omnipotent Almighty God. That it does not exist as the result of an accident or it does exist in its current state of the universal evolutionary process that is billions of years old. I have a great Greek word for that type of thinking and it is “bologna.”

With the next verse, **verse 21**, Paul explains why man is in the current state of cognitive decline that he is in. Simply put, man has rejected and rebelled against the revelation of God Himself and has created a plethora of gods to his own liking. Please note the rebellion of man against God is the result of choice: it happens not by accident or by ignorance.

It seems to me it was not that man did not know there is a God and what He is like, but he simply chose to reject God because He was not a god too man’s liking. Instead of submitting to Him and His laws and precepts, men have decided they would create a god to their own liking and replace the God they knew to be the One true God.

That decision made so long ago started mankind on a downward path that continues to take them farther and farther away from God. As we read **verse 22-23** we find they actually prided themselves in their rebellion that results in the devolution of man and not his evolution. How can I say that? The answer may be clearly seen as one considers the testimony given here as to how man began his idolatrous path. They began by first creating images of the highest sort of creatures. As they continued in their apostasy, they began to worship creatures of

all sorts until they began to worship what is considered to be the lowest form of all creatures: “creeping things” which is a reference to snakes.

Those things just mentioned are the results of the “vain imaginations” of man, and...(a) foolish heart (which) was darkened.” The very light they had, they rejected and the end result, darkness. The ironic thing is, in light of **verse 22** they were guilty of “professing themselves to be wise, (when in reality) they became fools.” Pride had deceived them and the result was darkness although they thought the darkness was light. How insightful was Jesus when He said: “But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness, if therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness” **Matthew 6:23**.