

The Book Of Romans
Reasons For The Wrath Of God Part 1b
Session 15

Romans 1:19-20 (NASB)

¹⁹ *because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.*

²⁰ *For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.*

GOD'S REVELATION:

We talked about the wrath of God upon all born into this world with one exception, that being Jesus Christ. And we talked about the question of why mankind deserves to be under the wrath of God and is that fair?

When we finished our study last time I said that the reasons given by the Apostle Paul that shows why it is fair and ultimately just could be identified as:

God's revelation,
 Man's rejection,
 Man's rationalization,
 Man's religion.

So we want to take these one at a time and look at them.

God's revelation is the first one;

We would have to say with Paul that God is justified in His wrath against sinners because of the revelation of Himself to all mankind.

In-summary, **Romans 1:18-2:16** pertains especially to Gentiles, who did not have the benefit of Gods revealed Word as did Israel.

Israel, of course, was doubly guilty, because she not only rejected God's natural, universal revelation of Himself in creation and conscience bur even rejected His unique written revelation through Scripture.

THE GIFT OF REVELATION;

Romans 1:19 (NASB)

¹⁹ *because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.*

Paul's point here is that even apart from His written revelation,

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²⁰ *For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.*

"that which is known about God is evident within" even pagan Gentiles, *"for God made it evident to them."*

The Lord testifies through Paul that His outward, visible manifestation of Himself is universally known by man. It *"is evident within them"* as well as without them.

All men have evidence of God, and what their physical senses can perceive of Him their inner senses can understand to some extent.

The Philistines both saw and acknowledged God's power, as did the Canaanites, the Egyptians, and every other people who have lived on earth.

The rebels who built the tower of Babel both saw and acknowledged God's greatness, as did the wicked inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah.

All men know something and understand something of the reality and the truth of God.

And they are responsible for a proper response to that revelation.

Any wrong response is "*inexcusable*."

Theologian Augustus Strong wrote, "*The Scriptures, both assume and declare that the knowledge that God is, and is universal. God has inlaid the evidence of [that] fundamental truth in the very nature of man, so that nowhere is He without a witness (Systematic Theology [Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson, 1979 reprint], p. 68).*"

Unregenerate man has "*no help and [is] without God in the world*" (*Eph. 2:12*), not because he has no knowledge of God but because he naturally rebels against the knowledge of God that he has.

As Paul has already attested (*Rom 1:18*), sinful mankind naturally suppresses God's truth with his own unrighteousness.

No one can find God on his own initiative or by his own wisdom or searching.

Yet God has never left man to his own initiative and understanding but has graciously provided abundant evidence of Himself.

He has sovereignly and universally **made Himself evident** to men.

No person therefore, can plead ignorance of God because entirely apart from Scripture, God has always revealed Himself and continues to reveal Himself to man.

God is perfectly just and therefore could not rightly condemn those who are totally ignorant of Him.

Paul unequivocally asserts here, no person can rightly claim ignorance of God, and therefore no person can rightly claim that God's wrath against him is unjust.

Every person is accountable for the revelation of God that may lead one to salvation.

Tertullian, the prominent early church Father, said that, "*it was not the pen of Moses that initiated the knowledge of the Creator. The vast majority of mankind, though they had never heard the name of Moses, to say nothing of his book, know the God of Moses nonetheless (cf, An Answer to the Jews, chapt. 2).*"

A disease left Helen Keller as a very young girl without sight, hearing, and speech. Through Anne Sullivan's tireless and selfless efforts, Helen finally learned to communicate through touch and even learned to talk. When Miss Sullivan first tried to tell Helen about God, the girl's response was that she already knew about Him, just didn't know His name. (Helen Keller, *The Story of My Life* [New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1905], pp. 368-74).

that which is known can be more rightly rendered "*that which is knowable*."

Obviously, finite man cannot know everything about God even with the perfect revelation of Scripture.

Paul's point here is that, **that which is capable of being known about God** apart from special revelation is indeed known by fallen mankind.

The characteristics of God that are reflected in His creation give unmistakable testimony to Him.

While ministering in Lystra, Paul told his Gentile audience about the God;

Acts 14:15-17 (NASB)

¹⁵ **WHO MADE THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH AND THE SEA AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM.**

And then went on to explain;

¹⁶ **"In the generations gone by He permitted all the nations to go their own ways;**

¹⁷ **and yet He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness."**

The very goodness of life testifies to the goodness of the God who provides it.

Later on, on his next missionary journey, Paul told the pagan philosophers on Mars Hill at Athens;

Acts 17:23-28 (NASB)

²³ **"For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.' Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.**

²⁴ **"The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands;**

²⁵ **nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things;**

²⁶ **and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation,**

²⁷ **that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;**

²⁸ **for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.'**

In other words, God controls the nations, their boundaries, and their destinies.

He controls time, the seasons, and every other aspect both of heaven and earth.

Even more remarkable than that, Paul says, because God has graciously chosen to make Himself known and approachable, **"He is not far from each one of us"**

John speaks of Jesus Christ as **"the true light which coming into the world, and enlightens every man"** (John 1:9).

He was not speaking about the saving knowledge of God, which comes only through faith, but of the intellectual knowledge of God, which comes to every human being through God's self-manifestation in His creation.

Every person has a witness of God, and therefore every person is accountable to follow the opportunity to respond to Him in faith.

Thus we see the gift of the revelation of God.

But what is the content of that revelation?:

THE CONTENT OF REVELATION:

Romans 1:20 (NASB)

²⁰ **For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.**

From the beginning of the world Paul says, God has made known His invisible attributes.

The particularly attributes that man can perceive in part through his natural senses are God's **eternal power and His divine nature.**

God's eternal power refers to His never failing omnipotence, which is reflected in the awesome creation which that power both brought into being and sustains.

God's eternal nature of kindness and graciousness is reflected, as Paul told the Lystrans, in *"the rains from heaven and the fruitful seasons, satisfying, your hearts with food and gladness"*(Acts 14:17).

The noted theologian Charles Hodge testified, *"God therefore has never left Himself without a witness. His existence and perfections have ever been so manifested that His rational creatures are bound to acknowledge and worship Him as the true and only God"* (Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983 reprint], p. 37).

God's natural revelation of Himself is not obscure or selective, observable only by a few perceptive souls who are specially gifted. His revelation of Himself through creation can be **clearly seen by everyone, being understood through what has been made.**

Even in the most ancient of times, long before the telescope and microscope were invented, the greatness of God was evident both in the stars vastness and in the tiny intricacies of nature.

Men could look at the stars and discover the fixed order of their orbits.

They could observe a small seed reproduce itself into a giant tree, exactly like the one from which it came.

They could see the marvelous cycles of the seasons, the rain, and the snow.

They witnessed the marvel of human birth and the glory of the sunrise and sunset.

Even without the special revelation David had, they could see that;

Psalm 19:1 (NASB)

¹ The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.

Some birds are able to navigate by the stars.

Even if hatched and raised in a windowless building, if shown an artificial sky, they immediately are able to orient themselves to the proper place to go to migrate.

The archer fish is able to fire drops of water with amazing force and accuracy, knocking insects out of the air.

The bombardier beetle separately produces two different chemical, which when released and combined, explode in the face of an enemy.

Yet the explosion never occurs prematurely and never harms the beetle itself.

No wonder David declared that, *"power belongs to God (Ps. 62:11)* and that Asaph *(Ps. 79:11)* and Nahum *(1:3)* spoke of the greatness of His power.

Robert Jastrow, and astrophysicist and director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, has said:

Now we see how the astronomical evidence supports the biblical view of the origin of the world. The essential elements in the astronomical and biblical accounts of Genesis are the same.

Consider the enormousness of the problem: Science has proved that the universe exploded into being at a certain moment. It asks what cause produced this effect? Who or what put the matter and energy into the Universe? And science cannot answer these questions.

For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been there for centuries. (God and the Astronomers [New York: Norton, 1978], pp. 14, 114,116). We will look at this content with much more information in our next study.