

The Book Of Romans
Reasons For The Wrath Of God Part 1c
Session 17

Romans 1:16-21 (NASB)

¹⁶ *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*

¹⁷ *For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."*

¹⁸ *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,*

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.*

²¹ *For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.*

Again we are talking 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?

Paul has given us reasons that show why it is fair and ultimately just and they are:

God's revelation, and that one we have studied,
 Man's rejection,
 Man's Rationalization,
 Man's religion.

So Now let's look at Man's Rejection.

MAN'S REJECTION:

Romans 1:21 (NASB)

²¹ *For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.*

God is not only justified in His wrath because of His revelation of Himself, but also because of man's rejection of Him.

Paul explicitly declares that **though they knew God** through this natural, general revelation, unbelieving men still rejected Him.

Although man is innately conscious of God's existence and power, he is just as innately and wickedly inclined to reject that knowledge.

The natural tendency of unregenerate mankind is to "*proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived*" (2 Tim. 3:13)

As Paul reminds believers,

Titus 3:3 (NASB)

³ *For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.*

A certain evolutionist said, "I refuse to believe in God, so what other alternative do I have, but evolution?"

The man was honest, but he gave clear testimony to the fact that it was not evidence for evolution that led him to disbelief in God but rather his disbelief in God that led him to embrace evolution.

Donald Grey Barnhouse made this potent observation:

"Will God give man brains to see these things and will man then fail to exercise his will toward that God? The sorrowful answer is that both of these things are true.

God will give man brains to smelt iron and make a hammer head and nails. God will grow a tree and give man strength to cut it down and brains to fashion a hammer handle from its wood. And when man has the hammer and the nails, God will put out His hand and let man drive nails through it and place Him on a cross in the supreme demonstration that men are without excuse. (Romans, vol. 1 [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953]. Pp. 245)

In verse 21, Paul mentions four ways in which men exhibit their rejection of God:

By dishonoring Him,

By being thankless to Him,

By being futile in their speculations concerning Him,

And by being darkened in their hearts about Him.

First, man fails to **honor** God as **God**. This is the basic expression of the root sin of pride which is at the core of man's fallenness.

Doxazo, (honor) is probably better translated here as glory, as it is in numerous versions.

The worst deed committed in the universe is failure to give God **honor**, or glory.

Above everything else, God is to be glorified.

To Glorify God is to exalt Him, to recognize Him as supremely worthy of honor, and to acknowledge His divine attributes.

Since the glory of God is also the sum of all the attributes of His being, of all He has revealed of Himself to man, to give God glory is to acknowledge His glory and extol it.

We cannot give Him glory by adding to His perfection, but by praising His perfections.

We glorify Him by praising His glory!

Scripture continually calls upon believers to glorify the Lord.

David says:

Psalm 29:1-2 (NASB)

¹ *Ascribe to the LORD, O sons of the mighty, Ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.*

² *Ascribe to the LORD the glory due to His name; Worship the LORD in holy array.*

Paul says:

1 Corinthians 10:31 (NASB)

³¹ *Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*

John in his book of Revelations says:

Revelation 4:11 (NASB)

¹¹ *"Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created."*

As the Westminster Shorter Catechism eloquently declares;

"The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever."

Man was created to glorify God;

Leviticus 10:3b (NASB)

³ *"It is what the LORD spoke, saying, 'By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy, And before all the people I will be honored.'"*

1 Chronicles 16:24-29 (NASB)

²⁴ *Tell of His glory among the nations, His wonderful deeds among all the peoples.*

²⁵ *For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; He also is to be feared above all gods.*

²⁶ *For all the gods of the peoples are idols, But the LORD made the heavens.*

²⁷ *Splendor and majesty are before Him, Strength and joy are in His place.*

²⁸ *Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples, Ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.*

²⁹ *Ascribe to the LORD the glory due His name; Bring an offering, and come before Him; Worship the LORD in holy array.*

Psalms 148:1-14 (NASB)

¹ *Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens; Praise Him in the heights!*

² *Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts!*

³ *Praise Him, sun and moon; Praise Him, all stars of light!*

⁴ *Praise Him, highest heavens, And the waters that are above the heavens!*

⁵ *Let them praise the name of the LORD, For He commanded and they were created.*

⁶ *He has also established them forever and ever; He has made a decree which will not pass away.*

⁷ *Praise the LORD from the earth, Sea monsters and all deeps;*

⁸ *Fire and hail, snow and clouds; Stormy wind, fulfilling His word;*

⁹ *Mountains and all hills; Fruit trees and all cedars;*

¹⁰ *Beasts and all cattle; Creeping things and winged fowl;*

¹¹ *Kings of the earth and all peoples; Princes and all judges of the earth;*

¹² *Both young men and virgins; Old men and children.*

¹³ *Let them praise the name of the LORD, For His name alone is exalted; His glory is above earth and heaven.*

¹⁴ *And He has lifted up a horn for His people, Praise for all His godly ones; Even for the sons of Israel, a people near to Him. Praise the LORD!*

Romans 15:5-6 (NASB)

⁵ *Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus,*

⁶ *so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

For man to fail to give God glory is therefore the ultimate affront to his Creator.

After they were created in God's own image, Adam and Eve continually experienced God's presence and glory. They communed directly with Him and they praised Him and acknowledged His glory and honor.

But when they sinned by disobeying God's command and seeking to gain glory and honor for themselves, they **"hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden" (Gen 3:8)**

Sin brought separation from God, and Adam and Eve no longer sought God's presence or yearned to bring Him glory. Ever since that time, fallen man has sought to avoid God and to deny His glory and even His very existence.

Throughout Scripture, God has revealed many elements of His glory.

When Moses asked to see God's glory, the Lord manifested His *goodness, graciousness, and compassion*, saying;

Exodus 33:19 (NASB)

19 And He said, "I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the LORD before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion."

The Lord placed Moses in the cleft of the rock and covered him with His hand, lest he see His full glory and be consumed.

He then allowed Moses to view Him partially from behind as He passed by.

As God presented Himself before Moses, He also gave a litany of His divine attributes,

Exodus 33:20-23 (NASB)

20 But He said, "You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!"

21 Then the LORD said, "Behold, there is a place by Me, and you shall stand there on the rock;

22 and it will come about, while My glory is passing by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock and cover you with My hand until I have passed by.

23 "Then I will take My hand away and you shall see My back, but My face shall not be seen."

Exodus 34:6-7 (NASB)

6 Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth;

7 who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations."

Although He had delivered Israel from bondage in Egypt and given them His holy law by which to live, the people persistently rebelled against God and against His appointed leader, Moses.

Yet God continued to manifest His glory to His chosen people.

After the tabernacle was built, the Lord filled it with His glory as the sign of His divine presence with His people.

Exodus 40:34 (NASB)

34 Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

As Israel moved about in the wilderness for forty years, God manifested His presence and His glory through the pillar of cloud that guided them by day and the pillar of fire that reassured them by night.

Exodus 40:36-38 (NASB)

36 Throughout all their journeys whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the sons of Israel would set out;

37 but if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not set out until the day when it was taken up.

38 For throughout all their journeys, the cloud of the LORD was on the tabernacle by day, and there was fire in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel.

After the temple was built by Solomon, the cloud of the Lord's glory filled the holy place there.

Yet the people of Israel continued to rebel against the Lord through countless kinds of false worship.

And when she persistently refused to turn from her sin, God's glory eventually departed from the Temple
(Ezek. 11:22-23)

And at that point the theocratic kingdom of Israel came to an end.

The glory of God did not return to earth until Messiah came.

John 1:14 (NASB)

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

The rest of the created world, however, has never revolted against God or sought to hide His glory as has man.

The heavens tell of His power and glory,

The animals do just what God has created them to do.

The flowers bloom just as God designed them to, and the butterfly gently and beautifully flies from place to place, testifying to God's beauty and order.

But recognizing God's glorious attributes and acts and glorifying Him for them is precisely what fallen men do not do.

Millions upon millions of people have lived in the midst of God's wonderful universe and yet proudly refused to recognize Him as its Creator and to affirm His majesty and glory.

And for that willful, foolish rejection they are without excuse as they stand under God's righteous judgment.

The person who can live in the midst of God's marvelous creation and yet refuse to recognize Him as its Creator and affirm His majesty and glory is a fool indeed.

Through Jeremiah, the Lord warned His people;

Jeremiah 13:15-16 (NASB)

¹⁵ Listen and give heed, do not be haughty, For the LORD has spoken.

¹⁶ Give glory to the LORD your God, Before He brings darkness And before your feet stumble On the dusky mountains, And while you are hoping for light He makes it into deep darkness, And turns it into gloom.

And what about Herod?

Acts 12:22-23 (NASB)

²² The people kept crying out, "The voice of a god and not of a man!"

²³ And immediately an angel of the Lord struck him because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and died.

Listen to what happens when Christ returns to earth:

Matthew 24:29-30 (NASB)

²⁹ "But immediately after the tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

³⁰ "And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory.

And that is just the 1st of the four things that Paul speaks of here in verse 21 we will see the rest the next time we come together to study.