

Romans 1:20-23 – Reasons for God’s Severe Wrath

Rienecker, TSK, Handfuls, Steele, Koning, Vincent, Trapp, Robertson, PNT, Poole, JFB, Geneva, Lightfoot, Clarke, Family, Henry, Calvin Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: You were introduced to the fact that men were brought under God’s condemnation and waiting for final destruction because they were ungodly and unrighteous (rejecting the 1st and 2nd table of the law), and they suppressed the truth in a defiant act of rebellion against God. The question that comes up is this: Why is God’s wrath so severe against men? This is what you will hear about today.

Our headings are:

Man identified the Creator

Man rejected the Creator

Man embraced the Creature

Our goals are: **That you will understand beyond doubt what you and the world deserved, that you will appreciate what you were given instead (life), and that you will work to save those who are still under God’s just wrath.**

Man identified the Creator

20 For **since the creation of the world** His invisible attributes are **clearly seen**, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that **they are without excuse**.

1. Man, even in his fallen state, is able to know God from what God has revealed in nature.

After all, you can know a painter by his works, or an architect by his designs. So too you can know God by his works.

2. This knowledge is not only that God exists, but man can know God by his attributes, attributes that are clearly seen and clearly understood!

(Of course, not everything about God is seen in nature or understood. God clarified this to Job. (Job 11)

3. Now which of God’s attributes are visible to all mankind?

The heavens speak! So look at the world. You can learn of the **power of God...**you can learn of the **orderliness of God...**you can learn of the **wisdom of God...**you can learn of God’s **common grace...the rain and sunshine...and snow...**you can learn that this world was **created by God, not by time, chance, and matter.**

You don’t have to visibly see God to know him! After all, **you do not deny the wind exists because you have never seen it.**

Acts 14: 16 "who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways. **17** "Nevertheless **He did not leave Himself without witness**, in that He did good, **gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons**, filling our hearts with food and gladness."

Look at some more specific things you can learn about God.

Learn of the glory of God.

Psalms 19:1 The heavens declare the **glory of God**; And the firmament shows His handiwork.

Learn of God’s omnipotence.

God obviously had to be before the things he made! Nothing could make itself.

Learn of God’s omniscience. He knows all things. He told Job that.

Learn of God’s beneficence. All good things come from him. Look around! Remember from yesterday!

Learn of God’s wisdom! You have 2 ears and 1 mouth. We have male and female bodies. How perfect, even with the fall!

4. Because the Gentiles (non-Jews) rejected the obvious presence of God, and therefore rejected him, they will have no excuse before God when they stand before him on Judgment Day.

5. Lessons:

a. God created the world and you can know him. You do not see God, but you know him by his works. No one can plead ignorance: "I didn’t know God, so I didn’t know what to do!"

b. People who deny the existence and character of God are lying to you and to themselves. This is a devilish work! God’s Word doesn’t lie. God spoke clearly! The Gentiles are without excuse.

c. Those who deny the existence and character of God are, in reality, lying to you and themselves in order to justify their own “goodness.”

d. Pity the ones who deny God! They are under the control of the Devil. Be patient with them. Love them. Evangelize them.

Man rejected Creator

21 because, although they knew God, **they did not glorify Him as God**, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

1. Man knew God but did not do what was requisite of this knowledge: Man did not glorify God, neither was he thankful to God for being his Creator.

God created man and provided him with many things, things essential to his survival, things that brought him joy, but man rejected God. He no longer had the right thoughts, notions, and praise of God. God did so much and revealed so much, but man wanted to be deliberately blind.

2. How did God expect man to glorify him and be thankful to him?

God expected man to **pursue more knowledge of him**, like the knowledge of his special revelation – the Bible – that shows the justice of God, the sinfulness of man, and the saving work of Christ.

God expected man to then **fall before him in praise and worship regularly.**

God expected man to **thank him for all his kindnesses.**

God expected man to **know and follow his holy laws.**

God expected man to **tell others about him.**

3. Instead of glorifying God and being thankful to him, man chose to pursue futile things.

Many did not hate God directly, but they **introduced other gods alongside the true God.** This is the **greater danger.**

4. Man's heart consequently became darkened, meaning he lost all reasonable, rational thought.

5. Lessons:

a. All the people in India, the countries of African, or China who never heard the Bible are rightly condemned by God because he is clearly seen, but they still reject him. They have no excuse.

b. You do not have sufficient knowledge in nature to receive salvation, but you have enough knowledge to receive condemnation if you do not repent. You see, you received the knowledge of God and **were duty bound to seek out this God.** And if you are a Christian, you are duty bound to take this special revelation of who God is to all mankind!

Romans 10:14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? ¹⁷ So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

c. Man does not want knowledge to receive salvation. He opposes God because he prefers to serve the Devil, his father.

d. God expects you to glorify him, whether you agree or not. He commands it.

Psalms 29:2 Give unto the LORD the glory due to His name; Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

Man embraced the Creature

22 Professing to be wise, **they became fools**, 23 and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man — and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

1. Because man was full of himself, thinking he knew everything, but indeed was foolish, he made the worst exchange in the history of exchanges: He exchanged knowing and worshipping the true and glorious God for idols!

The Greeks and Romans, because they thought they were the epitome of intelligence, treated others notoriously, seeing them as dumb. The Gnostics and ancient philosophers were quite boastful about their wisdom too. But that was wisdom from books, from men. They ignored the knowledge on their hearts.

So they were all fools because they rejected the way of God. God did not make man that way! God gave man true wisdom when he made him.

Genesis 1:31 Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed **it was very good...** **But foolish man rejected God's knowledge because he wanted to take credit for what God was doing.**

2. What are some examples of these idols man substituted for God?

Literal idols. These idols were brought to Rome from Egypt and worshipped. Greeks loved to make their gods as men. (When some Greeks and Romans were converted, these philosophers laughed at them.) The

Egyptians loved to worship birds and reptiles. The Babylonians worshipped snakes. American natives worshipped thunder. The northern Europeans worshipped the sun and moon. The Indians worshipped everything. The Jews did this on multiple occasions as well.

What an indignity of God to make him in his gloriousness into wood! Even Israel did this!

Jeremiah 2:11 Has a nation changed its gods, Which are not gods? But My people have changed their Glory For what does not profit.

Deuteronomy 4:15 "Take careful heed to yourselves, for you saw no form when the LORD spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire,

Sexual immorality. Men have violated God's order of how to use their bodies. Marriage is now hated. Perversion is celebrated. Weddings used to be a huge thing, now it is cross-dressing, and sexual perversion that are celebrated.

Wealth and power. Men would abandon getting married, abandon their families, church, and country in order to accumulate more wealth, which they use to control others.

3. Sadly, those who oppose these idols and warn others against pursuing them are often persecuted and sometimes prosecuted for doing so.

4. Lessons:

a. Man is not morally good. His life gets progressively worse the longer he lives without God. He is blind. He will do evil more and more, reflecting what is inside.

b. The most foolish thing a man can do is to exchange wisdom for folly. Man has made God in his image! How foolish! This is why God often describes man as fools. **Man rejects an all-powerful and gracious God for things that can do nothing good for man.** The fact is, the more a nation increases in so-called wisdom and philosophy, the more it rejects God's wisdom. (Not surprising!) In modern times you see this in the French Enlightenment. *Man became god and God had to be remade as a kind of nice grandfather doing the bidding of man! God became desperate for man's affections.*

Habakkuk 2:18 "**What profit is the image, that its maker should carve it,** The molded image, a teacher of lies, That the maker of its mold should trust in it, To make mute idols? Imagine the absurdity of worshipping that which he knows to be untrue!

Acts 14:15 and saying, "Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them,

c. Real humanity is living for God, and that starts with knowing, loving, and trusting in Christ the Savior. And having come to that state or real humanity, help save others from that self-deception.

Conclusion:

Man knew the Creator by looking at the **work of the Creator**. The Creator's power, glory, omniscience, kindness, and wisdom taught man much about God. **But man rejected that God** and substituted God with **idols of his own making and embraced them!** The absurdity of absurdities!

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus:

1. God is great and God made you. He deserves your worship for those things. **He also remade you in Jesus.** You have no reason to look to any other to live for and to worship, but Yahweh alone!

2. Humble yourself before him. Remember who he is and what he did of you through his Son on the cross. John 17:3 "*And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.*" This will guard your hearts and make sure you humble. Your salvation was not in yourself or any creature.

3. Show the world the futility of life apart from Yahweh so they will join you and worship the Creator. There is nothing better you can do with your life. Do you do it?

Finally: If you don't believe in the true and living God and worship him, you have idols...idols that cannot save you but will guarantee you condemnation to hell forever. If you want out of hell, acknowledge God is the holy Creator of heaven and earth, acknowledge you are sinful and in need of redemption, and acknowledge Jesus paid the full price of your sins on the cross.