

“The Wrath of God Revealed, Part 2”
(Romans 1:18-32)

I. Introduction.

A. We saw that God reveals Himself in His creation – His invisible attributes – i.e., His eternal power and divine nature.

1. He reveals it in the things we see in this world:

- a. Life, design (DNA), beauty, consciousness, intelligence, purpose, memory, senses, etc.
- b. God must have these and more.
- c. The cause is greater than the effect; what made the things we see must be greater than what we see.

2. He also reveals them in the things we see in this universe.

- a. There must be something that had no beginning – it’s impossible that there could have been nothing.
- b. Whoever made what we see must be eternal.
- c. He must also be infinite, because it’s impossible that nothing could be somewhere. Space can’t end.
- d. And He must be infinitely powerful, considering what He has made.

B. Paul also said that what He reveals, gets through.

1. Verses 19-21.

- a. “That which is known about God is evident within (or among) them; for God made it evident to them” (v. 19).
- b. “His eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse” (v. 20).
- c. “For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God” (v. 21).

2. This leaves them “without excuse” (v. 20).

- a. Everyone knows that God is and that they should honor and thank Him.
- b. They are without excuse if they should not believe.
- c. They are without excuse if they should worship something else.

C. But what do people actually do with that revelation, and what does God do to them because of this?

1. This is what we’re going to look at this morning.

2. *What we’ll see is that, apart from the grace of God, men try to hide that knowledge, and in response, God pours out His wrath on them.*

II. Sermon.

A. First, let’s consider what people do with what they see of God.

1. Paul says in verse 18 they “suppress the truth in unrighteousness” (v. 18).

- a. The word suppress means to hold back, to hold down, or to restrain something.
 - b. In this case it means to hide what they know about God in the Creation.
 - c. Unrighteousness is the means by which they do it; by means of their wicked hearts.
 - d. Sin is an enemy of God. It is in its essence hatred of God. It resists anything that has to do with God.
 - e. This is why we have such a hard time doing God's will – Bible reading and study, worship, prayer, obedience, witnessing. We have a struggle with sin.
 - f. In our case, we at least have the Spirit working love in our hearts.
 - g. But those outside of Christ don't. All they have is hatred.
 - h. Is it any wonder they hold down what they see of God?
 - i. Is it also any surprise that they're not lining up at our doors to hear the Gospel?
2. Second, knowing God, they do not honor Him as God (v. 21).
 - a. They do not give Him the praise or the glory that is His. They do not exalt Him or give Him credit for His work.
 - b. This is what God made man for – to glorify Him – but they deny Him His right.
 - c. Let's make sure that we don't deny Him. We must worship, pray, obey.
 3. Neither do they give Him thanks (v. 21).
 - a. They are not grateful to Him for what He has done: He made them, takes care of them, even provides salvation for them, if they will have it.
 - b. But they thank themselves or other gods; whatever idols they have made.
 - c. Again, let's make sure that we don't forget to thank the Giver of all good gifts – food, clothing, houses, families, lawful things to enjoy.
 - d. We do Him an injustice if we refuse or forget.
 4. Next, refusing to acknowledge what they know of God, they became futile in their speculations (v. 21).
 - a. Instead of using their God-given gift of thinking to face the truth, they use it to justify their denial of God.
 - b. The word means they give themselves to deceptive and meaningless thinking.
 - c. It's not that their minds no longer work correctly: their hearts won't let them. This is primarily a problem with the heart and not with the mind.
 - d. Paul tells us that they can see God, but their hearts dictate to their minds to tear that knowledge down, because of their hatred.
 5. And so their foolish hearts were darkened (v. 21).
 - a. The heart in Scripture can mean the emotions, affections, or will. Certainly these are affected.
 - b. But here it refers to their understanding. Because they refused the light of God's truth, He gives them over to darkness.
 - c. "Professing to be wise, they became fools" (v. 22).

- d. Wisdom is the seeking after and applying of truth.
 - e. Foolishness is not seeking truth; or knowing it, not applying it.
 - f. Covering over the truth, they convince themselves that they are actually wise in their new found philosophy.
 - g. But they are really *fools*.
6. Their greatest foolishness is that they worship and serve the creature, rather than the Creator.
- a. They exchange the glory of the incorruptible God for that of corruptible man, birds, four-footed animals and crawling creatures (v. 23).
 - (i) Animals were worshipped by the Egyptians and are by Indians (India).
 - (ii) Rocks and trees by animists.
 - (iii) Men by Romans, Egyptians, Persians.
 - (iv) Baals and Asherah poles (false deities) by the Canaanites.
 - (v) As we saw last week, man by evolutionists, or really, a great big rock, or something as small as an electron.
 - (vi) They look to things that couldn't have made what we see as the source.
 - b. Bear in mind, that these are the ones people look to as experts today.
 - (i) Most scientists, PhDs, doctors, highly educated men, etc., today fall into this category.
 - (ii) More people look to them for truth than anyone else.
 - (iii) Often we look to them for truth. Some Christians have a hard time believing they could be so far off. They are the experts.
 - (iv) But look at what God says about them.
 - (v) Look at the condition of their hearts – only hatred for God – and of their minds – futile speculations, darkened hearts, foolish, worshipping rocks.
 - (vi) Are you going to look to them?
 - (vii) Where should you look? To God's truth, not to secular man.
 - (viii) It's not that unconverted man doesn't have any true knowledge. He has a great deal.
 - (ix) But when it comes to the most important question of ultimate reality and origins, he is in the darkness of his sinful heart.
 - (x) Consider this when you choose the school or college you might go to and when you listen to them lecture.
 - (xi) Consider this when considering what they say about the age of the earth.
 - (xii) Their hearts are at war with God. They do not want to acknowledge Him.
- B. Consider also what God says He is doing and will do to them (v. 18). God says that His wrath is revealed from heaven against them (v. 18).
1. The tense of the verb shows that it is continually, everyday.
 2. It comes in many forms – disease, pestilence, war, earthquakes, tidal waves, volcanoes, hurricanes, famine, etc.
 3. We will see next week, it also includes God giving them over to more and more moral sin.

4. But finally, it certainly includes hell. Even though we don't see it with our eyes, we do see it through the eyes of God in Scripture.

III. Application.

- A. First, we need to acknowledge the God we see.
 1. Those who hate this knowledge and cover it up are judged.
 2. But those who acknowledge it and do what they can to show it to others are blessed.

- B. Second, we should honor and thank the God we see.
 1. He is the One who made us, provides for us.
 2. He is also the One who provided salvation for us when we fell into sin.
 3. Not to thank Him is the height of ingratitude.
 4. We must give Him the praise, worship and thanksgiving that is His.

- C. Third, if we are in a situation where we are covering that knowledge or giving honor or thanks to anyone or anything other than God, we need to repent.
 1. If we worship the creation, we will perish with it (1 John 2:17).
 2. But if we repent, trust in Christ, and live for His glory, we will be safe.

- D. Finally, this helps us to understand those to whom we are sent to minister the Gospel.
 1. Men hate God.
 2. They don't want you to point Him out to them.
 3. They don't want to hear the Gospel.
 4. But they need to because it's their only hope.
 5. God will open the hearts of His elect to receive it.
 6. So let's not worry, but simply obey.
 7. Let's bow and ask the Lord to apply His Word to our hearts as we need to hear it this morning.