

God knows! God accepts.  
God forgives. God restores.

*The Book of Romans has life changing truth...but it must be approached with effort and determination to understand what the Holy Spirit said through the Apostle Paul.*

### **God's Anger and the Reason for It is Revealed:**

*Romans 1:18-23, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. 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, 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. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man; and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things."*

### **God's Wrath...**

- *The contrast of the unrepentant sinner...the opposite of God's love for the repentant sinner.*
- *That response from God to man who is deliberately blind to God and worships his own thoughts and idols instead of Him.*
- *Incurred upon man who has a disobedient and rebellious heart.*

### **What did God's wrath mean?**

- *In early parts of the Old Testament the wrath of God is specially connected with the idea of the covenant people (Israel).*
- *The people of Israel were in a special relationship with God...God chose them and offered them this special relationship...which was there so long as they kept His law (Exodus 24:3-8)*  
*This meant two (2) things:*
  1. *Within the nation any breach of the law provoked the wrath of God for it broke the relationship, (Numbers 16:46; 25:3)*
  2. *Because Israel stood in a unique relationship to God, any other nation which treated her with cruelty and injustice incurred the wrath of God (Jeremiah 50:13).*

*God's people...chosen and set apart by God because of their special relationship with God...are still under the same type of covenant. When we keep God's commandments and put our faith and trust in Him...we are under a special covering (promised covering).*

*When we break that relationship by our sin, we:*

- *Separate ourselves from the covering and protection of God....*

- *Opening ourselves up to the enemy's warfare. The enemy wants "to steal, kill and destroy us."*

*Does God turn His back on us? Does He leave us to never come back to us? Does He abandon us because of sin?*

*No!*

*God cannot tolerate sin. He cannot and will not break His covenant...we are the ones that break the covenant.*

*All we have to do is ask for forgiveness... seek His face... place our sins under the blood....and reestablish the relationship with our covenant keeping God.*

*When Israel strayed away from God, when she was rebellious and unfaithful, then the wrath of God operated against her and involved her in ruin, disaster, captivity and defeat.*

***REMEMBER....Because He is God, because He is characteristically holy, God cannot tolerate sin, and the wrath of God is His "violent reaction" against sin.***

*It is hard for us to grasp....and for us to accept.*

*But....God's love for us cannot be measured without something to measure by.*

*God's measuring stick is obedience vs. disobedience, fellowship and rebellion.*

*God made his world in such a way that we break His laws at our peril (moral order).*

*If we were left solely at the mercy of that inexorable moral order, there could be nothing for us but death and destruction ("the soul that sins shall die" Ezekiel 18:4).*

*Does the moral order act alone...No!*

*Into this dilemma of man there comes the love of God, and that love of God, by an act of unbelievable free grace, lifts man out of the consequences of sin and saves him from the wrath he should have incurred.*

*Paul goes on to insist that men cannot plead ignorance of God. In the world we can see God.*

*It is Paul's argument (and a valid argument)...that if we look at the world we see that suffering follows sin.*

- *Break the laws of agriculture, your harvest fails!*
- *Break the laws of architecture, your building collapses.*
- *Break the laws of health, your body suffers.*

*Paul was saying, "look at the world! See how it is constructed! From a world like that you know what God is like."*

*The sinner is left without excuse.*

*Romans 1:24 – 32, Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. <sup>25</sup> They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. <sup>26</sup> Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. <sup>27</sup> In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error. <sup>28</sup> Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. <sup>29</sup> They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, <sup>30</sup> slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey*

their parents;<sup>31</sup> they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy.<sup>32</sup> Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

***The Key to this passage is the word “desires.”***

***Definition: “Sinful DESIRES” = a reaching out after pleasure; reaching after pleasure which defies all reason.***

***Putting it all together ...the passionate desire for forbidden pleasure.***

***It is the desire which makes men (mankind) do nameless and shameless things.***

***The way of life of a man who has become so completely immersed in the world that he has ceased to be aware of God at all.***

***It is a terrible thing to talk of God “abandoning” anyone (gave them over).***

***Two (2) reasons that we may be able to explain:***

***1. God gave man free-will, and He respects that free-will. Actually, not even God will interfere with man's free-will.***

***Before man there stands an open choice....it has to be so.***

- ***Without choice there can be no goodness and without choice there can be no love.***
- ***A coerced goodness is not real goodness; and a coerced love is not love at all.***

***God's abandoning...is not of anger....it is sorrowful regret.***

***2. There is judgment...***

- ***It is a grim fact of life that the more a man sins the easier it is to sin.***
- ***Man may begin with a kind of shuddering awareness of what he is doing, and end by sinning without a 2<sup>nd</sup> thought.***
- ***It is not that God is punishing him; he is bringing punishment upon himself and steadily making himself the slave of sin.***

***The awful responsibility about free-will...is that it can be used in such a way that in the end it is obliterated, and a man becomes the slave of sin, self-abandoned to the wrong way.***

***An Age of Shame...This describes a situation of degeneracy of morals almost without parallel in human history....***

***Actually, Paul was referring to what was happening in the Greek and Roman Culture at that time...***

- ***It was an age when things seemed, as if were, out of control.***
- ***It was an age of unparalleled luxury.***
- ***It was an age of unparalleled immorality.***

***Vice did not stop with the crude and natural vices.***

***(14 out of the first 15 Roman Emperors were homosexuals)***

***An age where it seemed that right was wrong...and wrong seemed right.***

***But....are we not living in a similar...if not worse society?***

***Basically...God will not tolerate this...God will not stand for this...God will “give us over”...abandon us to the lusts that we seek and deliberately grab and take hold of....for our pleasure.***

*What is left for us to do...to dare God to wipe us off the face of the earth...or just annihilate the creation that has started to worship the creation and not the Creator.*

*Where is the fear? Where is the absolute brokenness?*

*Where is the crying out to God for our sin that we have permitted to go on?*

**Then comes the long list of terrible things:**

- **Evil**---opposite of justice. Justice is giving to God and to men their due.
- **Depravity**---means more than badness. Depravity is so low in the thought process that it is defined as the desire of doing harm. It is the active, deliberate will to corrupt and to inflict injury.
- **Greed/Lust**---The accursed love of having more and more. The spirit which will pursue its own interests with complete disregard for the rights of others.
- **Envy**---there is a good and bad envy; the good envy reveals our weaknesses and inadequacy, and which makes us eager to copy some great example. Bad envy...is the grudging thing. .
- **Murder**---Jesus widened the scope of the word. It is what is in the heart. "Man regards the deed, but God sees the intention."
- **Strife**---the contention which is born of envy, ambition, the desire for prestige, and place and prominence. It comes from the heart in which there is jealousy.
- **Deceit**---the quality of the man who has a tortuous and twisted mind, who cannot act in a straightforward way, who never does anything except with some kind of ulterior motive.
- **Gossipers (whisperers) and slanderers**---two words...meaning people with slanderous tongues. The main thing is that it is a person who delights in destroying reputations.
- **Haters of God**---the man (person) who thinks that God is the barrier between him and his pleasures; God is the chain which keeps him from doing exactly as he likes.
- **Insolent and Arrogant men**---describes the spirit of the man who is so proud that he defies God; a man who has a certain contempt for everyone except oneself.
- **Inventors of evil**...describes the man who is not content with the usual, ordinary ways of sinning, but who seeks out new vices because he has grown unexcited and blasé with the ordinary...he wants the new thrill of a new sin.
- **Without natural affections**...a person who loves self; who could care less about the unborn, the old...seeks pleasure at the expense of others; it is the height of evil.

*Paul showed us the bottomless pit of man's nature....In general, Rome and most of the Romans had gotten to that point of thinking. Paul shows what happens when men deliberately banish God from the reckoning, and, in due time Rome perished.*

*Disaster and degeneracy go hand in hand...for any person or any nation!*

**Do we, as a nation, approve of those who practice such despicable acts?**

**Do we, as a church, approve of those who practice such despicable acts?**

***God...forgive this nation, our churches, us...for not standing for truth...for contributing to a world that is deliberately displeasing God, the Father...the Creator and righteous judge!***