

"The Doctrine of Condemnation"

Romans 1:18-3:20

Part 2

Introduction: Last week in our study of Romans we started into Romans 1:18 which takes us into the Doctrine of Condemnation. The Theme of the letter is found in Romans 1:16-17.

Notice Romans 1:16-17

The Theme of this letter is the Gospel of Jesus Christ and how it is the power of God unto all who will it by faith. In this letter Paul will show us how the power of God works in the life of the believer as he or she accepts the Gospel. He will show us how a sinner's life is completely transformed by the power of God within us. He will explain how we are justified by faith and then he will teach us to live by faith.

But before he gets to the Doctrine of Justification he will take us through the Doctrine of Condemnation. Last week in our study we looked at why Paul presents the Doctrine of Condemnation first and the reason is because man must see himself as a sinner who is completely lost and unable to save himself before he will ever see his need of a Savior.

In the Doctrine of Condemnation Paul will help us to see that we are all guilty before God and that all are sinners in need of a Savior.

I. The Wrath of God

Part 2

Notice Romans 1:18a

Here in this verse Paul starts out to explain why the Gospel is needed. Just as the righteousness of God is being revealed in the Gospel so the wrath of God is being revealed in the world today against ALL who hold the Truth in unrighteousness.

The wrath of God is a constant force in our day that operates against the evil of man. It is a principle that has been set in motion from the time that sin came into the world and it works directly against the evil in our society. We could say it is the consequence of sin.

The unsaved world is under the wrath of God.

John 3:36

³⁶ *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

The Bible calls the unsaved the children of wrath.

Ephesians 2:1-3

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

² Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

³ Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

We as believers encounter the wrath of God in this world but we have been saved from the wrath to come.

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10

⁹ For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;

¹⁰ And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

In 1 John we are told that Jesus has satisfied the wrath of God on our behalf.

1 John 2:1-2

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

² And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

The word "propitiation" means "satisfaction". Jesus death on the cross and the blood He shed was the sacrifice which satisfied the WRATH of God on our behalf. That is how we are delivered from the wrath to come. The unsaved world instead is headed toward the wrath of God.

Notice Romans 1:18b again.

Here is the very reason why the wrath of God is revealed and at work within the world today. Because man is guilty of holding the Truth in unrighteousness. All of us were guilty of this at one time. It means to suppress the Truth of God or not to allow the Truth of God to have the proper place with the hearth.

Notice Romans 1:19-20

Here is the Truth which is suppressed which brings about the wrath of God. People suppress the Truth of God's existence. God has revealed himself in 3 ways to all of mankind.

1. The Creation.
2. The Conscience
3. The Law written within our hearts.

There is no one who does not know that God exists. Everyone has been given this light.

John 1:6-9

⁶ *There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.*

⁷ *The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.*

⁸ *He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.*

⁹ *That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.*

When man suppresses this Truth, he becomes GODLESS which means while he knows that God exists he lives as if He doesn't. This suppression is then manifest through a life of unrighteousness.

Notice Romans 1:18 again.

Ungodliness will always produce unrighteousness. When people live as if God does not exist they are on a path which will collide with the wrath of God. If they die without accepting the Gospel they will experience the ultimate wrath of God. At the end of verse 20 Paul tells us they are without excuse.

This brings us to the question we stopped with last week, "Will people who never hear of Christ still go to hell?" The answer is, "YES!" They will go to hell because they have sinned against a Holy God who must judge sin. They are given light when they are born into this world meaning they know that God exists. If they do not suppress this Truth but seek to know God I believe God will send to them someone who will give to them the Gospel. Let me show you an example.

Acts 8:26-35

²⁶ And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.

²⁷ And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship,

²⁸ Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.

²⁹ Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.

³⁰ And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?

³¹ And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.

³² The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth:

³³ In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.

³⁴ And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?

³⁵ Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.

Illustration:

"Bill Bruster, former pastor of the First Baptist Church in Abilene, tells of a young student from Nigeria named John who attended his church. Bruster asked him how he became a Christian. John answered, "When I was a little boy, running around in the bush country of Nigeria, I knew there was a God. I would stand among the trees and look up at the skies at night and know that someone made this world. I knew there was a God, but I didn't know what to call him. One-day Josephine Skaggs, a Southern Baptist missionary, came to our village to teach us children how to read. She taught us how to read the Bible. There I discovered the name of the God who had revealed himself to me through the trees and the stars."

Now let us get back to our text in Romans again. In this Doctrine of Condemnation, we can clearly see 3 types of sinners.

1. The Rational Sinner

Part 1

The sinner described in Romans 1:18-32 is known as the Rational Sinner. This person is called the Rational Sinner because while he was given Truth from God but he has chosen HUMAN REASONING over the Truth of God.

Notice Romans 1:21

Here in this verse we see two ways in which the Rational Sinner chose human reasoning over the Truth.

a. When he knew God, he refused to glorify God.

This man like all men has been given the knowledge that God exists but this man will do all he can to explain away the existence of God. He will look at the sunset or the sunrise and refuse to acknowledge that the beauty comes from a Creator. Deep within him he knows this world is not by chance. Let me show you something from an article given to Richard DeHaan:

Many years ago, a friend sent me an article that included these words: "Some men say, 'There is no God.' All the wonders around you are accidental. No Almighty hand made a thousand billion stars. They made themselves. The surface of our land just happened to have topsoil, without which we would have no vegetables to eat, and no grass for the animals whose meat is our food.

"The inexhaustible envelope of air, only 50 miles deep and of exactly the right density to support human life, is just another law of physics. We have day and night because the earth spins at a given speed without slowing down. Who made this arrangement? Who tilts it so that we get seasons? The sun's fire does not generate too much heat so that we fry, but just enough so that we do not freeze. Who keeps its fire constant?

"The human heart will beat for 70 or 80 years without faltering. How does it get sufficient rest between beats? Who gave the human tongue flexibility to form words, and who made a brain to understand them? Is it all accidental? 'There is no God'? That's what some people say."

The Bible says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth". The fool says, "There is no God".

- b. When he experiences the goodness of God he refuses to give God the glory, the praise and the thanks.

The Rational Sinner will encounter the goodness of God over and over in his life but he will refuse to give God the thanks for what he has. I have seen this many times over the years. I have worked for men who were given brilliant minds, amazing talents and skills, they were provided with some of the best workers you could find and they made millions of dollars. But they praised not God but instead they gave themselves all the glorify. Let me show you a Biblical picture of this.

Daniel 4:28-30

²⁸ All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar.

²⁹ At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon.

³⁰ The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?

Nebuchadnezzar was the most powerful king on the earth but it was not because of his might and power. But it was God who had given to him the kingdom.

Daniel 4:31-34

³¹ While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee.

³² And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

³³ The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws.

³⁴ And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation:

Now let us notice the results of the actions of the Rational Sinner.

Notice Romans 1:21 again.

We see two things here and both are the righteous wrath of God against the Rational Sinner.

1. They became vain in their imaginations.

This is a very frightening thought when it is looked at closely. The word "VAIN" means "EMPTY". It has a distinct connection with idolatry. When the Rational Sinner suppresses the Truth given to him he creates within himself an emptiness which leads him right into idolatry. This we shall see when we come back next week. Man, by nature is created to worship God and so when God is rejected, man by nature is going to fill the void by worshipping something and therefore he gravitates right into idolatry.

2. Their foolish hearts were darkened.

When the Rational Sinner rejects God, he goes down a path that leads him into a deeper spiritual darkness. Let me show you what is recorded in one commentary:

"Darkened" describes not the enlightenment and freedom God rejecting men like to claim but increasing spiritual darkness and further enslavement to the power of Sin. The person who forsakes God is the ultimate fool for he or she forsakes truth, light, and eternal life, as well as meaning, purpose, and happiness.

Let me show you a Biblical example of what happens when man rejects the Light.

Genesis 4:3-8

³ And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.

⁴ And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering:

⁵ But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

⁶ And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?

⁷ If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

⁸ And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

God warned Cain that sin was like crouching lion waiting to pounce upon him and control him. To turn to God would give Cain the freedom God offered from the power of sin but Cain chose to reject God and he went down the path of darkness and killed his brother.

Conclusion:

It is only the POWER OF GOD in the Gospel which can rescue man from this deep spiritual darkness.