

"The Doctrine of Condemnation"

Romans 1:18-3:20

Part 4

Introduction: In our study of Romans we are currently looking at the Doctrine of Condemnation in which Paul is showing why man needs the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Last week we were looking at the Rational sinner listed in Romans 1:18-32. The Rational Sinner is a person who has the knowledge that God exists but chooses to reject the Light given to him and to live as though God does not exist. This suppression of the Truth/Light places the Rational Sinner on a direct collision course with the wrath of God.

In the verses which we looked at last week could see that when man suppresses the Truth/Light given to him that he will then set himself on a path headed toward idolatry. Man was created to worship God and when he turns his back upon God he WILL worship something or someone.

Notice Romans 1:21-23

In these verses last week, we looked at the spiritual spiral which the Rational Sinner finds himself in because of suppressing the Light given to him. He rejects God and through his rational reasoning sees himself as wise when he is a fool for he has turned his back upon the True Source of Life. The Rational Sinner will create his own god and he will create him on his own level. This will digress to the worship of birds, animals, and insects. This is the spiritual spiral which the Rational Sinner falls into and this is his collision with the wrath of God. Last week I reminded you that all of this comes upon this individual to help him or her to see their own sinfulness.

Now before we go on tonight I want to back up and look at something we considered before but in a little more detail. This Rational Sinner is without excuse as we are told in this passage.

Notice Romans 1:18-20

This means that even the heathen living in the jungle who never hears the Gospel will go to hell if he or she dies in their sins. We looked at all this a few lessons back. But there was one thing which I forgot to mention. The heathen who dies without Christ and has never even heard of Jesus will have a less degree of suffering in hell than the man or woman who sits in church and hears the Gospel and rejects it week after week. Just as in heaven there will be different degrees of rewards so in hell there will be different degrees of suffering. In Luke 12 Jesus was speaking of the day of accountability and I want you to notice His Words in the parable.

Luke 12:46-48

⁴⁶ The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.

⁴⁷ And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.

⁴⁸ But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

Revelation 20:11-15

¹¹ And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

¹² And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

¹³ And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

¹⁴ And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

¹⁵ And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Now let us get back to the Rational Sinner again.

I. The Rational Sinner and the Wrath of God

Part 4

As we continue to follow the Rational Sinner in the spiritual spiral we shall see some of the most frightening verses as well as some of the most graphic verses in the Bible. I have heard of Pastors who refused to read these verses in any public congregational gathering but we must understand that these verses are here to help ALL of us to see the dangers of sin and the full effects of the wrath of God. It is GRACE that has placed these verses here for these verses can serve as a warning to ALL about the danger of rejecting the Light from God. I am reminded of what is recorded in Leviticus concerning someone who is involved in sin.

Leviticus 19:17

17 Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.

These verses before us are warnings from a loving God. Let us now notice what a head on collision with the wrath of God looks like.

Notice Romans 1:24

We shall see 3 times in these verses that those who suppress the Truth/Light given to them will experience the wrath of God by being given up and given over. We who are believers sometimes do not fully grasp just how wicked and sinful man's heart really is and what man is capable of doing. In these verses we shall see the depravity of man and what happens when God lifts the moral restraints from the human heart. It can be in an individual, a society or a nation. Let me show you an example of what can happen to man when the restraints are lifted.

Genesis 6:1-5, 11

And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them,

2 That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.

3 And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.

4 There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.

5 And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

11 The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.

I believe this is a picture of what we are about to look at in Romans 1. The people of Noah's day suppressed the light and fell into idolatry and the moral restraints were removed and the entire earth became corrupt and EVERY thought of man's heart was ONLY EVIL CONTINUALLY.

When Man continues to suppress the Light and he sinks into idolatry and refuses to recognize his sinful state he is then endanger of God lifting the moral restraints from his

heart. When this happens, man is then given up to the power of the lusts of his own heart. Man chose to turn from the Light and the result is he goes deeper into the darkness. Man chose to give God up so it is only fitting that God gives man up to go deeper into the darkness.

John 3:19-20

¹⁹ And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

²⁰ For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.

Notice the words of William Barclay on the word "LUSTS" in this verse.

*"The word translated **lusts** is the key to this passage. Aristotle defined lust as a reaching out after pleasure. The Stoics defined it as a reaching after pleasure which defies all reason. Clement of Alexandria called it an unreasonable reaching for that which will gratify itself. Lust is the passionate desire for forbidden pleasure. It is the desire which makes men do nameless and shameless things. It is 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."*

Notice Romans 1:24 again.

The idea here is that when God lifts the moral restraints man falls deeper into sin and deeper into immorality. Let us remember that it started with suppression of the LIGHT and then digressed to idolatry and now to immorality. There are many verse in the Bible which speak of the connection between idolatry and immorality.

Numbers 25:1-3

And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab.

² And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods.

³ And Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel.

1 Corinthians 10:7-8

⁷ Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

⁸ Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.

These are just a few and there are many other verses which show us idolatry has a connection with immorality. Man is constantly searching for satisfaction and contentment and can only be found in a relationship with God. So, when man rejects God then he becomes a slave to his own LUSTS which lead him deeper into immorality as he searches for satisfaction and contentment.

Notice Romans 1:24 again.

It is important to notice they "dishonor their own bodies BETWEEN themselves". When the Rational Sinner meets with the wrath of God which removes the moral restraints he or she will gravitate toward others who are also seeking to fill the vacuum within themselves which is there because they have rejected God.

Notice Romans 1:25

Here in this verse is the very reason why the Rational Sinner collides with the wrath of God. He has changed the Truth of God into a lie. Notice the words of Wiersbe on this verse;

"From idolatry to immorality is just one short step. If man is his own god, then he can do whatever he pleases and fulfill his desires without fear of judgment. We reach the climax of man's battle with God's truth when man exchanges the truth of God for "the lie" and abandons truth completely. "The lie" is that man is his own god, and he should worship and serve himself and not the Creator. It was "the lie" Satan used in the Garden to lead Eve into sin: "Ye shall be as God!" Satan has always wanted the worship that belongs only to God."

The "Truth of God" here in this verse is the Truth that God is the Creator of all and it is He alone who is worthy to be worshipped. When man suppresses this Truth he then turns to worship himself due to the vacuum which has been created by the rejection of God. Man, then becomes his own god and he will worship himself by giving into anything which his sinful heart desires. The Rational Sinner has now EXCHANGED the Truth of God for a LIE. Instead of seeing God as the One worthy of worship he has made himself a god and he is now devoted to living to please his own sinful heart. He is controlled by the LUSTS of the HEART not just the LUSTS of the FLESH. The Rational Sinner will bow to any desire

or command of the heart and because of the depravity of the heart the LUSTS of the HEART will lead him or her into a life of sexual immorality. The Rational sinner will gravitate toward others who have also done the very same thing. How far will they go?

Notice Romans 1:26-27

Here we see that as the Rational Sinner continues down the path of idolatry he or she will be given over to "VILE AFFECTIONS" which are explained as a plunge into the homosexual lifestyle.

The rise of homosexuality within our world today is the result of the wrath of God in which the moral restraints have been lifted because the Truth/Light is being suppressed today.

As the Rational Sinner continues to follow the LUSTS OF HIS OR HER HEART they will find themselves in a life of gross sexual sins.

Notice Romans 1:26 again.

The word **EVEN** here is very alarming. When a society or a nation suppresses the Light one of the signs of abandonment by God is lesbianism. When I read this verse, I understand that when Paul was aware of the practice of lesbianism it was an accurate indicator of how far the people had spiraled away from God.

Notice the words of Pritchard on Romans 1:26-27;

*"Do not lose the main point. More than anything else, homosexuality is a willful choice. No one can say, "I was born that way." No one is born homosexual. No one. Anyone who argues otherwise is either ignorant of the Bible or has deliberately perverted its teaching. You can talk all you want about genetics, the brain, about absent fathers, over-protective mothers, about early sexual confusion, and even about sexual abuse. Some of those things may indeed create a predisposition to this particular sin. But the fact remains: Every act of homosexuality—whether in word or deed or in lustful thought—every single act is a **personal moral choice**. Temptation is not the issue because temptation in and of itself is not a sin. But giving in to temptation—whether mentally, verbally or in actual deed—is a sin. That's a moral choice for which God will hold you 100% accountable. You can't blame your choices on your brain! You can't even blame your father for his failure to be there when you needed him...As a society moves away from God, one mark of its drift into judgment is widespread homosexuality. The tragic fact is that this is exactly where America is today."*

Notice Romans 1:27 again.

The end of this verse speaks of the consequences which the Rational Sinner will experience as he chooses to practice this very lifestyle. They receive in themselves the

RECOMPENSE (which means reward or payment) of their error which is MEET (which is fitting for the sin, right or proper). This means that those who chose to live under the power of the lusts of their hearts and plunge into the homosexual lifestyle will suffer from the consequences of their choices. The consequences can be physical which means they can contract a number of STDs but it does not end there. There are emotional, mental and spiritual consequences which the Rational Sinner experiences under the wrath of God. Stuart Briscoe has a great thought on the consequences of the Rational Sinner's choices.

"The logic of Paul's argument should not be missed. Those who reject what they know of God in so doing divorce themselves from truth and reality. This means, among other things, that a person out of touch with the reality of God is out of touch with reality, period, including the truth about humanity. To be out of touch with the meaning of humanity means a crisis of identity which is demonstrated in many ways, not least in confusion about sexuality. When sexuality is misunderstood, the sheer power of unrestrained sexual drive and uneducated sexual insight will produce all manner of aberrant sexual behavior. In short, confusion about God breeds confusion about man, which breeds confusion about sexuality which produces sexual confusion and chaos. Far from being, as was fondly imagined by many, an enlightened age of sexual freedom, Paul showed his contemporaries that they lived in a dark day of divine wrath."

Conclusion:

As we study these verses we are not to conclude that the Rational Sinner is too far gone for God's saving grace. Let us remember the theme of this letter which is the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to EVERYONE who believes. Let me leave you with a thought from God's Word that is very encouraging.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

⁹ Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

¹⁰ Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

*¹¹ **And such were some of you:** but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*