

**"The Doctrine of Condemnation"**

**Romans 1:18-3:20**

**Part 1**

**Introduction:** Last week in our study of the book of Romans we looked at the theme of the letter.

**Notice Romans 1:16-17**

These two verses will be the focus of this letter. Paul will show us the power of the Gospel in that the Gospel can save anyone who will believe from the penalty, the power and eventually the presence of sin. He will teach the reader how to LIVE by faith in order to experience the resurrection power which lives within each and every believer. But before we learn how to live by faith and before we learn about the power of the Gospel to change lives we must study the Doctrine of Condemnation. The question which then comes to mind is, "Why not just get to the Power of the Gospel?" The answer is, "The Gospel and its Power cannot be understood until the sinner understands his or her sin, the serious of his or her sin and how God views and hates sin."

The Doctrine of Condemnation is presented first in the book of Romans because man MUST see his sin as God sees it before he can be saved. This Truth is seen in the teachings of Jesus Christ. Let us notice a conversation between Jesus and a man who was not saved.

**Mark 10:17-22**

*17 And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?*

*18 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.*

*19 Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.*

*20 And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth.*

*21 Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.*

*22 And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.*

If this man were to walk into certain churches today he would be instructed to fill out a decision card or to pray and ask Jesus into his heart. I find it very interesting that Jesus allowed the man to walk away unsaved. The reasons were the man did not see himself as a sinner, he did not understand the seriousness of his sin, nor did he understand how God viewed sin. He COULD NOT be saved because he held two things in his hand. One was self-righteousness and the other was a love for the world. Let me refresh your mind about the invitation Jesus gave in the Sermon on the Mount.

**Matthew 7:13-14**

<sup>13</sup> Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

<sup>14</sup> Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

The GATE to eternal life is very narrow. It can be likened to a turn stile at a security check. When you pass through a turn stile you must do so empty handed. When we come to Christ we must come empty handed. Let me show you another statement by our Lord.

**Luke 13:23-24**

<sup>23</sup> Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them,

<sup>24</sup> Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

Salvation is not by works so we know that Jesus is NOT teaching we must strive to win our salvation but He is saying that it is so difficult for sinful man to understand his true spiritual condition and to lay aside his self-righteousness in order to enter through the strait gate. A sinner must come to the place where they understand that they have nothing to offer and that is not easy for prideful sinners. It is not easy for a sinner to lay aside all self-righteousness so that he or she can enter through the strait/narrow gate.

This helps us to understand the importance of the Doctrine of Condemnation and why it is the very first Doctrine we see in the book of Romans.

**I. The Wrath of God**

**Notice Romans 1:17-18**

In verse 17 Paul tells us that the righteousness of God is reveal in the Gospel and then in verse 18 he tells us that the wrath of God is also BEING revealed against those who

suppress the Truth of God's Word. The power of the Gospel is CURRENTLY at work in the life of the believer right now and in the same way the WRATH of God is CURRENTLY being experienced in this world at the present time. When we think about the wrath of God we normally do not think about it being revealed or poured upon our world at this present time. But here in Romans 1:18 Paul tells us that God's wrath is presently being revealed. When we think about the wrath of God we almost always associate His wrath with the future Tribulation and the Bible does talk about a future wrath.

### **1 Thessalonians 1:9-10**

*<sup>9</sup> 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;*

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

### **Revelation 6:15-17**

*<sup>15</sup> And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;*

*<sup>16</sup> And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:*

*<sup>17</sup> For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?*

We think of the wrath of God being revealed in the Tribulation. We associate God's wrath with Judgments, thunder, lightning, and the Lake of Fire. But Paul tells us the wrath of God is BEING revealed today. This then raises a question, "How is the wrath of God being revealed today?"

Let me first explain the meaning of "WRATH" in this verse. It refers to a slow righteous anger toward sin. It is not a sudden outburst like we think of anger today. God never loses His temper. This is a slow boiling anger that is directed against sin and will one day be set completely loose upon the world when grace and mercy come to their end.

The entire human race experiences the wrath of God. I know there are some who would say that we as believers are free from the wrath of God and that is true but only of the COMING wrath. All of us today experience the wrath of God in some way. Let me show you several verses that will help us to better understand the present wrath of God.

Psalm 90:7-12

<sup>7</sup> For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled.

<sup>8</sup> Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.

<sup>9</sup> For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told.

<sup>10</sup> The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

<sup>11</sup> Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath.

<sup>12</sup> So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

Moses wrote this Psalm and he wrote it with the wilderness wanderings in mind and all that was experienced in those 40 years. Israel's day passed away in the wrath of God. This was because they had disobeyed God at Kadesh Barnia and refused to enter the land of Canaan. The point I want you to see is they experienced the wrath of God because of disobedience. That is why Moses prayed they would number their days and apply their hearts to wisdom.

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. Let me show you the words of Stedman concerning the wrath of God.

***"The shortness of life, the brevity of it, the sorrow of it, the tragedy of it -- this is all part of what Paul captures here under this phrase "the wrath of God ... being revealed from heaven." No one escapes God's wrath; it is revealed, and we have to face it."***

Now someone may ask, "How can the wrath of God touch the believer based upon the words of John 3:36?"

**John 3:36**

<sup>36</sup> 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 unbeliever is under the wrath of God in the sense that he cannot escape it unless he comes to Jesus Christ. He lives under the wrath of God and if he dies in his sins he will

experience the eternal wrath of God. All unbelievers have the wrath of God abiding on them.

**Ephesians 2:1-3**

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

*<sup>2</sup> 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:*

*<sup>3</sup> 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.*

So, everyone experiences the wrath of God but the unbeliever has the wrath of God abiding upon him meaning that without Christ he or she will experience the eternal wrath of God at the Great White Throne and in the Lake of Fire.

Therefore, the present wrath of God is a principle at work in our world that brings upon the sinner the consequences of his or her choice to walk in disobedience to the Word of God.

**Romans 13:1-5**

*Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.*

*<sup>2</sup> Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.*

*<sup>3</sup> For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:*

*<sup>4</sup> For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.*

*<sup>5</sup> Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.*

The present wrath of God could be illustrated with the Law of Gravity. If I were to jump from the top of a ten-story building the consequences would be death because I violated the Law of Gravity. In our world today, there are consequences/wrath for those who violate the Law of God.

Now throughout history the world has experienced the wrath of God at a more severe degree. The flood of Noah's day was one such case. The judgment on Korah and his followers in the days of Moses was another time. The Babylonian captivity was another revelation of the wrath of God. The most severe degree of God's wrath on this world will be seen in the Tribulation period when the Seal Judgments, the Trumpet Judgments and the Bowl Judgments will be brought upon the earth and the earth dwellers.

## II. The Reason for God's Wrath

### Notice Romans 1:18

Notice that the wrath of God is revealed against ALL ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the Truth in unrighteousness. To "hold the Truth" means "to suppress the Truth". When a man or a society or a nation suppresses the Truth of God they will collide with the wrath of God. In other words when the Truth is known and it is not permitted to have its proper place in a man's heart or in a society or in a nation then you can be 100% sure that person, society or nation will experience the wrath of God.

### Notice Romans 1:18 again.

I want you to notice a very important order within this verse.

First there is UNGODLINESS and then there is UNRIGHTEOUSNESS.

Ungodliness is acting as though God does not exist. It is not atheism but it is knowing that God exists but living as though He doesn't. When this happens, it is manifested by a lifestyle of unrighteousness.

### Application:

I need to stop here and make a very important application. This is exactly why children need to be brought up in church and taught and trained in the Scriptures. They need to have a reverence for God. They need to know that when His Law is violated there are consequences and it invokes the wrath of God. They need to know that Christ is the answer to their spiritual condition. When children are not submerged in the Scriptures then they grow up knowing there is a God but living as though He does not exist. Therefore, they spend their adult years struggling against the wrath of God. I remember reading a sign in Maryland years ago that said, "I would rather train a boy than to attempt to mend a man."

A person who is ungodly will manifest what is in their heart by living an unrighteous life. The order of the two never changes.

Paul will now continue to explain how they suppress the Truth.

### Notice Romans 1:19

God has revealed Himself to every individual who has ever been born into this world. He has revealed Himself in three ways:

**1. Through creation.**

**Notice Romans 1:20**

There is no such thing as an atheist for God's Word tells us that God has revealed His existence through creation. In other words, all a person needs to do is look to the stars or the beautiful sunsets or the consistency of the seasons and he must reach the conclusion that there is a Creator. This world did not happen by chance.

**Psalm 19:1-6**

*The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.*

*<sup>2</sup> Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.*

*<sup>3</sup> There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.*

*<sup>4</sup> Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,*

*<sup>5</sup> Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.*

*<sup>6</sup> His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.*

**2. He gave man a conscience.**

**John 1:6-9**

*<sup>6</sup> There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.*

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

*<sup>8</sup> He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.*

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

**3. He placed His Law within man's heart.**

**Romans 2:**

<sup>14</sup> For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:

<sup>15</sup> Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)

Man knows that God exists for God has revealed himself to all men. When people suppress this Truth, they bring upon themselves the wrath of God. Paul tells us they are without excuse.

**Conclusion:** I have heard many people ask the question, "What will happen to people who never hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ like the heathen in the jungle, will they go to hell when they die?" The answer is, "Yes they will." Paul tells us all men are without excuse. I will explain this in detail next week.