

II. The New Man – Need (1:18 – 2:11)

A. *The Fall – God’s wrath revealed – 1:18-32*

It is a very interesting statement Paul makes here. He says that God’s wrath has been revealed...“BECAUSE”... which ties this section to something he has previously said.

Vs. 16 – “I am not ashamed of the Gospel.”

Paul is not ashamed of the Gospel because God’s wrath has been revealed. Knowing that God has wrath and that His wrath is against men is exactly what makes the “Gospel” to be “Good News”. It reminds me of the guy who begins yelling at folks sitting on the front porch that their house is on fire. He feels no embarrassment because he knows the dire danger before them.

1. **God’s wrath has been revealed in Creation because Creation was considered deity. (1:18-23)**

Paul says that God’s wrath has been revealed against the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. What He does not say here is that it is against only some men who do this.

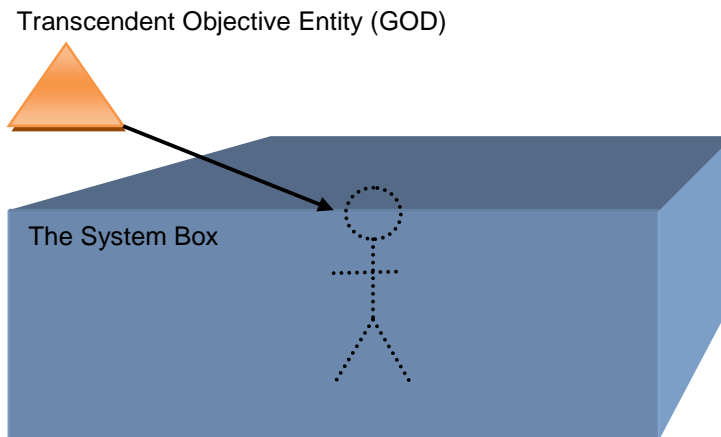
He is indicating a general condition of ALL men. And it has dictated God’s wrath.

Let’s say that two men wearing suits of armor both have evil inside them and it blazes forth when they open their mouths. If one man opens his mouth wide – he may display a lot. The other may only open his mouth a little and display only a little. However, they both share the same condition no matter how much they display. God is going to show us the condition that is true for all men. Some display it more but ALL of us have it.

No matter how much evil comes out; **once it does we know evil is on the inside!**

They can all see that there is a creator. I have been teaching about worldviews this semester at the NTBI. One of the problems with worldviews is the “ontology” or Beginning issues. Every worldview must deal with how things start.

However, most worldviews do not account for a deity that transcends the physical/natural system (the “box”) we exist within. If you do not account for a transcendent entity, then all truth and all knowledge must be discovered by those who exist within the box. This means that all their views and thoughts will be “skewed” or influenced by the very system they are trying to understand. This means that everything they come up with cannot be “certain”. But if an entity transcends the system, created the system and then speaks to those within the system, they can have understanding and knowledge that is accurate and reliable.



Our Theistic worldview is dependable and provides consistent answers. The problem is in men's efforts to find the answers independently...instead of thinking outside the box!

Instead of acknowledging a creator whom we might also have to be submissive to, man has taken creation and worshiped it as if it was deity. Is 44 is a humorous response from God regarding the ridiculously warped thinking necessary in making idols. Isaiah tells about how a man cuts down a tree. Uses half of the wood to build a fire, warm himself, cook his food and meet his own needs. He then takes the other half of the same tree and fashions an idol. He places the idol on a shelf and worships it. Half of the wood is holy and the other half is not. The idol didn't help the man but was dependent on the man to make it, place it, dust it and move it around. Stupid.

What is amazing is the statement, “When they knew God”. It seems that God is linking all of men back to an initial period when they all knew God, rejected Him and developed further from that point.

Paul describes these as man's own decisions. God did not cause or require this. Man's free-will did.

2. God's wrath revealed in allowing man's uncontrollable lusts to enslave us. (1:24-25)

Man may have begun this downward trek with his free-will choices, but God has provided some restraining hand to slow the downward slide. At some point, He reveals His wrath when He stops.

Once you ignore a creator and you elevate the creation it doesn't take much to start acting like animals. It seems that God, in His longsuffering graciousness, has a restraining effect for a time. But as man continues to reject, finally God allows them to start acting consistently with their beliefs. They begin to dishonor themselves. They became “Cheap”. Instead of saving their passions and love for pure relationships they cheapen their passions allowing them to be displayed without care. Calling it “Free Love”. Reality is that it is “Cheap Love”. More like bondage.

3. God's wrath revealed in allowing men to carry out dishonorable passions. (1:26-27)

The next step is not just cheap love but unnatural love. God again removes more restraint. God has helped them in His love without them recognizing or appreciating Him. He holds back for their own good but eventually turns them over to the next step.

This leads to homosexuality/lesbianism. Scripture expressly forbids this behavior (Gen 19:4-25; Lev 18:22; 20:13). Some would say that this only applies when it is unnatural. If someone has a

“homosexual” gene than it would be natural for them to be homosexuals. However, that is not the case. Instead, it is clear that God is describing a judgment that is based on the action rather than the natural desire. If anything it seems to indicate there is no natural desire to homosexuality. However, it is very natural for us to be selfish but God says this is wrong as well. The action is either right or wrong. Natural has nothing to do with it. Besides, Paul’s main point in this section is that because of the downward fall our natural tendencies are defiled and worthy of judgment!

4. God’s wrath revealed in allowing men’s debased minds to be displayed in perverted actions. (1:28-32)

The final slide is complete. God has given them over to all forms of sin. They not only happily commit them “naturally” but they also have perverted truth. They have taken what God says is bad and approved it. They have made it “lawful” and even popular to sin.

All Men are sinners and have this sinful condition. They all may be at different points in the slide but they all have the same sinful condition and God’s wrath has been revealed at whatever condition they are in.

B. The Fall hit All – Revealed through our Judgments – 2:1-11

I like this next statement. “O’ Man!” “Every one of you!” Again, Paul is not leaving anyone out of the condition. He says that when you judge others you are judging yourself.

If one of our evil men has his mouth only slightly open and starts judging the man who has his mouth wide open, he would be deserving of the very same judgment because he shares in the same condition!

1. Our judgments reveal our own condition. (2:1)

I have watched my kids do something and then told them that I knew what they were thinking when they did it. The reason I know is because it was something I have done! My very judgment condemns me! Like when one of my kids after a prayer says, “Daddy, Joseph had his eyes open!”

2. God’s Judgment is right and inescapable. (2:2-5)

We all have been guilty of thinking that our involvement is so little that we don’t compare to the other person. It is like we know God is gracious and has restrained us from sliding as far as someone else. However, God’s restraint is designed to lead us to repentance – not an allowance for a smaller level of sin! Instead our actions, no matter how big or little will face wrath at some point.

3. God’s Judgment is according to works. (2:6-11)

God says that His judgment is according to works. Patient, enduring obedience, good-works earn eternal life. But self-seeking disobedient sin results in wrath.

God does not say that we become saved through good works. Nor does he say that we become unsaved through good works. He simply says the actions will result in a judgment. It is easy to add more to this passage than it contains. However, keep in mind that within the context of Romans Paul consistently tells us that no one is justified by good works. He even goes so far as to say that the one who does not work but believes is counted as righteous (Rom 4:4,5).

As we continue into chapter 3 Paul is going to tell us that NO ONE lives up to this standard. From our downward fall he has shared it is clear that we are going to be facing wrath. God may choose to reward obedience but we must find some way to act obediently. If we must depend on our natural condition then we are doomed!

Hang on to your hope! He has told us that the JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH. Keep believing. Faith will provide us an answer in the next few chapters.

In the meantime:

- **Understand how evil our condition really is and how God has revealed His wrath by allowing it to grow.**
- **Understand that when we judge others we show that we recognize God’s wrath against sin. Since our condition is the same we deserve the same wrath.**
- **Understand that unrighteousness leads to wrath and righteousness leads to life.**
- **We cannot look to our natural condition to find eternal life.**