

Prayer:

Slide # 1

Romans

Theme: The Righteousness of God – The Gospel of God

Outline:

- **Prologue:** 1:1-17
- **Doctrinal:** 1:18-8:39
God’s holiness – man’s sinfulness – 1:18-3:20
Justification by grace through faith – 3:21-5:21
Sanctification of the believer – 6:1-8:39
- **Dispensational:** 9:1-11:36 (The place of Israel and the church)
- **Practical:** 12:1-15:33 (Duties and privileges of the believer)
- **Epilogue:** 16:1-27

In the prologue, Paul introduces himself in relation to the gospel he preaches. This gospel emphasis right from the start puts the emphasis on WHO Christ is as Lord-God as proven by His resurrection from the dead. And then Paul’s other great emphasis is that this gospel must be responded to by FAITH. Paul says that the goal of his apostleship was for the “obedience of faith” (v.5). And then in the theme verses of 1:16-17 Paul three times Paul make the issue that of FAITH.

Slide # 2

- v. 5 – “obedience of faith”
- v. 16 – “for everyone who believes”
- v. 17 – “from faith to faith”
- v. 17 – “The just shall live by faith.”

As a footnote, last week I inadvertently stated that Paul wrote Hebrew 10:38 which quotes “the just shall live by faith”. In truth we don’t know for sure who wrote Hebrews. It may have been Paul but we don’t know.

After his gospel introduction in the prologue, Paul then in his systematic presentation of the gospel (the most systematic presentation found in the NT), BEGINS by developing the truth that we are all sinners. People need to be right with God but the problem is that in our natural state we are NOT!

In relation to the gospel the FIRST thing people need to know is that they are NOT right before God. They must first and foremost be made aware that they lack “righteousness” before God. In Paul’s development of the gospel the BAD news comes before the GOOD news. People need to know WHY they need a Savior! That is where Paul starts.

Slide # 3

Isaiah 64:6 (NKJV)

6 But we are all like an unclean thing, And **all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags**; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away.

Philippians 3:9 (NKJV)

9 and be found in Him, **not having my own righteousness**, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;

We have no righteousness of our own to offer God. We are through and through soiled and stained by sin. And even if you are not as bad as someone else you are still a complete sinner. The ONLY way to acquire righteousness (a right standing before God) is by faith. This is God’s way. We are justified by faith. I like to say “just by faith”. We are justified just by faith.

Righteousness is God’s response toward faith or trust; wrath is His reaction to godlessness and unrighteousness.

– ***The Bible Knowledge Commentary***

Paul at great length FIRST and FOREMOST develops the fact that all have sinner – all are sinners. There is no exception. All need Jesus – the only Savior God has provided. We all need to come to faith in Jesus as our Lord and Savior. Paul presents his case like a trial lawyer showing that the pagans, the moralist, and the religionist are all equally under sin.

Slide # 4

Romans 1:18 – 3:20

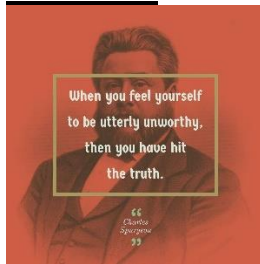
The Whole World Guilty Before God

1:18-32 – Depraved Pagans

2:1-16 – Hypocritical Moralists

2:17-3:8 – Self-Righteous Religionists

3:9-20 – The Whole Human Race

Slide # 5

As we transition from the prologue in verse 17 to the first doctrinal section beginning at verse 18 we note that while there is a change in subject there is also a parallel with what Paul has just stated and this common denominator is the word “revealed”.

In verse 17 he says the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, but then in verse 18 he says the wrath of God is revealed from heaven.

“Revealed” in both cases is in the present tense meaning it is an ongoing revelation. The righteousness of God is put on display in the lives of people of faith – as he says, “**from faith to faith**”. In contrast, the wrath of God is put on display in the lives of the ungodly. And that is where we go now in our study.

Romans 1:18–21 (NKJV)

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

For explains why salvation is available only by faith (1:16-17). People are not able to establish a right standing before God because sin sabotages the attempt. – ***The Moody Bible Commentary***

When Paul says the wrath of God is revealed from heaven he is putting the emphasis on the fact that this is from God.

The wrath of God emphasizes His personal anger. There is such an emphasis on God’s love today that many people are offended by the idea that God could be angry with them. The idea of a wrathful God is foreign to many that claim to be Christian. They don’t want that kind of a God. But God’s wrath is in perfect accord with His holiness. People seem to want a loving God on their terms but they don’t want a holy God on His terms. Thankfully, He has made a way to be right with Him on the basis of grace through faith.

Slide # 6**Psalm 7:11–12 (NKJV)**

11 God is a just judge, And **God is angry with the wicked every day.**

12 If he does not turn back, He will sharpen His sword; He bends His bow and makes it ready.

John 3:36 (NKJV)

36 He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but **the wrath of God abides on him.**”

The Bible speaks of God’s wrath being revealed in two main ways. There is a future coming Day of the Lord judgment in which God’s wrath will be direct and universal. It will be divine intervention that will be clear and undeniable.

Slide # 7**Revelation 6:16–17 (NKJV)**

16 and said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from **the wrath of the Lamb!**

17 For **the great day of His wrath** has come, and who is able to stand?”

But right now we are NOT in the day of the Lord judgment! This is Paul’s whole point in 1 Thess. 1 and 2 Thess. 1. This future day of the Lord judgment is just that – FUTURE. Right now we live in the Church Age – which is an age of GRACE. Right now the door of GRACE is open and people are urged to respond NOW before the day of coming judgment.

Slide # 8**2 Corinthians 6:2 (NKJV)**

2 For He says: “In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you.” Behold, **now is the accepted time**; behold, **now is the day of salvation.**

But in contrast to this future day of judgment is the wrath of God which is right NOW (present tense) being revealed. The manifestation of this wrath is indirect and is the essence of God just letting people go and experience the natural consequences of their sin.

We might call this the wrath of God's abandonment. Three times Paul will go on to say God gives them over (v. 24, 26, 28). Instead of God actively and directly bringing judgment on them – He just lets them go and the inevitable life consequences are a form of the wrath of God. Those consequences as developed in the chapter include futile thinking, idolatry, sexual perversion, and moral and relational brokenness. It's pitiful! It is the wrath of God revealed from heaven.

We see it all around on every hand. People wonder what is wrong with the world. Well, here it is. When God gives people over to their sin – all the wheels come off the wagon and life gets really HARD!

In our text today Paul is developing the WHY. He is showing WHY God's wrath is presently being revealed. Later in the chapter, he will develop the WHAT – that is what it entails in terms of consequences.

The wrath of God is the counterpart to His righteousness. Both are currently on display. God's righteousness is manifest in the lives of people of faith, and His wrath is manifest in the lives of the ungodly.

Note the wrath of God is revealed against ALL ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. Note it doesn't say "some" but rather "all". There are no exceptions. Nothing is overlooked. One cannot say some evil things don't really matter before God. They all do. His wrath is revealed against ALL (that is every form) of wrong.

People love to compare. I may be better than so and so. I might be worse than this person but not as bad as another. We probably in our secret thoughts all struggle with this. But in truth God's indictment is all-encompassing "There is none righteous, no not one" (Rom. 3:10). There is no "holier than thou" because none are holy – not in our natural state.

Ungodliness is the idea of showing disregard or irreverence for God. All sin starts with God. It is first and foremost a crime against God. Ungodliness speaks of a rebellious heart attitude towards God. It is the spirit of a rebel that defies God. We might call it an "anti-God" disposition. This person lives without regard for God and His authority. It is a LORDSHIP issue in that ungodliness defies God His rightful place as God!

Unrighteousness is that which is not right. It is that which is WRONG before God (cf. Rom. 1:29).

These terms are closely related although some tend to see the emphasis on “ungodliness” as essentially directed towards God while unrighteousness is more broad including wronging our fellow man.

But again these terms are intended to be broad sweeping involving ALL that violates God and His holy standards.

And what do ungodly/unrighteous people do to evoke the wrath of God – well they “**suppress the truth of God in unrighteousness**”.

Want to get in trouble with the world – just take a stand on God’s truth. They hate it and do everything they can to CANCEL it.

They have a problem with TRUTH – with God’s truth. They have a problem with absolute moral truth – which is God’s truth. They have a problem with the Bible – the book of God’s truth. They have a problem with the creation account. They have a problem with the truth of the flood. They have a problem with the God of the OT who warns of coming judgment. And consequently they have a problem with the God of the NT who just happens to be the same God as found in the OT as seen in the book of Revelation which ties the whole Bible together!

We are involved in a TRUTH WAR! The world is at enmity with God and constantly seeks to suppress God’s truth. And they do so in a way that is not fair or right – they do so in “**unrighteousness**”. Don’t expect the world to fight fair – they serve their master the devil who never fights fair.

We are constantly trying to get out the message of God’s truth and they are ever seeking to suppress it – and so there is great conflict over the truth. It is a spiritual warfare which sometimes involves physical consequences.

To “suppress” means to “hold down”, “to restrain”, “to stifle”. Instead of believing God’s truth rebel humanity resists it. They don’t want to hear it – they don’t want to live according to it. This is a problem on a collision course with God’s wrath being revealed!

God’s TRUTH is amazing! People try to suppress it but they can’t eliminate it!

It reminds me of the story about a little boy who smuggled his little doggy into his bedroom wanting the dog to spend the night in his room. The parents suspected something was up but before they got to the room the little boy hid the dog in his toybox and sat on it.

As the parents came into the room, they asked what was up. The little boy “suppressing the truth” said “oh nothing” and about that time a tail was heard thumping inside the box. One can try to suppress the truth but you can’t do away with it. God’s TRUTH IS HERE TO STAY!

The world would love to do away with the truth but they just can’t get rid of it. In Psalm 2 they say, “Let us break God’s bonds in pieces, let us cast away His cords” (2:3). They hate God’s rules, God’s moral law. They hate God’s authority. This is totally a LORDSHIP issue!

This is the great problem the world has with God! Instead of yielding to God for Who He is they insist on opposing and suppressing His truth.

19 because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them.

Where Paul is going with this is to “**without excuse**” as seen at the end of verse 20. People experience the wrath of God and they do so “**without excuse**”. That is they have no legitimate excuse. Accountability relates to knowing and the point is they know the reality of God but suppress and reject it.

Sometimes people say, “**If only they knew**”. Paul’s argument is that they DO KNOW which is why they are without excuse. They know “**because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them.**”

Manifest is the idea of “made plain”, “visible” or “clear”. “In them” refers to their heart, mind, and conscience.

There is a “God-consciousness” in the heart of every person. There are no true atheists – only rebellious fools. God has so wired people that they come hard-wired knowing there is a supreme being. God has made it “**manifest in them**”. “**God has shown it to them**”. When God shows you something there is no escaping from the reality of it – and there is no escaping the accountability of it! This is why the Bible begins in Genesis 1:1 with the reality of Creator God instead of developing all kinds of arguments for His existence. The reality of a God-consciousness is already inherently present in every person (cf. Rom. 1:20-21, 28, 32; 2:15).

Slide # 9

Psalm 14:1 (NKJV)

1 The fool has said in his heart, "**There is no God.**" They are corrupt, They have done abominable works, There is none who does good.

Commonly, this is understood as the fool saying to himself that God does not exist and therefore lives accordingly.

In this view "There is no God" is an intellectual position. But it could also be understood as DEFIANCE with the nuance being that the fool says "NO" to God in the sense of a defiant "No, God!".

Given the context a strong argument can be made that this is the better view. The Psalm goes on to emphasize "***There is none who does good.***" In other words, the whole of humanity has played the part of a fool.

Slide # 10

The root cause of atheism is traced in both of these psalms (Ps. 14:1; 53:1) to moral rather than to intellectual sources. It is not that a man *cannot* believe so much as that he *will not*. – **John Phillips**

Thus, the fool says NO to God's truth, NO to divine standards, NO to God's authority. The fool assumes the position of DEFIANT REBELLION.

This understanding aligns perfectly with what Paul is saying here in Romans 1. It's not that they don't know the truth of God's reality, it is that they DO know and yet defy Him in suppressing the truth.

Paul's point is that mankind has a sufficient knowledge of God to make all people accountable. God Himself has made this manifest in them and shown it to them in that all people come hard-wired with a God-consciousness.

God has put eternity in the hearts of people (Eccl. 3:11) and He has also instilled in them a God-conscious reality (cf. Heb. 2:15).

That which may be intuitively known about God has been placed in the minds (heart, conscience) of all men by God and thus no man can claim ignorance of God, and no person can claim that God's wrath against him is unjust. - **PreceptAustin**

The primary problem with mankind is NOT a lack of sufficient evidence, it is not essentially an intellectual problem, but rather a moral problem, a heart problem that in rebellion suppresses the truth of God as it seeks to be autonomous.

20 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,

What an interesting paradox: “Invisible attributes – clearly seen”. How is that which invisible clearly seen? The answer is in creation. Creation testifies of a Creator!

God has hard-wired us to make this connection. A painting requires a painter. A building requires a builder. A design demands a designer. A poem requires a poet. And Creation requires a Creator!

Note the double emphasis in this verse on “clearly seen” and “understood”.

The phrase “things that are made” is the translation of a single Greek word – that is the word “*poiema*”. This word is only found one other time in the NT and that is in Eph. 2:10 where it is translated as “workmanship”. It is from this word that we get our English word “poem”.

A poem is a beautifully crafted work of art that coordinates language to communicate the message in a profound and captivating sort of way. Interestingly this unique word is used only twice in the NT – once in reference to creation, and once in reference to the work God is doing in the lives of redeemed people. God in effect is the author of two poetic masterpieces.

The poetic beauty of creation communicates truth about God. This has been clearly seen ever since the time of Creation.

And what it communicates is the truth of God’s eternal power and Godhead. The awesomeness of creation speaks to the reality of a super power behind it all. Something awesome is here which speaks to the reality of something even more awesome behind it all – Creator God!

This is where intelligent design comes in. The whole of life is so awesomely complex and fine-tuned that the reality of a supernatural intelligence behind

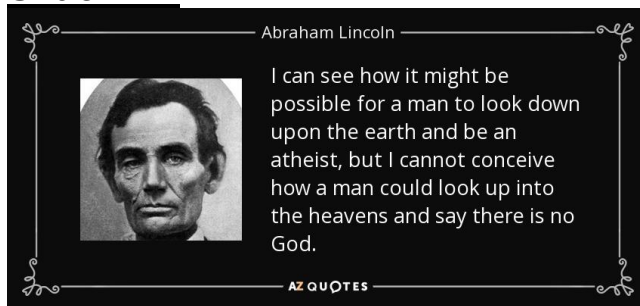
it cannot logically be denied. It use to be that people would look out into the heavens and speak of the awesome greatness of God and rightfully so.

Slide # 11

Psalm 19:1 (NKJV)

1 The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork.

Slide # 12



Napoleon, on a warship in the Mediterranean on a star-lit night, passed a group of his officers who were mocking the idea of a God. He stopped, and sweeping his hand toward the stars, said, "*Gentlemen, you must get rid of those first!*"

The earth at 93 million miles from the sun is at just the right place. If we were closer we would all burn up – if we were further away we would all freeze. The balance of oxygen (21%) and nitrogen (78%) is the perfect balance for supporting life. All of this speaks of order and design.

But then science began to look smaller instead of bigger. And the smaller the things they looked at the more awesome they became.

Atoms were once assumed the bedrock of matter, until their protons, neutrons, and electrons gave way to particles and subparticles and quarks, and we're still not to the end of it. Weaving it all together is the "God particle" long speculated, supposedly discovered, never actually seen. – **Janie B. Cheaney**

The discovery of DNA and the study of genetics is so profound as to blow a person's mind. "DNA contains about 2,000 genes per chromosome—1.8 meters of DNA are folded into each cell nucleus. A nucleus is 6 microns long. This is like putting 30 miles of fishing line into a cherry pit. And it isn't simply stuffed in. It is folded in.

If folded one way, the cell becomes a skin cell. If another way, a liver cell, and so forth. To write out the information in one cell would take 300 volumes, each volume 500 pages thick. The human body contains enough DNA that if it were stretched out, it would circle the sun 260 times.”
(PreceptAustin)

I have no idea on any of this – but I do know it is complex beyond comprehension and yet organized in such a perfectly functional way so as to be mind blowing!

There are certain laws that every true scientist knows are true. For example that first and second law of thermodynamics. The first law says energy cannot be created or annihilated. The second law says everything is breaking down. This is really profound and totally affirms what the Bible teaches.

Since nothing is now being created, the universe could not have created itself by the natural processes which now function in it. Yet, since it is now disintegrating and dying, it must have been created at some finite time in the past. – **Henry M. Morris**

And on and on it goes:

Except to a mind willfully closed to the obvious, it is inconceivable that such power, intricacy, and harmony could have developed by any means but that of a Master Designer who rules the universe. It would be infinitely more reasonable to think that the separate pieces of a watch could be shaken in a bag and eventually become a dependable timepiece than to think that the world could have evolved into its present state by blind chance. – **John MacArthur**

The things that are made testify of God’s sovereign power – what Paul calls “eternal power”. Eternal means “everlasting and infinite in duration – continuing without end”.

Creation also testifies of what Paul terms the “Godhead”. The word translated “Godhead” (Gk. theiotes) is a form of the word theos which is commonly translated as “God”. This word describes the quality of God – the divine nature of God. It is the Godness of God! One commentator says it means “**Godhood**” and not “Godhead”. It signifies the sum total of God’s divine attributes. It is the idea of a “Supreme Being” Who with super intelligence and almighty power created everything.

In short, Creation testifies of a super powerful supreme being behind it all. And this testimony has constantly been going on since creation.

Slide # 13

Psalm 19:2–3 (NKJV)

2 Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge.

3 There is no speech nor language Where their voice is not heard.

Creation's testimony to the reality of its GREAT CREATOR goes on day and night constantly. And this testimony is universal being declared everywhere all the time.

Nature itself speaks eloquently of its Creator. From the intricate design of the human cell to the majestic strength of the Rocky Mountains, all of God's works testify to His wisdom and power.

– ***The Nelson Study Bible***

The entire natural world bears witness to God through its beauty, complexity, design, and usefulness. – ***ESV Study Bible***

“All creation is an outstretched finger pointing toward God.”

Robert Jastrow (an astrophysicist) wrote:

Now we see how the astronomical evidence supports the Biblical view of the origin of the world... The essential elements in the astronomical and Biblical accounts of Genesis are the same. Consider the enormosity of the problem: Science has proved that the universe exploded into being at a certain moment. It asks what cause produced this effect? Who or what put the matter and energy into the Universe? And science cannot answer these questions... For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance, he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries.” (God and Astronomers [New York: Norton 1978], pp. 14, 114, 116) — **Robert Jastrow**

The only problem with this story is that they are not making progress. They are not getting closer to the truth because they don't want to find it. They suppress the obvious truth found in God and His Word.

This revelation of God puts humanity in the position of having NO EXCUSE. No one can plead ignorance. Accountability is based on knowledge and God has revealed Himself in such a way as to make the whole world accountable.

Often people say, "What about those people in the remotest parts of the world who have never heard?" Well, they have had enough light to make them accountable.

If a person will respond to the revelation he has, even if it is solely natural revelation, God will provide some means for that person to hear the gospel (cf. Acts 8:26-39; 10:1-48; 17:27). – **John MacArthur**

The Greek word (Gk. anapologetos) translated "without excuse" is a form of the word apologetic which means "defense" (cf. 1 Pet. 3:15). The idea is they are "without a defense". They have no excuse. There is no legitimate way to defend their rejection of the light that God has given.

21 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.

Here is the stated reason they have no excuse. Although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful." There is the bottom line.

They knew God in the sense that they had a God-awareness. They knew of His existence. They knew of His reality as stated in verse 20. It is one thing to KNOW the reality of God and yet another thing to know Him in a saving sense (cf. Ja. 2:19).

2 Peter 3:5 speaks of those who are willfully ignorant. They willfully reject the obvious truth that God has provided.

Slide # 14

2 Peter 2:20–21 (KJV)

20 For if after they have **escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge** of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

21 For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have **known it**, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

These people have KNOWN the truth of God and yet turned from it. This is the same issue in Hebrews 6 concerning those who were once enlightened but fall away in irreversible apostasy (cf. Heb. 6:4-8). And then again those in Hebrews 10 who go on sinning willfully after they have received the knowledge of the truth (cf. Heb. 10:26-29).

The point all the way through here in Romans is that these people have KNOWN the reality of God as revealed in creation. No one can plead ignorance. There is no excuse!

Slide # 15

- v. 18 “who **suppress** the truth”
- v. 19 “may be **known** of God is manifest in them”
- v. 19 “God has **shown** it to them”
- v. 20 “His invisible attributes are **clearly seen**”
- v. 20 “**understood** by the things that are made”
- v. 21 “they **knew** God”

It is amazing to me how much the unbeliever can still know about God in his fallenness and is accountable for it. To this point in Romans there are two great emphases concerning human accountability. People are accountable for the light given in creation. God expects them to respond to it. Jeremiah 29:13 says, “And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.” Now we know that doesn’t happen in a vacuum, but when God shows someone the truth they are responsible to respond to it!

Sometimes theologians speak of lost sinners in their depravity as being just like a corpse because indeed the Bible says as lost people they are dead in their sins. And that is true. However, a strict corpse analogy does not work. A corpse cannot reason or be under conviction. A corpse has no responsibility or accountability for anything. That is not true concerning those who are spiritually dead. As someone has quipped “this is a very lively corpse indeed” (cf. Acts 7:51).

Starting with the account of Cain in Genesis 4 we see that God holds lost people accountable for revealed truth. God in grace came to Cain and revealed truth to him. But then the onus was on Cain in terms of what he would do with it.

Slide # 16

Genesis 4:7 (NKJV)

7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.”

Clearly, God in grace warned Cain, but the choice lie with Cain on what he would do. And so it is with the entire world regarding the light that God has given. People are accountable for the light that is given them. And all have been given enough light to be accountable.

And here is what people are accountable to do. Paul says, these are without excuse because in their suppression of God’s truth they “***did not glorify God, nor were thankful***”. There is the crux of the issue. This is the very purpose for which they were created. We were created to bring glory to God!

To glorify God is to give Him His due for Who He is as God. It is to magnify Him for Who He is. This is a Lordship issue. They refuse to recognize His sovereign Lordship as sovereign God! They refuse to give God the place of supremacy! They refuse to bow before Him (cf. Rev. 4:10-11). This is really the beginning of the matter but also the end of it as seen in Phil. 2.

Slide # 17

Philippians 2:9–11 (NKJV)

9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,

10 that at the name of Jesus **every knee should bow**, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,

11 and that **every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord**, to the **glory** of God the Father.

The root sin is the failure to value God above all things, so that He is not honored and praised as He should be. Human beings are foolish, not in the sense that they are intellectually deficient but in their rejection of God’s Lordship over their lives. – ***ESV Study Bible***

These suppressors of God's truth refuse to honor and worship Him. God is seeking for true worshipers and this they refuse to do (Jn. 4:23-24). In other words, they refuse to properly recognize Him as their God. For all true believers, God is personally recognized as God. This is the starting point of true saving faith (cf. Jn. 20:28-31; Heb. 11:6).

And then they are not thankful! Natural revelation reveals that God is great and He is good.

Slide # 18

Acts 14:17 (NKJV)

17 Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without **witness**, in that He **did good**, gave us **rain** from heaven and **fruitful seasons**, filling our hearts with **food and gladness**."

But the suppressors of God's truth don't appreciate what God has provided for them. They refuse to acknowledge their dependence upon Him. And ultimately this is where Savior comes in. True believers recognize we are totally dependent upon God for everything – and most importantly to save us. And true believers are thankful for what God has done for us. True faith recognizes dependence upon God and is thankful for His provision – and by way of application most importantly for our Savior!

The spirit of this is a Lord and Savior issue. They refuse to glorify God for Who He is as God and they refuse to be thankful for His provision.

And the consequence of this rejection is that they "became futile in their thoughts and their foolish hearts were darkened." When one turns in rebellion from the truth of God's light then in effect turn to futility and darkness! That is the outcome!

Futile thinking is empty, vain, useless, or pointless. It thinks about worthless things that have nothing to do with God's truth.

Slide # 19

Ephesians 4:17–18 (NKJV)

17 This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, **in the futility of their mind**,

18 having their **understanding darkened**, being alienated from the life of God, because of the **ignorance that is in them**, because of the **blindness of their heart**;

Futility is often used in reference to idols which is where futile thinking leads (cf. Acts 14:15). Superstitious religion is a matter of futile thinking. It replaces the truth God with all manner of false gods.

Futile thinking no longer has any absolutes! All is vanity! It has both feet firmly planted in midair. There is nothing solid there. They are like a **“Blind Man in a Dark Room Looking for a Black Cat That Is Not There.”**

Part of the wrath of God is revealed in humanity's loss of intelligent thinking. - **HCSB**

Foolish is the opposite of true understanding or insight. It is the inability to put together reality as it really is or to make proper sense out of spiritual reality. They no longer are able to really understand reality as revealed by God.

People who suppress the truth of God's light end up in crazy places. They end up with evolution which doesn't know where we came from, why we are here, or where we are going. It has no purpose or meaning. They end up with idolatrous religion that worships everything but the true God. They end up with immoral philosophies that are deadly perverse and incredibly destructive. And there is no lasting satisfaction in any of it.

When you lack God as the proper starting point it never ends well!

Again, we note that the foolish heart is not one deficient in intelligence (per se) but one that is morally senseless. Instead of the obedience of faith what now defines them is suppression of the truth.

The heart refers to the entirety of one's inner life – the core of one's spiritual being. In some contexts the emphasis is on the emotions (2 Cor. 6:11-12; in some contexts the intellect (Rom. 10:8); and in some other contexts the volition is prominent (1 Cor. 7:37).

The heart is the center of the inner life, from it the person's direction is determined, his whole course shaped, his basic commitments formed. – **Leon Morris**

When truth is rejected, in time the ability to recognize and to receive truth is impaired (cf. John 3:19-20).

- **The Bible Knowledge Commentary**

Slide # 20***WHY the wrath of God is revealed...***

- 1) People suppress God's truth
- 2) They do so with no excuse
- 3) The consequences are futility and darkness

True story about Sir Isaac Newton: (1643 – 1727) (Footnote – I don't agree with all of Newton's theology but this story makes the point).

That a maker is required for anything that is made is a lesson Sir Isaac Newton was able to teach forcefully to an atheist-scientist friend of his. Sir Isaac had an accomplished artisan fashion for him a small scale model of our solar system which was to be put in a room in Newton's home when completed. The assignment was finished and installed on a large table.

The workman had done a very commendable job, simulating not only the various sizes of the planets and their relative proximities, but also so constructing the model that everything rotated and orbited when a crank was turned. It was an interesting, even fascinating work, as you can image, particularly to anyone schooled in the sciences.

Newton's atheist-scientist friend came by for a visit. Seeing the model, he was naturally intrigued, and proceeded to examine it with undisguised admiration for the high quality of the workmanship. 'My! What an exquisite thing this is!' he exclaimed. 'Who made it?' Paying little attention to him, Sir Isaac answered, '***Nobody.***'

Stopping his inspection, the visitor turned and said: 'Evidently you did not understand my question. I asked who made this. Newton, enjoying himself immensely no doubt, replied in a still more serious tone. '***Nobody.*** What you see just happened to assume the form it now has.' 'You must think I am a fool!' the visitor retorted heatedly, 'Of course somebody made it, and he is a genius, and I would like to know who he is.'

Newton then spoke to his friend in a polite yet firm way: 'This thing is but a puny imitation of a much grander system whose laws you know, and I am not able to convince you that this mere toy is without a designer and maker; yet you profess to believe that the great original from which the design is taken has come into being without either

designer or maker! Now tell me by what sort of reasoning do you reach such an incongruous conclusion?’

Sir Isaac Newton Solar System Story (from the book: ‘The Truth: God or evolution?’ by Marshall and Sandra Hall, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI)

God has revealed Himself in the natural revelation of creation, but most fully in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ as revealed in the Bible. The great issue in life for time and eternity is what will we do with this revelation. Will we suppress and reject it or will we receive and believe it.

John 12:36 (NKJV)

36 While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.”

The Bible is clear: Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. Will you in faith glorify God as revealed in the person of Christ and thank Him for being your Savior? What will you do with the truth of God?

This is the ultimate issue for time and eternity!