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The Epistle of Romans

The Justification of the Ungodly

Chapter 1 Verses 22-32

How is God's wrath revealed? The Apostle Paul in verses 24, 26, and 28 says, "God delivered them over into..." Indeed, what we need to understand is that mankind exchanges reality for something counterfeit/unnatural, and God unleashes His wrath by giving them into that which they choose. For example: in verse 23, mankind exchanges the glory of God for the image of man and beasts. In verse 25, mankind exchanges the truth for a lie. In verse 28, mankind did not see fit to regard God properly, which resulted in an unfit mind.

Let's look at the three examples a bit more closely.

In verses 23-ff, mankind disregards the glory of God. In other words, mankind sins by omitting (sin of omissions). However, keep in mind when mankind does not fear, love, and trust in God, mankind will eventually fear, love, and trust in something else – an idol. An idol, though, is not necessarily a carved image. An idol is anything that we fear, love, and trust. Therefore, an idol can be

anything in creation that mankind desires. The point being, when mankind disregards the glory of God (sin of omission), then the Lord – as a way of wrath – allows mankind to pursue the desires of their hearts. And those desires of mankind's hearts? These desires bring them into the punishment of uncleanness, depravity, and so forth (sin of commission). Frankly stated, God doesn't need to pour punishment upon mankind, for the desires and results of mankind's sinful hearts are enough of a punishment.

In verses 25-ff, mankind 'exchanges' truth for the lie. As a result, God gives them into the lie – degrading passions. As a way of example, the Apostle Paul mentions the exchanging of natural behavior for unnatural behavior, namely regarding sex. Keep in mind that without God, sex runs wild. The existence of homosexuality is one example in our society of mankind exchanging natural behavior (e.g., heterosexuality) for unnatural behavior (e.g.,

homosexuality). The main point is that mankind exchanges Truth for a lie, and then as a result of believing the lie, mankind exchanges that which is natural for that which is unnatural – mankind delves into darkness. Again, as a way of wrath, God gives mankind over to degrading passions.

In verses 27-ff, we see clearly that the mess that humanity has made of life is a result of God at work revealing His wrath. As a result, we may say, "What is this world coming to?" Tragically, the world is not coming to anything; it is already gone. Therefore, the very fact that this world exists and that we still have food, water, protection, health, etc. are all gift!

Keep in mind that pagans do not understand how God enacts His wrath. Pagans do not only pursue sinful things, as if they are natural, but they also applaud their sins (See Philippians 3:19).

This is why there is such a need for Law and Gospel for pagans and Christians. The Law reveals sin and God's wrath upon sin. Without the revelation of the Law, mankind would not only continue in sin but would celebrate sin. However, only through the preaching of the Law can there be 'repentance.' Then, upon repentance, the Gospel needs to be preached/given for forgiveness and faith. Only through repentance and faith, can people be delivered out of lies to truth – out of unnatural passions to natural reality.



