

# Sin and Condemnation: The World's need to get right with God (39)

Pastor Eddie Idefonso

[Romans 1:18-3:20](#)

(Continuation from 07/31/16)

## A. God's Case Against All Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men: Why God Shows Wrath, [Romans 1:18-23](#)

**(Romans 1:18-23) Introduction:** the message of this passage is perfectly clear: why God reveals and executes wrath upon men.

1. **The subjects of God's wrath (v.18).**
2. **Men reject that "within" them—conscience and thoughts (v.19).**
3. **Men reject that "without" them—the signs of creation (v.20).**
4. **Men do not honor God nor give thanks (v.21).**
5. **Men become prideful and turn away from God (v.22-23).**

**2. ([Romans 1:19](#)) God, Proof of— Mind— Conscience: God—the only living and true God—shows wrath because men reject that *within them*; that is, they reject their consciences and thoughts and reasoning's about God. (Cp. [Romans 2:15](#).)**

**Romans 1:19 (NASB)**

**<sup>19</sup>“Because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.”**

## The Indictments of Our Iniquity

Sometimes we don't like the pictures taken of us because pictures don't lie. They show us as we are in all our imperfections. God paints a picture of men in this section and it's not a pretty one. [Verse number eighteen](#) leads to God's courtroom as man is put on trial for his wickedness.

The theme of Romans is the righteousness of God. The focus at the beginning of Romans, however, is the unrighteousness of men. We go now from the righteousness revealed to the wrath revealed; from the Gospel of Christ to the godlessness of this world; from the Son who always walked in the Spirit to men who walk after the flesh; from grace to disgrace; from unspeakable love to unutterable lust. Notice [Romans 1:18](#).

## I. THE DISCLOSURE & DECLARATION OF GOD—[Romans 1:18-20](#)

Whether you like it or not, you and I are sinners. People kick at this truth, but it is true. People may try to restrain the flesh, but it remains unchanged. The flesh may be adorned, reformed, but it remains deformed without Jesus Christ as Savior. We are sinners. We may deny it, defy it, or deride it, but it remains a realistic fact. Schools may remove the Bible and prayer to remove the controversy of right vs. wrong. This decision has intensified and multiplied controversy, calamity, confusion, chaos, and killing as the plumb line for what is right and wrong has been de-emphasized or removed. Our school systems are teaching our kids that they come from beasts or apes. Why are we surprised when they act that way?

This passage refutes the teaching of evolution and reveals that mankind underwent devolution. Evolution teaches that mankind started low and progressed higher in his living and accomplishments. The Bible teaches mankind started high in the Garden of Eden, but fell into sin.

Paul states in [verse 19](#), *“Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.”* Man knows the truth in unrighteousness. It has been made **“manifest”** in men. The word **“manifest”** is the Greek word *phonerōs* {**fan-er-os**}. It means *“apparent, manifest, evident, known, to be plainly recognized or known.”* What the Lord wants men to know has been made plain, obvious, and evident. Men don’t want to hear or recognize what the Lord has to say. **Men hold the truth in unrighteousness (v.18)**. This word **“suppress”** in the Greek language has a strong meaning. It is the Greek word *katecho*. This word was used to describe the steering of a ship or the holding of its course. It means *“hinder, restrain, hold down, suppress, to prevent someone from exercising power, to be held down, to be bound, kept under.”* John Wesley translated this word in his 1790 edition of the New Testament as **“detain.”**

This is what men do with God’s truth today. They try to smother it out of existence. Men know the truth of God, but reject God and His truth. Men refuse to accept God’s truth. They try to smother it with ungodly living. God is angry with men because they can choose the truth, but fail to do so. The teaching that states that men cannot choose to do that which is right is erroneous. God has given us the ability to choose what is right. He challenges us to choose this day whom we will serve. Why would He issue such a challenge if we did not have the ability to choose?

Liberals claim that “God is love and He would not hurt anyone.” The Bible says something different. Wrath is revealed to God-rejecters. If we could talk to Noah, the men at the tower of Babel, the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, the Pharaoh of Egypt, Nebuchadnezzar or Belshazzar, they would all say that God’s wrath is very real and powerful.

God reveals His wrath against **“ungodliness”** which is sin against God and against **“unrighteousness”** which is sin against men. When our relationship with God is wrong, our

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relationship with men will be wrong too. For this reason, it is important that Christ is first in your marriage and home.

**Verse twenty** answers the question, “**How could a loving God send anyone to Hell?**” Paul says, “*For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.*” The “invisible” is “visible.” The invisible God, His traits and attributes, are revealed in His creation including His majesty, creativity, power, might, and wisdom. Creation reveals God’s power. It is evidence that demands a verdict that there is a God, a Master Designer of the universe. The vastness of the universe proves there is a God.

**Psalm 19:1-3 (NASB)**

**<sup>1</sup>“The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.**

**<sup>2</sup>Day to day pours forth speech, And night to night reveals knowledge.**

**<sup>3</sup>There is no speech, nor are there words; Their voice is not heard.”**

A 200 inch diameter telescope at Mount Palomar in California can be used to see objects four billion light years away. This is 25 septillion miles. The earth itself is 25,000 miles in circumference. It weighs six septillion, 588 sextillion tons and hangs unsupported in space. It spins over 1000 miles per hour with precision and consistency. It is orbiting around the sun at 1000 miles per minute in an orbit that is 580 million miles long. Who keeps this all together or maintains the order of the world? The answer is “God.” **Abe Lincoln** said, “I can see how it might be possible for a man to look down at the earth and be an atheist, but I cannot conceive how he could look up into the heavens and say, “There is no God.””

**Men say they can find God in nature.** Many times this is an excuse for not going to church. It is true you can see God’s power in nature, but nature is not enough to know God. Men need a Savior, a Redeemer. Nature does not redeem or forgive. Nature, in fact, teaches there are no moral codes. Savages have dwelt in nature for years and some are cannibals. Nature has a voice that declares the glory of God. Nature, however, has no heart. The strong devour the weak. Nature offers no solution for man’s sin problem. It does not mention a Savior. Man needs more than nature; he needs a messenger.

An atheist was walking through the woods admiring all the “accidents” that evolution had created. “What majestic trees! What powerful rivers! What beautiful animals!” he said to himself. As he was walking alongside the river, he heard a rustling in the bushes behind him. Turning to look, he saw a 7-foot grizzly bear charging toward him. He ran away as fast as he could up the path. He looked over his shoulder and saw the grizzly was closing. Somehow he ran even faster, so scared that tears came to his eyes. He looked again, and the bear was even closer. His heart was pounding, and he tried to run faster. He tripped and fell to the ground. He rolled over to pick himself up, but the bear was right over him, reaching for him with its left paw and raising its right paw to strike him. At that instant the atheist cried, “Oh my God!”

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Time stopped. The bear froze. The forest was silent. Even the river stopped moving. As a bright light shone upon the man, a voice came out of the sky, “You deny my existence for all these years, teach others that I don’t exist, and even credit creation to a cosmic accident. Do you expect me to help you out of this predicament? Am I to count you as a believer?”

The atheist looked directly into the light and said, “I would feel like a hypocrite to become a Christian after all these years, but perhaps you could make the bear a Christian?” “Very well,” said the voice. The light went out. The river ran. The sounds of the forest resumed. Then the bear dropped his right paw, brought both paws together, bowed its head, and spoke: “Lord, thank you for this food which I am about to receive, I am truly thankful.”

Creation reveals there is a God. Man, therefore, is without excuse. He is without a defense for his actions and beliefs. The words “**without excuse**” is one word in the Greek text, *anapologetous*, which means “**without apology or without defense.**” Without Christ, men will have no defense in the day of judgment. He is condemned for his sinfulness.

**John 3:18 (NASB)**

**<sup>18</sup>“He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”**

Ignorance is no defense for decisions and beliefs. If a man wants to know the truth of God, if he wants to know the Gospel, I strongly believe that God will somehow send His messenger and message of love and salvation to that man or woman. This is where we come in for we are God’s ambassadors responsible for delivering the Gospel to the world.

**Jeremiah 29:13 (NASB)**

**<sup>13</sup>“You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart.”**

**2. (Romans 1:19) God, Proof of— Mind— Conscience: God—the only living and true God—shows wrath because men reject that *within them*; that is, they reject their consciences and thoughts and reasoning’s about God. (Cp. Romans 2:15.)**

**Romans 1:19 (NASB)**

**<sup>19</sup>“Because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.”**

**Note three clearly stated facts.**

- 1) ⇒ God can be known. There are *some things* that “**can be known about God.**”
- 2) ⇒ These things are manifest (evident, made clear and plain) “*in*” men. Men know about God; they know some things about God *within* their hearts, minds, and consciences.
- 3) ⇒ How? “**God has shown [made evident, clear and plain]**” these things to men.

Living Word Christian Center, 6520 Arizona Ave., Los Angeles, Ca 90045

Email: [Pastoreddie@wlalwcc.org](mailto:Pastoreddie@wlalwcc.org)

Web Page: [www.wlalwcc.org](http://www.wlalwcc.org) Office 310-645-2522

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Now note.

1. There is a great deal *about* God that men cannot know ([Job 11:7](#)), but there is a great deal that men can know.

[Job 11:7 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>7</sup>“Can you discover the depths of God? Can you discover the limits of the Almighty?”

Men can know enough to be led to God. **This is the whole point of this passage:** men know about God, but they do not worship Him as God. They have a sense of God, but they suppress the sense, trying to get rid of it.

2. Man’s inner sense, or *innate awareness*, and *instinctive knowledge* of God are strong. Man is a very capable creature. He has enormous power and mental capacity. Man can reason and grasp that “**God is [exists] and that He rewards those who diligently seek Him**” ([Hebrews 11:6](#)).

[Hebrews 11:6 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>6</sup>“And without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.”

Man can “know God” ([Romans 1:19](#)), even the “invisible things” of God ([Romans 1:20](#)); he can know to such a degree that he is “without excuse” ([Romans 1:20](#)). (See note # 2—[Romans 2:11-15](#) for more discussion.)

## Note # 2

**([Romans 2:11-15](#)) Judgment—Obedience—Doers—Hearers:** the judgment of God—of the only living and true God—is without respect of persons.

[Romans 2:11-15 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>11</sup>“For there is no partiality with God.

<sup>12</sup> For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law;

<sup>13</sup> for *it is* not the hearers of the Law *who* are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified.

<sup>14</sup> For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves,

<sup>15</sup> in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them.”

God’s judgment will be executed with absolute impartiality, showing no favoritism whatsoever. God has no favorites. God does not show partiality; He does not favor the...

- |                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| a. moralist    | e. wealthy     |
| b. outstanding | f. religionist |
| c. honorable   | g. benevolent  |
| d. educated    | h. famous      |

God favors no one. All men stand on an equal footing before God's judgment. ***God loves and cares for all***, but He has no favorites and shows no partiality. Therefore, in the great Day of Judgment, all will be judged by the same rule and by the same principle.

1. The man who sins without the law and the man who sins in the law will both be judged. Again, sin is the basis of judgment. Men will be judged ***for sin***.

a. The man who sins "**without law**" (*anómōs*) will also perish without law. The word for law is a general word. It refers to the law of God in both the Scriptures and nature. Therefore, the man who does not have the law of Scripture ***does have*** the law of nature to guide him. If he sins against the law of nature, he will still be judged and perish. He had the opportunity to know through nature itself.

b. The man who sins "**in the law**" will be judged by the law. His judgment, of course, will be greater, for he had every privilege and opportunity imaginable.

**Acts 10:34-35 (NASB)**

<sup>34</sup> "Opening his mouth, Peter said: 'I most certainly understand *now* that God is not one to show partiality,  
<sup>35</sup> but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him.'"

**Acts 15:9 (NASB)**

<sup>9</sup> "And He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith."

**Romans 2:11 (NASB)**

<sup>11</sup> "For there is no partiality with God."

**Romans 10:12 (NASB)**

<sup>12</sup> "For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same *Lord* is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him."

2. The doers and not the hearers of the law will be justified. It is not enough to have the law or the Word of God; it is not enough...

- |                       |                    |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| a. to hear and see it | c. to possess and  |
| b. to understand and  | profess it         |
| know it               | d. to proclaim and |
|                       | teach it           |

A person must be a doer of the law; he must obey and live the law. The law was not given just to sit on a bookshelf or on a table, not given just to be heard and to secure verbal agreement. The law was given to be obeyed and lived out, to govern and control life so that life could be lived to the fullest. Therefore, those who only hear the law will not be justified before God, but the doers of the law will be justified.

**Thought 1.** Possessing, having, hearing, and even proclaiming the law (the Word of God) is not enough to save a person. A person must keep the law; he must live and do the will of God.

**Matthew 7:21 (NASB)**

<sup>21</sup> “Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter.*”

**Matthew 12:50 (NASB)**

<sup>50</sup> “For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother.”

**Luke 6:47-49 (NASB)**

<sup>47</sup> “Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and acts on them, I will show you whom he is like:

<sup>48</sup> he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid a foundation on the rock; and when a flood occurred, the torrent burst against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built.

<sup>49</sup> But the one who has heard and has not acted *accordingly*, is like a man who built a house on the ground without any foundation; and the torrent burst against it and immediately it collapsed, and the ruin of that house was great.”

**John 13:17 (NASB)**

<sup>17</sup> “If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.”

**Romans 2:13 (NASB)**

<sup>13</sup> “For *it is* not the hearers of the Law *who* are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified.”

**James 1:22 (NASB)**

<sup>22</sup> “But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.”

**James 4:11 (NASB)**

<sup>11</sup> “Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge *of it.*”

**1 John 2:17 (NASB)**

**<sup>17</sup>“The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.”**

**Revelation 22:14 (NASB)**

**<sup>14</sup>“Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city.”**

3. The heathen has a threefold witness, a witness that is strong enough to lead them to God.

- a. Men have their nature—the nature of man that speaks loudly and clearly—that points toward God. Note exactly what the verse says.
  - 1. Men may not have the law (the Scriptures)...
  - 2. But they can do the law by nature.
  - 3. They can become “a law unto themselves.”

There is that within man, within **his nature** (*phusei*), that can stir him to do the law. Man has within him an instinctive knowledge of right and wrong. His very nature gives him the opportunity to do what is right.

Something else is meant here as well. Man can look at nature (creation) and see that he is part of it. He can instinctively see by nature the great eternal power and deity of God.

**Romans 1:19 (NASB)**

**<sup>19</sup>“Because that which is known about God is evident within them [within them, in their consciences, in an inner moral sense]; for God made it evident to them.”**

**Romans 1:20 (NASB)**

**<sup>20</sup>“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.”**

- b. Men have their consciences that bear witness to what is right and wrong. When they do right, they sense approval; when they do wrong, they sense reproach. Man’s conscience gives him the opportunity to live righteously and to do good.

**Hebrews 9:14 (NASB)**

**<sup>14</sup>“How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”**

**Hebrews 10:22 (NASB)**

**<sup>22</sup>“Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith,**



having our hearts sprinkled *clean* from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.”

**Romans 13:5 (NASB)**

<sup>5</sup>“Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake.”

- c. Men have their thoughts, their reasoning ability which can approve or disapprove, excuse or accuse them and others. Men's thoughts bear witness to how they should and should not live, whether their behavior is excused (acceptable) or accused (condemned). **Now note two critical points.**

**First**, men can learn a great deal about God and about right and wrong through their nature, conscience and thoughts. Men can look at themselves and creation and learn that they are to live...

1. by order and law and rules.
2. in obedience and respect and peace.
3. giving recognition and honor and esteem.
4. being clean and pure and moral.
5. showing care and concern and love.
6. without stealing and lying and cheating.

**Second**, men cannot be saved apart from Jesus Christ. No matter how morally they may live—whether they live by law or by nature—they do not live a sinless and perfect life. They sin and come short of God's glory. Therefore, no matter how morally men live, they have to be *perfected* in the “**righteousness of God**” which is in Christ Jesus Himself.

**John 14:6 (NASB)**

<sup>6</sup>“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.’”

**Acts 4:12 (NASB)**

<sup>12</sup>“And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.”

**1 Timothy 2:5 (NASB)**

<sup>5</sup>“For there is one God, *and* one mediator also between God and men, *the* man Christ Jesus.”

**1 John 2:1 (NASB)**

<sup>1</sup>“My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

**1 John 4:14 (NASB)**

<sup>14</sup>“We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son *to be* the Savior of the world.”

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However, man chooses not to know God. He even chooses to take the truth that is *within* him and suppress it. Man rejects the knowledge of God that is *within* him. This is the first reason why God reveals and shows His wrath.