

God's Righteous Judgment

Romans, Part VIII

Romans 1:24-32

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I. God's Righteous Wrath

Sin is like _____. If it is not dealt with, then it will metastasize and lead to societal and personal death and judgment.

II. God's Righteous Judgment

²⁴Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, ²⁵who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

²⁶For this reason God gave them up to vile [degrading, shameful] passions. For even their [females] exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. ²⁷Likewise also the [males], leaving the natural use of the [female], burned in their lust for one another, [males] with [males] committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. ²⁸And even as they did not [see fit] to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a [an unfit] mind, to do those things which are not [proper]; ²⁹being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, ³⁰backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, ³¹undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; ³²who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

A. A Series of Judgments (24, 26, 28, 32 cf. 2:16)

This “*handing over*” is the revelation of *God's righteous judgment*. And this judgment, which already begins in this life, will conclude with death and the final judgment (32 cf. 2:16).

B. The Nature of God's Judgments

1. Uncleanness (24-25 cf. Gen 2:24)

When we *dishonor* God by “*changing the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man*” (23), God hands us over to sexual sin so that we _____ ourselves. To indulge in sexual intimacy outside the marriage bond, therefore, reveals that our heart is not right within us and so God *hands us over* to “*the lusts of [our] hearts*” (24). Sexual immorality, in other words, is the consequence of _____.

2. Vile Passions (26-27 cf. Gen 1:27; Heb 13:4)

Paul is condemning and repudiating same-sex sexual *attraction* and *practice* – both *lesbianism* (26) and *homosexuality* (27). *Vile homosexual practice* is the fruit of *sinful homosexual* _____: the males “*burned in their lust for one another*” (27). Same-sex sexuality is not only *shameful* (27), it is also *abnormal* and *unnatural*. Our bodily anatomy testifies to how God intended *male* and *female* to unite in sexual intimacy. Same-sex sexuality is evidence of God's hand of judgment. It _____ the judgment of God and _____ the judgment of God.

3. Debased Mind (28-32 cf. Gen 19; Judg 19-20; Heb 9:27)

God hands societies that rebel against their “*natural sexuality*” to a *debased mind*. *When we dishonor God then He dishonors us*. This is the way the righteous judgment of God works. A *debased mind* dissolves the glue that makes life worth living. When sins such as these multiply, what is happening? _____ is handing the society over to its sin.

An Outline of Romans

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III. Societal Decay and Societal Hope

A. The punishment of sin is sin (cf. Acts 7:42)

The punishment of sin is more _____. God reveals His wrath in handing ungodly and unrighteous men and societies over to their sin. To be handed over to our sin is to be handed over to _____. God permits our depravity to run its course.

Here is the irony. Sinners think that by sinning they are injuring God. But God is not mocked. In the very act of sinning more and more, the sinner is experiencing the _____ of God.

"So here we are, we rebellious peoples, glorying in the freedom we think to be grace, only to be told by Paul it is instead the fearful punishment of sin and a manifestation of God's wrath. The permissiveness we celebrated as a world 'come of age' we now find to be nothing more than the permission to fall deeper into sin... Divine discipline is the measure of grace, as divine permissiveness is the measure of wrath. A society in which discipline is disappearing and in which anything is permitted is, in light of this passage, clearly a society suffering under the wrath of God." (Gagnon, 251)

B. The trajectory of societal decay (Ps 115:8; Ezek 16:48-50; 2 Tim 3:1-4)

A people who rebel against the Living God and worship deaf and dumb idols, who worship false gods, are a people who will become increasingly like those idols – deaf and dumb. As Psalm 115:8 reminds us, *"Those who make [idols] are like them; so is everyone who trusts in them."* When we dishonor God, He dishonors us. Consequently, the "last days" of any corrupted civilization are characterized by this social decay (cf. Ezek 16:48-50):

¹*But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: ²For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ³unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, ⁴traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!*

Paul is not describing here the end of the _____ but the end of a civilization. Civilizations take centuries to build; but it takes only moments for them to collapse. As one social commentator has remarked, *"A study of history reveals that human beings are always nearer the brink of barbarism than the heights of civilization."* Herbert Butterfield said in 1949:

The plain truth is that if you were to remove certain subtle safeguards in society many men who had been respectable all their lives would be transformed by the discovery of the things which it was now possible to do with impunity... the orderings and arrangements of a healthy society seem to help out man's imperfections, conspiring with quiet inducements and concealed checks to keep the surface of life comparatively respectable; though down below there slumbers all the time the volcano that lies in human nature, and an unexpected cataclysm may bring it into activity. On the operation of certain safeguards which in normal times work so quietly that the superficial observer may miss them altogether depends all the difference between civilization and barbarism.

C. There is hope in Christ our Savior (1 Thes 1:9-10 cf. Ps 81; Is 61:1-4)

When we turn from *the Living God to idols*, then God hands us over to our sin. But when, by the grace of God, we turn *from idols to the Living God* (1 Thes 1:9), then God begins to work life in us and enable us to build _____. Jesus sings in Isaiah 61:

¹*"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound; ²To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn, ³To console those who mourn in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified."* ⁴*And they shall rebuild the old ruins, They shall raise up the former desolations, And they shall repair the ruined cities, The desolations of many generations.*

"The world is trying to experiment with attempting to form a civilized but non-Christian mentality. The experiment will fail; but we must be very patient in awaiting its collapse; meanwhile redeeming the time: so that the Faith may be preserved alive through the dark ages before us; to renew and rebuild civilization, and save the World from suicide." T.S. Eliot

IV. Conclusion