

ROMANS 1:18-3:39 | THE CASE REJECTED

Supplemental Resource: Romans Graphically Presented, pg. 10

ROMANS 1:18-2:1 | THE WORLD SITUATION

ROMANS 1:18-20 | MANIFESTATION OF GOD

Supplemental Resource: Romans Graphically Presented, pg. 11

VERSE 18 - BLUE

Romans 1:18-2:1 is blue letter in the *rightly divided* color-coding system, indicating that this material is applicable in our dispensation. In this case, the material is applicable because it speaks of all humanity.

The **righteousness of God** had been revealed in verse 17 through the **gospel of Christ** (v. 16). This revelation of righteousness was necessary because the **wrath of God is revealed from heaven**. If this is so (and clearly it is), then there should be an inherent knowledge of God's wrath by men, and indeed there is. Every culture and every people group holds some kind of idea about God's wrath, and how to appease it.

This wrath is revealed **against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men**. That is, a failure to worship and a failure to live in justice toward God receives **the wrath of God**. This is not **ungodliness** in the sense of behavior, but in the sense that *there is no allowance for God in their lives*. A person can live a very clean life and yet be ungodly.

Religious liberals once famously taught that education would lift humanity out of its **ungodliness and unrighteousness**. However, this verse tells us that the ultimate problem is not *knowing* the truth, but what is done with the truth. These men **hold the truth in unrighteousness**. When truth is concealed and perverted it is fully rejected.

VERSE 19 – BLUE

It would be unfair and unjust for God's wrath to be revealed if men did not *know the truth*. But these men **hold the truth in unrighteousness** (v. 18). Furthermore, **that which may be known of God is manifest in them**. Both the word **manifest** and **shewed** are of the same root, one being an adjective and the other a verb. Paul therefore gives a double emphasis on the fact that **that which may be known of God** has been made known.

One may argue that "it wasn't made known to me," or that "this people group doesn't know the truth of God," but such arguments are without merit according to this verse, and elaborated in verse 20. We must accept the declaration of Scripture that **that which may be known of God is manifest** in mankind.

VERSE 20- BLUE

God has made known the **things of him**. There is a play on words between **invisible** and **clearly seen**, both Greek words being built on the same root.

- The root: *opaw* [oraō] - *visible*
- **Invisible**: *ἀόρατος* [aoratos] - negation of visibility
- **clearly seen**: *καθοράω* [kathorao] - the ultimate of visibility (the Prefix *kat* or *kata* strengthens the word it is attached to, to the ultimate degree). Note: those translations which use *perceived* rather than *seen* do not do the word justice (ESV, for example).

The things of God are both **clearly seen** and thus **understood**. If this is not phenomenal enough, add to this that their visibility and comprehension comes from **the things that are made**. Imagine, the God

transcendent from Creation has made Himself known *in creation*. Compare Psalm 19:1-2 as a Biblical example. Since God's attributes are **understood by the things that are made**, Christians should emphasize the study of physical sciences. Such study would improve our knowledge of God and our Christian apologetic.

The phrase **without excuse** comes from the Greek word ἀναπολόγητος [anapologatos]. Apologetics is the "defense of a belief." These people are *without any defense of their belief*.

ROMANS 1:21-23 | REJECTION OF GOD

Supplemental Resource: Romans Graphically Presented, pg. 12

VERSE 21- BLUE

Who is **they** in v. 21? It must be the **men who hold the truth in unrighteousness** (v. 18). But in v. 18 it is a present active participle (holding the truth), and here it is an aorist active participle (having known God...). Therefore, this verse describes the events that happened in advance of verse 18, and are thus foundational.

When people become **vain in their imaginations** they trust those **imaginings** more than truth, making it impossible to see truth. The word **imaginings** is διαλογισμός [dialogismos], which is "thoroughly discussed," but is always used with the negative connotation of basing knowledge on one's own thinking rather than fact (used 14 times in the New Testament).

VERSE 22- BLUE

The men were puffed up in their vain logic, **professing themselves to be wise**. Yet God's Word gives the ultimate commentary on these men: **they became fools**. It would be hard to imagine a more stinging indictment upon men who think themselves wise.

VERSE 23- BLUE

The description of vv. 21-23 describes the history of pagan mankind. In summary, mankind took the evidence of God and, rather than pursue God, they **changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image**. That is, man took a shortcut, soothed his religious longings with idols, and moved on with life.

ROMANS 1:24-2:1 | THE WRATH OF GOD

Supplemental Resource: Romans Graphically Presented, pg. 13

VERSE 24 - BLUE

Through history, those who change **the truth of God into a lie** (v. 25) have been given over to **the lusts of their own hearts**. The more rejection of God, the more debauchery will be seen. Note that God **gave them up** not *because* of their sins but He gave them up *to* their sins. When they began to worship **the lusts of their own hearts** God gave them over **to dishonour their own bodies between themselves**. Spiritual sins inevitably lead to physical sins.

VERSE 25 – BLUE

Since these men **knew God** (v. 21) but **changed the glory of the incorruptible God** (v. 23) they ultimately **changed the truth of God into a lie**. And then they made that lie their doctrine. Inevitably such action leads to worship of **the creature more than the Creator**. Notice that they did not *cease to worship* they simply *changed the object of their worship*.