



# PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

## ROMANS 1:18-23

### LESSON: GOD'S WRATH REVEALED—March 15, 2026

#### INTRODUCTION:

**1:11-13** Paul longed to see them that he may impart some spiritual gift (truth of the grace of God) that will strengthen Jesus' believers in Rome (1:11). Paul then lets them know that when they get together, he also wanted to be comforted and be encouraged with them in the same faith (1:12). Paul calls them brethren, for at this point he didn't want them to be ignorant, but many times he had tried to visit them, but was prohibited. He really wanted to work among them, and that he might see spiritual fruit, just as he has seen among other Gentiles (1:13).

**1:14-17** The Gospel stirred Paul with a deep sense of indebtedness and a readiness to reach all men. He says he's a debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians; the wise and the unwise (1:14). He's ready to preach the gospel to those in Rome (1:15). And he's not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for the gospel is the power of God to bring salvation (deliverance from being lost) to every one that believes; to the Jews first then to the Greek (1:16). For in the Gospel is the righteousness of God revealed, from faith to faith. It is that faith that the just shall live by (1:17).

#### LESSON:

#### I. ROMANS 1:18-20

**1:18** For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;— God's attitude toward the sin of mankind is not one of tolerance. He does not simply hold man accountable for what may be reasonably expected of him in view of man's nature as a sinner, but God hates man's sin! First, the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold (keep back; suppress) the truth in their unrighteousness. We are looking at...

1. Men who are ungodly and unrighteous.
  - a. Ungodliness has to do with our religion—In our relation to a Sovereign God, we can't sin against the Being of God; live without reverencing Him.
    - The ungodly man lives as if there were no God at all. He fails to love and obey God; they do not live as God lives. They are not holy, not righteous, or pure; don't honor God by word or deed; don't reverence God by doing what He says. They do what they want when they want; and may give lip-service to God, ignoring Him in their day to day lives. The ungodly man lives as though there is no God at all.
  - b. Unrighteousness has to do with morality—our relation to our fellowman. It is sin against the Will of God. The unrighteous man lives as if there was no Will of God revealed.
2. Men who hold the truth in unrighteousness.
  - a. The meaning of "**hold**" means to hold down, keep back or suppress, repress, stifle, and hinder. Yet, despite having access to the truth, men restrain, ignore, neglect, and even push the truth aside, doing all they can to avoid and get rid of the truth of God's righteousness. Why? Because they want to live as they wish, and not as



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God says. They want to live unrighteous lives, taste, feel, see, and have all the stimulating things they want.

**The point is clear**— Just like Creation is made known to us, the wrath of God is also revealed from heaven against all who are both a religious sinner (ungodly against God) and a moral sinner (unrighteous against man). Therefore, the ungodly and unrighteous have had the righteousness of God revealed to them, yet, they choose to hold; suppress and hinder the truth of God's righteousness which is the **first reason** God reveals and shows His wrath. That's what sin does. It deceives and misleads. God's wrath is essential to divine righteousness, just as love and mercy are too.

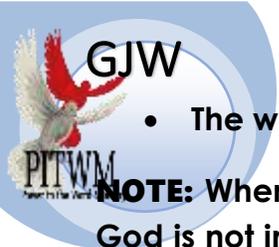
**1:19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.** Paul gives a reason for the wrath of God being revealed so there cannot be any question. The key words are: "*Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God had showed it unto them.*" He wants us to know Him. Therefore, the little these ungodly men do know, God manifested it in them. How? - Because God has sovereignly planted evidence of His existence in the very nature of man by reason and moral law. You know when you've sinned. You know right, but won't do it. Who else can fill them with knowledge of right, but God? The only living and true God can be known, and can be manifest in their conscious, their thoughts, and reasoning. He has revealed and shown these things to men, including His wrath!

**1:20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:**— So, Paul is saying that man has a sufficient knowledge of God to make him responsible to God. We didn't see how the world was made, but it's here— outer space, plants, animals, man and woman; the seasons, and much more. But they are clearly seen and understood that they were made. And even His eternal power of the Godhead; His deity; or even His Spirit have resigned and suggested that there is a "*Higher Power*" who created the whole universe! Its presence and its nature declares God! This makes man without excuse. The atheists may put all their knowledge together and come up with how this or that was made, but they are also without excuse of the evidence of God's power at work in Creation. Therefore, the ungodly and unrighteous have had the righteousness of God revealed to them, yet they choose to reject the knowledge of God within Creation which is the **second reason** God reveals and shows his wrath.

## II. ROMANS 1:21-23

**1:21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.** This would be a **third reason** why God reveals and shows His wrath! Men knew of God, but still did not glorify Him; was not even thankful, but became useless in their thoughts and their irrational hearts were darkened (rejecting Light).

- The word "**vain**" means empty, futile, useless, unsuccessful, senseless, worthless.
- The word "**imaginations**" means thoughts, reasonings, deliberations, conclusions, speculations.
- The word "**foolish**" means senseless, without understanding, unintelligent.



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- The word "**darkened**" means blinded, unable to see.

**NOTE:** When man push God out of their minds, their minds are void and empty of God, and God is not in their reasoning. Their minds are being filled with some other god or supremacy. So, men suffer empty imaginations and darkened hearts because when they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, and did not even offer thanks to Him. This surely leads the people down to the path of idolatry.

**1:22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,—** Men professed themselves to be wise, but in so doing they really became fools. •Too wise to believe in God • Too intelligent to depend upon the fables of the Bible.

**1:23 And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.** Men exchange the incorruptible God for some corruptible idol.

- God is said to be incorruptible (non-decaying, imperishable, unchanging, and un-aging). It means that God is not subject to passing away. He is eternal. God will always exist!
- Men swap and exchange God for corruptible man, that is, for the image, the idea, the thought that man is his own god. Men swap God for humanism.
- Men swap God for corruptible creatures. They turn from God and make their own gods whether mental images and thoughts or some grotesque image, and to carving wood and stone idols of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things; (example) the Israelites made a molded calf to worship in the wilderness.

Men professed themselves to be wise, but in so doing they really became fools, changing the glory of the incorruptible God into a man-made corruptible image. This would be a **fourth reason** why God reveals and shows His wrath!

## **SUMMARY:**

The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. By their unrighteousness they suppress the truth. What can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. His invisible attributes, namely, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse (**1:18-20**).

Although they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks to Him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles (**1:21-23**).