

But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Romans 2:5 (KJV).¹

Last time we studied the Reality of God’s Wrath against all Sin from Paul’s letter to the Romans. Actually, I find these two verses to be interesting. In the first case - in ch 1:18 - the thought is something that is revealed as valuable information. This sort of idea was widely valued in the Grecian mind. So, as in the first case in ch 1 not only is the Grand Theme of God’s Righteousness revealed but the consequences of rejecting this revelation A.K.A. Truth revealed to all of mankind.

Now we enter the realm of the moralist and here the hard and unrepentant heart of the moralist is shown to be treasuring – storing up (*gk = continuous active, present of Thesaurizo, to store up as treasure*).² Even now in ch 2 the dire consequences are contrasted with God’s gracious disposition towards man:

Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance? Romans 2:4 (NIV).

So let’s make a comparison between the two passages:

Chapter 1 – God’s revelation		Chapter 2 – God’s Riches vs Man’s Treasure	
God’s Righteousness	God’s Wrath	God’s Goodness	Man’s Treasure.
For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. Romans 1:17 (KJV)	For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Romans 1:18 (KJV)	Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? Romans 2:4 (KJV)	But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Romans 2:5 (KJV)

Here’s the comparison I’m trying to make: God patiently reveals His righteousness and gracious disposition toward man in many ways with the view of reconciling man to Himself. Man, on the other hand, is predisposed to reject this knowledge of incalculable value. Rather, instead of accepting the treasure of God’s gracious

¹ Compare with [ch. 1:18](#). There the Wrath of God is revealed – here it is stored as a treasure.

² Other NT uses are found in Matt 6:19, 20; Lk 12:21; 1 Cor 16:2; 2 Cor 12:14; Jas 5:3; 2 Pt 3:7. All denote storing up for a future time much as one would store up (hoard) grain or gold.

invitation to be rightly related to Him – man rejects this treasure and as a result is storing quite a different treasure – the Judgement of God. It is important to note that the condemnation is NOT based on the goodness or sinfulness of man – rather it is based on man rejecting the Knowledge and Riches of God.

The “Big Picture” of Man’s Eternal Destiny.

⁶ God "will give to each person according to what he has done." ⁷ To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. ⁸ But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. Romans 2:6-8 (NIV).

Here is the Big Picture – it is for God to give all that is good, be it righteousness, glory, honor (promotion) or immortality. All this is a gift that God, alone, offers to man. The tragic reality is that man rejects this generosity from God. This terrible condition is not only that of men who completely reject Knowledge of God (for this, read ch 1) but the condition remains associated with the Moralist – the man who prides himself in rejecting depravity assumes self-righteousness – even he, without the gift of God, remains condemned by God in this indictment. The plain fact is that as good as men seek to be in their own right – these men remain evil and are condemned by God. Should man turn to his own righteousness the condemnation is clear:

But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. Isaiah 64:6 (KJV).

And again:

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Romans 3:23 (KJV).³

It’s important for us to grasp the issue at hand. Not only is the immorality of man condemned but his pathetic attempt of righteousness is condemned by God as inadequate.

**Boxes within boxes –
even the frantic attempt of the Jew to obtain favor with God falls short.**

¹⁷ Now you, if you call yourself a Jew; if you rely on the law and brag about your relationship to God; ¹⁸ if you know his will and approve of what is superior because you are instructed by the law; ¹⁹ if you are convinced that you are a guide for the blind, a light for those who are in the dark, Romans 2:17-19 (NIV)

³ We frequently quote this verse with regard to the sinful condition of man but the second half of this verse states unconditionally that we not only have sinned but have *fallen short* of God’s glory – character.

Finally in this section Paul completely contains the Jewish argument that he is the favored of God by the use of 4 conditional clauses. Lenski presents these 4 conditional clauses of assumed reality – assumed by the Jew apart from Christ as boxes inside of boxes.¹ So the interesting picture is this – imagine the reader is opening up a box only to find inside the first a second. He then opens the second box only to find a third and so on. First box of assumed reality:

1. “I am a Jew.” (Now open the next box).
2. “I rely on the Law and have a connection with God.” (OK, now open the next box).
3. “I know God’s will and appreciate (approve of) that which is superior because I know the law.” (What’s this? Yet another box)?
4. “I am qualified to be a guide of the blind and can give light to those who are in the dark.” (OK now this is getting quite ridiculous)!

This is the tremendous argument of Paul. Boxes of assumed reality within boxes. Yet as we will see they are only an assumption by the Jewish moralist. Read on.

The “Smoke and Mirrors” of the Jewish Moralist without Christ.

²¹ you, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself? You who preach against stealing, do you steal? ²² You who say that people should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? ²³ You who brag about the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law? ²⁴ As it is written: "God's name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you."⁴
Romans 2:21-24 (NIV).

The fact was that the Jew without Christ lived a life of smoke and mirrors – a life that was a complete trick – a lie. He was just as immoral as the Gentile to whom he preached and tried to condemn. So all these boxes we opened in our previous passage contain nothing but disappointment. The Moralist was a sinner in need of Christ – the Jew was a sinner also in need of Christ. Certainly the Sinner who in chapter one stood condemned but now we find that so were the moral, self-righteous. The final indictment fell on the very ones who pretended to be a light unto all others – the Jew – and he, too stood condemned alone in his sin – without Christ. So we see that these four boxes contained nothing but the very condemnation that they hid. It is now out in the open. In spite of the claims – these four conditional clauses of assumed reality – we see now that the wrappings were nothing but pretty bows and ribbons. The contents were ugly dirty and exposed the very condemnation that they asserted fell on all others but themselves.

Now let’s turn to the final page of this condemnation and learn of our indictment as we stand in this court that Paul has set for all to observe.

⁴ [Isa 52:5; Ezek 36:22](#)

The universal condemnation of men stands in God's court.

What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. Romans 3:9 (NIV).

There is no self-worth. So we stand in this imaginary court alongside with the Jew who prides himself in keeping every point of the law hearing the same indictment. We learn that we ALL are under SIN (anarthrous use – no article) pointing to our general condition of sinfulness with no self-worth. The only worth we find ourselves is in the context of God's Love and predisposition of a gracious attitude. We read elsewhere that God is mindful (thoughtful – has kind thoughts) toward us ([Heb 2:6](#)). The ageless statement of John still stands **“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son...”** John 3:16a (KJV).

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The Conclusion of the Matter – All Men Are Guilty of Sin.

¹⁹ **This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.** John 3:19-20 (NIV).

This all goes back to chapter 1 – men naturally suppress knowledge of God.⁵ It is only the gracious call of the Gospel that brings all men who would respond to a relationship with God.

**Only God can provide the way to knowledge
(a meaningful relationship) of Himself.**

²¹ **But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. ²² This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all**

⁵ [Rom 1:18](#).

who believe. There is no difference, Romans 3:21-22 (NIV).

There is no other way to discover God. He alone can supply the “equipment⁶” to discover and discourse with Himself. It is this Grand Counter-Theme – the Theme that God’s Righteousness can be ours through Jesus Christ, His Son.

ENDNOTES

1. *“Each statement contains the next. Open the first box and you see the second; open the second, and there is the third; and so on to the last. To be a real Jew means really to rest on law; to rest on law means really to glory in God, thus really to know the Will, thus really to test out the essentials. In the case of this moralist these actions are prefaced by the assumptive “if”; but they are one and all most excellent, blessed, and lead to heaven. If this man were what he claims to be, and if he did all these things, he would be saved and all who heard and heeded him, for then he would not in any sense be a moralist.”*

—Lenski New Testament Commentary

⁶ A thought borrowed from Lenski. THE INTERPRETATION OF ST. PAUL’S EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, Pg 178.