

### **3 - So What If I Reject God?**

#### **Romans 1:16-23**

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney

REJECTING the free offer of GOD leads to some horrible CONSEQUENCES for your life!

#### **I. You Will Experience God's Wrath Now and Increasingly in the Future**

**Romans 1:18** "For the wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all godlessness and wickedness of men..."

Paul knows that until you hold of the revelation of God's wrath you won't get very excited about the revelation of His grace. The mercy and grace of God are really incomprehensible apart from the wrath of God.

"... unless we give real content to the wrath of God, unless we hold that men really deserve to have God visit upon them the painful consequences of their wrongdoing, we empty God's forgiveness of its meaning." Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, p. 213

"This means at least one thing: all talk of the love of God without explanation of who God is might as well be an episode of Mister Rogers' Neighborhood. Isolated from the greatness of God, we stifle the wonder of the gospel and short-circuit our joy. We bleach its goodness." Jonathan Parnell, *Desiring God Blog*, June 3, 2012, 04:00 a.m.

The fact that God is rich in mercy and great in love should stun you and leave you amazed because He's also a God who feels indignation everyday against sin. (Ephesians 2:4; Psalm 7:11; 75:8; Deuteronomy 4:24).

##### ○ **Paul tells us that God's settled indignation against sin is happening right now**

**John 3:16** "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

**John 3:36** "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and He who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on Him."

##### ○ **Make sure you understand that 'wrath of God' is not talking about God is losing control**

God's wrath is not capricious or irrational rage. We're not talking about the wrath of God in the same way that our society today talks about 'road rage' where God just loses it. God doesn't EVER just lose it.

The word used in v. 18 is the Greek word *Orgē*. It literally means intense, controlled anger. It's a settled, abiding condition of the mind. It's not impulsive.

God gets angry at sin because one expression of genuine love is that you get angry about things... because you care about it. Passion and anger are closely related. The opposite of biblical anger is not peace... but apathy. You just don't care.

"If God were not angry at injustice and deception and did not make a final end to violence—that God would not be worthy of worship....The only means of prohibiting all recourse to violence by ourselves is to insist that violence is legitimate only when it comes from God....My thesis that the practice of non-violence requires a belief in divine vengeance will be unpopular with many...in the West...[But] it takes the quiet of a suburban home for the birth of the thesis that human non-violence [results from the belief in] God's refusal to judge. In a sun-scorched land, soaked in the blood of the innocent, it will invariably die...[with] other peasant captivities of the liberal mind." Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Abingdon, 1996) quoted in *The Reason for God*, Timothy Keller, pgs 74, 75, 76

**Ephesians 2:1-3** "You He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others."

## II. You'll be Forced to Go On Rejecting the Truth of God All Your Life

v. 18b “who suppress the truth in unrighteousness”

The word used for ‘suppress’ is the Greek word ‘*Katakein*’ – which means to press down with force against something that is exercising counterforce. It’s a deliberate and conscious effort being made that sets you on a path of being a spiritual fugitive for the rest of your life... trying to ignore and suppress the truth of God that’s all around you!

## III. You'll Have No Excuse When You Stand Before Him on the Judgment Day

**Romans 1:19-20** “Because what may be known about God is plain to them, for God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities – His eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.”

It’s one thing to say that it’s POSSIBLE for every person to acquire knowledge of God, but Paul’s saying far more than that right here. He’s saying that everybody ALREADY possesses a knowledge of God.

“I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers. It isn’t just that I don’t believe in God and, naturally, hope that I’m right in my belief. It’s that I hope there is no God! I don’t want there to be a God; I don’t want the universe to be like that.” *The Last Word*, Thomas Nagel, Oxford University Press: 1997

“The flagellum is a whip-like rotary motor that enables a bacterium to navigate through its environment. The flagellum includes an acid-powered rotary engine, a stator, O-rings, bushings, and a driveshaft. The intricate machinery of this molecular motor requires approximately fifty proteins. Yet the absence of any one of these proteins results in the complete loss of motor function. The irreducible complexity of such a biochemical system cannot be explained by the Darwinian mechanism, nor indeed by any naturalistic evolutionary mechanism proposed to date.” William Dembski, "Science and Design," *First Things*, Oct. 1998, No. 86, p. 25.

"Biology is the study of complicated things that give the appearance of having been designed for a purpose." William Dembski, *The Design Inference*, p. 21, quoting Richard Dawkins

"Biologists must constantly keep in mind that what they see was not designed, but rather evolved" William Dembski, *The Design Inference*, p. 21, quoting Francis Crick

The evidence for God is... unmistakable... universal... and undeniable... so you’ve got no excuse!

## IV. You'll Spend the Rest of Your Life Trapped in an World of Pitiful Substitutes for God

**Romans 2:21-23** “because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.”

You see ultimately IGNORANCE is not the big problem that keeps us from God. IDOLATRY is the problem – a refusal to give God the honor and glory that He rightfully deserves.

- What do you do with the glory of God?
- Do you treasure it above all things – or do you cast it aside, trying to quench your thirst with everything else in this world?

Stop running today. Stop pushing. And choose to embrace what you know is true – that’s there’s a glorious God who holds all this in place... and He gave His own Son for you... to redeem you... to make you His own... to set you free.