

THE GOD OF NATURE

Romans 1:18-32

World Population Exceeds 7 Billion

- The Joshua Project estimates that there are 16,825 people groups in the world. Of those, 7,287 are *unreached*, by which they mean "less than 2% Evangelical Christian and less than 5% Christian Adherents". Because there are so few Christians in an unreached people group they will struggle to evangelise their own group with the gospel, which means many Christians believe they need outside missionary help. This represents 2.91 billion people.

God's Wrath – difficult to understand

- II Thessalonians 1:8 – “taking vengeance on those who do not know God and those who do not obey the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.”
- How could God take vengeance on those who do not even know him?
- Romans 1:18ff helps us understand more about God's wrath.

God's Wrath Revealed

- Romans 1:18 – “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of **men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.**”
- God's wrath is not arbitrary, capricious, irrational or sent with passion against man.
- There is a reason for God's wrath.

God's Wrath Revealed

- Wrath is against **UNGODLINESS**.
 - A general conduct of impiety (lack of respect, reverence, or dutifulness)
 - Refers to a perversity that is religious in character (idolatry).
- Wrath is against **UNRIGHTEOUSNESS**.
 - An assault against the righteousness of God.
 - Refers to what is immoral.
- God's wrath is directed against something which is at the same time both ungodly and unrighteousness.

The Crime That Provoked God's Wrath

- **Evil that “suppresses the truth in unrighteousness”** (1:18).
- “Suppresses” has as its most common positive meaning “to hold fast” (I Thess. 5:21).
- The term is used negatively here where people are said to hold the truth in an evil way, to incarcerate or hold it in prison.

What Truth Is Suppressed?

- Paul makes that truth very clear – “because what may be known of God is manifest (plain, clear) in them, for God has shown it to them” (1:19).
- This knowledge of God is not hidden only to be found by a few educated, sophisticated special people but is plain, evident, clear for anyone to see.

A Deliberate Rejection of God

- **“THEY DID NOT LIKE TO RETAIN GOD IN THEIR KNOWLEDGE”** (1:28) – They did not see fit to acknowledge God.
- An obstinate, hostile refusal to acknowledge that which is clearly true.
- They know they are worthy of death for their sinful practices yet they sin and then give approval to those who practice the same sins (1:32).

THE DEVELOPMENT OF FOOLS

- “Professing to be wise, they became fools.” (Rom. 1:22)
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- “Who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the creator...” (Rom. 1:25)
- God permits us to become fools.
 - By pursuing our own lusts.
 - By exchanging the truth for a lie.
 - By allowing us to follow the course of our own desires.

Conclusions

- God has revealed himself in nature.
- The Gentiles knew God.
- They deliberately chose error knowing they were worthy of death.
- God permitted them to become fools and follow their sinful passions and desires.
- **WE DO NOT HAVE TO LIVE LIKE THEM.**