

Romans Week 2

1:18-3:20

Long section, one sustained argument.

Paul is writing primarily to Jews, with Gentiles listening in. [Phoebe] Recap Jews and Gentiles in Rome.

Summary

1:18-23 not honouring God

1:24-32 God gave them up

2:1-11 no excuses, no partiality. God will repay everyone according to their deeds. (v.7)

2:12-16 having the law doesn't help

2:17-29 What matters is not Jewish identity markers, but the state of your heart

3:1-8 What advantages are there for the Jew?

3:9-19 He's not making it all up. Verses to prove it.

He arrives at his main point in 3:20. All have sinned.

Not linear structure. Sometimes there is a thesis statement then elaboration. Sometimes further thesis statement.

Changes in argument style. The rhetoric works well.

1:18-32 catalogue of sins; maybe traditional argument

2:1-5 diatribe. "they" to "you"

2:6-16 "they"

2:17-29 "you" *οὐ* emphasized.

3:1-20 diatribe again. "We"

WRATH OF GOD

Permeates all this section

Isn't God love?

1. Do we have trouble with the idea that God has emotions?
2. Wrath (is it different from anger?)

a feeling of intense anger that does not subside.¹ Different from an outburst of anger.

"The OT implies that anger along with (e.g.) hatred is a proper aspect of being a person. It has a place in the full-orbed character of God and thus in that of the human person made in God's image. . . . The attitude of the psalms and of the martyrs is that when people resist God and persist in oppressing other people, eventually God must punish them for their wrongdoing and free their victims. But such action lies in God's hands, not in ours. We trust God to take action;

¹ Rick Brannan, ed., [*Lexham Research Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*](#), Lexham Research Lexicons (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020).

and “it is an act of profound faith to entrust one’s most precious hatreds to God, knowing they will be taken seriously.” John Goldingay, Psalms Vol. 1. Introduction.

Wickedness.

δικ- words. just, righteous; justice, justification, righteousness, covenant faithfulness

δίκη way, punishment, penalty, lawsuit,

δίκαιος righteous, just

δικαιοσύνη righteousness, justice, justification

δικαιώ make right, justify

2 problems.

a. There is no English word family that covers all of these senses.

b. The words we have have different connotations.

Righteous/self-righteous

Just has legal overtones. Not regularly used to mean “good”.

v. 18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of those who by their wickedness suppress the truth²

Diff between NRSV and NRSVue in v.18. “wickedness” changed to “injustice”. KJV, ESV, NET unrighteousness. NLT wickedness.

No public prosecutor

Accused and defendant

The judge would determine the rights and wrongs of the case and pronounce one side δίκαιος and the other αδικος

“in the right” We wouldn’t say “righteous” and “unrighteous”

Connotations of word “righteous”. We find it incompatible with love. It doesn’t convey justice.

Connotations of word “justify.” Declare not guilty.

All of this makes sections of Romans difficult to understand. On top of Origen’s difficulties we have the added difficulties that come from reading it in translation.

What to do?

Read it in different translations

The New Testament for Everyone

² [*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989), Ro 1:18.

Read large chunks at a time
Don't get hung up with what you don't understand
Get help

"God gave them up" 24, 26, 28. Lots of examples in OT of God's exasperation with people's wilful disobedience. Ps 106:15 LEB

¹⁵ So he gave to them their request,
but he sent leanness into their souls. ³

Slide down into depravity

1:18-23 Homosexuality not the point. May be traditional thinking.

[Susan Eastman: Does Paul Teach Homophobia?

Full text in Evernote]

God said, "OK. Have it your way."

This is what happens.

It's been argued that 1:18-32 is a set-up

[Maybe Phoebe pauses for a drink of water]

Ch. 2

Sharp shift from "they" in ch.1 to "you" (sg.) in ch 2. "Gotcha"

This change in tone lends credence to the view that 1:18-32 is a setup.

2:1-16 Paul is establishing fundamental principles about God, about the human condition, and about salvation⁴

Maccabees. The Pharisees were preparing for the Messiah to return. Trying to make conditions perfect by keeping the law perfectly. Play video.

1-3 beginning of a diatribe

v2. "We know . . ." a commonly accepted idea. It would resonate with the Roman audience.

The Message is good here.

" You didn't think, did you, that just by pointing your finger at others you would distract God from seeing all your misdoings and from coming down on you hard? Or did you think that because he's such a nice God, he'd let you off the hook? Better think this one through from the

³ W. Hall Harris III et al., eds., [*The Lexham English Bible*](#) (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012), Ps 106:15.

⁴ Michael J. Gorman, [*Romans: A Theological and Pastoral Commentary*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2022), 95.

beginning. God is kind, but he's not soft. In kindness he takes us firmly by the hand and leads us into a radical life-change.⁵

⁵ But by your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath, when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. ⁶**For he will repay according to each one's deeds:** to those who by patiently doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; while for those who are self-seeking and who obey not the truth but wickedness, there will be wrath and fury.⁶

v. 6

LEB who will reward each one according to his works:

NRSV **For he will repay** according to **each one's deeds**:

ESV **He will render to** each one according to his works

NIV **God "will repay** each **person** according to **what they have done.**"

NLT **He will judge everyone** according to **what they have done.**

Danger of memorizing individual bible verses!

What counts is not whether you are a Jew or a Gentile.

And this is the message I proclaim—that the day is coming when God, through Christ Jesus, will judge everyone's secret life.⁷

circumcision is a matter of the heart—it is spiritual and not literal⁸

Backdrop to all of this: friction between Jews and Gentiles.

Circumcision one of the identity markers of Jews. (+food laws, sabbath)

"The law" Torah, Pentateuch. Torah means instruction.

3:1 Then what advantage does the Jew have? Much.

3:9 Then are we [Jews] any better off? No, not at all.

Verses to prove it.

v 20 "All" have sinned, i.e. both Jew and Gentile.

Ps 143:2

⁵ Eugene H. Peterson, [*The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language*](#) (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2005), Ro 2:3–4.

⁶ [*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989), Ro 2:5–8.

⁷ Tyndale House Publishers, [*Holy Bible: New Living Translation*](#) (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2015), Ro 2:16.

⁸ [*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989), Ro 2:29.

Notes

God's judgment and kindness

Jews and the law

Hypocrisy; what's the advantage of being a Jew?

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3:9-20 All have sinned

1. 1:18-2:1

This argument is headed to the conclusion in 3:20 [We'll get to the Romans Road later].

Revelation: 1:17 and 18

NLT This Good News tells us how God makes us right in his sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the Scriptures say, "It is through faith that a righteous person has life."

But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people

NRSV For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, "The one who is righteous will live by faith." For the wrath of God is revealed . . .

The righteousness of God is revealed

The wrath of God is revealed

Wrath of God

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3. Do we have trouble with the idea that God has emotions?
4. Wrath (is it different from anger?)

“The OT implies that anger along with (e.g.) hatred is a proper aspect of being a person. It has a place in the full-orbed character of God and thus in that of the human person made in God’s image. . . The attitude of the psalms and of the martyrs is that when people resist God and persist in oppressing other people, eventually God must punish them for their wrongdoing and free their victims. But such action lies in God’s hands, not in ours. We trust God to take action; and “it is an act of profound faith to entrust one’s most precious hatreds to God, knowing they will be taken seriously.” John Goldingay, Psalms Vol. 1. Introduction.

Wrath; natural revelation; no excuse; results of denying God; idolatry; worship of the creature rather than creator; God gave them up.

2:6 according to our deeds

Paul comes back to God’s wrath in 2:7

The place of the law. Maccabees.

1:18 and 19

[ἀσέβειαν καὶ] ἀδικίαν ungodliness and wickedness/injustice

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In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.⁹

There's a lot in the Bible about this. Not a matter of intelligence or education. It's a matter of having your eyes opened.

"God gave them up" 24, 26, 28. Lots of examples in OT of God's exasperation with people's wilful disobedience. Ps 106:15 LEB

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2: the day of wrath, when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. **For he will repay according to each one's deeds:** to those who by patiently doing good seek for glory and honor

⁹ [*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989), 2 Co 4:4.

¹⁰ W. Hall Harris III et al., eds., [*The Lexham English Bible*](#) (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012), Ps 106:15.

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