

The Sinfulness of Holding Down Truth

(Rom 1:18-2:3)

Rom 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

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Review

Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Rom 1:17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

In these two verses Paul proclaimed three important things:

1. That the good message is God's power unto salvation.
2. That in the good message the righteousness of God (even Jesus Christ) is revealed.
3. That one who is just (righteous, right, approved of God) will live his life by faith:
 - believing in the power of God to save.
 - and believing in the righteousness of God (even Jesus Christ).

So the logical questions that would arise are:

“Why do we need the power of God unto salvation?”

“Why do we need the righteousness of God (even Jesus Christ)?”

The answer lies in the next 64 verses that describe the sinfulness of all mankind.

The Sinfulness of Holding Down Truth

I. A general statement about God's wrath against suppressing the truth

Rom 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness (impiety) and unrighteousness (iniquity toward others) of men, who hold (hold down, hold back, detain, hinder) the truth in unrighteousness;

II. Holding down truth about God Himself

A. All men know that there is a Creator God

Rom 1:19 *Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.*

Rom 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:*

Psa 19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.

Psa 19:2 Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.

Psa 19:3 There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.

Act 17:23 For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

Act 17:24 God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

Act 17:25 Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

Act 17:26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

Act 17:27 That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:

Act 17:28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

Act 17:29 Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.

Act 17:30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

B. Many choose to suppress this universal truth of a Creator God

Rom 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.*

Gen 6:5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Ecc 7:29 ...God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.

Deu 28:29 And thou shalt grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways...

Joh 3:19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

C. The fool who worships an idol

Rom 1:22 *Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,*

Rom 1:23 *And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.*

1. The fool who thinks he is wise

Psa 14:1 The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. ...

Pro 26:12 Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him.

1Co 1:19 For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

1Co 1:20 Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

2. The fool who makes a god

Isa 44:14 He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak, which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest: he planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish it.

Isa 44:15 Then shall it be for a man to burn: for he will take thereof, and warm himself; yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread; yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth it; he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto.

Isa 44:16 He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire:

Isa 44:17 And the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god.

Isa 44:18 They have not known nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; and their hearts, that they cannot understand.

Isa 44:19 And none considereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh, and eaten it: and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? shall I fall down to the stock of a tree?

Psa 115:4 Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands.
Psa 115:5 They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not:
Psa 115:6 They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not:
Psa 115:7 They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat.
Psa 115:8 They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them.

Isa 46:1 Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth, their idols were upon the beasts, and upon the cattle: your carriages were heavy laden; they are a burden to the weary beast.

Isa 46:2 They stoop, they bow down together; they could not deliver the burden, but themselves are gone into captivity.

Isa 46:3 Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb:

Isa 46:4 And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.

3. The fool who makes money his god

Col 3:5 ...covetousness, which is idolatry:

Eph 5:5 For this ye know, that no...covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

Mat 6:24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

ITi 6:5 ...supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.

ITi 6:6 But godliness with contentment is great gain.

ITi 6:7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

ITi 6:8 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

ITi 6:10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

ITi 6:17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy:

ITi 6:18 That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;

Heb 13:5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

III. Holding down truth about right and wrong

A. The consequence of denying the truth of the existence of God

—God ceased to providentially suppress their lusts

Rom 1:24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:

Rom 1:25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

Rom 1:26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:

Rom 1:27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.

1. God gave them up

Psa 81:11 But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me.

Psa 81:12 So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels.

Act 7:42 Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness?

Hos 4:17 Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone.

Mat 15:14 Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

2. The lust of the flesh

Lev 18:22 Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination.

Lev 18:23 Neither shalt thou lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith: neither shall any woman stand before a beast to lie down thereto: it is confusion.

Lev 18:24 Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you:

Lev 18:25 And the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants.

B. The consequence of denying the truth of the existence of God

—God ceased to positively influence their minds

Rom 1:28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

1. They did not want God in their minds

Job 21:14 Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.

Job 21:15 What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?

Rom 8:7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

2Ti 4:3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

2Ti 4:4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

2Pe 3:5 For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:

2Pe 3:6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:

2Pe 3:7 But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

2. God gave them over to a reprobate mind

Act 7:42 Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven...

Hos 4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee...

2Co 4:4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

Joh 12:40 He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.

Eph 4:17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,

Eph 4:18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

Eph 4:19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

C. The state of the human mind without God's influence

Rom 1:29 Being filled with all unrighteousness (injustice, wrongfulness, iniquity), **fornication** (the incontinence of unmarried persons, adultery, incest, idolatry), **wickedness** (depravity, malice, plots, sins), **covetousness** (insatiable desire for gain, greediness, fraudulence), **maliciousness** (badness, evil, wickedness); **full of envy** (ill will, jealousy, spite), **murder** (slaughter), **debate** (quarrel, contention, strife), **deceit** (trick, bait, subtlety), **malignity** (bad character); **whisperers** (spreaders of secret, false and malicious accusations),

Rom 1:30 **Backbiters** (slanders, to talk against), **haters of God** (hateful to God, exceptionally irreverent), **despiteful** (insulting, injurious), **proud** (showing one's self to be above others, haughty), **boasters** (braggarts, empty pretenders), **inventors of evil things** (discoverers or contrivers of bad, harm, ill, injury), **disobedient to parents** (perverse, stubborn, inflexible, unyielding, not persuadable),

Rom 1:31 **Without understanding** (foolish, stupid), **covenantbreakers** (no regard to contracts or agreements), **without natural affection** (hardhearted toward kindred, inhuman, unloving), **implacable** (irreconcilable enmity or anger, one who cannot be persuaded to enter into a treaty or covenant), **unmerciful** (without compassion):

D. Though natural man knows God's judgment—He totally disregards God

Rom 1:32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

Rom 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

Seneca: Regarding the state of morality in Rome in New Testament times

“All is full of criminality and vice; indeed much more of these is committed than can be remedied by force. A monstrous contest of abandoned wickedness is carried on. The lust of sin increases daily; and shame is daily more and more extinguished. Discarding respect for all that is good and sacred, lust rushes on wherever it will. Vice no longer hides itself. It stalks forth before all eyes. So public has abandoned wickedness become, and so openly does it flame up in the minds of all, that innocence is no longer seldom, but has wholly ceased to exist.”

Cal Thomas: Regarding the state of morality in America in our time

“When future historians analyze the decline of America, they need look no further than the trivialities increasingly occupying our time and concerns instead of the substantive matters seriously threatening our existence.

The latest in a long list of examples is the two-hour ABC special last Friday devoted to former athlete Bruce Jenner and his coming out as a transgender person. Two hours! ...

What is wrong with us? This constant feeding of our lower nature and fixation on what not long ago was regarded as bizarre, even perverted, is contributing to a warped culture and the devaluing of the qualities necessary to stabilize society. ...

In his forthcoming book “1920: The Year That Made the Decade Roar,” Eric Burns writes that the mass media, birthed in that year by the spread of radio, is largely responsible for diverting our attention from things that matter to things that don’t.

Failed nations usually rot morally from within before they are conquered by invading armies, or collapse under the weight of their immoralities. ...

America is rapidly rotting from within and too many of us are fine with that. Blame it on 1920 if you like, but subsequent generations, including this one, have renewed the lease on the banal and bizarre to our national shame, if we were capable of shame in an age where anything goes.”

IV. Holding down truth about the sinfulness of self

A. The untruthfulness of a self-righteous hypocrite who claims to hold up truth

Rom 2:1 *Therefore thou art excusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.*

Mat 7:1 Judge not, that ye be not judged.

Mat 7:2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

Mat 7:3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

Mat 7:4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?

Mat 7:5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

2Sa 12:5 And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die:

2Sa 12:7 And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man...

Mat 23:28 Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

Mat 23:29 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous,

Mat 23:30 And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.

Mat 23:31 Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.

Joh 8:7 So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.

B. The truth of God’s righteous judgment that judges untruthful hypocrisy

Rom 2:2 *But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.*

Psa 9:8 And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness.

Rom 2:5 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;

Rom 3:4 yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

C. The self-righteous hypocrite is judged along with the blatant sinner

Rom 2:3 *And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?*

Rom 3:9 What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;