***Romans***

We are about to embark on a journey through Paul’s letter to the Romans. While it is written after Thessalonians, Corinthians and Galatians, it is the first of his letters in the canon, in part because it is the longest, weightiest and most influential. Paul writes this letter to the church in Rome, a congregation that had been established by Hebrew Christians. We know from Acts 2:10 that among those who witnessed the events of Pentecost were ‘visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes.’ These people heard Peter’s sermon and given their special mention in the text, may suggest a very early transmission of the gospel to Rome.

In Acts 18:2 there is reference to the Jewish expulsion from Rome by the Emperor Claudius (41-54). The historian Suetonius records that this action was because of “disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus.” Since confusion over ‘i’ and ‘e’ was common in Latin renditions of Greek, it is not a stretch to believe the Roman Jews had become agitated over the proclamation of Jesus as the Christ in their midst (consider Acts 18:1-18). Nero allowed the Jews back in after Claudius’ death in 54, but then persecuted the Christians following the great fire of Rome in 64.

Scholars believe Paul wrote the letter sometime between 54-58, most likely while in Corinth in early 57 (16:1,2 mention Phoebe from near Corinth and Gaius, one of the most prominent converts in the Corinthian church). He writes in anticipation of going to Rome, and given the nearly 2 years it took to convey the gospel in Ephesus there is a desire for them to hear the gospel message and digest it before his arrival. The primary audience is the gentiles (1:14). There is much more speculation about his plans for Spain, anticipating difficulty in traveling back to Judea before coming to Rome. He may have considered that he might not live to declare the gospel in the west. These different considerations all play into his decision to write a systematic letter to the church in order that it may continue to carry out his work.

We could devote much more time to introducing themes that carry through this book, but perhaps a better conclusion to this introduction is to consider the impact of this book on the history of the Church. In 386 Augustine picked up this scroll and upon reading Romans 13:13b-14 wrote, ‘No further would I read, nor had I any need; instantly, at the end of this sentence, a clear light flooded my heart and all the darkness of doubt vanished away.’ In 1513, Martin Luther was attracted to Romans 1:17, but “that phrase, ‘the righteousness of God’ stood in the way of my understanding. Night and day I pondered until… I grasped the truth that the righteousness of God is that righteousness whereby, through grace and sheer mercy, he justifies us by faith.” On May 24 1738 John Wesley was reading Luther’s Preface to Romans, and the description of the change God works in the heart when he felt his own heart strangely warmed. “I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for my salvation.” In 1918 Karl Barth wrote an exposition on Romans in which he said, “The reader will detect that it has been written with a joyful sense of discovery.” So as other theologians have said in recounting this history and wondering how many other lives have been impacted, “Let the reader be prepared for the consequences of reading farther!”

**Chapter 1 – Beginning Outline:**

**Prologue**

**v 1** *Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God.*

The word translated ‘servant’ is Greek, (doulos) meaning ‘slave.’ Paul is completely at his master’s disposal. It highlights from the very beginning his own understanding of his position in the kingdom as one not worthy to be called an apostle, and literally the ‘least’ on the kingdom. Elsewhere we will consider his self-understanding as one who persecuted the church and sought the death of those who followed Christ.

 From this lowest of positions ‘slave’ he has been ‘called’ and ‘set apart.’ His Lord takes first position in all things and Paul lives only to His owner’s good pleasure. It is to serve the purpose of Christ Jesus as an apostle (one who is sent) to preach the gospel (good news) of God. This is not just the good news about God, but it is the gospel that is God’s possession, being and activity in the world. It is God’s plan of salvation that began long ago.

**v 2** *Which He promised beforehand through His Prophets in the holy Scriptures.*

 This speaks to Paul’s high view of scripture as the very Word of God. It declares that the OT Scriptures (the only scriptures in existence at this time) find fulfillment and consummation in this new message of God that Paul has been set apart to preach. This plan of salvation is all of one piece (OT and NT). This statement is further amplified (1:17; 3:21; 4:3, 6-25; 10:5-20; 15:9-12, 21).

**v 3** *Concerning His Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh.*

This begins a short confessional statement (3-4) which might have been as familiar to the Roman Christians as it was to Paul. Jesus, God’s only Son is the subject of this gospel of God. While Jesus self-designation was as the ‘Son of Man,’ He is called ‘Son of David’ (Mark 11:10; 10:47-48) and calls attention to Psalm 110 (Mark 12:35-37). For Jews, the covenant with David, (2 Sam 7) and the continuity of the OT royal line again ties together the OT and NT plan and gospel of God. The phrase ‘according to the flesh’ means by natural descent and is used again (9:5).

**v 4** *And was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by His resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord.* A key to this message is that the three persons of the triune God – Father, Son and the Spirit of holiness – cooperate as one to bring about the salvation of a fallen humanity. Paul holds that the gospel of the Scriptures (OT) and the gospel he is preaching (the NT in formation) speak with one voice regarding the Son who is both true God and true man. His present exalted status as ‘Jesus Christ our Lord’ is brought about by the work of the Spirit of holiness at the resurrection when He is declared Son of God with power. It is not the first time He is declared Son of God (Mark 1:11; Ps 2:7), but at the resurrection it is *with power*. Jesus did not *become* ‘Son of God’ at the resurrection. During His ministry Jesus was the Son of God in weakness and in lowliness. In the mighty working of the Holy Spirit in the resurrection the reign of God comes in a new and powerful way at the climax of His saving mission. This is what the gospel means, “Salvation from death unto life through ‘Jesus Christ our Lord.’”

**Week 2 – Prologue (continued)**

Back to verse 1: First word is self-identification: Paul. It goes on to give a self-description, which emphasizes the call. One of the most important issues in the church today concerns the attitude of scholars and church leaders toward Paul. Many express distaste for Paul, especially in regard to his attitude toward women. The gospels contain the words of Jesus. To many, this gives the gospels much greater authority than these letters of Paul, who is but a man. What does it mean to talk about the ‘canon within the canon’?

The OT prophet Jeremiah writes that God called him while still in his mother’s womb. Does Paul understand his call as dating to the womb? That would highlight the sovereignty of God, ie. God did not just look around after the resurrection to find a messenger. Instead, God guided Paul’s life through his Jewish upbringing and opposition to the church into his call into the preeminent position as an apostle to the gentiles. He became the most significant voice to give shape to the theology of the church. Consider Peter’s own witness concerning Paul’s writings (2 Peter 3:15-16) where he references the difficulty some have in understanding Paul, ‘as they do the other scriptures.’

After calling himself a ‘slave’ of Christ Jesus, he describes himself as an apostle. What is an apostle? What is the difference between a disciple and an apostle? Paul was not a disciple, in a technical sense. He was not one of the eyewitness companions of Jesus during His earthly ministry. Not all of the disciples became apostles (Judas). Descriptions of the early church talk of the apostolic age, when the disciples were sent as messengers who were eyewitnesses. Yet, Paul was an eyewitness of Jesus on the road to Damascus. Paul’s writings give several accounts of this miraculous, life-changing event, at least in part as a means to establish his credibility. There where other witnesses to these things, like those who were with Paul on the journey, and Ananias who came to Paul and was a part of the miracle to restore his sight.

Paul was destined for this role throughout his life. His training in Judaism provided the necessary background to shape his Christian theology. It was God’s purpose to call the most ardent opponent of the early church, a passionate enemy of these followers of Christ, to be a slave of the gospel. Who is in charge? This is the sovereignty of God!

All of this factors into our understanding of the ‘Authority of Scripture.’ Muslims charge that Paul is the primary culprit in corrupting the early church and distorting and changing the message of Jesus from that of a prophet into the blasphemy that regards Jesus as God. Paul’s writings are all prior to his execution, which happened sometime after the fire in Rome (AD. 64) and before Nero’s death (AD 68). The charge is that the Christian emphasis on atonement and a heavenly kingdom comes only after the destruction of Jerusalem in AD. 70, when the zealots, and the earthly hopes of Jesus had been crushed.

**v 5**  *through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name,*

 Grace is the most important word in this letter for us to understand. If you do not understand grace, you cannot understand Romans. Luther describes Paul as having that inner turmoil, and a conversion experience which Luther understood to be parallel to his own. Paul says that he was not moving in that direction. While Luther struggled through the great inner struggle with the law and his inability to live up to it, Paul saw himself as a “Pharisee among Pharisees.” Luther faced a great inner turmoil from his dependence and fear of the law. Paul loved the law. He did not fear it. Paul’s conversion was a complete reversal of everything his life was about. Paul went from being perfectly happy with the course he was on, to being one who from that point forward, lived with constant suffering and persecution.

 In verse 1, Paul described himself as called to be an apostle. The grace he received was for a specific purpose, his calling and vocation as an apostle. This is all for His name’s sake (to the glory of God). Ultimately, I exist so that the name of Christ will be exalted. In Romans 9:17 Paul recalls God’s word to Pharaoh. God told Pharaoh that he had been raised up to make God known among the nations, for the sake of the name.

 Faith is the means by which we receive grace. When we believe God’s Word, listen to His voice, recognize His authority and power, the change that takes place within us is that we desire to obey. The obedience of faith comes from our trust in Him. Paul’s particular mission to the gentiles is again in line with all that God has been about from the very beginning. “Behold, the whole earth is mine, but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation.” This specific mission outside the Jewish community or the descendants of Abraham, is a proclamation of God’s sovereignty over all the world, not just Israel. It is all for the sake of His name, to the glory of God.

**v 6**  *including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,* It is not just Paul who has received this grace. It is a grace being poured out upon people of every tongue and nation. It is a message, a gospel for the whole world.

 In these first seven verses we have a summary of the entire message of scripture. The rest of the book will bring it from the macro-view into a much more detailed description of all that God is doing.

**v 7**  *To all God’s beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

At the end of all this, finally in verse 7, we have the salutation and greeting. It is notable that this work comes only from Paul. Others of his letters contain words of greeting from others in his entourage. This is completely personal. It is written to the community, to God’s beloved in Rome. The grace he has received is not exclusive but comes to many, even in this the capital of the empire of the world. Besides the well-wishes, Paul makes a statement here about the ‘saints’, who like himself are ‘set apart’ for God, and especially are being made increasingly ‘holy’ by the Holy Spirit. As grace is the most important word in this book, Paul understands that everything that is happening to them is a part of God’s grace being showered upon them. In OT terminology, the beloved of God are the elect who are sure of these things in their calling. The word ‘saint’ transfers the OT understanding of the chosen people of God to this early Christian community. The last words are just as important. Mercy and grace come, not just as a spiritual power, but on earth the divine order of peace comes as a sphere of life that is open-ended and without fear. It is dependent upon the fact that God truly became our Father (covenant of baptism) and Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Week 3 – Prologue (continued)**

Further notes: **v 2**; Holy Scriptures, designation that reminds us why the Bible is so often called the Holy Bible. Emphasis in this verse is on the Word of God promised and fulfilled.

**v 3** The good news is about the Son, who is the central figure in the salvation of the world. Beyond the 2 Samuel 7 text, many others from OT that make this reference (Isaiah 11:1; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Ezekiel 34:23-24). All three major prophets highlight this promise, and elsewhere in the NT are more references to Jesus as the seed of David. Remember the question about David’s son (Mark 12:35-37; Mt 22:41-46; Luke 20:41-44) that references Ps 110. The words, “according to the flesh” imply that He is more than what He seems to be, that is, more than human.

**v 5 “**The obedience of faith” I have already mentioned this as a natural outcome of faith, but it deserves further comment. If we begin with Paul’s initial word of self-identification, *doulos,* it gives much greater strength to the importance of obedience. It is to see my purpose as that of doing the will of the master. We cringe at this, especially when we think of the history of slavery, and the evil behaviors associated with it. I mentioned before the importance of reading this in light of the story of the prodigal son. We are concerned with the character of the master. When the master is good and loving and concerned with our best interest, we can obey because we understand that the directions given are good for us. This is focused on God.

The other angle is about the difference within us. This is about faith. We do His will because we believe what He says. We believe when He tells us that He is for us and for our salvation. It is about truly believing His Word rather than our natural reaction as we find it in Genesis 3. “Did God really say?” Luther emphasized that true faith is a *Fides Viva,* a living faith, or a faith that actually acts according to what it believes.

In Romans 10:17 we read, “So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the Word of Christ.” This is faith, listening to God in order that we might continue to grow in our knowledge of God. In John 8:31-32 Jesus says, "If you continue in my Word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” In John 17:3, Jesus prays to the Father, “This is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.” If we truly know Him we will glorify His name.

**v 6** This letter is addressed to the Christians in Rome, but it comes to us with the same message. As you hear these words, you are being called by God. My initial notes talked about the message for the whole world. Here the emphasis is on personalizing the message. You, are the one addressed and Paul’s hope for those in Rome who read this is now for you. This is about the magnitude of the message being conveyed, not because it is the word of Paul, but because it is the Word of God to people in this world who are lost, under the judgment of God because of sin. It is a matter of life and death. We are not looking at significance in the size of this book, or the author, but in relation to the God to whom it points. Notice that this word ‘called’ is repeated, in vs. 7.

When we started looking at the impact that this book has had on leaders and reformers of the church in multiple generations, it is because they saw and understood the significance of the message that comes to us through Paul.

 Our natural inclination is to think in terms of our freedoms and rights. The call to Christ is not about rights. The only secure argument for rights in relation to other people is that God has given them to us, that is on the horizontal level, in relation to other creatures. On the vertical level, what basis do we have for arguing for rights? If we, with our hard hearts, and stiff necks, have rebelled against our creator, what do you think we have within ourselves that we can rely on. There is nothing. That is what the words of judgment say. “You are dust and to dust you shall return.” We have no rights in relation to God. We have no basis for complaint about anything we receive from God. All condemnation from God is just and all salvation from God is grace. The only thing that can save us is a gracious God. We have no right to claim anything from God. The kingdom of God is not a democracy. The only thing we are entitled to, the only thing we have earned from God, is wrath. If you don’t get that, you do not understand sin. We can’t understand the gospel if we think we have rights before God.

We are called to belong to Christ. This brings us back to Paul’s self-identification. He knows that he is a slave. That is the proper word to describe who we are in relation to the sovereign, almighty creator of the universe.

Three underlying assumptions that we must accept to understand Paul’s argument:

1. God does the calling – You are the called of Jesus Christ

2. Not everybody is called – Only some are called

3. The call is effective – It creates what it commands

We will not come to the explicit description of these assumptions until chapters 8 and 9. It is good for us to know now where this argument is headed. Romans 8:28 is one of the most difficult passages in scripture for people to hear in the midst of suffering and adversity. “We know that all things work together for good, for those who love God and are called according to His purpose.” It is a reminder that not all things are good for all people. All things work together for good for the elect, the chosen, the ones who are called by God. In effect it is telling us that the only ones who can trust in this word are the ones who believe in Christ as their savior and know that they do not live for this life only. The full realization of all that God has promised us comes only when we have passed from death into life. While we know that in faith the life we live now continues into all eternity, we also know that we still must pass through the transition from this world of sin and slavery, into the heavenly promised land.

It will be a long time until we get to Romans 8 and 9, but read over those verses (8:28-30) few times so that they can be in your mind as we read these earlier chapters. Paul’s understanding of grace was profoundly shaped by his own experience of God’s call. That call is to be part of the One, Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church (Nicene Creed). This is how we describe the church, the body of Christ. If we do not out of faith, obey Christ, the apostolic ministry that is to be our new life in Christ, aborts. It becomes like seed (Mark 4) that falls on rocky ground, or the path, or the weeds, and may give the appearance of new life, but can never bear fruit worthy of repentance. The only future left is to be cut down and thrown into the fire (Matthew 3:8-10).

**Week 4 – Chapter 1 – Prayer of Thanksgiving**

**v 8** *First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed throughout the world.* It begins ‘first’ but there is no second. He addresses the church at Rome in the most personal terms. It begins with thanksgiving, acknowledging that it is God who is at work in the world changing hearts and creating His church. Because these Christians reside at the center of the Roman Empire, the things happening there become known throughout the Roman world. We should remember that perhaps 20% of the population in Rome were Jews or God-fearers, those who believe in the God of Israel. Events there are known, in particular when we recognize the expulsion of the Jews that took place from 41-54 A.D. (at the instigation of a certain Chrestus). This would have included Jews and Christians, as they were not distinguished as separate groups by the Romans until the time of Nero. Paul is happy with their faith, not necessarily their piety. He is simply happy that there are Christians in Rome.

**v 9**  *For God, whom I serve with my spirit by announcing the gospel of his Son, is my witness that without ceasing I remember you always in my prayers,* “For God is my witness,” speaks to a truth that is only known to God, that he is constantly in prayer for these people. These prayers are a part of his purpose, his service to God in the proclamation of the gospel. The gospel of His Son, should be understood in the same way as the gospel of God in v1. There is nothing superficial about Paul’s service. It comes from his inmost being. “*My spirit*,” reflects a heart that has been changed by God.

**v 10** *asking that by God’s will I may somehow at last succeed in coming to you.*  Paul is writing this as the apostle to the gentiles, and out of his desire to come to Rome, even as he writes he is about to go in the opposite direction, to Jerusalem.

**v 11** *For I am longing to see you so that I may share with you some spiritual gift to strengthen you—* Paul is emphasizing his deep and strong desire, not to get something from them, but to give something to them. It should not be read as coming to give them a specific gift of the Spirit, but in the sense that their faith may be strengthen through his ministry.

**v 12** *or rather so that we may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith, both yours and mine.* It is not only the ones who hear the word that benefit from ministry. He does not want to be boastful or patronizing, Christian life is about relationship, and in any godly relationship there is mutuality. This is a simple truth. Paul will bring something to them, all that he is able, but will also receive from them in the strengthening and encouraging of his faith.

**v 13** *I want you to know, brothers (and sisters), that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in order that I may reap some harvest among you as I have among the rest of the Gentiles.* While his words of intent may be seen as expressing affection, he does not know the people in Rome. Paul often uses ‘my brothers’ as a form of address (sisters is a modern inclusion), which implies the warmth of feeling he had for all who were kin to him in Christ. His coming to Rome is with purpose, that he might ‘get some fruit.’ His words seem to have a double meaning, that the harvest would be his gain and theirs. He had been the means of bringing people to faith in Christ elsewhere in the Gentile world. Now he looks for the same thing to happen in Rome. Paul had an extensive ministry, working among other Gentiles without exception. He comes to the church in Rome that also has many Gentiles and may even be predominantly Gentile.

**v 14** *I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish* Paul’s self-understanding, ‘a debtor’ suggests that his commission as the apostle to the Gentiles put him under an obligation to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, at Rome as elsewhere. There is much speculation in commentaries over the specific debt to which Paul refers. Thus Barclay says, “Obligation to him who died produces obligation to those for whom he died.” Earle speaks of “a vast amount of unnumbered blessings he had received from God”[[1]](#footnote-1) Others reject this and understand the words in the sense “having an obligation to them in the sense that God has laid upon him a duty toward them.” It is significant that he speaks of being a debtor, not to God, but to the Gentiles. It is in this regard that Corinthians 4 (1st and 2nd) bring a clarity to Paul’s self-understanding. The debt is not to God because the gospel is a free gift from God. If it is free, then there can be no obligation or debt. The existence of a debt following receipt of the gospel would imply that it is not really free. Instead, Paul’s sense of debt is to all those who were more deserving of God’s grace and mercy, meaning the weight and gravity of their sin was less than that of Paul. For Paul, many in the world stand in opposition to God merely in terms of indifference or irrelevance to their lives. There are others who have been active opponents of God, but in Paul’s time he stood out for his opposition and hatred toward everything related to Jesus of Nazareth. Again, It is the wonder of how and through whom God works. To Paul, as chief of sinners, there is a debt to everyone in the world who was not as unworthy, not in such direct and absolute opposition. There are issues in this interpretation that we can talk about, but it is clear that Paul comes with an attitude of looking at others as better than himself. Consider the categories he uses. It is not only to the Greeks, those non-Jews of the civilized world, but also to barbarians, the uncivilized hordes. While he excelled in wisdom, he has a debt to those who are viewed as wise by the world, but also to those who are foolish. He refers to those who think they understand the world, the wise, and also to those who have no understanding at all. He is in debt to all people and wants to discharge that debt.

**v 15** *—hence my eagerness to proclaim the gospel to you also who are in Rome.* Paul says here, that because I am bound or in debt to all men, I am ready and desire to proclaim the gospel in Rome. Whatever has prevented Paul from coming to Rome has not been his own fault. What has prevented his earlier appearance there are matters outside his own control. He will seize upon the gospel time and again as it is the one thing that matters in this world. It speaks to what takes priority in his life, and as he began in v1, “he is set apart for the sake of the gospel.” Why preach the gospel to Christians? He writes to his readers as Romans, rather than Christians. They have heard and believed the simple message of salvation through Jesus Christ. Paul comes to bring that message to other unbelievers, and to bring the full weight and content of God’s word so that they may become true disciples.

**Week 5 – Chapter 1 – The Power of the Gospel**

The thesis of the book is presented in these 2 verses. *The Righteous Shall Live by Faith.*

**v 16** *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.* Does this continue the previous thought, or jump into the argument? Harrisville argues, “Here, the introductions are gotten out of the way, and the apostle takes to the pulpit and launches into his theme without bothering with introductions or prefaces.” Others note the seamless flow of a subordinate clause, that he is eager to preach because he is not ashamed, because it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes.

 The first clause in itself is worthy of extensive study and explanation. *I am not ashamed of the gospel,* is a remarkably odd comment to begin sharing something that is held to be so wonderful. If you thought you had found the cure for cancer would you even consider being ashamed of sharing that good news? Many have hesitated to share the gospel because of fear to the reaction or response. We can get this in regard to all kinds of opinions that we express. Paul’s words have a much deeper significance, when understood in the backdrop of other statements in his writings that draw on even OT imagery (Isa 8:14, Ps 118:22; See also 1 Corinthians 1:18-25). Remember the image from the Circus Maximus, Alexamenos graffiti.

 Whatever the public perception of this good news, however foolish or scandalous, Paul is eager to preach it because it is the power of God for salvation. The immediate concern is the linkage between power of God and salvation. It is not concerned with how it works, but that it does work, and accomplishes its purpose for those who believe. Salvation is also a broad concept. We understand that not only the Jews, but even Jesus’ own disciples had difficulty in comprehending the salvation that God had in mind. Consider the question is Acts 1:6. Salvation includes the forgiveness of sin, and the themes of justification, sanctification, reconciliation, and redemption.

 This verse ends with priority given to the Jews. They are the chosen people of God. Theirs are the scriptures and the history of living in close relationship with God since the time of Abraham. Jesus says, “Salvation is from the Jews” (John 4:22). In the call of Abraham, God emphasized that Abraham was blessed in order to be a blessing (Genesis 12:1-3). The covenant at Sinai begins with a statement of purpose for the Israelites. You shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation (Exodus 19:6) They are the people that serve as God’s means of making His name known throughout the world to people of every tongue and nation. This priority also has a downside. God is more patient with those who are far from him. In 2:9 Paul will also give the Jews the position of priority in judgment.

**v 17** *For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”* This is a further elaboration on the previous verse. The gospel means salvation for those who receive it by faith, because it discloses “a righteousness from God.” Paul depends here upon the OT scriptures (Isa 46:11-13, 61:10). God’s righteousness is the way he acts in maintaining the covenant (Ziesler). This is about the character of God, in that what He does and provides must be in keeping with His nature. The gospel would not be good news if it simply disclosed the righteousness of God. Such a message would not demand faith. In view of man’s sinful state, it could only create fear. If the salvation as God provides it and offers it is fully in keeping with His righteous character, then it has integrity. If it satisfies God, man can be content with it. God’s righteousness in this context, while it has an implied reference to His character, stresses divine provision.

What is meant by the twofold reference to faith? A longer version might read, “because the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel at the place of and tending toward (or, for the purpose of creating) faith.“ Faith is the place at which God’s righteousness is revealed in the gospel. Righteousness belongs to God alone. In Plato’s book, *Republic*, righteousnessis the goal of life. That righteousness is obtained by a knowledge with which the immortal soul already comes equipped, and needing only to be recollected. To the worldly wise, this is the most eloquent and thoughtful statement of an opinion that has seized the human race since its beginning – righteousness is something to be achieved. The Christian faith stands in opposition to Plato and all the worldly wise. Righteousness belongs to God alone. That can only be comprehended in faith and it is meant to create faith in the hearts of those who believe.

This introduction of the theme concludes with Habakkuk. “The righteous shall live by faith.” The Christian is not only justifies by faith, but is also expected to live by faith in order to please God. This emphasis has its place, but only when the initial problem of the sinner has been met.

**The Wrath of God - Romans 1:18-32**

This passage has become difficult to even bring up in conversation with non-believers in our time. In September a new article noted that at Princeton Seminary a student had posted the ‘smash text’ on a school blog. The school response was that every student had to receive sensitivity training. The ‘smash text’ is the LGBTQ description of these verses from Romans 1.

The opening words strike at the difficulty for many in the modern church. When most want to hear about a God of love, Paul introduces us first to this God who executes his wrath upon a sinful creation.

**v 18** *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.* Paul launches into a lengthy exposure of the sinfulness of Man. Until humanity is persuaded of its lost condition, it cannot have any appreciation of the good news. The first step in Paul’s demonstration that all humanity is exposed to the wrath of God because of sin is the assertion that we are liable to judgment because of the specific sin of idolatry. God’s wrath is not an emotion. It is problematic for human views of justice, since the condemnation is sweeping and comprehensive. Humanity’s guilt is associated with its fate. God’s righteousness is opposed when people bound or ban the truth. In this verse, truth is something specific that is to be known – *The Truth.* What is ‘the truth?’ It is what can be known about God. The truth has to do with the conditions that ought to prevail between God and man. But that truth has been questioned from the very beginning. “Did God really say?”

**Week 6 – Chapter 1 – The Wrath of God – Romans 1:18-32 (cont)**

**v 18 (cont)** The wrath of God is about God’s justice. If God is a God of justice, then sin must be punished. The scriptures reveal this truth about God. It is only when we truly recognize the reality of God’s glory and holiness that we come to a full knowledge of our own character and depravity. In Jesus’ high priestly prayer (John 17:3) Jesus prays, “This is eternal life, that they know You the only true God and Your Son whom You have sent.” How do we know God? There is general revelation in all of creation and the specific revelation of the scriptures. This general revelation is revealed from heaven in everything that God has made. One should note the present tense “is,” implies that God’s justice is always present. Schiller said, *“The history of the world is the judgment of the world.[[2]](#footnote-2)”* Karl Barth taught that the revelation of God’s wrath, like the revelation of His righteousness, occurs in the preaching of the gospel, which, at its heart is the preaching of the cross.

v **19** *For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.*

That which is plain is the general revelation that is available to every person, whether or not they have ever heard the scriptures or even God’s children the Israelites. This is also known as *‘Natural Theology.’* There is a strong line of arguments that reject the concept of *Natural Theology*, but a part of the argument rests on what we mean by this revelation. It is not a specific revelation of the God as we find in the Bible. Anything that we may learn from creation is limited to the basic awareness of a creator. *“The human mind perceives that whatever lies beyond must be the Creator, who alone should be worshipped.[[3]](#footnote-3)”*

Other theologians argue that there are no true atheists; that people are rebelling against the thought that they have to answer to someone. The denial of God is a lie. One of the most powerful arguments against God is, that if God is so good why is there so much evil in the world? Russian author, Dostoyevsky responded, “If there is no God, all things are permissible.” That is, if there is no God, then the whole concept of good and evil becomes meaningless. Any talk about good or bad becomes nothing more than personal subjective opinion. To call Hitler evil, becomes nothing more than a statement of personal opinion, while others will argue that it was a utopian vision trying to create heaven on earth, *“A Thousand Year Reich,”* or *“The Workers Paradise.”*

v **20** *For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.* Psalm 8 is but one way we might reflect on this claim. (see Psalm 19:1-4) *“On contemplating God’s works, man can grasp enough of His nature to prevent him from the error of identifying any of the created things with the Creator, enabling him to keep his conception of the Deity free from idolatry.’[[4]](#footnote-4)”* Harrisville reads this verse as Paul writing a ‘legal brief,’ showing that God gives to humankind the possibility of knowing Him, in order that at the final judgment there may be no charge of mistrial. God may be perceived in His works, but the creature refuses Him reverence, commits idolatry and ignores His judgment. In other words, bringing to consciousness or reflection of what is before the eye – the created order, one sees God’s invisibility, His eternal power and deity.

v **21** *For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.* The wisdom of the world, which opposes God’s wisdom, embraces not merely intellectual learning, but a type of existence – the world. Though able to acknowledge God as creator and thus to honor Him, the world actively rejects such knowledge as is manifest in creation and attempts to create its own. Again it is not simply the possibility, but the actuality of the knowledge of God, which is asserted.

v **22** *Claiming to be wise, they became fools,* (see 1 Corinthians 1:20-21) God makes folly of human wisdom, though here it is the route to folly that is described, not folly as the end result.

v **23** *and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.* Paul is shaping his argument after the biblical account of Adam’s sin. Adam was made in the image of God, but ignores God’s Word in order to be ‘like’ God. God’s glory, (the ‘weight’ of His eternal power and deity, able to be perceived by means of or in the created order) is bartered off not merely for a mortal, but for the likeness of an image of a mortal – for that which is twice removed from what is human. (Psalm 106 esp. 14 and 48, the golden calf) At the heart of the case is that the primary sin here is idolatry. The even more insidious result of rejecting God as our Lord is that we now take as Lord – ourselves! We are substituting the darkness of our own desires for the light of God as Lord of creation. It is the temptation to which Adam and Eve succumbed: the temptation to become God, and hence Lord themselves, in Paul’s view is the continuing root of our trouble. Idolatry brings in its wake terrible consequences, which multiply themselves for anyone who contemplates seriously the state of the world. The analysis of both human society and human nature enables Paul’s message to be presented to our world with considerable force.

**v 24** *Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves,* This is the first of three statements that “God gave them up.” It should be frightening to all when we recognize the full weight of God’s wrath comes not in fire from heaven, but in what many mistake as a sign of God’s grace. This wrath consists in God simply letting humanity have its own way. The punishment for sin is therefore simply sin. It is not wrath and punishment imposed as a restraint upon us, but permissiveness. God punishes sin by letting us have control over our own destinies. We are given freedom to do whatever the inclination of our desires. Our own present society resembles Paul’s description in these verses. What is seen as a celebration of life freed from the constraints of the Word of God is therefore a celebration of the visitation of God’s wrath upon humankind. Luther asked, *“What is more just, than that those who turn away from the glory of God should be dishonored, not only in their hearts (and this is idolatry) but also in their bodies?”* Sexual perversion is simply an outgrowth of the violation of the created order.

**Week 7 – Chapter 1 – The Wrath of God – Romans 1:18-32 (cont)**

**v 24 (cont)** The word παρέδωκεν, Paul uses when saying God ‘gave over’ to captivity those who turned away from him is used extensively in the LXX. God is said to hand people over to their enemies or to deliver people’s enemies into their hands (cf., e.g., Gen. 14:20; Exod. 23:31; Lev. 26:25; Num. 21:34; Deut. 1:27; 21:10; Josh. 7:7; Judg. 13:1; 1 Sam. 14:10; 1 Kgs. 8:46; 2 Chr. 13:16; Isa. 19:4; 36:15; Jer. 21:10; Ezek. 11:9). This is also true in the NT (cf., e.g., Matt. 5:25; 10:17; 17:22; 24:9; Mark. 14:41; Luke. 20:20; Acts. 3:13; 1 Cor. 5:5; 2 Cor. 4:11; 1 Tim. 1:20). The implication is that there is more involved than the natural outworking of people’s choices when they turn away from God. God Himself consigns them to captivity in their sins (Might we call this addiction?). Simply stated, this is not passive abandonment but an active consignment on God’s part.

v **25** *because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.* This seems to be a direct reference to Genesis 3, “Did God really say?... …you will not die.” Adam and Eve believed the lie of the serpent instead of the truth of God and in effect worshipped the creature (the serpent) rather than the creator (God). Chrysostom comments: ‘Look how strong his condemnation is, for he does not say merely that they served the creature but that they did so more than the creator, thereby giving fresh force to the charge against them and removing any plea for mitigation’.[[5]](#footnote-5) Note that in 1 Thessalonians 1:9 Paul describes people’s response to the gospel in opposite terms: “you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.” This verse ends with a typical Jewish/ biblical way of referring to God.

**v 26** *For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature;* (This is an expansion of the charge made in vs. 24, 25) This is the second time Paul says, “God gave them up.” The word translated here, ‘relations,’ is frequently used in extra biblical literature to denote sexual intercourse. The word ‘natural’ is used by Paul to describe what people are by birth (Gal 2:15, Eph 2:3) or the natural order of things (Romans 11:21, 24; 1 Cor. 11:14; Gal 4:8). Paul’s description is similar to many others in ancient literature, including Plato, Philo, Josephus, Seneca, and Plutarch. Chrysostom maintains: ‘But when God abandons a person to his own devices, then everything is turned upside down. Thus not only was their doctrine satanic, but their life was too.… How disgraceful it is when even the women sought after these things, when they ought to have a greater sense of shame than men have’.[[6]](#footnote-6) It is generally assumed this means female homosexual practice, especially given the words, “in the same way” used of male homosexual practice in the next verse. There is a strikingly egalitarian note in Paul’s treating same-sex intercourse among females as an issue in its own right and holding women to the same level of accountability as men. It is nevertheless clear that Paul’s choice and description of the lesbian example reflect confidence that his audience, shaped by a similar philosophical and religious heritage, “will share his negative judgment” ’.[[7]](#footnote-7)

v **27** *and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.* Adding to his statement about women, Paul says “men likewise” have done the very same thing. It is not the same physical act, but the male equivalent. In some ways this is a more difficult case given his cultural setting and the positive evaluation of homoeroticism by some Greco-Roman writers and its popularization among the Roman ruling class, including Emperor Nero. The link Paul uses is evidence that is involves the same ’passion of dishonor,’ which continues with his further rhetorical effort to establish the despicable quality of homosexuality. To be ‘inflamed with their lust for one another’ is rare and derogatory language in the NT, but heat and flame are typically associated with sexual passion in Greco-Roman sources. As if he has not made it clear enough yet, he gives a more graphic description, adding, “men committed shameful acts with other men.” They were handed over (by God) to the tyranny of their own lusts as a due ‘penalty’ for their ‘perversion.’ When we talk about healthcare in this country, and recently focused upon pre-existing conditions, we must also talk about the cost of care incurred from a whole host of self-inflicted maladies. Venereal disease or in common language, sexually transmitted diseases, have a huge impact on our society. It is a difficult topic, because which of us does not have self-inflicted health issues. As one who is over weight, I recognize that there are health consequences of gluttony. While these things may be difficult to talk about, there needs to be some acknowledgment that if one abides by a biblical sexual ethic, there will be little concern about contracting such things. It is not that it drops to zero, but that the others means of contracting these disease result in a statistically minimal population. The final phrase in this verse comes across rather weak, such that, “due penalty for their error” has been rendered by others as ‘the fitting wage of such perversion.’

I must note here that there are numerous contemporary efforts to achieve a new and modern understanding of these words. Those making the case for acceptance of homosexual practice within the Christian community argue that the true sin under discussion here is a very particular form of sexual promiscuity, that Paul is attacking because of its idolatrous nature. That line of argument tries to make the case that such practice done in the context of a loving and monogamous and committed or covenantal relationship does not come under the scope of Paul’s attack. This is where the bishops comments, “The biblical writers lacked our modern understanding of homosexual orientation” must be dealt with in our modern context.

How do we understand the inner-self? Must we accept every internal analysis and self-identification? Where are we at in our understanding of nature versus nurture? Would it matter to this discussion if a scientist identified a ‘gay’ gene? Finally there is the whole matter of ‘hate speech’ and how these verses have been placed in that category.

**Week 8 – Chapter 1 – The Wrath of God – Romans 1:18-32 (cont)**

**v 28** *And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.* This verse is probably most central to the arguments that these verses have nothing to do with modern committed monogamous homosexual relationships, or the whole concept of same-sex marriage, but is instead a polemic against idolatry. While idolatry, and the refusal to acknowledge God as God is at the heart of Paul’s case, the actions or what is described, as sin in these verses is still sin. It is God’s function to judge, but men have usurped that prerogative in order to sit in judgment on Him and dismiss Him from their lives. There is also the matter of what is in ones heart motivating an action, which can turn the deed that looks good to others as an external action into sin. Paul is not talking about anything that is remotely good. This is now the third time that Paul says, “God gave them up,” again implying that they are to experience the tyranny of their own sinful behavior. We might expand these words to say, “Since they did not think it worthwhile to maintain a knowledge of God, restraint is removed so that the bondage of sin might have free reign in their lives.” This is about the mind. It is about what we think and how we think. God has given us a mind that it might come to the knowledge of God and bring glory to God. Their minds are depraved, led by their own depraved reason, because they reject the God made known to them in all creation. In the Greek it is a play on words, “since they did not think it *worthwhile* to acknowledge God, He gave them over to the tyranny of a mind that was not *worthwhile*, a mind so debilitated and corrupted as to be an absolutely untrustworthy guide in moral decisions. God gave them up and they proceeded to do ‘what ought not to be done.’ When human thought loses its norm, it does what is improper.

v **29***They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips,* Paul commences to describe the things that ‘*ought not to be done*.’ It begins with the general terms of the problem, every kind of wickedness (unrighteousness - ἀδικίᾳ), evil, greed, and depravity. Then he moves into greater detail. Most of these descriptions are self-explanatory. This third level of debasement moves beyond sexual activity, the misuse of ones own body, to a catalog of activities expressing hatred and hostility to others. Evil is filled with ethical overtones, signifying what is sinister and vile. It is the term used when the devil is called ‘the evil one.’ Covetousness or greed indicates the relentless urge to acquire more. Malice or ‘depravity’ indicates a condition of moral evil, emphasizing its internal and resident character or ‘the evil habit of the mind.’

It is important when considering this list, to recognize that letting us have our own way is not a measure of God’s grace, but the visitation of His wrath. The discipline, which does not let us do whatever comes into our heads, is not a form of evil, it is the very essence of grace. In that light it can be seen that to put oneself under the lordship of God is an act that opens us up to grace and protects us from wrath. It is that lordship whose discipline keeps us from ruining our lives with idolatry, and all the consequences of it Paul has been describing. The gracious dimension of discipline is a message that needs to be heard. Abusive discipline is not gracious, but lack of discipline is equally evil. (see Gal 5:19-21)

v **30** *slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,* The first word plays off of the previous verse, from ‘gossips,’ who whisper slander in the listener’s ear, to general slander which extends from the whisper to shouting from the rooftop. While whispers are more dangerous in their hidden nature to the overt public actions, all are vicious and ruthless. The God-haters designates hatred and enmity towards God. The next four sins seem to portray different and extreme forms of pride. Finally, there are two more independent thoughts that include inventiveness in relation to evil, and rebelliousness in relation to parents.

v **31***foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.* This is the end of the list, four negatives that the Jerusalem Bible renders as, “without brains, honor, love or pity.”

v **32** *Though they know God’s righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.* As the chapter comes to an end, we have a concluding summary of the human perversity Paul has been describing. First, *they know*. There is knowledge that these people possess, this time ‘God’s righteous decree’ (rather than truth), that those who do such things deserve death. Later he will write, *‘the wages of sin is death’* (6:23). They know this. Their conscience condemns them. They know, but disregard their knowledge. They not only continue to do these sins, but even worse, they actively encourage others to do the same, and so flagrantly *approve* of evil behavior of which God has expressed His disapproval. Ambrosiaster commented, “*Their wickedness is double, for those who do such things but prevent others are not so bad, because they realize that these things are evil and do not justify them. But the worst people are those who do these things and approve of others doing them as well, not fearing God but desiring the increase of evil. They do not seek to justify them either, but in their case it is because they want to persuade people that there is nothing wrong in doing them.”* We have come to the end of Paul’s portrayal of depraved Gentile society. It’s essence lies between what people know and what they do. God’s wrath is specifically directed against those who deliberately suppress truth for the sake of evil. ‘*Dark as the picture here drawn is*,’ wrote Charles Hodge, ‘*It is not so dark as that presented by the most distinguished Greek and Latin authors, of their own countrymen.*’ Paul was not exaggerating.

There is much more modern commentary on the nature of the homosexual practice condemned by Paul. Did he condemn all forms of homosexual practice or only certain expressions of it? It is crucial to this discussion what he meant by ‘nature’ in this context, and in particular what he understood to be ‘contrary to nature.’ To summarize, Paul did not impose Jewish customs and rules on his audience. He addressed same-sex relations from a multicultural perspective of God’s created order. Nor was homosexuality simply a sin practiced by idolaters; it was a distorting consequence of the fall. Paul did not describe homosexual acts by heterosexuals. Instead he wrote that homosexual activity was an exchange of the created order (hetero) for perversion (homo), which is never presented in Scripture as an acceptable norm for sexuality.[[8]](#footnote-8)

**Week 9 - Chapter 2 Critical Moralizers (2:1-16)**

Having declared the depraved Gentile world to be guilty and inexcusable, Paul now turns his attention to Jewish people. This is an understandable viewpoint, since the classification of the human race into Jews and Gentiles is mentioned on numerous occasions throughout the letter, and one of the apostle’s main purposes in writing is to demonstrate that Jews and Gentiles are equal in sin and equal in salvation.

There is some dispute of this view, as there is no explicit address to a Jew until verse 17. Thus many look at 1-16 as still addressed to Jews and gentiles alike. Some suggest that Jews are the hidden target all along, but that he implies a gentile audience in order to gain their confidence before turning the table on them in v17 and following. In the end it is a critique of everyone (Jew and gentile) who is a moralizer. (Think some of current religious practice described as *Moralistic, Therapeutic, Deism.)* Both groups have knowledge of God and both contradict that knowledge by their behavior. The judgment of God that is inescapable, righteous and impartial is upon all self-appointed judges.

**v 1** *Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things.* *‘Therefore’* ties into the next argument. Here is our human pattern. We are often as harsh towards others as we are lenient towards ourselves. He repeats ‘no excuse’ (1:20). Many suggest this is more directed to the Jews, because beyond natural revelation, they also have the Law and the Prophets. The ‘same things’ Paul describes are most likely pride and presumption. This relates to the Jews attitude of favored, or superior status as the chosen people of God that underlies so much Jewish disparagement of Gentile religion. They need the reminder of Exodus 19:6, where God said, “*Behold the whole earth is mine, but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation.”* Their status is not about being better than other people, but simply the ones whom God has chosen to work through for the sake of all humanity. As a Jew, deeply embedded in the religious practice Paul understood how they found amble reason to pass moral judgment upon gentiles. He will repeat the phrase, ‘to the Jew first, and also to the Greek’ (2:9-10), which in the end emphasizes that the Jew will face priority in judgment because they knew the law.

**v 2***We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things.* Paul starts this with ‘we,’ to include his audience with himself. He presumes general agreement with God’s judgment against such evil is just and based on truth. What should come to mind here is the Lord’s Prayer, where we say, *“For give our debts and we forgive our debtors.”* We should expect before God the same treatment as we practice toward others. We also must acknowledge that as sinners, we are under the same condemnation.

**v 3***Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God?*  Paul draws on *The Wisdom of Solomon* in these opening chapters. His portrayal of pagan idolatry echoes words in *Wisdom*. Now he takes up other themes from Wisdom that convict the Jews for their moral bankruptcy.

*For thou didst test them as a father does in warning,*

*but thou didst examine the ungodly as a stern king does in condemnation …*

*So while chastening us thou scourgest our enemies ten thousand times more,*

*so that we may meditate upon thy goodness when we judge,*

*and when we are judged we may expect mercy’* (Wisdom 11:10; 12:22).[[9]](#footnote-9)

‘Agreed’, says Paul; ‘you do well to acknowledge God’s goodness to you in spite of all your disobedience, but do you not realize that his goodness is intended to give you an opportunity to repent?’

When God pronounces judgment on those who make a practice of indulging in sin, His judgment is based in truth. This is not about the gospel, but simply means that the judgment is reached on the basis of reality; on the facts of the case, not on appearances or pretensions of man. Do you ‘think?’ Paul is pushing the inmost thoughts of the Jew. It is clear that he understands their tendency to complacency. The thought continues in v4.

**v 4** *Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God’s kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?* In addition to self-righteousness with its accompanying false security there is an ignoring and despising of the face that God, to be true to himself, must bring sin into judgment. He condemns their scornful attitude toward God’s forbearance with His people Israel, as though that patience were but a confirmation of their security, and even a sign of weakness on God’s part (Ecclesiastes 8:11; also Rom 11:22). The words forbearance (tolerance) and patience are explanatory of ‘kindness.’ It is God’s self-restraint, a temporary truce. The patience is given for the opportunity of repentance (2Peter3:15). Repentance is only mentioned here in Romans, but it is an idea always close at hand, but secondary to his primary emphasis on faith.

**v 5***But because of 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.* Paul speaks bluntly and plainly in order to shake the Jews out of their lethargy of self-deception. The nation is inviting retribution by its stubbornness and impenitence, which is slowly but surely building up a reservoir of divine wrath that will be crushing when it breaks over the guilty on the day of reckoning. Remember also, these words are written just a few short years before the Jewish War and the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. This national judgment fits into a temporal understanding, but the force of Paul’s words point to something even worse than the events of 70A.D. The day of wrath is a reminder that every person will receive according to what he has done. It is human sin that attracts God’s wrath, such that we are storing up wrath for ourselves by our sinful deeds. It is also true that God’s decision to defer judgment to provide opportunity for repentance is in effect God storing up wrath for those who refuse to repent. It is important to know that we confess that it is Jesus who will come again and judge the living and the dead.

**v 6***He will render to each one according to his works:* Paul gives an exact LXX rendering of Proverbs 24:12. God judging each person in accordance with their works is a recurring theme in the OT (Ps 62:12, Pr 24:12, Isa 3:10, Jer 17:10, Hos 12:2, Eccl 12:14), the teaching of Jesus (Mt 16:27, 25:31f, Jn 5:28-29), the writings of Paul (2Cor 5:10, 11;15, Gal 6:7-9…).

**Week 10 – Romans 2 (cont) God’s Righteous Judgment**

**v 7***to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life;*

**v 8***but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury.*

**v 9***There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek,*

**v 10** *but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek.*

**v 11***For God shows no partiality.*

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