

# God's Righteousness In Romans – Part 4

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“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.” (Rom. 1:18.) In Romans 1, Paul has gone to great lengths to show why God's wrath is revealed against all ungodliness. Gentiles rejected the natural revelation of God, that which can be known about God through His creation. The result of this rejection of the revelation of God through nature was being turned over to that which is unnatural. Their lives are full of chaos and disorder. Please see the previous articles in this series.

When Paul gets to chapter 2, he reminds us that the Jews are no better. They were self-righteous, occupying themselves with judging others (2:1.) God had given them a law but instead of humbly and faithfully serving God through that law, they allowed the law to puff them up with pride as though the fact they even had a law was enough to make them righteous. Instead of letting the law make them servants of God inwardly, they thought the mere keeping of outward commands was enough and in this, they forgot God as well, just like the Gentiles. The Jews believed in sin, just not their own.

It is important that Paul establish that all have sinned before God. Paul contends that God's righteousness is demonstrated by His judgment of sinners whether Jew or Gentile. God's righteousness is seen not only in His judgments of sinners but also in that He does so with impartiality. Paul makes this clear in 2:9-11, “There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For God does not show favoritism.” God has no favorites whose sin he overlooks. Nor are there those whom He dislikes whose condemnation is contrived. He judges men on the basis of the revelation given to them. The Jews are judged by the Law of Moses they possessed, while others are judged on the basis of natural revelation (Chapter 1.)

And worst of all, neither the Jew, with his law, or the Gentile, without that law, could achieve his own righteousness. The fact is, as Paul states in Romans 3:9-10, “What shall we conclude then? Do we have any advantage? Not at all! For we have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin. As it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one.” What a severe indictment on mankind. And Paul had made it clear that this is not God's fault in creating us.

The fact that man is unrighteous does not suggest any unrighteousness on God's part. Can God be righteous when He created men who are sinners, and when He has provided a revelation that only seems to produce unrighteousness in human beings? Law wasn't meant to bring salvation as Paul stated in 3:19-20. Law is to salvation what an X-ray is to a cure. The Law and the X-ray both reveal the problem and the need for a cure but they do not produce a cure in and of themselves. Both natural revelation and the law reveal that man has suppressed the truth leading to their own unrighteousness. It's man's fault for sin, not God's. And God's righteousness must bring wrath on ALL ungodliness.

It was important for Paul to point this out. In order to appreciate that we can be righteous before God, as he is getting ready to point out, we had to know who bad our situation really is. But the cure is coming in Romans. God is righteous to bring wrath against sin but He is also righteous to save. I can't wait for this good news.