

Romans 1b

18 Wickedness suppresses the TRUTH for a time. Godless and wicked men will taste the wrath (*orge*) of God! That is the righteous response of a holy God toward evil. Holy love and holy wrath are inseparable. We can count on wrath against evil as surely as we count on His love toward those pardoned. But remember, unless we repent we also will perish. "Is being revealed" - we begin to see it in the earth right now as they reap what they have sown. What we see is just a hint at the wrath to come. In every situation, the truth is what needs to be presented - the truth according to the Word of God. Those who would hide facts and information do so because it speaks against their intentions. They have no faith in a Sovereign God nor is He reigning in their heart. By manipulating the "facts" they think they can still have their agenda succeed. It's only for a time.

19 God reveals himself to ALL. John 1:9 What we do with that revelation is up to us. Since the truth is made known to us, if we do not change we must suppress it as the previous verse says. We can become even more wicked, now that we know the truth and will not change. The ultimate wickedness is refusing the love of the Son. The alternative is to repent and let Him cleanse us and give us His righteousness. One way is eternally punished and justly so. The other is eternally rewarded and because of Christ justly so. Everyone chooses. No one will be able to say, "I didn't know. It wasn't made clear to me. It's not my fault."

20 Hebrews 8:5 One way it is made plain is the gospel of creation. Give me some illustrations from nature about who God is. Notice the words 'clearly seen'. We do not live as closely with nature as earlier generations did. Do you wonder if that is not Satan's plan to keep us from the gospel of creation? They are without excuse! But what about the African who never heard... Today you could say, what about the Wall Street tycoon who never heard... God is faithful to make himself known to us. The rate of being detached from nature probably equals the rate of the written gospel proclaimed in the city streets. Then there are the wonders of nature revealed on media to an extent no one could even fathom years ago. The Just and Righteous Lord of all the earth will do what is right, declared Abraham. Genesis 18:25

21 I believe this knowing of God is not on an intimate level, but the knowing of his attributes. They see that what He has created is good and beautiful and know the Creator must be good. In spite of this knowledge they refused to glorify or thank Him. That results in the need to harden your heart and turn from the light to the darkness, futile thoughts and nonproductive thinking.

22 They think they are figuring out how to be their own god when in actuality they have surrendered to becoming a slave of destructive evil. How foolish! We often hear the derision, of these so called enlightened people, that those who follow Christ are ignorant of the facts and have a need to believe in something. They say they are weak willed fools that need a crutch, but who is the fool? The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." Psalm 14:1

23 AFTER God made Himself known to people, they turn from that knowledge and make more manageable gods that they can control, more convenient ones, or ones that fit their perverted tastes so they will not have to change. Foolishness! Even though they call it

wisdom, it is merely creating your own delusion so that the goodness of God is not able to bless you. In their hunger for spirituality they create a god that makes them proud of themselves.

24 Once the line of rejection is crossed, perversion that destroys is close behind. Reality is that they have chosen to be their own god and that means there is nothing that can keep them from destruction. Many false 'isms' and cults end up in the promotion of some sort of perversion.

25,26 The things we will not give up, the things we have decided to value above the One that made them and made them available to us, we end up worshipping. The excess and perversion of good things becomes our god of choice. Then we refuse to look beyond them to the One who gave them to us to be enjoyed in the proper setting and amounts. He will be praised forever with or without us.

27 Homosexuality and its destructive nature were very common in Rome, just as today in the USA. The due penalties they receive in themselves are the STDs and the ever-deeper cycle of lust. The cry against Sodom was great! I think it was the cry of the Sodomites suffering from their own sin. Genesis 18:20

28 There is a deliberate choice to ignore the Holy Spirit and His revelation of God (21), a value judgement that calls goodness and righteousness a thing of no value. Because of that, the hand or restraint is removed and destruction opens wide her mouth to receive them. *epignosis* - experiential knowledge.

29 Evil begets evil and there is no end to the pit of depravity. Some of the following we don't think are too bad, yet they are listed right alongside of murder. In Sodom, God observed the city was filled with violence. Perversion and violence go together. If any of these can be said about us, let us desperately seek God that any hint of them be removed from our life and be replaced with the fruits of the Spirit.

30,31 It sounds like a description of the opposites of the fruit of the Spirit.

32 Everyone has an inner sense of justice. They may suppress it and ignore it, deny it is there. Not only do they go on in those things, but their approval of others that do them encouraged them to continue with this kind of wickedness. They want to be with others who have been taken over by lust. Paul was writing to Romans who witnessed this perversion everyday. Pompei preserved a witness of this type of lifestyle being so prevalent at the time this letter was written, and the judgement of God on it. As Christians we should not slander others, but neither should we approve of those who practice evil. We can approve of something by being a part of it. Many a person has stepped away from a fellowship, or denomination, or even business because they suppressed the truth and promoted a lie. Your continued presence in something that is permeated by lies and deception, even perversion is a sign that you do not object. Be separate! Come out. 2Corinthians 6:17