**The Actions of God’s Wrath Yesterday & Today**

**Assyria, God’s Club.** Isaiah 10:5. **Ah, Assyria, the rod of my anger— the club in their hands is my fury!** **6** Against a godless nation I send him, and against the people of my wrath I command him, to take spoil and seize plunder, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. **7** But this is not what he intends, nor does he have this in mind; but it is in his heart to destroy, and to cut off nations not a few. … **10** As my hand has reached to the kingdoms of the idols whose images were greater than those of Jerusalem and Samaria, **11** **shall I not do to Jerusalem and her idols what I have done to Samaria and her images?”** **12** When the Lord has finished all his work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, he will punish the arrogant boasting of the king of Assyria and his haughty pride.

Deut 32:8 tells us that **–**

**“When the Most High apportioned the nations, when he divided humankind, he fixed the boundaries of the peoples”.** The prophet Micah confronting his nation because of their sin has this to say –

**Micah 2:1–5 (NLT) — 1** What sorrow awaits you who lie awake at night, thinking up evil plans. You rise at dawn and hurry to carry them out, simply because you have the power to do so. **2** When you want a piece of land, you find a way to seize it. When you want someone’s house, you take it by fraud and violence. You cheat a man of his property, stealing his family’s inheritance. **3** But this is what the Lord says: “I will reward your evil with evil; you won’t be able to pull your neck out of the noose. You will no longer walk around proudly, for it will be a terrible time.” **4** In that day your enemies will make fun of you by singing this song of despair about you: “We are finished, completely ruined! God has confiscated our land, taking it from us. He has given our fields to those who betrayed us.” **5** Others will set your boundaries then, and the Lord’s people will have no say in how the land is divided.

It would seem that today God has opened the boundaries and the Christianized western nations who have increasingly become paganized and filled with idols and the perversions of Rom 1 are being overrun. (German politician – Fears that German culture and way of life will changed and unrecognizable.)

**God acting in wrath in the New Testament.**

Acts 5:4-5 (Peter to Ananias and Sapphira), “you did not lie to us but to God!” 5Now when Ananias heard these words, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard of it.

Acts 12:21f. On an appointed day Herod put on his royal robes, took his seat on the platform, and delivered a public address to them. 22The people kept shouting, “The voice of a god, and not of a mortal!” 23And immediately, because he had not given the glory to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died.

The above acts of the wrath of God are overt, direct actions but in Romans 1 Paul unfolds the presence of God’s wrath in the daily life of individuals, peoples and nations.

**Rome – Historical Moral Background.**

The Roman Empire followed the Greek empire and it has been said that The Greeks corrupted Rome.

Aristotle, Plato, Pericles & Sophocles all had mistresses. The Greeks legalised state run prostitution and the profits were used to erect temples to the Gods. This continued under Roman rule.

Rome was the centre of the vast Roman empire: a modern city, a wicked city known for its orgies and immorality. 14 of the first 15 emperors were homosexual (bisexual), many paedophiles. Emperor Claudius's wife slipped out of the palace at night to serve in a public brothel. Emperor Caligula committed incest with his sister. Nero slept with his own mother, and went through a marriage ceremony with teenage boy. Julia Caesar was the lover of the king of Bythinia. Babies were abandoned and pick up from the streets each day with the garbage. Slavery was wide spread; a slave could be killed on the spot for offending a master. Thousands were slain in the arenas. 30,000 people were crucified on crosses around the time of Jesus.

**Romans 1. Two revelations – The righteousness of God & The Wrath of God**Roma 1:1 (RSV) Paul, a servant of **Jesus Christ**, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God 2 which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, 3 the gospel concerning his **Son**, who was **descended from David** according to the flesh 4 and **designated Son of God in power** according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord,

5 through whom we have received grace and **apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith** for the sake of his name among all the nations, 6 including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ; **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.**

The obedience of faith flows from the love of Christ that constrains us (2 Cor 5:14.) The obedience of law is where we tow the line for fear of judgment.

**16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 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.”**

Jew first – God’s people and then the Greeks. The gospel is that word of the cross; Jesus taking the sin of the world upon himself. The righteous God is not that he overlooks sin but that he demonstrates his righteousness by exacting the penalty of death on the sin bearer; his own dear son.

Some ask, how could a so called loving god place the hellish evil of humankind on the son whom he loves?

The Lord our God is one Lord, Father Son and Spirit. While the persons are distinct, together they are the one true God. As one, they have created the world. They are of one mind and one heart in all things and from the before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:1-10) the cross was the plan of the Trinity, Father, Son and Spirit, to redeem humanity

**18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men who by their wickedness suppress the truth. 19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse;**

The revelation of God’s wrath is from heaven; the Judgement seat of God. The signs of judgment are everywhere. The wrath of God is presently and continuously being revealed. God's holiness is continually expressing itself in wrath. As it was in Israel so it is amongst the gentiles. In this passage Paul has the gentiles firmly in his sights. In chapter two there is a parallel argument aimed at the Jews. Reject the revelation of righteousness and invite the revelation of wrath.

Ungodliness is direct anti-God rebellion. Fallen humanity, we do not want to be creatures dependent upon the creator, we want to be ‘as God’. We do not want to accept the law of God given to Moses on the mount. Even though this law is written in our hearts (Rom 2:15). We want to live by our own rules. It is not that we do not know the truth. We hold down the truth, we suppress it by our unrighteousness. We either obey God’s truth or we “obey unrighteousness”, (2:8).

We cannot hold down the truth by our unrighteousness for very long. Sooner or later it will spring up and hit us in the face. The wrath of God will fall on us and we will wallow in our sin; God’s truth all the time tormenting us.

When you look at nature do you see God? Does every person see God? Why not? because they suppress the truth in unrighteousness. What can be seen? God's eternal power and deity are clearly perceived. Not knowing is reprehensible. If we do not know it is because we will not know. So we are without excuse.

**21 for although they knew God they did not honour him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their senseless minds were darkened.**

Jer 2:5 Thus says the Lord, "What injustice did your fathers find in Me, That they went far from Me And walked after emptiness and became empty"?

(Deut 7:9 Know therefore that the Lord your God is God, the faithful God who maintains **covenant loyalty** with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations, 10and **who repays in their own person** those who reject him. If we reject the truth of God and live a lie there are consequences; dark minds and futile thinking. We are born to worship and so we create our own gods to serve ourselves.

**22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles.**

Psal 14:1 the fool says in his heart, "There is no God.” What is “the glory of God the immortal God”? Exodus.

The extent of the darkness of the human mind is seen by the nature of the idols that we create and worship. We take on the image of that which we worship.

There has been much criticism of Missionaries taking Christianity to tribal communities. “They are reaching out to God through their idols.” Paul says no, they have rejected the revelation set out in creation and have chosen to worship idols of their own making. They have rejected the living God, claiming that what is created is God.

The darkening of the mind and futile thinking relates directly to the rejection of God. It is a judgment.

This darkening of the mind applies to the person or nation that rejects God’s revelation. See how our politics and media have rejected Christian values and promoted the perversions that Paul outlines below.

**24 Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonouring of their bodies among themselves, 25 because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever! Amen.**

‘Gave them up’. We are given up to the custody of that which we worship.

Stephen before his stoning recounts the idolatry of Israel (Acts 7:40f). The Israelites say to Aaron –

'Make for us gods who will go before us; for this Moses who led us out of the land of Egypt --- we do not know what happened to him.' "And at that time they made a calf and brought a sacrifice to the idol, and were rejoicing in the works of their hands.  **But God turned away and delivered them up to serve the host of heaven**; as it is written in the book of the prophets, 'It was not to Me that you offered victims and sacrifices forty years in the wilderness, was it, O house of Israel? 43 'You took along the tabernacle of Moloch. (God of the Amorites).

This is a judicial action of God acting in wrath. His judgement is precisely that he gives us up to idols, and to the perversions that follow. V25 “Serve the creature rather than the creator” (eg. Beauty industry, Sport Golf $13millon prize.

Everyday life becomes the place of divine judgement as we forsake God and follow our idols. There is terror, fear, hatred, betrayal, breakdowns in relationships, diseases, and the constant pain of guilt and shame.

Our media report the daily murderers, suicides, drug induced deaths, pain and misery, while constantly rejecting God and encouraging the abominations that Paul is warning against.

Paul say that **we exchange the truth about God for a lie.** What lie? That we are our own Gods and that the **creation is the creator?** (The Australian, 10-11 Sept 16. Satellite launch to discover the origins of life –Asteroid

4.5 billion yrs old! 500m across, Project 7 Yrs, 6 Billion Km. Hoping for 6 grams of dust and gravel to reveal how life came to be! Great faith.

**26 For this reason God gave them up to dishonourable passions. Their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural, 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 their own persons the due penalty for their error.**

Leviticus 18:22 You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination. 23 And you shall not lie with any animal and so make yourself unclean with it, neither shall any woman give herself to an animal to lie with it: it is perversion. 24 “Do not make yourselves unclean by any of these things, for by all these the nations I am driving out before you have become unclean, 25 and the land became unclean, so that I punished its iniquity, and the land vomited out its inhabitants.

If as a nation, we play around with God's moral law then and are in danger of being “vomited out” of the land.

Paul is saying that homosexuality is the consequence of refusing the revelation of the righteousness of God and turning to idols. When we refuse to acknowledge, and give thanks to God our minds are darkened and acting as gods we determine what is good and evil and so we suppress the truth in unrighteousness.

**28 And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a base mind and to improper conduct. 29 They were filled with all manner of wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice. Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity, they are gossips, 30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 31 foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. 32 Though they know God's decree that those who do such things deserve to die, they not only do them but approve those who practice them.**

**Isaiah 53:5** But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. **6** All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and **the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all**. …. **10** Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him with pain. When **you make his life an offering for sin**, … **11** ….. The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous, **and he shall bear their iniquities.**

**Wrath and the Conscience**

Given up to God’s wrath, wallowing in our sin, we are tormented by our Conscience as David was (Ps 32 & 51) We are insecure, self-serving, and facing death without hope of eternal life.

***Gurnal:-*** The conscience demands as much to satisfy it as God does to satisfy him for the wrong that we have done. Nothing can stop the conscience from accusing but that which takes off God from threatening. Conscience is Gods sergeant that he employs to arrest the sinner. Now the sergeant has no power to release the prisoner but listens as to whether the debt be fully paid or the creditor fully satisfied and then and not till then he discharges the prisoner.

Tornier (Guilt & Grace. 1962) Man's punishment is precisely his intolerable guilt, the unconfessed guilt, bitter, repressed, provoking revolt which seems in his eyes to be an act of abandonment. He feels himself placed under a curse, repulsed and driven away from God. A final result of the law of guilt is insecurity

***Luther*** once commented that “there would be no hell is there were no conscience”. He also said,

"This is the liberty wherewith **Christ hath made us free,** not from an earthly bondage, from the Babylonian captivity, or from the tyranny of the Turks, **but from God's everlasting wrath**. And where is this done? **In the conscience.** That is to say, we are made free in that our conscience is now free and quiet, not fearing the wrath to come. **Through Christ we are now made free from the law, sin, death, and the power of hell."**

1 Pe 2:24He himself **bore our sins in his body on the cross**, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed

With his whole mind and being filled with the sin and evil of humanity: the powers of hell tormenting him (Ps 22:12) and from that depth of darkness came his cry, **My God My God why have you forsaken me?**

Not only did he bear our sin in his body on the tree but Paul tells us that - **For our sake he [God] made him to be sin** who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 2 Cor. 5:21.

NT Wright says that the sins of all Israel and indeed the sins of the whole world were gathered up and placed on him. The judgment and the wrath of God fell upon him. His conscience was aflame with the guilt of humanity, with the abominations and atrocities committed across the ages. With the sins of the murderer, the pedophile, the thief – with my sins and with yours.

Hence that anguished cry of abandonment and desolation, “ “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matt 27:46.)

Alienated, from God, abandoned, made to be sin for us, damned and tormented by the powers of darkness Ps 8.

Darkness came upon the land as creation hid its face in shame that the holy and glorious Son of God should be made sin for our redemption. “**so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”**

Hebrews 10:19–23 Therefore, my friends, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, 20 by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh), 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful.