

OUT OF TOUCH WITH REALITY

Romans 1:19-20

Jhn 1:18

No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

Col 1:15

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

1Ti 1:17

To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Heb 11:27

By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible.

Romans 1:21

Jer 2:5

Thus says the LORD: "What wrong did your fathers find in me that they went far from me, and went after worthlessness, and became worthless?"

Mar 7:21

For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery,

Luk 5:22

When Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answered them, "Why do you question in your hearts?"

Luk 6:8

But he knew their thoughts, and he said to the man with the withered hand, "Come and stand here." And he rose and stood there.

Luk 9:47

But Jesus, knowing the reasoning of their hearts, took a child and put him by his side

Psa 94:11

the LORD--knows the thoughts of man, that they are but a breath.

1Co 3:20

and again, "The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile."

Jer 17:9

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?

Romans 1:22

Gen 3:6

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

Gen 11:4

Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth."

Romans 1:23-25

Psa 106:20

They exchanged the glory of God for the image of an ox that eats grass.

Ex 32

Jer 2:11

Has a nation changed its gods, even though they are no gods? But my people have changed their glory for that which does not profit.

Deu 4:16-17

beware lest you act corruptly by making a carved image for yourselves, in the form of any figure, the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any animal that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the air,

Romans 1:23

Psa 97:6

The heavens proclaim his righteousness, and all the peoples see his glory.

Exo 40:35

And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

Isa 6:3

And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!"

Isa 40:5

And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

Romans 1:26

Isa 19:22

And the LORD will strike Egypt, striking and healing, and they will return to the LORD, and he will listen to their pleas for mercy and heal them.

2Pe 3:15

And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him,

Romans 1:24,26, 28

Mat 24:9

"Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake.

Mat 17:22

As they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men."

Act 8:3

But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.

Mat 10:21

Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death,

Romans 1:28

1Co 9:27

But I keep under my body, and bring [it] into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

2Co 13:5-7

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates. Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates.

2Ti 3:8

Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith.

Heb 6:8

But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed, and its end is to be burned.

THE REVELATION OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH IS FROM GOD BY FAITH ALONE – ‘HE WHO IS
RIGHTEOUS BY FAITH’ EXPOUNDED (1:18-4:25)

Rom 1:16-18

Both God's righteousness AND His anger are revealed in the Gospel.

The righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, and the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against the unrighteousness and ungodliness of men.

God's righteousness is actually being revealed whenever and wherever the gospel is being preached.

How? ~By describing the revelation which had already taken place in the past – the revelation of God's righteousness in the gospel events themselves.

**IN THE LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL THERE IS NO QUESTION OF MEN'S BEING RIGHTEOUS BEFORE
GOD OTHERWISE THAN BY FAITH (1:18-3:20)**

The dark state of humanity described in the following sections is not Paul's judgment of mankind, but rather the judgment that the GOSPEL itself pronounces. Paul has both heard and submitted himself to this message.

Rom 1:18-3:20 depicts man as he appears in the light of the cross of Messiah. It is not simply a description of very bad men, but instead of the innermost truth of all of us, as we are in ourselves.

The burden of this section is summed up in the statements "there is no one righteousness, not even one" (3:10) and "all have sinned and lack the glory of the Lord" (3:23)

Man under the judgment of the gospel (1:18-32)

In these verses Paul is not describing just his gentile contemporaries. He echoes the language used by both the psalmists and the prophets in describing God's own chosen people. Both Jew and gentile are guilty of the same sins. By describing the obvious sinfulness of the heathen, he was describing the basic sinfulness of fallen man. The inner reality of an Israelite was/is no less than that of the Gentile.

Psa 106:20

They exchanged the glory of God for the image of an ox that eats grass.

Jer 2:11

Has a nation changed its gods, even though they are no gods? But my people have changed their glory for that which does not profit.

When we understand these verses as the revelation of the gospel's judgment of all men, which lays bare the idolatry of ancient and modern paganism then we can see that it also addresses the idolatry ensconced in Israel, the church, and in the life of each believer.

V18 “THE WRATH OF GOD” RATIONAL ANGER VS IRRATIONAL ANGER

“Anger is not always an irrational passion. It certainly is sometimes; but there is also an anger which is thoroughly rational. ...indignation against wickedness is surely an essential element of human goodness in a world in which moral evil is always present. A man who knows about the injustice of apartheid and is not angry at such wickedness cannot be a thoroughly good man; for his lack of wrath means a failure to care for his fellow man, a failure of love.”

“To understand the wrath of God we must look not to the lower, irrational kind of human anger, but to the higher kind, the indignation against injustice, cruelty and corruption, which is an essential element of goodness and love in a world in which moral evil is present; and secondly, that even the very highest and purest human wrath can at the best afford but a distorted and twisted reflection of the wrath of God, since the wrath of men is always more or less compromised by the presence of sin in the one who is wroth, whereas the wrath of God is the wrath of Him who is perfectly loving, perfectly good.”

“REVEALED”

“The two revelations referred to in these two verses are ...really two aspects of the same process. The preaching of Christ crucified, risen, ascended, and coming again, is at the same time both the offer to men of a status of righteousness before God and the revelation of God’s wrath against their sin. In the gospel the divine mercy and the divine judgment are inseparable from each other: the forgiveness offered to us is forgiveness without condoning. And this is so b/c in the gospel events themselves there was wrought for men no cheap or superficial forgiveness, but God’s costly forgiveness.”

“WHO SUPPRESS THE TRUTH IN UNRIGHTEOUSNESS”

“Sin is always an assault upon the truth...the attempt to suppress it, bury it out of sight, obliterate it from the memory; but it is the essence of sin that it can never be more than an ATTEMPT to suppress truth, an attempt which is always bound in the end to prove futile.”

V19 “THE KNOWABLENESS OF GOD”

...refers to the attributes of God which are knowable to man. B/c God is infinite we cannot know all things about God. Here, Paul is referring to the unregenerate man, whose knowledge of God is even more limited b/c he refuses to acknowledge the attributes God has revealed about Himself through His creation of all things including man himself.

V20 “THE INVISIBLE THINGS ARE CLEARLY SEEN”

The point being made in this paradox is that the self-revelation of God referred to has been continuous ever since the creation. - He is the Creator of all things. – “...The result of God’s self-manifestation in his creation is not a natural knowledge of God on men’s part independent of God’s self-revelation in His Word... but simply the excuselessness of men in their ignorance. A real self-disclosure of God has indeed taken place, and is always occurring, and men ought to have recognized, but in fact have not recognized him. They have been constantly surrounded on all sides by, and have possessed within their own selves, the evidences of God’s eternal power and divinity, but they have not allowed themselves to be led by them to a recognition of Him.”

V21 “THEY DID NOT GLORIFY OR THANK HIM”

“They have in fact experienced Him – His wisdom, power, generosity – in every moment of their existence though they have not recognized Him. It has been by Him that their lives have been sustained, enriched, bounded. In this limited sense they have known Him all their lives.”

“They ought to have recognized their indebtedness to His goodness and generosity, to have recognized Him as the source of all the good things they enjoyed, and so to have been grateful to Him for His benefits.”

“THEY BECAME FUTILE IN THEIR THINKING”

Here is stated the futility, the uselessness, the pointlessness, and the worthlessness “**which is the inevitable result of loss of touch with reality**”. The Greek word here used for futility is the same word used in God's question to Jeremiah 2:5 in the LXX – “*mataioo*” [ma-ti-o-o]. It is to be seen in particular with regard to their thinking “*dialogismos*” [di-a-lo -gis -mos]. Paul uses the Greek word here which has a disapproving or contemptuous denotation as seen from its employment in other scriptures.

“All their thinking suffers from the fatal flaw, the basic disconnection from reality involved in their failure to recognize and to glorify the true God.”

“THEIR FOOLISH HEART WAS DARKENED”

“[This] is a sober acknowledgment of the fact that the heart as the inner self of man shares fully in the fallenness of the whole man, that the intellect is not a part of human nature somehow exempted from the general corruption, not something which can be appealed to as an impartial arbiter capable of standing outside the influence of the ego and returning a perfectly objective judgment.”

V22 “PROFESSING TO BE WISE THEY BECAME FOOLS”

“...drives home the contrast b/t human pretension and actual fact.”

V23

“The statement that men have exchanged the glory of the eternal God for mere likenesses of the forms of mortal men, birds, beasts, and creeping things, echoes the language used of Israel in LXX Ps 105 [MT106].20] with reference to the making of the golden calf (Ex 32) and in Jer 2:11 with reference to their forsaking the Lord for other gods at a much later time.”

V24 “THEREFORE”

“...indicates that what is related in this verse was God's response to the perverseness of men just described in vv22-23.”

“GOD GAVE THEM UP”

“...the thrice repeated [phrase] is surely so emphatic as to suggest that a deliberate, positive act of God is meant.”

“It is significant that the same verb is used in 8:32 of God's delivering up His Son to death for our sake: while this fact in no way calls in question the seriousness of what is meant by [paradidomi] here, it ought to put us on our guard against too readily assuming that Paul must mean that God gave these men up forever.”

“It seems much more consistent with what is said elsewhere in the epistle (e.g. in chapter 11) to understand the meaning to be that God allowed them to go their own way in order that they might at last learn from their consequent wretchedness to hate the futility of a life turned away from the truth of God. ... We suggest then that Paul’s meaning is...that this delivering them up was a deliberate act of judgment and mercy on the part of the God who smites in order to heal (Is 19:22), and that throughout the time of their God-forsakenness God is still concerned with them and dealing with them”

“We might perhaps compare Calvin’s comment on Hos 12:4 that God fights with us with His left hand and defends us with His right hand. (*Commentaries on the Twelve Minor Prophet*, Eng. Tr., Edinburgh, 1846, p425).”

Cranfield does not mention here 2 Peter 3:15, but it is a verse that I personally and others in my family hold on to, when praying for the members of our family who have a broken relationship with their Creator. As we continue to put our trust in Yehovah to bring them to a place of repentance and restoration, we hold on to the belief that where there is life there is hope, i.e. that as long as they are still here that Yehovah is not done with them yet, and that He continues to call them to return to Him and His ways.

“TO IMPURITY”

“...indicates the state into which they have been given up, the prison to which they have been delivered. Compare the use [with the associated scripture references and the states into which those individuals were delivered.]”

“CHANGED THE TRUTH OF GOD INTO THE LIE”

“In the present verse it is perhaps rather more satisfactory to understand by ‘the truth of God’ the reality consisting of God Himself and His self-revelation and by ‘the lie’ the whole futility of idolatry than to explain them as simply cases of the use of the abstract for concrete.”

V28 “A DEPRAVED MIND”

“B/c they have rejected God as not worth reckoning with, God has delivered them into a condition in which their minds are fit only to be rejected as worthless, useless for their proper purpose, disreputable. The proper use of [adokimos] is ‘failing the test’, ‘disqualified’, hence ‘unsatisfactory’, ‘useless’, ‘disreputable’, ‘reprobate’.”

“The [adokimos nous] is a mind so debilitated and corrupted as to be a quite untrustworthy guide in moral decisions.”

V29 “MALICE”

“...conscious and intentional malice”

V29-30 “GOSSIPS AND SLANDERERS”

“Both words denote people who go about to destroy other people’s reputations by misrepresentation.”

“The [gossip] is, of course, the more vicious and dangerous kind, inasmuch as he is one against whom there is virtually no human defense”

V30 “INSOLENT”

“It is best understood here as signifying the man who, in his confidence in his own superior power, wealth, social status, physical strength, intellectual or other ability, treats his fellow men with [disrespectful] contemptuousness and thereby affronts the majesty of God”

Cf 1Ti 1:13

though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief,

ESV	'insolent opponent'
HCSB	'arrogant man'
NASB	'violent aggressor'

We should consider the motivations and actions of the unregenerate man compared to the motives and action of the regenerate man in light of our discussion regarding verse 18.

Cranfield stated that “...indignation against wickedness is surely an essential element of human goodness in a world in which moral evil is always present.” How can we define someone as insolent or good, furthermore should we? I believe that if we are unable to determine whether someone is acting insolently or good, then the problem lies within us, for the scripture here clearly defines both words. It is up to us whether we will choose to speak in accordance with what the scripture clearly teaches.

When a brother or sister is the victim of insolence, we should be able to identify the issue, and be supportive to that brother or sister. If we bury our heads in the sand as it were, and choose not to 'get involved' then can we really say that we are endeavoring to be 'good'? Can we honestly say that we are following the example set for us by Messiah? The gospel of Luke is devoted to how Messiah cared for the disenfranchised, and we know that He only did what His Father showed Him to do.

Jhn 5:19

So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.

We have ample opportunity to be a light in this matter. Each one of us knows someone who is the victim of insolence. Perhaps you have been a victim yourself. Where is the body of Messiah during these times? Is the body being a supportive, exhorting, encouraging example of Messiah ministering to these people?

There should be a marked difference b/t the man who acts with disrespectful contemptuousness and the man who acts with righteous indignation. I see masses of people who mob the country with their insolent rhetoric and actions, but where are the crowds of people coming alongside the persecuted and withstanding the trial with them?

V30 “INVENTORS OF EVIL THINGS”

“...an incisive characterization of men’s capacity for committing ‘The oldest sins the newest kinds of ways’ – we may think especially of their inventiveness in finding ever more hateful methods of hurting and destroying their fellow men.”

V₃₁ “HEARTLESS OR WITHOUT NATURAL AFFECTION”

“In this connection Barclay aptly refers to the prevalence in the Greco-Roman world of Paul’s day of the practice of exposing unwanted babies and also of actual infanticide. Paul’s contemporary, Seneca, takes for granted the drowning weakly or deformed babies:

[‘...we destroy monstrous births, and we also drown our children if they are born weakly or unnaturally formed; to separate what is useless from what is sound is an act, not of anger, but of reason.’ – Seneca *De ira* I.VI]

V₃₂

How is consenting worse than doing?

“...Apollinarius, Chrysostom, Isidore of Pslusium, Calvin, and a good man other have seen, that the man who applauds and encourages others in doing what is wicked is, even if he never actually commits the same wicked deed himself, not only as guilty as those who do commit it, but very often more guilty than they. There are several factors involved.”

“...the man who does the wrong will often be under great pressure, as for instance that of passion, whereas the man who looks on and applauds will not normally be under any similar pressure... [this does] not at all [] diminish the guilt of the doer, but it is to reveal the greater culpability of the applauder. His attitude will very often be the reflection of a settled choice. But there is also the fact, that those who condone and applaud the vicious actions of others are actually making a deliberate contribution to the setting up of a public opinion favorable to vice, and so to the corruption of an indefinite number of other people. So, for example, to excuse or gloss over the use of torture by security forces or the cruel injustices of racial discrimination and oppression, while not being involved in them directly, is to help to cloak monstrous evil with an appearance of respectability and so to contribute most effectively to its firmer entrenchment.”