

DIVINE JUSTICE

BIBLE TEXT : Romans 1:18-25, 28-32; 2:1-16.

LESSON 381 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:20).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Romans 1:18-25

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

¹⁹ Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed *it* unto them.

²⁰ For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

²¹ Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

²² Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

²³ And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

²⁴ Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:

²⁵ Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

Romans 1:28-32

²⁸ And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

²⁹ Being filled with all

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I Fallen Man

1. The wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all unrighteousness, Romans 1:18; 2:8, 9

Hebrews 10:27

²⁷ But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

Revelation 14:10

¹⁰ The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:

2. Mankind in general has not heeded the witness of God, Romans 1:19-21;

Psalms 10:4-5

⁴ The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek *after God*: God is not in all his thoughts.

⁵ His ways are always grievous; thy judgments *are* far above out of his sight: *as for* all his enemies, he puffeth at them.

Acts 14:15-17

¹⁵ And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein:

¹⁶ Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.

¹⁷ Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

3. Professing wisdom, men became fools in God's economy, Romans 1:22, 23

1 Corinthians 1:18-21

¹⁸ For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

¹⁹ For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

²⁰ Where *is* the wise? where *is* the scribe? where *is* the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

²¹ For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

1 Corinthians 1:25-27

²⁵ Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

²⁶ For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*:

²⁷ But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

James 3:15

¹⁵ This wisdom descendeth not from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, devilish.

4. God disinherited unrepentant mankind, Romans 1:24, 25, 28;

Proverbs 1:24-30

²⁴ Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched

unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,

³⁰ Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,

³¹ Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:

³² Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

Romans 2:1-16

¹ Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.

² But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.

³ And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?

⁴ Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

⁵ But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

⁶ Who will render to every man according to his deeds:

⁷ To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:

⁸ But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the

out my hand, and no man regarded;

²⁵ But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof:

²⁶ I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh;

²⁷ When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.

²⁸ Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:

²⁹ For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD:

³⁰ They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof.

Matthew 23:37-38

³⁷ O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not!

³⁸ Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

5. Pleasure was taken in the very worst of evils, Romans 1:29-32;

Psalm 36:1-4

¹ The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, *that there is* no fear of God before his eyes.

² For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful.

³ The words of his mouth *are* iniquity and deceit: he hath left off to be wise, *and* to do good.

⁴ He deviseth mischief upon his bed; he setteth himself in a way *that is* not good; he abhorreth not evil.

Mark 14:10

¹⁰ And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray him unto them.

Mark 14:11

¹¹ And when they heard *it*, they were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray him.

II Inexcusable Man

1. All sins of all mankind are without excuse, Romans 1:20; 2:1;

John 15:22

²² If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin.

2. God will render judgment to every man according to his deeds, Romans 2:2-6;

Jeremiah 17:10

¹⁰ I the LORD search the heart, *I* try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, *and* according to the fruit of his doings.

Matthew 16:27

²⁷ For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

2 Corinthians 5:10

¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad.

III Transformed Man

1. True godliness will result in an eternal reward, Romans 2:7, 10; Matthew 25:46

John 10:27-28

²⁷ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

²⁸ And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand.

1 John 2:25

²⁵ And this is the promise that he hath promised us, *even*

truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,

⁹ Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;

¹⁰ But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:

¹¹ For there is no respect of persons with God.

¹² For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law;

¹³ (For not the hearers of the law *are* just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.

¹⁴ For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:

¹⁵ Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and *their* thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)

¹⁶ In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

eternal life.

2. There is no respect of persons with God, Romans 2:11;

Romans 10:12

¹² For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

Job 34:18-19

¹⁸ *Is it fit* to say to a king, *Thou art wicked?* and to princes, *Ye are ungodly?*

¹⁹ *How much less* to him that accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor? for they all *are* the work of his hands.

Matthew 5:45

⁴⁵ That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

Acts 10:34

³⁴ Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:

Acts 10:35

³⁵ But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

3. The doers of God's law shall be justified, Romans 2:12-16;

Matthew 7:21

²¹ Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

Luke 6:47-48

⁴⁷ Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like:

⁴⁸ He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock.

James 1:22-25

²² But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

²³ For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

²⁴ For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

²⁵ But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

NOTES:

"To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). God has placed a silent monitor, a conscience, into the heart of every person to inform him of what is right and wrong. It might be said that this conscience is an inherent knowledge of God, and God places great value upon this knowledge in every man's heart. He points out that the people who honestly follow the dictates of their conscience, even though they have no formal law of God by which to govern themselves, will stand and pass in God's judgment. Those who do not walk in the light of their conscience will be judged accordingly. The Bible, of course, is God's law, and all who have access to the Bible must measure their lives by that precious Word in order to gain God's approval and enter Heaven as their eternal home.

God's Revelation

Some men feel that the inherent knowledge of God in the heart of man and the inborn conviction that man should worship God are the greatest marks of difference between men and beasts. Some boast that they have no fear of God, that they do not believe in immortality, or eternity; but bring them face to face with the issue, and their actions belie their words. The saying during World War II, "There are no atheists in fox holes," was

not an idle saying. When men faced death they prayed, in many instances in spite of former boasting. Why? Because God reveals Himself to every heart. "That which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them."

Inherent knowledge of God is not the only witness that God has given men of Himself. God can be seen in the things of creation – in the structure, plan, precise timing, variety, the magnitude of some things, and the minuteness of other things. Surely the handiwork of the Great Architect is plainly seen. God said that these things contained evidence enough to lead men to God, so that men are without excuse. The trouble lies in the fact that men have changed the "truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator."

Men would not use correctly the knowledge that God gave of Himself. When they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful for the gifts and goodness that He gave. Trying to be wise and going beyond the revealed truths, the imaginations of men became vain and their foolish heart was darkened. "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." Is not that the true picture of worldly-minded men, today?

The Downward Course

People of former years forsook the revelation that God gave of Himself and turned to all sorts of idols. This course away from God led them into all manner of sin and debauchery, until no sin seemed too vile to practise. God did not pass over this wickedness, but justice was meted to the evildoer.

The people of this enlightened generation do not worship idols and images, perhaps; but a great proportion of humanity, refusing to serve God acceptably, have turned to gods of their own imagination. Many science-minded men have dethroned the God of Creation, and they have substituted the god of "just happened so" or "spontaneous generation" as the means by which the world and men came into existence. Immortality and the never-dying soul, some say, are out-dated ideas; but beware! Any man who disbelieves God's Word and believes such foolishness closes the door of Heaven upon himself.

Other people have replaced the God of love in their heart with the god of love for money. They have forsaken the true riches of Heaven and have tried to heap to themselves the vanishing treasures of earth. "Money will buy anything," is an expression often heard, but money will not buy peace of soul or mind, nor will it buy an eternal home with God. Still other people worship the gods of pleasure, position, power, opinions of friends, and a thousand other gods. The end result is just the same: those who forsake God become liable to all manner of sin. Read the catalogue of sins enumerated in Romans 1:28-32. These words were addressed to the people of the First Century, but they fit the people of the many other successive centuries just as fully as today. Many people think that their sins will not be judged, but the day is coming surely when divine justice will be meted to every sinner for every sin and act of disobedience committed.

"Justice" is an important word. "Justice" to the guilty means punishment, while to the guiltless "justice" means freedom. Divine justice to the sinner means eternal destruction. The sinner needs God's mercy, not justice.

Inexcusable

It is easy for one person to judge another's actions; whereas the one who judges, if placed in similar circumstances, might do even worse than the one judged. The more righteously a life is lived, the more quickly people want to judge him and find fault. It is easier to see a speck of dirt on a white garment than to see soiled spots on a dark garment. How many tried to find fault with

the spotless, sinless life of the Son of God!

What does all this judging mean? Simply, that people have more light than they are willing to walk in. The person, who has enough knowledge to judge another has enough light to walk above such judgment, has enough light to repent of his own misdeeds. Some point out the other man's faults in order that their own faults might not be noticed. No amount of camouflage, smoke screen, or bluff that a man uses to hide his life will avail in God's judgment. None will escape that appointment, and a true record of all lives will be brought into the open. Divine justice will be given, and each individual will know better than anyone else that he received according to his deeds and light. Seeing these things are true, how careful should be the walk and talk of all who live upon earth!

Riches

In these days all sorts of wickedness, seemingly, can be committed without visible penalty; however, no one should be deceived by this. The Lord observes minutely every happening and every action of man. The riches of God's goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering are bountifully given to the children of men, though sinners, for one purpose: to lead them to repentance. If justice were received every time a man committed sin, all would die in their sins, for "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). The true Christian is enabled to live above sin only because God has given him a new heart and nature: "He is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17). The riches of God's mercy sent Jesus Christ into this world, not to condemn the world, "but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:17). May the Holy Spirit cause everyone to examine his heart and make sure that God's riches are being received and used in the right way!

Wrath

Jesus said: "For he [the Father] maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matthew 5:45). The Apostle states that God's goodness and forbearance and long-suffering are given to all men, but some men despise these riches. There is one inevitable end reserved for the person who goes through this life, beholding, partaking, and enjoying the innumerable mercies of God's love and yet will not repent of sin to serve God. That hard and impenitent heart treasures up unto himself "wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds."

All who are contentious and do not obey the truth, but walk in unrighteousness, in the day of divine justice will receive indignation and wrath. Tribulation and eternal hell will be the punishment for every soul of man who does evil. It is easy to see that the winner in this matter of divine justice is the man who renounces sin and turns his heart and life to God in love and service.

"Treasurest up unto thyself wrath." What an awful surprise package will be handed out to sinners in that day! All men are working for a treasure, either God's riches and love, or God's wrath. Each individual must choose between the two. May God help us to choose the treasure of God's love!

Eternal Life

Divine justice holds no terror to those who have been born again — born of the Spirit and made new creatures through the Blood of Jesus — and who are walking in the light of the Gospel. In that day God will render to them, "who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality," eternal

life. Glory, honour, and peace will be given to every man who worketh good, "to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: for there is no respect of persons with God."

QUESTIONS

1. For what class of people is the wrath of God reserved?
2. In what ways has God revealed Himself to the children of men?
3. What happens when people will not serve God?
4. Why are men without excuse before God?
5. How will those people fare in the day of divine justice who pass judgment upon their fellow men?
6. Why are the riches of God's mercy granted to all men, even sinners?
7. What record will be granted to those who are faithful to God?
8. What will be given to the unfaithful?
9. How will God determine His faithful ones in the day of divine justice?