

A Study on Romans One Verses 16-28

Paul, after his salutation to the Christians in Rome, jumps right into the heart of his letter which is the gospel. Six themes are summarized within verses 16-18 in which Romans continues to focus. Below are the six major themes.

1. The gospel of Christ is the revelation of the righteousness of God.
2. The righteousness of God revealed is the power unto salvation.
3. The power of salvation is available to all, Jew or Greek.
4. The just shall live by faith in the power of salvation from sin.
5. Faith is believing in Christ's ability to empower us to obey the law.
6. The wrath, or righteous judgment of God, is revealed from heaven.

Paul's purpose for focusing on these 6 major themes further devoted in Romans is:

1. To vindicate God's righteousness, especially involving His Wrath or His judgment
2. To vindicate the moral law by revealing its purpose in the gospel plan
3. To reveal the destructive nature of sin

So let's jump into the study.

• **Romans 1:16**

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

The gospel of Christ:

Paul interchanges the phrase "the grace of Christ" with "the gospel of Christ".

Galatians 1:6 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: 7) Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

The gospel, or God's grace is power to save from sin:

Acts 4:33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.

2Corinthians 12:9 And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

The gospel is for everyone:

1Timothy 2:4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

To the Jew first and also to the Greek:

The Greek refers to the Gentile. Why would Paul say to the Jew first? Wasn't the gospel first given to Adam and Eve while still in the garden? Were they Jews? No. This simply indicates that Paul will be addressing both Jew and Gentiles in his letter to the Romans. The significance to whom he writes will become obvious as we follow along in Romans.

• Romans 1:17

The power of the gospel is the goodness or righteousness of God revealed:

Romans 1:17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

Romans 2:4 Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

How is the righteousness of God revealed?

2 Corinthians 4:6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory [character] of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Isaiah 60:1 Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. 2) For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. 3) And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

Habakkuk 2:14 For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

Isaiah 11:9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

Paul, speaking of the character of the Father and the Son, stated that Christ was exactly like His Father.

Hebrews 1:3 Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image [character] of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

Christ Himself stated the same fact, that there was no difference between the Father's character and His own. Many make the mistake of separating their characters and patterning themselves after the one they prefer, either the Father or the Son, which has eternal consequences.

John 14:8 Philip saith unto Him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. 9) Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?

From faith to faith:

God, well understanding the fact that we are under strong deception, is very patient and careful not to wound us, but meets us where we are, revealing only that which our deceived minds can handle.

John 16:12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

The just shall live by faith:

When we come to know God by looking and meditating on Christ, we will have the faith that He is well able to finish the work He has begun in us. This is righteousness by faith.

John 17:3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

Jude 24 Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, 25) To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

• Romans 1:18

The wrath of God is revealed from Heaven:

Could we be misunderstanding the wrath or anger of God?

Isaiah 55:8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. 9) For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Jeremiah tells us we shall be considering the anger of the Lord more perfectly in the latter days.

Jeremiah 23:19 Behold, a whirlwind of the LORD is gone forth in fury, even a grievous whirlwind: it shall fall grievously upon the head of the wicked. 20) The anger of the LORD shall not return, until He have executed, and till He have performed the thoughts of His heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly.

James tells us there is a difference between God's wrath and man's wrath.

James 1:20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

Let's take a look at the context of the above verse.

James 1:13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man: 14) But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. 15) Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

James 1:16 Do not err, my beloved brethren.

What is James cautioning us to not be mistaken about? Do not err where temptation comes from, do not err where sin comes from and do not err where death comes from, because:

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Christ is desiring us to come to the knowledge of His wrath that it might be manifested in our lives and shouted from the mountains, **God is good and only good things come from Him!**

James 1:18 Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

James 1:19 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: 20) For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

Mark records a picture of the anger or wrath of the Lord, which is a deep heart wrenching anguish of Christ when the Pharisees refused His salvation.

Mark 3:5 And when He had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, ...

Hebrews 3:13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

We have another example of the deep anguish of soul of Christ when He spoke woes to the Scribes and Pharisees,

Matthew 23:37 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.

In chapter one of Romans, Paul records just what the wrath of God is and how it comes about. Notice that the wrath is not against the ungodly or the unrighteous, but against the sin that separates His children from Him.

Romans 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

Romans 1:25 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.

So what does the wrath of God have to do with the gospel? The most familiar text found in John 3:16 tells us,

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17) For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved.

1Thessalonians 1:10 And to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

1Thessalonians 5:9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

If we treasure sin, we treasure up its consequences which is wrath or separation from the life giver. In the following verse, Paul tells us that a hardened heart is the same thing as a heart that does not want to repent. God gives us free will to receive or reject His provision of saving us from the wrath and allows us to treasure up wrath rather than to treasure God's gift of salvation. This choice will be seen by all in the righteous judgment and that God has truly given them their choice. We as parents know the depth of anguish we experience when we see our children suffering the consequences of their wrong choices. How much more the grief of the One who is known as LOVE.

Romans 2:5 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:

Christ came to save us from wrath, which is the penalty, that is the natural consequences of sin. In order to save us from death, that is the natural consequence of sin, doesn't it make sense that He would also have to save us from the power of sin?

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 6:16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

James 1:15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. 16) Do not err, my beloved brethren.

We will be discovering in this study that the wrath of God has been greatly misunderstood. Not only did Satan deceive the whole world, but the very nature of sin itself is deceptive.

Revelation 12:9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

God told Adam that if he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he would **surely** die. But there was another voice that said, “ye shall **not** surely die”. Whom do you believe? We know that Satan has deceived the whole world especially regarding the character of God, the nature of sin, and the immutability or unchangeability of the law.

Let’s remember that it was what we would call a very tiny sin that caused Adam and Eve to forfeit their home in Eden. If God can restore us to Eden while we are sinning, He should apologize to them! He must not only save us from the penalty of sin but from sin itself. He has promised He is able to do this and our having faith in those promises produces righteousness in us.

2Peter 1:4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Because all have sinned, all need a Saviour who has the power to save us from sin.

Romans 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

Because grace is an eternal attribute of God, there was already of remedy for sin. No less than the death of God’s only Son could reveal the truth of God’s character, the deceptive nature of sin and the unchangeability of the law.

Romans 5:20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

Who hold the truth in unrighteousness:

Paul also states that not only do the unrighteous hold the truth in unrighteousness but they change it into a lie.

Romans 1:25 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.

What “truth” has Paul been talking about? He’s been talking about the gospel, the power to save from the wrath of God by coming to a knowledge of the character of God, and that God is a Saviour and that sin leads to death. Let’s call sin poison for that is what it really is. If we choose to drink that poison, does someone have to kill us because we chose to drink of it, or does the poison kill us? In Eden God said, “thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof **thou shalt surely die**”, speaking of the natural death that sin brings. But Satan said, go ahead and eat of it “you shall **not** surely die”. Hosea tells us,

Hosea 4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: ...

Hosea 4:1 ... because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.

Not only has Satan deceived us, but the very nature of sin has also deceived us. How do we know this? We read that Adam and Eve after they had sinned, hid themselves from God because they were naked and afraid of Him?

Genesis 3:11 And He said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? 12) And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

Notice that Adam ultimately blamed God for his sin. How unjustly unfair that the One who created him and who bore the anger or wrath in his stead was blamed, suffering the grief that Adam would suffer should he reject God's provision for salvation.

2Corinthians 5:21 For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

The knowledge of the goodness of God who suffered the guilt and shame that sin brings, constrains us to follow in His steps.

2Peter 2:21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps: 22) Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth: 23) Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously: 24) Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

Wonder Oh Heavens and be astonished Oh Earth, herein is LOVE!

The Scriptures tell us that Christ was made a curse for us.

Galatians 3:13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

The Scriptures also tell us the curse without a cause shall not come. Christ saved us from the curse but He must also save us from the cause. For we read:

Proverbs 26:2 As the bird by wandering, as the swallow by flying, so the curse causeless shall not come.

Galatians 6:7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

• Romans 1:19

Romans 1:19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in [translates to] them; for God hath shewed it unto them.

How is it that God has shown Himself to those that change the truth of God into a lie and worship the creature more than the Creator?

Psalms 19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handywork.

Psalms 97:6 The heavens declare His righteousness, and all the people see His glory.

• Romans 1:20

Romans 1:20 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:

No one has an excuse, no one can say, "God has not revealed Himself to me", for nature speaks of a loving Creator.

• Romans 1:21

Romans 1:21 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.

Since God has revealed Himself through nature, He is not responsible for their not thankfully glorifying Him as God for creating them. In contrast, they take credit for gifts and talents God has given them. Does this sound familiar? Wasn't this the reason that Lucifer was the first one who became self-deceived?

Ezekiel 28:14 Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. 15) Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. ... 17) Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: ...

Notice the mechanisms, (the series of causes and effects) from when Lucifer was perfect in his ways till iniquity was found in him. It was the pride of his heart, taking credit for his gifts and talents, worshipping himself instead of worshipping the One who created him. He was unthankful and refused to give God the glory but took it to himself. And what were the consequences of his glorifying himself? His pride corrupted his wisdom and he no longer could see the true character of God. He became vain in his imaginations regarding God and his heart [mind] was darkened.

Isn't this exactly what happened to Eve in the garden? Through the subtle suggestions of Satan, she also trusted in her own wisdom which led to sin. God is desiring to teach us that self-trust leads to self-deception which leads to damnation.

Proverbs 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. 6) In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths. 7) Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.

Paul in Ephesians 4:17-19 gives a more detailed sequence of the mechanisms of cause and effect than we found in Ezekiel 28:14-17 that led to the corruption of Lucifer, and the same sequence Paul is addressing here in Romans one.

The heathen, having rejected God (cause), have become vain in their imaginations and walk in the vanity of their minds. (Effect) Because their understanding of God has been darkened by sin (cause), they are alienated from the life of God (effect). They have become ignorant and have chosen not to know Him aright (cause), this has lead them to have no desire to be righteous causing them to sin (effect).

Ephesians 4:17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles [heathen] walk, in the vanity of their mind, 18) Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: 19) Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

What is the result of leaning unto their own understandings and worshiping the creature instead of the Creator?

• Romans 1:22

Romans 1:22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

• Romans 1:23

Because of their foolishness in trusting in their own wisdom, they changed the truth about God's character, especially His wrath into an image made like to corruptible man.

Romans 1:23 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.

We read in Psalm 50 where God says to the wicked,

Psalm 50:19 Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit. 20) Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son. 21) These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes.

We become what we behold, in other words, we rise no higher than our concept of God. Remember what James tells us,

James 1:20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

But worse yet, they changed the truth of God's character regarding His wrath into man made idols of birds, fourfooted beasts and creeping things who need to be appeased by human sacrifices. But God is not such a one who needs to be appeased. Instead of requiring sacrifices, He became the sacrifice.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Romans 5:6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7) For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8) But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

• Romans 1:24

Romans 1:24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:

So then, because of the liberty God gives each and everyone of His creatures, when they choose to reject Him, He has to give them up to reap the consequences of their choice. Let's read then evaluate the following five examples.

In Psalm 81:11 God laments that "Israel would have none of me so was obligated to give them up.

Psalm 81:11 But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me. 12) So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels. 13) Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways!

In 2 Chronicles 30:7 again God "gave them up" not imposed desolation.

2Chronicles 30:7 And be not ye like your fathers, and like your brethren, which trespassed against the LORD God of their fathers, who therefore gave them up to desolation, as ye see.

In Psalm 34:7 we see the alternative. Those that "fear Him," that is place themselves under His government, the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them and is able to deliver them.

Psalm 34:7 The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them.

In Psalm 78:40 “they turned back and tempted God” which “limited the Holy One of Israel”.

Psalms 78:40 How oft did they provoke Him in the wilderness, and grieve Him in the desert!
41) Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel.

Have you considered that just as in Psalm 78:40 to “grieve Him” means they “limited the Holy One of Israel,” so does fully rejecting or grieving the holy Spirit limit God from sealing us “unto the day of redemption”?

Ephesians 4:30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

In Job 22:15 it directly asks what could God have done “for” the antediluvians, those that lived before the flood, to protect them from destruction which said unto God, “Depart from us”. What could He have done to save them and still give them liberty by honoring their choice?

Job 22:15 Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden? 16) Which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflowed with a flood: 17) Which said unto God, Depart from us: and what can the Almighty do for them?

How many Christians realize that when the Bible refers to various situations that involve the judgments of God and the decisions He makes, it's not a direct execution from God causing the effect, but that He is obligated to give them over to reap that which they have sown? God's desire to honor the liberty He extends His creatures obligates Him to allow cause and effect that we might understand the nature of sin and desire to escape it.

• Romans 1:25

See the explanation of the following verse on bottom of page 5.

Romans 1:25 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 1:26, 27

Romans 1:26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: 27) And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.

The law of God is immutable, unchangeable. It will produce blessings if obeyed, and curses if disobeyed. The property of cause and effect is built into laws. If you jump off a cliff the law of gravity assures you are definitely going down. If you transgress God's law you shall surely die.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

• Romans 1:28

Romans 1:28 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;

What is a reprobate? Strong's defines it as unapproved, ie rejected. In other words, Paul calls this condition as a hardened or impenitent heart.

Romans 2:5 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:

Strongs define hardness as stubborn and impenitent as unrepentant.

The Scripture reveals that God is always willing to forgive on condition.

1John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

The condition is not on God's part but on ours. He cannot violate the law of liberty and force upon us forgiveness if we do not want it. This is known as the unpardonable sin.

The sin of homosexuality:

The reason Paul uses homosexuality as an example of sin that leads to disease and death, is not to suggest it's the worse sin, or the unpardonable sin, but because it is a corruption of the gospel. Paul compares the love and oneness between man and wife as the intimate relationship He desires to have with us.

Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; ... 31) For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. 32) This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

When husband and wife come together and his seed remains in her, it can be seen that she has been with him.

1John 3:9 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

Luke 8:11 Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.

Psalms 119:11 Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

If His seed, (word) abides in us, the fruits of the Spirit will be seen.

Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23) Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. 24) And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. 25) If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26) Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

But if His seed does not remain in her, she has her monthly weekly which represents works of the flesh.

Isaiah 64:6 But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

Romans 10:3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

Can two men produce a new creature in Christ Jesus, or can two women? This misrepresents the biblical analogy of the union of Christ and man becoming one and reproducing a born again experience.