

<sup>18</sup> The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, <sup>19</sup> since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. <sup>20</sup> For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

Illustration: Sometimes we sabotage relationships. Envy, fear, anger; these are three of the negative emotions that can motivate selective incompetence. It's where children suddenly can't walk! And husbands just can't remember to do simple things that they said they would do. And wives—oh, it says here in my notes it doesn't affect women. How strange. It's the sudden memory loss that is most popular and convenient, because it creates an impregnable shield of ignorance around us. How can someone be angry at us when we forgot?

How many dozens of times in my relationships have I allowed thoughts of anger or fear or doubt to fill my mind and crowd out important things I said I'd do?

Wouldn't it be something if on judgment day, most of the world, in one cosmic act of selective incompetence, just claimed ignorance in the face of God's justice? "God, I had no idea." But in the text today we have working, practical explanation for how God is just and righteous when he judges, even if people claim ignorance.

My goal today is to demonstrate the attributes of God that are known to all humans via something we call "general revelation" in theology such that it's clear they are obligated to seek him and know him. Special revelation is that which we know and learn in Scripture, but "general" is known from the truths God has given us elsewhere, both outside and inside our mind.

This impacts our message to the unbeliever by putting the burden back on them. This teaching today dramatically impacts the way we present the gospel. We don't simply give them the gospel and hope they, as the judge of truth, accept it. We present them with proof that they do believe in God and even the shape of their own failings proves it. Then we challenge them

to pursue, with curiosity and hope, the existence of a creator God that if they are honest, they know exists, but what's hard to believe is that he loves us and can forgive us.

Look at the text today and the key phrase in vs 20--

His eternal power and divine nature—what is this? Let's not speculate. Let's allow Scripture to interpret Scripture.

Look at Psalm 19. This is the place where the ancient theologians took up this question.

In Psalm 19, David shows that God has spoken to us through His revelation in His world (19:1-6) and in His Word (19:7-11). He concludes by showing how we must respond (19:12-14). (See Text, focus 1-6)

19 The heavens declare the glory of God,  
and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. (Omnipresent)

<sup>2</sup>Day to day pours out speech,  
and night to night reveals knowledge. (All knowing, omniscient)

<sup>3</sup>There is no speech, nor are there words,  
whose voice is not heard.

<sup>4</sup>Their voice goes out through all the earth,  
and their words to the end of the world. (All merciful)

In them he has set a tent for the sun,

<sup>5</sup> which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber,  
and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy. (All Glorious)

<sup>6</sup>Its rising is from the end of the heavens,  
and its circuit to the end of them,  
and there is nothing hidden from its heat. (Immutable, unchanging)

Now with seeing how Paul's words are not new words, but a summary of what God's people have been singing about for thousands of years, back to Romans 1: Paul then says, on the authority of Scripture, having travel much of Asia Minor and met dozens of nationalities from three continents, from Mars Hill to Mount Zion, he's seen this teaching confirmed over and over. Men and women and children do understand these hidden attributes

of God and either submit to the story found in Scripture or insert these into their own religions, using them as borrowed capital to build their own religion.

This is a passage about judgment, but the end of this message is hope and happiness as we discover that God has made a way for those separated from this merciful God to be reconciled through Jesus Christ.

Why? Because the implications that Paul draws from this self-revelation of God in creation is that it makes us responsible for our sin against God—and there's no other way to address our obligation to live perfectly before God except through trusting the promises of God in Christ to give us his righteousness, exactly what satisfies God and gives us the courage to go on and fight the fight of faith.

Since we've already agreed together that the New Testament model is that believers ought to hear and apply the gospel daily, this general revelation of God's existence and holy expectations of us is one more truth that God has graciously given us to push us to live in the Gospel, live in light of Christ's promises presence and peace and propitiation. To live with the knowledge of a God who is there, always judging, always seeing, always teaching us and we refuse to listen—this is a frightening, anxiety producing reality that's going to turn into a thousand times worse in the future unless we act. Now. Today.

Trusting in the present power of the atoning work of Jesus to turn the eternal power and divine nature of God the Father into an infinite blessing rather than an infinite curse is exactly where we stand today. Will you reach out and take Christ's pierced hand and by faith, receive his redeeming rescue? It's your turn. You talk to God now. Let us pray.