

# Romans 1:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

## Analysis

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

Having established God's righteousness revealed in the gospel (v. 17), Paul now contrasts it with God's wrath revealed against sin. *Apokaluptetai gar orgē theou ap' ouranou* (ἀποκαλύπτεται γὰρ ὀργή θεοῦ ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ, 'for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven') uses the same verb *apokaluptetai* (is revealed)—God's wrath is as much a present reality as His righteousness. *Orgē* (ὀργή, wrath) is not capricious rage but settled, righteous indignation against sin. It is judicial, not emotional; holy, not vindictive.

The object of wrath is *epi pasan asebeian kai adikian anthrōpōn* (ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ἀσέβειαν καὶ ἀδικίαν ἀνθρώπων, 'against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men'). *Asebeian* (ἀσέβεια, ungodliness) refers to violations against God—irreverence, idolatry, impiety. *Adikian* (ἀδικία, unrighteousness) refers to violations against people—injustice, immorality. These two categories encompass the two tables of the law (Exodus 20). The participial phrase *tōn tēn alētheian en adikia katechontōn* (τῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν ἀδικίᾳ κατεχόντων, 'who suppress/hold down the truth in unrighteousness') describes active resistance to known truth. *Katechontōn* (κατέχω) means to suppress, hold down, or restrain—humanity actively suppresses revelation of God.

## Historical Context

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Paul's indictment of humanity begins with Gentile idolatry (1:18-32), then includes Jewish law-breaking (2:1-3:8), concluding that all are under sin (3:9-20). This threefold structure demolishes any claim to innocence. The Greco-Roman world was saturated with immorality—temple prostitution, infanticide, gladiatorial bloodshed, slavery, sexual exploitation. Jewish readers would have nodded in agreement about Gentile depravity, only to be confronted with their own sin in chapter 2. Paul's diagnosis is universal and total.

## Related Passages

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**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

## Study Questions

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1. How do you reconcile God's love with His wrath (ὀργή), and why is denying divine wrath an assault on God's holiness and justice?
2. In what ways do you or your culture 'suppress the truth' (κατέχω τὴν ἀλήθειαν) about God, morality, or reality?
3. What is the relationship between 'ungodliness' (ἀσέβεια) toward God and 'unrighteousness' (ἀδικία) toward people?

## Interlinear Text

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Ἀποκαλύπτεται	γὰρ	ὀργή	θεοῦ	ἀπ'	οὐρανοῦ	ἐπὶ
is revealed	For	the wrath	of God	from	heaven	against
G601	G1063	G3709	G2316	G575	G3772	G1909
πᾶσαν	ἀσέβειαν	καὶ	ἀδικία	ἀνθρώπων	τῶν	τὴν
all	ungodliness	and	unrighteousness	of men	G3588	G3588
G3956	G763	G2532	G93	G444		
ἀλήθειαν	ἐν	ἀδικία	κατεχόντων			
the truth	in	unrighteousness	who hold			
G225	G1722	G93	G2722			

## Additional Cross-References

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**Ephesians 5:6** (Judgment): Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

**Romans 1:32** (Judgment): 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.

**Colossians 3:6** (Judgment): For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:

**2 Thessalonians 2:10** (Righteousness): And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

**Romans 4:15** (Judgment): Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.

**Romans 5:9** (Righteousness): Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

**Romans 6:13** (Righteousness): Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

**Romans 1:28** (References God): 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;

**Romans 2:3** (Judgment): 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?

**Romans 1:19** (References God): Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.

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