

# Romans: Darkened, Shamed, and Deprived of Truth

## [Romans 1:18-2:16](#)

In this passage, Paul begins his exposition of the gospel by first deconstructing the misplaced hopes of both the Gentiles and the Jews in his audience. We, also, must realize that our hope cannot be in our culture's narrative of personal freedom or our drive to make things right. The only true hope that brings freedom and life is in the finished work of Jesus Christ and submitting joyfully to his authority.

## Application

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1. Similar to our current culture, the Greco-Roman worldview valued personal freedom. How have you seen our culture's elevation of personal freedom reflected in the church? How has it influenced your own worldview? In what ways can personal freedom lead to destruction?
2. Like the Jews, many of us place value in "being right." How is this a false hope? Has there been a time when you were committed to being right but were still blinded by sin? Why shouldn't we place hope in making our country "right"?
3. Why was it so vital for Paul to deconstruct the hope of both the Jews and the Gentiles in his audience? Take time to reflect and consider where you might be placing hope other than the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

## Key Points

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- In order to give his audience new hope in the gospel, Paul must first deconstruct all their existing hopes. Both the Jews and the Gentiles of the early Roman church have to understand their need for Jesus.
- While the gospel offers salvation for all, it also brings judgment for all. We must embrace this tension to have a fully developed view of God's truth.
- The Gentile worldview placed hope in personal freedom. However, the elevation of personal freedom can only lead to degradation and destruction.
- Many of us identify more with the world and its narrative than with a holy God, our Creator. Instead, we should not be ashamed of the counter-cultural nature of the gospel.
- In contrast to the Gentiles, the Jewish believers were self-righteous and judgmental. Paul reveals that their hope in being "right" is just as empty. Even

though they have God's law, they still fail to uphold it perfectly and are blind to their own sin.

- Ultimately, none of us have hope in and of ourselves. Our only hope is in Jesus' finished work on our behalf, and we must be willing to joyfully submit to his authority in our lives.

## Other Scripture References

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