

Romans 1:24-27 **God's Judgment Upon the Gentiles**

Romans chapter 1. We are in verses 18 through 32. We left off at verse 23 last week. This first part of this section goes through verse 25, we hope to take that this morning. And then finish out this chapter next week.

The book of Romans, begin reading at verse 17:

17) For in it, that is, *in the gospel*, the righteousness of God is being revealed from out of faith into faith: as it has been written, "The just (or *righteous person*) shall live from out of faith."

18) For the wrath of God is being revealed from Heaven against (or *upon*) all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who are suppressing, (holding down) the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them, *manifest* means for God to reveal it to them.

19) For that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has manifested *it* to them.

20) For the invisible attributes (or *the invisible things*) of Him from *the* creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood (or *perceived*) 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 they thankful; but became vain (or *empty*) in their reasonings, and their foolish heart (that is, *their heart without understanding*) was darkened.

22) While professing themselves to be wise, they became foolish. That is the Greek word from which we get our English word *moron* from. **They became foolish,**

23) and they changed the glory of the uncorruptible (or *incorruptible*) God into an image, into the likeness of an image to corruptible man, and of birds, and of four-footed animals, and of creeping things.

24) Wherefore God also gave them over to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies among themselves:

25) who changed the truth of God into the lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever, Amen.

Serious, serious portions of Scripture. Remember the book of Romans, the first book of the teaching section of the New Testament, is The Constitution of the Christian Faith. Paul wrote it like a legal document in order to present all of the doctrines of the Christian faith. He wrote it to the people in Rome whom he had never seen up to this point. Three years later he

would arrive in Rome as a prisoner, and they would get to know him that way. But great, great teaching by Paul so that we can be established in all of the doctrines of the Christian faith.

The first doctrine is condemnation, not exactly what you want to hear. *Condemnation* is a legal term that means *to pass sentence or judgment against somebody*. Condemnation. The word *righteousness*, we saw in verse 17: **In the gospel the righteousness of God is being revealed**. That is a present tense verb, right now. *Righteousness* is also a legal term and it means *to be lined up rightly with somebody*. To be lined up rightly with the law. To be lined up rightly with God. His righteousness has been revealed. That the only way a human being can be made right with God is through Jesus Christ. Paul said at the end of I Corinthians chapter 1 (verse 30) that Jesus Christ is our righteousness. And that we are clothed in His righteousness, we have none of our own. So the righteousness of God is currently being revealed but it is by faith, not by works.

But also in verse 18, the wrath of God is also being revealed, same verb, present tense. Both God's righteousness and His wrath is being revealed. **His wrath is being revealed from heaven against all ungodliness...** The word *ungodliness* means *a lack of respect and reverence for the Lord*. Doing things, living life with a lack of respect and reverence for the Lord. **...and unrighteousness** - living in a way that is not right in the eyes of the Lord. These people who are living this way who also are suppressing the truth in unrighteousness. To *suppress* means *to hold down*. To put it out of one's mind. It is still there but block it out, to keep it away from one's consciousness.

And this is what introduces us to one of the great doctrines that we as Gentiles, we do not understand. God does not minister to the Gentiles through the law. That God ministers to the Gentiles through creation.

Verse 19, **Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them**. So God reveals the truth. That is, that which may be known, those things that God chooses to reveal to us **is manifest in them, for God has manifested to them**. Point-blank statement. How does He do that? **For the invisible attributes (the invisible things) of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen**.

As I said before, it is a great attention getter and brings our minds back in line with the Lord. Go out some night. We are so busy in our horizontal lifestyles that we do not have time to look up, see the vast universe. It has the Creator's design written all over it. Even in our own solar system all the planets in line perfectly.

So that which may be known of God, **they are clearly seen being perceived by the things that are made**, that is by creation. And the two things about His attributes: **his eternal power**, that is, His authority; **and His Godhead**. You look up in the stars, look at creation, you see the very authority and power of God. He made all of that, that is how powerful He is. And also his Godhead, that He exists as God, His deity.

So that they are without excuse. No one will ever stand before God and say that they have an excuse. It does not make any difference if they have never heard the Bible. It does not

make any difference if no one has ever told them about Christ or not. God has manifested His authority, His power, and His deity through creation. Now that is just the beginning. After one has responded, then the Lord draws those people to, or draws people to them with the message of the gospel.

I can remember in Pensacola, Florida watching one of the electrical storms. That was my first time that I said to God, "Lord, if You are real reveal yourself to me." It was two years later that He saved me. Creation, through creation He touched my heart. Another two years to come to know who this God is through the ministry of his word. So the people will be without excuse.

You see, the point I have tried to make all these years is that there is a gray area about God and spiritual things that we know nothing about. And that is our problem. That is why we have so many differences over predestination, or eternal security, because it is an area that belongs to God. I do not even know my own heart. I did not know that I was seeking for the Lord and all the time He was seeking for me. I did not know that I would be saved. I did not know that others would be lost and they would reject Christ.

I still do not understand it. Why me, not the family next door? What is the difference? It is not God's choosing. It is because of a heart condition that I do not understand. When the seed falls upon the ground the ground is either receptive to it or it is not. God knows my heart. He knows from the beginning while I was on the drawing board whether I would receive Christ or not. Whether I would be receptive. God knows me. So His power and deity was revealed through creation so that they are without excuse. No one will ever have an excuse: "Oh, I did not know."

As we learn from John chapter 3, Jesus said he is the light of the world. Those who have a heart for the truth will be drawn to the light. Those that do not have a heart for truth will reject the light and try to get away from the light. See, it has nothing to do with words. It has do with the spirit of God. Why I am attracted to the spirit of God I do not understand. Why some people are not attracted to the Spirit of God, I have no idea. Other than the fact that something inside of me beyond my awareness and understanding is drawn to the light. It is one of those gray areas that we just do not understand. But we do know for sure that God knows ahead of time. And God can plan accordingly if He wishes.

I was speaking to somebody the other day and they talked about predestination. I said, "Look, even if predestination is true, what are you going to do?" God makes the rules. That is just the way it is. So whatever is true, that is what's going on. You are not going to be left out. You are not going to stand before Him and say, "You did not choose me to be saved and that is why I could not be saved." It does not say that in the Word. That is not the way God is. He desires all to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. But not everybody wants it. **So they are without excuse.** Then he goes on to explain.

Because that, when they knew God. Everybody when they knew God, *God* is just a generic term. Every religious group uses the generic term *God* in their own language. Even human beings in the Old Testament, those judges who sat on the bench amongst the Jews they were called *gods*, same word, *Elohim*, because they represented God through the through the

law. And God's laws were dispensed supposedly through the judiciary amongst the Jews. So even people were called *gods* because they were representative, it means *majesty*. So that is why in the courts we say, "Yes, your Honor." It is the place of superiority and power.

But when they knew God. They do not have to know His name, they do not have to know all the details, but it is for sure that everyone knows God, whether they want to admit it or not. According to our text it is suppressed. Because when they knew God they did two things:

1) they did not glorify him as God

They did not give Him the honor. They did not give Him the glory when it was real to them about His power, authority, and Godhead.

2) and they were not thankful

The opposite of *thankful*, to be thankful, is to complain. We all do that all the time. Every time we complain, we are actually complaining against God because that is the way He is doing things and we complain against it. We do not like it.

According to Paul's writings God's people glorify Him and thank Him for everything that He is and everything that He does. So, **Because when they knew Him, they did not glorify Him as God, neither were they thankful; they became empty in their reasonings**, literal translation. The dialogues in their minds.

In case you did not sense it when we read through, there is a progression with which God's wrath, His judgment, basically says once you know God, if you back away from Him and you no longer seek Him or respond to the truth, God is going to give you over to corruption. He is going to give you over to corruption. So, **They became empty in their dialogues** (their reasonings), **and their foolish heart** - the word *foolish* means *a heart without understanding* - **was darkened**. So now darkness has fallen upon their heart. They are no longer able to know the things of God or to respond to the things of God anymore.

While professing themselves to be wise - a lot of intellectuals who have rejected Christ that believe in various things about creation. They do not want to acknowledge where creation has come from. **Professing themselves to be wise, they became foolish.** *Morons*, very interesting. As I shared, I think last week, that if you ever come across someone that says, "The things of the Lord are foolish," you can let them know that they are in the Bible. Psalm 14:1 and Psalm 53:1 says, **The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God."**

Verse 23, **And they changed the glory of the uncorruptible God.** One of the things they did was change the glory of God. We will see the same word used a little later for *exchange*. Not just *change*, but *exchange*. I am going to take the truth of God and exchange it for a whole different theory, a whole different belief. **They changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into a likeness of the image of corruptible man, and of birds, and the four-footed beasts, and creeping things** (or *creeping animals*). So man in his decay and corruption tries to replace the truth that God has revealed to them. They try to change the glory of God and try to make man, and the things of man, and even the things of creation, we are going

to be told, above the Creator. We have sophisticated religious systems in the world that worship pieces of wood, stone.

It says in the Scripture, Psalm 115 verse 8 and Psalm 135 verses 15 and 18 that man becomes like the one that he worships. And that is why the New Testament emphasizes that we are being made into the image of God. The more time we spend with Christ, the more we become like Him, the more His attributes and characteristics influence our life. He gives us that example in just everyday human life. You can hang around the wrong people for long periods of time and some of their bad habits rub off on you. You begin to talk like them, and act like them, and they have an influence on your mind. That is the way God created us to be. So that when we spend large amounts of time with Him, His influence becomes the dominant influence in our life. We begin to talk like Him, think like Him, glorify Him, thank Him, because He is there with us.

Verse 24, **Wherefore God gave them over.** Another legal term: *God gave them up* or *God gave them over*, literally. It is mentioned three times in this chapter, that God delivered these people over. It is the same thing as delivering somebody over to the courts for sentencing. **God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts.** He turned them over to their lusts. But please note this is a deeper lust than fleshly and body lust. This is the lust of the heart, not of the flesh. It is deeper than flesh lust, heart lust.

Secondly, **God delivers them over into uncleanness.** The word itself means *to decay*, **to uncleanness.** It is kind of interesting that the Bible uses the same word for *immorality*. Also for *demons*, demonic activities, an unclean spirit. Paul goes on to say, **He delivers them over in the lusts of their hearts into uncleanness, to dishonor their bodies amongst themselves.**

In I Corinthians chapter 6 it tells us by Paul that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. When we reject Christ He gives us over to corruption to dishonor our bodies. In fact Paul mentioned in I Corinthians chapter 6 that sexual immorality is the only sin against the body, against your own body because it is the temple of the Holy Spirit. God says, "You reject Me, I will give you over to dishonor your bodies amongst yourselves."

Verse 25, **who changed** - and this is the word *exchange: replacing one thing with another*. These same people that God gave over, **they exchanged the truth of God for the lie.** Notice the definite article. John chapter 8 Jesus says that Satan is the liar, he is the father of all lies. This is the lie that Satan tells people here on the earth in the corrupt system. **They have exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and they have worshiped and served the creation more than the Creator, who is blessed forevermore. Amen.**

So they worship creation itself. Pick things out: horoscopes; pieces of wood; pieces of stone; bringing God down onto our level; worshipping a God that we create out of our vain imaginations. But they worship and they serve creatures, the creation, more than the Creator. I think that is interesting. In the Greek text it does not say they do away with the Creator altogether, it is just that they worship that which has been created more than the Creator. Then, of course, Paul says, **Who is blessed forever.** The word *blessed* means *who is to be well spoken of forever*. And then the affirmation of this, **Amen.**

We have a chance to go into verse 26, **On account of this**. Notice the progression of corruption. God delivers them over. It says in verse 26, **On account of this, God delivered them over**. Same word. Emphasizing that the degree of decay and corruption is because God has delivered them over for sentence. Remember the wrath of God is being revealed right now in judgment.

God gave them over into dishonorable passions. The Bible does not say that passion is wrong. It says dishonorable passion is wrong, misplaced passion, misused passion is wrong. He says for the females, **Their females exchanged the natural use for that which is unnatural: likewise also the males, not using the natural use of the female, they were inflamed in lust.** And this word for *lust*, it is the only time it is mentioned in the Bible. It is beyond normal, it is beyond natural, it is only found within the judgment. **They were inflamed in lust toward one another, men amongst men working out that which is shameful and dishonorable, which is necessary because of their error.**

We have to realize that what Paul is ministering to us is that God's judgment is being meted out to man. That if a human being in response to the knowledge that God reveals to them wants to reject that, block it out, and be on their merry way, even to the point of exchanging it for a lie, that God will give them over to it.

In fact, we are going to be told next week He is going to give them over to a reprobate mind. *Reprobate* means *reject*. God says, "You choose. You receive, I will give you a mind of reception. If you reject Me, I will give you a mind that rejects all truth. Which way do you want to go?" Like Pharaoh in the Old Testament. He hardened his heart when Moses came and said, "God says, 'Let My people go.'" So God says, "Okay, I will harden your heart. Every time Moses comes in and says, 'Let my people go,' you are going to say, 'No,' and it is going to bring judgment on you." Understand God's ways.

Galatians again chapter 6 verses 6 and 7 tells us that we reap what we sow. That is a law written in God's creation. We also dictate to Him if we want to follow Him. This is not a religious trip here. Christianity is not a religion, it is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. And if we reject the truth of God, whatever we use to exchange that truth God is going to give us over to it. And down the pathway that lie that leads to the point of dishonoring their own bodies for the natural intent which God created them to be. All for one reason, our bodies were made to be the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Paul said at the end of I Corinthians chapter 3, **Take care how you build. If anybody corrupts this temple, God will corrupt them.** Turn them over to corruption. What we have in our world today is judgment. What we have in our country is judgment. And it is going get worse and worse as people continue to reject the truth of God. You do not have to agree with it, you do not have to disagree with it, that is what is happening. It is what God does. Nothing short of repentance will turn a person around. I am not talking about turning our country around, because it is individual people through the social means of disrespecting the things of God.

That is why over the years as we look back in church history we ought to have been concerned and be concerned today. We, as Gentiles, we have made a religion out of Christianity. That if you go to church, believe in God, "Well, mostly what the Bible says, you know? There are some things I disagree with, but you know, I am a Christian, I believe in God. I believe Jesus died for me on the cross." But my mind and my heart is corrupt. All we have done is play church.

I was reading over the Internet yesterday where thousands and thousands of young people are leaving the church. One pastor even saying that it is because we have appealed to the flesh. We would rather have them in church than out on the street. And of course that is the better place to be but their soul is not being ministered to. They do not know it, but they are looking for Christ. And so they say that church is no longer prevalent in their lives, no longer applicable to their lives, so they are leaving by the thousands. One church said they had a youth group of about two thousand kids, this year they have three hundred and fifty because the kids just basically said, "I would rather be out in the world playing than be under your supervision and have it controlled." That is all it is.

So it is true that every person as they respond to God manifesting to them about God's deity, and His power, and authority; that He is real, and that He is alive, and that He is in control. As people suppress that, and then exchange it, and replace it with a God that they want to make out of their own empty imaginations. God says, "Fine, I will turn you over to your god that you have made out of your own imaginations. Let your God help you, protect you."

I can remember down in Los Angeles, it is when the Taiwanese were leaving their country - they were called *the boat people*. And some were loaded down in the boats, and the boats would tip over, and the people would drown because they did not know how to swim. They are out in the middle of nowhere. The first response by the news people was, "Where is God when all of this human tragedy is taking place?" And then on the front page of the LA Times on the next day was a man on his knees on a beach that he had landed on and giving thanks to Buddha for saving his life in the journey. And my response to the group that night, "That is why God does not intervene." Because all the praise and all the thanks goes to Buddha, not to God. And He gives them over to the one that they worship.

So we need to understand, number one, judgment has been passed upon this world, right now. It is not just coming in the future, judgment has been passed already. The wrath of God is being revealed and the righteousness of God is being revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. How we respond - we dictate to God whether we will be under His provision and care, or whether He is going to give us over to whatever we are going to believe to take His place. And that will eventually lead us down a road of corruption. And God will not be there to help because we have rejected Him. And as Gentiles we need to understand these things about the gospel, about God's plan, and His provision, even what is going on today. We will finish this chapter out next week.