

No Excuse!

Romans 1:18-32

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; 19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed *it* unto them. 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: 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. 22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 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. 24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: 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. 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. 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; 29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, 30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 Without understanding, covenantbreakers,

without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: 32 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.

Introduction:

1. The head of the department of evangelism for a major denomination in America said, "We don't need to evangelize the people of the world who have never heard the message of salvation. We only need to announce to them that they're already saved."
2. That leader reflects the rising tide of universalism, the belief that, because God is too loving and gracious to send anyone to hell, everyone ultimately will go to heaven.
3. If that were true, there obviously would be no place for judgment in the proclamation of the gospel.
4. Just as obviously there would be no place for biblical evangelism, as the person just quoted contends.
5. Some church groups in England concluded that 84 psalms were "not fit for Christians to sing." They reasoned that the wrath and vengeance reflected in those psalms were not compatible with the Christian gospel of love and grace.
6. But Scripture makes clear that justice, wrath, and judgment are as much divine attributes as are love, mercy, and grace.
7. Before Paul preaches the good news of salvation by grace, He gives the Jews and Gentiles the bad news that all are sinners.
8. Here we see the terrible downward spiral of those who turn their backs on God.

I. THE REVELATION - VS 19-20

- Every person has some truth about God

- Not everyone has a Bible, not everyone has a church to attend, not everyone can hear Bible preaching but everyone has some light about God

A. God Reveals Himself in His Creation - vs 20

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:*

1. The invisible God can be clearly seen in His creation
2. Regardless of culture, tribe or race a person can look up at a starry sky at night and say to himself, “Hmmm... there has to be somebody out there. There has to be someone up there. All of this could not happen accidentally all by itself.
3. The problem in our modern day is that we are taught evolution from before kindergarten and we are constantly told that everything happened accidentally. It all happened by chance.
4. Go to South Dakota and look up at Mt. Rushmore. You look at those 600 foot sculpted faces of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln. Suppose the tour guide said, “There was an earthquake and the mountains shook and when it was over those faces were carved in the mountain.” Someone with common sense would think, “Come on.. You’ve got to be kidding.” Or suppose the tour guide said, “Over millions of years of freezing and thawing, rain and wind hitting the mountain and erosion and those images formed all by themselves.” You’d say, “Artists and sculptors and engineers designed those images and workers took dynamite and blew apart the mountain to make those images. It took a great deal of intelligence to make those images. Somebody designed it, somebody made it. It couldn’t happen by chance.”
5. Creation shouts, “There is a mighty God out there.”

- a) *Every sunset has God's signature on it*
 - b) *Every flower points to God.*
6. There is so much evidence for God in creation that the lost will be without excuse when they stand before God
 7. A young man from Nigeria came to America to school and, in a conversation with a pastor, told this story. He said, "When I was a little boy, running around in the bush country of Nigeria, I knew there was a God. I would stand among trees and look up at the sky at night and know that someone made this world. I knew there was a God, but I didn't know what to call him until a Southern Baptist missionary came and taught us how to read the Bible. There I discovered the name of the God who had revealed himself to me through the trees and stars."

B. God Reveals Himself in Man's Conscience - vs 19

19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed *it* unto them.

1. Creation is an outward witness to the existence of God
2. Conscience is an inward witness to the existence of God
Ro 2:14 For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: 15 Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)
3. Before the Ten Commandments were written down people already knew that it was wrong to kill someone. They knew that it was wrong to steal or to steal another man's wife.
4. It is true that a person can sin and sin and sin so that his conscience becomes seared and it no longer bothers him.

The Revelation...

II. THE REJECTION - vs 18, 21-22

A. *The Lost Want to Suppress the Truth - vs 18*

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

1. “Hold” = katecho - to hold down
 - a) *Ungodly and unrighteous men desire to hold down or suppress the truth.*
 - b) *They knew the truth but suppressed it so that they might live their own lives and not be convicted by God’s truth*
2. They ignore the witness of creation and conscience.

B. *Light Rejected Increases Darkness - vs 21-22*

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. 22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

1. Those who reject the light and turn away from the light of the truth about God turn toward darkness
2. Wicked man wants nothing to do with God
3. God made Himself known to them but they rejected His revelation
4. Light refused increases darkness
5. Those who turn their backs on light go further and further into darkness - “their foolish hearts were darkened”

The Rejection...

III. THE RESULT - vs 23-28

A. *Light Rejected Leads to Darkness*

1. A Darkened Heart Leads to Image Worship - vs 23

23 And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

- a) *Those who reject the truth about the existence of God turn to image worship*
- b) *When man rejects the true God he does not cease to be religious - he simply creates his own god*
 - (1) Have you ever wondered how people could bow down before an idol, a statue?
 - (2) They rejected God and worshipped idols instead
- c) *Instead of worshipping the Creator, the lost will worship created things.*
- d) *Satan has always wanted the worship that belongs to God alone and in idol worship he receives that worship*
- e) *In America, we don't worship statues. Instead we bow down at the altar of success, we kneel at the shrine of career, houses, land and possessions.*
- f) *God's Word tells us that covetousness is idolatry. Anything people put above God is an idol.*

2. A Darkened Heart Leads to Believing "A Lie"

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

- a) *From idolatry to immorality is one short step*
- b) *A darkened heart leads man to exchange God's truth for Satan's lie.*
- c) *The lie is that man is his own god and that he should worship and serve himself and not the Creator*
- d) *This was the lie that Satan used in the garden of Eden to lead Eve into sin - "Ye shall be as God."*

3. A Darkened Heart Leads to Sexual Impurity

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. 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;

- a) *Where did sexual impurity ever come from?*
- b) *Sexual impurity came when people rejected the truth of God*
- c) *When people reject the light then they turn to darkness and worship idols and they turn to immorality*

B. Light Obeyed Increases Light

- We have seen that those who turn from the light of God go deeper into darkness
- On the other hand, those who turn toward the light and desire more light, they get more light

1. Example #1 - Ethiopian man - Acts 8

- a) *The Ethiopian man knew some things about God*
- b) *He left Africa and went to Jerusalem (even though he was not a Jew) to try to learn more*
- c) *He obtained a scroll of Isaiah and was reading. He wanted to know more. He wanted to know the God of the Jews*
- d) *At the same time God sent an angel to Philip who was preaching in Samaria to tell Philip to leave the revival in Samaria and go down to the desert*
- e) *Philip obeyed the angel and went to the desert and hopped up into*

the chariot and told the Ethiopian man about Jesus. The African man was saved and baptized and he went home rejoicing

- f) A few years later when missionaries made it to Africa they found that there were Christians already there. Where do you think they came from?*
- g) This man had some light but he wanted more and God sent Philip to him with the truth*

2. Example #2 - Cornelius - Acts 10

- a) Cornelius was a Roman soldier, a centurion*
- b) As a young soldier I can picture him on sentry duty late at night. He stops in his tracks and looks up at the starry sky and says, "God, I know that you are out there somewhere. Please reveal yourself to me."*
- c) He wants to know God and for several years he seeks God.*
- d) He prays, he fasts weekly, he helps the poor but he is not saved.*
- e) God sent an angel to Cornelius and the angel said, "Don't worry Cornelius there is a guy down in Joppa by the name of Simon Peter. He can tell you what you want to know. Send a couple of soldiers to get him."*
- f) At the same time God worked with Peter so that Peter would go to the house of Cornelius.*
- g) The soldiers showed up at Peter's house and he went with them and he told Cornelius and his family about Jesus and Cornelius was saved.*

3. Example #3 - Africa - Accident Baptist Church

- a) In 1992 in Tanzania, Africa a Baptist missionary named Rob Moore was in a jeep with a native pastor. They were miles from their home base on a dusty road in an area where they never had been before.*

- b) *A truck in front of them really kicked up the dust. Then suddenly out of the dust cloud a car appeared and there was a head-on collision.*
- c) *The missionary and pastor were wearing seat belts and were not injured but the five Africans in the car were injured.*
- d) *Rob and the pastor tried to administer medical help to the injured and it took a long time for someone to come and take them to the hospital.*
- e) *The missionary and the native pastor prayed for the injured as they were being transported to the hospital.*
- f) *Out of the bush three African men suddenly appeared. They said that they were convinced that there was only one true Spirit. They denounced the black magic of their ancestors and they set out to find the one true Spirit. So Rob Moore and the native pastor started telling them about Jesus.*
- g) *It took 48 hours for the wrecker to show up to tow the jeep back to town.*
- h) *In the meantime 12 more tribesmen showed up and all 15 trusted Christ as Savior.*
- i) *A thriving, vibrant church exists there today and the name of the church in Swahili is Accident Baptist Church.*
- j) *It was no accident. Three men were true to the light they had. They were seeking God. Sometimes it may take a car wreck.*
- k) *Anyone, anywhere who follows the light they have can find out the truth about God*

IV. THE RAMIFICATION - vs 29-32

29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity;

whisperers, 30 Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: 32 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.

1. As men reject the light of God they go deeper and deeper into darkness.
2. The further men get from God the more wicked and evil they become and Paul lists examples of that wickedness here.

Conclusion:

1. How will God judge the pagan who never heard the gospel?
 - a. That is up to God - not up to you and me.
 - b. They will be judged but there are degrees of judgment
 - c. In the end, they are without excuse
2. The main question is - How will God judge an American who has heard the gospel many times but rejected it every time.
 - a. There is a Bible in every hotel room.
 - b. There is a Christian book store in every mall.
 - c. The gospel can be heard on radio and TV
 - d. People will be judged according to the light that they have.