

The Book Of Romans
Reasons For The Wrath Of God Part 1d
Reasons for the Wrath of God Part 2

Session 18

Romans 1:20-26 (NKJV)

²⁰ *For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes 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, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.*

²² *Professing to be wise, they became fools,*

²³ *and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man--and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.*

²⁴ *Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves,*

²⁵ *who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.*

²⁶ *For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature.*

We remind ourselves tonight of what we studied before we shut down the Romans Study. Man is under the judgment of God because he fails to give God the Glory for all His creation, including His creation of man.

This is the first of three infractions against God by man.

Second: because man in his pride fails to honor and glorify God as Creator, he also fails to **give thanks** to Him for His gracious provision.

His unbelief is made still worse by his ingratitude. Although God is the source of every good thing that men possess, ... giving rain, sun, and other natural blessings to the just and the unjust alike

Matthew 5:45 (NKJV)

⁴⁵ *that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.*

Acts 14:15-17 (NKJV)

¹⁵ *and saying, "Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them,*

¹⁶ *who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways.*

¹⁷ *Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."*

The natural man fails to thank Him because he fails even to acknowledge His existence.

Third: as a consequence of their failing to honor and thank God, fallen men have become **futile in their speculations.**

To reject God is to reject the greatest reality in the universe, the reality which gives the only true meaning, purpose, and understanding to everything else.

Refusing to recognize God and to have his truth guide their minds, sinful men are doomed to futile quests for wisdom

through various human speculations that lead only to falsehood and therefore to still greater unbelief and wickedness. The term **speculation** embraces all man's godless reasoning's.

To forsake God is to exchange truth for falsehood, meaning for hopelessness, and satisfaction for emptiness. But an empty mind and soul is like a vacuum. It will not long remain empty but will draw in falsehood and darkness to replace the truth and light it has rejected.

The history of fallen mankind is devolutionary, not evolutionary.

The **foolish heart** that rejects and dishonors God does not become enlightened and freed, as sophisticated unbelievers like to claim. But rather become spiritually **darkened** and further enslaved to sin.

The person who forsakes God forsakes truth, light, and eternal life, as well as meaning, purpose, and happiness. He also forsakes the foundation and motivation for moral righteousness.

Spiritual darkness and moral perversity are inseparable.

When man forfeits God, he forfeits virtue.

The godless philosophy of the world inescapably leads to moral perversion, because unbelief and immorality, are inextricably intertwined.

Colossians 2:8 (NKJV)

⁸ Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

When the incarnation of truth and light came into the world, unbelieving mankind would not have Him.

Because Jesus was the light of the world, they rejected Him, because their deeds were evil and they loved darkness rather than light. (**John 3:19-20.**)

For the very reason that Jesus spoke the truth, they would not believe Him;

John 8:45 (NKJV)

⁴⁵ But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me.

This is the legacy of man's refusal to glorify God.

Reasons for the Wrath of God Part 2

Romans 1:22-23 (NKJV)

²² Professing to be wise, they became fools,

²³ and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man--and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

In Roman 1:19-23 Paul describes the character of fallen man.

He gives four reasons why everyone is born under God's wrath and condemnation.

The first two reasons, God's revelation, and man's rejection, are presented in verses 19-21 and we have discussed these reasons already.

The third and fourth reasons, man's rationalization and man's religion, are presented in verses 22-23

Romans 1:22 (NKJV)

22 Professing to be wise, they became fools,

In rejecting God's clear revelation of Himself through His creation, men failed to honor and glorify God, failed to give Him thanks, became futile in their philosophical speculations, and became foolish and darkened in their hearts.
(vv19-21)

Trying to justify themselves, they rationalized their sin, just as fallen mankind still does today.

Professing to be wise about God, about the universe, and about themselves, **they became** still greater **fools (vv. 21d)**

Centuries earlier, David had declared that men who deny God and His truth are fools

Psalm 14:1 (NKJV)

1 To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David. The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, They have done abominable works, There is none who does good.

Psalm 53:1 (NKJV)

1 To the Chief Musician. Set to 'Mahalath.' A Contemplation of David. The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, and have done abominable iniquity; There is none who does good.

And it is that very foolishness that deludes them into thinking they are **wise**.

The natural man cannot think perfectly about anything.

His thinking is perverted most severely in the spiritual and divine realm, because that is where his sinful rebellion is centered.

These things are beyond his human perception and since he rejects revelation, he has no hope of coming to truth in himself.

His foolish speculations therefore go the furthest astray when he philosophizes about his origin, purpose, an destiny and about the origin and meaning of the universe in which he lives.

The mind devoid of God's truth has no way to discriminate between truth and falsehood, between right and wrong, between the significant and the trivial, between the truly beautiful and the monstrous, or between the ephemeral and the eternal.

Sadly, these dominating worldly speculations often infect the church.

Because for example, gifted and articulate unbelievers have so long and loudly touted evolution as scientific fact rather than philosophical theory, many Christians have been intimidated into accommodating their theology accordingly.

In the name of theistic evolution or progressive creationism, they not only compromise scientific integrity but also, and infinitely more disastrously, compromise God's revelation.

They accept the unfounded foolishness of unregenerate men above the flawless truth of God's Word.

In a similar approach, many Christians try to adapt God's revelation to men's speculation in the areas of the mind and soul.

Intimidated by the ever-changing and mutually-conflicting theories of psychology, sociology, and anthropology, they foolishly modify or change the truths of God's revelation about man in favor of man's absurd conjectures about himself.

The late Martyn Lloyd Jones perceptively wrote, *“the whole drift toward modernism that has blighted the church of God and nearly destroyed its living gospel may be traced to an hour when men began to turn from revelation to philosophy”*

Thinking they are wise, they have become fools because their own speculations can't replace the revelation they reject.

Institution after institution that once firmly stood on God's Word has progressively accommodated itself to the intellectual foolishness of the world's system.

In the name of man's wisdom they come to reflect the foolishness, and inevitably the godlessness, of the world system of Satan.

Listen;

1 Corinthians 1:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

1 Corinthians 1:20 (NKJV)

²⁰ Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

1 Corinthians 1:25 (NKJV)

²⁵ Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

1 Corinthians 2:2 (NKJV)

² For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

The greatest fool in all the world is the person who exchanges God's wisdom of truth and light for man's wisdom of deceit and darkness.

Now the last reason for the wrath of God upon man.

MAN'S RELIGION

Romans 1:23 (NKJV)

²³ and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man--and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

The fourth reason why every person is born under God's wrath and condemnation is man-made religion, reflected in the countless systems he has devised to replace the truth and the worship of God.

Although man is not naturally godly, he is very much naturally religious.

According to the 1986 World Almanac, approximately 2.6 billion people in the world have an identifiable religious affiliation of some sort.

Many more are said to have some form of unidentified religion.

Hindus have some 330 million gods, which amounts to about eight gods per family.

They also revere cows and countless other animals that they consider to be sacred.

A two inch long discolored tooth, claimed to have belonged to Buddha and to have been retrieved from his funeral pyre in 543 B.C. is venerated by millions of Buddhists.

The tooth is set in a golden lotus blossom surrounded with rubies and enshrined in the Temple of the Tooth in Sri Lanka.

The beliefs and practices of ritualistic Christianity differ little from such pagan superstitions.

Many humanistic sociologists, philosophers, and theologians maintain that religion is a mark of man's upward climb from primitive chaos and ignorance, ascending through animism to polydemonism to polytheism and finally to monotheism.

But the clear testimony of Scripture is that human religion of every sort, whether simple or highly sophisticated is a downward movement away from God, away from truth, and away from righteousness.

Contrary to much thinking, men's religions do not reflect their highest endeavors but their lowest depravity.

The natural trend of religion throughout history has not been upward but downward. In fact, it has descended from monotheism.

That truth is attested even by secular history.

Herodotus, the famous Greek historian of the fifth century B.C., said that the earliest Persians had no pagan temples or idols

The first century Roman scholar Varro reported that the Romans had no animal or human images of a god for 170 years after the founding of Rome.

Lucian, a second century A.D. Greek writer, made similar statements concerning early Greece and Egypt.

And the fourth century Christian historian Eusebius declared that the oldest peoples had no idols.

Even many ancient unbelievers recognized the absurdity of worshiping something fashioned by man's own hands.

Horace, the Roman poet of the first century B.C., satirized the practice when he wrote, *"I was a fig tree's trunk, a useless log. The workman wavered, shall I make a stool or a god? And thus a god I am"*

The Apocrypha tells of a woodcutter felling a tree, stripping off its bark, and skillfully fashioning the wood into useful utensils and pieces of furniture. But the same woodcutter would take a gnarled leftover, of no practical value and fashion it into the likeness of a man or animal, filling in defects with clay and painting over the blemishes. After securing the figure to a wall or setting it in a niche so that it would not fall, he would then bow down and worship it, asking for protection and health for himself and his family.

Even after the Fall, at first, men began to call upon the name of the Lord (**Gen 4:26**), because He was the only deity of which they had any knowledge.

The next two chapters of Genesis however make it clear, that merely calling on the name of the true God did not prevent men from falling progressively into worse and worse sin.

As ancient Israel proved repeatedly throughout her history, merely knowing about and claiming the true God did not protect her either from sin or from spiritual unbelief and divine judgment.

Jesus clearly asserted in the Sermon on the Mount, simply, claiming allegiance the Lord does not guarantee entrance into His kingdom (**Matt. 7:21**)

Yet despite the rebellious and unrepentant wickedness of the world before the Flood, there is no evidence that men at that time were idolatrous.

The earliest instance of idolatry mentioned in the Bible is that of Abraham's family in Ur. (**Josh 24:2**)

Idolatry had developed sometime previously among some of the descendants of Noah.

There is no indication, however, that Noah and his family, as the only survivors of the Flood, even knew of the concept

of idolatry when they began to replenish the earth.

But as mankind again turned away from the true God, they began to create substitute gods, probably first only in their imaginations and then later with their hands.

By the time God brought His people back into the land of Canaan, they discovered idolatry had become as rife there as it was in Egypt.

The idolatry of the pagan inhabitants they had disobediently failed to destroy was a continuous threat to Israel until God allowed them to be taken captive to Babylon.

Remarkably, however, by His sovereign protection, from that time until now even unbelieving Jews have never again manufactured idols in any significant numbers.

Before the exile, Isaiah scathingly mocked the wicked foolishness of idolatry that had so corrupted his people.

Isaiah 44:9-17 (NKJV)

⁹ Those who make an image, all of them are useless, And their precious things shall not profit; They are their own witnesses; They neither see nor know, that they may be ashamed.

¹⁰ Who would form a god or mold an image That profits him nothing?

¹¹ Surely all his companions would be ashamed; And the workmen, they are mere men. Let them all be gathered together, Let them stand up; Yet they shall fear, They shall be ashamed together.

¹² The blacksmith with the tongs works one in the coals, Fashions it with hammers, And works it with the strength of his arms. Even so, he is hungry, and his strength fails; He drinks no water and is faint.

¹³ The craftsman stretches out his rule, He marks one out with chalk; He fashions it with a plane, He marks it out with the compass, And makes it like the figure of a man, According to the beauty of a man, that it may remain in the house.

¹⁴ He cuts down cedars for himself, And takes the cypress and the oak; He secures it for himself among the trees of the forest. He plants a pine, and the rain nourishes it.

¹⁵ Then it shall be for a man to burn, For he will take some of it and warm himself; Yes, he kindles it and bakes bread; Indeed he makes a god and worships it; He makes it a carved image, and falls down to it.

¹⁶ He burns half of it in the fire; With this half he eats meat; He roasts a roast, and is satisfied. He even warms himself and says, "Ah! I am warm, I have seen the fire."

¹⁷ And the rest of it he makes into a god, His carved image. He falls down before it and worships it, Prays to it and says, "Deliver me, for you are my god!"

Along with the rebellious, proud, vain, foolish, and darkened Gentiles, many Jews had also **exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for** that which is inglorious, shameful, and **corruptible**.

They substituted the reality of the holy **God** for the vain **image** of every sort of His creatures.

In their spiritual blindness, intellectual darkness, and moral depravity, men are by nature inclined to reject the Holy Creator for the unholy creature.

Because something even in their fallenness demands a god, but one they like better than the true God, they devise deities of their own making.

It is not incidental that the Ten Commandments begin with the admonition: ***"You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them."*** (Exodus 20:3-5)

Yet at the very time those and the other commandments and ordinance were being given to Moses, the children Israel were making a golden calf to worship **(32:1-6)**

