

**Sermon**  
**Abandoned By God 1**  
**Session 20**

**Romans 1:24-32 (NKJV)**

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

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

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

<sup>27</sup> *Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.*

<sup>28</sup> *And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting;*

<sup>29</sup> *being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers,*

<sup>30</sup> *backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,*

<sup>31</sup> *undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful;*

<sup>32</sup> *who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.*

As Paul illustrates in these verses, and develops theologically through the end of chapter 4, man is not basically good but evil.

His nature is innately bent toward sin.

**Romans 3:10, 12, 23 (NKJV)**

<sup>10</sup> *As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one;*

<sup>12</sup> *They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one."*

<sup>23</sup> *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*

Those who ignore God's provision for dealing with sin and seek to improve themselves by their own power invariably commit the most heinous sin of all, which is self-righteousness and pride.

Only God can graciously remove sin or produce righteousness, and the person who tries to eliminate his own guilt or achieve his own righteousness merely drives himself deeper into sin and further from God.

Like an untended garden, when man is left to himself the bad always chokes out the good, because that is the inclination of his fallen nature.

Man has no capacity in himself to restrain the weeds of his sinfulness or to cultivate the good produce of righteousness.

Man's natural development is not upward but downward; he does not evolve but devolves.

He is not ascending to God but descending from God.

He has continued a downward spiral of depravity throughout history, getting worse and worse, and when the restraints of the Holy Spirit are removed during the final Tribulation period, all hell will break loose on earth as evil reaches its ultimate stage

**2 Thessalonians 2:3-9 (NKJV)**

<sup>3</sup> *Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,*

<sup>4</sup> *who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.*

<sup>5</sup> *Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?*

<sup>6</sup> *And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time.*

<sup>7</sup> *For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.*

<sup>8</sup> *And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.*

<sup>9</sup> *The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,*

#### **Revelation 9:1-11 (NKJV)**

<sup>1</sup> *Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit.*

<sup>2</sup> *And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit.*

<sup>3</sup> *Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.*

<sup>4</sup> *They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.*

<sup>5</sup> *And they were not given authority to kill them, but to torment them for five months. Their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man.*

<sup>6</sup> *In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them.*

<sup>7</sup> *The shape of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle. On their heads were crowns of something like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men.*

<sup>8</sup> *They had hair like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' teeth.*

<sup>9</sup> *And they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots with many horses running into battle.*

<sup>10</sup> *They had tails like scorpions, and there were stings in their tails. Their power was to hurt men five months.*

<sup>11</sup> *And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon.*

Man cannot stop this slide because he is innately a slave to sin, and the more he pursues his deceiving efforts at self-reformation apart from God the more he becomes enslaved to sin, whose ultimate end is eternal death.

#### **Romans 6:16-23 (NKJV)**

<sup>16</sup> *Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?*

<sup>17</sup> *But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.*

<sup>18</sup> *And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.*

<sup>19</sup> *I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.*

<sup>20</sup> *For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.*

<sup>21</sup> *What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.*

<sup>22</sup> *But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.*

<sup>23</sup> *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Note that C.S.Lewis perceptively observes in his book, *The Problem of Pain* "the lost enjoy forever the horrible freedom they have demanded, and are therefore self-enslaved."

The major point of Romans 1:24-32 is that when men persistently abandon God, God will abandon them.

Even when God' own people ignore and disobey Him, He may temporarily abandon them.

**Psalm 81:11-12 (NKJV)**

<sup>11</sup> *"But My people would not heed My voice, And Israel would have none of Me.*

<sup>12</sup> *So I gave them over to their own stubborn heart, To walk in their own counsels.*

Hosea reports the same tragic reality concerning the unfaithfulness of the northern kingdom, represented by Ephraim, to whom God Said:

**Hosea 4:17 (NKJV)**

<sup>17</sup> *"Ephraim is joined to idols, Let him alone.*

In his message to the high priest and other religious leaders in Jerusalem, Stephen reminded them that when the ancient Israelites rejected the Lord and erected and worshiped the golden calf while Moses was on Mount Sinai,;

**Acts 7:38-42 (NKJV)**

<sup>38</sup> *This is he who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the Angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers, the one who received the living oracles to give to us,*

<sup>39</sup> *whom our fathers would not obey, but rejected. And in their hearts they turned back to Egypt,*

<sup>40</sup> *saying to Aaron, 'Make us gods to go before us; as for this Moses who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.'*

<sup>41</sup> *And they made a calf in those days, offered sacrifices to the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands.*

<sup>42</sup> *Then God turned and gave them up to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the Prophets: 'Did you offer Me slaughtered animals and sacrifices during forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel?'*

That is they He gave them up to worship the demon inspired deities they had made with their hands.

Paul declared to the pagan crowd in Lystra that God;

**Acts 14:16 (NKJV)**

<sup>16</sup> *who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways.*

When God abandons men to their own devices, His divine protection is partially withdrawn.

When that occurs, men not only become more vulnerable to the destructive wiles of Satan but also suffer the destruction that their own sin works in and through them.

**Judges 10:13 (NKJV)**

<sup>13</sup> *Yet you have forsaken Me and served other gods. Therefore I will deliver you no more.*

When God's Spirit came upon Azariah, He told Judah,

**2 Chronicles 15:1-2 (NKJV)**

<sup>1</sup> *Now the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded.*

<sup>2</sup> *And he went out to meet Asa, and said to him: "Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin. The LORD is with you while you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you.*

Through Zechariah, the son of Johoiada the priest, God again said to Judah;

**2 Chronicles 24:20 (NKJV)**

***<sup>20</sup> Then the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, who stood above the people, and said to them, "Thus says God: 'Why do you transgress the commandments of the LORD, so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the LORD, He also has forsaken you.' "***

Here in Romans 1:24-32 we see vividly the consequences of God's abandonment of rebellious mankind, showing the essence, the expression, and the extent of man's sinfulness.

Each of those progressively more sobering sections is introduced with the declaration, ***"God gave them over"***

#### THE ESSENCE OF MAN'S SINFULNESS

**Romans 1:24-25 (NKJV)**

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

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

Now the word therefore refers back to the reasons Paul has just set forth in verses 18-23.

Although God revealed Himself to man, man rejected God and then rationalized his rejection and created substitute gods of his own making. And because man abandoned God, God abandoned men, ***"He gave them over or up"***

It is that divine abandonment and its consequences that Paul develops in verses 24-32, the most sobering and fearful passage in the entire epistle.

Then the phrase, ***"Paradidomi (gave....over)"*** is an intense verb.

In the New Testament it is used of giving one's body to be burned, and three times it is used of Christ's giving Himself up to death.

It is also used in the judicial sense of men's being committed to prison or to judgment and of rebellious angels being delivered to pits of darkness.

It is also used of Christ committing Himself to His Father's care.

And of His Father's delivering His own Son to propitiatory death.

God's giving over sinful mankind has a dual sense.

First, in an indirect sense God ***gave them over*** simply by withdrawing His restraining and protective hand, allowing the consequences of sin to take their inevitable, destructive course.

Sin degrades man, debases the image of God in which he is made, and strips him of dignity, peace of mind, and a clear conscience.

Sin destroys personal relationships, marriages, families, cities, and nations.

It also destroys churches.

Thomas Watson said, ***"Sin puts gravel in our bread and wormwood in our cup"***

Fallen men are not concerned about their sin but only about the pain from the unpleasant consequences sin brings. Someone has well said that sin would have fewer takers if the consequences were immediate.

Many people, for example, are greatly concerned about venereal disease but resent the suggestion of avoiding it by restraining their sexual promiscuity and perversions.

Instead of adhering to God's standards of moral purity, they attempt to remove the consequences of their impurity. They turn to counseling, to medicine, to psychoanalysis, to drugs, to alcohol, to travel, and to a host of other means to escape what cannot be escaped except by the removal of their sin.

It is said that an ermine would rather die than defile its beautiful coat of fur; The animal will go to incredible lengths to protect it.

Man does not have such an inclination concerning the defilement of sin. He cannot keep himself pure and has no natural desire to do so.

Not all of God's wrath is future. In the case of sexual promiscuity perhaps more specifically and severely than in any other area of morality God has continually poured out His divine wrath by means of disease.

In regard to countless other manifestations of godlessness, He pours out His wrath in the forms of loneliness, frustration, meaninglessness, anxiety, and despair that are so characteristic of modern society.

As sophisticated, self-sufficient mankind draws further and further away from God, God gives them over to the consequences of their spiritual and moral rebellion against Him.

Commentator Alan F. Johnson said, *"without God there are no abiding truths, lasting principles, or norms, and man is cast upon a sea of speculation and skepticism and attempted self-salvation."*

Notice here now that the divine abandonment of men to their sin about which Paul speaks is not eternal abandonment. As long as sinful men are alive, God provides opportunity for their salvation.

That is the marvelous good news of God's grace, which Paul develops later in the epistle.

Like her Old Testament namesake, the Jezebel who was misleading the church at Thyatira was the embodiment of idolatrous, immoral godlessness, yet the Lord graciously gave her opportunity to repent.

***Revelation 2:20-21 (NKJV)***

***<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.***

***<sup>21</sup> And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent.***

Despite His righteous wrath against sin, God is patient toward sinners.

***2 Peter 3:9 (NKJV)***

***<sup>9</sup> The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.***

After giving a list of sins similar to that in Romans 1:29-31, Paul reminded the Corinthian believers,

***1 Corinthians 6:11 (NKJV)***

***<sup>11</sup> And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.***

It is sin that makes the gospel of salvation necessary and that makes God's offer of salvation through Christ so gracious.