



THE BOOK OF

ROMANS

CHAPTER 1:18-25

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Condemnation of the Gentile

- In verse 18, Paul is going to prove why the heathen man needs the righteousness of God.
- The rest of Chapter 1 is looking at the Gentile and why he is in need of the Grace of God.
- Is the guy in the jungles of the Congo ignorant of the knowledge of God?

In Context: Polytheism

- Leading theological system was polytheism.
 - ▣ Paul takes up the thought system of the day – polytheism – and derives their guilt.
- If Paul were writing this letter to the church in Washington DC, what thought system(s) would he be addressing?
- Polytheism
 - ▣ What is the first commandment?
 - ▣ What is the second commandment?

Verse 18: Not Hell but History

- The wrath of God is revealed...
 - ▣ Present tense
- “When nations become polytheistic and reject the knowledge of God they result in a debacle morally and that is the judgment of God.” - T. Nelson
 - ▣ "God's wrath mentioned in Romans 1 is not an active outpouring of divine displeasure but the removal of restraint that allows sinners to reap the just fruits of their rebellion." (R. Mounce, 1995)
 - ▣ Will America go through the judgment of God?
- against...
 - ▣ Godlessness - actions
 - ▣ Unrighteousness –state of the heart committing actions
- of people who suppress
 - ▣ (gk. katecho) to hold down; “in evasion tactics”

Verse 19: Why?

- That which was evident WITHIN them, God made evident TO (BEFORE) them
- How? They don't have a Bible.
- Puritan saying: there are two great bibles; the Works of God and the Word of God.
- Creation reveals:
 - ▣ Existence
 - ▣ Order; design
 - ▣ Dignity
 - ▣ Righteousness, conscience (con sentia)

Metaphysical Lunacy

- Acts 14:17 – Paul preaches - at Lystra - his first major public sermon where he says God has not left himself without witness, doing good by the people by sending rain.
- In Romans 1:20, Paul is saying that since the dawn of creation, his invisible attributes (his power, divine nature) have been on display in creation itself.
- “divine nature” – one word in the Greek – means His Godhead.
 - ▣ Don’t call God an “it”
 - ▣ Why do we call God, He?

Verse 20: Natural Revelation

- “What has been made”
 - ▣ (gk. Poiema) root word for poem – a masterpiece
 - ▣ only other time it’s used in the New Testament is in reference to our salvation. (Eph. 2:10)
- It’s in the poiema that **they** can see, and are therefore without excuse.
 - ▣ "Utter uncompromising, abandonment of hope in man is the first preliminary to understanding or preaching the gospel." (Newell, 1970)
- Revelation 21:8 gives a list of the kinds of people going to Hell and the sorts of attributes sending them there
 - ▣ first two are the cowardly and unbelieving.
 - ▣ Unbelief is not just having a right or left belief of God, but that you refuse to openly confess in the world who He is – John says that is cowardice.
- So from the beginning, it is self-evident who God is and man is accountable for that knowledge.

Verse 21: Rejection and Reason

- Glorify – Doxa
 - ▣ man was to (doxaso) lift his opinion of God
- If you reject the Godhead you must **reason** god from somewhere else.
 - ▣ So the gentile looks within themselves
 - ▣ “Whenever human wisdom sets itself against God, the result is soon seen in human foolishness.” (G. Thomas, 1984)
- Wisdom – gk. sophos – claiming to be wise.
 - ▣ Phileo Sophia – love of wisdom
 - ▣ Philosophy

Verse 23: Replacement

- They exchange God for a man, a bird, a snake.
- What sort of wisdom is this?
- You have a righteous God who masterfully designed creation, inexplicably caused it to be, undoubtedly a wondrous workmanship, and exchange him for a snake.