

## Rom. 1:18-23 (WCF 4) "The Creator/Creature Distinction"

**For the Children:** If you had grown up in a non-Christian home, you might look at a flower and think, "Isn't it wonderful how that flower has evolved all by itself!" That is what you would be taught at a state school. That is what you see on nature programs on TV. But since you have been brought up in a Christian home and perhaps attended the Christian school, and learned about the Bible at church, you know better. You know that God created flowers simply by saying "Let the earth sprout vegetation!" The flowers you see around you show His work. They show that He really exists and is the eternal, good, and all-powerful God. That also reminds us that only God is Creator. We are just creatures. We are not very powerful or wise. We live for only a short time on this earth. **Questions:** How does knowing this help us to praise and thank God? How does it help us to obey Him? How does it help us to trust Him?

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### Introduction:

#### First Point: What God Reveals in Creation

- 1) Revealed and Revealing: What God did in creating the world revealed certain truths about Him. Those same truths are still revealed in "general revelation." Hence the present tenses, "is known," "is evident," and the expression, "since the creation..." V.20, "Have been clearly seen" is literally, "Is clearly seen."
- 2) The Creator/Creature Distinction: V.20 uses the words "creation" and "made," but it is chiefly about what the creation shows – not about the "how." See WCF 4:1, Gen.1-2 and Heb.11:3 for more on the "how." In creation, God has given a witness to His own existence, divinity, eternity, power and goodness – along with other "invisible attributes." WCF 4:2 adds His "wisdom" and "goodness." See also Ps.104:24. However, general revelation does not teach us about Christ's saving work.
- 3) Within and Without: Creation gives a witness that presses upon man. But the Lord also placed a witness within man – a sense of God's existence (*sensus deitatis*) and a conscience. Therefore, "That which is known about God is evident *within* them" (v.19). This knowledge is vital for worship, obedience, and trust in God. It is crucial in accepting doctrines such as election and special creation.

#### Second Point: Why Many Do Not Acknowledge It

- 1) The Unbeliever's "Knowledge" of God: In the beginning, Adam and Eve knew God in a perfect relationship. After the Fall, man still received the clear revelation from creation (vss.19,20, 21) in a sense they still "knew" God; but they did not love what they knew. They "suppressed the truth in unrighteousness" (v18). They refused to honour the Lord or show gratitude to Him.
- 2) Further Devolution: As a result, their hearts were further darkened. They became more empty in their religious "reasonings" and more disobedient to God's laws. They turned more and more away from the glory of God, to worshiping images and forms of creatures – denying the Creator/creature distinction. This is how Gentile paganism developed.

#### Third Point: What Happens as a Result

- 1) A Shocking Revelation: Those who are given over to this life of futility, darkness, foolishness, irreverence and immorality will receive another "revelation" – of the wrath of God. This is just, because general revelation has made the existence and attributes of God known to all men. They have willingly suppressed the truth they were given. This has rendered them "inexcusable" (v.20), which is part of the purpose for which God has given general revelation.
- 2) A Special Revelation: Once we receive God's special revelation (His Word) and believe in His Son, we are taught to interpret general revelation rightly. Then we can accept the Creator/creature distinction and all that follows from it.

### Conclusion: