

## EXPOSITION OF ROMANS

Message #7

Romans 1:21-23

The religious development of man is as Dr. S. Lewis Johnson said, “one of retrogression, not progression; of devolution, not evolution; downward, not upward” (*God Gave Them Up*, Bibliotheca Sacra, 129:514 (Apr. 72), p. 125).

These are powerful verses because these verses answer one of the greatest questions of theology - namely God is perfectly legitimate in pouring out His wrath on even the heathen natives, because He has given them enough intuitive information to make them guilty. **Behind all the idolatry of all pagans of the world is a rejection of God.**

God has given man a great intuitive knowledge of Himself so that He is perfectly just in pouring out His wrath on everyone and is perfectly just in giving people up. People are not just innocent bystanders in their rejection of God; they suppress the truth and hate God.

**GOD IS LEGITIMATE IN POURING OUT HIS WRATH ON THOSE WHO SUPPRESS THE TRUTH IN UNRIGHTEOUSNESS AND IN EVEN GIVING THESE PEOPLE UP TO ETERNAL DAMNATION BECAUSE OF THE WAY THEY HAVE DEMEANED HIM AND REJECTED HIM.**

Now you will notice that **verse 21** begins with a conjunction “for.” This is a subordinate conjunction which introduces a series of reasons why God is perfectly legitimate in pouring out His wrath on godless heathen people, and why these people who suppress the truth are without excuse on the day they get before God. There are seven reasons why people deserve God’s wrath, no matter who they are or where they are:

**REASON #1** – Because ungodly and unrighteous people have knowledge of God. **1:21a**

Make no mistake about it, ungodly and unrighteous heathen people have a knowledge of God. The participle “knew God” is aorist tense, meaning God has put a point of understanding in every human, regardless of how ungodly or unrighteous. In fact, this tense of participle with the aorist verb “did not honor” indicates that their knowledge of God preceded their refusing to honor God.

The word “knew” does not mean they knew God in the sense of having a personal relationship with God, rather through creation and through intuition, they have this inborn knowledge of God.

**REASON #2** – Because ungodly and unrighteous people have knowledge of God but do not honor God. **1:21b**

The word “honor” is one that means to think about something in a magnified way. It means to hold a high opinion of something (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 121). **God has placed within every human the realization that He is God and He should be worshipped as God.** God has put within every human being an intuition of His power and glory. But as J. Vernon McGee said, “Man has certainly not moved upward in his opinion about God.

Truth is, man does not like to elevate or honor God ; he likes to elevate to or honor himself . or anything but God . Man hates God's sovereignty and God's greatness. Man does not want to have to honor God or depend on God for anything.

**REASON #3** – Because ungodly and unrighteous people have knowledge of God and are unthankful . **1:21c**

Ingratitude toward God is one of the great sins of our day. People today are unthankful and ungrateful people. In Paul's day, most people of Rome offered all kinds of thanks to all kinds of deities , but very few were willing to offer thanks to the true God of the Bible, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

All good things in existence come from God - life, health, food, shelter, jobs, friends, family, church and salvation. Humans should be the most thankful people on the face of this earth, but instead of thanking God, they doubt God, deny God, and curse God.

**REASON #4** – Because ungodly and unrighteous people have knowledge of God and have futile speculations. **1:21d**

The actual Greek word for “futile speculations” is one that literally means moronic or foolish reasonings or thoughts. God has graciously placed within every human being, knowledge of Him and His great work and some turn this wonderful intuition into idiotic . speculations.

God has placed within every human being an intuitive knowledge of Himself and people have taken that wonderful knowledge and turned it into moronic concepts.

*Time Magazine* published an article (December 4, 1995) that presented what they said was the “New Exciting Theory of Evolution.” It is as moronic and stupid as anything you will ever read:

- 1) Earth was formed 4.6 billion years ago.
- 2) First evidence of life was a blue/green algae 3.5 billion years ago.
- 3) First official cell with a nucleus was 2 billion years ago.
- 4) First multi-celled algae was 1.7 billion years ago.
- 5) Cambrian Explosion caused an amoeba to form 543 million years ago.
- 6) Amoeba became a tadpole who jumped in and out of water for many years.
- 7) Finally through exposure to the sun it progressed into an animal that could climb a tree.
- 8) Eventually it became a human.

That is the most stupid, moronic pack of foolish lies that has ever been told and we are teaching this in our schools. We have allowed these pseudo-intellectuals to take God out of schools, prayer out of schools, creation out of schools and the Bible out of schools so we can teach them theories of morons.

God has every right to pour out His wrath on this world that has done so much against Him. We deserve the wrath of God; in fact, we deserve to be totally abandoned by God.

**REASON #5** – Because ungodly and unrighteous people have knowledge of God but are dark in their hearts. **1:21e**

The word “foolish” means to be without understanding or discernment. The word “darkened” means to be without light to the mind. People who suppress the truth may look spiritual, they may look religious, but they have hearts as dark as the forces of hell.

They become so dark that they lose sight of the precious light of truth God has given them. They think they have arrived at some level of mental sophistication, but in all reality they are at the lowest level of mental stupidity.

No human being will ever dare stand before God and say, we didn't know. We didn't know that You existed and that You were righteous and powerful and true. God has put this within every human's heart and when a heart is dark and suppresses this truth, it is deserving of God's wrath and God's abandonment.

**REASON #6** – Because ungodly and unrighteous people have knowledge of God but become fools. **1:22**

Notice carefully, fools in the sight of God profess to be something they really are not. Fools try to give the impression they are scholars when in God's estimation they are moronic. R. A. Torrey used to say, “Professing themselves to be wise, they became ‘philosophers, that is foolosophers.’”

The present tense “professing” indicates that these people continually and habitually present themselves to be wise, skilled and clever, particularly when it comes to having insight about spiritual things.

**REASON #7** – Because ungodly and unrighteous people have knowledge of God but change His glory. **1:23**

God is to be honored and glorified His way, not our way.

There is one thing God will never do; He will never share His matchless glory with anything or anyone. He is God and there is none like Him. He is majestic, He is Holy, He is the blessed, glorious God!

It is a disgrace for a sinful man to think he can possibly invent or devise something that equals the glorious God. Not only do people not worship the true God and honor the true God, but they actually invent or devise their own form of God. They worship something perishable! They turn the true God into something corruptible, something that can decay.

How degrading it must be for the Living God to see man so butcher His glory:

Some will make God out to be some man like Joseph Smith or Mohammed or the Pope.

Some will make God out to be some big bird.

Some will make God out to be some four footed animal, such as a cow.

Some will make God out to be some crawling reptile like a snake.

Some will make God out to be some big ugly piece of carved wood called Buddha.

Supposedly, the most civilized, most educated society in all the world has become one giant mental disorder filled with morons in the sight of God.

It all began when man refused to acknowledge and respond to the insight God gave him.

**You give finite/sinful man the freedom of religion and you will wind up with religious insanity.** Unless knowledge is based on the truth of God's Word it is foolish speculation.

Paul personally saw this stupidity in the Roman Empire. In fact, over 400 statues and idols stood in the city of Rome. Ephesus had the famed temple of Diana. Corinth had the famed temple of Aphrodite. Athens, the supposed place of culture and knowledge, was a city filled with idols (Acts 17:1) and even had a statue to the unknown God (Acts 17:23).

On the day God pours out His wrath, this depraved, heathenistic society will deserve it. People today worship money, sports, power, possessions, success, and even themselves. They will worship birds, sticks, statues, the sun, the moon and a tree. Deep in their hearts they know better; but they suppress the truth and they are guilty and deserve God's wrath.

There is only one chance any human has of escaping God's wrath and that is to believe on Jesus Christ. If a person refuses to place his faith in Jesus Christ, on the day God pours out His wrath on that person, he will deserve every bit of it.