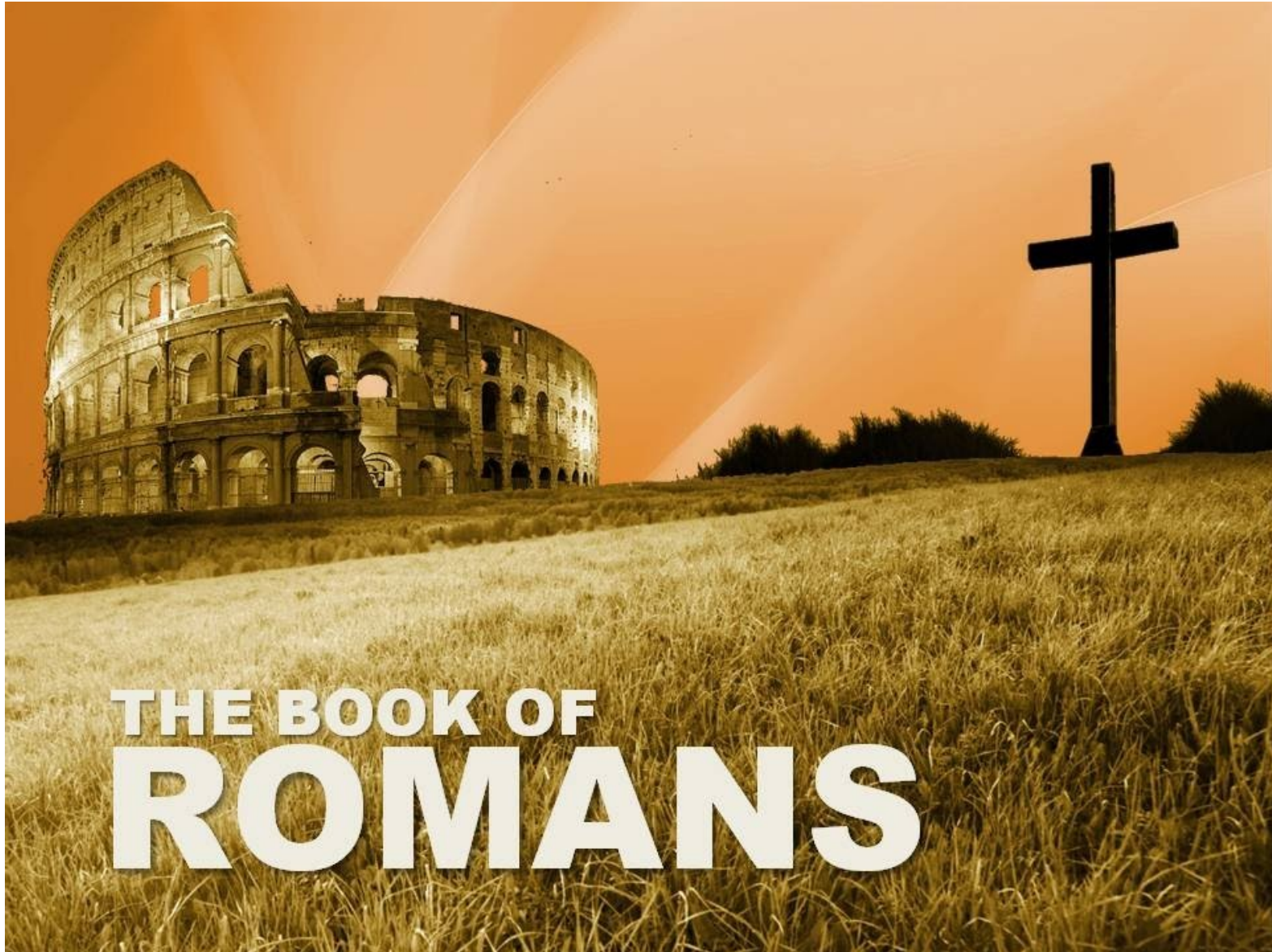


Romans 1:21-23 The Results of Dishonoring God



Outline



The Gentile World Condemned	1:18 - 2:16
The Wrath of God Revealed	1:18-20
God Not Honored Even Though Known	1:21-23
Results of Condemnation	1:24-32
Gentiles Judged According to Truth	2:1-5
Gentiles Judged by Their Works	2:6-10
Gentiles Judged With Impartiality	2:11-16

Last Week's and Today's Verses



¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

¹⁹ because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.

²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

²¹ For even though **they** knew God, **they** did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but **they** became futile in their speculations, and **their** foolish heart was darkened.

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

²³ and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.



¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

for – gar – let me explain about mankind's condition
the wrath of God is revealed from heaven

is revealed - to uncover, to unveil

wrath - *orge* – is not punishment of sin but God's attitude towards it [sin]

Trench via Wuest

- It's His settled anger out from His righteousness Molloy
- It is a holy and righteous wrath (not like man's)
- John 3:36 He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.
- God has revealed His wrath as well as His righteousness from heaven in the gospel. Constable₄



18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

who suppress the truth in unrighteousness

suppress - *katechō* - to hold down, to repress, to restrain, to hinder (present active participle)

• This is the continuous action of “all men mentioned”

the truth – **What truth is Paul talking about?**

• The truth here is not the gospel, for all men do not possess a knowledge of it. Wuest

• This is the revealed truth about God [i.e. invisible attributes - eternal power and divine nature].

in unrighteousness

• This is the very nature of man - Rom 3:10 as it is written, There is none righteous, not even one. Molloy

More on “suppress the truth in unrighteousness”*



- Because un-regenerative man is energized by his Adamic (sin) nature,
- It can only manifest itself in unrighteousness (internal & external).
- Therefore man can only suppress the truth about God.
- Question: How is it possible then for man to not suppress the truth [of the gospel] and believe?
- John 12:32 And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.
- John 16:8-9 And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me.

* Molloy

¹⁹ because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.



- The truth of God is continually (24 x 7) and emphatically made clear to mankind - but man still continues to hold down or suppress the truth.

No man can say:

- “There is no God”
- “I can’t know if there is a God”

From God’s viewpoint :

- There are no atheists
- There are no agnostics
- Sinful man holds down or suppresses his knowledge of God in his unrighteousness because that is the very state of his being

Man has a choice:

- God’s blessing - by faith (The believer is at rest)
- God’s wrath - by unbelief (The unbeliever is at unrest)

²⁰ For the invisible things of Him are clearly seen, from the world's creation being understood by the things made, both His everlasting power and divinity, for them to be without excuse.

Interlinear modified



What a paradox, invisible things which are visible ! Wuest

since the creation of the universe being understood by means of the things that are made Wuest

- This tells us we can understand about God from His creation
- These verses begin a discussion of “Natural Revelation”*
- Natural revelation describes what everyone knows about God because of what God has revealed concerning Himself in nature [or better creation]*
- But, the written words we have from God is called “Special Revelation”

* Constable



²⁰ For the invisible things of Him are clearly seen, from the world's creation being understood by the things made, both His everlasting power and divinity, for them to be without excuse. Interlinear modified

both His everlasting power and divinity

- God reveals these two invisible attributes:
 - His power which is everlasting or eternal
 - His divine nature or being

so that they are without excuse

NASB

without excuse – *anapologētos* – without apology, without defense

- Every man of the human race is without defense. Merryman
- However it [natural revelation] does not give sufficient information for him to experience salvation. That is why everyone needs to hear the gospel. Constable

Overview of verses 21 to 23*



- Starting in verse 21 we see a change from present tense to past tense
 - Paul will now talk about the “they” in the past
 - The “they” have rejected God’s message to them and in them
 - Paul is possibly talking about a historical race of people
 - Some commentators think it might be the pre-flood people or maybe people at the tower of Babel or the Greek civilization
 - Verses 21 to 23 will show us their decline and our decline as a society as well
- * Merryman

Man's Stages of Decline from verses 21 to 23*



Though They Knew God

They Did Not Glorify God

They Were Not Thankful To God

They Became Vain In Their Reasoning

Their Foolish Hearts Were Darkened

They Professing To Be Wise, They Became Fools

They Exchanged The Glory Of The Incorruptible God

21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.



For even though - *dióti* - on account of this, for this reason
1st – they knew God

lit: having known - *ginōskō* - to be taking in knowledge,
to come to know (aorist tense)

- This is saying that they had come to know God from creation
- God makes His eternal power & deity emphatically clear by His creation - Ps 19:1-4*
- The creation is a universal language heard & understood by every man*
- The creation precisely tells the world of God's glory*
- God says it is a fact – there is not a shadow of a doubt!
(aorist tense)*

* Molloy

21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.



2nd - they did not honor Him as God

not as God did they glorify Him

Wuest

glorify - doxazō - to magnify, extol, praise - ascribing honor to God, acknowledging Him as to His being, attributes and acts

- Knowing God demands man's awe and adoration of him*
- But man does not magnify God's glory*
- God says this is the reality of every un-regenerative man (indicative mood) – Why? *

* Molloy

21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.



3rd - or [they did not] give thanks

give thanks – *eucharistéō* - to show oneself grateful,
to be thankful,

- Not thankful, in particular, for the revelation God was pleased to make of Himself [in creation]*
- Man produced the action of being unthankful*
(past point fact, active voice)
- Man today says thanks for the small courtesies but will not give thanks to God for anything

McCalley



21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

but – *alla* – in strong contrast

4th - they became futile in their speculations

became futile - *mataiōō* - to become vain, destitute of real wisdom, to be or act perversely, foolish
(past point fact, passive voice)

speculations - *dialogismos* - a thought, reasoning, inward questioning

- Man's imagination (reasoning or thought process) became void, or empty, or worthless of true wisdom*
- Passive voice: Man is being acted upon - by who or what?
- Rom 5:12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—

21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.



5th - and their foolish heart was darkened

foolish - *asynetos* - without discernment or understanding, hence senseless

was darkened - *skotízō* - to darken, deprive of light. In NT, only in the passive, to be darkened.

- Figuratively of moral darkness, ignorance*
- Passive voice: Man is being put into darkness & deprived of light - by who or what ?* * Molloy
- John 3:19 This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.

22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, [6th]



professing - *phaskō* – to assert, affirm, to allege

- It's an unfounded assertion - because how can a darkened heart possess true wisdom*
- True wisdom is God's wisdom - man's wisdom is foolishness* (1 Cor 1:18-21)

to be - *eimi* – state in which someone continually exists

wise - *sophós* - intelligent, enlightened, in respect
to things human and divine

they became fools

- *mōrainō* - meaning they became foolish or acted like fools (past point fact, passive voice)
- They profess themselves to be wise - God's response:
He makes them fools (lit: to be moronic)* * Molloy

²³ and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.



7th - [they] **exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God**

exchanged - *allassō*, to change, to cause one thing to cease and another to take its place, to exchange one thing for another.*

incorruptible - *aphthartos* - not capable of corruption or decay, imperishable

Glory of God:*

- Holy (Righteous and Just)
- Infinite (Omniscient & Omnipresent & Omnipotent)
- Self-Existent
- Love (Grace and Mercy)
- Immutable (Faithful and True)
- Spirit
- Sovereign

* Molloy

²³ and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.



in[to] a likeness of an image

Interlinear

a likeness - *homoiōma* - that which is made like something, a resemblance
of an image – *eikōn* - a derived likeness of men and animals

- The association here of the two words *homoiōma* and *eikōn* serves to enhance the contrast between the idol and “the glory of the incorruptible God.” Wuest

of corruptible man

corruptible - *phthartos* - of man as being mortal, liable to decay in contrast to God

- Deities of human form prevailed in Greece. Vincent

²³ and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.



in[to] a likeness of an image

Interlinear

- Notice the descending scale of created things, man, birds, four-footed beasts, snakes

Wuest

of birds

four-footed animals

- Those [deities] of bestial form in Egypt*
- Israel evidently learned calf-worship from Egypt's sacred bull

Newell

crawling creatures

- Serpent-worship was common in Chaldea, and also in Egypt

* Vincent

Final Thoughts*



- Honoring God as God and giving Him thanks should be man's response in view of creation.
- Mythology and idolatry have resulted from man's need to identify some power greater than himself and his refusal to acknowledge God as that power.
- Men and women have elevated themselves to God's position.
(Nebuchadnezzar is an example of this)
- In our day, humanism has replaced the worship of individual human leaders in most Western countries. * Constable