

Sermon Title: The Pagan is Under the Sentence of Condemnation, Part 4 & 5

Sermon Text: Romans 1:24-32

Sermon Purpose: To call the hearer to an understanding of the dangerous result of rejecting rationalizing the revelation of God.

Sermon Proposition: There are 4 practical results of the rejection and rationalization of God.

- I. The **essence** of the pagans abandonment by God. V.24-25
- II. The **expression** of the pagans abandonment by God. V.26-27
- III. The **extent** of the pagans abandonment by God. V.28-31
- IV. The **erosion** of the pagans abandonment by God. V.32

Introduction: When God abandons men to their own devices, His divine protection is partially withdrawn. When this occurs, men not only become more vulnerable to the destructive schemes of Satan but also suffers the destruction that their own sin and sins works in and through them. Humanism said, “that man is basically good.”

Key phrase in the section is “God gave them over.” Greek word “paradidomi” is an intense verb, and refers to divine abandonment and its consequences, one commentator states, “this the most sobering and fearful passage in the entire epistle.”

Psalm 81:11 "But My people would not heed My voice, And Israel would *have* none of Me. **12** So I gave them over to their own stubborn heart, To walk in their own counsels.

Judges 10:13 "Yet you have forsaken Me and served other gods. Therefore I will deliver you no more.

2 Chronicles 15:2 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.

2 Chronicles 24:20 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.'"

Hosea 4:17 "Ephraim *is* joined to idols, Let him alone.

Acts 7:38 "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, **39** "whom our fathers would not obey, but rejected. And in their hearts they turned back to Egypt, **40** "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.' **41** "And they made a calf in those days, offered sacrifices to the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands. **42** "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?"

Acts 14:16 "who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways.

- I. The **essence** of the pagans abandonment by God. V.24-25

“The lost, enjoy forever the horrible freedom they have demanded, and are therefore self-enslaved.” [C.S. Lewis book “The Problem of Pain” New York: Macmillan, 1962), pp.127-128]

God does not simply let the boat go, but gives it a push. It’s like the judge handing over the prisoner for judgment and then punishment, that was earned by his crime.

- A. The pagan is abandoned to their **uncleanness**. V.24a

Greek word “Akatharsia” (impurity), this is a general term referring to decaying matter, especially the contents of the grave, both physically and ceremonially unclean to a Jew.

B. The pagan is abandoned to the **lust** of their heart. V.24b

God turns them over to what is already in their heart. Man's heart is deceitfully wicked, who can know it.

Ecclesiastes 9:3 This *is* an evil in all that is done under the sun: that one thing *happens* to all. Truly the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil; madness *is* in their hearts while they live, and after that *they go* to the dead.

2 Corinthians 12:21 lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and I shall mourn for many who have sinned before and have not repented of the uncleanness, fornication, and lewdness which they have practiced.

Ephesians 5:3 But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints;

1 Thessalonians 4:7 For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness.

C. The pagan is abandoned to the **dishonoring** of their bodies. V.24c

To dishonor means to be debased, disgraced, and degraded. The Indianapolis Star reported that child molesters have their own national organization called NAMBLA (National American Man Boy Love Association) that publishes a newsletter for members (Tom Keating, "Molesters Have Own Organization" [15 April 1981], p. 17).

1) They exchange the truth about God for a lie.

1 Thessalonians 1:9 For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, The lie of idolatry.

2) They exchange the worship of God for idols.

It is the idea of putting some aspect of God's creation – whether it be an animal, a human, a material object, or an immaterial object, in place of God that is the essence of idolatry.

3) The exchange the service to God, for the service to idols.

Wis 11:15-16 "In return of their [the Gentiles or Pagan's] foolish and wicked thoughts, which led them astray to worship irrational serpents and worthless animals, you sent upon them a multitude of irrational creatures to punish them, that they might learn that one is punished by the very things by which he sins." (**1 Cor 10**)

Jeremiah 10:2 Thus says the LORD: "Do not learn the way of the Gentiles; Do not be dismayed at the signs of heaven, For the Gentiles are dismayed at them. **3** For the customs of the peoples *are* futile; For *one* cuts a tree from the forest, The work of the hands of the workman, with the ax. **4** They decorate it with silver and gold; They fasten it with nails and hammers So that it will not topple. **5** They *are* upright, like a palm tree, And they cannot speak; They must be carried, Because they cannot go *by themselves*. Do not be afraid of them, For they cannot do evil, Nor can they do any good."

Jeremiah 10:8 But they are altogether dull-hearted and foolish; A wooden idol *is* a worthless doctrine. **9** Silver is beaten into plates; It is brought from Tarshish, And gold from Uphaz, The work of the craftsman And of the hands of the metalsmith; Blue and purple *are* their clothing; They *are* all the work of skillful *men*. **10** But the LORD *is* the true God; He *is* the living God and the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth will tremble, And the nations will not be able to endure His indignation.

Psalms 115:3 But our God *is* in heaven; He does whatever He pleases. **4** Their idols *are* silver and gold, The work of men's hands. **5** They have mouths, but they do not speak; Eyes they have, but they do not see; **6** They have ears, but they do not hear; Noses they have, but they do not smell; **7** They have hands, but they do not handle; Feet they have, but they do not walk; Nor do they mutter through their throat. **8** Those who make them are like them; *So is* everyone who trusts in them.

II. The expression of the pagans abandonment by God. V.26-27

A. The expression of the violation of worship. V.26a

They are turned over to vile passions. This refers to illicit sexual passions. The gross sexual immorality that the Jews found rampant among the Gentiles was traced directly to idolatry. Thus the wisdom of Solomon: “the idea of making idols was the beginning of fornication, and the invention of them was the corruption of life.

B. The example of the violation of worship. V.26b-27a (**Gen 19:1-28**)

Leviticus 18:22 `You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It *is* an abomination. **23** `Nor shall you mate with any animal, to defile yourself with it. Nor shall any woman stand before an animal to mate with it. It *is* perversion. **24** `Do not defile yourselves with any of these things; for by all these the nations are defiled, which I am casting out before you.

Leviticus 20:13 `If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood *shall be* upon them.

Deuteronomy 23:17 "There shall be no *ritual* harlot of the daughters of Israel, or a perverted one of the sons of Israel. **18** "You shall not bring the wages of a harlot or the price of a dog to the house of the LORD your God for any vowed offering, for both of these *are* an abomination to the LORD your God.

When all the factors and Scriptures are considered, it is clear that Paul depicts homosexual activity (all sexual activity outside of marriage) as a violation of God’s created order, another indication of the departure from true knowledge and the worship of God. Paul’s indictment of all sexual activity outside of marriage as a lifestyle choice is a clear example of the extent to which man has fallen from a true knowledge of God. Male or female does not matter.

(**Mark 10:6; 1 Cor 7:1-3**)

Genesis 1:27 So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Matthew 19:4 And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made *them* at the beginning`made them male and female,'

Homosexuality among “males,” like that among “females,” is characterized as a departure from nature or what is natural. Nature denotes the natural order of things, as designed or created by God’s creative purposes.

Genesis 19:11 And they struck the men who *were* at the doorway of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they became weary *trying* to find the door.

The people were so morally perverse and even more so today, that in Scripture the name Sodom became a byword for immoral godlessness, and sodomy became synonymous for homosexuality.

C. The eventuality of the violation of worship. V.27b

(**1 Cor 5:9-13; 6:9-10, 12-20; 10:20-22; Rev 22:14-16; 20:11-15**)

- 1) In the US and many western countries homosexual males 300 partners a year.
- 2) Many of the most notorious murders are homosexual related.
- 3) San Francisco coroner 10% of homicides sadomasochist (sex among homosexual).

III. The extent of the pagans abandonment by God. V.28-31

Contrary to various sciences of our society, no one is born a homosexual, any more than anyone is born a thief or a murderer. A person who becomes or practices a habitual and unrepentant thief, murderer, adulterer, or homosexual does so of his own choice. It is a result of man's rejection of God.

A. The result is mental decline of the rejecter. V.28a

The mind that rejects God, becomes useless and worthless spiritually, deserving only of God's divine wrath. (**Prov 1:7**)

Jeremiah 6:30 People will call them rejected silver, Because the LORD has rejected them."

Job 21:14 Yet they say to God, 'Depart from us, For we do not desire the knowledge of Your ways. **15** Who is the Almighty, that we should serve Him? And what profit do we have if we pray to Him?'

Jeremiah 4:22 "For My people are foolish, They have not known Me. They are silly children, And they have no understanding. They are wise to do evil, But to do good they have no knowledge."

Jeremiah 9:6 Your dwelling place is in the midst of deceit; Through deceit they refuse to know Me," says the LORD.

2 Corinthians 4:4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

B. The result is behavioral decline of the rejecter. V.28b-29a

C. The result is inward decline of the rejection. V.29b

Full of envy, frequently ascribed to acts of violence such as murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness.

1) Their speech is corrupted. V.29c

The whispering of the person who spreads "confidential" rumors about others.

2) Their attitudes are corrupted.

Proud, arrogant, overbearing

3) Their thinking is corrupted.

They are without understanding.

4) Their loyalty is corrupted.

Without loyalty refers to refusing to abide by covenants and treaties. Not faithful or loyal to family obligations, lack affection for family.

IV. The erosion of the pagans abandonment by God. V.32

The purpose of the final verse is to bring out even more fully the willful rebellion against God that characterizes humanity.

(**Rom 8:4; 2:2; 6:21**)

Hosea 7:3 They make a king glad with their wickedness, And princes with their lies.

"It can be concluded from this passage, that all people have, by reason of God's revelation in creation, occurs to some degree of knowledge about God (v.19) and that, to however limited and extent, they subjectively at least perceive this knowledge (v.20).

Therefore, man becomes guilty because something essential related to truth about God does reach him."

H. Berkhof, *Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Study of the Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), pp.48-49; cf also Turner, "Romans 1:18-21"

Let's be clear because of the fallenness of mankind, this knowledge alone is woefully inadequate to save, apart from special revelation.

Calvin's statement on this text helps, "It is therefore in vain that so many burning lamps shine for us in the workmanship of the universe to show forth the glory of its Author. Although they bathe us wholly in their radiance, yet they can of themselves in no way lead us into the right path."

As Bornkamm puts it, "the intention of the Apostle is not to infer God's being from the world, but to uncover the being of the world from God's revelation."

Bornkamm, "Revelation of God's Wrath," p.59.