

## Romans Part 8 – Chapters 1 and 2

Sunday, March 20, 2022

With input from gotquestions.org, John MacArthur, Mahatma Gandhi, studylight.org

### Romans 1:19-20

*For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. <sup>20</sup> For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.*

If they are without excuse, and they know, but suppress the truth, then they will have a vindictive response to what they perceive as binding cords that keep them feeling guilty:

**Psalm 2:1:** *“Why do the nations rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.”*

This is why Christianity is hated more than other religions – because it’s not only true, but people know it.

*<sup>21</sup> For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. <sup>22</sup> Claiming to be wise, they became fools,*

Followers of Christ are often bewildered at the thinking of unbelieving neighbors, leaders, and “wise” people because the foundation of all their thinking is flawed. Lost people are lost.

*<sup>23</sup> and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.*

Paul addresses this in Acts 17:

*<sup>24</sup> The God who made the world and everything that is in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made by hands; <sup>25</sup> nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things;*

*<sup>26</sup> and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, <sup>27</sup> that they would seek God, if perhaps they might feel around for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;*

*<sup>28</sup> for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we also are His descendants.’ <sup>29</sup> Therefore, since we are the descendants of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by human skill and thought. <sup>30</sup> So having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now proclaiming to mankind that all people everywhere are to repent, <sup>31</sup> because He has set a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all people by raising Him from the dead.”*

## Romans 1:24 - 32

*Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, <sup>25</sup> because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.*

When God gave them up **in** their lusts it means he leaves them there and no longer attempts to pull them out.

*<sup>26</sup> For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; <sup>27</sup> and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.*

When God gave them up **to** dishonorable passions it means they are now going full steam ahead without any impedance from God. These particular verses states the actions they will pursue.

*<sup>28</sup> And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.*

When God gave them up to a debased mind it states that their way of thinking is flawed, damaged, and off course, and no longer impeded by God. (opposite of “Thy word have I hid in my heart) It is a sinful way of thinking (iniquity) which continues to pile on one sin upon another which is why he then states the list of sins in the following verses.

*<sup>29</sup> They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, <sup>30</sup> slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, <sup>31</sup> foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. <sup>32</sup> Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.*

1. Does God leave them this way, never to offer redemption again?

A. The text does not say that. If it did say that, it would nullify Paul’s purpose of arguing in Romans 2 that we should not be judgmental because we can all be found guilty of some of those sins.

B. We all start out that way:

**Ephesians 2:1-2** “you were dead in the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup> in which you once walked”

**Psalms 14:1-3:**

*The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.”*

*They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds;  
there is none who does good.*

<sup>2</sup> *The LORD looks down from heaven on the children of man,  
to see if there are any who understand,  
who seek after God.*

<sup>3</sup> *They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt;  
there is none who does good,  
not even one.*

### **Romans 3:10-18**

*“None is righteous, no, not one;*

*<sup>11</sup> no one understands;  
no one seeks for God.*

*<sup>12</sup> All have turned aside; together they have become worthless;  
no one does good,  
not even one.”*

**Psalm 53:1-3** *The fool says in his heart,*

*“There is no God.”*

*They are corrupt, and their ways are vile;  
there is no one who does good.*

*<sup>2</sup> God looks down from heaven  
on all mankind*

*to see if there are any who understand,  
any who seek God.*

*<sup>3</sup> Everyone has turned away, all have become corrupt;  
there is no one who does good,  
not even one.*

### **Total Depravity of Man – John MacArthur**

Sin is a cruel tyrant. It is the most devastating and degenerating power ever to afflict the human race, such that the entire creation “groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now” (Romans 8:22). It corrupts the entire person—infesting the soul, polluting the mind, defiling the conscience, contaminating the affections, and poisoning the will. It is the life-destroying, soul-condemning cancer that festers and grows in every unredeemed human heart like an incurable gangrene.

Total depravity does not mean that unbelieving sinners are always as bad as they could be (cf. Luke 6:33; Romans 2:14). It does not mean that the expression of sinful human nature is always lived out to the fullest. It does not mean that unbelievers are incapable of acts of kindness, benevolence, goodwill, or human altruism. It certainly does not mean that non-Christians cannot appreciate goodness, beauty, honesty, decency, or excellence. It does mean that none of this has any merit with God.

Total depravity means sinners have no ability to do spiritual good or work for their own salvation from sin. They are so completely disinclined to love righteousness, so thoroughly dead in sin, that they are not able to save themselves or even to fit themselves for God’s salvation. Unbelieving humanity has no capacity to desire, understand, believe, or apply spiritual truth: “*A natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised*” (1 Corinthians 2:14).

### **Romans 2:1-11**

*Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things.*

**Matthew 7:3-5** *“Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? <sup>4</sup> How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’*

*when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? <sup>5</sup> You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.*

We need to be cautious when we judge corporately as well, when we think we have the high moral ground:

**NBC:** Depictions of gay relationships are banned from Chinese television under a 2016 law barring "vulgar, immoral and unhealthy content."

**APN:** MOSCOW (AP) — A bill that stigmatizes gay people and bans giving children any information about homosexuality won overwhelming approval Tuesday in Russia's lower house of parliament.

We have to remember we are evangelicals, not conservative moralists.

Remember Paul is addressing Jews in Rome in this passage. Jews were proud of the blessings they enjoyed as God's people. They boasted that they knew God's law, and thought that they could teach it to others (17-20). But they themselves did not practice what they taught, and so brought shame on the name of God (21-24).

Paul states that not only are pagan Gentiles under God's condemnation, Jews are also. Jews find fault with their Gentile neighbors, yet they do the same things themselves (2:1).

*<sup>2</sup> We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things. <sup>3</sup> Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God? <sup>4</sup> Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?*

They know that God is just and that he punishes sin. Therefore, when they suffer no immediate punishment for their behavior, they think that God approves of them and will not punish them. They do not realize that in his kindness and patience he is giving them time to repent

*<sup>5</sup> But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.*

Those who increase their sin also increase their punishment, because God judges people according to what they do. They deceive themselves if they think they can live as they please and still claim eternal life. By contrast those who have eternal life, the life of the age to come, will show it by the way they live now (5-8). This applies to all people, Jews and Gentiles alike. God will show no favoritism on the day of judgment (9-11).

*<sup>6</sup> He will render to each one according to his works: <sup>7</sup> to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; <sup>8</sup> but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. <sup>9</sup> There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, <sup>10</sup> but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. <sup>11</sup> For God shows no partiality.*

Notice the parallel on "**works**" between this verse and our memory verse for the month,

**James 2:18** *But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds."*

*Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds.*

*<sup>12</sup> For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. <sup>13</sup> For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified. <sup>14</sup> For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. <sup>15</sup> They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them <sup>16</sup> on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.*

*<sup>17</sup> But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God <sup>18</sup> and know his will and approve what is excellent, because you are instructed from the law; <sup>19</sup> and if you are sure that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, <sup>20</sup> an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth— <sup>21</sup> you then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? <sup>22</sup> You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? <sup>23</sup> You who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law. <sup>24</sup> For, as it is written, “The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.”*

**Gandhi:** "I like your Christ, but not your Christianity. I believe in the teachings of Christ, but you on the other side of the world do not, I read the Bible faithfully and see little in Christendom that those who profess faith pretend to see."

"The Christians above all others are seeking after wealth. Their aim is to be rich at the expense of their neighbors. They come among aliens to exploit them for their own good and cheat them to do so. Their prosperity is far more essential to them than the life, liberty, and happiness of others. The Christians are the most warlike people."

*<sup>25</sup> For circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law, but if you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision. <sup>26</sup> So, if a man who is uncircumcised keeps the precepts of the law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? <sup>27</sup> Then he who is physically uncircumcised but keeps the law will condemn you who have the written code and circumcision but break the law. <sup>28</sup> For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. <sup>29</sup> But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.*

Paul reminds the Jews that religious rites such as circumcision are of no value unless the person's life is in keeping with the meaning of the rite. Circumcision was a **sign** God gave to Israel that spoke of cleansing and holiness; but an uncircumcised person with a pure life is more acceptable to God than a circumcised person with an impure life (25-27). The true Jews, the true people of God, are not those who have the mark of circumcision, but those who have pure hearts (28-29).

