

## **ROMANS: RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH FROM START TO FINISH**

### **IV. The Need For God's Righteousness In Man's Condemnation, Romans 1:18-3:20**

#### **A. God's Condemnation Of Pagan Man**

**(Romans 1:18-32)**

#### **I. Introduction**

- A. The theme of the epistle to the Romans is that God's righteousness is available to man by faith from start to finish (Romans 1:16-17; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 441).
- B. This belief is often not accepted in Christendom: Some claim one must have faith plus works to be justified, and others say that though we are justified by faith, we cannot righteously live the Christian life by faith.
- C. The great evangelist Billy Sunday once said that before you can lead a man to Christ, you have to get him lost, meaning that the lost person must see his spiritual need before he is motivated to trust in Christ. Paul demonstrated the spiritual bankruptcy of pagan man in Romans 1:18-32, so we view it for our insight:

#### **II. God's Condemnation Of Pagan Man, Romans 1:18-32.**

- A. God's wrath is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men because they are "suppressing" (*katechonton*, lit. "holding down") the truth in unrighteousness, Romans 1:18; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Romans 1:18. God's wrath is expressed against man's **sin**, *not* against **man himself** at this time due to the work of Christ on the cross, cf. 2 Corinthians 5:19.
- B. To explain this charge, the Apostle Paul wrote that God has displayed Himself to pagan man in creation, but that pagan man has rejected and suppressed the knowledge of God that is revealed there, Romans 1:19-23:
  1. God has plainly revealed His eternal power and divinity, entities that themselves are invisible but are evidenced in the universe He created, making an awareness of God inexcusably obvious, Romans 1:19-20.
  2. However, when pagan man knew God from observing the evidence of His existence in creation, he neither glorified God nor was he thankful for God's livelihood sustainment, but he became willfully vain in his thinking, and his foolish heart was spiritually darkened, Romans 1:21.
  3. Professing himself to be wise, pagan man changed the glory of God into an image of corruptible man, of birds, of four-footed beasts and of creeping things in idolatry, Romans 1:22-23.
- C. Since pagan man abandoned God, the Lord in just recompense has abandoned pagan man, Romans 1:24-27:
  1. In just recompense for changing the glory of God into an image of corruptible man and beasts, God has abandoned pagan man to a distorted sexuality, Romans 1:24-27:
    - a. First, God abandoned pagan man to general immorality, to "live-in lovers, wife-swapping and group sex parties" versus the monogamy of Biblical marriage, Rom. 1:24-25; Ibid., Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 443.
    - b. Then, God abandoned pagan man to distorted immorality in homosexuality, and Paul referred specifically to lesbian and gay unions, Romans 1:26-27. By application, this includes the LGBTQA+ and bestiality aberrations that are all condemned in Leviticus 18:1-23. [In 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Paul condemned the **orientations** of aberrant sexuality, **not just the acts**, contrary to what some homosexuals try to claim!]
  2. In just recompense for refusing to retain God in their knowledge, God further abandoned pagan man to a reprobate mind to perform acts that were improper, Romans 1:28-32:
    - a. Those acts are marked by evil, greed, depravity, envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice, gossip, slander, God-hating, insolence, arrogance, boasting, inventing evils, disobedience to parents, senselessness, faithlessness, heartlessness and ruthlessness, Romans 1:29-31 NIV.
    - b. Though knowing God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, pagan man has continued to commit these vices and even approves of others who commit them, Romans 1:32 NIV.

***Lesson:*** *Pagan man is without excuse for coming under God's condemnation, for God has revealed Himself in creation, but pagan man has rejected that knowledge, relying on his own foolishness to turn from God to idols. God has thus abandoned pagan man to general immorality, to abnormal forms of immorality, and to rampant sin.*

***Application:*** (1) *Let us not excuse pagan man for his spiritual darkness, for that darkness is self-inflicted since God has revealed Himself in creation that is always available to every human being.* (2) *Also, as the Apostle Paul said in Acts 17:27 while speaking to the pagan Greeks of the Areopagos in Athens, God is not far from every human being, be he Jewish or Gentile, so any time any individual desires to know the God Who has revealed Himself in nature, God will get him the Gospel of Christ that he might be saved!* (3) *In view of the huge push of the LGBTQA+ community to gain widespread acceptance, Romans 1:24-27 reveals the depravity of our culture!*