

# GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR MAN FROM START TO FINISH

## **Part II: Man's Need For God's Righteousness, Romans 1:18-3:20**

### **A. The Condemnation Of Pagan Man, Romans 1:18-32**

#### **1. The Cause Of Pagan Man's Condemnation**

**(Romans 1:18-23)**

#### **I. Introduction**

- A. Having clarified that Christ's Gospel reveals the righteousness of God that is available by faith alone (Romans 1:17), Paul began an explanation of **why** man *needs* God's righteousness, starting with pagan man's need for it.
- B. However, many have questioned the fairness of God in sending people to hell who live in pagan societies where they do not have ready access to Christ's Gospel of salvation.
- C. Paul addresses this issue, showing God's just cause for condemning pagan man in Romans 1:18-23 as follows:

#### **II. The Cause Of Pagan Man's Condemnation, Romans 1:18-23.**

- A. Paul wrote that God's wrath is revealed from heaven against all "lack of proper reverence for God" (*asebeian*, Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 442) and unrighteousness of men who "suppress" (*katechontown*, Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 423-424) the truth in unrighteousness, Romans 1:18.
- B. One may wonder how pagan men who do not have access to Christ's Gospel actually "suppress" God's truth, so Paul explains how this occurs, and explains how it occurs all of the time in Romans 1:19-23:
  1. Romans 1:19 and 21 each begin with the conjunction *dioti*, "because" (U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 531; C. F. D. Moule, An Idiom-Book of N. T. Grk., 1975, p. 164), signaling a development where Paul explains a first step of suppression in Romans 1:19-20 leading to a second step of suppression in Romans 1:21-23.
  2. Thus, the first step of suppression is suppressing the revelation of God Himself in creation, Rom. 1:19-20:
    - a. Paul wrote that what may be known of God is "visible or clear" (*phaneron*), for God "has made it plain (*ephanerosen*, the verb related to the noun *phaneron*)," Rom. 1:19; *Ibid.*, Bib. Know. Com., N. T., p. 442.
    - b. Having stated that God has made "visible or clear" what can be known about him to make man accountable to Him (verse 19), Paul **explained** in what **WAY** God has done this for pagan man in Romans 1:20, for that verse is introduced with the explanatory use of the conjunction *gar*, translated "For," *Ibid.*, U. B. S. Greek New Testament, p. 531.
    - c. Specifically, God has made "visible or clear" His "invisible qualities" (*aorata*) as being made "clearly seen" (*kathoratai*), both words sharing a common root, Romans 1:20a; *Ibid.*, Bible Know. Com., N. T.
    - d. Those "invisible qualities" of God's unseen Spirit are His eternal power and "divine nature" (*aidios*), a word used only here in the New Testament "and embraces the properties which make God God," *Ibid.*
    - e. These things are evidence by way of God's creation, Romans 1:20b. Invisible entities like God's love of beauty, order, versatility and His care, sensitivity and infinite, raw power and intellect as seen so profusely in the things that God has made throughout creation testify to His unseen qualities of His unseen Spirit!
  3. The next step of suppression is exchanging the knowledge of God in creation for idols, Romans 1:21-23:
    - a. The second use of *dioti* in the context that begins Romans 1:21 explains that though pagan man could understand God's invisible qualities of His eternal power and divine nature by way of creation, he neither glorified Him as God nor was thankful for God's gracious bounties in providing him life and livelihood provisions in creation, but became "worthless, purposeless" (*emataiothesan*) in thinking and his "morally senseless" (*asynetos*) heart was spiritually darkened, *Ibid.*, Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 442-443.
    - b. That darkness of worthless, purposeless insensitivity to God as so evidenced in creation led to pagan man's claiming himself to be wise when he actually "became stupid" (*emoranthesan*) and thus turning to "the worship as gods of idols in the forms of people and animals," Romans 1:22, 23; *Ibid.*, p. 443.
    - c. Isaiah 44:9-20 describes the "insanity or stupidity of idolatry" (*Ibid.*), illustrating in one case in that passage how a man uses part of a given tree as firewood to warm himself with a fire and to bake his food only to carve an idol out of another part of the same tree and fall down to worship it as his god, beseeching it to save him from his crises in life!

**Lesson: Though pagan man may not be exposed to Christ's Gospel, he is nevertheless fully accountable to God for God's revelation of His invisible qualities as God, what is evidenced by way of creation, which knowledge pagan man has rejected in favor of illogically, insanely replacing the Creator God with false idols for worship!**

**Application: Pagan man stands justly condemned for exchanging God Who is evident through creation for idols!**