

ROMANS 1:21-25 | GOD GAVE THEM UP (REVIEW)

- The description of vv. 21-23 describes the history of pagan mankind.
 - In summary, mankind took the evidence of God and, rather than pursue God, they **changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image**.
 - That is, man took a shortcut, soothed his religious longings with idols, and moved on with life.
- Through history, those who change **the truth of God into a lie** will be given over to **the lusts of their own hearts**. The more rejection of God, the more debauchery will be seen.
 - Since morality is based in the character of God, when there is no recognition of God, there is no morality.
- God does not insist on being recognized. He does not insist on being honored. He also does not owe anything who do not even recognize His existence.
- Since God never *gave up* the nation of Israel, except for abbreviated times, it appears that this section is in reference to the Gentiles.
- The fact that God **gave them up** is also testimony against Calvinism, which teaches that God created some to be damned from the beginning.
- Note that God **gave them up** not *because* of their sins but He gave them up *to* their sins (vv.24ff).

ROMANS 1:26-27 | GIVEN UP TO VILE AFFECTIONS

EXEGESIS

- Verse 26 –
 - **For this cause** - Due to the fact they changed the **truth of God into a lie**.
 - **vile affections** –
 - The word **affections** is *πάθος* [*pathos*].
 - The English *pathos* is "a quality that evokes pity or sadness," and is associated with suffering, distress, and disease.
 - According to Zodhiates, "*Páthos* is the soul's diseased condition out of which the various lusts spring." Zodhiates, Spiros. *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament 2000*
 - Related English words: *pathology* (the study of disease), *apathy* (an absence of the emotion of pity or sadness), *sympathy* (joining a person in their sadness), and *pathetic* (arousing pity). Both the Greek and English demand that the **affections** spoken of in this verse must be *diseased and unwholesome*.
 - Paul uses the adjective *ἀτιμία* [*atimia*], literally "without honor" to strengthen the already negative noun.
 - **Natural use...against nature** –
 - Both here and v. 27, **natural** is *φυσικός* [*physicos*], that is, the *physical* use.
 - The change is **against nature**, for which the Greek is *παρα φύσιν* [*para physin*].
 - The word *physin* (from *physis*) and the word *physicos* are of the same root.
 - The *para* (alongside) is used in the sense of a failure to be in alignment with the *physicos* and only being "along side" rather than "on target." (Used in the same sense that *paranormal* is "not normal.")
- Verse 27
 - **lust** - The Greek *ὄρεξις* [*orexis*] is from the same root as we get the English word *orgy*.
 - **recompense** - The *ἀντιμισθία* [*antimisthia*], where *misthos* is "reward," thus the "anti reward."
 - **receiving in themselves...** -

- Paul does not elaborate on what the **recompense of their error** was (and presumably is) that they receive.
- Since it is an "anti-reward," it could be as simple as the inability to reproduce, or it could be a direct judgment by God.
- However, in its plainest sense, it appears to be a direct result of the actions taken by those given up, not a direct judgment sent from God. It is the kind of judgment seen in Galatians 6:7, the judgment of the law of sowing and reaping.
- **error** - The translation **error** does not fully convey the behavior, since, in modern English, an error implies lack of intention rather than willful deeds. The Greek *πλάνη* [plane] is "wandering," and the word from which we get *planet*.

COMPARISON OF TRANSLATIONS

- ESV uses "natural relations" rather than "natural use," while the Greek speaks of usage, not relationships. It is not unnatural for men and women to have relations with those of the same sex, but there is a "usage" of reproductive organs that is unnatural. The NET Bible also says "natural relations" but gives a footnote that says the Greek says, "...the males abandoning the natural function of the female."
- The NIV84 spoke of the "due penalty for their perversion" but the 2011 revision changed to "error."
- NLT was clear that the issue was sexual, "instead indulged in sex with each other" (v. 26) and said that the **error** was "sin." GNB speaks of "natural sexual relations."
- *The Message* says that they were "*Sexually confused*," which fails to place responsibility where it belongs. Furthermore, it summarizes the sexual perversions as "all lust, no love," while the text does not even address love. Thus, *The Message* conveys the idea that men and women need a restored dignity and humanity because they are "emptied of God and love, godless and loveless wretches," rather than sexually deviant.

ROMANS 1:28-32 | GIVEN UP TO A REPROBATE MIND

- Verse 28
 - **they did not like to retain God** - Literally, "they did not approve of having god in knowledge" (YLT).
 - **a reprobate mind** - The Greek has a play on words in this sentence.
 - **They did not like** is *δοκιμάζω* [dokimazo] and **a reprobate mind** is *ἀδόκιμος* [adokimos] - thus, "with judgment" and "without judgment."
 - Literally, "they judged God unworthy to keep in their knowledge so God gave them over to a mind that cannot judge."
 - This should serve as a warning that a believer should beware of adopting the conclusions of atheists.
 - **not convenient** –
 - Literally, *καθήκω* [katheko], where *kat* is a multiplier prefix and *heko* is "to come." With the negative qualifier, "things which will never come [to pass]." So, metaphorically, "to do things which are not based in reality."
 - In 1611 the word *convenient* had the same meaning as the Greek *katheko*, from the latin *con* (with) and *venire* "to come."
- Verses 29-31 – a list of the fruit of a **reprobate mind**
 - **covenantbreakers** (v. 31) - Literally, "faithless" (i.e.: do not put any faith in their promises because they are **covenantbreakers**).
 - **implacable** (v. 31) - i.e.: "irreconcilable."
- Verse 32 - From the beginning (v. 21), these are men that **knew God** but **glorified him not as God**. This is descriptive of the first generation of mankind, the decedents of Cain who chose to mock God and run from him.

SUPPLEMENTAL: UNDERSTANDING THE DEPRAVITY OF OUR WORLD

- Homosexuality is an outgrowth of atheism, and can be expected in atheistic communities.
 - This is because, when humanity rejects God, they have no basis of morality, so nothing is *absolutely* wrong (though it may be *situationally* wrong).
- Homosexuality is a perversion of sexual nature. It is chiefly self-gratification, which is another result of a rejection of the existence of God.
 - Homosexuality is *not* a gene structure.
 - All perversions can be reversed, and thus homosexuality is something from which someone can recover.
- Homosexuality develops in sexually open societies and becomes pervasive enough to affect those of faith.
 - Homosexuality is not a sign of *individual* lack of faith, but of *societal rejection of God*.
 - The person of faith who struggles with same-sex attraction has to deal with it the same way that a person of faith deals with any sin:
 - *Flee also youthful lusts.*
 - Recognize the attraction as a sinful perversion of something that is intended to be natural and good (that is, sexuality between a man and his wife).
- The list of sins of a society that has no place for God in its thinking is endless, and vv. 28-31 is just a sample.
 - To address each issue (homosexuality, fornication, deceit, etc.) individually will be a fruitless exercise.
 - The only place to combat these societal ills (i.e.: sins) is in the mind.
 - If you live in a society that has a *godless mind* you will likely need to withdraw and **do your own business** and **work with your hands** in a quiet life (2 Thes. 4:11). Even if you can handle the temptations and the dangers, your family will be negatively affected, and the one who does not provide for his own family is **worse than an infidel** (1 Tim 5:8).