Will People Who Never Hear the Gospel Be Held Accountable?
Scripture: Romans 1
Code: BQ111511

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. (1:20)

Paul specifies the content of the revelation of Himself that God makes known to all mankind. **Since the creation of the world**, he declares, God has made His **invisible attributes** visible. The particular **attributes** that man can perceive in part through his natural senses are God's **eternal power and** His **divine nature**. God's **eternal power** refers to His never-failing omnipotence, which is reflected in the awesome creation which that **power** both brought into being and sustains. God's **divine nature** of kindness and graciousness is reflected, as Paul told the Lystrans, in the "rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14:17).

God's natural revelation of Himself is not obscure or selective, observable only by a few perceptive souls who are specially gifted. His revelation of Himself through creation can be **clearly seen** by everyone, **being understood through what has been made**.

Even in the most ancient of times, long before the telescope and microscope were invented, the greatness of God was evident both in the vastness and in the tiny intricacies of nature. Men could look at the stars and discover the fixed order of their orbits. They could observe a small seed reproduce itself into a giant tree, exactly like the one from which it came. They could see the marvelous cycles of the seasons, the rain, and the snow. They witnessed the marvel of human birth and the glory of the sunrise and sunset. Even without the special revelation David had, they could see that "the heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands" (Ps. 19:1).

Some birds are able to navigate by the stars. Even if hatched and raised in a windowless building, if shown an artificial sky, they immediately are able to orient themselves to the proper place to which to migrate. The archerfish is able to fire drops of water with amazing force and accuracy, knocking insects out of the air. The bombardier beetle separately produces two different chemicals, which, when released and combined, explode in the face of an enemy. Yet the explosion never occurs prematurely and never harms the beetle itself. No wonder David declared that "power belongs to God" (Ps. 62:11) and that Asaph (Ps. 79:11) and Nahum (1:3) spoke of the greatness of His power.

At any given time, there are an average of 1,800 storms in operation in the world. The energy needed to generate those storms amounts to the incredible figure of 1,300,000,000 horsepower. By comparison, a large earth-moving machine has 420 horsepower and requires a hundred gallons of fuel a day to operate. Just one of those storms, producing a rain of four inches over an area of ten thousand square miles, would require energy equivalent to the burning of 640,000,000 tons of coal to evaporate enough water for such a rain. And to cool those vapors and collect them in clouds would take another 800,000,000 horsepower of refrigeration working night and day for a hundred days.

Agricultural studies have determined that the average farmer in Minnesota gets 407,510 gallons of rainwater per acre per year, free of charge, of course. The state of Missouri has some 70,000 square miles and averages 38 inches of rain a year. That amount of water is equal to a lake 250 miles long, 60 miles wide, and 22 feet deep.

The U. S. Natural Museum has determined that there are at least 10 million species of insects, including some 2,500 varieties of ants. There are about 5 billion birds in the United States, among which some species are able to fly 500 miles non-stop across the Gulf of Mexico. Mallard ducks can fly 60 miles an hour, eagles 100 miles an hour, and falcons can dive at speeds of 180 miles an hour.

The earth is 25,000 miles in circumference, weighs 6 septillion, 588 sextillion tons, and hangs unsupported in space. It spins at 1,000 miles per hour with absolute precision and careens through space around the sun at the speed of 1,000 miles per minute in an orbit 580 million miles long.

The head of a comet may be from 10,000 to 1,000,000 miles long, have a tail 100,000,000 miles long, and travel at a speed of 350 miles per second. If the sures radiated energy could be converted into horsepower, it would be the equivalent of 500 million, million, billion horsepower. Each second it consumes some 4 million tons of matter. To travel at the speed of light (ca. 186,281 miles per second) across the Milky Way, the galaxy in which our solar system is located, would take 125,000 years. And our galaxy is but one of millions.

The human heart is about the size of its owner’s fist. An adult heart weighs less than half a pound, yet can do enough work in twelve hours to lift 65 tons one inch off the ground. A water molecule is composed of only three atoms. But if all the molecules in one drop of water were the size of a grain of sand, they could make a road one foot thick and a half mile wide that would stretch from Los Angeles to New York. Amazingly, however, the atom itself is largely space, its actual matter taking up only one trillionth of its volume.

Except to a mind will-fully closed to the obvious, it is inconceivable that such power, intricacy, and harmony could have developed by any means but that of a Master Designer who rules the universe. It would be infinitely more reasonable to think that the separate pieces of a watch could be shaken in a

bag and eventually become a dependable timepiece than to think that the world could have evolved into its present state by blind chance.

Even a pagan should be able to discern with the psalmist that surely the One who made the ear and the eye is Himself able to hear and to see (see Ps. 94:9). If we can hear, then whoever made us surely must understand hearing and seeing. If we, His creatures, can think, then surely the mind of our Creator must be able to reason.

Men are judged and sent to hell not because they do not live up to the light evidenced in the universe but because ultimately that rejection leads them to reject Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit "will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment," Jesus said; "concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me" (John 16:8–9). But if a person lives up to the light of the revelation he has, God will provide for his hearing the gospel by some means or another. In His sovereign, predetermined grace He reaches out to sinful mankind. "As I live!" declared the Lord through Ezekiel, "I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live" (Ezek. 33:11). God does not desire "for any to perish but for all to come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). He will give His elect the privilege of hearing the gospel and will bring them to Himself. "You will seek Me and find me," the Lord promised through Jeremiah, "when you search for Me with all your heart" (Jer. 29:13).

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