Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Reasons for the Wrath of God, Part 3
Scripture: Romans 1:22
Code: 45-12

Let's look together this evening at the first chapter of Romans, Romans chapter 1. Examining again verses 19 through 23.

I sense tremendous amount of interest in the passage. There's a great amount of interest in my own heart in discovering all the depth of truth that God has in this particularly significant text. And I can tell too by your response that you are equally excited about what you are learning.

We're looking at verses 18 really through 23. Paul introduces the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ with a direct statement about the wrath of God. That's where the Good News has to begin; it has to begin with the bad new first. Let's remind ourselves of these verses by following along as I read beginning in verse 18. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness, Because that which maybe known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shown it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his excuse; Because, eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man, and birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things."

This is how Paul begins the message of the Good News of Jesus Christ. The wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness. Our Lord had more to say about judgment, more to say about destruction, more to say about damnation, and more to say about hell than anybody else recorded in Scripture. And if you think it unusual that this great epistle on the doctrine of salvation opens with this statement about judgment it's because you really haven't thought very long about how the whole New Testament opens. Because as you enter the New Testament you enter first at the Gospel of Matthew, and I want you to turn there for a moment, I want to introduce our thoughts by a rapid tour through Matthew's Gospel. And I want you to see a repeated focus that our Lord gives in this Gospel, and remember this is the introduction, this is the opening of the New Testament.

And you find for example in chapter 3 verse 7, "When he saw many of the Pharisees andSadducees come for baptism, he said unto them, 0 generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" Verse 11, John further says, John the Baptist, "I, indeed, baptize you with with water

unto repentance, but you cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit, and with fire; Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the granary, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Chapter 5 verse 22, "But I say unto you that whosoever is angry," and the Lord is speaking now, "with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire." Verse 29, "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut if off, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." Chapter 7, verse 22, "Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out demons? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Chapter 8 verse 12, "But the sons of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Chapter 10, verse 15, "Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city." Verse 28, "And fear not them who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Chapter 12, verse 36, the Lord continues to speak, "But I say unto you that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account of it in the Day of Judgment." Verse 41, "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and, behold, a greater than Jonah is here. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; for she came from the farthest parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here." And of course in that passage the Lord is speaking of a comparable judgment. In chapter 13 verse 40, "As, therefore, the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of the age. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them who do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." Verse 49, "So shall it be at the end of the age; the angels shall come forth, and separate the wicked from among the righteous, and cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." Chapter 16, verse 26, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Chapter 18verse 34, "And his lord was angry, and delivered him to the inquisitors," actually the Greek word for inquisitors is the word torturer, "till he should pay all that was due unto him." A picture of judgment. Chapter 22, and you have in chapter 22 in the parable of the marriage feast, verse 7, the king hearing, being angry, "and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city." In verse 13, "The king said to the servants, Bind him handand foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." And God is seen as the King in judgment. Chapter 23, verse 33, our Lord says, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore, behold, I send (you) unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes;

and some of them ye shall kill and crucify, and some of them you shall scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city, That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Barachiah, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation." Chapter 24, verse 50, "The lord of that servant," again parabolically representating God, "shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he's not aware of, And shall cut him asunder, and appointhim his portion with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Finally chapter 25 verse 26, and again in parable, "The lord answers and said, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not spread? Thou oughtest, therefore, to put my money to the exchangers, and then, at my coming, I should have received mine own with interest. Take, therefore, the talent from him, and give it unto him who hath ten talents.For every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast that unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Now that's about enough to get the message, isn't it?

Now what (a) point am I trying to make? Now listen carefully, I want you to understand that there is no guile in the heart of our Lord as the message of the New Testament is given. It is clear from the very beginning that God is a God of judgment, that God is a God of wrath, that God is a God who punishes sin, and predominately that message is uttered by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. And by the way, that is precisely how the New Testament ends, the way it began. "And, behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For outside are dogs, and sorcerers, and fornicators, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. And I testify to every man that hears the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." Listen, the New Testament begins with warnings of judgment and that is precisely the way it ends. And so we are not surprised as we approach the Epistle to the Romans to find the Apostle Paul beginning his Gospel presentation with a statement warning men about God's wrath. It begins right here in verse 18 where he begins to delineate his message, the first seventeen verses being introductory, and he opens up with a statement of the wrath of God.

Now we've already begun to study this and we have asked ourself that oft asked question, is God just, is He fair in such judgment, does He have a right to such wrath and such acts of vengeance? And the answer comes in verses 19 through 23, and consequently it is a very crucial passage, because people very often criticize the God of the Bible by saying that He's unfair, He's overbearing, He's judgmental, He's condemning, how can a God of love send people to hell? And so forth and at

the very outset Paul speaks of His wrath and then defends God's right to act in that manner.

Now we're looking then in verses 19 to 23 at reasons for the wrath of God. A sequence of reasons given by Paul that also parallel the decline and fall of man. Now from the beginning I mentioned there are four basic reasons why God's wrath is vindicated, is justified, is right, and these also chronicle the decline of man.

Number one, we titled the word revelation, and in verses 19 and 20 we learned that God has a right to be angry "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in men; for God has shown it unto them." From the invisible things of His nature which men could never see, there is still accountability because God has revealed Himself in His created world, and that's what verse 20 is saying. By the things that are made God is manifest, so that men are without excuse. So the first reason that God can act in judgment against man is because men have been given the truth of God. And as we showed if they had lived up to the light that God had given them He would have given them more light. God has been revealed in His creation. And I only remind you of two very essential comparative passages, the first being in the 14th chapter of Acts in verse 15 where Paul says, "We are men of like passions, we preach unto you that you should turn from these vanities," that is from false gods, "to serve the living God, who made heaven, and earth, and sea, and the things that are in them. He has not left himself (Paul says) without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." In other words the God of creation has manifested His nature, and that nature is visible in His created world. And then in the 17th chapter of Acts an equally essential passage. In verse 23 Paul passes by a particular inscription on an idol, "To the unknown God." And he decides that he ought to tell them who that is. And he says, that is the true God, the real God. Verse 24, "The Lord of heaven and earth." And then in verse 27 he says, "If you seek him, you'll find him, because he's not far from every one of us. For in him we live, and move, and have our being." And so the New Testament tells us that God is revealed in His creation. In fact it even goes further in John 1:9 to say, "Christ is the light, coming into the world to light every man." God has disclosed Himself in His created order to everyone. Therefore man is responsible for the revelation of God's truth.

Now if men...and I want you to understand this, if men will accept the light they have, affirm that light, believe that light then I believe God will give them more light to bring them to the knowledge of Christ. And it's important at this juncture to say this; nobody is ever saved shortof faith in Jesus Christ. No one can be saved apart from Christ. "Neither is there salvation in (what?) any other." Only in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore we must reach people with the name of Christ. You say, well what about those people who are off in some remote place? If they live up to the light they have, I believe God will allow them to hear the message to be saved. And He does that of course by His sovereign, sovereign predetermined, predestined grace as He reaches out to redeem men. And He will bring, if you will the elect to Himself, and He will give them the privilege of hearing. You see the great commission tells us to go and preach and go and make disciples of every nation, go and

preachthe Gospel to every creature and that assumes that they must hear the Gospel of Christ. Men are judged and sent to hell not because they didn't live up to the light they had, but because they rejected Christ, that's John 16. The Spirit has come into the world to convict the world because they have not believed in Jesus Christ, that is the cardinal sin. And so they must hear of Christ. But I believe, if they live up to the light they have, in God's wonderful sovereign grace,He'll bring them the message of Christ, through a missionary, through a book, through any means He wants.

People who always wonder about the, the heathen must find their answer in the character and the nature and the power of God, He's not limited. He is just and He is merciful. And God is sovereign and whoever He draws and whoever He calls He will allow to hear the message. But may I hasten to add, don't think that if people aren't saved God isn't just because none of us deserve it. So we're not looking at the goodness of man as if that werethe issue, we're looking at the mercy of God. So I believe that there's enough light for every man, and if men live up to that light God will get them the message by His sovereign power. "So that all that the Father gives to me" said Jesus, "shall (what? shall) come to me, and I've lost none of them."

So we see then that in verses 19 and 20 the first reason for judgment being justified is that men have the revelation. Second reason, rejection. Men have turned away from that revelation, and verse 21 says it, "When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." They turned away from it. When they knew God. How did they know God? Well based on verses 19 and 20, they knew God because of His creating the world and all that is in it and thus disclosing His nature in His creation. They were without excuse and yet they turned, and what was the key? "They glorified him not as God." They refused to give God glory and we went into that in some measure of detail last time so we won't go over it again. But that is the cardinal definition of man's rejection, they will not glorify God. And that's the issue. Men don't respond to God. Now we shouldn't be so surprised when Christ came into the world, God in human flesh, that they didn't respond to Him either, and they refused to glorify Christ. Because that's how it is with fallen man. He refuses to glorify God. And really it's an ego trip; he seeks rather to glorify himself.

Now, we went into some detail last time talking about God's effort to get men to glorify Him, and I, I thought to myself, you know there may be some question in the mind's of some people as to what it means to glorify God, to give Him honor and so forth and so on. But practically let's assume that we're Christians and we say, no we glorify God, ah, we're not like those people in Romans 1, we are contrasted, we are set to glorify God. Truly we desire to do that. What is it that we do in doing that? If, if we know what it is to glorify God we can know what it is not to glorify God, right? By contrast. So what does it mean to glorify God?

Now hang onto your seat I'm going to give (you) to you fast. I've covered this in a, in a series some years ago but it is utterly important material, maybe the most important I've ever preached, and I'm

going to run it by real fast. How do men glorify God? How do you and I glorify God? Number one, by confessing Jesus as Lord. That's where it all begins. In Philippians 2:9, "God has highly exalted him, given him a name above every name, That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, things in earth, and things under the earth. And every tongue should confess (listen) that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God." To begin with we glorify God by confessing Christ as Lord, that's where it all starts. And that is precisely what the world will not do. They will not acknowledge the Lordship of Christ any more than they would acknowledge the Lordship of sovereign God in the Old Testament era. They refuse to do that, be it God in the Old Testament, be it Christ in the New. There's a second way we glorify God, we glorify God by living for that purpose. In other words, our entire life goal is set in that direction. That is precisely the meaning of First Corinthians 10:31, "Whether, you eat or drink," and he picks out the two most mundane, routine, elemental aspects of life, eating and drinking which are just very neutral sort of nonreligious things, but he says, even that, "or whatever else you do, do all to the (what?) glory of God."

Now that simply means that in all of the activities of life we do what we do to honor God. Is that how people live in our world, is that their focus? Oh no. Oh they are not anxious to do that at all, they are not even interested in what glorifies God. But that is to be the focus of our life. In other words we aim at that, at any price. In fact the Lord even said to Peter, you're going to die, and the writer John says, "This spoke he, signifying by what death he should glorify God." John 21. So glorifying God for Peter was dying, being willing to pay the supreme price of his own life in order to give God glory. How do we glorify God? First, confessing Jesus as Lord, secondly, aiming our life at that goal no matter what it costs us.

Thirdly, we glorify God by confessing our sin. In Joshua 7:19 Joshua approached Achan who had stolen things from Jericho and been told not to do that, God had said that was forbidden but he had stolen those things and Joshua says to him, get this, "Give glory to the God of Israel, and confess your sin." Confession of sin glorifies God. You say, how so? Now listen carefully, because when you sin God will react in a holy manner, and when you sin there's chastening. But if you admit the sin, you affirm the fact that you deserve the chastening, so when God chastens you you're not going to accuse Him of being unjust. You see when you deny your sin then you'll also deny that God has a right to chasten you and then you'll impugn His character by saying He's unfair. And so Joshua said to Achan, you confess your sin because you're just about to die, and when you die and everybody who was implicated with you, we want it to be known that you're dying justly because you have violently and willfully sinned against God. We then glorify God by admitting our sin and that is something the world will not do. First John 1 says that is characteristic of men to say, "we have no sin, and make God a (what? a) liar." To the world will not confess Jesus as Lord, they will not aim their life at the glory of God, they will not confess their sin and that is expressed in the statement, "they glorified him not as God." They're not interested in life on God's terms.

Fourthly, we glorify God by trusting in Him. In the 4th chapter of Romans and the 20th verse, it says, "He staggered not" speaking of Abraham, "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief," when God said, you're going to have a baby and he was a hundred and Sarah was ninety, it would have been easy to doubt, but "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, which gave glory to God." You know what glorifies God? When you believe Him. That's right, when you believe Him. When you believe His word, when you believe what He says. Unbelievers don't believe that, they're not interested in what God says, they don't believe the Scriptures, they don't believe God's trustworthy, they will not place their life in His care, they will not trust Him for destiny. They will not glorify Him. And it goes from there. We glorify God by praising Him, that's another one. Psalm 50:23 says, "Who so offereth praise glorifieth me." We glorify God when we praise Him, unbelievers won't do that.

Another one, we glorify God when we pray, John 14, "If you ask anything in my name," "I will do it." "That the Father may be glorified in the Son." John 14:13 and 14. Prayer gives God an opportunity to be glorified and men do not pray because they do not seek God's glory. In First Peter 4:10 and 11 it says, minister your gift to the glory of God. And what it's talking about is gifts of service and gifts of speaking. Serve the body to God's glory, serve the church selflessly. Men aren't interested in that, they're not interested in serving one another let alone the church. In Second Thessalonians 3:1 it says ... Paul says, that when he proclaims the Word it gives glory to God. The unbelievers don't do that.

In First Corinthians chapter 6 it says, that we are not to be joined to a prostitute or a harlot, that we are to care for our body with holiness, "for our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, what know ye not? That you are bought with a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and your spirit, which are God's." And that means we glorify God by moral purity. You see the Bible is very clear about how to glorify God. You glorify God by confessing Christ as Lord, by aiming your life at that purpose; you glorify God by confessing your sin, by trusting Him, by praising Him, by praying to Him, by ministering to His people, by proclaiming His Word, by being morally pure and also in Second Corinthians 4:15 Paul tells us we glorify God by winning people to Jesus Christ, the world isn't interested in that, they don't even know how to do it. And we find in John 15:8 that we glorify God by bearing much fruit, the fruit of righteousness. You see that's the positive side, that's what it means to glorify God, but the rejecters of this world are - are not interested in that. They will not believe in Jesus Christ, they will not confess Him as Lord, they will not aim their lives at God's glory, they will not confess the guilt of their sin, they will not trust, they will not bear spiritual fruit, they will not praise, they will not pray, they will not minister to God's people, they have no concern for the lost and utterly no moral purity. And so they live in violent and direct opposition to that which glorifies God. They will not do that. And that is the characterization of all of the human race, apart from regeneration**,** "For all have sinned and fallen short (of what?) glorifying God." They just don't do that. And neither are they thankful, Paul says in chapter 1 verse 21, they're not thankful. Why would they be thankful? They don't see God as the source of anything. And lack of thanksgiving is a terrifying desecration and blasphemy against the

name of God who gives us all good things. But men are not thankful.

I think about Luke 17 so often about the lepers that came and Jesus cleansed them all, and how many came back? There were ten, how many came back and said thanks? One, and Jesus said to him, you're saved. The other nine were just physically whole. Only one was thankful. Men refuse to glorify God. And the real issue is they seek to glorify themselves. Let me give you an illustration now, Daniel chapter 4. This guy that I want you to meet in Daniel 4 is Nebuchadnezzar, the greatest monarch in the history of the world, as far as the world is concerned, apart from God's dominion. Nebuchadnezzar the king of the kingdom of gold, Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar, who was the superior to any other king. And he refused to glorify God, was not interested in it. In fact he was so caught up in his own glory that verse 30 says, "He spoke, and said," Daniel 4, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?"

Now he didn't restrain his ego at all. I mean he just let's it all fly. And he's wandering through his palace yelling at the top of his voice, look what I have done for my own majesty. "While the word was in the king's mouth,

there fell a voice from heaven, saying, 0 King Nebuchadnezzar," and whenever you hearthat coming out of heaven you're in deep trouble, "to thee it is spoken, The kingdom is departed from thee." That is enough. You know there comes a time in the patience of God when the door goes slammed shut, and He can only take so much. "And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field; they shall make thee to eat grass like oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will." Until you get it straight who God is you're going to be a wild maniac, you're going to eat grass like an oxen**.** "And the very same hour was the thing fulfilled on Nebuchadnezzar," instantaneously this greatest monarch of the world lost his mind, became a raving maniac, "was driven from men," because they couldn't handle him, "heate grass like oxen, his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws." Seven years of insanity. "And at the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honored him who liveth forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation." It's my guess that you'll see Nebuchadnezzar in heaven but he sure learned the hard way, that God is to be glorified, because men don't do that.

Now what happens? Is it always so to be? Yes, always. Even as you go to the end of the New Testament into the Book of Revelation you find the same basic attitude. In Revelation 14 verse 6, "An angel flies in the midst of heaven, has the everlasting gospel." Now the everlasting gospel is a very interesting term, I believe it is simply the news from God that God judges sin and rewards righteousness. That is the permanent message, and this angel is preaching it, and what does he say in verse 7? "Fear God, and give (what?) glory to him; (why?) for the hour of his judgment is come;

and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." And God calls on the world to, to give Him glory. But as you know, if you know anything about the Book of Revelation they don't respond. Over in chapter 15 verse 4 it says, "Who shall not fear thee, 0 Lord, and glorify thy name? For thou only art holy." And this is the message all through the Bible, that men refuse to glorify God.

Now what happens? Back to verse 21. What happens? Well, "they became vain in their imaginations." Literally empty, useless, human dialogue resulted. They went from truth to emptiness, and then from emptiness as we saw last time, "their foolish heart was darkened." Emptiness created a vacuum and it sucked in darkness.

Now what is darkness? What kind of darkness? Wh, wh, what do we mean? Well, the empty imaginations, just to remind you of last time, simply means meaningless musings, meaningless thoughts, useless human dialogue. In fact the word is dialogismos, for uh, imaginations, human dialoguing, human debate, human discussion, human information, empty words. And into the emptiness and the vacuum comes rushing the darkness. And darkness in the Bible is seen in two ways, first is intellectual and second is moral, and I don't have the time tonight but if we did we could trace that. You will find throughout Scripture darkness picturing intellectual ignorance and you will find it also picturing moral perversity. And you find it all over the Old Testament and all over the New Testament as well. Darkness refers to intellectual ignorance, the absence of truth and the absence of righteousness, moral perversion. That is precisely what happens. Man says no to God, he will not glorify God, he decides that he's going to spin off his own musings and in his big empty nothingness that comes out of his own mind he creates a vacuum that sucks in intellectual blackness and moral perversion. And so man has forfeited understanding, he's forfeited virtue. Well that is why the philosophies of this world tend toward immorality, they have no restraint power, they are ... they're basically intertwined with immorality. The worldly philosophies accommodate immorality because they both come out of the darkness of hell itself.

Now all the vain imaginations of man will give you is a legacy of darkness, darkness intellectually and darkness morally. All the philosophies of the world will leave you with nothing but that. Look with me very rapidly at Colossians chapter 2 and I'll show you why. Colossians chapter 2 verse 8, now this is right straight from the Holy Spirit through Paul. "Beware lest any man spoil you," and the verb for spoil is a very rare verb used of kidnapping someone, plundering a house or seducing and ravaging a young girl. Don't let anybody kidnap you, seduce you, plunder you, "through philosophy." Now that's fairly clear, isn't it? Human wisdom, the theories of God and man, the theories of truth, spun out of the empty imaginations of a darkened heart. When anyone comes to me and says, well I'm going to take philosophy. All, all I ever think about is this passage, Colossians 2:8. You're going to come out kidnapped, plundered and ravaged, because you've given yourself over to the useless musings of blackened hearts who do not know truth and do not know morality. It is vain deceit, and I believe that phrase describes philosophy, it is an empty illusion, it purports to be something, it is nothing, but that

which can ravage the soul. It is after the tradition of men, that is it is human, it is from the level of inadequate human thinking, and it embodies the rudiments of the world, and those are...that is a phrase used several times, it means the basic elements of human wisdom, the infantile poverty stricken opinions of a world full of fools. Philosophy doesn't advance you, philosophy doesn't give you something deep, profound. Philosophy doesn't give you something new; it is a regression to the basic perversions of the human mind, devoid of God and lost in the blackness of sin. So man will reject revelation, and he'll be left with a legacy of darkness.

And that will lead him to step three, we finally got there. Step three, rationalization. Get comfortable, I'm going to finish this, I think. Rationalization, this is fascinating. You can see right here the fall of man. The third reason God has a right to judge them is rationalization, verse 22, "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." Here they are, they have said no to revelation, they have utterly rejected the truth, they are left with empty, meaningless human philosophy, their dark hearts are filled with deceit, and they announce that they are wise.

Now that is rationalization. The futility, resulting in the loss of touch with reality, they don't even know what wisdom is anymore. They've obviated the standard. Man doesn't think right about anything, why should he think right about how he thinks? He doesn't think right about anything else. He refuses to accept truth, so in effect he destroys the power to discriminate, do you understand that now? You know sometimes when I listen to the philosophers and I read all the garbage and I hear all these people talking about what they believe and what is right and what is wrong, it's very frustrating to me, and you say to yourself, how could they ever think that way? And you have to remember that they think illogically. They have abandoned any right to think properly, so everything is going to come out wrong. They have no power to discriminate, they cannot perceive truth, they cannot perceive error.

You know ah, years ago Christians decided they had to believe in evolution, because they were intimidated by the philosophers who taught evolution. And so immediately they looked for places in the Christian system where you could put evolution, and we still believe in creation and God started it and then evolution took over, and they came up with what is known as quote, unquote theistic evolution or progressive creationism. And it was an accommodation because people were intimidated by the rationalization of a whole fools who didn't know the truth anyway. What about liberal theology? More schools and churches have been ruined by the theology of liberals because people have been intimidated by their supposed intellectualism when they don't know anything. They are fools. They live in the ultimate insanity believing they're wise. And then today it's psychology. People think that psychologists have all the answers. They don't have the answers, don't be intimidated by them. Men think they're smart when they're utter fools. By the way, you might be interested to know that the word here, "they became fools." is moraino, from which we get moron. Men are morons, but they think they're wise. What an incredible deception. Do you know what they are? They're wise all right, but their wisdom is limited to one sphere. They are wise in their own conceits. Do you know what that means? They are wise only in their own conceited self-styled perception, that's all.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones, great saint of God, who is now with the Lord wrote this, "The whole drift toward modernism that has blighted the church of God and nearly destroyed its living gospel may be traced to an hour when men began to turn from revelation to philosophy." End quote. Simply stated, when they stopped listening to God's Word and decided they wanted to listen to men. And so nowadays you can take a good Christian institution and you start feeling intimidated by the academic community so you start pumping people into it who are educated and trained in the philosophies of the world and pretty soon they undermine everything it ever stood for. And they intimidate the people, who don't have their supposed credentials. Look with me at First Corinthians 1.

Now mark this people, carefully, philosophy is always set against the Gospel, it's always set against the Gospel, the wisdom of man versus the wisdom of God. So in First Corinthians 1 Paul says, verse 18, well verse 17 he says, "Christ didn't send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel; not with the wisdom of words." In other words not just verbiage. "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish (what?) foolishness." Now here you see is this insanity again. While men are saying their foolishness is wisdom, they're saying true wisdom is foolishness. That's where they are, that's where human kind exist, in that sphere. "But unto us who are saved the preaching of the cross is (what?) the powerof God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise," so called wisdom by the way, this is quoted from Isaiah, "and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Then where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" It's foolish. Don't you be intimidated. What did worldly wisdom ever do to transform lives? Has, has all the philosophy of men throughout its generations saved man from the constant decline? No, it has no power. Verse 21 says, in First Corinthians 1, "For since in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." What man's wisdom couldn't do God's foolishness did. Verse 25, "Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; the weakness of God is stronger than men." The blunt, clear message delivered by uneducated Christians with transformed lives infinitely exceeds the tangled, confused complications of human philosophy. That's what it's saying. Fools, fools. The biggest fool of all is the one who has rejected the light, gone into the darkness and now rationalizes that this darkness is light, and the light is darkness. He thinks he is a super mind and he is a moron. It's that simple.

Now you see the decline and fall of man. Revelation, God gave him the truth. Rejection, he refused to believe the truth. Rationalization, he affirms then that the error he has invented is the truth and he has to do that to convince himself that he's right. But it's insanity, because it is an empty deception.

Now step four in the decline and fall of man is religion. What happens? Verse 23, and I'm just going to introduce this. Boy does time fly, wow. "Then he changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man, and birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things." Man became religious and he made idols out of men and he made idols out of birds and he made idols out of beasts and idols out of snakes and bugs and stuff like that. Now listen to me, religion is not the

highest point in man's ascension, religion is the pits. It is the lowest level.

First God is revealed, and he knows God through the created world. But he rejects that, and into the emptiness that he's left with rushes the blackness of intellectual ignorance and moral perversion. And in the midst of his blackness he cannot deal with the fact that he is wrong so he rationalizes that he is right but still in his heart there is an empty feeling because something in him demands a god so he makes up one. Is that incredible, is that incredible? That man should eliminate the true God and then create one that doesn't exist and call himself wise. It would be on the level of a father who had a son say, murdered his son, and bought in his place a ventriloquist dummy and went through the rest of his life introducing the dummy to people as his son. We'd put him away. That's what man has done. We'll see how next week. Let's pray.

Lord we feel that we are grappling with some rich, deep, profound eternal truths, and this is not man's wisdom, this is Your wisdom. How exciting to be able to get a grasp on why the world is the way it is. We know sometimes the rationalization is very sophisticated at the university level, sometimes it's very simplistic as every little individual man and woman who rejects You has to rationalize in their own mind that they're right at their own level. Be it ever so uncomplicated and simplistic. We know that man who will not accept the revelation, who enters into rejection must also enter into rationalization; he's got to live with the fact that he's right and so the world is filled with a fantasy.

God help us to break through this world of fools, we who once were fools as well. May we be not so quick to condemn knowing that we too would be fools but for Your grace, as we are to reach out to them, to give them the truth. God help us to shine a little light into their darkness so that the glorious light of Jesus Christ may burst upon them. May we not come to the place where we simply isolate ourselves as those who are the know-it-alls but may we in humility know that were it not for Your tender grace and mercy we would be as ignorant as the rest. And in deep gratitude and adoration and thanksgiving may we go to this darkened world, as Jesus came to bring the light, that the darkness may flee away and out of the complexities of their rationalizations they may enter into the simplicity of Christ, and the light of the glorious Gospel which is so basic, so easy to understand that even a child can know.

We would pray tonight for any dear ones in our midst who are still in the darkness, may they see Christ in all His glory and not continue the course that inevitably ends in the wrath of God. For Jesus' sake we pray. Amen.

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