

Romans, Part 3

In Romans 1, Paul gave a clear and detailed explanation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Gospel is “*the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes.*” In Romans 1:16, Paul begins explaining the redemptive value of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Romans 1:16-17 NKJV For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”

The Gospel of Jesus Christ presents God’s power that produces salvation. This salvation is three fold.

1. In the **past** we are saved from the **penalty of sin** — that is justification and regeneration.
2. In the **present** the believer is saved from the **power of sin** — that is sanctification.
3. In the **future** the believer is saved from the **presence of sin** — that is glorification.

Salvation is a product of the power of God in action.

Justification is an act of God that declares sinners to be just and righteous as a result of their faith in Jesus Christ. Closely related to justification is the action of regeneration in which the Holy Spirit comes and dwells in the repentant sinner and gives them new and eternal life. (Repentance is godly sorrow and remorse for sin and turning to God.) Sanctification is a process by which God develops the new life of the believer and brings them to perfection in Christ, (Philippians 1:6). Glorification is the completion and ultimate end of the salvation of believers when we shall be fully made into the image and likeness of Christ, (Philippians 3:21).

Romans 1:17 NKJV For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”

In the Gospel, righteousness is revealed by faith. As a result of faith in the finished work of Christ, a person is declared righteous by God and is given new and eternal life. Once made just or righteous by God’s declaration, the righteous believer lives and is justified by faith. So, we are saved by faith in Christ and live by faith in Him.

The next section reveals God’s wrath against people who suppress or hinder the truth about God.

Romans 1:18-23 NKJV For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in

unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing 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 animals and creeping things.

These verses establish several major doctrinal truths about God.

First, since creation, God's invisible attributes, eternal power, and divine nature have been made known.

How can an unregenerate world know the invisible attributes, power, and nature of God?

Romans 11:33-34 NKJV Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! “For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counselor?”

God is incomprehensible in all of His attributes. Yet, the things God has made clearly reveal His attributes, essential characteristics, and nature.

What is the nature, character and attributes of God?

Creation reveals both indescribable and knowable attributes of God. Scripture shows that we may have a personal knowledge of God, but will never be able to fully comprehend His whole being.

The attributes of the nature or characteristics of Almighty God are beyond our ability to fully know.

- God is omnipresent, He is everywhere present.
- God is self-existent and independent of everything He has created.
- God is immutable, God does not change.
- God is eternal, He has no beginning or end.
- God is boundless, He is infinite, unlimited and immense. (There is no formula, doctrine, or idea that can measure the unlimited God. He is self-existent, eternal, and infinitely complete within Himself.)
- God is omniscient, He knows all things.

God has revealed Himself in such a way that His attributes are knowable in a limited measure.

- He eternally maintains His holiness and moral excellence.

- He has related to us His spirituality and invisibility, but He can reveal Himself in any number of ways that are knowable to man.
 - He has revealed His knowledge (omniscience), wisdom and truthfulness.
 - He has related His moral attributes: goodness, love, mercy, grace, patience, holiness, peace and righteousness.
 - God has revealed His omnipotence, sovereignty and supremacy (omnipotence).
 - He has demonstrated His immutability, will, purpose and freedom. (Some of God's will is known and some is not disclosed to humans. God does not change.)
 - He has manifested His perfection, blessedness, beauty, glory, and holiness.
- God has revealed His character, attributes, and nature in His creation.*

Second, since God has revealed His attributes, power and nature, people are without excuse.

God has revealed Himself in His creation so that there is no excuse for anyone to reject Him. Logically, God has proven His existence. The existence of God is absolutely necessary.

How could all things exist unless there is a creator God?

All kinds of theories have been offered in an attempt to disprove what God has clearly revealed. There must be a God who caused everything to exist and to remain. God alone is the causative power behind the existence and continuance of everything. He designed the universe and all that is in it and brought everything into existence by the word of His power. In Him all things are held together and maintain the course set by God, (Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3). He is the Creator, Lord and King of the universe and all laws of nature are established and operate at His command.

Psalm 33:6 NKJV By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.

John 1:3 NKJV All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

The extensive variety, nature, species, and unique aspects of creation declares there is an almighty and powerful God. All of the moral laws that men obey prove the existence of a higher authoritative power.

Romans 1:20 says, "we are without excuse."

God has adequately revealed His nature, character, and attributes to cause man to recognize and glorify Him as God. Who else could have created the vast complexities of the universe? Who else could have caused order to reign in His creations? Who else could have established the varieties and diversities of creation? There is no other plausible explanation but there is a glorious and

powerful God.

People are without excuse because, *“although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him,” (Romans 1:20).*

God is very jealous and will not give His glory to another. He deserves all praise, honor, and glory. He has done many wonderful things. We should be thankful for all of the glory and majesty we behold in His creation. All creation declares the wonder, glory and majesty of the Lord God Jehovah. There are severe consequences for not believing and giving God the glory that is His due.

Romans 1:21 NIV84 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.

What is God telling us?

The original word for *“futile”* means to become “empty, worthless or nonsense.” After they became *“futile in their thoughts,”* their foolish hearts are darkened. The original word for *“foolish heart”* means: “unintelligent, without understanding, stupid or senseless.” Have you ever seen people do something unintelligent or stupid? Why do people do things that make no sense?

Romans 1:22-23 NKJV Professing 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 animals and creeping things.

What is God like?

God is not like any one else. The Almighty, Sovereign, Holy, Mighty, Wonderful God is not like man. Jesus said, *“no one has seen the Father but the Son,”* and He came to reveal the Father. It is foolish to attempt to change the glory of the incorruptible God into an image of man, birds, four footed animals, or creeping things.

Grave judgments fall on people who refuse to give God glory and worship.

Listen to the times the Holy Spirit indicated that God gave them up and what He gave them up to.

Romans 1:24-32 NKJV Therefore **God also gave them up to uncleanness**, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this reason **God gave them up to vile passions**. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is

shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, **God gave them over to a debased mind**, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

How can people do what they do?

Why is there so much evil in the world?

You thought a little bit of common sense would tell them no. You are absolutely right.

God gave them up.

God also gave them up to uncleanness, vile passions and a debased mind.

Have you ever tried to reason with someone who did not have a right mind?

There are consequences for disobedience and not giving due honor to God. The downward spiral ends in destruction.

This is the story of the Prodigal Son.

He was privileged and was well raised in a great environment. He was cared for, taught to fear God and had every advantage life could afford. None of that kept him from destruction. He became unclean and was taken by vile passions. His brilliant mind became debased to the level that the Holy Spirit is referring to in Romans. God gives people up to uncleanness, vile passions and a debased mind. This is why they practice sexual immorality and every other evil passion. The lust of the flesh causes them to do things that are not proper or decent but loathsome.

The scripture shows what happens.

- They stop thinking right and their mind becomes filled with every kind of unrighteousness.
- They are filled with sexual immorality which leads to every kind of impure activity.
- They are filled with wickedness (all evil purposes and desires).
- They are filled with covetousness (greediness, unsatisfied desire).
- They are filled with maliciousness (ill will and malice to others).
- They are full of envy, jealousy, murder and debate.
- They are full of strife, deceit and treachery.
- They are full of whispers, backbiters and haters of God.

- They are spiteful, proud, boasters and inventors of evil things.
- They are disobedient to parents, without understanding and covenant breakers.
- They lose natural affection, and become relentless, unforgiving and unmerciful.

How can anyone be like that?

God has given them up to do these things.

Why would God allow people to go that way and give them up?

The answer is clear and hard for us to hear. It happens when people refuse to listen to God and honor Him. It happens when they refuse to give God the glory and respect He is due and refuse to recognize that God is truly God.

They set this in motion.

They begin to turn the other direction and lose a desire for God and His righteousness. They take pleasure in people that live an ungodly and unrighteous life.

The Prodigal Son did it.

He ran away from security, constraint and purity. He did not want rules or anyone telling him what to do. He fell into a crowd of people that wanted to live the same way. Before long he lost everything he had and was in the pig pen. He lost everything that was pure in his mind and heart. His body was covered with the fruit of his corruption.

God says they are without excuse.

They know better because He has given them witness. They have known the goodness and judgment of God. They know that those who do such things are worthy of death.

This is where the Gospel of Jesus Christ comes in.

Romans 1:16 NKJV For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is a message of hope, forgiveness, salvation and new life.