

## Romans 1-2 (side 2)

So, what we discover is when they perceived or knew God by aspects of the creation which manifested His eternal power and government as Godhead or deity, they decided to glorify Him not as God and to honor the Creator, and they weren't thankful for what they had been learning, but they became vain in their imaginations.

Their human reason led them down the Primrose path, and their foolish heart, not subject to the law of God, because it was not made that way, it was subject to vanity.

In Romans 8, their heart was darkened, and in professing themselves to be wise in explaining a universe without a Creator, they became fools.

And they changed the glory of the uncorruptible God and defined Him in terms that seemed reasonable.

Corruptible man or birds or four-footed beasts and creeping things in that day, now instead of having four-footed beasts today, our gods have four wheels, and then we polish them.

We put water on them and clean them and soap our gods.

We stand on the sidewalk or the lawn, and then we get out into the street, and they had their gods that they decorated and bowed to, and we have our gods that we pay homage to in a different fashion.

We pay homage via dollars and work and service.

Whom you serve is your God, and most people serve the automobile as a good illustration of our modern world, more than the automobile serves us.

In that world, religion played a significant counterfeit.

In our world, the world of technology, we have made all kinds of gadgetry.

We think we're being served by the gadgets that, in fact, we actually serve.

One-sixth of all people in the United States work in the auto industry to keep these ten gods running.

God gave them, therefore, up to what was characteristic, both of them and today, to unclean this through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves.

You will find homosexuality very minimal among the labor union people, but you find it much more common among educators and most common in high levels of government and the great philosophers and thinkers.

Paul is pointing up that when their foolish heart was darkened, what prompted this attitude was that people wanted to indulge themselves and didn't want to acknowledge their sin, and so if this is what they wanted to do, God gave them up to it.

Now as it happened, all the Greeks reading this letter would perceive that verse 24 was not characteristic of the Jewish community, it was characteristic of the Greek world.

But Paul didn't say it.

He let them draw the conclusion.

He spoke about men.

It's manifested to them.

Paul didn't say that the Greeks were just like this, but he describes the world that the Greeks were familiar with, which they knew was their world.

This was very good psychology.

These philosophers among the Greeks were those who changed the truth of God into a lie.

They invented the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, among other things.

They worshipped and served the creature that God made, like the Egyptians did in some Greeks.

They worshipped and served the creature, in this case the Greeks often worshipped and served themselves.

You know anything about Greek gymnastics, you will understand, more than the creator who was blessed forever.

Now because of the fact that human beings who could have known God preferred to cover up their lusts and ended up in homosexuality.

God therefore just simply wrote them off.

He gave them up to vile affections, and now they all know that he's not talking about the Jewish community as a whole, talking about the Greek world, who were given up to this.

For even their women changed the natural use into that which is against nature, and likewise also the men.

And what is characteristic of the Gentile Greek world that sank Persia and that ultimately sank Rome and Egypt, and it arose out of Greeks, interestingly, because the Greeks were culturally the superior people, and they were also morally the inferior people of all nations of that generation.

Sad but true, God gave them up to vile affections.

The women and the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another, men with men working that which is absolutely vile, and they received in themselves, B.D. and other things, emotionally, the recompense of the error that was appropriate to their conduct.

I recently had to talk to a person who is gay, that's their term, and he spoke of himself as gay.

And I had to help him little by little as much as I could to explain some of the knowledge that I have.

I have attended a seminar on the homosexual in America, sponsored by the University of California, Los Angeles, that was actually headed by a woman who is one of the seven who was appointed by President Johnson when he was President of the United States to study this subject.

And I have had an opportunity in such seminar situations to talk to homosexual men, heterosexual men, and lesbian women, and it's a very grave tragedy.

If you know of anyone who is, who is interested in this work, you owe it to that person to bring that person to our attention so that we may help that individual as much as possible.

Gay people or homosexuals do not perceive what has happened to their personalities.

They do not perceive the inadequacies as others view them.

They have come to believe that what is their condition is what is natural to them.

The particular individual that I have been working with had an alcoholic father who was reared by grandparents who didn't touch him because grandmother didn't nurse him, and when he was finally given back to his mother, she hated him.

He was unfortunately born premature and has a physical defect, found himself socially inadequate with women, discovered he was sexual and found himself only comfortable with men, later discovered he was uncomfortable with men with whom he was attracted and found himself at greater ease with women, but socially unable to communicate with them as a man, but only as a laborer, you know, someone who works with someone else.

Very tragic set of circumstances that they may not all be in everybody's case, but I'll tell you, I could have guaranteed that he had a problem with both father and mother.

I could have guaranteed that he was most likely reared by a grandparent.

I have had this experience over and over again.

It doesn't prove that everybody is, and there's some who are not, but I would have given this the option, and many of these things were true.

He couldn't see it as his problem, but he's willing to give up certain aspects, the actual contact.

But Paul perceived, you see, that the thinking man in his day had drifted in this direction, and God just simply gave them up because if they didn't want his knowledge, they didn't want his truth, they thought they were wise in their own conceits, and they wanted to indulge themselves, God let them indulge themselves.

So there is a natural use in sex and an unnatural use, and it's determined by the way the human body is designed.

So if they didn't like to retain God and their knowledge, you gave them over to a reprobate state of mind, morally speaking.

So if they did those things which were absolutely inappropriate, and they were filled with all kinds of unrighteousness, pornea or fornication, wicked, malicious, you see, attitudes, covetousness, maliciousness, they were filled with envy, the spirit of murder, constantly debating and arguing, deceiving, gossiping.

They hated God ultimately and became atheists.

The most famous of all the Greeks, of course, were Socrates, who was an atheist and a homosexual.

And he reaped the consequences, which was Hemlock.

Despiteful, they were proud, they were boasters, it's a good thing Rome overran the country, but unfortunately it also infected Rome.

They invented all kinds of evil things that we can't imagine, both in terms of technology for that day and moral and religious ideas.

They created a generation disobedient to parents so that when a pedagogue is referred to in the Bible, a pedagogue was the man who led the boys especially from home to school, lest the boys would be molested by older men.

The Law of Moses in Galatians is compared to a pedagogue, a schoolmaster.

That's not the teacher in the school, that's the person who walked back and forth most of the time to protect the boys from the homosexual men, then the girls from the women.

To get back to the character of Jesus Christ and God Himself as reflected through Jesus.

Now in any congregation such as this, where the majority of people descend from a nation that had gone this far morally to the bottom, there are always others, and he hasn't yet named the Greeks, you see, with chapter 1, and he isn't going to name the Jews with chapter 2.

Each one draws the conclusion of where he stands, that all the wisdom of the Greeks to whom we are all indebted is to be contrasted also with their sins, and so it's no wonder that God first revealed Himself to the Jew when you see what the Greeks did with their knowledge.

Now, there are always those who see this, so he says in chapter 2, therefore you are inexcusable, O man, not O Jew, O man, whoever you are, whoever you are, who decides therefore that since you didn't do that, you can sit in judgment and look down on these people who did that, and of course everybody perceived that he's obviously here dealing with those who were Jews who did look down on the Greeks, because the Jews didn't do this kind of thing, you know, the law prohibited it, so surely they wouldn't do it, for wherein you judge another, you actually, fellow, are condemning yourself, for you who judge this kind of thing, you're actually doing the same thing, but you don't do it publicly, you do it privately.

The Greeks did it publicly, God gave them over to this until their culture was like this.

The Jews had a law, and therefore, like the people of Europe viewed the English in specific examples, they think that the Englishman has a certain conscience, and so he hides some of the things he does, that other people in the continent of Europe did publicly, and so Paul implies that the Jews were doing the same thing, but he didn't limit it to the Jews, he lets them draw their own conclusion, it could have included Greeks, it could have included Romans, that is, Latins, whoever you are, it doesn't matter whether you're a Jew or otherwise, but the implication before the chapter is over is that this is more characteristic of the Jew, and chapter two was chapter one was more characteristic of the Greek, but he lets the chips fall wherever they may.

Now, we're sure that the judgment of God is according to truth, against those which commit such things, now that's, we all agree with that, and especially you who sit in judgment of others who are like that.

Now, before we go any further, let me explain to sit in judgment, and to perceive a problem where entirely different things, to perceive someone to be a homosexual or an alcoholic or a murderer is not equivalent to sitting in judgment, to sit in judgment to feel you're not condemned because you don't do it, that is, other people don't know you do it, and you condemn the person who did it publicly, but you don't admit that you do it privately, and you rise in your own mind with your own kind of people above other people who do it publicly, that's sitting in judgment as Paul was addressing the question.

Today, most people misunderstand this in the church, including no small number in the ministry, who assume that you're sitting in judgment if you help somebody else who is an alcoholic by merely recognizing that he is, and hence the toleration for too many sins.

When you need to help somebody and you work out a program that the other person is able to hurdle the problems he cannot hurdle by himself, do you think, O man, you who judge them, which do such things publicly, and do the same thing yourself and private, do you think you're going to escape the judgment of God, or do you despise the riches of his goodness and the forbearance and long suffering because God has been patient with you who know his will and publicly appear to do his will and in private do something else? Don't you know that the goodness of God who's been dealing with you all this time that is bringing to the Jew the message first that it's all ultimately that God is leading you to repentance, not leading you to see that the law is done away, but leading you to repentance so that you begin to keep the law that you have privately been breaking? Now, when Paul says this, you won't misunderstand other places in Romans unless you yourself have the same kind of problem that you are hiding from God and you want a justification to get rid of the law so you can continue in sin.

That's Paul's understanding of the problem.

He's pointing up here that the purpose for God being patient is to bring the one who knows the will of God and hasn't done it privately, also to repentance, and after your hardness and impenitent heart has treasured up to yourself wrath against that day of wrath, and Paul may have perceived it as possibly coming in his day, and it certainly came on the Jewish community between 66 and 71, 72 and 73 A.D., and it's also coming in our day.

It's a day of wrath and a revelation of the righteous judgment of God, and so Paul is here really addressing the end-time generation, he's saying that there are people who have known the truth whose heart has been hardened on whom the wrath of God, the day of the wrath of God, which is the day of the Lord, and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God when Jesus Christ comes is going to be made known, and there are people today who claim to be Christians in this world who are going to persecute God's people and who are going to appear to be Christians when they themselves have been doing these very things, and on them will the wrath of God come.

That's defined in the book of Revelation, by the way, in greater detail, so that in the end God is going to render to every man according to his deeds, to those who by patient continuance and well-doing, no matter of Greek or Jew, seek for glory and honor and immortality, that's what they're seeking for, to them their award shall be eternal life.

This glory and honor and immortality are what God bestows in the kingdom of God, that's the gospel that Paul preached, not merely a message about Jesus, but it implies very clearly that he is the forerunner, the one who set the pattern, he's going to make it all possible.

Eternal life comes only through what Christ did for us, and in contrast to those who are patient, there are those who are contentious and do not obey the truth.

Thy word is true, therefore these are people who don't obey the Bible, but obey unrighteousness, whether it's motivated from within in their own human nature or by society around them, you're either going to obey one or the other.

To them comes indignation and wrath and tribulation and anguish on every soul of man who does evil, and now for the first time he labels them both, whether of the Jew first or anybody who is of the Gentile, not the Greek only.

That includes the Latins, the Italians, the Greeks, the Arameans, Armenians, it doesn't matter, anybody who was in that world who was at Rome, and therefore anybody. And God's wrath came on the Jew first, and then God's wrath came on the civilized world when he sent the German barbarians in the destroyed Rome. God is no respecter of persons. As many as have sinned without the knowledge of the law or who had never had the law in one way or another, the Gentiles are going to perish in a state in which they are without the law. It is not true that if you are without law, that you are without sin. You sin when you are without law even more because you have no guide whatsoever. That's why the Greek sin was public. They didn't have any conscience against public immorality. So Paul is pointing up fundamentally that human conduct is not judged on the basis ultimately of whether you know the law or not. Human conduct is something that, as we all know, but you sow, you reap. But God doesn't hold you responsible eternally in terms of eternal judgment and the ultimate death when you don't know. As many as have sinned, the Jews were not included here because they had the law. As many as sinned without the law, so the Gentiles were sinners, they were in fact going contrary to the law that defines the way man ought to live, but not ever having had the law, not being among the house of Israel at the foot of Sinai, and not being a part of the Commonwealth of Israel or Judah, that they had no law and they were perishing without it. Their world brought a penalty on itself.

And as many Jews or others who come among the Jewish community as have sinned in the law, having the knowledge of the law and yet have sinned are going to be judged by what is written in the law. Given here, Leviticus, Deuteronomy point up the blessings and the curses. So ultimately, it's not the hearer of the law like the Jew who heard it, who was just before God merely because he hears it, but it is the doer of the law who was justified and here, poor Paul, so many would say, must clearly have misunderstood because the doer of the law must be under a curse.

He didn't say that at all.

The hearer of the law who does not do, he is under a curse. It is not the hearer alone.

Yes, got to do more than hear. If he's going to be just before God, he has got also to do.

And how do you do? Well, you do it by faith because verse 17 chapter 1 says you live by faith.

You don't live by what you can do in your natural strength, but you by faith become a doer of the law, you hear it, and by faith you begin to do it. And that faith is an attribute of God that God imparts. Now, it is even possible, says Paul, that when the Gentiles, which have not the law, that as it's not written, they have no access to a written copy of it, due by nature the things contained in the law, now it doesn't say they would have perceived the seventh day as the Sabbath, that that would have been not possible, because that is a matter of revelation. But when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature those things which in looking at human experience that they could discern should be avoided and these other things should be done, when they do by nature the things contained in the law, you shall honor your parents, you shall not steal, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not lie, you shall not covet. When they begin to do those things, these Gentiles, Greeks or otherwise, who do not have the law written and they have no access to it, actually reflect a law that's in themselves. These things have become in their own conscience, a kind of law. So it shows the work of the law written in their hearts of all things.

Their conscience, you see, smites them because they've looked at the lives of other people and they see these adulterers, these liars, these thieves, these people who've indulged in homosexuality.

They see those people aren't happy and they're reaping problems and the people they know to honor their parents, the people who are good to their word, they just live differently, they're different inside and so the Gentile who sees that and begins to live by that kind of standard, he's actually having the law written in his heart and he does it not by the presence of God's spirit, he does it by perceiving what is around him. He has no knowledge of the written law, he's not told about repenting, believing and being baptized in any written form, but he sees there are certain things to be avoided and the letter of the law at least, if not the spirit in some ways, he's beginning to have written in his heart.

Now, I have been around the world enough to say that I do count it an experience that is true.

I have met more people behind the iron curtain who are atheists in a certain sense or reared in this society without a real awareness of God or law who do more for their neighbor than we in the Western world who have freedom in Bible.

Paul perceived this remarkable thing himself, that he met Gentiles who began to do what was in the law on the basis of being properly trained by parents, being taught fundamentals of good behavior in contrast to the overwhelming majority of the world around until they began to reflect the law of God in their own action, their heart had become habitual and they didn't know it was the law of God, but they saw by experience that the other way was wrong. So it shows the work of the law in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness as to whether or not they really kept up, you see, with what they were doing. Sometimes they failed and their thoughts, the meanwhile, either accusing or excusing because sometimes they did sin where they knew it and at other times they lived in accordance with the law.

So that in that day, now we have to pick it up beginning with the end of verse 12, as many as have sinned without the law will perish without the law, as many as have sinned with the law are going to be judged by the law. And it's all going to happen in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, which is the millennium.

And also in the resurrection afterward, verse 16. So verses 13 through 15 show how Paul explains that it's even possible for someone who has the law to be guilty and someone who doesn't have a law to have learned things by experience, it had become like the law and it affects their conscience.

And, you know, he's drawing attention to this remarkable thing.

My wife and I and Victor Kubik, who was then a student, now a minister at Paducah, Kentucky, visited the Soviet Union. We met people who refused a tip because they thought that what they were doing for us is what they ought to do. That's one simple illustration.

I've met Muslims who couldn't understand the greed of this Western world.

We call Christianity. Now, behold, in verse 17, he really gets right to it. You are called a Jew.

So now he really labels them directly. You're called a Jew and you rest in the law and you make your boast in God and you know his will and you can publicly approve the things that are more excellent because you've got all the law to back you up. And you're confident that you're a guide to these blind Gentiles, especially the Greeks around you. You're a light to those that you know are in darkness. You're an instructor of all these foolish people around. You're a teacher of all these babes. You can just see how he's putting in their mouths the very things they were thinking.

You have the form of knowledge and of the truth that's in the law.

You, therefore, who teach another. That's what they like to do. Do you also teach yourself? You who preach to another man, not to steal, do you steal? It does appear that Paul rather had some respect for the Ten Commandments, doesn't it? That he's not one who believes they were all nailed to the cross and now he can do as we please. He's getting right at fundamentals.

You who say a man should not commit adultery, what are you doing committing adultery? You who abhor idols, are you committing idolatry in some form that you know is idolatry? You who make your boast of the law, are you in fact not this honoring God you see when you break the law you make a boast of? I was reading, you know, I read so many things from day to day.

It was a paper, it should have been a magazine. I forget what it was. Oh, I know. I was looking at a book on the American Indian. There was Circumstantial today because we visited a school program where one of the classes has to do with the history of America. And one of the things that started the wars between the Indians and the European settlers was that the Indians couldn't understand the white man's duplicity and the white man who lives with it couldn't understand why the Indian was so perturbed about it. Because he didn't realize that the barbarians, he didn't realize that these savages had ethics that the white man with civilization had lost.

There was a story of the wars that broke out that were called the King Philip's War in New England in the Middle Atlantic states.

For the name of God, unfortunately, is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you.

Now, that's awfully strong. That's like saying, why should we give honor to God when the people who claim to be the people of God are committing in private and hypocrisy the very things they condemn us for who supposedly are in ignorance? You know, the Greeks doing the talking here.

And it's written, of course, that this should be the case. For circumcision barely profits if one keeps the law. That is, if you're circumcised, it reflects something that you descend from Abraham and you do honor to Abraham only if you keep the law. We're drifting in the direction, of course, in the church in which people who, when reading, if you keep the law forgot Christ, it seems, and were doing it in their own strength and fell condemned when they didn't, to the point now where they want to get away from the law and talk about Christ without realizing that you can't keep the law without Christ and you don't have Christ unless he lives in you, which means he's keeping the law in you as you surrender to him.

If you be a breaker of the law, what good is your circumcision? It's no different than the Gentile who was uncircumcised. So if the uncircumcision, that's the Gentile whose flesh had not been altered, actually keeps the righteousness of the law. Now, we're not talking about the difference between the letter and spirit, but what the law defines as right. If a Gentile who keeps the law as much as he knows of it, isn't that, in fact, equivalent to saying that his uncircumcision is of no account and it's equivalent to being circumcised? Because when you keep the law, the token of keeping the law is circumcision and the keeping of the law is more important than whether one is circumcised or not and shall not uncircumcision, which is by nature. I remember a Jewish woman who asked me if I was born circumcised. I didn't make an issue of it.

She was the wife of the Israeli Council General in Athens of all places. We were guests in 1971.

She deserved, in fact, to be put in her place, but since I was a guest, we didn't go any further on that, but we did dwell on the law.

So that if the uncircumcised person, the Greek in that day, the General Barbarian, the Latin, if it fulfilled the law, is it not, in fact, judging you who, though you have the letter and circumcision, are transgressing? So we end up with the fact that one is not a Jew outwardly, in the real sense of the word, and circumcision is not meant to emphasize just the flesh, your natural descent, but one is ultimately a Jew who is one inwardly.

And circumcision is of the heart and pertains to the spirit, and it's not just in the letter.

And the praise that comes from one Jew to another for being circumcised, that praise, which is of men, is not what counts, but the praise that comes from God.

Now, I must read about two verses more, because Paul, these chapters don't always break correctly, but so you don't misunderstand. There is a difference between the circumcised and the uncircumcised. That is, what advantage then has the Jew, or what profit is there of circumcision? Now, he didn't say that uncircumcision was unprofitable, that you descended from Abraham.

He pointed out that the ultimate thing is what you are in your attitude and heart of mind, and whether you keep the law inwardly. Now, what advantage, however, is there in circumcision, just so you don't get me wrong, Paul is saying? Well, there's very much every way, chiefly because that unto those who are circumcised was committed, or were committed, the oracles of God. Now, that's really where the break should be. And although, perhaps next time they'll start theoretically with the beginning verse of chapter 3, that really is the end of this thought, now we will begin to get into another thought as to what profit it is. And we won't go any further, it's already time to dismiss. But we see here, in the first two chapters, a remarkable understanding of the issues. Now, how do you get rid of sin? Paul only refers to repentance once, he refers to obedience, he refers to the law, he refers to faith. He hasn't dwelt on the question of forgiveness, he's dwelling on the guilt of all people, and dwelling on the need of obedience by all people. And how to get rid of the guilt will come later through grace. But he's established the presence and the importance of law, the importance of obedience, the importance of doing what is defined in the oracles of God as distinct from the customs of the Gentiles. And when you see that, you cannot legitimately misunderstand Paul. And that is why the book of Romans is the first of Paul's epistles, because it lays the foundation. And when you understand the first two chapters, you won't stumble. And if you are stumbling and begin to question the fundamental things that church has taught with respect to obedience, it's simply because you haven't understood those first two chapters of Romans. I hope you will be here. There will be a series of men for those who are new, who will be going through roughly two chapters each evening. And this is the introduction, and there will be some very, very important verses to come in each succeeding Friday evening study. With that, I wish you all a safe journey home and a lovely rest. Full Sabbath.