

God Gave Them Over to...(Part One)

Paul's Long Introduction (vs 1-17)

- Explains the Gospel 1-4
- His calling vs. 5 -6
- Paul's audience – Roman Christians and his affection for them vs 7 – 15
- One of the most powerful faith statements in the Bible all Christians must know. V. 16

*“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, **“BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.”**”* Romans 1: 16-17

The Protestant Reformation – a brief overview. Verse 17 is a restatement of Habakkuk 2:4 that inspired Luther to revolt against the Roman Catholic Church in what became known as The Protestant Reformation. (1517 Wittenberg, Germany)

Why did Luther revolt? Luther was disgusted with the church because it was **selling indulgences**. What did that mean? Leaders in the Catholic church were selling forgiveness of sins for a price – self-indulgences of the people. These were sins of every kind that Paul discussed in the following verses we are about to examine.

These words – *“the just shall live by faith”* – got to his spirit. The Holy Spirit revealed to Luther what we know today—believers are saved by grace thru faith apart from works . We do not need a priest as intercessor because Jesus our Savior and Lord is our High Priest.

“This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and reliable and one which enters within the veil, where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.”
(Hebrews 6: 19-20)

What irony? Luther was put on trial for heresy—being tried by the heretics for heresy.]

The Wrath of God (vs 18 – 32)

Paul moved from the love of God expressed thru the gift of salvation in Jesus Christ alone (the Gospel) to his calling and this audience to **consequences** of NOT believing and receiving the Gospel as truth—rejecting Christ as Messiah and only means of salvation—restoring us to God.

▪ **The Aim of God’s Wrath (v 18 – 21b)**

*“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. 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**. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks*

Five Characteristics of the Objects of God’s Wrath:

- Ungodliness
- Unrighteous
- Suppress the Truth in Unrighteousness (do more evil to refute truth)
- Did not honor God
- Were not thankful for Who He is and what He

did for them

▪ **What Indicts Them:**

"...but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures."

(They worshipped themselves and man-made idols.)

They know that God is—He revealed Himself to them. So, the Holy Spirit spoke these terrifying words thru Paul, ***they are without excuse.***

Now we come to the main text of this message. The Three THEREFOREs (more importantly what follows them)

(1) *"Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator (idolatry), who is blessed forever. Amen."* (Romans 1: 24-25)

This speaks to all forms of idolatry and pagan practices that included child and human sacrifice and temple prostitution, other blood sacrifices and self-mutilations. There were things even God's people practiced that on more than one occasion He said He could imagine they would commit such sins.

(2) *"For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due*

penalty of their error.” Romans 1: 26-27

(AIDs comes to mind. Nearly 70% of all AIDs cases in the U.S. were among homosexual men.)

The Bible on homosexuality. Temptations of any and all kinds are not sin. Acting on them in ways that are contrary to Scripture are sinful. That troubles many, but it is what the Bible teaches. In addition to the verses Paul wrote, cited above, here are a few others commonly used. I have to note the HUGE campaign by the LBGTQ community beginning in the 90s to make Christians and the Bible look like bigots and haters and a total revisionist approach to these Scriptures.

In part, they are right because we are commanded by Jesus to love others REGARDLESS—not their sin but them because we were once sinners ourselves and condemned to eternal death in Hell. Not one of these verses calls out homosexuality by itself as being worse than the others. After verses saying the same thing about adultery and incest, among other illicit relations, and cursing your mother and father, God said this,

“You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination. ‘Also you shall not have intercourse with any animal to be defiled with it, nor shall any woman stand before an animal to mate with it; it is a perversion.”...” Leviticus 18: 22-23

If there is a man who lies with a male as those who lie with a woman, both of them have committed a detestable act; they shall surely be put to death. Their bloodguiltiness is upon them. Leviticus 20: 10-13

These OT laws were specific to the Jews under the rule of God given by Him to keep a pure and holy people. They were to be carried out by the priests and those God put in charge according to His words. They do not apply today for obvious reasons. **Jesus fulfilled the requirements of the OT law in every way.**

Some argue that Jesus did not specifically mention or use the word homosexual. The word does not appear in the Bible, but the sins associated with its practice it are on many occasions. Jesus said,

*“For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. These are what **defile a person.**”* Matthew 15: 19-20

Homosexuality is among the sins of sexual immorality. Note that Jesus did not mention drug use, or kidnapping, or child trafficking, addictions, or many other sins of His day and ours. So the practice of homosexuality is a sinful lifestyle, like many others, and it can carry a lot of dangerous consequences—some physical health issues; others societal ones as they attempt to retrain the culture that there is nothing wrong with it, even to the point of adopting children and forcing their agenda on schools and into corporate America under the guise of sensitivity training. This is in total conflict with the teachings of Jesus and the Bible.

(3) *“And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, **God gave them over to a depraved mind**, to do those things which are not proper, being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents (this was one of the Ten Commandments), without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.”* Romans 1: 28-32

The closing verse is from a letter the Apostle Paul sent to

his protege Timothy describing more of what a lost culture will look like in the days ahead – we have arrived there now!

“For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.” 2 Timothy 4: 3-4

The Death Penalty for Sin Never Went Away

God did not change His mind. He sent Jesus to demonstrate His love, fulfill the Law, and make a way to Him—the only way to be completely regenerated and free from sin.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” John 3:16

“Jesus said to (Thomas), “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. John 14: 6

For Christ's sake,

Walter