

Abandoned by God

Romans 1:24-25

Let's look together at Romans chapter 1 and I want to read to you the setting for our message , verses 24 through 32...Romans 1:24 to 32.

The actions and consequences known.

24. Wherefore **God also gave them up to uncleanness** through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:

25. **Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature** more than **the Creator**, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

26. **For this cause God gave them up** unto vile affections (*shameful passions*): for even their **women did change the natural use** into that which is against nature:

27. **And likewise also the men**, leaving the natural use of the woman, **burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly** (*shameful*), and receiving in themselves that recompense (*penalty*) of their error which was meet (*due*).

28. And even as **they did not like to retain God in their knowledge**, God gave them over to a reprobate mind (*depraved*), to do those things which are not convenient (*proper*);

29. Being **filled with all unrighteousness**, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate (*strife*), deceit, malignity (*malice*); whisperers (*gossips*),

30. Backbiters (*slanderers*), haters of God, despiteful (*insolent*), proud, boasters, **inventors of evil things**, disobedient to parents,

31. **Without understanding**, covenantbreakers, **without natural affection**, implacable (*unforgiving, ruthless, cruel*), unmerciful:

32. **Who knowing the judgment of God**, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

➤ Now inherently those verses are a catalog of the sinfulness of man.

1. **Men are wicked.**
 2. **They are vile.**
 3. **They are evil.**
- **They are creatures who are utterly filled with sinfulness.**
 - **They are characterized as ungodly and unrighteous.**

Even, now we are not in this particular day and age surprised to hear this about men because we see it all around us.

1. We see the depravity of man, made manifest or obvious to us.
2. We're not in a world of isolation, but we are present amongst evil continuously.
3. We are in a tremendously integrated kind of world, it is a cosmopolitan kind of world, and a media driven world. A world that has shrunk to such a small size visually as a result of social media, that we pretty much know everything that's going on everywhere and the sinfulness of man has become common knowledge and common place.

No matter how well a society begins, it always descends predictably to the same pit of immoral behavior and subsequent judgment of God that is positively presented to us in Romans Chapter 1.

4. Just like an infant child, the beginnings may be lovely and beautiful but the end is not without turmoil.
 5. The beginning of life starts well but the vileness of man's sinful nature soon plunges him into the slippery pit of transgression and the resultant sin is under the condemnation of God with nothing but a prospect of eternal hell.
- ✓ **Man is not good; and you need to know that at the very beginning.**
 - ✓ **Man is inherently evil.**
 - ✓ **His nature is bent on sin and given his choice he will inevitably end up in the mire of immorality.**

What did Job say about humanity?

He said in. (**Job 5:7**) **Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.**

- ✓ Why? Why is it so? Why has man always inevitably sunk to such a sad condition?

How is it that that an infant's life is so lovely, so precious, so soft, so innocent will descend to the corrupted adulthood that inevitably awaits the human race? Why?

- ✓ The bible's answer is right here.
1. You want to know why men and woman are like they are?

2. Do you want to know why the fall of man is inevitably marked in every single life?
3. The answer is clearly here, it is because God gave them up.
4. Three times it was said in these verses. And it essentially means that man is abandoned by God.
5. God has abandoned the man or woman who has turned their back against God. That's really the problem that man has.

You see, because of the Fall of Adam and the associated depravity of man, his inborn sinfulness, as we shall see in a moment, because of this,..... man has no capacity to restrain his own sinfulness.

1. It is impossible for him to restrain his sinfulness. Try as he may.
2. He can't capture it.
3. He can't harness it.
4. He cannot do good.
5. He cannot keep from doing evil. He cannot overcome it.

The bible says, There is none that doeth good. As the book of Romans Chapter 3 says.

Romans 3:11-12 ¹¹ there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. ¹² They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; **there is none that doeth good, no, not one.**

6. They do evil continually. That is you and me....folks even when we are saved. This was the apostle Paul's struggle too.
7. But as a saved person we should be grateful and thankful that God is restraining us through the power of the Holy Spirit to show us and teach us what is evil and what is good.
8. But for an unsaved person they do not have the restraint of God by the Holy Spirit.

Look what the Apostle Paul said in Romans 7.

Romans 7: ¹⁸ For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not. ¹⁹ For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. ²⁰ Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

²¹ I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. ²² For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: ²³ but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. ²⁴ O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? ²⁵ I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

9. Even the religious among men, the seemingly self-righteous among men may be committing the most heinous (wicked) sin of all which is self-righteousness. (self assurance).

- ✓ Man cannot restrain evil and **he will** inevitably do what is wrong.
- There's only one force in the entire universe that can restrain evil and that is God.
 1. And the problem with the natural man (unsaved) is that God **is not** restraining him.
 2. **God has abandoned him. God has given him up, given him up, given him up.** And what that really means is that God no longer restrains man. God has abandoned man. That is the story of the human race.
 3. Don't get this confused with the fact that God loves all men, and that is why he sent his only Son Jesus, to save all who would believe in Him. But God, also said that He will draw all men, and the drawing only takes place by the Word of God alone, if they will hear His voice through His Word and turn to Him. Turning to God means to believe in Him for salvation.
 4. God has opened the invitation to believe in Him, but whether people will is entirely up to them. If they don't believe then they are outside the protection and family of God.
 5. Rebellion towards God, it really all began in the garden with Adam.

Now this passage is the most tragic, the most fearful, the most sobering and sad passage in all of the epistle to the Romans and because of this single thought that man has been abandoned by God.

Look at verse 24, "**Wherefore God also gave them up.**" Verse 26, "**For this cause God gave them up.**" Verse 28, "**And as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them up...same verb...to a reprobate mind.**"

- Now if you want to know why man is like he is, that's it.

And that really is the major answer that we're going to be looking at.

1. Man is the way he is because he's abandoned by God.
2. **And God is the only restraining influence there is in the universe to hold back evil.**
3. **And the more God lets go, the worse it gets.**

And as you go through human history it says in 2 Timothy 3:13, "**Evil men will grow worse and worse.**" And it's almost as if God just continues to let go of man and man continues to go his own way.

2 Timothy 3:13 ¹³But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

- ✓ And in the process he compounds sin upon sin upon sin which escalates his evil.
- ✓ **Abandoned by God, that is man's problem.**

❖ I want you to just think that through with me for a minute.

And I'd like to show you that **it is not a new thought in Romans**, it is elsewhere in the Bible. And I'll give you a couple of illustrations.

In Psalm 81 verse 11 it says, "**But My people would not hearken to My voice...**(now listen to this next statement in this verse)...**and Israel would have none of Me so I gave them up.**" To what? "**To their own heart's lust: and they walked in their own counsels.**" Israel would not hearken. They would have none of Me so I gave them up.

(Psalm 81:12-13) ¹²So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels. ¹³Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways!

❖ What horrifying words.

In Hosea, the prophet marks the same tragic reality. In Chapter 4 verse 17, an unforgettable verse, it simply says this, "**Ephraim--and that is a term designating the nation of Israel-- Ephraim is joined to idols.**" And here comes the shocking line, "**Let him alone.**" Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone. God gives up on the northern kingdom. God gives up on his wayward people who will have none of Him.

Listen to this. In Matthew 15:14 our Lord talks about the rulers of Israel, most specifically the Pharisees. It says this, "**Let them alone, they are blind leaders of the blind and if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.**" Let them alone...let them go. The restraints are off. That's man's problem. God is not restraining him and he has no capacity to restrain himself. (the unbeliever)

In the Seventh Chapter of Acts there is a masterful address, a sermon given by Stephen. Part of it speaks to our point. Listen in verse 37-39, "**This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear. This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us: To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt,**"

In other words, they didn't want the leadership of Moses who represented God. V40-41. "**Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for as for this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands.**"

" Listen to this. V.42 **"Then God turned and gave them up to worship the host of heaven."** Gave them up, let them go. That was the choice they made and He let them go.

1. Just one other scripture comes to mind, Chapter 14 of Acts verse 16 says that God in time past allowed all nations to walk in their own ways.
2. Oh my,what a statement.
3. He let them walk in their own ways.

Now, beloved, I submit to you that whether you're talking about all nations or whether you're talking about Israel, there is a point in which God lets them go.

1. God gives them up to society.
2. God said back in Genesis, "My Spirit will not always strive with man."
3. It doesn't go on forever. The final judgment is coming.

❖ Now we have to ask a question as we look at Romans 1.

1. How did this ever happen?
2. How did God ever get to the point where He gave people up, where He just turned them over, let them go?
3. What is it that brings God to such a place where He gets so angry, so full of wrath that He lets people go, that He just takes off the restraint?

Well the answer to that is to go back to the full thought of our text, and you have to begin in verse 18.

And there you see the declining descent of man presented in successive steps, leading to verse 24. And I want you to follow this.

1. First of all, we can go back to verse 16 and remind ourselves that Paul has designs in the book of Romans of preaching the gospel.
2. He's not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.
3. He wants to unfold the gospel which is the standard of salvation for everyone that believes.
4. And as he unfolds the doctrine of salvation, he begins with the principle of wrath. – why?

That's not typical of our approach when we come to someone who is not a Christian to start with the subject of wrath.

5. And in defense of Paul these people to whom he writes are already Christians and he's simply repeating to them theologically all that is necessary for a full understanding of the gospel of Christ.

✓ So he begins with the fact in verse 18 that God is very angry.

6. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men."

✓ So, God is angry.

1. He is so angry that He gives men up.
2. He lets them go. He takes off the restraints. Why?
3. Why does He do this?
4. Why does He let them go?

Well there are basically successive steps,-

1. first of all, because of revelation.

You remember back in verse 18 it says they hold the truth. And then in verse 19 it says they hold it because God has made it manifest.

And then in verse 20 he says its manifest through the creation of the world so that men can see that God is powerful and God is supernatural so that men are without...what?...excuse.

- a) So they've had revelation.
 - b) They've had the truth.
2. It's not only given unto them in verse 19, but it is manifest in them.
 - a) They've thought about it.
 - b) They've conceived it.
 - c) They've perceived it that God is, God is supernatural, God is eternally powerful and they are inexcusable.

And so we start with revelation.

- a) And then descend to rejection, verse 21. Because when they knew God they glorified Him not as God neither were thankful but became empty in their thinking and their foolish heart was darkened.
- b) In other words, they had the knowledge of God and they refused the knowledge of God.
- c) They rejected it. It was all theirs. But they turned their back on it.

Rejection led to rationalization. Verse 22, **"They then professed themselves to be wise and thus they became the biggest fools of all, for who is a greater fool than he who is a fool and thinks he's not?"**

And so man has revelation, followed by rejection, followed by rationalization in which his empty imaginations tell him that he is really wise.

3. **And the fourth step in the successive fall of man is religion, verse 23.**

- a) "He then changes the glory of the incorruptible God, the true God into an idol, an idol made in the image of men and birds and beasts and snakes and bugs."
- b) And he worships everything but the true God.
- c) For religion is idolatry and idolatry is man in the pits, for idolatry violates the first commandment, "Thou shalt have...what?...no other gods before Me." And the second, "Thou shalt make no graven images."

- ✓ **And so man starts at revelation, descends to rejection, descends to rationalization and descends finally to religion—**
- ✓ **Manmade Satan-inspired demonic religion that has absolutely no truth in it and no power to restrain sin.**

Now watch what happened.

- 1. At this moment, God lets men go. Why?
- 2. Because they have gone so far away from Him.
- 3. Ephraim is joined to idols, what's the rest of the verse? Let them alone. Because you will have none of Me, I give you up.
- 4. You have forsaken Me and I forsake you.
- 5. That's the story of man.
- ✓ **The human race is not on an ascent to God, the human race is on a descent from God.**
- ✓ They're running as fast as they can away from His presence and reality.
- 6. And they have come to the pit of religion.

And once you come to the pit of false religion, you have violated the first and foremost commandment and that is that you should love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.

- 7. You have made other gods, you have blasphemed the truth of God and you are at the worst possible level of human existence.
- 8. And at that point, God says I gave them up.

And that leads to the results of verse 24.

- 1. When God gives men up, they sink into reprobation that is almost beyond description.
- 2. Because when the restraints are offall hells pit breaks loose.
- ❖ Now I want you to think this through with me because it's the key to the passage. Now listen carefully.

The wrath of God is not only something future.

- 3. There is a day of wrath in the future, but the wrath of God is not just a future reality.

4. The wrath of God is going on all the time. Verse 18 says, "For the wrath of God.....is all the time being revealed from heaven."

Now listen..... How is God's wrath being revealed?

1. It is being revealed in His giving men up to their own devices.
 2. For when He gives them up to their sinfulness, that in itself is the working of His wrath. They are being turned away.
 3. He could restrain men but He is so angry with their apostasy that He lets them go and the consequences of their own sin is the outworking of His wrath.
 4. Men today who live their own life in sin are seeing the wrath of God unfolding through the result of their own sinfulness, and God abandoning them.
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- ❖ Men today worship cars, they worship houses, they worship clothes, they worship their bodies, they worship women, they worship success, they worship money, they worship false gods in a religious environment.
 - ❖ They have idols in excess, but not God and that's why God gave them up. And He gave them up to the essence of their evil hearts.

To understand the Lord, we need to draw closer to him, and the only way to do that is through His Word.

When we realize who God is, we will get a healthy understanding of who he is.

That He is God the Father, God the Son Jesus Christ and God the Holy Spirit.

So that God is to be feared and revered.

But until such time as we submit unto Jesus and believe in Him for salvation, his wrath is forever against the unbeliever.

So repent and believe.

PRAY.....