

## MAN'S DESCENT INTO DARKNESS

### **TEXT: ROMANS 1:18-28**

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. The first seventeen verses of this epistle emphasize the "good news" of the Gospel (cf. 1:1, 9, 15, 16).
2. This is the great theme of the epistle (1:16).
3. But now the apostle Paul is declaring the bad news -- that man is a wicked sinner in need of salvation (1:18).
4. W. Graham Scroggie said, "News which is good implies a state which is bad; supply presupposes want; salvation implies sinfulness."
5. Man is so wicked that we do not have to wonder why "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven" (1:18).
6. We only marvel at God's longsuffering and patience!
7. The other day, the House Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer (Md.) said on the House floor, that the Declaration of Independence declared that homosexuals are endowed by "their Creator—by God" with a right to marry.
8. To think that men who put together the Declaration of Independence, men like Thomas Jefferson and John Adams and Benjamin Franklin would ever support something as wicked and vile as homosexuality is absurd.
9. In the American colonies, the penalty for sodomy, referred to as the detestable and abominable sin of buggery was death.
10. And to say that God has given special rights and privileges to those guilty of committing this wicked sin is blasphemous. The Bible says, "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination" (Leviticus 18:22).
11. The other day, a protester in the courtroom where the Supreme Court met to "define marriage," screamed out, "Gay marriage is an abomination in the eyes of God."
12. Justice Antonin Scalia then commented, "That was refreshing, actually," causing loud laughter to ripple through the courtroom (*WND*).
13. On the other hand, departing Attorney General Eric Holder gave his last speech as the Attorney General, and said, "LGBT equality is the civil rights issue of our time." What a foolish thing to say!
14. In an interview with Diane Sawyer last Friday night, Bruce Jenner admitted he is in the process of transitioning into a "woman."

15. Jazz Jennings is a new celebrity in our mixed-up wicked society. He is a 14-year-old boy who dresses up like a girl. When he was four-years-old he told his parents he wanted to be a girl and they went along with it so now he is identified as a girl.
16. In 2014, Jennings was named one of "The 25 Most Influential Teens of 2014" by *Time* magazine. He will soon be on his own reality show.
17. I could go on and on, but it is enough to make one nauseated. We look around and all we see is perversion, adultery, rape, murder, thievery, corruption and violence.
18. Looters and rioters are trying to burn down Baltimore, and the mayor said, "we also gave those who wished to destroy space to do that."
19. This is a wicked world that is inviting the judgment of God.
20. Man likes to boast that he is improving and "evolving." But actually man is getting worse -- religiously, morally, intellectually, and spiritually.
21. Romans 1 shows this downward decline of man.

#### **I. MAN HAS TURNED HIS BACK ON GOD (1:18-20).**

1. Because man has turned his back on God, sinners are under the deserving wrath of God (1:18-20). "The rejection of divine light must necessarily incur the divine wrath" (W.H. Griffith Thomas, *Romans*).
2. Sinners are "without excuse" (1:20).
3. God has revealed Himself to man through His creation. Psalm 19:1 says, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork."
4. All man has to do is look up into the sky and know there must be a Creator who created the sun, and moon, and skies.
5. John 1:9 says the Lord Jesus Christ "was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Romans 1:19 says, "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them."
6. But men have rejected the light. John 3:19 says, "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."
7. First, sinners refuse to see; then eventually they cannot see. They are "without excuse" (Romans 1:20). Second Peter 3:5 says "they willingly are ignorant." They deliberately ignore the Word of God.
8. In a message from our text, Pastor W.A. Criswell said, "I'm going to quote from the chief justice of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, 'If those who preach the gospel had been lawyers prior to entering the

ministry, they would know and say far more about the depravity of the human heart. The old doctrine of total depravity is the only thing that can explain the falsehood, the dishonesty, the licentiousnesses and the murder so rife in the world. Education and reform fail to overcome it.” We need more judges like that!

## II. MAN HAS TURNED TO FOOLISHNESS (1:21-23).

1. Romans 1:21 says, "Because that, when they knew God..." They knew God but have turned their back on God.
2. In his recent interview with Diane Sawyer, Bruce Jenner claimed to be a church-going Christian (and a conservative Republican), and even admitted he knew his perversion contradicted Scripture.
3. "They glorified him not as God, neither were thankful..." (1:21). They did not give God His rightful place. By the way, when people skip church, they are not giving God His rightful place because Sunday is the Lord's Day.
4. And when people skip prayer meeting they are saying, "Prayer is not important" (cf. Luke 18:8).
5. "But became vain in their imaginations..." (1:21). *Thayer's Greek Lexicon* says "became vain in their imaginations" means they "were brought to folly in their thoughts, i.e., they fell into error."
6. Their thinking became confused, and then, "their foolish heart was darkened" (1:21), as they turned to idolatry, immorality, alcohol, drugs, pornography, false religion, evolution, communism, etc.
7. Wilbur Smith said, "When we are in an environment of rebellion against God, and of lawlessness, we breathe its atmosphere, we read its books; we absorb its concepts; we are living in this world, and the spirit of this world seeps into our own inner life...Unconsciously it may, be, we lean towards the world in which we live, and even we as believers are affected by this diabolic, sin-denying spirit in which we are living...This is an age in which man is exalted...The ideal in our modern philosophical thinking reaches no higher than the head of a man! We are not bringing God into our thoughts, and man becomes the measure of all man thinks."
8. Things have gotten much worse since Wilbur Smith left this world and went to heaven. Now we see people covered head to foot with ugly tattoos, strange piercings, sex-change operations, etc. -- they "became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened" (1:21).

9. Today many people are going to colleges and universities, but they are being miseducated by humanists, atheists, socialists, communists and perverts. "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools" (1:22).
10. America is drifting into pagan idolatry as people today worship strange gods, and accept just about every religion except Biblical Christianity. Just look at the books on the shelves in bookstores.
11. And few people even read books anymore. They pick up their unscriptural ideas from television and Hollywood.

### **III. GOD GAVE UP ON MAN (1:23-28).**

1. We see this mentioned three times in Romans 1 (1:24, 26, 28).
2. God gave up on mankind when He sent the flood back in the days of Noah.
3. God gave up on the people of Judah, when He allowed King Nebuchadnezzar's army to destroy the temple and burn down the city of Jerusalem.
4. The LORD said to the prophet Jeremiah, "Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me: for I will not hear thee" (Jer. 7:16; cf. 11:14; 14:11).
5. God will judge this wicked world for its idolatry (Rom. 1:23).
6. Today we have many educated people who actually worship the sun and the moon and the stars.
7. Many people today, especially those involved in the environmental movement and new-age movement, have embraced pantheism. Derived from the Greek words *pan* (all) and *theos* (God), "pantheism" means "all is God."
8. Pantheism is the view that the universe or nature ("Mother Nature") as a whole is divine. Therefore, environmentalism leads to earth worship, and has become a form of idolatry (1:23).
9. Environmentalists often worship and serve the creature, rather than the Creator (1:25). This is what is driving the so-called "global warming" and "climate change" fanatics. It is not based on science but on idolatry.
10. The Bible tells us that God will burn up this world, not man. Second Peter 3:10 says, "the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." The Lord will do this, not man.
11. Isn't it strange that the same people who are so riled up over so-called "global warming" and "climate change" are very supportive of

- abortion. They are bothered by melting polar ice caps, but a million babies being slaughtered every year in America does not bother them at all. They think that is good and acceptable.
12. These same liberal and progressive people support the wicked homosexual movement (1:24-28).
  13. I do not agree with Franklin Graham on some things, but on two issues I am in agreement with him. He has been very strong in his opposition to the Muslim menace, and he has been equally outspoken in his opposition to so-called "gay marriage."
  14. He said this, "True followers of Jesus Christ, whose salvation is based entirely upon God's Word, cannot endorse same-sex marriage, regardless of what our President, the Congress, the Supreme Court, the media or the latest Gallup poll says about the matter."
  15. Supporters of homosexuality say Christians who oppose them "are on the wrong side of history." That statement may scare spineless politicians but it shouldn't frighten true Christians who believe the Bible.
  16. Franklin Graham said, "This moral issue has been settled by God Himself and is not subject to man-made revisions or modifications. In the end, I would rather be on the wrong side of public opinion than on the wrong side of Almighty God who established the standard of living for the world He created. Marriage is a biblically moral issue, not a political or theological one."
  17. This is taught throughout the Old Testament and the New Testament. God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, and the destruction of these cities is referred to often in Scripture (cf. II Peter 2:6; Jude 7).
  18. Leviticus 18:22 says, "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination."
  19. "Abomination" is a strong word. It means something God considers disgusting and detestable.
  20. "Idolatry is invariably associated with sensuality" (Griffith Thomas).
  21. False worship leads to false living -- then God "gives them up."

### **CONCLUSION:**

Poem written by a 15-Year-Old Boy

Now I sit me down in school  
Where praying is against the rule  
For this great nation under God  
Finds mention of Him very odd.

If Scripture now the class recites,  
It violates the Bill of Rights.  
And anytime my head I bow  
Becomes a Federal matter now.

Our hair can be purple, orange or green,  
That's no offense; it's a freedom scene.  
The law is specific, the law is precise.  
Prayers spoken aloud are a serious vice.

For praying in a public hall  
Might offend someone with no faith at all.  
In silence alone we must meditate,  
God's Name is prohibited by the State.

We're allowed to cuss and dress like freaks,  
And pierce our noses, tongues and cheeks,  
They've outlawed guns, but FIRST the Bible.  
To quote the Good Book makes me liable.

We can elect a pregnant Senior Queen,  
And the 'unwed daddy,' our Senior King.  
It's 'inappropriate' to teach right from wrong,  
We're taught that such 'judgments' do not belong.

We can get our condoms and birth controls,  
Study witchcraft, vampires and totem poles,  
But the Ten Commandments are not allowed,  
No Word of God must reach this crowd.

It's scary here I must confess,  
When chaos reigns the school's a mess.  
So, Lord, this silent plea I make:  
Should I be shot; My soul please take! Amen