

God's Response to Man Rejecting Divine Revelation

Romans 1:24-32

Now would be a good time for me to define what it means to be a reprobate. In its simplest term, to be reprobate means: “not standing the test, rejected” according to Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary. In Vine’s definition, he continues to say, “here in this passage (specifically in **verse 28**), a reprobate person is someone who has a mind of which God cannot approve, and which must be rejected by Him, (which is) the effect of refusing ‘to have (retain) God in their knowledge.’”

Without doubt, Vine’s definition of reprobate is excellent. But, please allow me to humbly give you my definition of what it means to be a reprobate. “A reprobate mind is a mind which has rejected God, and therefore, has been rejected by God: it is a mind that holds down truth and denies God: a mind which God has left to its own devices: the results being a mind whose thinking and reasoning are both illogical and worthless: simply stated, a reprobate mind is a mind that cannot form right judgments.” (TK Price 2020)

Romans chapter one is a record of what man becomes when he ignores the only true God and refuses both His truth and revelation, while intentionally removing Him from both their thoughts and lives. It is my opinion that we are seeing this chapter lived out in our great nation and in the world around us.

Psalms 9:17 states: “The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all nations that forget God.” If anyone has ever wondered what the wrath of God might look like, all they have to do is look on the streets of many of our nation’s greatest cities. It is there they will see a variety of very tragic scenes being depicting in a nation being turned into Hell displayed in America.

Trafficking of all sorts of depraved behavior is the fair of the day. Filth of all sorts has made walking what was once a safe and beautiful landscape worse than walking through a garbage heap. The results of exchanging truth for a lie are sinners wondering in their sins without hope: captives of every sort of sin with no hopeful direction and no way of escape. It is the absence of the restraining forces of a God of love, God’s grace, God’s mercy, and God’s truth. It is the absence of Heavens help, which must be what the psalmist said a once blessed nation turns into: a hell on Earth.

It also reminds me of a generation, that according to **Matthew 24:37-39** and **Luke 17:26-32**, came under the judgment of God. A generation and a people which are no longer in existence with the exception of the record of God's inspired Word. How can I make such a statement? Please, note again the word "imaginings" in **verse 21**. I did not highlight it earlier in my remarks, but have saved my brief comments for this moment. According the **Genesis 6** record, "imagination" was one of the great marks of Noah days. They are days that parallel our days and are days that will usher in the return of our Lord. It is a fact that in Noah's day "every imagination of the thoughts of his (man's) heart was only evil continually." **Genesis 6:5**.

According to Vine's Expository Dictionary, the word imaginings refers to "thoughts and reasonings" of men. As just noted, in the days of Noah they are said to have been "evil continually."

From the beginning, God has allowed man the privilege of choice, but not without its consequences. In the following verses, **verses 24-32**, we find a divine record of what has been stated earlier in my comments. And that is, that God is currently and actively revealing His wrath from Heaven on men who "hold (down) the truth in unrighteousness." It is the wrath of God that is deserved and it is the wrath of God that is being inflicted. Although fallen man has chosen to rarely retain God in his mind and thoughts, God's mind is rarely without thoughts of and towards fallen man.

As has already been stated, the most severe judgment God could ever inflict on man is to leave man alone: simply leave him to his own devices. The truths before us in this section of Scripture, clearly testifies to this fact.

Verse 24 begins with the word "Wherefore." Most Bible readers understand that when one comes to this word, one needs to stop and see what it's there for. It is an adverb or a conjunction that, introduces a reason or purpose for that which is to follow. In other words, the word indicates a summation of what has just been stated.

As this verse continues, we find an amazingly alarming phrase given that will be repeated in **verse 26** and **verse 28**. Here and in **verse 26** Paul states that "God also gave them up..." In **verse 28** Paul states: "God gave them over..." Wow! Talk about a shocking and alarming phrase! Such a phrase should shake the mind and

heart of all who read those words. In fact, they should provoke within us the need to repent and turn back to the one true God. But, unfortunately, that is not the way of a reprobate mind.

In those three verses, we find the three things God gave man over to. Those three things are:

1. the lusts of their own hearts
2. to vile affections or passions that are degrading
3. to a reprobate mind

Those three things make an amazing statement of what God chooses to do when man chooses to abandon God. Those three acts teach that in response to man abandoning Him, He in turn abandons man. It means He withdraws His divine restraints allowing them to follow whatever sinful and debased course they choose to follow. In fact, as has been stated before, when man gives up and when God turns him over to his own judgments and choices without interference, this is the worst type of judgment God could pronounce against man.

This type of man is not ignorant about God, he simply chooses to not acknowledge or honor God. Man chooses not to be grateful to God for the many blessings He bestows on man. When men think like this, they think themselves to be wise when actually they prove themselves to be fools. In rejecting God and replacing the One true God with themselves, they actually end in darkness and think it to be light. How sad it is to be so depraved in thought so as to believe being in darkness is being in light.

Please note that the fact God gave man up to his own thoughts did not result in either man's righteousness or holiness. But it did result in uncleanness birthed out of the lust of a depraved heart and mind. Please note that uncleanness can either be spiritual or moral uncleanness. In fact, if I understand this passage correctly, to be unclean in one realm of life means to be unclean in both realms of his life: that is spiritually and morally. Note again that Paul states uncleanness comes "through the lusts of their own hearts, (a cognitive process) to dishonor their own bodies between themselves (which is physical)."

Please note again that uncleanness came "through the lusts (plural) of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves." When God created man and woman in the beginning, He intended for them to enjoy each other in every honorable way possible. That means physically, emotionally, spiritually, and

relationally. Every way they could in a moral sense. Our gracious Creator built in ways and means of pleasure for both the man and the woman that were to be enjoyed fully and legitimately, as man and wife, without uncleanness according to **Hebrews 13:4**.

Unfortunately, due to the fallen nature of man, man's depravity began to manifest itself in how man chose to corrupt that which a gracious God had created for mutual pleasure and satisfaction between two people in a godly relationship. A relationship ordained by God. A relationship that was designed to honor both God and man.

Verse 25 continues with one of, in my humble opinion, the most frightful statements found anywhere in scripture. In **verse 18** we read and learn that man was guilty of holding down the truth. Man knew what truth was, but he chose to suppress what he knew to be true and refused to allow it to have its rightful place and power over him as it was divinely designed to have. Here in **verse 25** we find man chose to exchange the truth of God for "a lie." Amazing! It was the lie that was introduced by the serpent to Eve in the garden of Eden long ago according to **Genesis 3:5**.

The "lie" referenced in **verse 25** takes us back to the garden of Eden and the lie Satan tempted Eve with. The lie was, that if she would eat of the forbidden fruit on the tree in the midst of the garden, the of knowing good and evil, she would "be as gods." The "lie" was, actually, that man could and should be his own god, which would allow him to satisfy any desire his depraved heart might demand. And when man becomes a god, then man becomes guilty of nothing because in his eyes, nothing he could desire would be sinful. If man were truly god, all things would be lawful if they were to be used to satisfy his lusts: regardless of what that lust may be.

It has been suggested by some, that this act of rebellion may be the apex of man's rebellion against the truth of God. Please note that man did not perform his act of suppressing the truth through ignorance. But, rather, it was an act of pure rebellion on his part against something he knew to be true. It was a manifestation of what apostasy actually is. You see, apostasy is not holding something to be true that is not true because one is ignorant of what truth is. Nor is apostasy believing something to be true which is actually not true. But, apostasy is choosing to refuse what is known to be true in order to embrace something that is known to not be true.

“The lie” referenced in **verse 25** takes us back to the garden and the lie Satan tempted Eve with and that is if she would eat of the forbidden fruit on the tree in the midst of the garden, she would “be as gods.” “The lie” is that man could and should be his own god. That he should be worshiped however his depraved heart would demand. When that happens, man can become guilty of nothing because in the eyes of man who has become a god, nothing he chooses to do is sinful. All things are lawful if they are used to satisfy his lusts regardless of what that lust may be.

You see, the depraved mind will always embrace evil. Seeing the depraved heart works from darkness of their soul without the aid of the light of God, they will run to evil without restraints until they meet their own destruction.

It is a sad truth but a real truth to know that throughout the history of man, man has attempted to bring God down to man as God has attempted to bring man up to God. This truth, as well as the depth of man’s depravity, may clearly be seen in what follows. Man has attempted to bring God down and portray Him in every way imaginable. He has even chosen to worship anything and all things such as the creature rather than the Creator. He has even chosen to worship God in the images he has made such as: “image(s) made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things” **verse 23**.

What are the results of such choosing? **Romans 1:23-32** tells us rather clearly. Those things listed by the Apostle Paul under the influence of the Holy Spirit are unimaginable, but true. When light is rejected only darkness remains. Fallen man with a depraved heart can only commit crimes against himself, good reason, the good of others, and the very God that created him in the beginning. And how sad that is in light of the fact there is light available for anyone who will choose to walk therein.

Although a sad truth, it is nonetheless true, God has and will at times give man over to the damnable desires of his depraved heart: even to the point of his own destruction.

In our next look at how Paul brings **chapter one** to a close, we will see the many effects of God’s judgment upon mankind for his choice to “change the truth of God into a lie” **verse 25**.

Tom Price, 2023