

Chapter Fourteen

Studies in the Epistle of Paul to the Romans

Condemned

“¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; ¹⁹ Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed *it* unto them. ²⁰ For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:” (Romans 1:18-20).

This text begins the first of five major divisions in the epistle to the Romans. This first division is the doctrine of condemnation and begins with 1:18 and goes through 3:20. This section has three other divisions within it (see outline), the condemnation of Gentile unbelievers, the condemnation of apostate Jews and the Law’s blanket condemnation of the whole world.

All sinners tend to a common problem. Sinners are guilty of creating God in their image. Sinners are guilty of reducing God to the god of their imaginations. In order to create a god who fits their mold, they must reject the God of the Bible. Therefore, any distortion of the God of the Bible creates a false god and all trust or reliance on that false god is equal to unbelief.

The three divisions of the doctrine of condemnation establish the true God of the Bible accurately and absolutely. It is that God (the God of the Bible) to which all men are accountable.

Lost people suppress the truth of God (1:18).

Lost people tend to rationalize God out of existence. At best, they tend to create God in their image. The God of the Bible is an absolute God Who reveals Himself to mankind. The “wrath” of that absolute God is being revealed against all that is contrary to Him (ungodliness and unrighteousness). This “wrath” defines God’s condemnation.

When the absolutes of God’s Word are removed from a society, that society will progressively begin to see the product of that removal (1:21-28). When society reduces the absolutes of God’s Word to just one of many options, all *truth* becomes relative. The ultimate end to this digression is the removal of God altogether. This is known as Secular Humanism (non-theism).

Once the God of the Bible and His absolutes are removed as the governing force in a society, the things of God can be replaced with humanistic absolutes. For instance (it is not my intent to single out smokers) for Secular Humanists, it is not wrong to smoke because it is worldly. It is wrong to smoke because it is unhealthy and too costly for society. Although Bible believing Christians have been called *legalists* for calling smoking worldly, now the new absolutism of secular humanism is trying to pass legislation to outlaw it.

The religion of a tolerant secular humanism is one of absolute rejection of the absolute God (non-theism). Absolute secular humanism absolutely rejects the existence of God or absolute truth (atheism). Our society is presently caught between these two positions rapidly moving to the extreme. Mankind remains under the curse of God’s condemnation (“wrath”) because it suppresses (“holds”) the truth of God’s absolute righteousness (1:18).

Lost people suppress two truths regarding the existence of the absolute God. In doing so they are rejecting the grace of God extended to them in these witnesses.

Unbelievers suppress the voice of their conscience telling them that God exists (1:19). Man was created in the image of God. Even in mankind’s fallen state, every reflection of himself is to some degree a reflection of God. God’s image was defaced but not erased. Man has a God given conscience and God has programmed Himself into that conscience saying, “I am, I am, I am.” What this means is that in every person is a conscience that is like a neon light in the darkness of our fallen existence flashing, “God is! God is! God is!”

However, lost mankind does not like this constant reminder of the existence of an absolute God with absolute rights and wrongs. “They did not like to retain God in their knowledge” (1:28). By the vanity of human reasoning, they deny the inward testimony of their conscience to the existence of God. In doing so, they put themselves in almost total darkness.

“⁹ *That* was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not” (John 1:9-10).

“²² The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. ²³ But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great *is* that darkness” (Matthew 6:22-23)!

Lost people suppress the testimony of creation to the existence of God (1:20).

Creation is a shouting testimony to God’s existence.

“¹ The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. ² Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. ³ *There is* no speech nor language, *where* their voice is not heard. ⁴ Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, ⁵ Which *is* as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, *and* rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. ⁶ His going forth *is* from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof” (Psalm 19:1-6).

Two invisible things about God are clearly evident in creation (1:20).

1. “His eternal power”

“¹ In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. . . ³ And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. . . ⁶ And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. ⁷ And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which *were* under the firmament from the waters which *were* above the firmament: and it was so. . . ⁹ And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry *land* appear: and it was so. . . ¹¹ And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, *and* the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed *is* in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. . . ¹⁴ And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: ¹⁵ And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. . . ²⁰ And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl *that* may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. . . ²⁴ And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. . . ²⁶ And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth” (Genesis 1:1, 3, 6, 7, 9, 11, 14, 15, 20, 24, and 26).

2. His “Godhead” (literally His God-hood, this refers to His divinity. He is the Creator/God.)

God’s conclusion about those who suppress the truths that testify to His existence (1:20) is that “they are without excuse.” If a person rejects these two witnesses to the existence of God, are there grounds to believe he might respond to additional witness in the gospel?

Before a person will see his need of a Savior, he must believe that God exists and that God defines Himself in absolute terms as to Who He is and what He expects. There is no second chance. A person has one lifetime to believe in God and accept His free gift of salvation in Jesus Christ.

“The fool hath said in his heart, *There is no God*” (Psalm 14:1). God says a person who denies His existence is a fool. The word “fool” is from the Hebrew word *nabal* (naw-bawl') referring to a person without any sense of reason or reality.

How could a doctor, trained in the intricacies of the human body, deny the existence of God? A medical doctor is a person who has spent years and years of intense study of the human body. His profession requires a great deal of intelligence. Yet the Bible says he is a fool if he denies the existence of God.

How could an astronomer, trained in the details of a universe so vast and infinite that it goes beyond human comprehension, deny the existence of God? How could a person who charts a space flight in increments of nano-seconds of the movement of planets in our solar system deny a sovereign Creator to keep in all under control? As intelligent as these people must be, God says they are fools if they deny His existence.

When lost people stand before the Great White throne, they will stand there without excuse. God has given them two great lights which testify to His existence. Satan is doing everything he can do to destroy those two witnesses.

Before a person has any hope of being saved, he must open His heart to the inner testimony of his conscience crying out to him that God exists. Once a person accepts the fact of God's existence, God's message to all mankind is that we are lost and need a Savior.

“¹⁶ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. ¹⁸ He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. ¹⁹ And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. ²¹ But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God” (John 3:16-21).

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1. What is the first major division in the epistle to the Romans called? _____

2. Write out the three divisions within this first division and give the Scripture verses that apply.
 - A. _____

 - B. _____

 - C. _____

3. Discuss why lost people tend toward creating God in their image. _____

4. Discuss what happens to a society that removes the absolutes of God's Word as a governing force. ____

5. Discuss the difference between a tolerant secular humanism and an absolute secular humanism. ____

6. Read Romans 1:19. What do lost people suppress about God? Discuss this in detail. _____

7. What two truths (testimonies to God's existence) do lost people suppress? Be detailed about these. ____

8. What is God's conclusion about those who suppress the truths which testify to His existence? Discuss this in detail dealing with the idea of the possibility of a *second chance*. _____

