



Rebellion Results
The Problem of Getting What You Want Even When it is Wrong
Part 1
Romans 1:18-32

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We are still in the introduction section of Paul's letter to the Roman church. A church that is made up of Jewish and Gentile believers but leaning heavily towards the Gentile side. He has introduced himself and talked about the faith of those in the church in Rome and reflected his eagerness to come and be blessed by them but to also bless them as well with teaching of the word. We concluded last time with Paul's power statement concerning the gospel.



Romans 1:16–17

“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 ONE WILL LIVE BY FAITH.”” (NASB 2020)

Anticipating questions, Paul jumps in by answering the same one I have heard people ask even today. Why do I need to have God’s righteousness? Why is it by faith? What is the problem that I have to rely on someone else to do this for me?

Because you are going the wrong way.

Everyone needs the gospel because we all have the same problem. Sin. What we are about to learn from Paul is how comprehensive his analysis truly is. I suspect all of us will indeed become offended by what Paul has to say.

This is the word of God, if you disagree with the text, it is the word of God and God never changes. Hebrews 13:8 “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, and forever.” (NASB 2020)

Take up your objections with Him.

Romans 1:18–23

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of people 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, that is, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, being understood by 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, but they became futile in their reasonings, and their senseless hearts were darkened. **Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and they exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible mankind, of birds, four-footed animals, and crawling creatures.**” (NASB 2020)

I thought we were talking about the righteousness of God, yep, we still are. Many think Paul takes a detour from that topic beginning here in verse 18 and continuing all the way to Romans 3:20. I mean, he picks up with a verse 17 restatement.

Romans 3:21

“But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,” (NASB 2020)

Here is the thing, in order to fully understand the righteousness of God and the deep need we have for the gospel of the Grace of God in Jesus Christ, we also need to understand just how badly depraved all of mankind is. “In other words, the grace of God in Christ, received by faith, can be understood and appreciated only against the dark backdrop of human sin and depravity.” (Storms 2016, Ro 1:18-32)

And Paul begins with the depravity of Gentiles first of all because they have rejected God as a result of the rejection of general, also called natural revelation.

What is natural revelation? It is the revelation that God gives us through nature.

Why is it God’s wrath is being revealed, a wrath, by the way, that we as followers of Jesus Christ have been promised to not be subjected to.



1 Thessalonians 5:9

“For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,”
(ESV)

This is why we, as the church and His adopted kids, wait for Jesus Christ to come and snatch us away to be with Him forever in the pre-tribulation rapture of the church.

But why the wrath?

Romans 1:18

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of people who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,” (NASB 2020)

The general revelation that Paul is about to explain to us has been actively and specifically suppressed by mankind. We see the stars, the sun and the moon and all He has created, and we have come to the conclusion, random chance of evolution or worse, aliens did it and seeded our planet with life. That is de facto suppression of truth sitting right in front of you.

What Paul does here is he “brings the entire world before the tribunal of God to demonstrate that everyone needs the gospel because everyone has been judged guilty—not for rejecting Jesus, of whom many have never heard, but for rejecting God the Father, who has revealed Himself plainly to every human being. It is our nature as sinners to suppress that truth in unrighteousness (other translations say “to repress,” “to hinder,” or “to stifle”). Paul says that God is angry about what human beings do with His revelation.” (Sproul 2014, 17-18)

We forget that what we know of as God’s wrath, is His determination to punish sin. Before coming to Christ, that was where we were and was all we could look forward to.

Ephesians 2:3

“Among them we too all previously lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the rest.” (NASB 2020)

So, the issue is suppression of all that God has revealed to mankind simply through His creation. Easy enough to do, being really busy will do that, staying really drunk or high does that too. Paul is going to make it clear to us here what God’s wrath is against.

Leviticus 11:45

“For I am the LORD who brought you up from the land of Egypt, to be your God; so you shall be holy, because I am holy.” (NASB 2020)

In His word, we learn He is holy, and as His kids, He expects us to be just like Him. His holiness stands against anything and everything that is not. Once we understand that He is holy, and you then ask the question how should I live as a believer, the answer, holy.

Psalms 24:3–4

“Who may climb the mountain of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? Only those whose hands and hearts are pure, who do not worship idols and never tell lies.” (NLT)

And for those who want lists, be patient, it is indeed coming.



Paul intends to provide us all the evidence we will need for us to fully get that without Christ, we not only have no righteousness of our own, but because of the sin nature we all have, we are, without Jesus, utterly and totally unsuited to a God of infinite holiness. God has revealed this to us in creation alone.

Romans 1:19–20

“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, that is, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, being understood by what has been made, so that they are without excuse.” (NASB 2020)

Two things walking outside at night and looking into the night sky and seeing the stars, the moon, and all that is observable; His eternal power and His person. Clearly on display. Really Ken, how? God is invisible. Correct, He is a spirit, but listen to David as he looked at the heavens.

Psalms 8:3–4

“When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?” (ESV)

I seriously considered majoring in astronomy in college. I took a class in it and soon learned why calculus was a requirement for the class.

But I will never forget walking out on the Nevada desert floor far from the lights of Las Vegas and looking up. The Milky Way was clearly visible, and so was Comet Hale Bopp. How could anyone look up and see that and say there was no God. His creation was clearly on display. There were others who looked up at the same comet I did and did not see God but saw aliens instead and 39 people committed suicide together as part of the “Heaven’s Gate” cult believing they would be picked up by an alien spacecraft they believed was in the tail of the comet.

They had suppressed the truth of God seen in nature, believed a lie, and died for that lie.

Even the weather points to the Lord. Paul pointed that out to a crowd in Lystra who were thinking he and Barnabas were Zeus and Hermes. He pointed out that the living God was the one who made everything and then added this.

Acts 14:17

“Yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.” (ESV)

Antony Flew was an atheist, he was involved in numerous debates with Christians, but he was honest about his unbelief as it pertained to natural revelation. He said the following, “my two main antitheological books were both written long before either the development of the big-bang cosmology or the introduction of the fine-tuning argument from physical constants. But since the early 1980s, I had begun to reconsider. I confessed at that point that atheists have to be embarrassed by the contemporary cosmological consensus, for it seemed that the cosmologists were providing a scientific proof of what St. Thomas Aquinas contended could not be proved philosophically; namely, that the universe had a beginning. (Flew and Varghese 2007, 135-136)

His conclusion validates what it is Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, positions as fact here in Romans.



Science qua science cannot furnish an argument for God's existence. But the three items of evidence we have considered in this volume—the laws of nature, life with its teleological organization, and the existence of the universe—can only be explained in the light of an Intelligence that explains both its own existence and that of the world. Such a discovery of the Divine does not come through experiments and equations, but through an understanding of the structures they unveil and map. (Flew and Varghese 2007, 155)

In other words, the creation of the world is still showing those who care to look, that there is a God. But there are those who say otherwise.

Psalm 14:1

"The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds; there is none who does good." (ESV)

The person who says there is no God is a fool. The word David chose to use here means insane or senseless. Literally, a person is insane when they say there is no God.

So those who act and live that way in the face of the evidence, are without excuse.

Romans 1:21–23

"For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their reasonings, and their senseless hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and they exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible mankind, of birds, four-footed animals, and crawling creatures." (NASB 2020)

These three verses argue against evolution. What they represent is a downward pull or motion. Today, the thought is we are improving physically, morally, intellectually and spiritually. But are we really?

Natural revelation make all of mankind accountable because they realize there is a creator. It is limited and does indeed fall short of a real relationship with God, but it is enough to condemn. Knowing of Him should lead to reverence and gratitude. We saw that beginning to reflect in the life of Antony Flew as he examined natural revelation.

But for most of mankind, that was not the result. "Instead of acknowledging God "as God," by glorifying him and thanking him, human beings perverted their knowledge and sank into idolatry." (Moo 1996, 107)

I was not saved yet and was not even looking either. I was in a biology class, and the instructor approached the first couple of weeks of the class dealing with origins, from the perspective of evolution. I thought that was appropriate, I had heard of creation, but evolution sounded more plausible to me at the time.

I will never forget half of the class showing up the next day with their Bibles ready to argue for creation, I just watched. The grades and the test were still based on evolution. By the way, that also points us to the fact that some of my classmates had been trained up well, me, not so much.

Leave it to the enemy to try and infiltrate his own worldview into the mix as early as possible. In retrospect, how in the world could we sit in a class and study the intricacies of various animals and say it all happened by chance. Yes, I was seriously blind before coming to Jesus.

There are those we see today who have the resume to lead you to believe that they are incredibly wise. Do not confuse knowledge with wisdom. We tend to do that. I have worked with people who have PhDs



who will spout off some of the most overused tropes about the Bible that I had to watch myself to keep from rolling my eyes.

Dr. Schroeder has this to say about evolution.

In regard to the Darwinian theory of evolution, the world-famous paleontologist of the American Museum of Natural History, Dr. Niles Eldridge, unequivocally declared, “The pattern that we were told to find for the last one hundred and twenty years does not exist.” There is now overwhelmingly strong evidence, both statistical and paleontological, that life could not have been started on Earth by a series of random chemical reactions. Today’s best mathematical estimates state that there simply was not enough time for random reactions to get life going as fast as the fossil record shows that it did. (Schroeder 1990, 25)

A lot of the insanity we see is due to the rejection of God as the creator. We know that death came into the world as a direct result of the sin of Adam and Eve. Death is an enemy (1 Corinthians 15:26). But per the theory of evolution, death “brings about better adaptations for life’s challenges.” Survival of the fittest and all of that. But adhering to the theory of evolution can “easily lead to nihilism. Its acceptance also leads to the denial or drastic modification of major biblical doctrines.” Literally, there is nothing after death and survival of the fittest leads to all we see in terms of exploitation today. (Mueller 2020)

Where does this misguided insane mind turn when God has been rejected? Insanity and idolatry. Today, that would be chasing anything other than God. Enter the idea of directed panspermia. “Nobel laureate Francis Crick and origin-of-life researcher Leslie Orgel first proposed the concept of directed panspermia in 1973.” (Rana and Ross 2004, 205)

The term panspermia comes from two Greek words: “pan,” which means “all” and “sperma,” which means “seed.” Panspermia is actually an umbrella term that describes any scientific theory that posits that all life as we know it on earth began in outer space. (Heiser 2016, Kindle Location 7)

Crick and Orgel suggested that the seeds of life may have been purposely dispersed by an advanced extraterrestrial civilization, possibly on space craft. Crick, whose Nobel Prize was earned (with Dr. James D. Watson) for the discovery of the double helix structure of DNA, further posited that small “grains” containing DNA may have been fired randomly by extraterrestrials throughout space, perhaps by a civilization facing annihilation, or hoping to terraform planets for later colonization. (Heiser 2016, Kindle Location 33)

Romans 1:22

“Claiming to be wise, they became fools,” (NASB 2020)

I am stopping there since this is seriously low hanging fruit. Whether the result is old fashioned idolatry and worshipping a statue or animals or more modern ones of worshipping aliens, the intent is to not give the credit to the Creator of everything.

What happens to a culture, a people, a society or mankind in general, when we have rejected God and come up with our own ideas of reality? God gives you up to the natural results of that line of thinking.

Romans 1:24–25

“Therefore God gave them up to vile impurity in the lusts of their hearts, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for falsehood, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.” (NASB 2020)

This section of scripture introduces us to a repeat of what we see in Judges, “progressive degeneration” or “progressive reprobation.” Step one, the turn from God to idols, aliens, or whatever, step two God is



abandoned totally. Step three, with no morality embraced, my truth rules and since evolution means we are animals and all morality is false anyway, do whatever you want.

Judges 21:25

“In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.” (ESV)

Welcome to the current world. Choices have consequences. The reality is simple. The example we have in the book of Judges reflects a people who stray further and further away from the truth and as a result, begin to become accepting of idolatry, rape and murder. And the surrounding culture, which is no better off, turns to civil war, killing and finally to trafficking for solutions.

Unfortunately, Judges is being repeated in corners all across the globe today.

Galatians 6:7 “Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.” (ESV)

Here is the progression so far, man needs salvation because we are all under the wrath of God. And without Jesus, that is the end point. Why are we under the wrath of God? Because even though God has a marvelous creation that we can clearly see Him in, we choose not to see Him at all in it. Instead, we see ourselves, or little green men, or who knows what.

The situation is due to rebellion. It is our fault, not His. God’s response to this is shocking, He gives us up to what it is we want more than Him. We see this all over the globe today. People choose to give up the truth, so God gives them up.

How do we see that? Here is a thought, the CDC says cases of syphilis are up 42% over the past five years. Hmm.

This is a serious issue in our culture, and it is not just showing up among those who do not know the Lord. God giving someone up means that they will indeed reject absolute morality and live however they want to live. They do not have a Biblical worldview and have no sense of objective truth.

The result is a culture of “free sex” which is not really free. Consequences that shorten life spans from the already short ones we have.

The media champions promiscuity and touts it in music, motion pictures and on television. We see public schools teaching human sexuality but not biblical morality. Yes, another outcome from leaning into evolution. The net result, a belief that it is okay to engage in sexual activities prior to marriage and to do so with whoever.

Welcome to the hook up culture.

The sacrifice of unborn babies in abortion is due to this mindset. So is the increase in STD’s, single parents, welfare fraud, hunger, pornography and trafficking. Free sex isn’t free. It is sin. God’s solution is simple, repent and stop doing it. Christ died on the cross for all of our sins.

1 John 1:9

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous, so that He will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (NASB 2020)

You see, our culture has rejected moral absolutes and now many believers have questions about that.



George Barna tells us “This basis for rejecting moral absolutes makes sense if you believe that everyone’s truth view is right, nobody’s truth view can be considered wrong, and it is better to live with a multiplicity of equally valid truth claims than to discern which truth claim is objectively accurate and therefore legitimate. This perspective is especially attractive to atheists and agnostics, as a majority of them (54%) support this argument. They are not alone, though, as large minorities of religious groups hail this idea as well. That includes nearly half of all Catholics (47%) as well as millions of people from non-Christian faiths (43%), those who attend Pentecostal churches (42%), and individuals aligned with mainline Protestant churches (39%). (Barna, 2025 American Worldview Inventory-Report #6 Americans Possess Contradictory and Unbiblical Views about Moral Truth 2025)

Too many today have decided to drink the Kool-Aid and made the decision that following Christ is not important. It is not important to many in their peer groups and the culture sure does not say it is important so why should they. And then when you consider the problem of false teachers, results like this among those who say they are believers are not as shocking as we think.

The exchange of falsehood for the truth of God is in full operation today. The breadth of it is breathtaking to see it and the research from Arizona Christian University is becoming hard to read and digest as a result. It tells a story we really would not want to be there. We have Laodicean churches all over the landscape who will not ever tell you or me that we are sinners in need of a savior. We are by the way and salvation is only available through Jesus Christ.

Further research has shown that “A significant reason for the widespread rejection of the sinfulness of humanity is likely the belief held by 70% of adults that while sin may be a reality, people are “basically good at heart,” and therefore, should not be pejoratively characterized as sinners. **That mindset is somewhat more common among self-identified Christians (72%) than among non-Christians (65%). Unexpectedly—and unbiblically—seven out of 10 theologically-identified born-again adults (70%) contend that people are basically good at heart. That view is also considerably more prevalent among Catholics (82%) than Protestants (66%).** (Barna, 2025 American Worldview Inventory-Report #8 Millions of American Christians Deny Their Sinfulness 2025)

Are you kidding me? Looking back at our text, what does this mean?

Romans 1:25

“For they exchanged the truth of God for falsehood, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.” (NASB 2020)

Yes, this is indeed a picture of those who are in rebellion, and it is a truth that has over 2000 years of proof behind it. When the rebellion of not wanting to even recognize God in creation takes over and God gives a person up, yes it is that personal, then the truth of God is exchanged for the lie de jour. One of the signs of the end of the age, per Jesus in Matthew 24, is increased lawlessness. That is not just everyone driving 100 mph on I 95, but means sin, personal lawlessness and rebellion against the Lord.

Not every church teaches truth anymore, and that is what we are in desperate need of. The truth of God’s word. This drought of the word has been going on for long enough that the numbers being seen in the research of Dr. Barna reflect that 72% of those who name the name of Jesus, do not have a Biblical view of sin.

Paul is very clear.

Romans 3:23

“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,” (NASB 2020)



Jeremiah 17:9

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?” (ESV)

I do not want to turn this into a study of hamartiology, the study of sin how it originated and how it has affected humanity and what it results in after physical death. But we do see that those who are in rebellion are more into sin and the number one referenced here is sexual sin.

“Worshiped and served the creature” is a way of saying they are busy indulging in all of the lusts of the flesh and doing whatever it takes to pander to their own desires. They actually are now captive to their own sins. And how it is explained to us here tells us it is bondage to sexual sin, and Paul is about to get very specific.

Let’s just talk about one thing regarding sexual sin, it is Satan taking advantage of a God given gift, that as fallen creatures, Satan wants to exploit to destroy us. Satan has lied to many that looking at an image or watching a video doesn’t hurt anyone. Hold that thought.

The Greek root for pornography is pornē, meaning “female captive” or “prostitute.” Under its original meaning, pornography depicts the use of sex for subjugation, aggression, degradation, abuse, coercion, violence, dominance, control, sadism, or rape. Today’s contemporary use of the term pornography has a much broader meaning, including sexually explicit art, literature, and film. (Balswick and Balswick 2019, 225)

And leave it to our culture to turn it into a so-called art form. But this is pervasive and destructive. Yes, it is indeed destroying lives all over the globe and some countries are trying to outlaw it completely, but it is not just limited to those who do not know Jesus. The statistics I am about to give you are eye watering.

54% of practicing Christians watch pornography.

75% of Christian men watch pornography.

40% of Christian women consume pornography.

22% of Christians view pornography at least once a week, compared to 31% of non-Christians who view pornography at least weekly. (Covenant Eyes 2026)

What that means is that I may be stomping on someone’s foot right now. Victory over this is possible through Jesus Christ, but it does have to be treated almost like an addiction.

Years ago, I helped a young man who was on staff at a church to set up software and accountability to combat his own issue with internet pornography. He found a way to defeat the hedges we constructed and was later discovered sampling the flock resulting in him losing his ministry. It gets worse, he ran off with the pastor’s wife eventually marrying and then divorcing her. A life ruined by becoming addicted to pictures and then fantasizing about it.

If you have struggled with this, the first step is realizing you are struggling with it and repenting. Again, 1 John 1:9 is the place to start.

If you don’t know Jesus, turn to Him right now.

Romans 3:21–24

“But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.” (NLT)



Romans 10:9–13

“If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.” Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”” (NLT)

ABC's of Salvation

- A. Acknowledge that you are a sinner, tell Him that.
- B. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sin and that He rose from the dead.
- C. Confess that Jesus is Lord. Tell someone about what you have done.

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