

The Reason for Gentile Guilt: Part 2

Dr. Michael A. Cox

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Text: Romans 1:21-23

Romans: [Bibliography](#) or [Manuscripts and Greek Exegesis](#)

UBS 4th Edition Paragraph Topic: The Guilt of Mankind

Central Idea of Message: All humans who have reached the stage of accountability stand guilty of sinfulness before God.

Introduction: Universalism is the so-called "Christian" teaching that all people will be saved by the application of the blood of Christ to their sin. This is soteriologically (having to do with salvation) and hermeneutically (having to do with interpretation) erroneous.

Also, religious pluralism teaches that all religions are equally valid and lead to the same heaven-like destination. This, too, is false.

Further, five-point Calvinism teaches that some are elected for salvation but that others, the non-elect, are left unselected, and will, therefore, die in their sin with no possibility of salvation. This, too, is biblically inaccurate.

God loves the world (John 3:16), desires all to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4), and it is not his will that any should perish but that all should come to repentance (2 Pet. 3:9). Since these three biblical truths are clear, one can only conclude that salvation must be universally accessible to all people from every era. The only way salvation can be accessible to all people from every era is through some form of disclosure from God. This disclosure can be divided into two categories: General Revelation (conscience and nature) and Gospel (special) Revelation. Since Gospel (special) Revelation is not accessible to all, but God wants to save all, the only form of revelation clearly given to all is General Revelation; therefore, I have stated that I believe a faith response to the one biblical, triune God, who is one with Christ, and belief in no other god or name, as a result of the disclosure of General Revelation, may very well be God's method of saving the unevangelized, meaning those who have not heard the gospel or God will see to it that those responding to the light they have through General Revelation will also get Gospel Revelation.

All humans are accountable for the light they have been given by God, whether General Revelation or Gospel Revelation. Rejection of the light given is rejection of faith in God and results in eternal condemnation in a literal hell, with no stops in any mythical places like limbo, purgatory, or the astral plane, and with no second chance at salvation after death. Jews and Gentiles alike are guilty of sin and in need of the Savior. Watch closely as Paul begins to list the cumulative consequences of rejecting God and his truth.

I. Ingratitude: Humans Know God Exists But Refuse to Worship Him (v. 21; cf. Willmington)

A. No people group has ever been found anywhere that did not have some yearning for a god (cf. Robertson 4:329)

1. Knowledge of God is innate, meaning inborn, but routinely distorted
2. These about whom Paul wrote knew God (τὸν θεὸν)
 - a) Knowledge of the personal God, not an abstract deity
 - b) Singular, not plural

B. People refuse to glorify the one God of heaven

1. People can respond to God's self-disclosure in two ways: with faith or with rejection (cf. MacGorman, *Layman's*, 26)
2. **Unless people are free to say "no" to God neither are they free to say "yes" to him (cf. MacGorman, *Layman's*, 27): this fatally challenges both universalism and religious pluralism**
3. Paul says people did not value God (cf. McBeth 53)
4. **"God but persuades; almighty man decrees"**
(Unknown)

C. People refuse to thank God

1. People become rebellious: improper attitude toward God (cf. MacGorman, *Layman's*, 27)
2. People become arrogant: improper attitude toward self (vv. 21-22; cf. MacGorman, *Layman's*, 27)
3. People become idolatrous: improper attitude toward creation (v. 23; cf. MacGorman, *Layman's*, 27)
4. Refusal to trust God leads to darkness
 - a) People become futile in speculations
 - (1) The knowledge of God was there
 - (2) But people "know" more than they "do" (cf. Robertson 4:329)
 - (3) Guilty verdict was not due to ignorance

- (4) **"Mythology and idolatry grew out of man's insistent need to recognize some power in the universe greater than himself, coupled with his refusal to give God the place of supremacy" (Harrison 23)**
- (5) **Rejecters of God become futile in their thinking, reminding that they *did not begin that way***
 - b) Their foolish hearts were darkened
 - (1) "Heart" is a comprehensive term for all of mankind's faculties (cf. Robertson 4:329)
 - (2) It is a sad day when darkness settles in
 - (3) Refusal to walk in light means wandering in darkness (cf. McBeth 54)
 - (4) A mind revolting against truth becomes inclined toward falsehood (cf. McBeth 54)
 - (5) Rejecters of God can become unable to perceive or often even process truth
 - (6) "Follow your heart" is some of the worst possible advice anyone could ever give, because the Bible says, "The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?" (Jer. 17:9)
 - (a) It inclines toward worldly desires
 - (b) It inclines toward emotionalism

II. Insolence: Foolishness Is Displayed by Exchanging the Glory of God for Images (v. 22; cf. Willmington)

- A. **Professing themselves to be wise, the rejecters of God and truth were made fools**
 - 1. Oxymoron: wise fools
 - 2. Progressive darkening
- B. **A fool is one who orders his or her life as if there is no God, especially in the moral sense, which is called practical/functional atheism**
- C. **Please note the irony that the wiser rejecters of God claim to be, the stupider they actually become as they descend from truth into the abyss of lies and corruption**

III. **Idolatry: People Know to Worship and Even Pattern Their Worship after Adoration of the True God (v. 23; cf. Isa. 44:9-12; cf. Willmington)**

- A. People are aware of God and his value
- B. But exchanged
 - 1. Worship of God for worship of man, beasts, and things
 - 2. Truth for falsehood
 - 3. Eternal exaltation for eternal condemnation
 - 4. Idolatry makes one guilty of glory theft, that is stealing away what was intended only for God
 - 5. Why idolatry, or even mythology? In order that mankind's own "schemes and dreams may be furthered" (cf. Barclay 33)
- C. **Were mankind not to know of God, idolatry would be an invention, but since mankind does know of God, all allegiance to anything or anyone other than the true God is revision**
- D. Any form of idolatry is not the religion of an ignorant person but of a rebellious one
- E. What a terrible list of substitutions: all created
 - 1. Humans (Greece)
 - 2. Birds
 - 3. Animals (Egypt)
 - 4. Reptiles (Babylon and Egypt)
- F. **When people refuse to have God as their God, they doom themselves to have less than God as their god (cf. MacGorman, *Layman's*, 27)**
 - 1. **Man himself becomes the number one candidate for the honor (cf. MacGorman, *Layman's*, 27)**
 - 2. Man is in revolt against his creatureliness (cf. MacGorman, *Layman's*, 27)
 - 3. **The god mask is the phoniest of all the masks which man wears (cf. MacGorman, *Layman's*, 27)**

Conclusion: All who have reached a stage of accountability stand guilty of sinfulness before God. In this text, Paul charged that the reason for man's guilt was due to God's self-disclosure to the world and the world's response to this self-disclosure, which was rebellion. As W. Griffith Thomas says, "**All religious truth which is not acted on is on its way to forfeiture**" (Thomas 71). So what about you, will you act on biblical truth or forfeit it and let your mind be darkened and your thinking become futile?