

GOD GAVE THEM UP

ROMANS 1:18-32

Some of the most despicable events that have ever occurred are recorded in the Bible. The O. T. in particular bears witness to numerous crimes against God and humanity. When you read of people such as Ahab and Jezebel, Manasseh, people of Sodom and Gomorrah, and others, you certainly see some dark times in the history of mankind. The N.T. also has its share of various and sundry crimes of similar description.

Why did God in his infinite wisdom, record such events and provide men with the record? It must have been in order to demonstrate the ultimate reward of wickedness...the awfulness of sin. (Rom. 6:23). Sin pays spiritual death and eternal damnation to those who persist in it.

Our God is a God of love, but he is also a God of wrath toward those who do evil. God knows what sin will do (Isa. 59:1,2). The apostle Paul refers to a most deplorable state in Romans 1:18-32. "God gave them up..." Three times in this section of scripture we read, "God gave them up" (vss.24,26,28). [wording is same in verse 28 as others.] To have God let one go is the worst fate that can overtake any human being. Yet that is the inevitable result of stubborn refusal to let God have His way. A. T. Robertson wrote, "The words sound to us like clods on the coffin as God leaves men to work their own wicked will." Why did it happen and how did it happen?

I. God gave them up because they dishonored God.

A. How did they dishonor God?

1. They were ungodly and unrighteous.
 - a. Unrighteous—lack of a right attitude inwardly and right conduct outwardly.
 - b. Ungodly—person who is "ungodlike" in heart and life.. Want of reverence towards God.
 - (1) Many who live lives that are circumspect and socially acceptable, but are nevertheless "ungodly" or "godless" because they pay no attention to God.
 - (2) A lack of reverence for God and sacred things—for instance, the time and place of worship—is what constitutes real ungodliness.
2. Holding the truth in unrighteousness..
 - a. Some translations have "hindering" the truth.
 - b. Thus, by their manner of life they were guilty of holding down, restraining or suppressing the truth.
 - c. Through evil deeds today, truth is often concealed.
 - d. A.T. Robertson noted that "truth is out in the open, but wicked men, so to speak, put it in a box, sit on the lid, and hold it down in unrighteousness. Their evil deeds conceal the open truth of God from men."
 - e. Those who love the truth will not conceal it, any of it.
 - f. Our society today does not want to uphold truth... they will exert pressure to limit the effects of those who will contend for truth. (Narrow minded, bigots, etc...)
 - g. 2 Thess. 2:10f... God allows us to do this... (Psa. 81:12).
3. They dishonored God when they "glorified him not as God."(v.21)
 - a. This is done by denying God's divine attributes, such as his omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, etc...
 - b. When people fail to comply with his will and purpose for their lives.
 - c. Men must recognize God as Creator, preserver, and rightful Ruler.
 - d. John 17:4... "I glorified thee..."
4. Neither gave thanks...
 - a. When people deny God, they are, of course, not thankful.
 - b. Because God did not occupy their thoughts, they were ungrateful.

- c. They replaced the God of heaven with a god of the intellect, a rationalistic god.
- II. God gave them up to do as they willed (vss. 23-25)
 - A. Changed the glory of incorruptible God, into an image...(Idolatry).
 - 1. Worshiped the finite, rather than infinite.
 - 2. They invented aids to replace Almighty God.
 - 3. After rejecting god, they turned to images. They brought God down to earth to walk on two legs, and not being satisfied with that, they made him crawl on all fours.”
 - 4. Because these nations denied god, and turned to the worship of idols, God gave them up to follow their own lusts.
 - 5. He did not give them up, till they first gave him up.
 - B. Exchanged the truth of God for a lie.
 - 1. Truth is absolutely essential to acceptance with God in any field of thought or endeavor, where moral responsibility is involved.
 - 2. Any time that something contrary to the truth regarding such an issue is substituted for it, which, of course, amounts to a lie, it will not be possible for one to reach the proper conclusion with reference to that subject.
 - 3. Man’s departure from God began when the truth of God was exchanged for the lie of Satan.
 - 4. They failed to bring their thoughts into captivity and therefore substituted righteousness for rottenness.
 - 5. It is strange that men will deliberately turn from the truth to a lie, but that is what any one does who turns from God to human wisdom.
- III. God gave them up to Vile Passions. (vss.26-27)
 - A. Immorality is a short step from idolatry, self-deification leads to self-indulgence.
 - 1. When men are not help in restraint by a felling of personal responsibility to God nor by associating with those who do honor God, their passions become the controlling force in their lives. [Wicked Living]
 - 2. They plunge into all sorts of immoralities, and they dishonor their bodies among themselves.
 - 3. When a people cease to respect God, they will not long respect their own bodies.
 - 4. The women became abusers of their own bodies.
 - 5. The men indulged in the sin of homosexuality.
 - B. Vile passions
 - 1. Shame, disgrace, degradation, sexual perversion.
 - 2. “They were consumed with passion for one another.”
 - 3. Their wicked living was accompanied with wicked thinking.
- IV. God gave them up to Depraved Minds (1:28-31).
 - A. They dishonored God by doing “those things which are not fitting.”
 - 1. Verse 28 gives the true source of their crimes, i.e. they did not choose to acknowledge God.
 - 2. There is hardly any passage which so clearly shows what happens to a man when he leaves God out of the reckoning.
 - 3. When a man banished God from his life he becomes a certain kind of man, and in this passage is the description of the kind of man he becomes...
 - 4. Humanity had tested God and disapproved of Him. Consequently man had rejected God.
 - B. God is all but forgotten and where there is no consciousness of God, there is no restraint.
 - 1. A reprobate mind is a mind that does not stand the test and hence is rejected. Rejected after testing.
 - 2. Since they rejected God, He in turn rejected them. (II Chron. 15:2)
 - C. All forms of immorality are then engaged in. (Vss.29-31)

V. God assured them of a final judgment.(v.32).

A. Even the heathen knew that God condemned such practices.

B. “Have pleasure” Carries the idea of hearty approval. “Approve those who practice them.”

Con: God gave them up! What sad words to hear. What happened then can happen today. If a man chooses to walk in the darkness of sin, there is no power that can recover him. We can not engage in the things we just talked about and have God’s approval at the same time. God gave them up because of idolatry, vile passions, debased minds. For that to happen will end in eternal punishment for the individual. It is time to awake unto righteousness!